

## ORIGIN OF NATURAL GAS.

A correspondent sends us the following notes from which, he explains, a possible explanation of the formation of natural gas might be elaborated:—

1st. A temperature of about 960 degrees F. will convert water into oxygen and hydrogen gases.

2nd. The temperature of the earth increases at the rate of one degree F. to every fifty feet downward from the surface.

3rd. At a depth of less than ten miles the temperature will be sufficiently high to decompose water.

4th. The difference in composition of natural gas (from that of decomposed water) may be accounted for by its coming in contact with a variety of different elements after formation.

This theory is not new but is still held by many, though rejected by some of its old-time adherents. Our correspondent says:—"It may be difficult to show that water reaches that depth," and he adds:—"Would the pressure of surrounding elements prevent the decomposition of water?" Has anyone any explanation to offer?—*Iron Trade Review.*

## LONDON FOG.

The London fog has been unprecedentedly thick of late and trouble was feared from roughs. The day when the fog was the very worst happened to be the Stock Exchange fortnightly settlement, and known as pay day, whereupon securities to a fabulous amount changed hands. Brokers had cause for nervousness, for a fortnight ago a clerk was stopped and robbed in broad daylight of a

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big bagful of bonds. Therefore clerks groped their way cautiously, armed with revolvers, with bags fastened to their sides by steel chains. The day passed without robbery, but the scare set smart people thinking, with the result that a scheme is now in operation whereby nervous brokers may insure bonds in transit through the streets at a premium of ten shillings per £100 per annum, maximum individual insurance £20,000. The risk covers the transit of bonds from the sender's doorway until duly delivered.—*Boston Commercial Bulletin.*

## Commercial.

## MONTREAL MARKETS.

MONTREAL, Jan. 4th, 1888.

Wholesale trade has not yet altogether recovered from the usual holiday dullness, but travellers are all getting back to their usual "grind," and the trade movement is expected to be of a more lively character by next week. In the retail trade we hear further reports of the excellent holiday business done in most lines, confirming our remarks of last week on this score. The first good fall of snow came exactly a week ago, but being followed by a drifting blizzard, travel by both team and rail was adversely affected, especially the former. A heavy rain since then has, however, settled the roads pretty well, and business in country sections, it is hoped will be improved by the free movement of produce. Country collections are not better than fair at the moment.

ASHES.—There has been a continuation of a dull market, and prices are on about the same level, namely \$3.90 to \$3.95 for first quality pots, seconds about \$3.60 with few transactions, pearls \$7.75 to \$8.00, nominal.

FISH.—No active demand exists for fish; Labrador herrings are dull at \$4.25 to \$4.50, green cod in fair demand at about \$4.50 for large, dry cod \$4.00 to \$4.10, salmon dull at \$13 to \$14.50.

BOOTS, SHOES AND LEATHER.—Manufacturers of boots and shoes report fair orders in hand, and the factories will liven up considerably after Old Xmas, to which day most of the French employees prolong their holidays, and leather dealers then look for a much better business. As it is, business in leather shows more activity, but is mainly due to the forcing of some large lots of cheap black leathers at cut prices. Stocks are still heavy. We quote:—Spanish sole, B. A. No. 1, 24 to 25c.; do. No. 2, B. A., 20 to 22c.; No. 1 Ordinary

Spanish 21 to 23c.; No. 2 do., 19 to 21c.; No. 1 China, 20 to 21c.; No. 2, 18 to 19c.; Hemlock Slaughter, No. 1, 24 to 27c.; oak sole, 41 to 45c.; Waxed Upper, light and medium, 33 to 37c.; ditto, heavy 31 to 35c.; Grained 34 to 37c.; Scotch grained 36 to 42c.; Splits large 16 to 26c.; do. small 12 to 18c.; Calf-splits, 32 to 33c.; Calfskins, (35 to 46 lbs.), 55 to 70c.; Imitation French Calf skins 75 to 85c.; Russet Sheepskin Linings, 39 to 40c.; Harness 24 to 33c.; Buffed Cow, 12 to 15c.; Pebbled Cow, 11 to 15c.; Rough 23 to 26c.; Russet and Bridle, 54 to 55c.

DRUGS AND CHEMICALS.—Trade in these lines has been of rather a quiet holiday character. Some lines show a gain in firmness; glycerine is quoted at £80 in England, and we advance quotations, sulphate of copper is also up again £1, other lines about as before. We quote:—Sal Soda 95c. to \$1.00; Bi-Carb Soda \$2.40 to \$2.50; Soda Ash, per 100 lbs., \$1.70

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