

OF THE FINANCIAL MISCREANT.

The bed of the financial scalawag is being filled with publicity tacks. Apparently his repose after transgression will not be peaceful. Worse than the petty thief or burglar, he is a parasite upon small savings and responsible for financial ruination. Largely, he has been able to escape through legal loopholes. The investor is terrorized into inaction when losses come. The stock salesman is in another part of the country, in another land perhaps. Inquiry at the company's office brings back a dead letter. Nobody knows where are the promoters. Nobody remembers the company, except for its attractive advertisements. Nobody cares but the man or woman whose savings have been sacrificed at the altar of unclean finance and unenforced laws.

A much-desired change is occurring. The unscrupulous promoter, the barnacle of the stock market, will be the sufferer. Several factors are working to this end. It may be because somewhat belatedly a new era of conscience is dawning. The independent financial press and those other papers which comment similarly on such matters, may take first credit. The means of educating the investor, the first necessity to the art of safely placing capital and avoiding the pitfalls of speculation, they have advised. The Monetary Times has diverted useful capital from questionable channels to where it will be useful in national development, at the same time affording return and safety to the investor. This journal chooses to do that campaign work in a quiet way. Others, such as Toronto Saturday Night, prefer a more sensational, and to some more attractive, style. The result is the same. The bad promoter becomes afraid and disappears. For nearly half a century The Monetary Times has advised investors and adopted fearless criticism towards questionable financial and other promotions. Libel suits are a necessary experience, but it is curious how their power vanishes when the newspaper has facts and moral strength to back it.

Last week, armed with bench warrants issued by the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, special agents of the Department of Justice simultaneously raided brokers' offices in New York, Philadelphia, Jersey City, Baltimore, Cincinnati and St. Louis. This is understood to be the first move in a campaign to abolish illegal stock gambling in the United States. In Canada there is also a better disposition in official departments to check company promotion methods which hurt legitimate development. Enormous sums are lost annually by investors chiefly because the men who should be in gaol are peddling valueless stocks. Cobalt mining propositions, of which no reputable authorities have ever heard, are being utilized in Western Canada to magnetize savings. Wireless telegraph securities are having considerable sale also in the West. Oil stocks are enjoying patronage, while in several cities real estate is sowing the seeds of future disappointment. The province of Ontario has done more perhaps than any other in checking these evils, and room there is for a more strenuous campaign. While one cannot guard the investor against every trap, the least to do is to enforce laws against men harming Canadian credit. If the eel-like financial buccaneers still continue to escape the law must be strengthened.

"PASSING THE DOCTOR."

It was to be expected that life agents would take sides upon a matter where experience is so diverse as the acceptance or rejection by medical men of prospects who were examined for life assurance. Two more interested parties life agents, to wit, have sent their opinions

and experience to The Monetary Times. They differ considerably. One of them, having had the unpleasant fortune to have his application for insurance refused early in life has no sweet words for the doctor who refused him, or for other doctors who do likewise with other prospects. Moreover, he cites a case where a man who was refused insurance three times in twenty-four years because of symptoms of unsoundness lived to be seventy, and outlasted the doctors who refused him. So he scoffs at doctors.

More complaisant is Mr. March Meadows, who has plainly a reverence for medical doctors, as he knows them. That is, his experience seems to have been with local medical men, whose reports were, as a rule, favorable to his clients, and passed by head office. And thus he had no reason to denounce chief medical examiners. And this reminds us of what must always lend weight to the opinion of the local doctor: The local examiner sees the man and tests him; the chief medical examiner most often does not, but may pronounce upon his physical fitness or unfitness from reading his measurements, breathing, complexion, heart-beats, distensions of the arteries, or what not, and comparing them with corresponding peculiarities in men tabulated and ticketed as warnings in a previous age.

It must be remembered, to the credit of the chief medical examiners, that these functionaries, placed as it were

Upon a hill retired,

In thoughts more elevate, and reasoning high,

sometimes by learned doubting and persistent enquiry, ascertain more about subjects whose habits are their especial quest than local doctors do. Nay, it is quite probable that the eminent man of medical science in a great city who has walked the hospitals, who is widely read and amply experienced, whose mind is logical and whose reasoning just, is more likely to reach a clear conclusion upon any abstruse case than the country practitioner who has not these opportunities and qualities. And, too, anyone, whether agent or nearest friend, who sets up to censure a doctor for too pessimistic a decision as to a certain case, ought to remember that possibly the subject has not told all the truth about himself, and that the doctor may have found it out.

March Meadows admits straightforwardly that he has learned from the quiet reasonings and explanations of a doctor the probable evil condition of a prospect's interior what his (the agent's) own observation would never have taught him. His letter says: "I notice your Irish doctor that is speaking before the Yorkshire Institute tells a lot about puffy eyelids and squinting eyes, slurring speech and clubbed finger tips as indications that all is not O.K. with a man's insides. He is dead right about these. I have learned a lot about these things from my doctor, who has told me about what things show glandular trouble or tubercular trouble, and what ill state of health is shown by muddy complexions or by pimples." So I reckon I will stick by the doctor's ideas, for he knows his business better than I know mine. Only I would hate to have the head office doctor contradict him and sit on him, for I know he works up his cases well."

It is safe to conclude that the last word has not by any means been said about under-average lives by the scientists. And it is at least significant to find the London speaker at the Vienna Congress of Actuaries telling his hearers that the line between the two kinds of lives (the average and the under-average) cannot be reduced to a mathematical formula. "It must necessarily be determined by the individual judgment of the actuary—here he 'magnifies his office'—assisted by the doctor."