

From Dry Goods to Soldiering.

The Early Career of General Hector Macdonald.

THE brilliant career of General Hector Macdonald in Africa, both north and south, is doubly interesting from the fact that he began life as a clerk in a drapery, or dry goods, store in the city of Inverness, Scotland. This was the establishment of Mr. Mackay, now retired from business.

It appears that young Macdonald took to soldiering from the love of it, and that he went off suddenly, leaving his employer in the lurch. For this he was afterwards very sorry, in case he might have put that gentleman to inconvenience, and in 1880, when colour sergeant, and, therefore, still in the ranks, he wrote Mr. Mackay a letter.

It was a long one, and in its opening passages Hector expressed the utmost contrition, and begged his old employer's forgiveness for an act committed nearly 10 years ago. That act was in getting drill lessons without his employer's knowledge and enlisting without his permission, thus breaking his apprenticeship agreement. Hector wrote "I regret the duplicity I exhibited then, and the want of confidence in you

—you who were always an indulgent—I fear too indulgent—always kind, and ever a cheerful and gentle master."

Hector, writing after that interval of 10 years, uses very harsh language towards himself for not frankly telling his employer that he wanted to be a soldier, and says that in the intervening years the thought of this and the possible embarrassment to business which his sudden and unannounced departure



GENERAL HECTOR MACDONALD

might have occasioned had given him "many a pang of remorse." He adds

"Many a time have I been on the eve of writing you to ask your forgiveness for my delinquency, but I became faint-hearted and feared being snubbed, and, to tell the truth, I might not have had the courage to do so now had it not been for a cutting which I saw from a newspaper a few days since, in which it was stated that eight years ago I had served as an assistant at another draper's establishment. Now, I know (and you know from my signature) that I was in your establishment—Mr. William Mackay, Association Buildings, Inverness.

"Of course, I have no wish, and your own good, strong and sound common sense would lead you to see that no end or good can be had by contradicting the report. Nevertheless, it opened a way for me to address you, for I felt not a little

nettled—a vain man when being put down as Mr. —'s production, whereas should anyone be credited with knocking sense into a stupid head, it should be you, and you alone.

"Now, you will please observe that any strides I made in my profession, or any more I may make, are due in a marked measure to the observance and imitation (so far as could be applied to a soldier's life) of your methodical and business-like manner of conducting your establishment, for I may add that what you taught—punctuality, order, cleanliness, method, and here I fell with you and received a lesson) implicit faith and obedience—are the main attributes of a good soldier.

"I need not say what caused me quitting your employ, yet it may be a good turn to you to say—never let your employes lodge with soldiers, or with those who were soldiers, for as sure as you do you may look out to losing some of them."

TROLLEY CAR AND THE MERCHANT.

STATISTICS giving the number of miles of electric railroads built during the past few years, as well as the number of lines in course of construction and projected, is something enormous. It is a wonderful showing of the progress of science and the energy of private enterprise, but back of it there is an economic condition that is worth looking into.

A trolley line between two towns or between a city and its suburbs brings each into a closer relationship with the other, in a business way as well as social, than the railroads do. It is much easier to get into an electric car than it is to go to the station and wait for a train. In Summer especially, a ride in an open electric car of eight or ten miles or more is a pleasure. It is reasonable to expect that a woman in doing her shopping would be more inclined to take a ride and do her shopping at a distance, especially if by taking the ride she would be enabled to reach a larger town and, perhaps, have a greater number of shops to select from. The expenditure of 10c. for an agreeable street car ride would certainly prove no obstacle in her visiting a neighboring town to do her shopping, and she would be very apt to avail herself of the opportunity. This would not only be the case with the women, who presumably have more leisure time than the men, but men, after working hours, would in all probability do the same thing. They would take their families to the neighboring town ostensibly for the ride, but some shopping would naturally be done. The merchant in the larger town, appreciating the advantage he would have, would in all probability take greater pains to advertise his store in the towns from which he would likely draw business on account of the electric road, and merchants in the smaller centres would find competition harder and keener than ever before. The trolley car is an important factor in business in many localities, and its influence cannot be safely ignored.—Chicago Dry Goods Reporter.

The superintendent of The Fair, Chicago, says every one of their 1,500 employes who have been with the concern one year gets a week's holidays with pay. Most of them get away between July 1 and September 1. Extra help is employed whenever necessary to supply the places of absentees. "We do not limit the length of the vacation to one week. Employes take more if desired, but we cannot afford to pay them for the time they are away over one week. I decide on all special cases, that is to say, employes who want to stay away over the regular week consult me, and I give them, so nearly as possible, the time they may desire. Many of our employes have gone abroad and been away four and six weeks. In order to stay away this length of time, however, they must have been in our employ three or four years at least.