

THE HEALTH OF BUSINESS MEN.

When pleas are so often heard in favor of means of recreation for the laborer, a half-holiday for the working classes, and so on, it is surely not out of place to urge that the man of business, the worker in the counting-house, at the professional desk, needs recreation if ever man did. The kind of exhaustion caused by brain work is more serious than that arising from bodily labor. It drains the vital forces in a way that differs materially from the draft made upon the physical strength of a laboring man. The sedentary brain-worker wastes more nervous force than the brawny mechanic. And whereas the latter, working all day, it may be, in the open air, can at night refresh himself by reading or study, the other must adopt a contrary process to adjust the balance between body and brain.

No single rule of recreation can be laid down which will suit every temperament. One brain-worker may find diversion in what would but increase the lassitude of another. But it may safely be said that bodily exertion of some sort, out of doors, is "indicated," as the doctors say, for the refreshment of those whose daily round and common task involve the use of brains, eyes and fingers indoors. A Montreal correspondent calls attention in our pages to-day to the subject of recreation for over-worked business men. And he makes some suggestions which are not the less valuable because they are homely. "It would be no waste of time," he writes, "but a positive benefit and blessing to such men, to go out with a friend and row a boat, to play at cricket or dig in a garden. In the winter, they might cut their own wood and clear their paths and pavements clear of snow. If living in a city, they might join a curling rink, or skate for an hour or two a day, or go for a snow-shoe tramp. * * Many a doctor's bill could be saved and many a mental wreck be averted by such simple expedients as these."

In this connection some eminently sensible remarks were made the other day, on the occasion of a gathering at the opening of the Caledonian Rink in this city, by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, himself a good illustration of the benefits derivable from attention to athletic exercises and outdoor sports. Said His Honor: "The projectors of this handsome building and of other similar premises, have done a good thing for the physical and mental well-being of our citizens, in affording facilities not only for needed exercise, but for escape from the turmoil and worry of business life in such joyous and healthful pastime as a manly game like this affords. You are all workers, gentlemen. No one here, I dare say, myself included, was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, but has had to work with hand or brain or both. And business men as you are, you know something of the worries and anxieties of business life. Is there any better way of throwing off these cares, of refitting the mental or physical machinery, than to come to such a place as this, and engage with zest and goodfellowship in a simple, healthful and exhilarating game? You forget your responsibilities—you throw overboard for a time your worries

—you divert the channel of your anxious thoughts—you lose your headaches—and in an hour's time you are in better humor with yourselves and with all other people."

We take pride in the disposition of Young Canada towards athletic sports, recognizing that no unimportant share of the vigor of a nation springs from regular indulgence in them. We take kindly to such sports, besides, as descendants of the British race, with whom a love of out-door exercise is, happily, inborn. There is no good argument against, but a score of reasons for, the continuance, in middle age, of that attention to the maintenance of a good *physique* which brings about that sum of all manly capacity, a sound mind in a healthy body. The pressure of competition and the constantly enlarging sphere of business duties and concerns render it essential that the manufacturer, the merchant, the lawyer, the doctor shall, in order to keep up in the race, take care to maintain his health. Impaired digestion, chronic ailments, nervous symptoms, loss of eyesight, brain disease itself, are sure to be the lot of those who give no heed to the demands of the bodily frame. We deem it a duty to emphasize the words of our muscular christian friend in Montreal: "Your mercantile and professional readers might live happier lives, and be more fit for their work if they would adopt some form of regular exercise for their muscles."

"CHEAP" MANUFACTURES.

Under this title we do not purpose discussing the relatively low values of staple merchandise which now prevail but the tendency to produce, by using poor material, dishonest substitutes, hurried or 'scamped' work, goods that will seem what they are declared to be but are not. Of course, shoddy has for many a day been put into cloth; and it will continue to be; leather-board—an ingenious mixture of hemp, paper, leather scraps and what not, to imitate leather—has had a great run as heel, sole or counter stock in shoes. Nor can we hope to find the average article of cream tartar free from *terra alba*, any more than our spices are free from flour, beans and turmeric. For indeed the popular taste often prefers coffee with chicory in it, and has been known to prefer, at about the same price, the "strength" and pungency of cheap tea with Prussian blue and graphite therein to a genuine article, with no foreign substances. Nay, there are numbers of people who would rather eat oleomargarine at fifteen cents per pound than real butter at twenty. Something of the blame, therefore, for the existence of adulterated goods must lie upon the shoulders of consumers, who tolerate them.

What we wish rather to do is to put before our manufacturers some considerations as to the effect of putting out goods which are intrinsically below the standard which their price and the reputation of their maker demands. Some makers, all honor to them, will not do this, choosing rather to cease making certain goods than to produce them imperfect. It has been openly stated that one result of the disastrous competition brought about by too many cotton

mills will be the substitution, for the excellent and cheap domestics Canadians have enjoyed, of 'sized' fabrics. The reason alleged being that the mills cannot go on making honest goods at present low prices, and the mill which shows the greatest ingenuity in this sort of adulteration will have the advantage over the rest. Taking the article of machinery as an example, we are told that in England "the competition which has grown up, during the last few years particularly, has been so severe that a very large, and we are afraid an increasing number of firms have, in the struggle to make ends meet at low prices, gradually let down the quality of their productions until they can no longer be classed as of medium quality."

This admission, which is sorrowfully made by the *Mechanical World*, is in the face of the claim that "English engineers can turn out better work than the engineers of any other nation if they choose to do so." It is quite true, according to American consuls, that American machinery, cutlery, &c., has found its way to preference in certain foreign markets formerly supplied wholly by Great Britain, because the American goods were made with care and taste while the British often betrayed the absence of both. The journal quoted contends with force that manufacturers are never more mistaken than when they sacrifice quality, and in severe competition should cease to seek orders which will not pay unless quality be sacrificed. "It is almost axiomatic that a firm's character is ruled not by their best but by their worst quality of work; so that if once a manufacturer stoops to low qualities of work he is doomed to remain at that level."

"As a proof of this is it not a fact to-day that our busiest firms are those noted for invariably good quality? and are not the low quality men all struggling together in the rush for the poorer class of work? We have known many instances of individual firms who for long were known as "one quality men," and yet who, in perhaps the push of bad times have been tempted to take cheap orders. This has been their downfall. The cheap orders have demoralized the men, and the low tone once accepted is difficult to eradicate; workmen say to each other, "Oh! this will do; it's only for such and such an order." The *World* is speaking now of what may be termed wholesale work, such as is reproduced in hundreds of machines or articles.

There is another aspect in which the careless turning out of cheap competitive goods is undesirable. It is economically wrong to employ labor in producing bad articles; for, to put 20s. worth of labor upon the same value of raw material, to result in a 40s. article, is less economical than putting the same labor upon raw material of the value of 30s., for which perhaps 60s. will be finally obtained." But it is to be borne in mind that there may be a market for a thousand of the forty-shilling machines and for only a hundred of the better ones. It is often said of foreign nations, that the wages being less, they are better able to produce cheaply than Great Britain. This may be true, but it is a fact daily becoming less burdensome to the