

## COMMERCIAL MORALITY.

There is reason to deplore a certain lax morality among a class of business men, which permits them to act in a way that to the ordinary mind seems to belong to the same moral category as theft. We refer to that plan of systematic failing in business, by which the class referred to amass fortunes in a manner which, however immoral, is yet beyond the power of the law, as it at present stands, to adequately punish, much less prevent. For the honest bankrupt no properly constituted mind can fail to feel pity and sympathy. For the man who finds that though misfortune of any kind he has lost his all and is unable to pay his creditors, we naturally feel sorrow, and it is well for the law to provide some means by which he shall be relieved from a burden he is unable to bear. But while the great majority of business failures are undoubtedly of this nature, there are, unfortunately, only too many cases where a well arranged failure is looked on as the most convenient way of amassing a fortune. The honest and unfortunate bankrupt is entitled to sympathy, but the man, whose "failure" is the result of a well and cunningly devised scheme, is deserving of nothing but execration.

It is hard, at times to say to which class a bankrupt belongs, and, when there is a doubt, he should ever get the benefit of it. But the fact nevertheless remains that, for the benefit of society, and especially of the business classes, some stringent law, to meet the case of fraudulent bankrupts, should be enacted. There can be nothing more dangerous to the morals of our young men, nothing more calculated to undermine and vitiate their growing moral manhood than to see men living in splendid and gorgeously furnished houses, which they have bought with the sum which represented a part of the difference between the amount they actually owed their creditors, and the twenty-five, fifty or sixty cents on the dollar, they actually paid them. What father, when choosing books for his boy, would select those in which the hero attains success through sheer dishonesty? How often do we hear the "Dick Turpin" style of literature condemned for its vitiating and its demoralizing effects on its youthful readers. And yet society by its treatment of fraudulent bankrupts, is holding before the eyes of the young, examples a thousand times more redolent of moral corruption; a thousand times more calculated to cause them to entertain an exalted opinion of dishonesty. If reading a novel which has a criminal for a hero is calculated to vitiate and debase a boy's moral character, and to unsettle and pervert his perceptions of right and wrong, who can deny that to see a fraudulent bankrupt rolling in the lap of luxury, and caressed and honored by society, is infinitely more to be dreaded?—*Guelph Herald*.

## LUMBER FAILURES AND THEIR LESSONS.

Within the past half month three important failures have been made among manufacturers of lumber in Michigan—the land of fair margins and smart editors. The Danaher & Melendy Company and O. O. Stanchfield of Ludington, and the Alpena Lumber Company of Alpena, have been driven to the wall for the simple reason that the price they have each received for the product of their mills has been less than it cost them to produce it.

Some eight years ago the first named firm began their career as lumbermen at Ludington. They invested \$40,000 in cash. They were both practical men, had been engaged in the business long previous to their Ludington venture, and they erected a saw-mill, which, though

not an expensive one, was in all probability the smartest mill in Michigan. Its cutting of 25,348,917 feet of lumber last season with two circulars and two edgers has been the subject of almost world-wide comment. They likewise built a large, but not expensive store, engaged in the mercantile business, and are reported to have enjoyed the most extensive trade in dry goods and groceries in Ludington. In fact, the yearly profits arising from this branch of their business—amounting to, \$20,000—kept them afloat during the last two years. It was insufficient to keep them from becoming more and more involved, however, and the final result may be written in a word of three syllables—bankruptcy.

They have manufactured an average of 19,000,000 feet of lumber annually from their own timber, and it has generally been supposed they were making money, until they made an assignment. The liabilities amount to upwards of \$276,000. Add to this sum the capital with which they began business, and we have \$316,000 as the total loss in eight years. The assets, we are informed, cannot amount to more than \$100,000, which would leave a net loss of \$1.50 upon every thousand feet of lumber they have manufactured. They have been engaged in no outside speculations, but have lost all their money in the manufacture of lumber.

What made them fail? Simply and solely because lumber could not be made there and sold at Chicago for \$7, \$7.50 and \$8 per thousand feet, and return to the maker its cost. The simplest of all simple propositions; but too large a sum for the margin man to cipher out. It makes no difference who owns or runs the mill; everyone who sends the boards across Lake Michigan to be sold at those rates here, will one day find himself in Danaher & Melendy's boat, and a helpless wreck upon the same ugly breakers.

W. N. LUMBERMAN.

## HOW THE STRIKE AFFECTS BUSINESS.

The effects of the great strike are even more clearly seen, in the bank transactions of the week ending August 4th, than in those of the week preceding. Cities which escaped the immediate effects now feel the consequences through their general trade, and especially through their dealings with the cities most disordered, while at Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville and Pittsburgh, the depression of business is very great. The returns show:

	Per ct
New York.....	+15.8
Boston.....	—
Philadelphia.....	—23.4
Chicago.....	—14.0
Cincinnati.....	—1.0
Baltimore.....	+2.1
St. Louis.....	—22.5
Louisville.....	—10.0
Pittsburgh.....	—17.3
New Orleans.....	+3
Milwaukee.....	+19.6
Total, eleven cities.....	\$526,395,264
Week preceding.....	\$487,998,228. Average, +7.8

The apparent gain at Milwaukee is apparently due entirely to the defective method of comparison, and the gain at New York is in part due to speculation. Outside of this city, the transactions are only \$135,837,637, against \$151,042,246 last year, a decline of more than 10 per cent. On the whole, the comparison would be exceedingly disheartening, but for the probability that the decrease in payments is mainly due to a temporary cause.—*Financier*.

A WARNING TO NEWSPAPER MEN.—It cannot have escaped observation that, within the last few years, a dire mortality has taken place among the most brilliant and promising of our younger race of literary men—if that odious phrase must be employed. Names need not be

mentioned—but they will recur to many memories—of men who have been cut off exactly when life was in its meridian, and when their genius, or talent, was in the full prospect of a triumph. Now, in the last century this would have been attributed to debauchery, drinking, and other idle habits of a dissolute, spendthrift, unscrupulous life. But it is not so in the present day. The evil is that men of excitable, intellectual temperament belong to little exclusive clubs, never care for rest, turn their nights into days, revel on strong coffee and stronger tea, and go to bed in the dawn with a swim of conversation in their heads. It would be safe to say, in respect of some late melancholy cases, that this is the true story of them all. Unnatural lives are led, and the penalty is paid in an earthly, untimely, disaster-bringing death. Of course it is painful to point a moral of the kind; yet the truth of it will not be denied anywhere, and the multitude of examples cannot possibly be passed by without commiseration. We hear of men writing with wet towels wrapped about their heads, smoking themselves into excitement over their tasks, almost imitating the sad excesses of De Quincy, and doing in the dawn the work they should have done in the evening; but does not responsibility attach to all this?—*London Echo*.

—One hundred and fifty vessels were reported to the British board of trade in the year 1873-4, as not heard from after sailing or being spoken at sea. All of these are supposed to have gone down with the 2,381 persons on board. Including the missing vessels, there were reported to the same authority, in the same year, 6,084 vessels as having suffered wreck, collision or other casualty, resulting in the total loss of 1411 vessels and 6,817 lives. During the ten years, ending June 30, 1874, there were 22,098 wrecks, collisions and other casualties of vessels reported as having occurred on or near the coast of the British Isles alone. Over twenty-five per cent. of this number were total wrecks, involving a loss of over 8,200 lives, and the value of about \$90,000,000 in property. With such a startling array of facts, it is no wonder that the appeal of Samuel Plimsoll has been heard around the world.—*Surgeon Woodworth*.

## Commercial.

## MONTREAL MARKETS.

(From our own Correspondent.)

Montreal, 14th Aug., 1877.

We have had heavy rain storms accompanied with thunder during the past week, which, however, appear to have been to a great extent local. Accounts from the districts all around speak favorably of the crops, and harvest operations are carried on with great activity.

Business continues slowly but steadily to improve. In dry goods the movement has been quite active, and orders taken by travellers and given by buyers in the city are of larger dimensions than for a long while previous. Hardware is quiet. Flour continues to decline with very little demand. Grain is without animation. Ashes are steady and in fair demand. Leather moderately active, and holders inclined to be firm. Boot and shoe manufacturers are busy filling orders which are numerous and tolerably large. Since our last report Petroleum has advanced about  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 1c per gallon.

ASHES.—*Pots*.—There have been fair receipts during the week, and a moderate business has been done, with very little variation in the prices quoted this day week. Firsts have been selling