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About Some of our Acquaintances.

The copybooks long ago taught us that there are "many men of many minds," and our every day experience enforces the truth of the statement. — that is, if actions are to be taken as proof of mental states. Our neighbors are very different from each other in many respects, and we propose, for their own and others' benefit, to point out some of their differences.

There is one large class, to begin with, whose members steadfastly refuse to join in any movement that proposes to be undertaken for the public good. Either because they are too selfish to devote time and money to any object that aims at the good of the community — too mean to contribute to any object in whose benefits they will share even though they contribute nothing, — or because they have no faith in any such endeavors, they preserve their isolated position with a persistency that seems selfishly indifferent or sublimely superior to the public-spirited activity of others. Boards of Trade are organized with difficulty, kept up at some expense, attended at a considerable sacrifice of time, and exercise an important influence for good on trade legislation and otherwise; but the members of this class never give a dollar or lose an hour for their maintenance, although they share in the legislative benefits, and make use of the statistics and other useful information brought out in debate or embodied in reports of committees. When the action of the Board is contrary to their wishes, when it treads on their commercial or political corns, when it fails to accomplish all that these gentlemen think it should, then it is derided as useless, ridiculed as pretentious, or denounced as the tool of a clique, by the gentlemen who have done nothing to keep it in

the right path, increase its efficiency, or preserve its independence. These gentlemen seem to consider that they have an inalienable right to dictate the policy of such bodies, prescribe the objects which they shall consider, and grumble at their failures. It never seems to occur to them that, as they have not taken part in the support of such a body, they have nothing to say about its management, and no right to grumble at its delegates and committees. The assurance with which they come forward as critics, directors, prompters and denouncers of men whom they have refused to aid is simply marvellous. The attitude these gentlemen take up towards Stock Exchanges, hotel and railway projects, and other enterprises that promise as much good to the public as to the projectors, still further illustrates their peculiar method of shirking the burdens and sharing the benefits of public improvements. The members of this class are invisible when the hat or subscription paper is passing around, silent when they are reaping the benefits of others' enterprise, and very demonstrative when failure follows the disinterested labors in which they have refused to share.

We are inclined to scold the great majority of our neighbors for the manner in which they under-estimate and over-estimate men. It is too much the custom to value them in proportion to the amount of talking they do at public meetings, the frequency with which they get themselves put forward as representative men, and the amount of knowledge they profess to have on every subject that comes up for consideration. There could be no greater mistake than this, and it is a mistake for which the newspapers are largely responsible. Many of the most useful of our public-spirited citizens, many of those who are the most active in working for the advancement of schemes for the welfare of the community, are without the self-confidence and command of words that are necessary for addressing a public meeting. Most of the real work of Boards of Trade, Parliaments, Municipal Councils, and Industrial Associations, is not done publicly by the talkers, but privately by active and industrious committees, and yet the speeches made on the floor are reported at length in the newspapers while the labors of days and weeks are hardly noticed. The credit is given to the man who grasps the facts, arrays them in the most effective order, and presents them in flowing sentences, rather than to him who has worked weeks in gathering them. This is not right, and thoughtful people should not be misled in this way, valuing words more than deeds, an hour's talk more than a month's work, the facility with which facts are marshalled into an oration more than the industry and penetration with which the facts were brought to light. We have many quiet, hard working men in this commercial community who are always ready

to share in any good work, and never make speeches on any account, and we hope the public will value them at their real worth.

There are men in this community, including some of its most talented speakers and influential citizens, men with peculiar qualifications to do good in the capacity of members of the Local or Dominion Parliament, or as Mayor of the city, who are blamed by many for steadfastly declining to become candidates for public positions. If they made no use of their talents as speakers and writers, held aloof from public meetings and public enterprises, the blame would be deserved; but if we look into their conduct carefully, we may find that they are doing more good daily, in their capacity of private citizens, than they could do in office. The names of some men will recur to our readers, men whose talents are ever at the disposal of charitable societies, whose names are on every subscription paper that is handed around for religious or charitable objects or the promotion of enterprises such as the building of railways, hotels, etc., for the public benefit, and it will be easily seen that their capacity for good would be lessened by their acceptance of office. In office, or as candidates for office, their benevolence would be interpreted as corruption, their suavity as bids for votes, and their charitable views of religious and other opponents as sacrifices of principle to popularity. They do a great deal of disinterested work now, and will be missed more when they die than our officials and legislators, for we are sure of able successors for these, but can only hope for worthy successors of those.

Among the most useful men in this and every other community are those who are active in organizing companies for undertaking work that individuals are seldom ready to perform. These men risk a great deal, and their motives are often misconstrued. They have the courage to go ahead, generally after having examined the path to be trodden with much more caution and clear-sightedness than they are credited with, and the magnetic power of infusing some of their own spirit into others. In this way they secure combinations of capitalists that carry forward enterprises of the greatest good to the community, giving employment to a large number of men, earning profits for money that would have been idle, and developing natural wealth that would have lain dormant. Some of those who condemn these enterprising spirits regard them as reckless, and refuse to believe that it is ability and not luck that carries them over obstacles that appear insurmountable, while others recognize their force of character and business talents and are jealous of them.

Some men stick to their own business, never stepping aside to meddle with anything else and others find it agreeable and profitable to have several "irons in the fire." The former