

CORRESPONDENCE

LUMBER AND FREE-TRADE.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

SIR,—Adam Smith says that the capacity of people to produce wealth exceeds the capacity of the worst governments to waste it. This may be the case on an average from century to century, or generation to generation, but there are times at which the waste is fully equal to the accumulation. *Wise legislation is the basis of national prosperity.* The profits of the farmer, the miner or manufacturer, even in the best seasons, may be swept away by unwise expenditures, tariffs or legislation. Take the lumber trade of this country for example. A single stroke of diplomacy has totally paralyzed it. By one wrong move profits are rendered impracticable. A theory has, however, been tested; but at an enormous cost. This is the application of Free-Trade principles to the lumber business. The present authorities, believing that competition, supply, and demand are all that is necessary to maintain trade in a wholesome state, offered immense timber limits for sale. This, together with giving settlers power to sell their timber, at a time when the market was fully supplied, caused a glut resulting in the present crisis. Free-traders ascribe the depression to the monetary crisis in the States. Now half the truth is usually a lie. This explanation is but part; and a very small part, of the cause. The depression is partly due to that crisis, but principally to bad legislation in this country. Previous to this, while limits were offered for sale sparingly, the trade flourished and made profits. People, like children, often cry for what would make them sick. The lumbermen demanded limits and the government, like a foolish parent, gave them an over dose. Hence, popular demands require to be tempered with prudence. The Reformer may be as much too fast as the Conservative is too slow; and the former failing is fraught with much more danger than the latter.

The sale of those limits has stimulated production ever since. Worse still. The capital formerly employed in handling and holding the manufactured lumber was invested in limits, throwing the manufacturers on the more precarious and costly aid of banks. Capital is not unlimited or elastic like the air. It does not move from one trade to another without a pull. The pull consists in higher interest. There is a certain amount of capital available for each trade, and to draw in more than this requires an effort and sacrifice. Hence, the circulating capital locked up unproductively in those limits had to be replaced, both in Canada and the States, by drawing capital from other industries. The lumbermen could draw capital from other industries, to replace that invested in limits, only by offering the bank higher rates of interest than others were giving. Hence, a ruinous competition, for all parties, commenced, and the bank rates went up to ten per cent. I will not say that the lumber trade was the sole cause of this; but I believe it to be the main cause. The other effect, the glutting of the market, was caused in this way. It is not necessary, for my purpose, to show that the new limits have been yet touched. Their purchase stimulated production on the old limits. Firms investing largely in new limits were obliged to get some of their money back as soon as possible. This was, in many cases, done by increasing their production of the old limits; and so far as glutting the market is concerned is just as effectual as if the work had been on the new limits. There is something more than supply, demand, and competition required to regulate trade. If left to these alone manufacturers and traders, like tribes and clans, are liable to exterminate each other. Legislation is the basis of all business success. Business can no more prosper under unwise laws than human life can continue vigorous in a foul atmosphere.

There are rich men in the worst governed countries; but whether the average wealth of a people is high or low depends very much on their laws and legislation. Organizations, like that lately formed by the lumbermen, to curtail production, would not be needed under a sound system of commercial legislation. Such a system would lead each individual to pursue the course best for himself and best for society without entering into any organization. *The necessity for organizations proves the existence of great abuses or defects in the law.*

Again, such organizations are nearly always inoperative. No rule can be adopted suitable for all interested. Hence, the result is that one or more break the rule and the rest gradually follow. This is the difficulty attending a combination. There are, also, difficulties in the absence of organization. No mill owner likes to set the example of curtailment by closing his works. It might affect his credit. People would be liable to think he was getting into financial straits. Rather than send this impression abroad he goes on till ruined. He will not halt while strong and is ashamed to halt when becoming weak. Besides this, stop when he will, there is another danger. In all such suspensions the workmen are likely to consider the act a device for lowering wages. Such an impression as this once created may endanger both the employers' property and life.

Much will never be accomplished by organization. In fact weak firms will countenance the attempt least. There are two causes for this. First they may want to conceal their weakness by assuming a tone of indifference. Second they may have no way of meeting their liabilities but by keeping in motion even at a loss. To stop and let their fixed capital stand idle may in itself be ruinous. It is only strong firms that are able to do this. Many a man continues a business, and makes a living by it, long after his capital is gone. Under vicious commercial laws such a person cannot recover; but under good laws he may not only recover but afterwards amass wealth. The lumber trade of this country has been partially ruined by the application of Free-Trade principles; and all our manufactures will be ruined also if that principle, as contained in the proposed Reciprocity Treaty, be carried into effect.

Mismanagement always leads to increased loss, labour and expense. There is nothing in which this is more apparent than in legislation. The individual can no more escape the effects of bad laws than the effects of a bad climate. The trouble, loss and expense occasioned by the sale of the limits referred to are incalculable. We may possibly have more legislation on the subject, as it is proposed now by free-traders to put an export duty on lumber to check its manufacture. This would be a step from extreme free-trade to extreme protection. Lumber is said to be unprofitable now; and they propose to make it profitable by putting new taxes on it.

Fenelon Falls,

Yours truly,

W. DEWART.

THE LITERARY WORLD.

Mr. George Smith is preparing a work on Assyrian discovery in 1873 and 1874.

Messrs. Cassell, Petter, and Galpin have in contemplation to issue shortly a work dealing with the history of the Reformed Churches.

Mme. Jules Janin has signified her intention of presenting to the French Academy the whole of her husband's library, on condition that it be kept together and bear his name.

Mr. Froude, the historian, leaves England during the present month on a grand tour to most of the English colonies, commencing at the Cape of Good Hope and ending with Canada. He goes as "one clothed with authority," not merely as a "scribe," and will probably give to the English-speaking public something on his return that will be worth reading.

It is not generally known that Strauss married an actress, as it would seem a bright, versatile, worldly woman, with whom he naturally soon ceased to have any sympathy. After living three years together they separated by mutual consent without the formality of a divorce.

A new Republican paper is, it is said, about to be started in New York. According to the *Daily Graphic*, the people interested in the venture have been associated with the late Mr. Raymond, of the *Times*.

A valuable collection of books and MSS. has just been dispersed under the hammer of Messrs. Puttick and Simpson, of Leicester-square, London. The most prominent item in the sale was lot 216—The Boke of Encyclos, compiled by Vyrgyle, translated and printed by William Caxton, 1490, which, although wanting two pages, was knocked down for the sum of £191. The following also realized high prices:—Lot 91, Misale ad usum Ecclesie Sarisburiensis, printed at Paris, 1515, £42; lot 92, Psalterium Davidicum ad usum Ecclesie Sarisburiensis, 1555, £19 15s.; lot 96, Bezar's New Testament, Englished by Laurence Tomson, 1576, £13; lot 119, the Life of St. Barbara, an illuminated MS., £12; lot 125, Lauri, Album Amicorum, 1598—1640, £10 5s.; lot 132, Whittintoni, de Sylabarum Quantitatibus, &c., printed by Wynken de Worde, 1519, £20 10s.; lot 147, The New Testament, Tyndale's version, 1553, £15 15s.

The Petrarch Festival at Avignon opened on Saturday, the 18th inst., with an excursion to Vaucluse. Prizes were distributed there to upwards of fifty writers of essays and poems composed specially for the occasion. A banquet to 300 persons afterwards took place under the mulberry-tree in Petrarch's garden. Signor Nigra, the representative of Italy in France, made a speech, in which he referred to the friendly union of the two countries in the festival then being celebrated, and of the undying gratitude of Italy for the aid rendered to her in effecting her deliverance by France. At Avignon there was afterwards a night fête. Sunday's programme included an open-air mass, regattas, bull-fights, a grand historical cavalcade, representing Petrarch going in triumph to the Capitol, a theatrical entertainment, and illuminations. The festivities were continued on Monday.

Sir Travers Twiss has in the press a second volume of the appendix to the "Black Book of the Admiralty." It will (says the *Academy*) contain the judgments of the sea from the earliest known MS., which is preserved in the archives of the Guildhall of the city of London, collated with an early Flemish MS. of the fourteenth century in the archives of the city of Bruges, as well as the customs of the sea from the earliest Catalan version of the book of the Consulate of the Sea, collated with the earliest known MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The introduction will contain an account of the recent discovery of the missing Black Book, as well as of the discovery of the long-sought-for "Tavola Amalphitana" among the Eoscarini MSS. in the Imperial library in Vienna.

DRAMATIC GOSSIP.

Woodstock, Ont., is to have a musical convention in September.

M. Offenbach's nearly-completed opera is called "Madame l'Archiduc."

Mrs. Frederick Gye, the wife of the director of the Royal Italian Opera in London, is dead.

Mrs. Ross-Church (Florence Marryatt) has appeared in theatricals in London for the benefit of Mrs. Shirley Brooks.

M. Jules Verne, whose wild romances are well known in England, is preparing his "Round the World in Eighty Days" for the Paris stage.

A five-act drama entitled "Colonel Sellers," by Mark Twain, is soon to be brought out on the stage.

Johann Strauss has returned from his very profitable concert tour in Italy to Gratz. He has purchased a residence in Florence of the value of 100,000 florins, and intends to pass the winter partly there, partly in Gratz, and only occasionally in Vienna.

At a concert lately given at Niort, in France, a curious experiment was tried: Two clarinet concertos being performed with the solo parts played by five clarinets in union! The street clarinet player is a pleasing minstrel, but five of them together might have a qualifying effect.

Madame Patti is going to create a new part, having accepted the rôle of Virginia in M. Victor Massé's new opera of "Paul and Virginia," which is to be brought out this year in Russia, with M. Capoul as Paul. From Russia the opera will be transferred to Paris, where it is to be produced at the New Opera with the original artistes.

Edward Grieg, a young Norwegian, has suddenly sprung into fame as a musician. He is thirty-one years old, and when a child his extraordinary talents attracted the attention of Ole Bull. He has since been in constant study and practice, and the Swedish papers speak of him as "the Scandinavian Chopin."

A story to this effect is current. A little girl named Redmond, a daughter of one of the porters connected with Covent Garden, was about the stage some nights ago. While Marioun was on the stage, the young creature at the wings hummed after her the air that she was then singing. Faure, who happened to be about, heard, and was charmed with her execution. The following day her voice was tried. Faure was right. The juvenile songstress will be sent to Italy.

THE MAGAZINES.

St. Nicholas for August is a seasonable number. The illustrations are up to the usual standard of excellence, and several of the papers are remarkably clever. The geological gardens of London are described with appropriate pictures. This magazine took a prominent stand from its initial number and has maintained it throughout.

Old and New. The chief article in this number is an exposition by Rev. Mr. Martineau of the contrasts between the gospel of John and the preceding three, the author dwelling on the mystic, or perhaps gnostic, features of the fourth Evangelist, and contrasting them, as well as the language, with the peculiarly Hebrew traits of the Revelation, concludes with great force of reasoning that the two books were not written by the same person, and that the gospel of John was written later than is usually supposed. Tyrwhitt's art series is continued, and always with interest.

Lippincott. The "New Hyperion," by Edward Strahan, with capital illustrations by Gustave Doré, is continued. "Malcolm," by George Macdonald, hardly grows upon the reader as it progresses, but by way of compensation, we have the opening of a new tale, "The Three Feathers," by William Black, which sparkles with promises of interest. The poetry of the number is also creditable.

The Atlantic Monthly contains the continuation of "A Forgone Conclusion" and "Katy's Fortune." The miscellaneous of rich variety and the poetry introduces the names of such authors as Whittier, Trowbridge, Mrs. Platt and Alfred Street. The literary and artistic criticisms are unusually full.

The illustrated articles in *Harper's* are four—"The Queen of Aquidneck," "Our Nearest Neighbour," "On the Boundary Line" and the "American Railroad." Besides this there is a vast miscellany which always makes this excellent Magazine the matter of a day or two's reading every month.

We have often called attention to the solid character of the contributions to the *Penn Monthly*. The present number is by no means an exception. "The Teutonic Mark" and "Why Hannibal did not march on Rome" are papers on recondite and interesting subjects which one likes to see treated in the popular manner, for the instruction of the masses. We also call attention to "The Perils of Modern Quakerism." The pure literary portions of the magazine are devoted to "Balzac" and "Pastoris Jefferson."

Scribner's is as its very best in the present issue. All the articles are excellent and one or two of them deserving of special comment, which we regret not being able to devote to them. The Southern series is in itself worth the price of the number.

OLD PLAYS AND MODERN ONES.

It is commonly said that the old plays are licentious and broad, and that it is our modern delicacy, or prudery, or fastidiousness, call it which we will, which has condemned the old writers to oblivion. Yet this can hardly be the whole case, for who can be more "broad" than Chaucer in some of his "Canterbury Tales?" Yet Chaucer is undeniably an English classic. He is broad, not only in the extreme plainness with which he calls a spade a spade, but he is broad in the very substance of some of his stories themselves. Our modern plays, too, are often broad enough in their plots and in their *doubles entendres*; and it is manifest that the supposed delicacy of mind which forbids the reprinting of the elder plays, or of Wycherley, or Congreve, or Vanbrugh, or Beaumont and Fletcher for miscellaneous family reading, is not a little the result of that utter hypocrisy which pervades our popular talk and popular belief in all matters of religion and morals. There is no harm in the world, it is thought, in the singing of "La ci darem" in the most respectably rigid of drawing-rooms; but then are not the words in Italian, and is not the music by the divine Mozart? So it is with another of the divine Mozart's whole operas, "Le Nozze di Figaro." It is not all in the Italian? Or, in other words, it is not all a *double entendre* from beginning to end, which the mamma may understand, but not the more innocent members of proper society? The ballet-girl of the period is, indeed, by no means a *double entendre*, and she is a phenomenon to be carefully studied by those who would estimate the sincerity of the religious professions of the age we are living in. Here, in truth, are two of the most striking illustrations of the difference between the social ideas of the ages of Elizabeth and Victoria. Under Elizabeth and James we have the talk of Holywell-street, uttered by players of the male sex alone, for the appearance of women upon the stage was unknown: under Victoria we have the most highly improving sentiments flung by women in men's clothing, supported by crowds of ballet-dancers, who, whether they are dressed in male or female clothing, are invariably girls. What a marvellous change in the notions of society as to what is moral! And what a honeycombing of scepticism does it not betray, in our modern world as to the real standard of right and wrong! Then there is another curious circumstance about the dramatists of the Tudor and Stuart period. They furnish but a very slight reflection of the theological and political strifes of the times. It has even been maintained that Shakespeare was a Roman Catholic, and entirely as the proof fails, it is sufficiently suggestive that the attempt to prove him one should ever have been made. No doubt the chief actors in London being the "King's players," or the "Queen's players," they had singularly little liberty for expressing any political sentiments which they might have held. How little that liberty was, may be gathered from one of the few adventures that chequered the life of George Chapman. In conjunction with Ben Jonson and Marston he wrote the comedy of "Eastward Ho" in the first year of James the First's reign. In this play they indulged in a few of those reflections upon the Scotch, which were then so popular among English people; and "Gentle Jamie," in his wrath, sent all the three poets to the Fleet, where they were very nearly undergoing the characteristic gentle penalty of those days, in having their noses slit. Drummond says that Jonson declared that he had no hand in writing the offending passages, but that he would not desert his friends in their trouble, and went to prison with them. As it was, James, who was more forgiving than is usual with cowards, soon set all three at liberty, and took to admiring Chapman's writings, and made no objection to the patronage which his son Henry Prince of Wales bestowed upon him.—*Cornhill Magazine*.