

THE TEA SEIZURE.

The large seizure of teas by the customs authorities on Saturday last is a topic of the liveliest interest to the trade, and its issue is looked for with eager curiosity. The admitted facts are that Paul Heinemann & Co., tea merchants of Yokohama and New York, shipped by the *Obed Baxter* 6,199 half chests of tea, which recently arrived at the latter port; that this cargo has since been forwarded to Canada; that upon the arrival of the first consignment, 134 half chests, doubts as to regularity arose in the minds of the customs officials, and the lot was detained, being subsequently released, under satisfactory representations; that the ensuing larger shipments aroused suspicion afresh, and the rest of the consignment, 6,065 half chests was seized, part in bond in Toronto, and part on arrival at this port. The law imposes an extra duty of 10 per cent. on all indirect importations of teas, and the breaking of bulk of any consignment at an intermediate port is held to constitute an indirect importation. It is asserted on the one hand, that in this instance bulk was broken in New York, and on the other that it was not. A fresh consular certificate, it is admitted, was procured in New York, but under what representations is not known. The explanation has been offered that bulk was apparently broken through leaving the dust in which the tea was packed in New York under a special invoice. The chief difficulty in the way of a direct regular importation into Canada, is, that tea in great quantities is only sold in China and Japan by the *chop* or entire product of a plantation. This necessarily includes many different grades, some of which are quite unsaleable in Canada, but find a ready market in the States. But a *chop* cannot be imported regularly into Canada, and the unsaleable portion exported to the United States on account of the American duty of 10 per cent.; so the only way to import a *chop* would appear to be to break bulk in New York, and send on to Canada only that portion of the consignment marketable here. Of course there is a great advantage in buying by the *chop*, and if this business could be carried on fairly, large American houses might establish an agency in Canada, (as it is claimed is the true state of the case under investigation), and soon acquire a substantial monopoly of the tea trade of the country. The substance of the whole matter is that an attempt has been made to import teas (in larger quantities than the methods of the trade renders explicable, except on the supposition of purchasing a *chop*, which would entail breaking bulk in New York) without incurring the extra duty of 10 per cent. Whether or not the requirements of the law have been met is the open question. It is generally supposed that the government will not undertake to enforce the penalty of confiscation in the present instance, but merely exact payment of the additional 10 per cent. duty. In this connection it may be stated that the attempt to tax the intentions of importers of tea, recently referred to in the *JOURNAL*, through compelling consignees to declare they never intended to sell in the United States, has been abandoned by the Government, and the teas detained on this account have been released.

It is claimed for the now well-known composition, celluloid, that it promises to become as extensively or variously used as vulcanized rubber, and in view of its rapid increase in favor as a cheap substitute or imitation for all sorts of genuine goods, we judge the following description of its properties, and uses from an exchange, will be found interesting, and instructive. "It, (celluloid,) is produced by mixing gum camphor with a pulp of gun-cotton, and subjecting the combination to a high degree of pressure and heat. The result is a hard product of extraordinary toughness and elasticity. It can be made plastic again, and moulded into any required form. Any color can be given to it by the use of coloring matter during the process of manufacture. The uses to which celluloid is put are numerous, and are constantly increasing. It is extensively used as a substitute for ivory, which it resembles so closely that it is sometimes difficult to detect the difference. It is said to equal ivory in strength and elasticity, and not to warp or discolor with time. It has proved a good material for piano and organ keys, billiard balls, backs of brushes, looking-glass frames, handles for knives, forks, umbrellas and many other articles. It is much cheaper than ivory, and is claimed to be better for decorative purposes. It is also used with much success to imitate tortoise shell, malachite, amber, pink coral, and other costly materials. In imitation of tortoise shell it is made into combs, napkin rings, match boxes, card cases, &c. Imitations of pink coral jewelry are made and sold at prices much below those of the genuine. The same is true of imitations of malachite and amber. Mouth-pieces for pipes, cigar-holders, &c., are common. It is also used as a substitute for porcelain in making dolls' heads. The frames of eye-glasses, opera-glasses and spectacles are made of it. More recently it has come into use in combination with linen, cotton or paper, for shirt bosoms, cuffs and collars. The material has a hard, glistening surface, like that of newly-laundered linen, is elastic and impervious to moisture, and when soiled can be renovated with a moistened sponge." Celluloid in process of manufacture is highly explosive, and was recently the occasion of a catastrophe in New York attended by destruction of property and loss of life.

THE TOTAL NUMBER of post offices in Canada on the 1st of January, 1880, was 5,606 located as follows:—Ontario, 2,353; Quebec, 1,102; Nova Scotia, 994; New Brunswick, 762; Prince Edward Island, 228; Manitoba, 93; British Columbia, 48; North West Territories, 21; Keewatin, 5. The number of miles of post route was 39,598; the number of letters delivered, 43,900,000; the number of pounds of printed matter, 9,695,454; the number of book packages and miscellaneous articles, 5,054,000; the number of parcels, 206,600. The revenue for the year was \$1,531,363; expenditure, \$2,167,266; deficit, \$632,903. The money-order offices numbered 778, from which issued orders in the sum of \$6,783,723. The post office savings banks number 294, representing 27,445 depositors, who deposited \$1,973,243 during the year, and on the 1st of January had \$3,105,109 to their credit. The receipts from the sale of

stamps amounted to \$1,480,209, and the commissions allowed vendors, \$16,452. There were 493,030 letters received at the dead letter office, and re-distributed. Of a total of 194,000 registered letters, 57 miscarried.

THE Duke of Beaufort, whose long stay and travels in this country have afforded him ample opportunity to form a correct judgment, in replying to a pamphlet recently published in England by Mr. D. Owen, setting forth that the British farmer can still compete with Americans in wheat raising, says: "Climate and steam transportation by land and sea, together with the labor question, on both sides of the water make it out of the power of English agriculturists to compete with growers of wheat in America; and our farmers must turn their attention more to better and cheaper modes of growing beef and mutton, so as not to be driven out of that market also by the Americans. The distance, difficulty, and expense of transporting live or dead meat give us an advantage in that matter which we shall be wise to improve, rather than waste our time and capital in trying the impossible task of competing with them in growing wheat."

CHICAGO boasts a "Ladies Grain Exchange," which in the vernacular of the Board of Trade would be doffed a "women's bucket shop," and here the gentler sex, old and young, rich and poor, meet in some number daily to buy and sell grain on margin, or perhaps more accurately to lay wagers on the future price of grain, after the manner of the men on 'change. The room in which these dealings take place is neatly carpeted and furnished, and appropriately arranged with desks and railing for the character of business to be carried on. The *Chicago Inter-Ocean* describes the scene as follows: "Gathered in this room, with their eyes anxiously scanning the board of quotations, may be seen during business hours a varied assortment of females, distinguished by marks of worldly-importance, from the sealskin sacque to the tawdry shawl. There are old staggers, who buy freely and talk grain volubly; and there are timid new beginners venturing their first savings. Nor are men prohibited from making deals. Indeed, it seems to be a shop free for all who are able to furnish the requisite margin to cover investments. The scene is a busy one, and one that calls into force some very decided indications of character, while the interminable buzz of piping voices makes a discord in the ear more horrible than the hulahloo of the regular board."

A SORT of index to the prosperity of manufacturing interests in the Eastern States during the past year will be found in the following relative prices of cotton mills stocks as quoted in Boston Feb. 23rd, 1879, and Feb. 21st, 1880: Androscooggin mills has risen from 72 to 129½; Bates from 124 to 144; Continental from 36 to 80; Mill from 50 to 106; Amoskeag from 1,570 to 1,840; Appleton from 650 to 1,085; Cochecho from 595 to 750; Middlesex from 176½ to 240½; Pacific from 1,655 to 2,400. Other manufacturing shares of all kinds are said to have enhanced in value in like ratio.