

there will be a reaction for the better, as there is nothing menacing in the country but a want of confidence. The latter once restored, the wheels of trade and commerce will be as active as before. Already there is evidence of a revival of the cotton manufacture, by two of the greatest mills in the Dominion, the Hudson and St. Anne resuming after two or three weeks suspension with their full forces of some fifteen hundred operatives again, with orders on hand sufficient to keep them going for an almost indefinite time. The dry goods trade has been very sensibly affected by the changes of the atmosphere from that experienced last week. There is very little more business expected to be done in this line until the spring trade begins to waken wholesale houses up unless a long spell of rattling cold weather would come on, when there would be some good sorting-up orders in heavy woollens and the like, as stocks everywhere are comparatively light. General groceries have been under a cloud, as well as other departments. The activity in refined sugar has ceased, and prices have declined from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ for yellows. Granulated is quoted at $\$3\frac{1}{2}$ to $\$4$. Tea is quiet but steady. A sale of 2,000 half chests of low-grade Japan took place, but at so poor a price, it was said that the sales were withheld. In hardware pig iron has been unprecedentedly dull on the week, and prices are in favour of buyers. General hardware is quiet. The trade in drug and chemicals for the season is practically over with the close of navigation. In other departments quietness prevails, and mercantile houses are employing the idle time in stock-taking and balancing. The breadstuffs market has relapsed into its usual featureless condition after close of navigation.

The Influence of Forests upon Water Supply

There has been in the past few years a considerable amount of discussion, especially among those using water as a motive power for manufacturing purposes, of the effect upon our annual rain fall due to clearing up large tracts of our forest trees. Some maintain that the effect is to directly diminish the amount of rain which falls upon any given area of land which has been cleared up, thus causing severe droughts and an insufficiency of water for motive power where there formerly was an abundance. With respect to this latter state of affairs, we think it would be much easier to show that it is brought about by an increase in the amount required, rather than by a diminished water supply. But this is not the question. Does the clearing up of our forests diminish the annual rain fall? We do not think it does. At any rate, it has not sensibly affected the amount falling in the eastern states during the last sixty years, as is absolutely proved by the records kept by the various water power companies during that time. At Lowell, Mass., the proprietors of the locks and canals have kept a record of the annual rain fall since the year 1826, and no material change has been shown. According to these records, the average for the whole period has been 41.94 inches yearly. In the year 1882 it amounted to 40.91 inches. In 1876, '78, '79 and 1881 it exceeded this amount, being 56.63 inches in 1878; and the average for the ten

ten years from 1826 to 1836 is almost precisely the same as for the last ten years, although very large tracts of forest have been cleared away in the Merrimac valley during that time.

The real effects produced by cutting down and clearing away the forests would seem to be this: It allows the water which falls to run off more rapidly to the ocean. In a heavily timbered region, it will readily be seen that the presence of the trees will tend to equalize and prolong the flow and evaporation of the surface water, while in a region bare of trees it will quickly find its way to the various streams and thence to the ocean, and the evaporation will also be more rapid, owing to the absence of the shade, etc. Thus it may reasonably be inferred that land which was reasonably moist while covered with trees may, after being cleared up, be subject to periods of drought. The writer personally knows of several cases where "living" springs of water existed on land which was covered with trees, and the driest seasons did not perceptibly diminish the amount of their flow. After the trees were cut away, these springs wholly dried up in a year or so, and the hardest rains would make them flow but a day or two.

The presence of forests seems not to increase the rain fall, but to temper and equalize its effects after it has fallen — *H. F. S. in the Locomotive.*

Stock and Grain Gambling.

The stock and grain gamblers of Great Britain occasionally get hard raps from the press, as witness the following from the *British Mercantile Gazette*. Outsiders have but the faintest possible idea of the ruin caused by the abuse of speculation. In the old days at Crockford's gambling hell, play was remarkably high, and public opinion abolished the nuisance. But all the mischief of the hells of St. James' was child's play compared with a fortnight's hazard in Capel Court. For instance, there is in existence barely £1,800,000 worth of Brighton A, yet it frequently happens that over £50,000,000 of differences are cleared on a busy settling day. This, of course, means that wagers on the rise or fall under the false pretence of buying or selling stock, have reached a yet more formidable amount. Again, Mexican ordinary figures in the share list as about £1,230,000 stock, yet at last monthly settlement 25,000,000 or 30,000,000 sterling had to be adjusted. Our forefathers who fulminated against the 'infamous practice of stock jobbing' would turn pale at the modern refinements of speculative art.

The Lost Thirty-Five-Thousand Pound Note.

Somewhere about the year 1740 one of the directors of the Bank of England, a man of wealth and unimpeachable honor, bought an estate for £30,000, and for convenience sake obtained a note for that amount. On returning home, just as he was about to put it under lock and key, he was called out of the room, and placed the note on the mantelpiece. On coming back a few minutes later no note was to be seen. No one had entered the room in his absence, and after an anxious search he came to the conclusion that the precious bit of paper had fallen into the fire and been consumed.

Hurrying off to Threadneedle street, he told his colleagues what had happened, and they gave him a second note upon his undertaking to restore the lost one if it should come again into his hands, and in case of its being presented by any one else, repay the amount to the bank. Thirty years afterward, when he had long been dead, and his estate distributed among his heirs, the supposed non-existent note turned up at the bank counter, where it was presented for payment. All explanations of the circumstances were lost upon the presentee — the note had come to him from abroad in the course of business, and it must be honored without delay. There being no help for it he was paid the £30,000. Application was made to the representatives of the defunct director to refund the money, but they promptly disclaimed the liability, and the bank perforce had to put up with the loss. The story goes that it was discovered (how or when we are not informed) that the builder employed to pull down the dead man's house, preparatory to rearing a new one on the site, and had found the note in a crevice in the chimney, and kept it and his own counsel unscrupulously, and so became a rich man at a stroke.

How to Detect Oleomargarine.

There is much difficulty experienced by grocers in judging oleomargarine from butter. We here give two methods for so doing, and we are sure they will be welcomed. Procure a vial of oil of vitriol (sulphuric acid) which will cost about five cents. Use a glass rod, and put one drop on the article to be tested. Pure, fresh yellow butter will turn almost white, while tallow turns to a crimson red. Lard gives diversified colors, showing all colors of the rainbow. Here is another, and a very simple test: Melt a very small quantity in a shallow dish, which should be only large enough to hold the quantity, and put a piece of wick in the fluid. Now light the protruding end of the wick above the surface of the liquid, and after it burns a few minutes extinguish the flame. By inhaling the ascending smoke from the wick the odor of fried butter will designate pure butter, but if the odor is similar to that of a smoking candlestick you may rest assured it is oleomargarine. *Philadelphian Cash Grocer.*

A Standard of Signals.

The railway magnates having been successful in the adoption of a standard of time have now directed their attention to a standard of signals. At present a perfect chaos is said to exist in this respect, each Company operating entirely "on its own hook" and irrespective of any other. The aim is now to effect an absolute unanimity, and to this end a committee of able railway men has been convened to see what can be done in the premises. The report of this committee will be received by the next Convention, and it is believed will be accepted, with very slight modifications, if it is not adopted outright. Unlike the time standard, this will affect none but the railroad men, yet it will be of great convenience to them. As a slangy "exchange" remarks, "It only requires the introduction of a twenty-four hour clock to complete the racket!"