

PROSPECTS FOR 1874.

Not many topics of Christmas discourse, pertaining to this world only, could we touch upon that come nearer to the hearts and homes of the masses of the people, than does the question as to the prospects of business and employment during the year about to begin. We read in the papers about the Ashantee War; the Home Rule agitation in Ireland; the great conflict on the school question now going on in England; Mr. Disraeli's recent remarkable speeches at Glasgow; the war of authority between the Emperor of Germany and the Pope; the distractions of France and Spain; the Cuban difficulty, which the other day appeared likely to end in war between Spain and the United States, and which, perhaps, is not really settled yet after all; the great panic in the States and its consequences still continuing, and other important matters which go to make up the news of the day. But we venture to say that not any one of these matters, nay, coming nearer home, not even the strife between our two political parties in Canada; the Pacific Railway question; with Hamilton Municipal affairs, the question who shall be Mayor, and local taxation to boot—have as close and as touching an interest for the most of us as has the important question of what the prospects are for work and wages, for trade and manufactures, during the year 1874, the beginning of which is now near at hand. To this question we propose to give an answer as best we can, in the light of such information as we are possessed of. We do not aspire to prophetic honours; we wish merely to do as they do in the weather office at Washington, that is, to state probabilities, based upon the reports that reach us from all quarters.

We will begin, then, by saying that forecasts of trade, of business, and of employment for the people, must, like those of the weather, be founded upon reports coming in from over a wide area. To give a guess at the probable weather to-morrow, it is necessary for the observer to know what weather conditions prevail to-day, not merely in his own locality, but also what they are over hundreds of miles distance to the north, south, east and west of it. In like manner, to estimate aright the business prospects of Canada, we must know how things are in Europe and America, particularly in Great Britain and the United States, the countries with which we have most to do. Taking the mother country first, we observe these facts, a considerable falling off in exports of British manufactured goods to foreign countries, (though British exports of goods of foreign manufacture are rather increasing), a fall in the price of goods generally, with a rise in the price of food; a combination of circumstances decidedly unfavourable to the British workman. It has not much affected him yet, for this reason, that the revival of industry on the continent of Europe after the Franco-German war is only beginning to tell, but every year it will tell upon him more and more, unless war should again break out, a contingency upon which we do not here speculate. The check given to railway building in the United States, together with the extension of iron production in that country, diminishes seriously the market for British iron, and must force a still further decline in prices. But the decline in prices is not only in iron and iron manufactures, but in most kinds of manufactured goods, owing to increasing foreign competition and decreasing demand both operating together. The consequence is likely to be, a great increase of artisan emigration next spring, but whether to our own or to other shores remains to be seen. As for the agricultural emigration, which, under the direction of Joseph Arch, is likely to be considerable, all that we may get of it here will be in our favour: we cannot get too much of it, for cultivating too much much land or cultivating it too well is something that will not be seen in Canada in our time, or for some generations after us. But over-production of manufactured goods is something that happens frequently enough, and the indications are that this is going on in Britain at present, with a probability of a check of some of these days.

Let us take a glance next at the United States. The most remarkable thing to be noticed there is the fact of the recent panic and the lasting serious consequences by which it is being followed. The war made high prices for everything, which was natural enough, and to be expected; but what happened besides was this, viz.—that for fully eight years after the war had closed, high prices were kept up through the fever of speculation which had seized upon all classes. Naturally, prices should have come down long ago, but through an excess of speculation and extravagance almost verging upon general insanity they were kept up; until the panic came on the 18th of September last, and did in one day what should have been the gradual work of five years. The result is, in brief, that prices over the way have touched bottom, our neighbours have got down to "hard-pan," very nearly, and are coming to their senses. A fall in wages as well as in prices has taken place; and is likely to be permanent, we will add, deny who may. One immediate consequence of low prices in the States will be to enable the Americans to do what they have not been able to do these twelve years and more, or ever since the outbreak of the war, that is, to send their goods largely to Canada for sale. Let Canadians understand that the spell of high prices and expensive production in the States has been rarely broken by the panic, and that henceforth our neighbours will be able to meet us in competition, on terms something like those that existed before the war, as far as cost of production is concerned.

If this statement of existing circumstances is correct, we may almost certainly look for a pressure upon the Canadian market for British and American goods, but more particularly of such goods as we are making or trying to make for ourselves. In woollens, cottons, silks, sewing machines, both light and heavy hardware, and iron manufactures generally, the pressure from both Britain and the States is likely to be very heavy upon our market to be sold rushed upon what they will fetch. Our manufacturers cannot but feel the effects of this very seriously, more especially as regards dealings with the Americans, while our market is open to our neighbours, their market is carefully closed and kept closed against us. Some people think it good policy that we should give free trade whether we get it or not; we do not, however, here discuss the question, but merely point out that such and such are the facts, as they at present exist.

The agricultural prospect is much better than the manufacturing, in fact, it has scarcely ever been better than at present. Everything that the farmer has to sell brings high prices, cash on the nail, and no credit given or asked. The man who should ask to buy wheat, or potatoes, butter or cheese, on credit, farmers don't do that kind of business any more in Canada. If we have any considerable immigration of farm labourers from England next year, so much the better, so much more will it tell in favour of the farmers. And not only the agricultural interests, but other interests more immediately dependent thereupon, have a good prospect before them. During the two months just preceding the close of navigation—the most valuable two months of all the year for transportation by water—the movement of grain from the Western States was paralyzed through the panic, the consequence of which was that grain in vast quantities which in other years and other circumstances would by this time have been on the seaboard in Europe, is still lying at Chicago or farther off, awaiting the trolley to move it. The consequence of this again is, that the grain which should have come east by lake and canal, but did not, must now come by railway. This conclusion is a sure one, there is no evading it; the grain now in the Western States must go to Europe, and it must go to the seaboard by railway, too, for the reason that Europe cannot possibly wait for it until inland navigation opens next spring. Confirmatory of this, we observe that the movement has already set in strongly; the two thousand Blue Line cars, lately lying idle at stations and sidings on the Great Western are now called for, every one of them, and once more the freight business of the road is looking up. Other through railways must also share the benefit of a movement which is not local merely, but large and general; and we know that the prosperity of our railways makes work and wages for many people amongst ourselves. It may be looked for, therefore, that there will be good times as far as the prosperity of the farmers and of the railways together can make them.

As for the prospects over the border, a great revival in business is expected by everybody immediately after New Year's day. Our neighbours get down one in a while, but they never stay down very long; they are a people of great spring and elasticity, and rapidly recuperate after depression. We feel safe in advising all who are interested in prospects over there to count upon the opening, in a month or two at farthest, of a season of great activity in the United States, but with both wages and prices permanently lowered from the high figures of twelve years past. Should this be realized, our farmers will benefit thereby, through increased demand for their produce and live stock.

We reach these general conclusions, then, in the matter. First, that in Canada manufacturing prospects are decidedly dull for 1874, owing to the certainty, almost, of large importations of competing goods, both from Britain and the States, at lower prices than have prevailed these some years past. Secondly, that the agricultural prospect is good, very good, in fact, and that as far as good times in the country can make the same in the town there will be good times; though it is to be remembered that farmers' money spent upon imported articles only benefits a few people, whereas money spent upon articles made at home benefits many people. And thirdly, that our railway interests, largely dependent as they are upon the revival of business on the other side, have really nothing at all to fear, as the revival has already commenced, and is sure to go on. As regards Hamilton, we should say that agricultural and railway prosperity will go far to make up for the dullness in the manufacturing line which we anticipate, and that our city is as likely as any in Canada to find compensation in one way for what it may fall short of in another. Meantime every Government work and every public work of any kind, the doing of which has been determined upon, with the funds provided for it, should by all means be pushed with the earliest opening of next season, and all the winter preparations that can be made should be made. It is the duty of Governments and corporations to push their works chiefly in dull times, when private enterprise lags and fails, and to hold back in good times, when private parties are madly bidding against each other for land, labour, material, and everything that is for sale. We offer, for the general good, these few reflections on a subject which is of great personal and family interest in most households, believing that they are making a safe thing as they are, making at the same time the attempt to set forth, as clearly as we can, what the prospect is of things as they are likely to be.

A great gambling policy organization, upon the head quarters of which a raid has just been made by the New York police, has about 600 branch offices in that city alone. The extent of the policy swindle is alarming, no less than \$3,000,000 being the annual receipts of the offices in question.

Spurgeon.

All tourists spend a Sabbath in London, and all go to hear Mr. Spurgeon, who for twenty years has been one of the lions, as really as the Tower or British Museum. He had just returned from his vacation, and was, in the happiest manner, shall I describe him? A short, stout man, of broad shoulders and full chest—a head dropped into his shoulders, black hair and full whiskers, eyes small and face rather expressionless than otherwise, of shallow hue—this is Spurgeon, as he appears upon his platform. There is no organ. He spends a moment in silent prayer; and then opens the service by a vocal prayer, some five minutes long. His voice is sweet, and charms you with its clearness and melody. A choir of some fifty persons seated on a platform below Mr. Spurgeon, under the direction of a precentor, who stands by his side, lead the congregation in a six-verses hymn. The effect is grand. It is the singing of Plymouth Church, without John Zundel's accompaniment. It is the united melody of five thousand voices. Fitting minutes are spent in a running commentary on the 23rd Psalm, the people following with open Bibles. After singing and prayer and singing again—for Spurgeon, like Beecher, believes that David knew what is the chief element in religious worship—Mr. S. announces his text:—"As the apple tree among the trees of wood, so is my love among the daughters."—Sol. Song. The subject is the pre-eminence of Christ, and it is developed in an illustrative and practical way, which gain the attention of every one. When he says, "lastly," you look at your watch, for you are surprised at the brevity of the discourse. But what seemed only fifteen minutes is in reality forty-five. "All hail the power of Jesus' name," is the closing hymn. "Myles Lane" is the tune, and grandly it is sung. The slight repetition of the words "and crown him," in the last line of each verse, was thrilling in its effect. "Louder," said Mr. Spurgeon, and the roof seemed to shake. It was magnificent. I have heard choral singing in ten English cathedrals, but with all its beautiful art it is not so moving as this. I have heard that Spurgeon was egotistic. I saw nothing of it. There is not a thing about the man's manner or pulpit appearance that I would change. His sincerity and calm fervour captivated me. A Scotchman said, "He is the tip top of preachers."

Whatever you do, never set up for a critic. I don't mean a newspaper one, but in private life, in the domestic circle, in society. It will not do any one any good, and it will do you harm—if you mind being called disagreeable. "If you don't like any one's nose, or object to any one's chin, don't put your feelings into words. If any one's manners don't please you, remember your own. People are not made to suit one's taste; recollect that. Take things as you find them, unless you can alter them. Even a dinner, after it is swallowed, can't be made any better. Continual fault-finding, continual criticism of the conduct of this one, the dress of the other, and the opinions of a third will make home the unhappy place under the sun. If you are never pleased with any one, no one will ever be pleased with you. And if it is known you are hard to suit, few will take pains to suit you.

The Danbury News man says: "One of the most annoying complaints in the range of medical knowledge is a cold in the head. The man with a cold in his head is a mournful fabric to contemplate. He loses his interest in everything but a stove and a handkerchief, and were he called upon to give an expression, it would be found that his idea of heaven was a place where stove foundries and cotton mills were about equally divided. His eyes are watery, his skin drawn tight to his flesh, his nose is swollen, of a fiery red, and sorer than a strange dog. What he mostly fears is the draft, but in spite of his most active endeavors he is sure to get into it; and he is hardly able to conceal his surprise at the pressure of business the family is subjected to, which keeps the door open about two thirds of the time, and establishes an almost uninterrupted current of air about his legs. Screwed up back of the stove, with his nose like a beacon shining above it, he patiently holds his handkerchief to the blaze, and finally slips into a mental calculation as to which will first lose its moisture—his cotton or his blood. There he sits all day with the handkerchief as a flag of truce tendered by the fire in his head to the fire in the stove, and at night he goes sneezing through a cold hall, sneezing at every leap. Long after every one else is asleep he starts up with a terrific sneeze, and finds that his feet are sticking out below the quilts, and that the handkerchief which he meant to have carefully located for just this emergency is nowhere to be found.

Blowing.—"The other evening," relates the New Orleans Herald, "while the chief engineer of a lung-tester was expatiating upon the benefits to be derived from the free use of his instruments, a candourous individual stepped out of the crowd and remarked to him: 'Mister, do you think it would help me to blow into that?' 'Yes, sir, certainly; it would expand your chest, give elasticity to the lungs and lengthen your life. Why, you'd soon be able to blow 500 pounds, and win the \$5 prize.' 'Why, does a fellow get \$5 when he blows that many pounds?' 'Yes, sir; wouldn't you like to make a trial?' 'With a knowing wink to the crowd. 'I don't care if I do,' said Greeny, walking round and peering down a dime of the greasy shin plaster sort. Then, taking the mouth-piece in his hand, made ready. He opened his mouth until the hole in his face looked like a dry dock for ocean steamers, and began to take in wind. The inflation was like that of the Daily Graphic balloon, but not so disastrous. The fellow's chest began to grow and distend, until he resembled a pouter pigeon more than a man, at which point he put the mouth-piece to his lips, and blew with such force that his eyes came out, and stood around on his cheek-bones to see what was the matter. But that cannot be said to be a flash, and the needle of that indicator spun around like a baton on a school-house door, until it stood still at 500 pounds! The crowd cheered, and the keeper of the can paid over \$5 in stamps without a mutter of astonishment. But Greeny pocketed them coolly, and turning to the spectators, said, 'Look here, gents, that ain't nothing at all to do for a man who has been bugler in a deaf and dumb asylum for seven years, like me.'

Miscellaneous Paragraphs.

A Nevada gambler won \$4,380 on a capital of 50 cents, but was robbed and murdered while going home. The fact that bad-guns are sweating under the arm is adduced in evidence of exceeding mild winter. Not one-twentieth of the people who gather about "Barium's" talking machine are married men. The Rev. Miss Chapin of Iowa City, of the Universalist Church there, has accepted a tutorship in an Eastern college with a salary of \$3,000 per annum. Dinners are again being supplied in London, to poor children, at two cents per load. Last winter the number of dinners given on this plan was 104,468. A New York Herald reporter, who went to see the police "pull" a gambler's den, was mixed in with the fare men arrested, and he served twenty-six hours in goal before they would accept his story. In consequence of the sudden demand of troops for the Gold Coast, an order for 700 tunics and 400 pairs of trousers was given out recently at the Government clothing factory at Pinlicko, London. The order was filled, and the goods delivered twenty-four hours after, and that without in any way disturbing the ordinary routine of the establishment. A woman who thought that to be witty at the expense of the youth of a weak intellect, accosted him with, "John, people say you are a fool." "Oa this, John," he replied, "I don't know that I am, Sir; I know some things, sir, and some things I don't know, sir."—Well, John, what do you know?" "I know that widlers always have fat legs, sir."—"And what don't you know?"—"I don't know whose ears they eat, sir."

An Irish counsellor having lost his case, which having been tried by three judges, one of whom was esteemed a very able lawyer, though the other two were indifferent, some of the barristers were merry on the occasion. "Well, now," said he, "who could help it when there were a hundred judges on the bench?"—"A hundred?" said a bystander; "there were but three."—"By St. Patrick!" replied he, "there were one and two eighths!"

Says the Chicago Post:—"Poor ex-Congressman Connelly, Tweed's Tammany confederate, is living in retirement at a little out-of-the-way town in the interior of Ireland, on the interest of a miserable pittance of \$3,000,000 obtained in New York by assiduous industry, the results of which sent him abroad in search of a more salubrious climate."

"I've known many a church to die 'cause it didn't give enough; but I never known a church to die 'cause it gave too much. Dry don't die that way! Bread, has any of you knowed a church to die 'cause it gave too much? I do, just say so, and I'll make a pilgrimage to dat church, and I'll climb by de soft light of de moon to its moss-covered roof, and I'll stand dar, and hit my hands to heaven and say, 'Blessed are de dead dat die in de Lord.'"

The late Dr. Macadam used to tell of a tipsy Scot making his road home upon a bright Sunday morning, when the good folks were wending their way to the kirk. A little dog pulled the ribbon from the hand of a lady leading it, and as it ran from her, she appealed to the first passer by, asking him to whistle for her poodle. "Woman!" he retorted with that solemnity of visage which only a Scot can assume, "woman, this is no a day for whistling."

MILLIONS ON THE STRIKE!—In spite of the enormous amount of capital invested in the promotion of intemperance, the Missionaries of Sobriety have no reason to be disheartened. The strike against alcoholic drinks is not confined to the ordinary liquors of commerce. It is extending to all medicines of which ardent spirits form a component part. The chief stimulants of this nature are the poisons gains ground everywhere. Eminent physiologists preach the doctrine, and the dissecting knife and the microscope afford post mortem evidence of its truth. Fortunately at the very time when our distinguished surgeons were making the experiments which led to this conclusion, a sagacious member of the profession, Dr. Joseph Walker of California, was perfecting a vegetable tonic, possessing all the restorative properties claimed for the spirituous astringent, and freedom from their deadly sting. To those demoralizing, health-destroying poisons his famous Vinegar Bitters seem to be giving the coup de grace. The demand for them declines, while the commercial and sanitary success of the new medicine is complete. And we hear daily of cases of dyspepsia, biliousness, malarious fever, rheumatism, constipation, general and local debility, gout, kidney diseases, etc., etc., that have succumbed to the great restorative after resisting all others.

Ocean Pathways.

In view of the Ville du Havre disaster, the Chamber of Commerce of New York passed a memorial to be submitted to Congress, asking that body to take measures for the appointment of an International Commission, to be composed of delegates from the maritime nations of Europe and America, whose duty it shall be to draw up a map upon which the pathways of inward and outward bound ships and steamers shall be marked out so clearly that there shall be no possibility of a collision. The memorial stated that the managers of a single line had already laid down the tracks which their steamers should follow.

"Come in out of the wet," as the shark said when he swallowed the boy. A boy two years old, son of Mrs. Desplains, of Randolph street, swallowed a thimble, and as soon as his mother ascertained the fact she called in the neighbors and then fainted. Some of the wise old women suggested standing the boy on his head; others talked of looping a string and fishing after the thimble as people go for a cork in a bottle; others ran out after small boys and sent them for doctors. Three doctors arrived simultaneously, and after engaging in an angry discussion over the respective merits of allopathy and homoeopathy, they went off without doing anything, and another was sent for to attend the mother. Up to dark last night the boy had not complained, but in these hard times there's no knowing how anything will end.—Danbury News.

The Ruling Passion. A well-known sporting character being on his deathbed was attended by a friendly divine of a somewhat nervous temperament, who, to console him, expressed a conviction that he and his penitent would meet heretofore winged angels. "Are you sure of that?" inquired the dying man. "Quite sure," replied his adviser. "Then I'll fly you for a sovereign," replied the incorrigible gambler. An enthusiast of this sort seems, according to a local paper, to have greatly distinguished himself on the occasion of a fire which lately broke out at the cotton-sampling offices of a firm in Liverpool. While the conflagration was at its height, and the burning cotton was being thrown out of the windows upon the flags below, a number of brokers stood in the street discussing the sum which the waste would realize. One among them offered to bet a guinea that the burnt cotton would fetch £15, and as this was apparently far beyond its value, he found difficulty in finding persons willing to take the bet. This he did till twenty people had accepted the wager for a guinea each; he afterwards went to the sale and bought the cotton for £16, which he then sold for £12, sustaining a loss of £4 upon the purchase, but pocketing sixteen guineas as the balance of his profits on the transaction.—Pitt Mall Gazette.

Little Hilarities. Life would be miserable if men and women had no grievances. It is highly probable, indeed, that a large number, if they could find nothing to grumble at, would die of simple ennui. It is positive enjoyment to many people to have a good growl; they take intense delight in persuading themselves and those by whom they are surrounded that they are martyrs on a small scale. They do not act thus always with the mere intention of invoking pity on their behalf. They are actuated by a somewhat vague feeling of discontent. They feel that somehow or other, things are not exactly as they ought to be. They may have plenty to eat and drink, they may have good clothes on their backs, and sufficient money to provide them with all the lawful luxuries; they may have friends who love them, and comfortable homes, and yet they feel dissatisfied and seize an opportunity of making their dissatisfaction felt. They may be good-hearted people in the main; they may give money to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, their eyes may water with compassion at the sight of suffering, and yet, unaccountable as it may appear, they will take positive pleasure in making those with whom their daily lives are spent temporarily unhappy.

Human nature is made up of such palpable contradictions—there is a much instinctive bad mixed up with so much instinctive good in every one of us—that there is no reason to be surprised at this. Such being the constitution of many men's minds, it will readily be conceived that even when such people are exceptionally prosperous they will at a point of positively floating over their rival heads, looking out, indeed, that they have as large a share of the bitters of life as any of their fellows. Indeed, we may go step further and say that those who have most trials talk least about them. Those whose lives are an unintermittent struggle to keep the wolf from the door, have, in fact, little time for grumbling. They have generally to be content with things as

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