

[The company has a taking name, and some parts of its prospectus read plausibly. We must read the latter through carefully before pronouncing on its merits. But we do not hear of any deposit at Ottawa from this company, and Iowa is a little too far away to send money for insurance without something to show for it. Would recommend you to wait.]

DOMINION COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION.

The Dominion Commercial Travellers held their quarterly meeting in Montreal the other day, the president, Mr. George Boulter, in the chair. Mr. Fred Massie, was nominated for president for 1886, but he declined to stand, and Mr. R. B. Hutchinson, the present vice-president, was elected president by acclamation. So, too, were R. C. Simpson as vice-president, and Alex. Gowdey as treasurer.

Among the notices of motion given was one to annul the by-law relating to sick benefits and in place thereof to extend the mortuary benefit for death from natural causes to \$1000.

Some discussion took place with regard to the annual reunion, several members being in favor of a conversazione. It was finally decided, however, to hold the usual dinner on Tuesday, the 29th of December. The committee named below was appointed to carry out the arrangements: Messrs. G. R. Locker, Wm. Percival, E. Lichtenheim, W. H. Morgan, F. Birks, E. Dumaresq, O. P. Patten, R. C. Simpson, G. Piche, J. Rogers, and J. J. Fairbairn. It was decided to hold the annual meeting on Saturday afternoon, December 12, at the rooms of the association, the evening session to be held at the Natural History society's hall, University street.

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE RETURNS.

CITY.	Nov., '85	Nov., '84	Inc or Dec
Montreal customs..	\$462,358	\$566,111	103,753 D
do. excise ..	144,022	122,346	21,676 I
Toronto customs..	186,355	204,730	18,375 D
do. excise ..	38,524	40,188	1,664 D
Halifax customs..	124,672	119,812	4,860 I
do. excise ..	21,658	19,987	1,671 I
St. John customs..	62,077	56,674	5,403 I
do. excise ..	.....	.....	.....
Hamilton customs..	49,549	49,503	46 I
do. excise ..	27,096	23,219	3,877 I
Quebec customs..	35,923	54,797	18,874 D
do. excise ..	43,527	41,915	1,612 I
Winnipeg customs..	.....	.....	.....
do. excise ..	.....	.....	.....
London customs..	26,295	24,731	1,564 I
do. excise ..	23,138	21,310	1,828 I
Ottawa customs..	16,712	.....	.....
do. excise ..	17,040	.....	.....
Kingston customs..	9,565	.....	.....
do. excise ..	12,664	.....	.....
Brantford customs..	9,764	.....	.....
do. excise ..	5,860	5,607	253 I
Belleville customs..	3,161	3,912	751 D
do. excise ..	.....	.....	.....
Guelph customs..	.....	.....	.....
do. excise ..	.....	.....	.....

—Hamilton's exports to the United States during November last, were of the value of \$135,296, the largest share of the whole consisting of barley. We append the principal items:

Barley	Value, \$88,410
Wool	16,767
Skins and hides ..	7,414
Eggs	5,191
Cattle	2,353
Lumber	2,042
Lambs	1,625
Horses	1,150

—The Building and Loan Association declares a dividend of three per cent. for the current half year. The Bank of London declares one at three-and-a-half per cent.

—We learn from the last number of the *Canadian Gazette*, 19th November, that as the result of the attention their exhibits at the Antwerp Exhibition have attracted, several leading Canadian firms have made arrangements to secure commercial representation on the Continent. Amongst these are the following:—Messrs. Warnock & Co., Galt, tools, &c.; The National Manufacturing Company, Ottawa; Messrs. W. Clendinning & Son, Montreal, stoves; Mr. W. E. Welding, Brantford, Ontario, pottery; Messrs. Hart Brothers & Lazier, Belleville, Ontario, pottery; the Massey Manufacturing Company, Toronto, agricultural machinery; Messrs. S. G. Kerr & Son, Canning, Nova Scotia, evaporated vegetables; Messrs. Pontbriand Brothers, Sorel, Quebec, saws, &c.; Messrs. O. Gignac & Son, Quebec, mouldings; Mr. O. V. Goulette, Gananoque, Ontario, tools, &c.; Messrs. Fish & Ireland, Argenteuil, Quebec, hygienic foods; Mr. F. G. Bullock, Otterville, Ontario, agricultural and other implements; the Williams Manufacturing Company, Montreal, sewing machines; Mr. George Fraser, Halifax, Manhattan spiced food.

BOOK-KEEPING.

THESES READ BEFORE THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF ONTARIO BY E. R. C. CLARKSON, OF TORONTO, UPON HIS EXAMINATION FOR THE DEGREE OF FELLOW OF THAT CORPORATION—OCTOBER 5TH, 1885.

MR. PRESIDENT.—*Gentlemen*.—I appear before you to-night as the unhappy medium chosen by the Institute of Accountants, to say something new and interesting upon "Book-keeping." The task is so prodigious that I suppose it is no sin to premise my story by asking your indulgence.

How tormenting and laborious are the exertions of the disciples of the pen and book—Men whose life long labor is to preserve their equilibrium—is fittingly expressed in an epitaph which may be found in the grave of a poor accountant whose mortal remains lie in the churchyard of St. Marys at Chatham, in England:—

"Here lieth part of Richard Bowle—(which part we will not stop to enquire—though I may hazard the opinion that it was his brain, for accountants, as we know, are mostly made up of this commodity), who faithfully served divers great lords as auditor on earth, but, above all, prepared himself to render a well balanced account to his Maker, and now has his *quies est* and rests from his torments and labors.

"He died the 16th of December, 1626, completely ossified, his fleshy substance having turned to bone through long hours of labor and scant pay. By indefatigable efforts his friends have secured £1 10s. 9³/₄d. to defray the cost of erecting this plain oak plank to his memory. He died, as we all shall, *but he was an accountant*."

An old encyclopedia describes book-keeping as that art by which all the transactions of commerce as well as private matters are methodically recorded so as to exhibit a perfect picture of a person's affairs. Book-keeping is at once a science and an art: both of which may be said to be investigations of truth; but one, science, enquires for the sake of knowledge, the other, art, for the sake of production. One may simply be called principle, the other practice.

As a science book-keeping begins, proceeds, and ends, in as much certainty as human fallibility admits of, and whatever may become of the property in a concern, the matter of account is subject to no possible diminution.

As an art the adoption of successive expedients in the exigencies of trade has combined accuracy with expedition, and brevity with clearness and completeness. An intimate knowledge of the fundamental principle of book-keeping enables any one to understand whatever accounts are placed before him, and to render these intelligible to others by means of fitting and recognized terms.

This principle is the same whether applied in keeping the accounts of the capitalist, the

manufacturer, the banker, the loan company, the building society, the municipal corporation, the wholesale trader, or the smallest storekeeper. It is the grouping together under a uniform, never varying plan, and under convenient and self-explaining titles, of the many transactions of buying and selling, of borrowing and lending, and all the other numerous forms of dealing in cash, credit, commodities, labor, manufacture, and exchange, which compass the great variety of operations in our private as well as our commercial world, and no undertaking is too simple, or too gigantic, to disturb its equilibrium.

That book-keeping should appear to be an occult science, co-delusive with the imaginary sciences of the middle ages and abstruse to a degree, is the result of scant enquiry into the laws which govern it.

An accountant is looked upon by some as a person who has considerable difficulty in accounting for himself, and this view will to some extent obtain, so long as we find persons who advertise themselves as "mercantile accountants, brokers in business chances, mediators, and dealers in tin plates," securing employment as experts in accounts.

The fundamental principle of book-keeping is simple, and any person of ordinary intelligence can learn in a short time, and understand how this principle is to be applied in recording the transactions of an ordinary business, as for instance, one in which the proprietor buys manufactured goods at one price and sells them at another; but let him go back a step and attempt to prepare a set of books for the manufacturer of those goods, and he is puzzled as to how he shall arrange the variety of facts which require to be kept track of, as step by step, the raw material is manufactured, now into one class of goods, and now another; and the cost of each class, the expenditure for labor, waste and interest are to be separately and accurately known; and yet the ground work of both these sets of accounts is identical, the greater demands of the manufacturer necessitates the keeping of additional subsidiary or auxiliary accounts in which the various atoms of the concern are uniformly collected together, and at the proper time transferred to one account which then represents the cost of the goods manufactured, as gathered from the separate records of the expenditure for raw material, labor, depreciation and interest, which constitute that cost; hence a technical knowledge of this principle alone will not make a competent accountant, for the framing of these necessary auxiliary records requires as well an intimate knowledge of the details of the particular business for which the books are intended.

There are two methods of keeping accounts: by single and by double entry; but as the former admits of no real exposition and check of the user's transactions, and is merely a device of lazy men, we need only mention it to pass it by.

In the London "Accountant" issue of 1883, I find the following: It is claimed for the Italian method as adopted by modern practice that it grounds itself upon the scientific axiom that the whole is equal to the sum of all its parts; that it is satisfied with nothing less than a perfect equilibrium between the total amount of all the debtor accounts on one side, and that of all the creditor accounts on the other side; that it arrives at this ultimate result by exacting at every step of its progress, the same equilibrium between debtor and creditor in each entry; and by suffering no event either inwards, internal, or outwards, to take place without a self-balancing entry; that it secures at last its great object of presenting a perfect picture, whenever all these separate parts are collected together as a whole.

Book-keeping accepts only dry and stern facts, and cannot choose its material or reject at pleasure, but takes the facts as they arise, disjointed and unconnected as they may be, and weaves them into a complete and well arranged whole, each part filling a necessary place, and the whole constituting what is described as a picture of affairs which can be readily grasped and understood, and which displays its artistic character by its simplicity, clearness and truthfulness.

"Barnes" says that a good system of book-keeping need not be complicated or difficult. Some prejudice on this point has been occasioned by the fact of the great preponderance which has been given in most existing treatises