

"There is quite a demand this spring for elastic shoe laces, especially for ladies' low-cut shoes," said a clerk of a shoe store. "As time economizers these are a success, because they enable a shoe to be put on or off without stopping to untie the bow, though they are inconvenient if one happens to cross a muddy street where there is much clay around. Ladies frequently tie a very pretty bow in these laces and then sew the bow with thread, so that it has to remain until worn out. Nobody realizes the amount of time consumed in the course of a lifetime in lacing shoes, and even retying bows carelessly tied in the morning."

The razor-toed shoe is the proper thing in footwear just now, so a Buffalo man tells the *Courier*. Unfortunately, however, the prices are such that a man is liable to get strapped in buying a pair.

It is much easier, according to the saying of a well known American literary man, to govern an island than to manage almost any retail business properly and with success. This will apply very well to a retail shoe business, the conduct of which is a matter needing no small generalship.

The time seems to be close at hand when the shoe dealer's stock will be almost as gorgeous as the milliner's—that is, in women's goods. So says a St. Louis exchange, and we agree with him. The extravagant ideas prevailing in regard to dress extend to footwear, and a great many women consider it necessary to match their gowns with their shoes. This requires a very diversified shoe stock, and the fashionable shoe merchant is taxed to keep up a sufficient variety.

"I don't see how you can afford to give a pair of rubbers with every pair of shoes," said a customer to the new shoe-seller. The latter replied: "My friend, there is nothing equal to a pair of rubbers for getting away with shoes, see?"—*Indianapolis Journal*.

IRON AND METAL TRADES.

The production of iron ore in the United States for 1893, as reported for 23 States and two Territories, is placed at 11,507,607 long tons, a decrease of 29 per cent. from the previous year's figures. This is the smallest amount recorded since 1887, and is significant of the times.

The Gananoque correspondent of the *Brookville Recorder* says that Mr. Walton, formerly manager of the Gananoque Carriage Company, is now manufacturing carriages at the first named place.

Mr. John Connor, manager of the binder twine factory at the Kingston penitentiary, says the factory is in full swing, and that for more than a week twine has been produced. When the works get into proper running order about forty men will be employed.

Numerous households and factories in Detroit have fitted up house or factory for using as fuel natural gas, which is piped from Findlay, Ohio. But so irregular was the supply that the appliances have in many cases been removed, and the users went back to coal. We learn that the Port Huron Fuel Gas and Light Company opened their plant for business last week, capacity 750,000 feet of gas daily, which is manufactured by the improved Aroher process. The price of gas as fixed by the common council is fifty cents per 1,000 feet for fuel purposes, and \$1 for lighting gas.

The makers of Bessemer steel throughout Britain are experiencing very dull times. The rail trade is now but a shadow, owing to the

absence of export orders. Heavy rails are offered at £3 15s. In the open-hearth steel trade business is active at most centres, says the *Iron and Steel Trades Journal*, owing mainly to the strong demand for shipbuilding material. In the Sheffield district there is some improvement in several branches of the trade.

On the Glasgow Exchange in the last April week there was a moderate business doing in Scotch pig iron warrants, with only fractional changes in the price. The market, closed on the 28th with sellers at 42s. 8d., buyers offering 42s. 7½d. The stock in Connal's stores was then 314,000 tons. No change to report in the Cleveland iron market. Shipments good, and stocks decreasing.

An exhibition of electrical machinery and tools will take place between May and September this year at Buda-Pesth. The exhibition, which is expected to be highly interesting, has been organized by the Hungarian Commercial Museum.

The power house of the Electric Light Co. at Nanaimo, B. C., was completely destroyed by fire, with contents, on Saturday last. The fire spread rapidly to the adjoining buildings and Mackenzie's furniture factory. Hirst Bros.' general store and two private dwellings were also destroyed. Loss \$70,000.

The number of furnaces in blast in Scotland was practically the same at last mail advices, 27th April, as in the corresponding date of 1893, namely, 72; but there were fewer ordinary furnaces and more hematite and basic. In Middlesboro' district there were 94, as compared with 88; in Cumberland, 35, as against 33.

According to Watson's weekly iron report, the quantity of pig iron in Connal's stores, Scotland, was 314,535 tons on 26th of last month, as against 315,068 at the corresponding date last year. The Cleveland pig in store by Connal showed a large increase, being 101,113 tons in April this year, against 68,170 last year. The stock of Cumberland iron was 134,890 tons.

INSURANCE MATTERS.

According to the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the Merchants Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Manitoba, a new organization, has retired from business. It did not meet with the support expected, and, besides, had more losses than it could stand.

The provincial manager of the Massachusetts Benefit Life Association, Mr. Bigger, has been challenging the agents of rival companies to a public discussion at Victoria, B. C., of the relative merits of those companies doing business under the old line system of insurance with the new line system of life insurance as presented by his company. The western people, or some of them, like this sort of novel excitement. Quite possibly Mr. Bigger got a good audience.

During the month of March the New York Life Insurance Company paid 208 policies on the lives of 186 policy-holders, the total sum paid being \$676,975.17, on which the premiums had been \$208,795. Of these, eighteen claims, amounting to \$50,000, were upon the lives of men who had insured less than one year before death. They had passed a strict medical examination, and had the prospect of long life, but they died less than a year afterward.

The Dominion Burglary Guarantee Company (Limited) of Montreal has been granted an important change in its charter. It will now have the power to operate an electric wire

protection service, and a uniformed day and night service for protection against burglary and fire.

We understand that the Employers' Liability Assurance Corporation (Limited) has made application for the withdrawal of its deposit with the Government at Ottawa.

The Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York shows accumulated funds amounting to \$186,707,680; the Equitable Life, \$169,056,397; the New York Life, \$148,700,781. This makes an aggregate in the hands of three companies of \$504,464,858. Successively, as above, they show incomes of \$41,953,146; \$42,022,606; \$33,863,647; a total of \$117,839,399. Successively they show surplus amounting to \$17,942,609; \$32,366,750; \$17,025,630; a total of \$67,344,989. The Mutual Life has insurance in force to the amount of \$708,692,552; the Equitable Life, \$932,532,577; the New York Life, \$779,156,678; a total of \$2,420,381,807. These are big figures, as a contemporary shows, but it is questioned whether these "giants," as they are called, earn the ratio of profits for their policy-holders that some smaller companies do.

TAXES IN CHARLOTTETOWN.

We have more than once taken occasion to object to the licenses levied on travelling salesmen by municipalities in the Maritime Provinces, such as Fredericton and Charlottetown. But now we find one of their own journals objecting. The *Charlottetown Guardian*, of last week, learns from confidants of the Island Government that the proposal to tax commercial travellers will be resurrected. The tax, they say, will be only \$15 on each "drummer." "This is less iniquitous," says the *Guardian*, "than the \$50 tax previously suggested; but it is, if possible, three times as idiotic as the first suggestion. The \$50 tax collected from a dozen travellers or so, would pay an ordinary tax-gatherer's salary, even though it did not yield any revenue. But a \$15 tax will hardly yield enough to pay the tax-gatherer, because half the travellers will not pay. Yet enough annoyance will be given and trade will be impeded sufficiently to make it worth while, perhaps, for the merchants to charge this tax to their customers—to the farmers whom it was designed to 'protect.' And this is a free trade government!" It would be in order for the Prince Edward Island authorities to define their free trade principles.

THE APRIL FIRE LOSS.

It is encouraging to find a falling off in the fire loss of this continent for last month equal to nearly thirty per cent., as compared with the previous April.

The fire loss for the month, as estimated from the files of the *N.Y. Commercial Bulletin*, amounts to \$11,540,000, as against \$14,669,000 last April and \$11,569,000 in April, 1892. Here is a comparative total for four months of this year and last:—

	1893.	1894.
January	\$17,958,400	\$10,568,400
February	9,919,900	11,297,600
March	16,662,350	9,147,100
April	14,669,900	11,540,000
Total	\$59,210,550	\$42,553,100

The total for the first four months of 1892 was \$46,686,700, being made up of \$12,565,000 in January; \$11,914,000 in February; \$10,648,000 in March and \$11,569,000 in April. There were 53 fires of a greater destructiveness than \$50,000 each, and 153 fires costing from \$10,-