

UPS AND DOWNS

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ECHOES OF THE MONTH.

THE end of February finds us hard at work in preparation for the coming season's immigration, receiving applications and finding openings for the new comers who will soon be reaching us from England. I write on the eve of my departure for London, where, in the various Homes, the lads, big and little, will now be receiving the "finishing touches" of the training that, we hope, will prove to have fitted them for lives of honest service and useful citizenship in their future career in Canada.

We are thankful to record that, so far, there is every indication of as large a demand as ever, and in spite of bad times and all the efforts that have been made to arouse prejudice and ill feeling against our boys and our work, the number of applications is steadily increasing, and already we begin to doubt whether we must take any more applications for boys over 15. We dread having to disappoint farmers who are depending on us for their season's help, and although we have not yet received any definite advice as to the number and ages of the boys who are being sent out in the next party, we are beginning to think we have already as many places for big boys as we are likely to be able to fill, and we must confine ourselves to receiving applications for smaller boys only, or for bigger boys with the proviso that the applicant must be prepared for our not being able to supply them from the first party. For boys under 14 we are still open to receive applications, and any of our readers can do us valuable service by putting us in communication with farmers who can offer good homes to boys between the ages of 11 and 14.

Our method of dealing with applications is such as the experience of many years past has suggested as the most effectual to protect the interests of our young charges and prevent misunderstandings in the future. We are men of

business and we believe that the work of placing our boys should be conducted on business principles. When we receive a letter from a farmer telling us that he wishes to take one of our boys, we reply to him, sending him a printed circular in which full information is given as to the terms and conditions upon which boys of various ages are placed; the length of time for which engagements are made; the amount of wages we expect to be paid; the attendance at school required for younger boys; and so forth. Attached to this circular is a form which the applicant is requested to fill up, giving us his full name, post office and township address, railway communication, occupation, member-

Each applicant we supply is charged a fee of \$3 to cover the cost of the railway fare from Toronto to any point in the Province of Ontario to which the boy may be sent. Three dollars is not an exorbitant charge, but it just saves our having to tax the funds of the Homes for expense in sending out boys after their arrival in Toronto, and serves as a little contribution towards the costs of immigration.

The applications, with all particulars of each case, are carefully recorded in a book provided for the purpose and when the party of boys has left England, a copy of these entries is made on large sheets which are sent down by Mr. Davis to meet me at Halifax in the case of the spring party, or at Rimouski with the other parties. Between Halifax and Portland, or Rimouski and Quebec, the work of consigning the various boys to their respective places has to be got through. During the voyage out I have acquired a certain acquaintance with each boy and have been able to form a judgment as to the style of place for which he is adapted, and when I get the list of situations before me, it becomes a matter of "match-making," getting the right boy in the right place—and we had almost added "the wrong boy into the wrong place." We won't admit any "wrong" boys, however, but we will say the "easy-going," "come-day, go-day" boys into places where the employers are capable of doing a little bit of hustling, and where no quarter is given to indolence or idleness. How to get brothers and chums together is perhaps the most difficult problem, but by hook, or by crook, we generally manage to avoid separation, and it is a hard case if we cannot get brothers and particular friends within easy distance of each other.

As regards the applicants. Of course every one expects perfection. A boy must have no bad habits; he must be honest, truthful, and trusty; he must be kind to animals; he must have a special aptitude for farm work; must



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ship or otherwise of a Protestant Christian Church, and such other particulars as are necessary to enable us to form an idea as to who he is, what he is, and what he wants. All this has to be certified to by a minister or magistrate who affirms that he is well acquainted with the applicant, that he knows the information furnished on the form to be true and correct, and that, to the best of his belief and knowledge, the applicant is in all respects a fit and proper person to have a boy entrusted to his care and guardianship. By means of these precautions we do all in our power to guard against our boys falling into unsuitable hands and to satisfy ourselves as to the *bona fides* of the people with whom we are placing them.