

POTATOES.

These have sold fairly well in car lots at 50c. Receipts are light. Street prices 10 to 20c higher, per bag.

EGGS.

Have been easier and unsettled in price. Offerings of fresh have been ample, and no more are wanted at over 19 to 20c. Pickled are slow of sale, with prices at 14½ to 15c.

BUTTER.

Choice grades have been scarce, and other qualities are not wanted. Prices for selected dairy have been steady at 15 to 17c, with more wanted. Stocks of medium and inferior are still large, and receipts of these continue to come in against the will of dealers. Good medium for shipping could be bought at 9 to 10c, but inquiries are for lower prices. Good rolls sell at 12 to 14c and inferior slow at 8c.

LARD.

Has been in good request. One car lot of 50 lb pails sold at 8½c. Smaller lots brought 9 to 9½c. Tinnets are worth 8½ to 9; according to quantity taken.

APPLES.

Steady and unchanged. Prices in car lots range from \$1.50 to \$2.25 per bbl.

HAMS.

Have been in steady demand at firm prices. Smoked sold at from 19½ to 11c according to quantity taken.

BACON.

Has improved somewhat in the demand. A car lot of long clear sold at 6½c with 6½c asked later on. Tons and cases have sold at 6½ to 7c and closed firm. Cumberland quiet at 6½c. Rolls steady at 8½ to 9c. Bellies worth 10 to 11c with a good demand.

CHEESE.

In fair and steady demand, at firm prices. Medium sold at 7c in round lots. Choice is worth 9 to 9½c.

PORK.

More active and firmer. Small lots sold at \$13.50, with \$14 asked for in some instances.

POULTRY.

Has been quiet and easy, with abundant receipts. Turkeys sold fairly well at 10c, and geese at 6 to 6½c per lb. Chickens worth about 45 to 50c, and ducks 65 to 75c per pair.

Commercial Summary.

Special telegrams to *Bradstreet's* from a more extended number of distributing centers indicate that general business has not been so active. The snow blockade of the larger northwestern railways centering in Iowa, which has checked the movement of trains there for the greater portion of two weeks has just been raised. At Des Moines goods have been held two weeks for shipment. The wide prevalence of stormy weather has served to check trading, and the condition of the country roads has hindered interior merchants in replenishing stocks. At New York city there has been some activity among dry goods commission merchants, as at Boston, most notably in bleached cottons and print cloths. In other lines, at those cities, trade may be classed as fairly satisfactory, but without special activity, with the exception of the raw wool market. Dry goods generally are favorably affected by the renewed drying, and there are larger purchases of woolen and worsted goods at an advance of from 5 to 10 per cent. in price. Print cloths in first hands are quite firm and advancing. Prices yesterday were 36-16c. per yard for 64s, against 35-16c. a week ago. Some makers are holding out

for 37-16c., and 3½c. is freely predicted. A small advance has been obtained for medium sorts wool at the seaboard, though not quotable. The strength of the London spring sales encourages expectations of a brisk demand for materials. Seaboard sales for January exceed those of January last year. At Philadelphia there is no general activity, and complaint is made that business has not met expectations. The ice embargo at the port of Baltimore has been raised. The distribution of general merchandise from that city has been light, but country stocks are reported low and orders are accumulating. Advices from Cleveland, Cincinnati, Louisville, Memphis, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Burlington, St. Louis and Kansas City report a quiet movement in trade circles, or a smaller volume than in the preceding week. At Pittsburgh business has been satisfactory, and at San Francisco prospects are said to be good. Iron shows no change in price or demand. Steel rails are weaker. Cotton is 1/16 c. off on spots and 9 or 10 points lower on futures. Larger receipts and lack of speculative interest has had something to do with it. Grocery staples move slowly. Sugar is dull and lower; coffee is firmer and tea quiet. Dairy products are dull, but with a slightly improved export demand. Wheat has been somewhat firmer and the temper of the speculative market is more bullish. Corn and oats are steady. Flour is relatively firm. Hog products are irregular, pork being the leading speculative product. The total number of business failures in the United States reported to *Bradstreet's* this week number 337, against 394 last week, and 349 in the fourth week of January, 1885, 365 in 1884, 276 in 1883 and 205 in 1882. The total of failures in the United States this year to date is 1,364, against 1,628 in a like portion of 1885, 1,341 in 1884, 1,224 in 1883 and 770 in 1882. Canada had 30 failures this week, against 30 last week, 41 in the like week of 1885, 37 in 1884, 46 in 1883 and 8 in 1882. Canadian totals for four weeks of the years named have been respectively 100 (this year), 130, 146, 116 and 23.—*Bradstreet's*.

Sumac Gathering in Virginia.

Sumac gathering has grown into an industry of considerable magnitude in the Virginia mountains of late years. The bush is most abundant on the rocky and uncultivated mountain side, where no crop of grain could be grown. Providence, it would seem, has especially designed that the mountaineer should not be forgotten in the universal economy of nature, and that he should find subsistence ready at his cabin door. The season for picking the leaf lasts three months in the year, beginning in the latter part of June. The first frost renders the leaves unfit for use.

The product is hauled sometimes as far as fifty miles, often over rough and stony roads, in the ancient vehicles of the mountaineers, to some mill or convenient shipping point. For the dry and cured leaf they receive \$1 a hundred weight. At this rate, although it is smaller, the pickers allege, than the mill men could with justice give, the gathering of this wild leaf is much more profitable than raising grain in the rich valleys, where drouth afflicts

the farmers. The wife and children of the mountaineer assist him in gathering the leaves, and a little girl of 10 becomes as dexterous in stripping the bushes as a grown man of 25. Each can earn \$3 a day. Expert gatherers have been known to strip off leaves, which when cured have weighed 500 pounds. One man living at the top of the Blue Ridge, near Manassas Gap, has picked this season twenty tons and realized \$400. It is impossible to estimate the amount of comfort given these poor people by this source of revenue. Their fathers, in ignorance of the wealth at their doors, lived a precarious existence, chiefly by hunting and fishing, and partly by raising on the thin soil little patches of buckwheat.

Most of the sumac gathered in Virginia finds a market in the morocco factories of Wilmington, Del. It is used to retain the rich coloring of the leather imported from Sicily. The American article is richer in tannic acid than the Sicilian, but the imported leaf commands the highest price for the reason that, as yet, the Virginia mountaineers have not learned the importance of keeping their leaves as free from sand and grits as do the careful Italians. The Italian leaf is used by the print cloths factories of New England.

The bush in the Virginia mountains is known as the "staghorn sumac." It grows in great luxuriance until the leaves have been stripped off for several seasons, when the bush will die if let alone. In this emergency the mountaineer hitches his horse to a long narrow-pointed shovel plow called a "bull-tongue," and plows about the roots, breaking and tearing them apart. From the torn roots fresh bushes spring up, and the next season a crop of leaves thicker and darker than ever amply rewards his homely toil.—*Independent Journal*.

Great Britain not a Free Trade Country.

It can not be said that the British fiscal system is wholly based upon free trade principles. If we are absolute free traders, how comes it about that we levy somewhere about twenty million pounds annually in customs duties? We are certainly more of a free trade nation than the United States, as the revenue derived by that country from customs duties amounted in 1883 \$4 to nearly forty million pounds sterling. Still we are only relative free traders, and therefore we must not lay too much stress upon that matter. We pay ourselves a much greater compliment—and let us hope that this is a truthful compliment—when we assert that we are a persevering, energetic, and conscientious people; that we pride ourselves upon turning out good work; and that our perfection in machinery, or unequalled mercantile marine, and our commercial genius enable us to produce and deliver with remarkable cheapness. These are, or should be, our distinguishing characteristics as a manufacturing nation. If they are, we shall continue to enjoy a large and prepondering share of the world's trade. If they are not, probably all the fiscal legislation which can be devised will not prevent our becoming a second-rate commercial community.—*Ex*.