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THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

WEDNESDAY MORNING DECEMBER 5, 1906.

BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION.

It is a hopeful indication that four of our leading city clergymen graced the electoral reform meeting with their presence on Monday night and instructed those present with their addresses. We use the word instructed advisedly. There are perhaps some who smiled inwardly at the idea of ministers knowing anything about electoral corruption beyond vague generalities, or more than women know about war.

Those who were present and listened to their discourses may perhaps be rather inclined to rush to the opposite extreme and conclude that they know almost too much. But all who heard them will at least agree that they are fully aware of the prevalence of a great evil in our midst and earnestly desirous to have it checked and eradicated. And therein lies a great hope for the success of the movement for pure elections. For great is the power and influence for good of the pulpit.

Probably there was no elector present who had ever sold his vote. If such there were he must have had a very uncomfortable time. If none were present the fact is none the less regrettable as this is one class whom it is especially desirable to reach, to convince and to reform. We do not anticipate that any of the bribe-takers will take the platform in his own defence, and yet he may make a defence to his own conscience, and it seems desirable that the reformers should know his views. Let us try to enter into his feelings a little.

Such a one may ask, what is the politics of the time? It is not a strife between two parties for the spoils of office? "A plague on both your houses!" There is something in it for the contractor, who get his money back in extras; something for the lawyer, who looks for present fees and a future judgeship; something for the rich corporation in the way of subsidies; something for the office-seeker who is of good family and has a pull; something for the candidate, who if successful will get $2,500 per session, with perhaps a Senatorship, Judgeship or Governorship at the end. But what is there in it for the average farmer or the working man? Why should I lose a day from my work to go out and vote for either Liberal or Conservative? This is something for the electoral reformers to answer.

In truth, as Rev. Mr. Dobson expressed it, we have before us a very serious problem, and we do well not to despise our enemy. Some reformers believe in taking short-cuts and would like to kill the Devil and so make an end of evil. Some believe in strict laws as a sort of cure-all, and others have no faith at all in law, unless backed up by popular sentiment. Moses had not much public sentiment to back him when he flung the Ten Commandments into the world. The law may be a very excellent schoolmaster, a strong and growing restraining influence. Canada is the better for a law against stealing. We believe it would be better for more stringent laws to punish both the briber and the bribed.

The evils that have fastened upon our electoral system run from top to bottom. Unlike Nebuchadnezzar's famous image, which had a head of gold, a body of silver, thighs of brass, but feet in part of miry clay, the head, the body and the thighs of our representative system have as much of clay in their composition as the feet. The poor elector who takes a bribe is not the weakest nor the worst member of the anatomical structure. Possibly some of this despised class had they been in Parliament would have had the virtue to deny themselves the ill-gotten gold that was parcelled out in the salary grab. He at least did not steal the five dollar bill which was passed into his hand by some over-zealous candidate's agent or friend.

The evil runs from top to bottom of the system and and the reform, if it is to be effectual must run from top to bottom. There are bigger bribes going than those distributed in secrecy among the proletariat on election day. No man need wait long for a Senatorship or something equally good, under the Government of either party if he has wealth enough, and will contribute freely enough to the party election fund. The people see and know these things and they cannot be blinked in the discussion. And they see and know that our members of Parliament have made an exhibition of dishonest grab and greed which is at once degrading and demoralising. The head, even more conspicuously than the feet, is of miry clay.

What then? Shall we despair of our country? Shall we excuse or exculpate the crime of bribe-taking among electors? God forbid. We believe there is manhood enough, patriotism enough, in Canada to purge the Dominion as Britain purged herself from the rampant corruption which marked the earlier stages of representative government there. Members who buy their elections will sell themselves, always, if the price be high enough. If votes are to be bought and sold, offices and honors, and justice will be bought and sold. The country is beginning to see this and the public conscience is awakening to the need of reform from the bottom to the top of our representative institutions. If we mistake not, the powers that are in the political heavens will be shaken before the movement is ended. And may we not hope that in the end we shall have attained to something of the dignity, the glory and the purity which so signally marks the representative system of the Mother Land?

Toronto Junction under a local option bylaw closed its bars and saloons three years ago. Some honest folk thought this would do no good and others feared it would injure trade and depreciate property values. Rev. Dr. Hazlewood in the Christian Guardian tells that drunkenness has been almost eliminated, the treating habit killed, the assessed value of hotels and other property enhanced and building operations increased. Lots that sold for $40 a foot in barroom days have since sold for $80 a foot. One banker reports $100,000 increase in deposits. A former strong opponent now says, "the police statistics speak eloquently for local option," He will now vote to keep the barrooms closed. Dry goods merchants, grocers, boot and shoe men report large increases in their trade as compared with the days of the open bar. A prominent manufacturer finds his business benefited and says, "local option is a great benefit to Toronto Junction." Time was when some people thought the earth rested on a turtle's back. That was an error, but not a more absurd one than to suppose that the world rests on the back of the barroom.

DR. A. W. CHASE'S CATARRH CURE ... 25c.

is sent direct to the diseased parts by the Improved Blower. Heals the ulcers, clears the air passages, stops droppings in the throat and permanently cures Catarrh and Hay Fever. Blower free. All dealers, or Dr. A. W. Chase Medicine Co., Toronto and Buffalo.

It may or may not be that a medical inspector for the city schools is needed. Our correspondent, Taxpayer thinks none is needed, and he gives his reasons. We think the gentlemen of the School Board should do the same. If a new salaried office is to be created, sufficient reasons should be set forth to satisfy the public of the necessity.

Free Catarrh Cure

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In order to prove to all who are suffering from this dangerous and loathsome disease that Gauss' Catarrh Cure will actually cure any case of catarrh quickly, no matter how long standing or how bad, I will send a trial package by mail free of all cost. Send us your name and address to-day and the treatment will be sent you by return mail, duty free. Try it! It will positively cure so that you will be welcomed instead of shunned by your friends. C. E. Gauss, 7918 Main St., Marshall, Mich. Fill out coupon below.

FREE

This coupon is good for one trial package of Gauss' Combined Catarrh Cure, mailed free in plain package duty free. Simply fill in your name and address on dotted lines below and mail to

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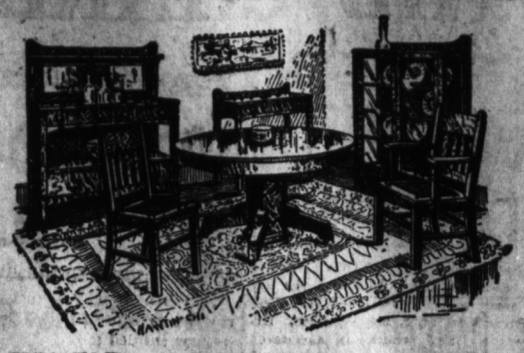

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MARKET HALL

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12-4d3i

NOTICE

All persons on the North side of this Island, having in their possession deals or lumber being part cargo of Ship "Sovinto" recently wrecked near Priest Pond, King's County, are hereby notified that M. P. Hogan has purchased the whole cargo of that vessel, and the property is his wherever found. We would point out that the possessors of any portion of said cargo picked up on the shore, or at sea, must surrender same, on payment of reasonable expenses for their trouble.

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