

Canadian Wayside Sketches.

THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

As we have no shopkeepers amongst us in Canada, but are all, every mother's son of us, merchants, it follows as a necessary sequence that we require a large staff of Commercial Travellers. I am not in any way particular as to factions, and in fact have ever had an antipathy to them since my schoolboy days, when they presented themselves to me as savouring of a parsimonious and mean spirit, and when I registered a vow that I would never split a cent into any smaller denomination, as being derogatory alike to the national currency and the pocket money of a young gentleman; but I believe the statistics show about one traveller to every head and a half of the population.

I know nothing about your raw material, nor your law of demand and supply. I am unable to distinguish "good goods" from "bad bade," and I am absolutely ignorant as to the genealogy of our Commercial Traveller or his asserted connection with the Pilgrim Fathers; that he was a specific creation from our own clay, and indigenous solely to our own soil, I should be inclined to believe, did not the Mosaic dictum stare me in the face and force the rejection of that theory. We owe, by the way, a great deal to Moses, and have much to be thankful for, he has saved us so much thinking and research, and at the same time afforded us a sort of sledge-hammer argument most convincingly effective against our adversaries in opinion. But what has theology to do with commercial travelling? Very little, I am afraid—"Paullo majora,"—and I say I attempt no analysis of the origin of the C. T., but take him simply as I find him in the present day; and here he is:

A jolly-looking, well-developed specimen of humanity, on whose brow appears no furrow, and on whose lip lurks always a smile. Some 5 feet 10 inches of man incased in some 6 feet 3 inches of overcoat (our own goods), with the most recherche of fashionable fur caps, the brightest polished and rather large boots; a horseshoe pin in the latest "line" of scarf; a ring which would be an absolute incubus to a less robust man's finger; a superfluity of watch-chain and pendant emblem; with a sort of comfortable appearance on the whole, as though "chill penury had ne'er frozen the genial current of his soul," and that he has just risen from the consumption of continual Christmas dinners. All these, I say, taken together, with a slight suggestion of Falstaff and a soupçon of Sancho Panza added, make up the *tout ensemble*.

Look at him now, sitting at the hotel office window, with his favourite tilted back attitude, and his favourite tilted up cigar, whilst sturdy porters make obeisance before him, and crouching bell-boys tremble. He is watching the passers-by, and he is at the same time pondering—he knows everybody, of course, and has frequently to come out of his reverie to acknowledge numerous salutations. He has, however, the art of keeping up a conversation and pondering at the same time; even now, as he bows to the passing young lady with his sweetest smile, he is intent on cogitating the advisability of calling (professionally, of course) on Mr. Breakdown, across the road; he is taking a mental inventory of that gentleman's goods and effects, and has come probably nearer the mark than that gentleman would himself. He has evidently some unpleasant reminiscences connected with Mr. Breakdown—though he effected a sale, he was himself effectually sold; this, however, was long since, so he finally decides the matter by a reference to his treasured "vade mecum," which consists of certain calligraphic signs in neatly bound covers, and which always reposes in the innermost recesses of one of his unfathomable and mysterious pockets.

During the first five minutes of his arrival he has found out all the men in his "line" who

have been in town since his former visit, and he knows also who will be on his heels by the next train. His samples are already artistically displayed upstairs, and so, having stricken Mr. B. from his visiting list (in all honour, be it said), he sallies forth to leave his cards and to seek business.

It is, of course, no direct injury to the merchant to take a look at his samples, even though equal of course he doesn't require anything "in that line," but let him once get inside that room, and I hereby publicly challenge any one of them to get out without leaving our C. T. an order. I don't care if it is for \$10,000, or for a lace shawl for his daughter's wedding day, which happy and prospective occasion it is true is rather a long way off, considering that young lady only arrived at two o'clock this a.m., yet has not our C. T. asserted that lace will be going up all the time—but to get out without leaving some order I absolutely defy him.

In the sample room the C. T. is absolute, the autocrat of all the Czars is a nonentity in comparison; his word is gospel, his fiat is irrevocable. He will tell you unblushingly the happy and fortuitous circumstances whereby "The House" (his employers are always "The House") became possessed of that extraordinary line of velvet, of that extraordinary line of silks, at that still more extraordinary line of prices; he knows the number of yards left of them in the whole world, and will tell you within twenty-four hours of when the supply of the same article at any price will cease.

I remember once being present by chance at one of those interesting recitals to a young, oh so very young a merchant, and the thrilling and hazardous circumstances under which "The House" had secured one particular line fairly chilled me to the necessity of a stimulant. I know that amongst other minor and trivial matters was involved the overthrow of the dynasty of some silk-producing country, a declaration of war between two powerful nations, a piratical revolt, a fall in the Bank of England stocks, and, if my memory is not defective, I think there was a murder or two thrown in.

The C. T. does his best, of course, to make sales, and does it, let it be said, as times go, in a fair and legitimate way; but I should so like some evening, after he has packed up to take him to some quiet corner away from all mortal ken, and then ask him to unbosom himself to me, and give me his calm and unbiassed opinion as to the deservability of the punishment of the lamented Ananias and Sapphira.

VIATOR.

Clerical Quits.

A DRAMA OF THE DAY, AS PERFORMED AT "GRIP" THEATRE, ADELAIDE STREET, TORONTO.

ACT. I.—Convocation Hall, Toronto.

Enter Bishop Perspirationman and Clerical Delegates.

Bishop Perspirationman, of Yorkville.

To pay or not to pay, that is the question;
Whether 'tis safer for the Church's interests
To pay Stinsonius the salary agreed,
Or deftly to refuse? My reverend brethren,
Lend me your ears, (which laymen say are long).
And tender your advice.

Sly Church Delegates—

My Lord, your Lordship
Had best consult your Lordship's own opinions,
Or with the Lord Bishop of Shantylville take counsel,
Or with his Lordship of Seagoe—
Yet would we counsel that no salary
Be paid unto the catfish who hath soiled
His clean hands by doing laymen's work.

Slow Church Delegates—

We think our Bishops should agree with Paul,
"If any will not work he shall not eat,"
And since Stinsonius doth require to eat,
And since work clerical was not forthcoming,
What could Stinsonius do but work as layman?
Pay him his salary? certainly! yes! Amen!

Bishop Perspirationman.

I do dislike me of these Slow Church delegates,
They never will address me as "your Lordship!"
Nor yield due deference to ARTHUR YORKVILLE.
And though before I had the luck to be
Slipped into this contested Bishopric
Known as Slow Church and slowest of the slow,
Skim milk of evangelic pious dullness,
To turn my coat I greatly wish to try,
Praise surplised choirs, and how is that for High?

ACT II.—Convocation Hall.

Bishop Perspirationman. Enter Profane Laity.

Laity—

We humbly wish, if possible, that all
This unclean linen were not washed,
These parson squabbles settled otherwise
Than in the law courts, to the church's scandal.

Bishop—

Dear! beloved, do not thus presume!
And know that ye must be more reverent,
And more esteem the ministerial office,
Which to exalt, it is our Lordship's purpose,
In this cathedral of Saint J. of Yorkville,
To name a score of Canons, two Archdeacons,
High dignitaries with ecclesiastic leggings,
Whom ye must honour.

Laity—

Yes, it is our duty!

Bishop—

And pay high salaries.

Laity—

Duty so requires.

Bishop—

And from all tax and impost must exempt.

Laity—

Such is the duty of the humble layman.

ACT III.—A Law Court.

Enter Bishop, Judge, Laity, Lawyers and Stinsonius.

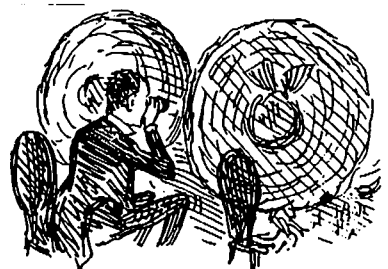
Bishop—

I tell the court here that this man Stinsonius
Is guilty of the most heinous crimes—
He hath earned cash and paid his bread and butter
By working like a coarse and common layman!
He hath to far Australia made voyage,
And thence imported the unorthodox emu,
Wherefore I pray his salary be docked.

Judge—

Whatever salary Stinsonius had a right to,
No honest work of his can make him forfeit;
In Canada, all before the law are equal,
So pay the man his dues, or dread the sequel!

TABLEAU.—Stinsonius is paid amid frantic applause from Laity.



A NOW-A-DAY NUISANCE.

Oh, the cart-wheel hat! the cart-wheel hat!
What a torturing, crazy-bred nuisance is that!
A plague to the eyes,
So monstrous in size,
The glaring, and flaring, and vile cart-wheel hat.

Oh, woman, just fancy a man in a hat
Built of ten yards of plush or the skin of a cat—
Three yards all around,
And its weight, I'll be bound,
Not less than a stone—woman! please fancy that.

Oh, the cart-wheel hat! the cart-wheel hat!
At opera and lecture behind it I've sat;
But I saw not a sight
The whole blessed night,
Because of that brain-racking, huge cart-wheel hat.

Oh, mankind of Canada, if you would know
The pleasures of theatres, come with me, go
To a millinery store,
Full of cart-wheels, galore,
Wide-brimmed, and all trimmed and set out for show.