

A MATCH OF MINDS.

In the preceding issue of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS I promised our professional bookkeepers a proposition under the above title, which promise I shall try to redeem to-day.

We have had lacrosse, base-ball, cricket, walking and swimming matches, boat and horse races, to which the greater number of our merchants contributed largely, without having ever received any direct benefit from the same. And since the welfare of our commerce is in immediate danger, at least as far as it rests upon keeping *true accounts*, it becomes all professional bookkeepers, merchants and others who are in favour of advancing the interests of our commerce, to stamp out all imposition of scientific bookkeeping, and hold out some inducement to our young men that it will be worth while fitting themselves for the highest position in a counting-room.

Let us, therefore, have a "Match of Minds," by which proficiency in scientific bookkeeping will take due honours. Give the successful competitors the first chance of filling vacancies, which may at any time occur in our principal offices, and the result will show itself. But let it be understood that, should such a match, with the support of our merchants, be brought about, it does not mean war against the average bookkeeper; for while we promote the interests of the merchants and do justice to professional bookkeepers, we compel the neglected mind either to fit himself for the position of an accountant or yield the palm to the deserving man.

Supposing that this new departure meets with general favour and the carrying out of this plan is heartily supported by subscriptions from our merchants, who receive in return a great benefit by knowing who is able to fully do their office work, the merchants, bookkeepers and friends of this cause could meet, elect a committee and make preliminary arrangements with a view of having the match come off some time in February, 1880, as an earlier date might seriously interfere with the balancing of our merchants' books after the 1st of January.

As to the question who shall have a right to be a competitor, permit me to give my idea.

In order to have fair play in this interesting movement, we cannot base upon anything but look to our shield "Experience," which will settle the question at once.

For instance, those who have had at least two years' practical experience in a merchants' office and worked to the entire satisfaction of their employer, shall be admitted into the Third Class.

The Second Class to be open to competitors of not less than five years' experience.

The First Class shall be open to competitors of not less than eight years' experience. No one older than 30 years of age should take part in the proposed match as it must be understood that the prizes, which may be offered according to the support of the subject, are simply to induce our young bookkeepers to increase their knowledge, aim for higher accomplishments than the average bookkeeper commands at the present day, and come up to the standard where a thorough, competent manager of a counting room ought to be.

It should afford any man capable of managing a merchant's office properly, a great pleasure in not only being at the head of an office, but that the employer can repose implicit faith in his bookkeeper's integrity and efficiency.

Therefore, let our young men who wish to attain to the profession of an accountant, come forward, show their superiority of mind over another in this branch of business, and the merchants will certainly recognize ability. For an able man is always preferred to the less talented one.

The merchant who can carry back his thoughts to the days when he held the position of a bookkeeper, will coincide with me that the responsibilities in a counting-room are many while the laurels are few! But it is only right that these few laurels should not bear the dew of imposition which every employer can stop effectually. Firstly, by not employing poor help; secondly, by promoting education in bookkeeping and general office work; and thirdly, by encouraging the study of the profession in giving those who have obtained proficiency, the first chance of filling any office vacancies.

Thus, while the merchant secures his own interests he helps on the worthy man and lays the foundation of commerce upon sound principles; much needed in the tide of adversity as well as prosperity.

Merchants! support this new departure! for it will give light to the minds, air imposition and put money into your pockets; three very important elements nowadays!

Should our professional men take up the question of "Our Bookkeepers," and succeed in bringing about a "Match of Minds," the judges could be elected by our merchants, and ought to consist of men of not less than 12 years' experience, who are known to be thorough accountants and perfectly acquainted with practical and theoretical bookkeeping.

Afterwards an association could be formed of those who are and merchants who were practical bookkeepers, extending the membership to those merchants also who are in favour of having their books kept by capable men.

However, this subject will receive more attention as the proposed match advances.

E. W. B.

DO SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF.

Almost any man of capacity and independent spirit who has reached middle age, and been continuously employed by others, must regret that he did not in early life enter into some sort of business for himself. The majority of men, whatever their trade or talent, are anxious to be hired; and if they are not hired, are liable, and likely, too, to come to want. The consequence is that the market for labour, from the finest to the coarsest, is nearly always overstocked, and that in dull, hard times—such as we have had for five years past—it is irremediably glutted. At such periods, thousands and thousands of men, all over the land, especially in cities, are idle, unable to support themselves and their families, simply because they cannot get places, and they cannot, or think they cannot, do anything for themselves. They have been accustomed to be hired; they are acquainted with no other way of gaining a livelihood; and, when they cannot be hired, their case seems hopeless, and they yield to what they regard as the inevitable. By far the greater part of the pauperism, vagabondage, and lack of occupation in the country now and in the past, comes, and has come, from the inability or indisposition, strengthened by long indulgence, of the mass of people to push and manage their own fortunes, instead of trusting them to the direction and dictation of others.

In the beginning of our practical lives it is natural and necessary that we should serve an apprenticeship of some sort; that we should be instructed in the calling or profession we intend to adopt. We must in some way be hired before we can expect to earn for ourselves. The trouble is that we are apt to remain in this commercial tutelage long after we should have been our own masters, and when we want to get out of it, if we ever do, it either is, or seems to be, too late, and we are deterred by the formidable character of the undertaking. Thus it happens that in middle age we are, as has been said, likely to regret the course we have too steadily followed, neglecting opportunities, and wasting years that we cannot revive. It behooves us, as a certain amount of experience shows, to try our trade or talent, after we have fully learned or demonstrated it, in our own behalf, in place of following or exercising it in the interest of others. Our apprenticeship ended, we cannot too soon set up for ourselves. The occasion may not be quite ripe; things may not be as we would have them—they very seldom are so—but still we should begin, and let improvement and further encouragement come in their own good season. For lack of such enterprise and resolution, innumerable men in all departments of activity have been kept down constantly, and have lost more than half their usefulness. They timidly hesitated and waited to do something for themselves until the time had irrevocably gone by, and their destiny had been fixed.

The large proportion of failure in business and the professions is often used as an argument against the wisdom of young men attempting to be independent. But it is no argument at all. Most of the failures result from defects in the men, not in what they have undertaken. They have been imprudent, dishonest, careless, extravagant, over ambitious, and therefore they have met with disaster. If they have not; if they have conducted their affairs intelligently and properly, they will be pretty certain to be so sustained and helped as to be able to go on again; and the next time circumstances over which they have no control will not, in all probability, declare against them. Out of failure not traceable to dishonourable dealing, incapacity, or recklessness, prosperity may, and often does, spring, for a new trial is generally accorded to him who has worked faithfully, and not abused public or private trust. Honest failure is not calamity; it excites sympathy and insures timely aid; for the most part, finally resulting in justification of, and advantage to, the man who has failed.

But failures at the worst are hardly so bad as losses of situation or absence of employment to the hired. They who depend on salaries or wages are never secure, and they are prone to feel their insecurity and their dependence, if they be sensitive or proud, in a way that wears upon and depresses them more than they think. It is very common to say that a really valuable man seldom wants a place; that if he have not one he can easily get another. But this is not true, as numberless valuable men have found to their sorrow, mortification and bitterness. Hundreds of such men, whose services have been dispensed with from no other cause than desire or need to retrench, have actually suffered for the necessities of life. They are thoroughly competent; they are industrious; they are trustworthy, and they could prove it by their acts; but they could not, hard as they tried, though they have offered to do anything, obtain any situation worthy of the name. Nobody has any sympathy with them or any inclination to aid them. They want to be hired, and the community, with a strange injustice, rarely has respect or compassion for the army of men who have such want. Why, it asks, don't they do something for themselves? This is the question everybody asks, and the answer is an echo, "Why don't they?" Let those for whom it is not too late answer it soberly, practically, wisely, by a little enterprise and by positive deed. There are thousands here at this moment who lament that they have never tried to do something for themselves. There are very few who, having done something for themselves, have reason for regret. The less in the world teaches is, do something for yourself! and he who makes

not the trial before middle age is apt to sow his future with seeds of discontent.

FOOT NOTES.

AN IMPERIAL AMAZON.—The Empress of Austria's life at her estate of Gödöllö is unlike that of most queens. She spends a great deal of her time in her stables and riding-school. The riding-school is a large area connected with the castle by a covered passage, and having a luxurious tribune for spectators. Leading from this apartment is a ball-room; and the empress is described as sometimes giving a semi-equestrian, semi-terpsichorean entertainment to her guests, when waltzes and mazurkas are interspersed with feats of horsemanship—the imperial lady herself mounting a wild Arabian horse which has given a great deal of trouble to its trainers.

STANTON-DICKENS.—In a letter, dated Washington, February, 1868, Mr. Dickens says, "I dined with Charles Sumner on Sunday, he having been an old friend of mine. Mr. Secretary Stanton (war minister) was there. He is a man of a very remarkable memory, and famous for his acquaintance with the minutest details of my books. Give him any passage anywhere and he will instantly cap it and go on with the context. He was commander-in-chief of all the northern forces concentrated here, and he never went to sleep at night without first reading something from my books, which were always with him. I put him through a pretty severe examination, but he was better up than I was."

WHO IS JOHN DUNN?—As the question is still frequently asked—Who is John Dunn, to whom the British Government have committed the office of ruler of an important section of Zululand? we may state shortly that John Dunn is the son of a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, who was killed by an elephant in Natal many years ago. John married a half-caste woman; but when he settled in Zululand most of the chiefs, by way of making him at home, sent daughters as offerings—gifts he could not well refuse. He has thus twenty Zulu hours in his harem, besides the half-caste, and his family already consists of ninety little Dunns. His profession for many years has been that of "gun-running," or, in other words, that of smuggling firearms across the frontier into Zululand, an operation he long conducted with noted success, thereby laying the foundation of his wealth. As the great Sir Garnet has decreed that gun-running shall cease, he has set a thief to catch a thief, and Dunn, no doubt, will prevent everybody he can from participating with himself in the profitable trade.

THE DARWINIAN THEORY CONFUTED.—The Darwinian hypothesis is not only unsupported by facts, but it is in flagrant contradiction to them. There are some 20,000 species of animals, and not one instance is known of different species being crossed without sterility ensuing in the animal thus begot. It seems a law of nature to keep species apart. Darwin, to support his hypothesis, has to assume that there may have been a time when this law was reversed. What would be thought of an astronomer, if he were to argue that though the attraction of gravitation is true now, there may have been a time when an apple thrown into the air would travel forever in space? Darwin's argument is precisely similar, though its fallacy is not so obvious at first sight. If the theory of evolution be true, a multitude of animals should be discovered in various stages of physical change, which would defy the efforts of naturalists to classify. As is well known, the reverse of this is true. A skilled naturalist finds no difficulty in placing each newly-discovered animal in its proper order.

AFRICAN EXPLORATION.—Lieutenant Cameron crossed Africa from Zanzibar in a south-western direction and more recently Stanley crossed it, navigating the great river Congo in canoes, but now two Englishmen, named Bagot and Beaver, have resolved upon what the *Cape Argus* describes as "one of the most hazardous feats of African exploration yet attempted." They are to travel north through Central Africa from the Zambezi river to the Victoria and Nyanza Lakes. This they are to attempt at their own expense, and the first cost of the equipment is estimated at from £3,000 to £4,000. There is still a large blank in the geography of Central Africa, and, were the present expedition successful, it would be in a great measure filled up, for, as is intended, a complete astronomical and general survey is to be made between the Zambezi and the great lakes under the Equator. Dr. Livingstone's greatest discoveries may be said to have been along the line of the Zambezi, and we may suppose what that truly great and good traveller would have thought of two Englishmen starting from that river with Lake Nyanza as their destination.

A MOSLEM VIEW OF CHRISTIANITY.—Snyed A. Bedaway, a Mahometan of Alexandria, has written to the *Pall Mall Gazette* a letter on what he calls the failure of Christianity. It is beyond doubt and nothing but rational, he observes, to say that real "Christianity has been perverted by the gloomy ages of the past, or has been erased immediately after Christ by those who would not naturally do so—namely, those who had the power of killing Christ himself; and all the present forms of Christianity are not worthy to be named as such." Luther's work he calls "a noble attempt to reform" Christian-

ity, but unfortunately it was only "the adding of so much water to mud." Bedaway thinks it quite practicable to provide evidence of "the spuriousness of all the present different creeds of Christianity." The Mahometan doctors, beside having special books on Christianity when they teach the doctrine of Islam, "refute on the most sound principles all religions, Christianity included, and it is simple, nevertheless just, to observe that Islam is unquestionably the most pure, real, and the most teaching theism of all the religions of the universe"—moreover it is "that religion which in less than a century has united—not by force of arms, as misrepresented by its enemies—the different and difficult nations that existed from near the heart of China to the very coast of Africa on the Atlantic, as well as northward and southward, to one common principle: the belief in the unity of God, and His—and only His—sacred worship (praise be to Him); and to do unto others any good, whether they would have it done unto themselves or not."

WOMAN'S HAND.—The female thumb is said to be an important index of the female character. Women with large thumbs are held by phrenologists, physiognomists, &c., to be more than ordinarily intelligent—what are called sensible women—while women with small thumbs are regarded as romantic. According to certain authors, who profess to have been observers, a woman's hand is more indicative of a woman's character than her face, as the latter is to a certain extent under the control of temporary emotions, or of the will, whereas the former is a fact which exists for any one who understands it to profit by. Consequently, a few hints about the proper reading of a woman's hand may be very useful to certain of our readers, especially married men, or men contemplating matrimony. Women with square hands and small thumbs are said to make good and gentle housewives. These sort of women will make any man happy who is fortunate enough to win them. They are not all romantic, but they are what is better—thoroughly domestic. Women with very large thumbs have a "temper" of their own, and generally a long tongue. There is a hint in this to a lover. Let him, the first time he seizes hold of his mistress's hand, examine, under some pretext or another, her thumb; and if it be large, let him make up his mind that as soon as he becomes a married man he will have to be a good boy, or else there will be the very deuce to pay. Again, if a young man finds that his lady-love has a large palm, with cone-shaped fingers and a small thumb, let him thank his stars—for in that case she is susceptible to tenderness, readily flattered, easily talked into, or talked out of anything, and can be readily managed. But if she is a woman with a square hand, well proportioned, and only a tolerably-developed thumb, why, then, she is either one of two distinct classes of women—she is either a practical female who will stand no nonsense, or she is a designing female; she is a woman who cannot be duped, or a woman who will dupe him.

HUMOROUS.

MANY men become round-shouldered by carrying trouble.

ONE touch of nature—When you get your nose frst-bitten.

DEAL gently with the 'erring or you'll get bones in your throat.

"AND oh, Edward," said the girl he was going to leave behind him, "at every stopping place, be sure you write; then go ahead."

IN a family in which there are two boys of about the same age, it is pretty difficult to decide whose birthright it is to roll out the ash barrel.

"DOCTOR," said a gentleman to his clergyman, "how can I best train up my boy in the way he should go?" "By going that way yourself."

THE boys are beginning to think it's about time to start a couple of cases of mumps and break up the school, which, of course, won't reopen until after Christmas.

A FASHION magazine says: "Ulsters will be worn somewhat longer this season." Well, then, by St. George, the men who wear them have got to wear stilts, that's all."

"PA," said a little boy, "a horse is worth a great deal more isn't it, after it's broke?" "Yes, my son. Why do you ask such a question?" "Because I broke the new rocking horse you gave me this morning."

A YOUNG lady of Moultrie County sends in a communication on some presumably interesting topic, with the request to "Please print it if not too full." It is hardly necessary to say that we hurl back the base insinuation with scorn—also the communication.

A BOY was caught in the act of stealing raisins in a shop, and was looked up in a dark closet by the grocer. The boy commenced begging most pathetically to be released, and, after using all the persuasion his young imagination could invent, proposed: "Sir, if you'll let me out and send for my daddy, he'll pay you for the raisins and let me be beside!" This appeal was too much for the grocer to resist.

THE *Pekin Gazette* is nearly 500 years old, and every now and then an old man hobbles into the office and pays a year's subscription, with the remark that he has been a subscriber ever since the first number was printed. The clerk, without betraying any surprise, observes, as he hands him a receipt, "Yes, we have several names on our list who have been subscribers from the start." Then the old man goes out muttering something about this world being full of lies.

A WALNUT street clerk was discharged and asked the reason. "You are so awful slow about every thing," said his employer. "You do me an injustice," responded the clerk, "there is one thing I am not slow about." "I should be delighted to hear you name it," remarked the proprietor. "Well," said the clerk slowly, "nobody can get tired as quick as I can." A motion for a reconsideration of his case has been referred to the proper committee.