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## THE "MACHINE" IN HONEST HANDS.

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DURING the closing weeks of the month of January, 1894, several hundred men and women, prominent throughout America for their interest in the cause of municipal reform, were assembled in the city of Philadelphia, to take council together regarding the best methods of bringing about their common desire. Almost synchronous with the deliberations of this representative body a criminal prosecution was in progress in Brooklyn, the defendant in the case being one who had for years successfully defied authority in the most flagrant violation of the election laws of the state of New York. While the Philadelphia reformers were discussing the improvements in civic administration that a well disposed municipal body might be expected to make, with hardly a word relative to practical work at the polls, the trial of the "Boss of Gravesend" was demonstrating beyond a peradventure that reform, to be effectual, must commence at the ballot box, and that as long as election laws can be evaded and a community be defrauded of its electoral rights, only corrupt men and corrupt measures are possible. It is common nowadays to heap abuse upon the "machine," but until the reformer can learn the practical

lessons that the "machine" is prepared to teach him, his abuse of that instrument will have little result in impairing its effectiveness. The "ward boss" not infrequently remarks: "We will give you the press, the pulpit and the indignation meeting, provided there be left to us undisputed control of the registry list and the ballot box." And in his shrewd choice of weapons the "practical politician" has oftentimes won the fight before he has even met the enemy. The city of Montreal is not, perhaps, universally regarded as the most progressive city upon this continent, but it has been one of the first to learn that the only road to substantial reform in municipal administration is through the sanctity of the ballot box, and the adoption of "machine" methods on lawful lines. It is to give an account of the way in which this lesson was learned and acted upon that constitutes the *raison d'être* of this article.

Montreal, like many another city, has for some years past tolerated a thoroughly corrupt administration. During the past two years matters had gone from bad to worse. Valuable franchises had been practically given away to favored and, it is reasonable to suppose, favoring corporations.