

which we see, or think we see, in our richer neighbors' hands than are willing to offer to our poorer friends a part of the blessings we enjoy. The true Christmas spirit dictates giving rather than getting.

Let us have a merry Christmas by all means, and let every man, woman, or child partake of its delights, while bringing cheer to all within their reach. But conviviality is not the sole end of the anniversary, nor is having a jolly spree the highest expression of its meaning. Truth and righteousness, the doing of our duty, the fulfilling of our obligations as merchants, employers, neighbors, are ends to be kept in view through all the bright and joyous accompaniments of the Christmas time. Self-denial, that highest Christian virtue, has many forms. If in order to do the right one must put aside an impulse to extravagance, even should it disappoint our nearest and dearest, depend upon it that the consciousness of rectitude will sweeten our sense of disappointment.

To those whose efforts in the commercial field have brought no satisfying return, who miss the gladness of this glad season by reason of misfortune or the failure of their hopes, we would commend the saying of the ancient saint that out of our very trials and failures we may make a ladder to reach higher things. Keep on. To labor is to pray. And when in the future we shall have succeeded in our just aims, the recollection of former failures need not embitter, but will sweeten the sense of enjoyment. The effort to succeed, pursued aright, will act as a spur which shall arouse the spirit "to scorn delights and to live laborious days." So that, when Christmas comes again, we shall have earned the right to be merry, as we certainly shall be happy.

ST. JOHN AWAKE.

St. John has been unusually wide awake of late with respect to commercial matters, and since the granting of Government subsidies to the lines of steamers from that port and Halifax to West Indian ports, not less than before that event, she has sought to keep herself and her claims before the public. At the meeting of her Board of Trade, early in December, a report of unusual length was submitted. Reference was made therein to the injury done the good name of the harbor by an error in the British Admiralty charts and the steps taken to remedy the same; to the various railways centering in St. John and to some yet to come; to improved steamship service to Bay of Fundy ports and the prospect of a regular line to New York; to improvements in wharf accommodation and the recent connection of deep water wharfage with two main lines of railway; to increased express, telegraph, and telephone facilities; to the importance of the lime industry, and the rapid growth of fish export westward, and to the activity of her various manufacturing industries.

Word comes this week that the City Council of St. John has agreed to assist a scheme submitted by Mr. Leary, of New York, for wet and dry docks, by giving \$10,000 a year for some twenty years to

the company which shall provide it. This is the scheme which the retiring president of the Board of Trade in his retiring address considered had been too hastily agreed to. "He thought it strange that with all the propositions before the city this offer should be approved of within a few minutes. The General Committee of the City Council had no plan or specification before them, but still they voted this subsidy." This would seem to indicate that the people of St. John, in their anxiety to get a needed something done for their port, have not remembered that it is sometimes best to hasten slowly. The new president of the Board of Trade, Mr. Dewolf Spurr, so far agreed with his predecessor as to say, alluding to the dry dock project, that "any scheme brought forward by a responsible person or company ought to be encouraged, but we should first understand what is proposed to be done, how, and when, and of what use the work will be when completed." Let us hope that in a work of so much future importance to the city and port zeal and haste may not be allowed to outrun discretion.

It is impossible not to admire the energy with which the business men of St. John have set to work to prove themselves worthy of possessing a first-class Atlantic seaport. They have done much in the way of circulars, newspaper articles, and memorials to influential quarters, to show the advantages of their city and port. And now we are told that Mr. George Robertson, vice-president of the Board of Trade, is on a tour to western towns and cities to persuade manufacturers and shippers concerning foreign trade via St. John. Mr. Robertson will be made welcome for his own sake, but still more as a New Brunswicker and the representative of a live and indomitable community.

SPONTANEOUS IGNITION.

A fortnight ago we enumerated various substances liable to spontaneous combustion, and now recur to the subject, deeming it one of the utmost importance, and one with which the public should be made familiar. All substances that are liable to take fire spontaneously do so more readily when covered up so as to confine the heat generated, or when subjected to artificial heat, either from steam or hot-air flues, or that of the sun.

Oily rags are very liable to burn spontaneously, and are doubtless often the cause of fires in factories, junk shops, or paper mills which are supposed to be of incendiary origin. Canvas when painted with oil paint, and rolled up or packed closely in a confined place, is pretty sure to burn. Ordinary oiled clothing, such as is worn by sailors, when piled in heaps on shelves or elsewhere, is very subject to spontaneous ignition. Such goods should always be hung up, so as to admit of a free circulation of air around them. Spent tan-bark will ignite spontaneously when stacked up in heaps. It is for this reason often used in white lead works to generate carbon dioxide by its fermenting in the corroding beds.

The moistening of such fibrous substances as cotton, hair, or wool is always attended with slight heat. Wet iron filings generate heat readily, as does also rusting iron. Very fine fragments of iron and steel, by their rapid oxidation, will become red hot, and some English scientists declare that the fires known to be caused by steam-pipes constantly in contact with wood originate from the rust of the iron. An English authority says:

"When oxide of iron is placed in contact with wood excluded from the atmosphere, and aided by a slightly increased temperature, the oxide parts with its oxygen, and is converted into very finely-divided particles of metallic iron having such an affinity for oxygen that, when afterwards exposed to the action of the atmosphere from any cause, oxygen is absorbed so rapidly that these particles become red hot, and if in sufficient quantity, will produce a temperature far beyond the ignitable point of dry timber. Whenever iron pipes are employed for the circulation of any heated medium (whether hot water, hot air, or steam), and wherever the pipes are allowed to become rusty, and are also in close contact with wood, it is only necessary to suppose that under these circumstances the finely divided particles of metallic iron become exposed to the action of the atmosphere (and this may occur from the mere expansion or contraction of the pipes) in order to account for many of the fires which periodically take place at the commencement of the winter season."

It is very difficult to get persons to believe that there is any danger from fire arising from the contact of steam pipes with wood, notwithstanding that there have been well-attested cases of fires originating from this cause.

Iron scraps or filings, or lathe chips, always found on the floors of machine shops, and usually more or less oily, are very liable to heat if they become rusty, and particularly so when sawdust is used, as is often the case in bolt works. There is an instance on record when a large machine shop was flooded by a sudden freshet, wetting the heaps of iron filings on the floor, which became heated immediately after the water had subsided.

DECISIONS IN COMMERCIAL LAW.

ROSS v. DUNN.—J. D. being indebted to W. D. & Co., in the sum of \$2,260, for which W. D. & Co., held his unmatured notes under discount in a bank, applied to them for an advance to enable him to carry on business. They, in good faith, agreed to advance \$1,000, and J. D. made a chattel mortgage in favor of W. D., the senior partner in the firm, purporting to secure an indebtedness of \$3,260. A cheque for \$1,000, was given to J. W., held by him for some six months and then returned to W. D. & Co., he in the meantime in pursuance of an arrangement, made when the cheque was given, drawing on W. D. & Co., from time to time as he required money, until he had drawn in all more than \$1,000. W. D. made the affidavit in an usual form, that J. W. was indebted to him in the sum of \$3,260. The goods covered by the chattel mortgage were sold under it, while another creditor of J. D.'s had an execution in the sheriff's hands. The Court of Appeal held that W. D. could properly take the mortgage in his own name and make the affidavit of indebtedness, though the debt was due to the partnership and partly represented by unmatured paper; that the

mortgage was advance; and peached under that it could Assignments advance was m J. D. would t his business an

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