

place in the list, and the volume of it was \$1,064,327. But it was more than double the volume in 1882, when immigration was large and the "boom" was in full blast.

I found Mr. Westbrook, and he blames the tariff, for the stoppage of immigration. He is strong on this point, holding that the tariff is framed in the interest of "eastern people," and that it discriminates against the North-West. Mr. Westbrook, who was recently elected mayor of the city, is a popular man with business people. His firm deals in American machines as well as Canadian, so that the head of the house has a leaning to what Professor Smith advocates—commercial union, though Mr. W. wants it to stop there, and not eventuate into absorption. Mr. Jones, the gentlemanlike manager of Messrs. Harris Son, & Co., says that until January payment of due notes was very good. What is needed two or three good seasons. There have been three frosted wheat crops in succession, and were this feature to disappear, for it was not an occurrence until 1883, the prosperity of Manitoba and North-West farmers would be ensured. He believed that farmers will have to "move around more lively," get in their crops earlier, and be more prompt in harvesting than they have heretofore been, thus taking advantage as much as possible of the very short summer season which prevails in this latitude.

The advice of mixed farming which has been freely given takes some time before it can be acted upon. It needs money to buy stock and many persons, who in their wisdom are ready to give this advice appear to have overlooked this fact.

Certainly, it is undeniable that the agricultural machine manufacturers have been carrying over due paper. Mr. Cochrane tells me the amount is considerable. They are more or less compelled to do so, though from what I know of most of the agricultural machine dealers in this city, I am sure they would be lenient to the settler even if the latter were in a better position than he is. True, their trade has been pushed perhaps more than it would have been had there been no boom, but the farmer must have machinery. To say that he can get along in the old fashioned way, with sickle and scythe, as he did of yore, is to ask the world to go back to times which ante-date progress.

The hydra head is, however, showing itself in the shape of the mortgage fiend. It recalls the Minnesota experience, with this additional feature, that there it was not always easy to borrow money on the farm even when it was justifiable—if it is justifiable to mortgage the homestead—but here in these days when everybody is complaining of the "hard times," the "mortgage fiend" is flooding the rural districts with something like the following: "If you want to borrow money on your farm it will be to your interest to call at Blanks." The average farmer who, previous to the receipt of one of these, possessed some misgivings would no longer hesitate after receiving one of these seductive missives. He can hardly resist the invitation and therefore away goes the title to the homestead and by-and-by the homestead goes for principal and interest.

It is true that second homesteading may hold out some inducements but that is likely to go the same road for the money-lender seems to follow up the settler, as Jews do a victorious army.

Mr. Jones smiled when I remarked that the mortgage money no doubt went to pay for the agricultural machinery. It was too often true, though not a few settlers are purchasing stock with a portion of this doubtful capital. Undoubtedly if the agricultural machine trade of the province were in the hands of unscrupulous men—as the mortgage business sometimes is—they would possess little or no anxiety on account of their paper for they could readily shift their responsibility to the mortgage man in the way indicated, but it is to the credit of our manufacturers that they seek no such way out of their engagements. I know of many instances where money so obtained was refused, even on overdue notes, and at the suggestion of the machine agents it was invested in live stock, while if the agent had taken the money they would have crippled the settler and left him worse than ever while in their own case they put up with delay only—still, I have no doubt that in most instances money is not refused even by the farm machine firms and no questions asked. Though, so far, the latter have dealt with the farmers

in a most lenient and honorable manner, according to the testimony of the farmer himself.

Mr. Westbrook declares that the tariff has stopped immigration. This is debatable ground; for any one that has studied the question of immigration must admit that like almost everything human the influx of immigration has its periodicity. The Canadian Immigration Department does not appear to understand its business as thoroughly as our neighbors do, nor is it as intelligent in this respect as the Immigration Department of the Australian Colonies. However, this is so well known that it is superfluous to mention it.

Give our North-west friends a tariff after their own fashion, several successive seasons of good crops, a large immigration, and the Hudson Bay route, and I doubt if all this would be sufficient to insure a commercial millennium. It is difficult to restrain western ambition. Your carefully-going eastern business man does not appear to realize this though a great deal of humbug is often disguised under a show of "restless activity." Immigration is again one cry, and if this should not come soon there must be emigration, but not a few Winnipeggers are damaging their own city and province by drawing gloomy pictures, just as some of the sanguine optimists occasionally draw one that carries with it too much of the imagination.

The level-headed men, and there are not a few of them here, have the fullest confidence in the near future not merely of Winnipeg itself, but of the whole country; and it is gratifying to meet with business men who have as much solicitude for the area of the inscribed circle as for the importance of the point called the centre. Little is being done at the moment in the trade of which I have made special mention, though the various staffs are busy at their books and accounts.

A few years ago a dozen of mowers and rakes on market square represented the farm-machine trade of the North-west. Now costly buildings occupy this ground and the volume of the trade has reached upwards of a million. This is not a fancy, but a fact which a decade has established and confirmed.

Winnipeg, Man., Mar. 2nd, '86. VIATOR.

THE HISTORY OF COMMERCE.

In an address delivered before the students of the British American Business College, in this city, Prof. Goldwin Smith made some very pointed remarks on the above subject, a synopsis of which we give:

In beginning his lecture the speaker said that "to attempt to give the history of commerce in an address of half-an-hour's duration would be like trying to put the sea into a bottle." He believed that although the subject was a most wonderful and important one, still there was not a really good history of commerce in existence.

Carrying his hearers back to the primeval world, he contrasted the little barques of the Syrian merchants, being steered through unknown seas, without the aid of the compass or other scientific appliances, with the vast floating restaurants in which we cross the Atlantic or the Pacific to-day. The rise and fall of Carthage, Rome, Alexandria, and other cities which successively held the commercial supremacy of the ancient world were eloquently pictured. Athens showed in a signal manner the union of commerce with letters and art. Rome he felt convinced owed the foundation of her greatness to the immense wealth she collected as a mercantile city; and it was only after she had become mistress of the world that a purely military origin was assigned to her.

Passing on to the feudal ages the speaker briefly sketched the commercial condition of Italy, whose wonderful cities of Venice, Florence, Pisa, and Genoa, were the great emporiums of trade and centres of art and civilization. The famous family of the Medici who ruled Florence was a family of merchants, having for their arms three golden balls similar to those which to-day hang over the shops of pawn-brokers. Traces of the commercial greatness of Germany and Flanders, he pointed out, are to be seen in their beautiful cities—still beautiful in their decay. Holland was a country whose land was reclaimed from the sea by her industrious people, and she in her day became the mercantile centre of the world. Once more commerce waved her wing and England became the great seat of trade. Eng-

land has a position for commerce which is unique in the world; but besides this she has beneath her soil those great mines of coal and iron which have sustained her manufactures and produced her vast wealth. The supremacy of English commerce is of much later date than many would suppose. In the middle of last century Amsterdam was the bank of the world, and now it is London.

The development of commerce has done great moral good to the world by increasing the wealth of mankind without which you cannot have comfort, self-respect, or morality; it has knitted together the different portions of the human race, and made one harvest and one heart for all; and it has taught the people to keep contracts with their fellow-men. But a rapid expansion of commerce has also its disadvantages. These were seen in the "bubbles" of England, and are still noticeable in the "booms" of the present day. The most noted of these in England was the South Sea Bubble—a project gotten up for trading in the South Sea. The shares went up to an enormous figure; some made great fortunes and others were totally ruined. All sorts of mad schemes were set going about the same time, which ended in the ruin and suicide of thousands. France experienced the same thing in a notorious swindle known as the Mississippi Scheme, the shares of which at one time were as high as 1,300 per cent. Scotland with her Darien Scheme, and Holland with a similar one also suffered from these absurd bubbles. We do not now have such fits of madness as these, but we have our "booms" and sometimes very foolish ones. People who speculate rashly in colonization societies can hardly throw a stone at the investors in the South Sea Bubble or the Mississippi Scheme.

The merchants of the Middle Ages first established banks and invented bills of exchange. The functions of bankers, the speaker considered, were three-fold. First, they provided a safe place to deposit money, which in former days had to be kept in the houses or carried to a goldsmith; secondly, they economized the precious metals by issuing paper to represent their value; and lastly, they enabled us to trade more extensively on credit, by examining a man's affairs and advancing money in proportion to his real worth, thereby giving an enormous expansion to business. To our ancestors we also owe gratitude for the invention of money. We find that cattle were the original currency in the ancient world. These of course were very inconvenient, and it was found necessary to invent some standard circulating medium. The Romans used copper; the Spartans iron; but gradually the most civilized nations of the world settled down to the use of gold. Gold was chosen on account of its intrinsic value, and the special qualities which it was found to possess as a circulating medium, but besides these it has now a quality of which it would be practically impossible to divest it; that is to say, it has been firmly established as the circulating medium of the world, and anything that has become a firmly rooted practice by civilized nations is not easily changed.

Many have an idea that paper will do as well as gold, and that the Government has only to print an unlimited amount of paper bills to flood the country with money. This fallacy is based upon the supposition that bank bills are money and consist only of paper. But this is a mistake. A bank bill is currency but not money; it is paper, but it represents value, as it contains a promise to pay money. No government can possibly legislate value into that which has none; all it can do is to ordain that such paper be legal tender for itself. But even that would be sheer robbery. A striking example of this was the issue of an immense quantity of inconvertible paper during the first American War, by which the holders lost nearly all their property. So terrible were the effects of this upon the people, that Paine proposed that any man trying to introduce that practice a second time should be put to death. The French Republic, and the Confederate States did the same thing with the same results. The Federal States also issued an inconvertible currency which fell very low at one time though ultimately specie payment was resumed. Such paper will retain value only so long as it is believed that the State issuing it will pay it in gold. The property of the country does not belong to the Government; only the public land and public buildings belong to it. It has nothing else except a power of taxation, which it is bound to ex-