

ROLLING STONES.

The world is much smaller than it was; not that its actual size has diminished, but in a relative sense Montreal is to-day much nearer to Yokohama than it was a few years ago to Victoria, and we make the circuit of the globe with greater ease and expedition than Columbus could accomplish in crossing the Atlantic. This transformation has wrought other changes, and our thoughts upon many subjects are totally different to those of our forefathers, so that certain proverbs, which used to be held in veneration as the embodiment of truth, have now, to some extent, become obsolete, because no longer applicable.

The old saying, for instance, that "rolling stones gather no moss" cannot in these days be taken in the literal meaning of the phrase that it was even in the beginning of this century. If a young man, a course of generations back, moved more than once to try his fortune, his parents and friends would shake their heads ominously and repeat the above proverb. Such a man was looked upon as a discontented "ne'er do weel," who could never succeed, and yet it is that very feeling of discontent which is the mainspring to human advancement and prosperity in this world. An individual or a nation without the ambition or desire to improve their condition, but thoroughly contented, will not progress, and the "moss" they may "gather," like that on an old disused castle, will only serve to cover their decay.

Of course the other extreme is almost worse and one, who rushes from place to place merely from an Arab propensity to restlessness or want of change, squanders his substance and his energy, just as a nation does who will accept no government or laws for long but is always in a state of transition or revolution. The first extreme is a ship without sails, the second one without ballast.

Still to return to the point from which we started, it must be admitted that, considering the practically closer proximity of places now to a hundred years ago, what was really "rolling" then, may be, with us, put down as barely turning over. A man discovers that the qualities or abilities he possesses do not meet a ready market in Montreal takes them to Winnipeg or Vancouver, with as much facility, as a merchant of the old time would remove from one locality to another he deemed more favorable, in the same city. For the truth is, what with rapid transit and electricity, the world has become like one huge town, and the proverb we have already quoted,

must be adapted to the altered condition of things. Discontent should not subvert perseverance, but rather be the spur which drives the latter to greater efforts, and he who finds a better opening in a place hundreds of miles away, than where he is at present need not be a "rolling stone" because he goes.

Let us not, however, be misunderstood, we are not wishing to praise a roving disposition, and those who are doing well, that is steadily advancing in prosperity and position, would be worse than foolish not remain where they are, but in these days of speed and competition the channels of enterprise are quickly filled in the larger and more settled towns, and there is more chance in breaking new ground. It is the "rolling stones" which have built up England's colonies and the United States, without which this continent would be still a wilderness chiefly inhabited by Red Indians and buffaloes.

CHARACTER SKETCHES.

NO. 13. OUR CANVASSER.

Of course by Our Canvasser we mean the "Drummer" whose business it is to solicit orders for every kind of merchandise, publications, subscription, advertisements, invention, insurance, medicine, etc., etc. This branch of the commercial system has grown enormously of late years, and to sell or dispose of any article nowadays, it has come to be acknowledged that it is absolutely necessary to canvass both continually and thoroughly. Formerly merchants or insurance companies waited for their customers to come to them, but now they have to hunt up the customers, and therefore Our Canvasser is to be met in every warehouse and store, at every street corner, nay he even invades that "sanctum sanctorum," the private dwelling.

The two leading qualities which Our Canvasser possesses in a superlative degree are "cheek" (no other word so entirely expresses our meaning) and tact. Industry, perseverance and other attributes he may doubtless have, but—if we may use the parallel without disrespect—if he have not "cheek" and tact (especially the former) he will be "as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal," and that grand quality like the other we have hinted at "covers a multitude of sins."

Our Canvasser is stoutly built with not a jot of weakness in his knees and though he has a loud genial laugh, there is no trace of softness in his steel grey eye. He walks briskly into your office or store, and smiles blandly as he passes a remark upon the weather, and if you are really busy he has tact enough to

bow himself out, saying he will call again, but he is not easily deceived by any pretence on your part. Should you say that you do not want anything just then, he replies that, for that very reason he has come, in order to be beforehand, and down he sits beside you. He chats away upon indifferent matters, and unconsciously you begin to think he is rather a pleasant fellow, and pulling out your watch, you ask him to call again, which he does, not only once or twice, but twenty times, until you give him an order, as the sole way of getting rid of visits, that have become a nuisance, and Our Canvasser "scores one."

You have met the man often and have alternately cursed and cajoled him, but you have never shaken him off, for like the "old man of the sea" in the Arabian Nights, he sticks like a leech, and we, as Sinbad did, have to bear him on our shoulders. The great art in Our Canvasser consists not in making you order what you want, but what you don't want, and which of us has not some time or other been bamboozled into subscribing to some book, published in monthly parts, and when complete, can be bought for half the money we have paid for it, even then being thrust aside into some corner as entirely useless. Anyone may induce you to buy something you require, but to force you to take an article you have no use for, is the triumph of canvassing.

We have caught ourselves wondering what becomes of Our Canvasser, because, as a rule, he is unfit for any other occupation, and yet the physical exertion of his employment, prevents his following it much beyond the time when his joints grow stiff. Perhaps, he is translated like Sam Weller's post boys and donkeys, but however that may be, he is an undeniable fact in our midst at present, and though his persistence amounts to impudence, and his unconquerably good temper drives you to the verge of lunacy, you know him to be a necessary evil, and while he is canvassing you, your own canvasser is at somebody else. As for the good old times you wish back again, they can no more be recalled than the toys and rattle you once delighted in, and there, as you were thinking you had already enough life insurance, round comes Our Canvasser with a smirk on his lip and a gleam in his eye, wide awake and ready for business.

In Russia strikers who interfere with men willing to work are severely punished, because Russia isn't a free country. It is only in free countries that every man is at liberty to interfere with every other man's business.—Boston Transcript.