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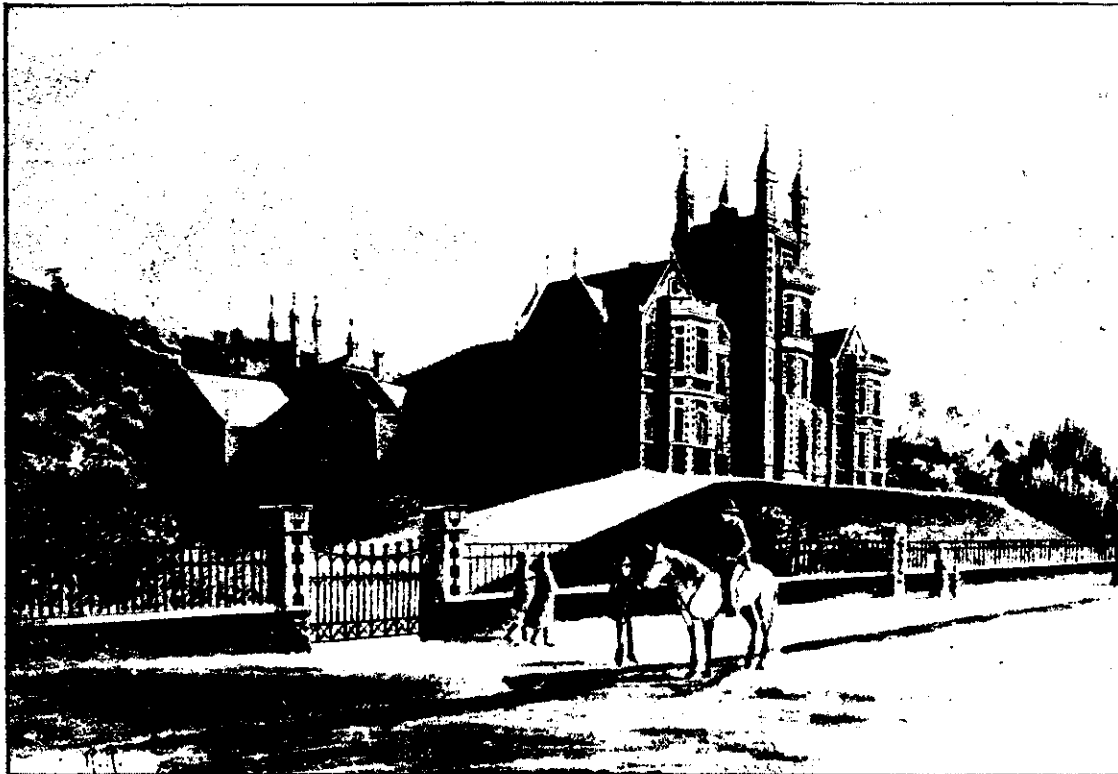
THE PROFESSIONS V. TRADE.

THE will of Mr Peter Robinson, the popular draper of Oxford-street, shows that he had accumulated a fortune, including of course a valuation of his extensive business, but excluding his freeholds, exceeding eleven hundred thousand pounds. That is a large fortune, even in these days of great accumulations, and must make some of the old squires smile or groan when they recollect the selling value of the 'great estates,' for the possession of which they are so bitterly envied and even publicly reviled. Mr Meeking, of Holborn Viaduct, a draper with the same kind of business, left, if we remember rightly, a little less than six hundred thousand pounds, while the personality of Mr Marshall, of Messrs Marshall and Snelgrove, also drapers, was sworn under three quarters of a million. Fortunes like these, which are exclusive, it must be remembered, of any freeholds the testators may have possessed—such men usually buy valuable little estates in the home counties—attract attention even in a time when men begin to think of fortunes on the American scale, and the accounts of them produce two noteworthy results. They greatly excite the cupidity of Chancellors of the Exchequer, to the despair of great freeholders, whose sons are compelled to sell their properties in a demoralised market; and they increase the general impression of the cultivated that the professions are not worth entering, that if money is to be a young man's object, his only chance is to devote himself to 'business.' To become a farmer of any kind, even the 'occupying owner' kind, is to starve, while to become a barrister, a solicitor, a doctor, a journalist, a soldier, a sailor, or even an engineer, is only to earn a living in which the prizes are far below those of business, while for the majority of those who do not fail there is only a bare living, out of which the children can get nothing but an education, and sometimes not that. Nothing approaching to a million or half a million has been bequeathed in our time by a professional man; indeed we doubt whether, if we exclude inheritances and lucky investments, any professional man has ever accumulated £250,000 while the largest fortune made in the Services, and that only in

India, has not exceeded £100,000. In a country like this and among a people like ours, which is always thirsting to reach the top, if it be only in the production of orchids, the great prizes produce an imaginative effect, and that effect is reinforced among cool minds by a study of the general scene around them. The average business man is more comfortable, if he succeeds at all, than the average professional man, has more to spend, can save more, lives farther out of the cities—now a great object of middle-class ambition—and can give his children rather better chances. The social prejudice against trade, and even against shopkeeping, has long been dying away; the admitted object of hard work outside the Services is comfort, and we do not wonder therefore when we read, as in the *Times* of Tuesday, that, according to the census returns, the number of farmers is shrinking rapidly and that of lawyers shrinking slowly, while every other kind of gainful work has every year more candidates for its prizes. Nor are we surprised to be told that 'gentlemen' who inherit businesses elect to carry them on; that mothers of degree make interest to get their sons 'into the City'—a very wide phrase covering many occupations—and that their fathers, who themselves were taught Latin and Greek, question angrily whether modern education is not 'all wrong,' and declare that if there were a first-rate 'business-school' in England—which, so far as we know, there is not—they would greatly prefer it for their boys to Eton and Harrow. We expect, in fact, within a few years to see the American system in vogue here, that is, to see the strong and ambitious lads of a family learning manufactures or trade, while only the weak, or those with an instinct for study, will adhere to the professions. Here and there, as in America, a bold and energetic person will break loose from the rack, and to the surprise of his schoolmates will cut his way to distinction, and even fortune, on the old professional lines; but the majority will think the effort too hopeless, will turn aside to commerce, and will make of the great marts of the world worse 'competitive wild beasts' dens than ever. They will 'cut one another's throats,' as the clerks do now, till all careers will alike seem disappointing; though still the few prizes that will remain of the very large kind will fall to the men of commerce. They cannot disappear wholly, for

the simple reason that it is as easy to sell a thousand bales of goods as a hundred if there is only a demand, that demand tends more and more to run in grooves, and that a thousand pennies are worth more than four times a pound. If a man can attract ten thousand persons a day to his shops, it hardly matters what the scale of his charges is; he must, if he takes ready money and lives for thirty years, die a millionaire. The immense expansion of modern markets, owing to improved means of communication, works almost automatically, so that those who attract the mass of buyers gather in wealth almost without knowing it. We suppose the humblest known kind of manufacture is tag-making—a mere twisting of minute pieces of tin—but if everybody buys off one tag-maker, and he can make a machine twist tin for him, it is inevitable that his annual takings, and therefore profits, should be on an enormous scale.

We began this paper by a word about the wills of men with great personal fortunes, and we want to end it with a word about the wills of men with lauded estates. That class may rely on it that the rule of etiquette, or whatever it is, which prevents the publication of the value of the properties they bequeath, is exceedingly injurious to them. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*, and the popular envy of wealth concentrates itself on them because of the general ignorance. They are supposed to be the only rich because their possessions are never accurately known even when they die. A great squire with ten thousand acres in an agricultural country receives for his wealth ten times the abuse, and even the political hostility which falls to the lot of a Mr Peter Robinson; yet the latter, in the present condition of affairs, has probably six times the great squire's income, and eight times his actual wealth when reduced into sovereigns capable of being expended. There are large proprietors in Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk at this moment, whom all Radicals would tax to the bone because they must have so large a surplus, yet whose property, if valued for probate, would not be worth one fifth of that possessed by Mr Peter Robinson. Yet Mr Robinson is treated as an excellent citizen who benefits his country, while Lord Deepdrains is denounced as a 'bloated aristocrat,' who, while 'rolling in riches,' clamours for a reduction in agricultural rates.—*The Spectator*.



BOY'S HIGH SCHOOL, DUNEDIN.