

FIRST LECTURE

HISTORICAL SKETCH.



WHEN I was invited by the Educational Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association to speak upon the subject of banking I gladly acceded to their request for three reasons: First, because I believe in the work which they are carrying on in an educational way, and am therefore glad to co-operate with them; secondly, because there is a conspicuous lack of knowledge on the part of the general public regarding banks and banking; and, thirdly, because the acceptance of this invitation may, and I hope will, afford me an opportunity of conveying a certain amount of information to the younger bank officers in Montreal, who may not have time or facility for acquainting themselves with the history and theory of banking. I feel this more particularly because the educational side of the Canadian Bankers' Association has been lost sight of completely during the past few years, and the essay competitions, which did much to promote a desire for the study of banking, have been discontinued.

When I promised to deliver an address on banking the intention was that it should be confined to one evening, but I found that it was beyond my power to condense the subject in such a way as to make it at all intelligible in the space of an hour or so. I have, therefore, arranged it in a series of four lectures, in which I shall endeavour to deal with the subject at sufficient length to make the more important features intelligible to the uninitiated, and, if possible, in such a way as to encourage young bank officers to take a greater interest in the higher branches of their profession. I propose to deal almost exclusively with the banking business as we have it in Canada, believing that this will be of more practical benefit to you than treating the subject generally.

In fairness to you I should explain that this is the first time I have ever given a public lecture, and I must therefore ask you to bear with the deficiencies that must naturally occur under such circumstances. I do not intend that any lecture will exceed one hour in length, and I can promise you that the first one will be the driest of the series.

ANCIENT BANKING.

The business of loaning money, which is one of the principal sources of profit to a banker, has existed from the very earliest times. In the Book of Exodus the Israelites were warned against