

if the payments had been made in full, except that the balance remaining due and the interest thereon shall be deducted from the monthly pension in such amounts as the government may determine.

The lesson of it all is: the irretrievability of an error in policy of this kind, once it is made, without years of paying the piper. For its sixteen years' lapse in sound doctrine on the civil service question, the province of Quebec will feel the effects for a quarter of a century to come, while many deserving employees will be deprived of a means of self-help that would have turned old age from a period to be looked forward to with misgiving to one of self-respect and content.

CIRCUMSTANCES.

By Von Ludwig.

A certain merchant who had risen from zero to four or five hundred thousand was filled with the idea that he was self-made.

The idea increased until he was not only filled with it but he overflowed so that he lost no opportunity to put his thumb in the arm hole of his waistcoat, throw out his chest and tell people how much patience, perseverance, energy and will power he had exerted to make himself.

He took much pleasure in smiling superior smiles at the young, striving and unsuccessful, and, relating how, unaided, he had risen from an undershirt and trousers to a dress suit at dinner.

One evening the merchant was lounging in his library smoking his perfecto and composing paeans of praise to himself, when he became aware of the presence of an entity which stood before him regarding him with an amused expression of countenance.

"Who are you?" said the merchant.

"I am Circumstances, I alter cases," said the Entity.

"Oh, indeed," said the merchant, "do you want to see me?"

"I am forced to take cognizance of you," replied the Entity.

"Well, but what can I do for you? What is your business with me?" asked the merchant.

"You can do nothing for me," replied the Entity; "but I can do much for you and have done much."

"You must be making a mistake," said the merchant. "You are in the wrong house. I never had any cases altered and I don't need any altered now. Go away please, I do not know you."

"Yet I made you," said the Entity.

"Pooh! pooh! nonsense," said the merchant, "you must be a stranger hereabouts; everyone knows I am a self-made man."

"A self-made fool," said the Entity, "your memory is short and your vanity great. Do you remember the strike that took place when you were in the undershirt and trousers period of your life?"

"Yes," slowly replied the merchant, a little flurried to hear a stranger go back so far into his history.

"Well, I made that strike case, and only for that case you would have starved to death. You became a scab workman by taking advantage of me."

"Really," said the merchant.

"Now," continued the Entity, "you remember your quick promotion, how you rose to be foreman?"

"Yes," quickly interrupted the merchant, "but you know that I was eminently fit for the position."

"Of course you were fit," answered the Entity, "but 'twas I who made you fit and I made the case. What good would your fitness have been without the case?"

"Well, but my dear fellow," commenced the merchant.

"Don't 'well but' and 'dear fellow' me," interrupted the Entity,