

diploma to prove to those interested that the holder has passed a satisfactory examination on the subject and is competent and understands what he claims in regard to watch repairing. That is all a physician can generally show, a diploma, and why is not one as good as the other? It is as near the right thing as we can get, and we must make the best of it. An horological school grants diplomas to those who can buy them by losing much time and money, and many workmen who have been taught the rudiments of the trade and afterwards perfected themselves by the study of Saunier, Grosseman and Excelsior's works, must do without, or go and learn what they already know in order to obtain a diploma.

An association diploma or certificate can be granted for not more than the mere printing would cost, and the applicant could produce specimen work or undergo an examination at his leisure.

Now, readers, what shall it be? Shall the watch repairers have an association? There are three beside myself who are in favor of such an association, but we should have at least three hundred to start with.

Do not, after reading this over, mentally resolve to take action to-morrow, or bye and bye, but act at once, do something which will improve your business, or, if you are not a watch repairer, call the attention of your watch repairer to this appeal and persuade him to take some action in the matter. Simply write the one word "Association" on a card if nothing more, and direct it to

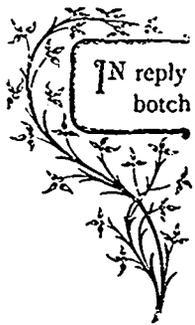
C. E. BILLINGS,

April 21, 1890.

208 Dundas street, London, Ont.

MR. KLINCK HAS THE FLOOR.

Editor TRADER—Sir :



IN reply to the question, "What shall we do with the botch?" and the working of a good horological school in connection therewith, I will venture to make a few suggestions.

That a great proportion of the watchmakers now in the trade are sorely in need of technical education is a fact which everyone who understands his business will admit. Whatever may be the causes of this condition—and some of them have been well described by your correspondents in the late issues of the TRADER—it is certain that there is a general resentment against, and a desire to get rid of the botch, the annoyance he causes, and the reflection he casts on those who are competent and honest enough to do their work properly. If this could be done, a blessing would be conferred upon the trade in particular and the public in general. But, just what to do, and how to do it, in order to arrive at this end, is a problem not so easily solved.

No plan that I can think of, or that has been proposed by your correspondents, is free from great difficulties which would be hard to overcome. I have little sympathy with the proposition of compelling everyone to pass a certain examination, and to hold a certificate of competency before he should be

allowed to commence repairing on his own account, simply because I deem it impracticable. If such a thing could be done—if the Government could be reasonably asked to interfere—there is no doubt that a great improvement in the condition of things in the trade would soon manifest itself.

It is, however, not probable that the Government will interfere, nor is it likely that anything would be done by it in aid of instituting or maintaining schools of instruction. For this reason, and because I believe that reforms of this kind can only be brought about by paying proper attention to the education of those who are lacking it, I find myself obliged to fall into line with those of your correspondents who agitate the opening of an Horological School by private enterprise, or by the co-operation of a body of persons interested in the advancement of the science and practice of horology.

In point of knowledge, a certain Arabian philosopher has divided mankind into three distinct classes, and has described and placed them at their value as follows :

1st. "He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool.—Leave him alone."

2nd. "He who knows not, and knows that he knows not, will learn.—Teach him."

3rd. "He who knows, and knows that he knows, is a wise man.—Follow him."

Watchmakers, in this respect, do not differ from the rest of humanity. Representatives of all three classes are found amongst them, and the first class seems to be by no means the smallest. In order to do anything for the advancement of the trade, the first thing necessary would be to get enough members of the second class together to form a class which would be willing and in a position to place themselves under the instruction of a selected few of the third class.

The moment this could be done a long step in the right direction would have been taken. Then, whether the place of instruction would be a thoroughly equipped Horological College, costing thousands of dollars to institute and maintain, open to students year in and year out, or simply a lecture room, furnished with the most necessary apparatus for teaching and illustrating a theoretical and technical course of a few months duration, would depend altogether on the amount of support that would be forthcoming.

For reasons following, I believe that Horological Schools, in themselves, are inadequate to meet the demand for workmen in this country. The mechanical and commercial interests of the retail watch and jewelry trade are so inseparably connected—one so dependent on the other—that a workman, educated in the former branch alone—a graduate of an Horological College, if you like—would meet with great difficulty in building up a trade of his own, or in doing justice to that of his employer, especially if he were obliged to compete with one who was well up in both branches.

What I mean is this: All the information necessary to make a thorough retail watchmaker and jeweler, or a valuable assistant to one, cannot be obtained at a college. A certain amount of knowledge of human nature, as well as an ability to occasionally leave strictly methodical ways and to adapt oneself to conditions as they exist, are indispensable. The proper place for a man to obtain a proficiency in this respect is right in