

# CASH BOYS IN NEW YORK STORES.

A man who has charge of the hiring of a lot of boys has no secret. The superintendents of the big stores all agree on this point.

"It is much harder to hire a boy than it is a man."

That's the first thing the young man who hires all the youngsters for cash boys and for other places in one of the largest shops in the city had to say when asked about the matter.

"Just wait a minute," he went on, "and let me tell you why. Now, I'm more interested in boys than in anything or anybody else, and the experience I've had with them would fill volumes. A man has a set look in his face, something that another man can understand, but a boy has not. His character, as a rule, is not sufficiently fixed to show itself. It is not wise to engage a boy on first sight, for when a boy applies for a place he is always at his very best. If his clothes aren't brushed then and his shoes polished and his nails clean he will never be clean afterward, you may be sure. All men who hire the boys in department stores, however, do accept a good many on sight."

"The first thing we do when a boy applies is to take stock of him. First, we look at his face, of course, and then at his general appearance, taking careful note of his manners. After that we consider his references, if he has any. The first thing we ask a boy is his age, for the law requires that he must be at least fourteen years old. If the applicant says he is under sixteen, we inquire whether he has a certificate from the Board of Health, which gives a general description of him. And if he says no, we tell him that we cannot consider his application until he gets this document, as the house employing a boy under age is liable to a fine."

"What general principle do you go on in hiring boys?" the reporter asked.

"Appearance goes a great way in deciding whether a boy's application is accepted or not. If a boy is neat looking, has a keen, bright eye, is quick in his movements and is polite, not having a reference will not stand in his way of getting a trial, if there are any places to be filled. The trouble with New York boys is that they don't stick; they don't get down to business and work with an eye to the future. They are a restless set, and are impatient for promotion, which comes as slowly at first in the career of the working child as it does in the career of a man. But when we get a boy that does knock down as if he wanted to own the store in the end, he goes right ahead. Later I will give you some instances, but first I wish to say a word about references."

When a boy who intends to go to work leaves school he should get a recommendation from his teacher. My experience has been that a teacher's reference is worth more than all the other references put together. Teachers are honest and just, as a rule, in recommending a boy. I have in mind now one of the very best cash boys in this store, who came with a letter from his teacher, who said, after giving him an excellent character, that, while not as bright as some others, when told to do a thing he always did it to the very best of his ability. She lowered that boy's standard in one way, but she raised it in another, and her honesty enabled me to place him in a situation that he was fitted to fill, and he is filling it admirably. When he is told to do a thing we think no more about it, for we know that boy will do his work well."

"The stereotyped recommendation that every one gives is worth so much and no more. References from other houses are almost always no good. They frequently discharge a boy and send him away with a letter which says they know nothing against him. I never hire a boy with such a letter, and I always ask him why his former employer did not keep him. If a man goes to another house to investigate personally the reference of a boy, unless he is positively dishonest his former employer, nine times out of ten, will not tell what sort of a boy he is. This isn't as it should be. The standard of New York cash and office boys could be raised if the big stores that employ hundreds of them would stand by each other in furnishing honest recommendations."

"What is really wanted in a boy? Do you want a solemn, serious youngster of a lad full of life and pranks?"

are up to the most pranks are, as a rule, the quickest and most accurate about their work. A man in charge of a lot of boys has to study human nature carefully. These folks that say that all boys are alike, and hard nuts at that, are mistaken; they know nothing of boys. No two boys are alike, and each one has to be treated differently. Some have to be coaxed, some driven, some can be reasoned with and others must be got rid of and as quickly as possible. What you might say to one boy without giving it a second thought offends another, takes the ambition and life right out of him. I'd rather have a thief in the shape of a boy than a liar. You can detect a thief and get rid of him; you can have him locked up or send him home to his parents. But when a boy lies once you never know when to believe him again. A boy who will do a thing and lie about it is the very worst sort of a boy. These boys who own up to their mischievous, annoying

boys, and I also keep their records in this big ledger, taking the book from under lock and key.

"You see, each boy's name, address and age is entered here under the division to which he belongs, and we can turn to this book at any time and get the record of a boy. Look at the comments opposite a few names."

Here are a few of the comments:

"Very troublesome. Laid off." "Resigned. A good boy." "Not describable. Do not recommend to other houses. Lazy. No good." "Discharged; disorderly, fighting; no good." "Resigned to take better position. Excellent boy."

"What chance has an intelligent boy for advancement?" asked the reporter.

"An excellent chance if he is patient at the start," answered the authority. "Do you think it is pleasant for a firm to be always changing boys? Not a bit of it. Advancement is slow at first, because generally promotion depends on length of service, although sometimes a brilliant boy jumps right ahead of all the rest. A boy came here the 26th of last November as a cash boy, and he got right down to work. He was put in

him. The other is still a cash boy and is on the ragged edge of dismissal all the time. Some one is always doing something to him and he is never wrong. His is a case of not applying himself and of rather malicious mischief, though he is clever enough not to go so far that he will be laid off. Another cash boy, I remember came here at the same time, and he was a very imp of deviltry. I was on the point of discharging him, when he came one day, and without a word of warning turned over a new leaf, and has ever since been one of the best boys in the house. He is now a bundle inspector, and I've often wondered what reformed that child so suddenly."

"A year ago the head of the house sent me word that he wanted a boy. In an instant I knew the very boy for the place, and took him up inside of five minutes without any of the washing, shoe polishing, manicuring process. Another boy who was a cash boy was promoted to the manager's office, and now he is one of the best salesmen in the men's furnishing department. If a message boy should come from any of the offices now for a boy or several boys I know the

way into a long, large, well-equipped room.

"The schoolboys, who are cadets as well as cash boys, are divided into three classes. The lowest grade attends school Mondays and Thursdays; the next Tuesdays and Fridays, and the highest Wednesdays and Saturdays. Although the time seems short, the boys really learn a great deal and like the school. You should see how sulky some of them get if, for some reason, some work interferes with their attendance. They are taught writing, spelling, English composition, arithmetic and rapid calculation. They are the principal things that a dry goods man should be well up in, and more mistakes are made through a lack of knowledge in these branches than in any other. In their spelling lessons they are asked to spell and write all sorts of business terms and the names of goods, as well as ordinary words. Cash boys should strive to become good spellers and plain writers, if they wish to advance, for a mistake in an address can cause no end of trouble. Of course, they should be good in arithmetic."

"Let me show you some of the boys' copybooks and spelling blanks"

equal number of boys in the city. We have more applicants than we can possibly supply with places. Our principle is to educate the cash boys to our ideas of business, and then to push them ahead as far as their ability and the circumstances warrant. We used to have military drill for the boys, a sort of setting up exercise, every morning to accustom them to discipline and to improve them physically as well, but that has been done away with for the present. The school has proved more essential. Yesterday, being in doubt as to which of two boys to promote to one of the offices, I went into the schoolroom and examined their work there. My decision was made in favor of the better penman, the boy who made the better appearance and whose deportment in the schoolroom was better. There's a case where the school settled definitely a youngster's claim to promotion."

"It is a common occurrence for a boy who has had his start here and resigned to take a better place elsewhere to come in and tell me how he is getting on and to thank me for giving him a start. If the parents of the bread-winning boys in this city would take more interest in them they would probably advance much quicker. Poor little chaps! Their parents never think of going to see how they are getting on or to ask they are doing well. My honest opinion is that the cash boy is very faithful for his years, very honest for his chances, and his little heart is full of affection for those who take a humane interest in him and treat him fairly and squarely."—New York Sun

## DIED FROM HYDROPHOBIA.

Walter McCann, twenty-two years old of No. 24 Condit street, Newark, died from hydrophobia last week. For twenty-four hours prior to his death he went from one convulsion into another, lying exhausted on the bed in the intervals between his violent paroxysms. At sight of water, or if there was sudden noise or a draught of air, he became violent, and writhed and twisted in agony.

McCann's condition was due to his having been bitten in the right leg and in the thumb of his left hand by a small dog which sprang at him without provocation on New Year's night, at Warren street and Wallace Place, while he was on his way home with his younger brother.

He felt a stinging sensation in his left arm two days later and became frightened. He went to the City Hospital and told the house surgeon he had been bitten in two places by a dog. An examination of the bites was made, but the physicians were not impressed with the matter. Any more than was McCann. As a matter of precaution the wounds were cauterized. McCann went home, but about the middle of January was unable to walk.

With the help of his younger brother McCann went to the City Hospital again and his wounds were cauterized a second time. The pains increased in intensity and Dr. R. J. Connelley was summoned. He made a careful diagnosis and declared his patient had been bitten by a mad dog. He was satisfied that Mr. McCann was suffering from hydrophobia, but called Dr. A. V. Wendell, of Littleton avenue. Two physicians examined the patient critically and reported the same conclusion.

It was decided to try the water test, and this was done on Friday. As soon as McCann saw water in the bedroom he went into a violent spasm. He barked and clawed and acted like a mad dog and it took all the strength of both physicians and several male nurses to quiet him. He attacked several members of the family yesterday. Had the physicians been called in time McCann would have been subjected to the Pasteur treatment.—New York Herald.

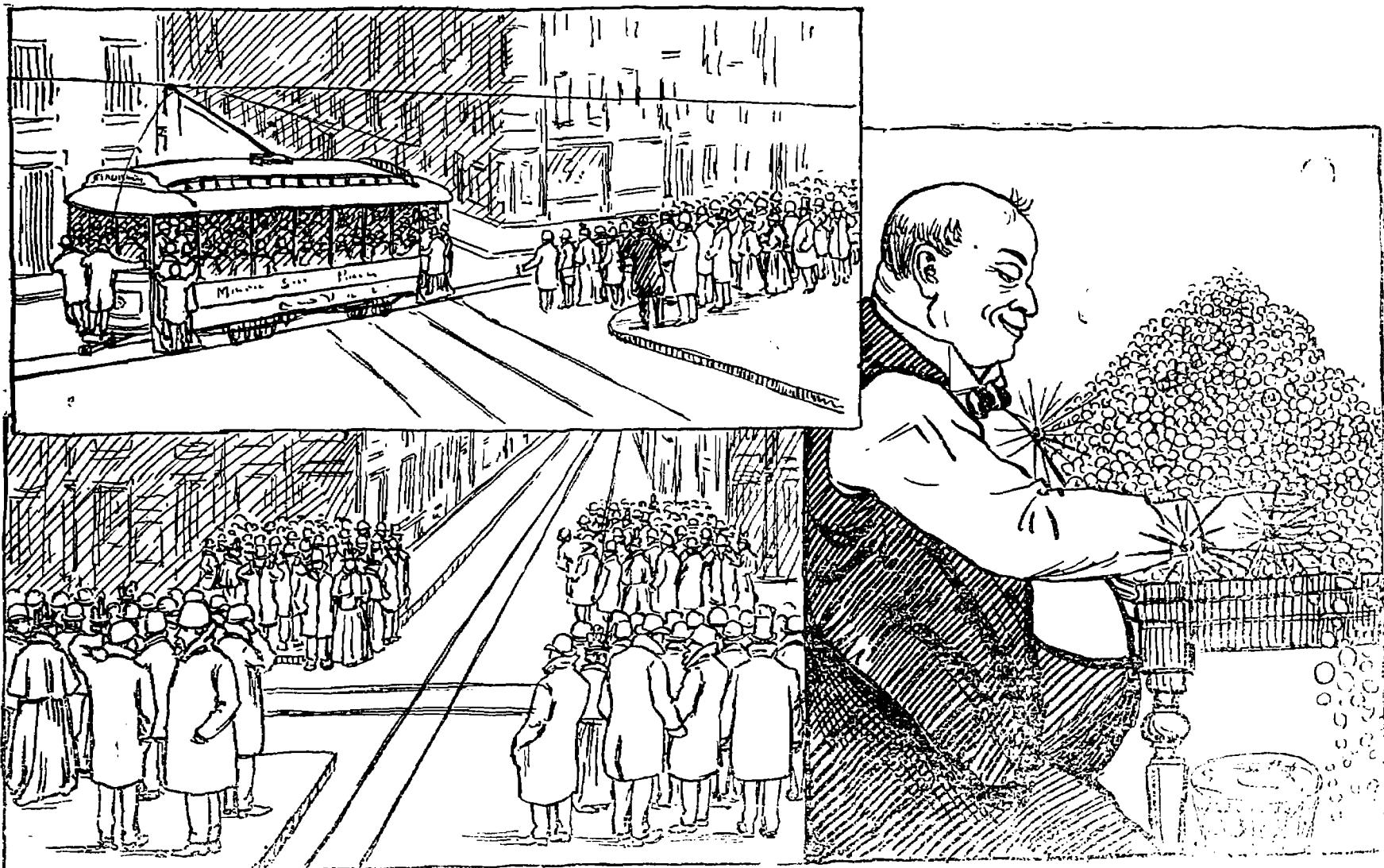
## GOLD PRODUCING COUNTRIES.

According to Consul Brush, at Clifton Canada, the output of gold from the Klondike and British Columbia has raised Canada to fifth place in the list of gold-producing countries. While the United States shows an increased output for 1898, it is still second to the Transvaal. According to the latest figures the five leading gold-producing countries for 1898 are as follows:—

Transvaal.....	\$73,476,600
United States.....	61,300,000
Australia.....	61,480,763
Russia.....	25,136,994
Canada.....	14,190,000

## BOOM IN LUMBER.

Vancouver, B. C.—An order for 160,000,000 feet of lumber has been placed in the mills here for the Chinese railway. As the capacity of the mills is small, it will take six years to fill the order. New mills are being erected to increase the output. Australia has also ordered more lumber than British Columbia can supply.



## PROTEST AGAINST THE STREET RAILWAY SERVICE.

La Patrie, one of the leading French newspapers of Montreal, is just now devoting a good deal of space in pointing out the defects in the service supplied by our street railway monopoly. In a recent issue it says:—

The Montreal Street Railway Company is rich and powerful, and relies on its thirty years monopoly to enable it to defy public opinion in this city. For a long time, a very long time, the citizens have complained of the horrible service, to which we are treated by the company, of the overcrowded state of the cars, the lateness and irregularity of the service. We had hoped, however, that the company would listen to the de-

mands of the public, and put an end to these grievances, which have been formulated from time to time. But no, we are laughed at by this company which places as few cars as possible on the different routes, and employ a small number of men in order that the receipts might be increased, and the dividends as fat as possible. And while this is going on the citizens and the ratepayers are shivering at the street corners, waiting often a quarter of an hour and sometimes half an hour, for their crowded and unhealthy street cars. This system cannot be tolerated any longer, and we give them Mr. Forget a friendly warning that "La Patrie" will carry

on day after day, a campaign of protestation until this wretched state of affairs will have ceased.

It will be quite easy to undertake a campaign for what the English call "no seat, no fare," and we might continue a great distance with such a plan of campaign. Mr. Forget pretends that if there are not enough cars, it is because the company are obliged by their charter to construct them here, but we know enough of what is going on to be able to affirm that this all powerful Co. could have more than 200 additional cars at its disposition, had it been so disposed. Even to-day if the company sees that they have not sufficient, let them double the number of

their employees and their cars, for both can be found in Montreal by paying for them.

The actions entered by Mr. St. George and other citizens, the complaints of the whole population, and the daily grievances against the company have had no effect up to the present time, but Mr. Forget will have us when we say that his directorate will gain little in the contest we are about to wage because we have on our side all the working classes, all clerks and office hands, all the women, and in fact all those who have to travel by the roadway. This gentleman of the street cars is our first broadside.

jokes and tricks always come out all right, but the liar never."

"How is a cash boy trained, and what are his duties asked the reporter.

"After a boy is hired he has to be schooled. When he is put in a department he is first placed with an older boy, who shows him the different parts of the house where he is likely to be sent on errands. Although we have the tube system, boys are indispensable. A cash boy here does not carry the cash to the desk, but merely takes it to the tubes. The boys are expected to get to work at a quarter to eight o'clock, but have ten minutes' grace. We have them divided into divisions A, B, C, and so on, and they are all kept downstairs in one large room until the time for them to come upstairs. After they get their badges they are commanded to fall in and they march past the time keeper division by division. During the day they are subject to the orders of the aisle managers or floorwalkers. No boy is supposed to leave his department without the permission of his manager, and he is required to report to him at all times when he does leave. At night when the bell rings, telling that the aisle men are through with them each boy deposits his badge in the place where the badges are kept. Our cash boys are not allowed to work at night, for we believe that from eight to six is long enough for any youngster to be on duty, and this is a rule in all of the best shops. "A typewritten list is kept of the

the Japanese department. He made himself so valuable to the people in that department and to the house that when the stock boy resigned the merchandise people insisted that the cash boy be promoted to his place. In two months he jumped over boys who had been there a year and more, and his salary was greatly increased. The Japanese department is very difficult too, for everything is bought there by sample and the stock boy has to get it from the stock room. It takes a careful sharp boy to do this, and I hear this little chap has to make his first mistake yet.

"If a boy outgrows his age, after he has been here a reasonable time, and there is no place for him in stock, we make a cadet of him. It is humiliating to a great, tall, overgrown boy to be a cash boy, and it often squelches his ambition, so we've adopted the cadet plan with great success. A cadet is an advanced cash boy, who does not wear a badge gets a higher salary, and has an hour at noon instead of three-quarters as the cash boys do. He is nearly on a footing with the men. Promotion is not infallibly due to length of service by any means, for common sense dictates to the manager of a lot of boys when this one is fit for a certain place and the other is unfit.

"On Nov. 16, 1897, two cash boys were engaged. They were about the same age, the same size, and both well appearing neat boys. Both were put in the dress goods department. One boy got down to work, and the result is that he is now a stock boy and everybody thinks the world of

very ones who would receive the promotions.

"Some situations in stores are too hard for a boy to fill constantly. For instance, the work in the mail department is very hard and a nervous strain, so the youngsters who work there alternate with each other. One goes on this week at 7 o'clock and works until noon, and another boy takes his place and works until five. The rest of their time is spent in doing light incidental work, such as going out with messages or putting circulars into envelopes. The boys in this department do practically little more than half work, but it is very hard work.

"Cash boys start with \$2.50 a week, and, if capable, are soon raised to \$3. Stock boys receive \$5, and some of them more a week."

"Haven't you a school here for cash boys?"

"Yes, and I'm glad you mentioned it, for the public has a wrong impression about these schools which have been started in a number of department stores. They aren't charity schools and were not intended to give the public an idea that the heads of department stores wish to pose as philanthropists. These schools are unquestionably of great value to the cash boys, but their primary object is to benefit the firm. Now you have it in plain English. The cash boys here are compelled to spend an hour and a half the first thing every morning in school. Here is their schoolroom," leading the

and composition work," suggested the teacher, a pretty young woman. She was very proud of the work of her pupils. The boys are taught vertical or slanting writing, as they may elect, and the copy books were all models of neatness. The composition books were wonderfully interesting. Many of the boys had written on prominent men in American history, such as Lincoln, Grant, Washington and Jefferson, while others had chosen such subjects as "What are the duties of a citizen?" "What is patriotism?" "The Necessity of Qualifications for Success in Business," and "The Duties of a Cash Boy." The compositions generally were carefully composed and well written. There wasn't a blot on one of them.

"The members of this firm are self-made men," continued the man who has charge of the boys, "and they are deeply interested in the work being done in the school. They dislike to hear a boy use bad grammar, and they want the boys to know how to treat the public when they come in direct contact with it. The teacher instructs the boys in a delicate way concerning manners, and tells them that they must answer people respectfully, excuse themselves when obliged to pass between people, and must never push their way through the store. That is a hard lesson for the little fellows to learn, for as soon as the store becomes crowded the boys crop out in them."

"All the same I'll put our 104 promiscuously, against any other promiscuously, against any other