

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JULY 15, 1889.

BIG HEAD.

It has been dinned in our ears until we are almost tired of hearing it, that "nothing succeeds like success;" but the saying, though having the semblance of truth, cannot be taken as absolutely reliable. When success develops the disease known here in the West as "big head," then success frequently opens the way to easy failure. The last sentence seems somewhat contradictory in substance, but its meaning can be readily comprehended. How many people who at first meet with moderate success in their undertakings, are afterwards greatly hindered in the attainment of still greater distinction, or ultimately entirely ruined, by this malady of "big head"? Really it seems that very few people can bear a little success in life without showing some symptoms of this disease. Nor is its development induced by success only in commercial pursuits. With the man of business, those who aim for distinction in professional, educational, social or political spheres, are all liable to suffer from the same trouble.

What is "big head"? "Whiskey head," sometimes called "big head," is not to be taken into account. The query it is difficult to answer lucidly, though the disease has many unmistakable symptoms, and is readily diagnosed. "Putting on airs" does not exactly convey the desired meaning, though this phrase, used in a broad sense, is not inappropriate. When this is used as a definition, the various ways of putting on airs must be taken into account. Those versed in the art of physic know that the same disease develops different symptoms in different individuals, according to the circumstances and conditions of the diseased persons. So it is with "big head." The symptoms vary in different persons, but there is no mistaking the disease. The verbose vendor of a quack medicine, after describing all the symptoms of infirmities which flesh is heir to, invariably concludes by intimating that the subject will likely only experience one or a few of these symptoms, but the terrible disease, for which his nostrum is the only panacea, is nevertheless certainly developing. So in this disease of "big head," the malady is certainly present,

though but a few of the symptoms may show on the surface.

The sufferer from "big head" is rarely if ever cognisant of the personal presence of the disease, which is working so insidiously upon him. Any person who has visited an insane asylum will have observed that many of the unfortunate inmates seem to labor under the hallucination that they are being unjustly detained among a lot of crazy people, they themselves of course being quite sane. Likewise, "big head" does not prevent the observance of the disease in others, though the sufferer therefrom cannot observe it in himself. Old Æsop remarked to the effect that those who were honest in their detestation of flattery, were often very susceptible to a little of the commodity, when judiciously administered. So the symptoms of "big head" are objectionable and detestable in others, but pleasing when personally experienced.

"Big head," as an outgrowth of some degree of success in life, must not be confounded with the vanity and conceit of the ignorant, and of those who have accomplished nothing in particular to develop any self-glorification. It is a trouble which shows itself by a visible swelling of the head of an individual, as he advances or succeeds in his sphere in life. By this swelling of the head, many men in the higher spheres of life are robbed of a portion of the distinction to which they are justly entitled, and are prevented from accomplishing much of the good which it should be in their power to perform. "Big head" has clouded their intellect and blunted their feelings, and made them unapproachable to the masses. Thus the opportunity of accomplishing much is lost. But while this is the case in the educational, social, and more distinguished walks of life, these remarks regarding "big head" are addressed more directly to the commercial community. Failure resulting from "big head," and following former success, is very common in the business world. The man who succeeds in his undertakings, and from this very success develops ideas above his business, is afflicted with "big head." He usually embarks in some enterprise which he considers is more in keeping with his improved circumstances, and very often winds up in a disastrous failure. It must not be understood from this that the idea is to discourage business changes, though changes in business

are for many reasons often undesirable. The reference is solely to those who feel above their business simply because they have made a little money. The person whose business is of an honest and honorable nature should never feel his calling beneath him. Again, men who have succeeded very well while careful and attentive to their business, have become afflicted with "big head" as they found themselves coming into easy circumstances. This "big head" has led them to put on business airs which the circumstances of the case did not warrant, and thus the door to failure has been opened. Others are led by the swelling of their heads to seek distinction in social or political spheres, to the neglect of their business, until failure cuts short their illusion.

To men who are succeeding in life, we would say, watch for any symptoms of "big head," and apply a radical remedy wherever there is an indication of the evil. Bear success meekly and patiently, using quiet judgment; and not forgetting what manner of man you are.

THE TRADE SITUATION.

The mercantile agency of Dunn, Wyman & Co., has issued their trade report for the first half of the present year, for the United States and Canada. In neither country does the report show any startling features, as to the number of commercial failures and the amount of liabilities, compared with the first six months of 1888. The total number of failures in the United States for the first half of the present year is given at 5,603, against 5,189 for the first six months of 1888, and 4,912 for the first six months of 1887. Total liabilities are, \$65,828,853 for first half of 1889, \$68,114,159 for 1888, and \$55,138,092 for 1887. For Canada the total number of failures for the past six months is 886, with liabilities of \$7,352,338 against 872 failures, with liabilities of \$7,802,422, for the first half of 1888, and 721 failures and liabilities of \$10,693,015 for the first half of 1887. It will be noticed that while the number of insolvencies in Canada has increased each year for the past three years, there has been a decrease in the aggregate of liabilities. For instance, total liabilities for the past six months show a marked decrease of over \$3,000,000, as compared with the same period of 1887, though in the portion of 1887, the number of insolvencies was considerably less than in