

MERCANTILE AGENCIES.

We have repeatedly been asked by our subscribers whether it would be advisable for them to make a detailed statement of their affairs to the representative of a Mercantile Agency when it is requested. To such we have invariably replied, yes, by all means. No business man who is doing business on a safe basis, and understands the purpose for which the Mercantile Agencies were started and are operated, can have any good reason for refusing to answer their questions, and in that manner shows that he is not ashamed or afraid to have his creditors understand thoroughly the nature of their customer's business. On the other hand, if the dealer refuses to answer these questions, it would appear that there is something wrong about the business which he wishes to conceal, and raises a doubt in the minds of people making enquiries about his standing and his responsibility. It does not matter whether a dealer, in commencing business, resolves to pay cash for all he buys; because unless he has a very much larger capital than the necessities of his business require, he will find himself at some time in a position where he must have accommodation. Whether it is necessary to get this accommodation from his bank by discounting paper, or from the jobbers from whom he purchases his stock, it matters very little. Either one will go direct to the Mercantile Agency for the purpose of finding out whether or not it will be safe to give him the accommodation requested. The fact that he has always discounted his bills will have very little weight; as he might be engaged in a speculation which, if it failed, would involve his entire business, and wipe out at one sweep all his assets.—*Tobacco.*

PRACTICAL HINTS TO BOOK-KEEPERS.

An old and experienced book-keeper gives, to the *Michigan Tradesman*, the following hints in relation to a book-keeper's duty:

Never put on record anything that comes to you verbally, but require a memorandum of the facts from the proper party to the transaction.

File all memorandums, even of the most trivial nature, for reference.

Always require receipts for payments in currency or by cheque made payable to bearer.

Never sign receipt for money received by others without seeing it properly entered on the cash book.

Never credit an invoice until it has been properly checked and O.K.'d by the receiving clerk, and you have satisfied yourself that the prices and extensions are correct.

Never use the abbreviation "do." or the sign of inverted commas (") for figures.

Always insert ciphers in amounts without cents.

Never use the abbreviation "No." in connection with figures, as figures themselves are the numbers referred to.

Always begin a new month on a new page.

THE WORLD'S PAPER MANUFACTURE

The *Berliner Tageblatt* has recently published some interesting facts concerning the paper trade of the world. It says:—"Germany, relatively speaking, possesses the greatest number of paper factories and paper manufacturing machines of any other country in the world. It is surpassed only by the United States, which have 884 factories and 1,100 machines, whilst Germany has 809 factories and 891 machines. France possesses only 420 factories, with 525 machines; England 361, with 541 machines, of which number 69 factories are in Scotland and 12 in Ireland, with 13 machines only for the last country. Italy has 220 factories; Russia 133, with 137 machines; Austria-Hungary 220 factories, with 270 machines. Australia possesses already 4 paper manufactories, with 6 machines, whilst Egypt has only one factory, and still produces by hard labor. The entire universe then has a total of 3,194 paper factories, with 3,952 machines. The daily production, calculated upon the basis of the total yearly output, amounts to 55,899,200 quintals of paper, or in round numbers 56,000,000."

LIQUOR DRINKING IN THE STATES.—The Bureau of Statistics of the United States has compiled some interesting information respecting the consumption of distilled and malt liquors and wines in that country, and shows to what an extent this industry has been expanded within recent years. The consumption of distilled spirits, domestic and imported, is shown to have increased from 43,000,000 gallons in 1840 to 72,000,000 in 1886; of wines from 4,800,000 gallons to 22,000,000; and of malt liquors from 23,000,000 to 642,000,000. The *Shipping List* finds the consumption per capita during the same period decreased as regards distilled spirits from about 2½ gallons to about 1½ gallons, and increased as regards wines .29 to .38 gallons, and malt liquors from less than 1½ to more than 11 gallons; only 10 per cent. of distilled spirits consumed by that country is used for medicine and manufacturing purposes, 90 per cent. being used as a beverage. From a table covering the five years ending with 1885 it is stated that consumption of distilled spirits per capita has steadily increased in France from .94 gallons to 1.32; that it has varied in the States between 1.51 in 1883 and 1.24 gallons in 1884 and 1885; that the United Kingdom consumes a little more than a gallon per capita, and that the consumption in Germany has decreased from 1.32 in 1881 to 1.14 in 1885. France during the same period increased her wine consumption from eighteen and a half to nearly thirty-seven gallons, while the States and the United Kingdom, beginning with less than a half a gallon per head, show a slight falling off. In the matter of beer consumption during this period, the United States increased her average from a little less than ten to a little more than eleven gallons; the United Kingdom held her own at about thirty-three gallons, and Germany did the same at about twenty-three gallons.

Indecision is a constitutional and sometimes an acquired habit. Some men always mentally say: "Well I'll wait," or to some one asking for a decision: "I'll see about it," or "I'll tell you to-morrow." Many a person would be surprised in a review of himself in this respect to find that he had formed the universal habit of procrastination, and always deferred a decision. Certainly, no habit in business life is more unfortunate, especially for a young man. It is loss of time, it crowds one thing upon another, it carries into the next day affairs which should be settled and off the mind to-day. Time for reflection on many important matters is, of course required, but there are thousands of similar affairs over which no time need be lost. A habit of quick decision is discipline for the mind, which thus becomes more clear and active for every demand upon it. Another very suggestive fact is that in looking about the country at the men who manage great interests, they are, as a rule, persons pre-eminent for quick decision in every particular.—*Fabrics, Fancy Goods and Notions.*

—A comparative statement of timber, staves, &c., measured and culled to 29th June, at Quebec, is furnished by the supervisor of cutters.

	1885.	1886.	1887.
Waney White Pine	393,028	636,108	394,821
White Pine.....	591,864	397,781	119,278
Red Pine.....	12,965	136,766	230,326
Oak.....	691,650	398,537	291,499
Elm.....	266,317	150,565	139,946
Ash.....	86,770	28,237	22,397
Basswood.....	80
Butternut.....	1,004	57
Tamarac.....	36	2,346
Birch and Maple..	264,979	153,715	89,626
Std. Staves.....	39.0.3.28	19.8.2.3	26.5.1.1
W.I. Staves....	64.2.1.17	8.1.2.16	27.6.1.13
Brl. Staves.....	48.5.0.22

—The man who is great in mercantile affairs, says an exchange, is not usually the one who seems the most conspicuous in ordinary intercourse. He is quiet rather than noisy, and modest rather than obtrusive. He does not boast of his own doings or underestimate the efforts of others. He is neither alarmed at business rivalry nor is he apprehensive regarding his own plans and ventures. In the retirement of his private office he evolves a wisdom which ramifies

in every part of his vast business. In all enterprise he is found foremost and sagacious, and when financial storms come upon the business world he meets them with a courage which is little less than sublime. He is likewise humble-minded and unassuming, which are traits that add to the lustre of greatness. In all countries this is usually the type of the men who found strong commercial houses and win for themselves enduring fame.

Commercial.

MONTREAL MARKETS.

MONTREAL, 6th July, 1887.

ASHES.—The receipts of ashes for the six months ending June 30th were: pots 1,972 brls.; pearls 127 brls.; the corresponding figures for 1886 were: pots 1,723 brls.; pearls 78 brls.; showing an increase in all of 298 brls. for the current year, which is rather unusual, as there has been a steady diminution in the output of late years, owing to the growing scarcity of wood in the country, and increased cost of manufacture. Stocks in store July 1st were 370 pots and 7 pearls, as against 944 pots and 49 pearls last year. The market is steady at \$4.75 to \$4.85 for No. 1 pots.

BOOTS AND SHOES AND LEATHER.—Orders for fall goods have come in well; most of our larger manufacturers have their order books well filled and have found themselves hampered by the enforced idleness of their factories owing to the numerous recent holidays. The week's business in leather has also been of a quiet character from the same cause. The situation is rather favorable to larger buyers who could obtain some shading of quotations. The English market is reported as still dull, but shipments of coarse leather continue to be made in face of low prices ruling there. We quote:—Spanish sole, B. A. No. 1, 24 to 26c.; do., No. 2, B. A., 20 to 23c.; No. 1 Ordinary Spanish 21 to 23c.; No. 2 do., 19 to 21c.; No. 1 China, 21 to 22c.; No. 2, 19 to 20c.; Hemlock Slaughter, No. 1, 25 to 27c.; oak sole, 42 to 47c.; Waxed Upper, light and medium, 33 to 37c.; ditto, heavy 32 to 35c.; Grained 34 to 37c.; Scotch grained 36 to 42c.; Splits large 21 to 26c.; do. small 16 to 20c.; Calf-splits, 26 to 32c.; Calfskins, (35 to 46 lbs.), 70 to 80c.; Imitation French Calf skins 80 to 85c.; Russet Sheepskins Linings, 30 to 40c.; Harness 24 to 33c.; Buffed Cow, 13 to 15c.; Pebbled Cow, 11 to 15c.; Rough 23 to 28c.; Russet and Bridle, 54 to 55c.

DRUGS AND CHEMICALS.—The movement of heavy chemicals is a pretty fair one, and drug houses report a steady distribution in progress. Sugar of lead shows some advance at home, and the market for opium in the East shows continued firmness. New supplies of gum arabic are likely to be very light, owing to disturbances in the Soudan, and it is not unlikely that prices will go still higher. The new explosive Melinite, into the composition of which carbolic acid largely entered has not proved a success, and this latter article is weaker. We quote:—Sal Soda 90 to \$1.00; Bi-Carb Soda \$2.60 to \$0.00; Soda Ash, per 100 lbs., \$1.65 to \$1.75; Bichromate of Potash, per 100 lbs., \$8 to \$10.00; Borax, refined, 10c.; Cream Tartar crystals, 32 to 33c.; do. ground, 35 to 36c.; Tartaric Acid crystal 55 to 60c.; do. powder, 60 to 65c.; Citric Acid, 80 to 85c.; Caustic Soda, white, \$2.40 to \$2.60; Sugar of Lead, 9 to 11c.; Bleaching Powder, \$2.50, to \$2.60; Alum, \$1.60 to \$1.65; Copperas, per 100 lbs., \$1.00; Flowers Sulphur, per 100 lbs., \$2.60 to \$3; Roll Sulphur, \$2.00 to \$2.25; Sulphate of Copper, \$4.50 to \$5.00; Epsom Salts, \$1.25 to \$1.40; Saltpetre \$9.00 to \$9.40; American Quinine, 60 to 65c.; German Quinine, 75 to 80c.; Howard's Quinine, 80 to 85c.; Opium, \$5.00 to \$5.50; Morphia, \$2.30 to \$2.50; Gum Arabic sorts, 70 to 90c.; White, \$1 to \$1.25; Carbolic Acid, 45 to 55c.; Iodide Potassium, \$4.50 per lb.; Iodine, \$5.50 to \$6.00; Iodoform \$6.50 to \$7.00. Prices for essential oils are: Oil lemon \$2.00 to \$2.50; oil bergamot \$3.00 to \$3.50; Orange, \$3.50; oil peppermint, \$4.50 to \$4.75; Glycerine 25 to 26c.; Senna, 18 to 30c. English Camphor, 40c. American do. 35c.

DRY GOODS.—Fall goods are arriving freely by all incoming steamers, and travellers are now all out in their several districts. As yet