

Reporter—A man who can report what never happened, and mislead the public.

Copy—The primary duty of all Gritty country papers.

Printer's D—A man who has thoughts and dares to print them.

Loyal Canadian—A *Globe* subscriber.

Lunacy—A disease brought on by ceasing to follow the Grit organ.

Mercantile Agencies are at best a doubtful blessing as at present conducted; for the moral character and habits of a man are usually reported on hearsay evidence only. An immoral character is seldom scrupulous in lying to his neighbours about his own virtues, or to the Agency reporter about his means. It is only, therefore, in statistics, or a record of hard facts, that the real usefulness of Mercantile Agencies becomes apparent. Dun, Wiman & Co.'s statistical statement of insolvencies for 1879 confirms the sad experience of nearly every wholesale merchant, that the year just closed has been the most disastrous Canada has ever seen. Think of it; Canada with its four millions of population had to bear the strain of twenty-nine millions of bad debts; while the United States, with a population ten times as great, sustained bad debts of only ninety-eight millions. A few sermons on statistics, with some reflections on that prudence which makes for honesty, could hardly come amiss in Montreal.

The statistics of failures in Great Britain in 1879, published by Mr. R. Sneyd, are decidedly doleful; yet it would seem as if the tide has turned. The last half of 1879 showed a total of 7,647 failures, against 8,990 in the first six months.

The Manchester Chamber of Commerce has addressed the Foreign Office on the subject of "sizing" cotton, defending itself on the ground that orders from abroad were given for just that class of goods and none other, and therefore they had to make them. This is neither the logic of religion nor of common sense; for between these two there exists a marvellous resemblance. A pick-pocket may as well blame the resetter of stolen goods because he buys the product of his industry. Whenever a merchant or manufacturer becomes regardless of usefulness as a characteristic of the goods he handles, his business becomes alike immoral and unstable. He who makes real value, real service to others, the predominant thought in all his labour, will seldom if ever experience dull trade. This is a law of trade as reliable as any of the other laws of the spiritual and natural universe.

On the authority of the *Warehousemen's and Drapers' Journal* of London, England, it is announced that silver anklets are the latest novelty in the adornment of the fair sex. W. Thornhill, of New Broad Street, has the credit of their introduction. Verily, the world moves, and women are becoming strong minded. The *Journal* naively remarks: "We should not be surprised if they were to become popular." That editorial "we" might not; this editorial "I" certainly would.

As the time draws near when the British Parliament will have run its course to the end and the electors will be called upon to say what party shall have the next lease of power, the excitement increases. There is a lull just now, so far as public speaking by the leaders is concerned, but this is the time when the real work of forming opinion is done. The enthusiasm created by a great meeting soon passes off; but the speeches are not forgotten. The miners in the mines, the artisans in the shops, and commercial men on 'Change discuss them after the meeting is over; and in England there is a healthy public opinion which may be relied upon when the moment for action comes. And judging from the past it is safe to say that the days of Lord Beaconsfield's power are numbered. The "spirited foreign policy" has turned out a most expensive disaster. Hardly a success can be pointed to, while the catalogue of failures is long and black. Then there are questions of great importance in domestic economy demanding attention, and it is felt on all sides that the great Earl is hardly competent to deal with them. Once more popular favour is swinging round, and it looks as if the great William will be once again the friend and idol of "the people" who for some years past have hated him unreasonably.

Should the Earl of Beaconsfield come to the conclusion by and by that the Liberals will carry the elections, we may rest assured that he will resign his position as leader of the conservative party and dissolve Parliament. He is not likely to fight a battle that he even suspects will be a losing one; and it would be at least a dramatic and proud ending to the strange life he has lived if he were to have the opportunity of saying: I educated you Conservatives in spite of yourselves; I led you to power, and now that old age has forced me into retirement the country has declared that it wants you in office no longer. The people of England wanted me, not you, and my life's ambition is accomplished. A proud farewell it would be, but intensely like the man.

After much delay at Washington, and much speculation in political circles in London as to the reason for it, the States' Ambassador to England has been decided upon. Mr. Lowell, a man of very considerable reputation as a writer, has received the appointment. The post would have been filled before, probably, had it not been for the fact the Presidential term is drawing to a close and a change of Presidents may affect even one so high in office as the Ambassador to London. Not many men of power and self-respect would care to run the risk of being snuffed out after less than a year's sojourn at the Court of Great Britain; and, had it not been that Mr. Lowell has been unfortunate and unhappy in his mission at Madrid, it is probable that the United States would have had no representative in London until the next four years' master at the White House shall have been decided upon.

Quoth Frank to Jack: You fib like facts!

Quoth Jack to Frank: You lie like figures!!

SIR,—Apart altogether from those Consolidated Bank prosecutions there is one feature in the monthly bank statements which has not been discussed with sufficient force nor clearly enough brought out. I mean the gross inconsistencies to be found in the statements themselves. The law says that those "monthly returns shall exhibit the conditions of the bank on the last juridical day of the month preceding." It provides columns for "assets" and columns for "liabilities," one of which on the credit side reads "Balances due from other banks in Canada," the corresponding one on the debtor side reading "Due to other banks in Canada." To an ordinary mortal no language could be simpler or more explicit than this, and yet here is the aggregate result from a late *Canada Gazette* :—

Balances due FROM other banks in Canada.....	\$4,653,138
Due TO other banks in Canada [only].....	2,708,172
Unaccountable difference.....	\$1,944,966

That is to say, that the creditor banks make oath that there is some two million dollars more due to them than the debtor banks admit to be owing by them. I would commend some of those bank officials who claim such enormous and seemingly false balances to be *due* to them, to the attention of the Crown Prosecutor. 'Tis no more than even-handed justice that they too should have their turn.

A Subscriber.

SIR,—It is surprising to note the amount of animosity and malicious abuse that some men are capable of launching at those with whom they disagree, from behind the safe covert of an anonymous letter. Indeed I cannot imagine Mr. Editor, why you, who always advocate fair-play and politeness, and invariably show these courtesies yourself, should allow anonymous writers to attack and abuse in this skulking manner, articles written by well known gentlemen and signed with their own names. I now refer particularly to the letter of "J. W. G.," in this week's SPECTATOR, which professes to be a criticism on Mr. Popham's article on "A Canadian Academy of Arts." Now I am but slightly acquainted with art and not at all with Mr. Popham; indeed my knowledge of the former has been in great part derived from the—that I considered very clever—articles of the latter, and those of Mr. King. These gentlemen certainly know more of art than most Montrealers, and although they sometimes differ in opinion they do so in a gentlemanly manner, and openly over their own signatures, not throwing artistic mud at each other from behind anonymous fences; but no amount of art culture is required in the understanding of "J. W. G.'s" letter, since it deals not in argument but in abuse. Yet I must acknowledge that even the abuse is beyond my comprehension, for I cannot reach to the height of "J. W. G.'s" impudence or to the depth of his sarcasm. Of course it is very easy to call any article "senseless twaddle," and I might just as easily say the same of "J. W. G.'s" letter, but whatever I may think, I shall refrain from following an example so uncourteous.

However, it is not so easy to understand "J. W. G.'s" facetious allusions to the Governor-General and Princess, whom he evidently considers as mortals