

friend, Mr. Ali. Smith, was an agreeable incident. Doubting his powers to entertain as of old, by reason of his late long sick spell, the result of an accident, his usual diffidence was more acute. The unanimous verdict was, however, that his convalescent body carries still the old-time complement of social and mental vigor. After the banquet, adjournment was made to the parlors, and until early hours there was fancy dancing and high stepping by the members; also songs and trills of bygone times, which, as the manager of the—Company says, brought tears to his eyes, owing to the reminiscence that was in them; in the songs. At early hours, under such circumstances, criticism is out of place.

Business being concluded, nearly all the members left on Thursday night. Those remaining over, therefore, had a quiet time.

The good fellowship of the members was never more strongly marked than on this occasion. The isolation of the place tended to bring altogether, and to make each dependent on other for entertainment, so that the influences all round made for good.

The presence of Mr. Frank Haight, now manager of the "Waterloo" Fire, for the first time at an annual meeting of the C. F. U. A., was duly noted and appreciated.

As I close, I am reminded that the Bank of Toronto cases, against the Insurance Companies *re* John Eaton loss, have commenced at Osgoode Hall under Chief Justice Meredith.

Yours, *Ariel.*

Toronto, 26th September, 1898.

### LONDON LETTER.

14th September, 1898.

#### FINANCIAL.

The Board of Trade returns for August have given pause to the pessimists. The returns of our total imports and exports show substantial increases upon the figures for the corresponding month of last year. The imports increase 11.5 per cent., or about twenty million dollars, and the exports have expanded 7.5 per cent., or about seven million dollars. The settlement of the Spanish-American war, the waning of the Far Eastern diplomatic heat, and the cessation of the great coal strike, give us reason to think that conditions favourable to that industrial activity of which are the triumphs of peace are approaching.

The announcement of the definite conclusion of the rate-cutting war in Canadian and American rails caused quite a sensation in the London market. Late-ly in the section where Can. Paes. and Trunks are bought and sold, there has been desolation and limp-ness. But on Wednesday the scene was galvanized into such activity that the other markets complained of the noise. The hubbub reminded one somewhat of the days of Kaffir Boom. All the stocks concerned registered improvements in prices, which improvements are being maintained. Sir William Van Horne's ready acceptance of the ruling of the Interstate Commerce Commission caused some astonishment, but it is surmised that he knows how to score in the future.

The continued appreciation in the prices of Argentine securities, very well indicates the industrial progress made by the republic in the last year or two. Trade returns show substantial increases, as also do

import duties payable in gold. Harvest reports are very good. As the credit of the Government increases so the premium upon gold goes down at Buenos Ayres. Recently, Argentine was able to renew one of her loans in this country, at a lower rate of interest, and a conversion of her National Debt is expected soon, upon terms which will mean a heavy saving in annual interest charges.

The perpetual rumors about approaching trouble between Argentine and Chili, over the boundary question, are getting somewhat discounted here now, especially as it is probable the matter will eventually be submitted to outside arbitration.

Business is returning to the city, and brokers are hurrying back from their holiday resorts, just in time to catch the hinder part of the heat waves. Of the moping of foreheads, and the absorbing of drinks there has been no end last week down Throgmarten street. Companies are going to come out again, and a busy autumn is being prophesied.

The mining market is getting into good condition, but the properties that go to make up Hannan's Belt in West Australia are coming in for a rather large order of disfavor. It is said that the Belt might with irrigation become a passable market garden, but it will never depreciate the value of gold.

#### INSURANCE.

The recent issue of \$25,000 shares by the Scottish Alliance Insurance Company has been considerably over subscribed, the issue provoking a great deal of interest and favorable comment. The funds of this admirably organized and directed office now stand as follows:—Paid-up Capital, \$500,000; Reserve Fund, \$735,000.

For a record of the most complete misfortune, the Empress Assurance Corporation captures the palm. Only formed at the end of 1895, no less than \$840,000 have been absolutely lost to date, and very probably another \$125,000 will be wanted to clean the remaining accounts in the books. Another call of \$5 per share, making the \$25 shares paid up to the extent of \$15 each, is being asked for by the directors. The Fire Department was handed over to the Eastern Counties Company, and cost the corporation over \$150,000 to liquidate. The Marine Department for which this last call is being made will leave this loss far in the rear. The loss on the 1896 account amounts to, at least, \$325,000, and the directors believe that the same will be the ultimate loss on the 1897 account. In all, it can be said that the Corporation's late marine underwriter lost for his company in the short space of two years something like \$650,000. This huge loss reminds one that, when Rutherford was underwriting for the now absorbed Universal Insurance Company, he dropped about the same amount. In the case of the Universal, though there was a paid-up capital of a million; in the case of the Empress, it was only \$375,000. The Empress' case is a record. Its new underwriter is a very capable man, and as expenses have been cut right down, it is possible that the corporation will in time pull through. It will take a long time though.

The appointment of F. J. Lee Smith as general-manager of the Credit Assurance and Guarantee Cor-