

PROSPECTS OF THE FALL TRADE.

Gentlemen, connected with mercantile agencies and in other positions favorable to an intelligent estimate of the present financial condition and the future business prospects of the country, speak with equal confidence as to the favorable aspect of affairs in both these respects. It is stated, as a fact both surprising and gratifying, that, within the past six months, there have absolutely been fewer failures in number, and certainly fewer in prominence, than for the same period in the average of years. On the contrary they have observed a very remarkable reduction of indebtedness in all classes and in almost all sections of the country.

It is said also that the mercantile indebtedness in the country is not more than two-thirds what it was at this time last year. The caution thus evinced is one of the chief causes of a restricted business and a hampered trade. The fright that the debtor class received in September has had its effect, and the very prominence of the failures that immediately followed impressed deeply a lesson that has been heeded.

The dullness of business has made many traders poorer than they were six months ago. In certain departments, such as railroad construction, iron making, and building operations, the demands of the time have been anticipated, and business for the present remains dull, but it is argued on all hands, that all the indications, which in former years would be taken as a basis for the hope of a good fall trade, are presented now. An unusually abundant crop of almost every production is promised in almost all sections of the country. Prices for these products are maintained at remunerative figures, and the steady gain in the value of our exports which the past six months has shown, is almost certain of repetition in the next half year.

It is true that similar predictions,

made last winter in reference to the trade of this spring, and summer, have not been verified. Much of this untatisfactory result is unquestionably due to the fact that during the most of the time, congress has been at work in reference to the financial interests of the country, and, with the uncertainty as to what policy would be adopted and as to the result of any proposed policy on the business of the country, business men have hesitated to engage in any new enterprises. In the absence of this paralyzing influence of congressional discussion and action or inaction, and with the favorable circumstances, to which we have adverted, we may certainly hope for a prosperous fall trade in nearly all departments of business.—*Boston Lumber Trade.*

INSPECTION.

The work entrusted to the two committees, appointed at the Williamsport Convention, to recommend rules for the uniform inspection, measurement and classification of lumber, one for white pine and one for yellow, will be one of great labor, and not of immediate accomplishment. We have several times during the past year adverted to the fact, that while the importance of uniform terms, rules, and practice of inspection is acknowledged and perhaps fully appreciated, there is, at the different points of manufacture and distribution a very great discrepancy both of usage and of terms. It is sufficiently easy to account for this in the circumstances under which the trade has grown up at its different centres. These have been brought together by the greatly increased facilities of transportation, but for many years they were comparatively isolated; terms and rules in the different lumber regions were in some degree peculiar to each of them. A glance only over our reports of the markets, embracing as they do, every important

point in that trade from Ottawa to Florida, and from St. John to San Francisco, will suggest this fact. We were more than ever impressed with it, as we endeavored, for the purpose of illustrating our statement on this point, to collate the present in some sort of table or other form, the various terms, applied at different points to the same quality of lumber, and found that we could not satisfy ourselves as to what terms corresponded throughout to each other in the various tables. We might do so with a tolerable assurance of accuracy on some points, but as to others we were wholly "at sea."

We have said that this work of reducing to system and uniformity would be difficult and not of immediate accomplishment. Should it be performed with entire thoroughness and to the satisfaction of the trade it will only after a long period, be universally accepted and used. It can only be effected by the hearty co-operation of the trade throughout the country. The committee will, we are assured be pleased to receive copies of any printed documents such as the laws of any state, the regulations of any district or association, having a bearing in this subject. Suggestions also from gentlemen, connected with the trade in any part of the country, may very essentially aid them in their important and difficult work. Communications on this subject may be addressed to the chairman of the committee, P. B. Merrill, Esq., of Messrs. N. Shaw & Co., Williamsport, Pa.—*Boston Lumber Trade.*

TIMBER TRADE OF MARSEILLES.—During the year 1872, the Adriatic supplied Marseilles with 6,000,000 staves; the United States with 125,000; and the Black Sea with about 100,000, principally Odessa and Poti. In the same year, 9,000 loads of timber and 6,000 planks were received from the Adriatic. The Baltic supplied

50,000 dozen of planks and deals; Canada sent 6,000 deals and 500 loads of oak timber; 250 loads of pitch pine from Florida were also imported.

BURL WALNUT.

Burl, or French walnut is noted and prized for its variety of fine figures and its hard, fine grain, or, perhaps, more properly speaking, its absence of grain. In these qualities it is superior to rosewood or mahogany, and the wood itself is susceptible to a high degree of polish, requiring a comparatively short space of time only for manipulation. This wood, too, is remarkable for its beauty, and it would be difficult to find two veneers alike in figure or color unless cut from the same block, and even then there would be perceptible marks of difference. This very beauty should tend to make the wood choice, but in America the demand for it is so great that it is used unsparingly on every article of furniture from the cheapest bedstead to the costliest cabinet. It would be useless to urge economy in its application in that country where a piece valued at twenty-five cents placed on an eight or ten dollar bedstead will yield an extra two dollars, but it does seem a pity that this fine wood should be wasted on cheap work.

Four or five years ago burl walnut was a rarity used only on fine work, and then in moderate quantity only; hence it was duly appreciated. Now fine work is covered with it, and cheap work has patches of it here and there without regard to design or meaning. If it must be used indiscriminately, let it by all means be put on tasty panels that have a significance. The manner in which panels are finished on some cheap work is truly horrible. The grains are imperfectly filled without any rubbing down, and then covered with a coat of cheap shellac. Frames for