

The contrary has happened. With very few exceptions all countries have secured a quantitatively full average crop; but the quality almost everywhere shows traces of the unfavorable condition of the weather during the formative period, as well as of the troublesome rust. "Abundant and poor" is a variation of the well-known expression of Reuleaux's. "Cheap and poor," which may be justly applied to this year's grain harvest, and in this circumstance the principal reason must be sought for the enormous tumbling of prices for all kinds of grain albeit the effects of speculation on this phenomenon is not to be underestimated. When the American grain trade offers its wheat to the European consumers at fabulously low prices for delivery at any time, and accepts the easiest conditions of payment, as has been the case during the last weeks, there must be another factor at work than the large production; there must have existed, on the other side of the Atlantic, a speculation on future options, which finds itself disappointed in its expectations, and is now trying to get rid of its large reserve of wheat at any price, the expected failure of the crop not having occurred.

It is an ever recurring experience that the consumer, in the face of falling prices, discontinues his purchases in the same manner as, at a favorable opportunity, he often supplies his wants for several months in advance. The low prices this year are still harder for the producer, since, after all, the crop is not to be considered very large and quantitatively is much smaller than the one of 1883.—*The United States Miller.*

### Building 100 Freight Cars in Nine Hours.

This altogether unparalleled feat was performed in the freight car shops of Pullman's Palace Car Company, at Pullman, Ill., on August 18th. The cars were flat, and formed part of an order for the Vicksburg, Sareveport & Pacific Railway Company, which desired to have them delivered as soon as possible. The task was accomplished without any special extra preparation. The work was "laid out" as usual on Saturday, that is, five sets of wheels and axles were placed on each of the seven tracks used in the work, and materials for each of the cars were placed along the track in the usual manner. When the whistle sounded at 7 A. M. the men sprang to their work. Of the twenty-nine gangs, twenty-eight consisted of four men each, but the best gang was one hand short, because of sickness. The three men preferred to do the work themselves rather than take on a fourth hand. The first complete car was turned at 9:15 A. M., and the first lot of twelve completed cars was pulled out of the shop at 10:40 A. M. The hearty interest felt by all the men in this splendid contest was shown by the cheer which rang along the lines when the first finished lot began to move out of the shop. The writer reached the scene at about 4 P. M. and found the floors being laid on the last two or three of the 100 cars. It is within bounds to say that the whole number was finished by 5 P. M., and by 6 P. M. twenty-four of them were lettered and ready to ship. The remaining seventy-six were lettered and shipped during the next day.—*Railway Age.*

### Presence of Foreign Drummers.

The Davenport (Iowa) *Democrat* has the following: "Two English commercial travellers from London and a French commercial traveller from Paris have been in the city the past two days selling goods. This is not the first time this year that foreign drummers have come to Davenport to solicit trade. High as our tariff on foreign goods is it does not exclude them entirely. We import large amounts of silk, linen, woollen and worsted goods, cloths and hosiery, and it is these articles the drummers come to solicit orders for. Many English and French manufacturers make a specialty of supplying the American market with certain kinds of fabrics. Heretofore they have sold to New York, and the merchants of that city have enjoyed the monopoly of supplying the rest of the country, but the appearance of foreign drummers in western cities means that the foreign manufacturers are hereafter to avoid the agency of New York and deal directly with their American customers. The latter will have the advantage of about 10 per cent. reduction in prices. The New York importers do not relish the new method of doing business, but are powerless to arrest it."

### Novelties in Brass Ware.

A few months ago it was believed that fancy brass goods would be in very little demand this season as they have been in the market so long that it was thought that people had become somewhat tired of them. Notwithstanding many new and novel designs were constantly being brought out, they were taken hold of by the jobbing trade with a great deal of distrust as to their stability, and this too in the face of the fact that prices have very much declined within the past year or two, and that this class of goods, therefore, had a better chance of becoming generally popular. But the extremely large sale which brass goods have had this fall has taken the trade by surprise, and it is now thought that they may become more popular than ever. Their increased sale is undoubtedly because of the reduction in prices. People are buying brass ware now who could not afford to do so two or three years ago. With those who have an almost unlimited amount of means, to be sure, bronze is preferred to brass, but the price of the former is about four times greater than that of the latter. A piece of bronze costing, say, \$40 can be bought in brass for \$10 or \$12, and except for those of ultra fashionable tastes, answers just as well, being exactly the same as to quality of workmanship, finish, &c. "In some instances," said a dealer to a reporter of *The Stationer*, "the difference is more striking. Here is a brass pitcher, worth \$85, which in bronze would be worth \$300. The finest brass goods are imported from Vienna, Berlin and Paris, and customers generally prefer the imported to the domestic goods on account of their quality, and also because there is not much difference in the price. It is impossible for domestic manufacturers to compete with foreign makers in respect to quality and fineness of finish, although they do their utmost to imitate the imported goods. To an unpractised eye they

succeed very well, but it is an easy matter for a dealer or connoisseur to detect the difference. A few years ago nearly everything in the shape of fancy brass goods was imported. Eventually their manufacture was taken up in this country, and now there are more domestic manufacturers than you can shake a stick at. This has had the result of reducing the price by 33 per cent. We could not sell the imported goods for the price they are holding at if they were not of a better quality. I am inclined to think that in the end our home manufacturers, however, will drive out of the American market their foreign competitors, from the fact that each season they improve on the quality of their productions, and also because they do not depend so largely on foreign ideas for designs, but are constantly bringing out many novelties."

One who has never had occasion to go through the market for the purpose of acquainting himself regarding the number and variety of fancy brass goods would be surprised, not to say, interested and edified, were he to take the trouble to do so. Articles in brass have multiplied with each season. There are paper baskets, statuary, ash-trays, pocket lanterns, candle sticks, pictures, with frames of brass, *repoussé* ware in panels, with portraits in bas-relief, mantle and wall clocks, card-receivers, stands, book-racks, lamps, thermometers, etc. *ad infinitum*. Brass ware is made to serve a variety of uses, aside from its ornamental character, and stationers and fancy goods dealers now carry in addition to a line of strictly stationery novelties, many articles in the house-furnishing line, such as fancy brass tiling kettles, egg-boilers, wine-coolers, dressing-glasses, cuspidors, umbrella-stands, etc. "On one reason," remarked the dealer already referred to, "why brass ware remains so popular, aside from the reduction in price, is because it is showy and looks aristocratic."

There are a great many novelties this season in brass ware. Tilting kettles are improved not only in their attractiveness and neatness of design, but in respect to their utility. A French novelty of this kind consists of a porcelain cup, tightly covered, mounted in a frame with a spirit-lamp underneath and a glass receiver with siphon attachment. The beverage when it has undergone the process of preparation, flows through the siphon into the glass receiver, perfectly free from drugs, and is delicately flavored as to be fit for the gods. These goods are mentioned because they are largely handled by dealers in fancy goods.

A card-receiver is mounted on legs and has square top inlaid with porcelain with a pretty design in color. The same style of card-receiver also comes with a mirror attachment.

A very attractive thing for the parlor table is a bouletta, which consists of a rod resting on a base of a very pretty design holding up a canopy with a row of glass prisms around the edges and four sconces underneath.

A new style of lamp has a base consisting of a Turkish figure, the whole being brass with bronze finish. A hall lamp is enclosed in Japanese screens having frames of teak wood.

An elaborate card-receiver consists of a tray with a gonodola mounted on a dolly.