

## EARLY CLOSING.

ABSRD and ridiculous is the idea that some merchants have that if they keep open six days in the week the people in their town will buy more dry goods than they would if they kept open only five and a half days. If one dry goods merchant closed for half a day and the rest in that trade did not, then those who kept open longest would probably gain a little on the one. But if all close for half a day, are the people in that town going to buy any the less dry goods? Do the people in this country buy any less amount of dry goods because the stores are all closed on Sunday? Why not then save a few running expenses and take a half holiday for yourself and your clerks one half day in the week. If your country trade will not allow it on Saturday afternoon, take it on Wednesday afternoon. In our last issue we mentioned that some of the Hamilton dry goods houses were closing on Saturday afternoon during the summer months. Most of the large retail dry goods stores in Toronto do the same. But in both these cities the smaller stores do not do this, and hence these larger stores must lose a little. But the owners of these large stores know that this loss is small and they are willing to bear this for the pleasure they get in knowing that they are not grinding the lives out of their employees, but that they are allowing them that recreation which mind and body needs and which makes them better clerks during the next week and makes them better men and women. Honor is due to men who do this. Beamsville merchants are sensible; they have agreed to close their places of business on Wednesday afternoon at one o'clock, from June 22nd to August 31st. Here are other reports. One from Halifax says that Mahon Bros., G. M. Smith & Co., W. & C. Silver, John Silver & Co., and Charles Robson & Co., will close at 6 o'clock, except Saturdays, during July and August. They are away behind the time, but nevertheless they are catching up. The Windsor merchants will close their stores at 6:30 each evening, except Saturdays, during July and August. There is a movement on foot among Strathroy dry goods merchants to close their places of business at 9 o'clock on Saturday nights. Here too they are moving, but they are still in the rear of the reform movement. Many towns in Ontario and elsewhere have the early closing movement, and close at 7 o'clock every evening, while many also enjoy a half holiday some day in the week. The Toronto butchers take a half holiday on Wednesday afternoon. But as an example of pure blindness and selfishness we have the following report from Ingersoll, Ont., where alone the tailors seem to have some common sense: A petition, signed by quite a large number of Ingersoll merchants, was handed to the council Monday night, asking for the repeal of the Saturday night early closing by-law. Another petition, signed by a majority of the merchant tailors, was also handed in, praying for the enforcement of the 7 o'clock closing by-law. The police were instructed to notify and enforce the latter.

Henceforth merchants have adopted the early closing system, and their stores will be closed at 6 p.m. every day except Saturday.

## TRAVELLERS' TALES.

The other day half a dozen commercial men came down the Georgian Bay from Parry Sound. Before proceeding we may say that a more delightful trip is not to be found in America than a sail on the steamer Manitow, down the Inside channel, through the fifty miles of islands that dot the channel all the way along. Mr. Dave McNalg is again afloat on the staunch old boat, so you are sure to have a jolly time. As usual, a few good stories were told. We can remember only two or three, and here they are:—

## WHY JOHNNY GOT THE BOUCE.

Mr. John Marling was engaged for the glove and hosiery counter in a big western dry goods house, where a large proportion of the firm's best customers were colored people. A few days after he had entered upon his new duties, a stylishly dressed young lady, of very deep tinted complexion, waltzed up and asked Johnny for some flesh-colored silk stockings. He opened a box of black & white hosiery, saying: "These are warranted fast dye, full-fashioned and—" The young lady gave John a look that paralyzed him, and abruptly the store. She told the floor walker she had been insulted and would never enter the shop again. Mr. Marling was asked for particulars; he explained how she asked for flesh-colored hose and he showed the nearest he had to match her complexion. "That will do, sir. If we keep you here after to-day the store will be boycotted. We are very sorry, but it was an unpardonable mistake. Good-bye!" And Johnny quit.

## TOO MANY COOKS.

John Slater, an old dry goods traveller, said:—"Some years ago I had a customer in a country village named Wyke. It was an all-day job to sell a five hundred dollar parcel. First there was John Wyke himself to please; then Mrs. Wyke had to be satisfied; then there was Grandma Wyke—John's mother—she had to be consulted; and Grandma Tuttle—Mrs. Wyke's mother—would always drop in to have a look at the new styles, and assist with her advice and counsel. Mrs. Wyke and Grandma Tuttle pulled together, while John and Grandma Wyke pulled the other way. I remember once spending nearly half a day in selling them twenty pieces of print. The thing got so tedious at last that I struck an idea which worked first-rate. I got them to agree to take turn about in choosing patterns. I told them by this means they could find out whose choice of patterns sold the best. Quite a rivalry got up between the two old ladies and John and his wife. It was very funny to hear me call out 'Now, John, it's yours and Grandma Tuttle's turn to select from this book;' but it worked all right and saved me lots of time."

## SHE COULDN'T MAKE IT OUT.

Mr. O'Rourke died a short time ago, his life being insured for \$500. With this money the widow started a corner grocery. Mrs. O'Rourke's early education had been sadly neglected. When she started to check off the first invoice she was "all at sea." She couldn't make "hild or tail av it." She sent her boy Dennis down to the wholesale house to say his mother couldn't make out the bill "at all at all;" half av it was "ditto ditto," which she didn't order and didn't "maane ter keep," and

to send up a waggon and cart the "ditto" back "ter wance," it was groceries she wanted.

TOM SWALWELL.

## WOOLLEN UNDERWEAR.

Canada manufactures most of her own woollen underwear in fact, all but some very fine goods and these are rapidly being displaced by improved goods of home manufacture. While doing this, woollen goods are supplied to the consumer at prices much cheaper than those supplied to the citizens of the United States, and yet our mills are prospering. The quality of the goods is improving, but not uniformly. Some mills are turning out goods which are a disgrace to any manufacturer, while other mills are turning out goods which catch the trade every time by their clever appearance, and hold it by their intrinsic merit. To make nice underwear requires very careful attention to details. The weight of the garments must be just and the "feel" of the goods proper. This last point is one which some manufacturers fail to get altogether. It is hard to trace the fault, but in many cases the poor "feel" is due to poor scouring and fulling. But it is the appearance of the shirt which sells every time, and this appearance is made up of a large number of little details—such as the color of the thread used in stitching, the shade of the buttons and their make, the edging and other trimming. Too great attention cannot be given to the small details and the trimming of the garment costs but little; an improvement which costs but ten or fifteen cents a dozen in this part of the making, often adds fifty cents a dozen to their value. A shirt which has cheap edging, badly shaped or poorly designed buttons, unsuitable thread and poor stitching will sell for less than a poorer shirt, as regards stock and weight, but with neater and more attractive trimmings. This may seem a lamentable fact, but it is a true one.

Great improvements have taken place during the past few years in this manufacture. The chief were: the looped skirts and cuffs, the fancy stitching about the front and neck of woollen shirts, and perhaps greatest of all, the gradual substitution of plain goods for ribbed goods. Ribbed goods still sell but chiefly in cheaper, part cotton goods or heavy goods for lumbermen and those in the colder districts. But for the better class of trade, plain goods are more in favor, the colors being mostly stripes and mixes. The tendency is to quiet colors, such as plumb color mixes, stripes and naturals, very few scarlets being sold. A number of years ago scarlets had a very strong run, but for quite a while the demand has been quite inactive, although showing signs of reviving somewhat.

Hitherto we have been speaking of men's underwear, but ladies' underwear is also being manufactured in Canada in increasing quantities. Last season there was a strong demand for ladies' ribbed vests. These sleeveless, closefitting garments were at first imported from England, but a firm in Hamilton, Ont., gained the secrets and now manufacture them very largely. This season the plain woollen underwear, the sleeved garments, seems to be finding a readier market.