

there exhibit the lack of animation generally observed at this time. Prices of leading staples are firm, and the general belief appears to be that prices are likely to advance shortly after the opening of the new year. At the east there is less doing in the wholesale departments. There is, however, a very general steadiness in most staple lines. At Boston the confidence in a favorable prospect for the latter portion of the winter is marked. The distribution of dry goods from eastern cities is as quiet as expected. Commission houses are doing rather more than jobbers. There is reported to be a fair movement in brown cotton on export orders. The domestic consumption is moderate. Raw wool is as firm as ever. The demand is fairly active for low and medium grades as of late, but there is also some request for the finer fleeces. No weakness is noted anywhere in the list. The movement of groceries has been restricted. Dairy products are improved and higher. The wheat market has been dull, and prices tend downward. Increased quantity afloat, visible supply and (prospectively) foreign stocks combined with speculative selling at home, are responsible therefor. There is still a conspicuous absence of foreign demand. In the Northwest the larger millers are now credited with being long of wheat. In any event, wheat at Minneapolis and Chicago has been well held. Indian corn is in limited export demand, but is freely offered. Oats are dull and lower. Hog products have been weak and lower, but on a slightly improved inquiry both at home and abroad have been a little firmer. Pig iron is strongly held and prices are unchanged, though an advance at the east of \$1 per ton within a week or so would not be surprising. Hardware and implements have been held more firmly for slight advances, owing to the strength in iron. There have been 24 fewer business failures in the United States reported to *Bradstreet's* this week (five days) than last, 193 against 217; and 402 fewer this year to date than during a like portion of 1884, or 10,934 against 11,366. *Bradstreet's*.

The Evolution of the Overcoat.

Caricaturists and writers have endeavored to show that the garments of the gentle sex are becoming more and more masculine as years pass on. This is apparent to the most careless observer. He cannot fail to notice it in the apparel of the ladies as they pass him in the streets, but it has been left to my gigantic intellect to note for the first time that a portion of alleged masculine mankind is becoming affected in the other direction, and that unless some speedy check is given the movement great dangers menace man's most useful winter friend. When the short overcoat was banished and the shoe-top length appeared, the average man was content and warm. The overcoat, that useful and necessary garment, has probably been subjected to fewer changes than any other part of man's attire, but of late, very late years, the tailors, tired of monkeying with coats, vests and trousers, have attacked it and we have seen gradually stealing over its appearance a change for the worse that is distressing and fatiguing.

The respectable conservative overcoat of our daddies showed nothing particular about the fit or material, yet it stood the wear and tear of years, and imparted an air of solidity and solvency to its wearer. Now and then you see one of these overcoats going along the street and note its antique and chestnutty effect in contrast with the "very latest" that follows.

We are not sure who startled dudedom with the "cape" style of garment, but presume it was the outcome of some night dedicated to insomnia. It was a decided innovation at first and was somewhat ridiculed, but now that we wear one the excitement has subsided. Take for example last year's style, with a little lah-de-dah cape half covering the shoulders and a pinched corset-suggesting waist, the first departure towards the feminine cut. It is close-fitting and imparts a suggestive doubt already as to the sex of its wearer, around whose slight form it clings so lovingly. It is imported goods and possibly made in "dear old London, ye know."

The cape grew longer and came down to below the elbows by-and-by, and then the overcoat took a step farther and evolved itself into the coat with a hood to it just like a lady's waterproof cloak. They are to be seen daily all over New York in increasing numbers, showing that they have found favor with the "Gussies" and "Chollies" who infest our society. No wonder women are wearing men's attire when they see their own appropriated by these creatures. The step is but a slight one to the next change in costume which "Gussie" will adopt. In all probability next year you will see the overcoat worn by him adorned with a large and beautiful bustle in conjunction with the hood, and he'll "toddle away" with his insane smile and think what a sensation he is creating among the women, whose chief prerogative he has usurped. The imagination must be dull indeed that cannot see where they are taking the poor defenseless overcoat, the most masculine of all garments. How long do you suppose it will be before you will see one of these creatures strolling down the avenue or loafing in front of the Knickerbocker Club bedecked with ribbons and with "rick-rack" or lace at the bottom thereof, "fluted" and "flounced," "cut on the bias," "gored," "fox-plaited," &c., till you can't rest. And the tailors will advertise as do the dressmakers, but instead of saying "tailor-made garments" they will add to their announcements: "All garments are made and fitted by female dressmakers."

Meanwhile the men who have brains in their head, instead of charlotte-russe or the like, and who earn their beer by the sweat of their brows, will continue to wear the same old overcoat whose lining falls into the basement of the sleeves every time it is put on in a hurry, and will sneer at the new and advanced styles as they fish it up to the elbow again. — *Journal of Fabrics*.

Railway Control and Railway Subsidies.

Sir Richard Cartwright, in a speech made at Orillia, the other day, referring to the passing of certain railways in Ontario, under Federal

control said: "If a change of Government took place, he could promise them that the control of these railways should be handed back to the Province, or every dollar refunded." The money to be refunded referred to the Provincial and municipal subsidies granted to these railways. Railways which form part of an extensive connection cannot be advantageously controlled by Provinces. The inefficiency of State Control over railways, in the neighboring Republic, is shown by the fact that no State Legislature can prevent discrimination outside the limits of its authority and to this fact the discriminations so often complained of are due. The connection between the control of railways and the subsidies granted in aid of their construction, is not so absolute and complete that the one must follow the other; while it cannot be satisfactory to a province to find railways which it has subsidised passing from its control, it is nevertheless true that dividend control of railways which run through more than one province, is impracticable, and if attempted it could lead to no satisfactory result.

We cannot think that a transfer of control when necessary in the public interest, carries with it the right on the part of the province and the municipalities to obtain a refund of the subsidies. The public utility of the railroad does not cease with the transfer of the control; though it is one thing to work is for general, and another thing to work it for provincial purposes. If the province or the municipalities suffer substantial damage from the transfer of control, there is a case for compensation, but there can hardly be a case for the refund of the entire subsidies. The damage, if real, must be capable of being appraised; and the measure of the refund should be the extent of the actual damage sustained. If no damage be sustained, there is no case for refund or compensation. Fanciful injury, such as results from the loss of power, is incapable of being assessed as if it were a substantial damage. A real loss of some kind, and in some form, can alone form a ground of compensation. Whether such loss has been suffered and what is the extent of it, it would be eminently proper to enquire; though we cannot admit that the loss is to be assumed without enquiry and that it is to be put on a par with the whole amount of all the subsidies, provincial and municipal.

The railways, as we have said, remain after the control changes. The change of control may be a result of extended connection, which increases the utility of the road. Even the province cannot confine its view of the benefits to be derived from the road to the bounds of its own territory. Connection with the outer world has its value, and if this additional value be obtained without a loss of local benefits to secure which the subsidies were given, a gain without a loss results from the transfer of the control. The gain cannot, perhaps, be taken into account, in estimating the effect of the transfer on the province. The question, and it is the only question that can come under arbitration, is whether the province suffered substantial damage from the transfer of control, and if so, to what extent. To that extent, we think it might fairly claim compensation; but the claim cannot be legitimately supplemented