

Our Book-Keeper Kicks.

"There, confound it, I have been through every one of the eight hundred and odd pages in that old ledger of ours and have found only two hundred unsettled accounts. If it were not for the care needed in the examination of so many unsettled accounts, in order to skip no live ones, I could have been out riding with my best girl for the past two hours at least. Why is it, anyway, that book-keepers are using the same old ways of keeping customer's accounts that were in use before I was born? Now, there's the boss, he sits back in his chair (not with his feet on the desk, however. Oh! no!) and just talks for a few minutes to a nice young lady, who pretends to follow each motion of his lips with a funny looking scrawl on her note book, then he excuses her, and while she retires to her cozy little nook to play with her type writer, he comes out to my desk and with a sigh of relief, says well, thank fortune, my work is done—answered that batch of letters in fifteen minutes. And that imp of an office-boy, look at him, just putting away the last letter of that same batch, while I'm talking. Yes, those cabinet files are a great improvement, over the way I had to file letters when I was a boy, used to fold them, writing inside, and put name and date on back and put away in bundles: took an hour or so to find one when you wanted it.

That brings me back to ledgers again; had to look up an item three years old in the account of one of our best customers, found six different places where he had been carried forward in this ledger, and then had to drag the old one out of the corner and hunt through, I don't know how many pages in that. Of course I started at the wrong end!

You know we have to take stock next week, and I must begin opening a new ledger; that will make the fifth since the business started. No, this ledger is not all used up; but it won't last the year out, and the other books start fresh with the new year and we have to preserve uniformity you know. See the waste of time; I have to write two hundred names on the pages which have been allotted to them, (and I spend hours in laying out the various spaces required by the several classes of accounts, and then giving so many pages to each sub-division) after that I must write two hundred names in the new index, and also enter two hundred items and amounts transferred. It wearies me to think of it.

Why can't I tear the old binding off, put in fresh leaves in places most appropriate, and continue the accounts as they are? Well, I might do that, only for the fact that all those old dead accounts would be staring me in the face for another year or two, and I am dead sick of them now. No, I'll do anything to get them out of sight! Why doesn't some genius get up a new fangled machine that you can drop items into and grind out monthly statements by the yard? Blamed if I don't feel like an old used up machine myself, every time I get through my usual semi-monthly thumbing over every page in that confounded ledger."

All this happened yesterday afternoon. This morning the air has been so blue that even the office-boy felt it, and refrained from his usual happy-go-lucky whistle, and has made errands

for himself rather than remain anywhere in sight of that book-keeper.

After lunch, however, feeling better ourselves we ventured to peep at our book-keeper's usual place, and noticing a pleased and contented smile on his face, were thunderstruck at noticing that he was doing just what he was kicking so furiously at, only last evening, thumbing over that same old ledger, and anon pausing to take a fresh sheet from a pile before him, and writing thereon. Curiosity getting the better of our fear of being jumped on, we inquired the reason of the evident change in his feelings.

"Do you see those sheets? That's my new ledger. Oh, yes, you can jump all you like; but it goes all the same! As I go through this old ledger, I put the title of each open account at the bottom of one of those sheets; then when I get through, I can sort them up any way I like; divide them into classes, such as general accounts, creditors, customers, city, country or according to lines of railway, as I please; and then arrange each class alphabetically. You notice the holes at the top? Well,



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that is for the purpose of holding them on a Shannon file. In that way they can't get lost or disarranged. I can use one file for general and creditor's accounts, and one or more solely for customers. Then when an account is paid, I can transfer it in three seconds to a file for closed accounts, and thus do away with all that dead matter I was kicking about. I can show a customer his account and he will not be able to see any of the others. Then too, any account started on these sheets, no matter how many of these sheets may be used, will be all together (that is, the balance due, if any, on the open file, and the used up sheets on the closed file) from now till the end of use of the system.

No, there is no index, that's done away with. The sheets index themselves. See all the time that saves—fully one-half on the posting and two-thirds on opening new accounts.

How did I happen to catch on to the idea? Well, it isn't mine, worse luck! I wish I had the patent on it. I wonder why I didn't think of it myself! After lunch, I called on our old friend, the expert, across there from the post office, and found him working away at posting items on to sheets like those, and after watch-

ing him a few minutes and asking some questions, I wanted that system right away. I rather timidly inquired if I might use the idea, and was surprised to find that he had a stock of sheets on hand, and had been advertising his patent ledger for some time; only I've been so blamed busy digging at this old book, I haven't read any advertisements for I don't know how long. He told me that he had to get out of the old rut in order to do the work that came to him. For nearly two years past, he has been keeping five different sets of books going (writing them up once a month. He got up this system and gave it a thorough trial on three different sets before he had it patented. He showed me one set in which were seventeen hundred closed accounts, stored away in his vault, and three hundred open accounts neatly bound at the top with leather covers, ready for use in the store where they belonged, and as a proof of the saving of time, he makes out the three hundred statements of open accounts for a leading merchant tailor in three hours work which, using an ordinary ledger, containing two thousand accounts as this does, would take nearly all day.

Another set, for which he used the loose sheets, belonged to a firm of contractors and builders, and without any previous knowledge of the business he has been able to keep his accounts classified throughout the progress of various jobs and show results in a manner that would be simply impossible in a bound book.

Just think how nicely my trial balance will come off every month. All the accounts in the various groups in their proper place, and thus showing quickly the progress of the business, and enabling comparisons to be made with results shown in the past. You can't do that with a bound book. No matter how carefully you apportion the spaces required, some accounts will overrun said space, have to be transferred and thus destroy the symmetry of the work. All old book-keepers know that.

Two New Companies.

The Manitoba Loan and Trust Company is the name of a financial concern recently organized in Winnipeg, the officers and directors being well known local men. The capital stock is \$2,000,000, in shares of \$50 each. The company will invest in mortgages, on real estate, corporation debentures, etc. At present there are quite a number of loan companies doing business in the country, but these are nearly all branches of companies which have their headquarters in Eastern Canada or Great Britain. A good local company will, no doubt, receive a liberal patronage.

The other institution to which we refer in the heading above, is the Great West Life Assurance company. Nearly all the Life Insurance companies of Eastern Canada, besides several United States and Old Country companies, have offices in Winnipeg, and some have important investments in this city. The Great West, however, is the first local company to take the field. The authorized capital is \$100,000, in shares of \$100 each. The stock of this new company is now on the market. At present large sums of money are annually sent out of the country, in payment of premiums on life policies. A new country always stands in need of capital to develop its resources, and the money sent away for life insurance, if kept at home for investment here, would be a considerable gain to Manitoba. This is the object of the new Life Company now formed in Winnipeg. The money which it receives in business will be invested at home, instead of being sent to Toronto, Montreal, New York, London, Glasgow and other cities,