

he was struck with their benefit, and determined to introduce them amongst his own people. Even in Siam there were fashions, but even in Siam there must be a female leader for such articles as these. But the King, being about to be married, thought he would make his bride a present that would solve the difficulty. The royal flower and in fact the impress of everything about the court is the lotus, in pattern of which the King ordered his present, and the Queen consort of Siam owns, therefore, a gold thimble shaped like a lotus bud and thickly studded with diamonds, which are so arranged as to form the lady's name and the date of her marriage. As the Siam language is by no means deficient in words and signs it may, therefore, be readily understood that the diamonds are plentiful and the thimble unwearably large.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

GOVERNMENT.

The simplest definition of this word is, "*The exercise of authority.*" When applied to a nation it signifies the form of fundamental rules and principles by which the people are governed. We naturally think first of the divine government, whose principles are manifested in Providence and Grace, in accordance with the revealed character and will of the Great Supreme.

But we wish to speak of government and governments as existing among the children of men. Its existence is coeval with the first man, and to this day has a personal bearing. And he who does not govern himself, is not fit to govern others.

Then comes the family idea; no safety or happiness here without government. Sir Walter Raleigh says, "A man must first govern himself, ere he be fit to govern a family; and his family ere he be fit to bear the government in the commonwealth." Outside of Christianized civilization the world knows very little about good government, and not as much as it ought to know inside of it. However, we are thankful for its existence and operation in families, social life, and national affairs. There is room for much improvement in the exercise of delegated authority, but we seldom have to complain of despotism, coercion or cruelty.

The nineteenth century will not tolerate despotism, the one man power, as former centuries have done. Where the highest style of civilization is known, despotism dies. This form of government might indeed work well if a good despot could be found; one who would never err or do wrong. Such is the divine government. But as no mere man is thus qualified, we must seek another form of government. And we have it, a limited monarchy or aristocracy, which means government by the best, a privileged class. The aristocracy may be more limited than it ought to be, for the best are not always secured. Sometimes it borders on an oligarchy—governed by a few. Britain, in times past, has known more of this kind of rule than would now be tolerated. Probably there is not on earth a better form of government than that which now prevails in this, the largest and most populous empire the world has ever seen. It is certainly superior to Republicanism or Democracy, unless the majority of the state or nation be intelligent and moral. A good government can scarcely be expected from the vote of an illiterate and wicked people.

It is thought by many that the people of Britain affect the government quite as much as they do in the Republic of America. And doubtless the President has more power in filling official positions than either the Premier or the Queen of England. We might just as well say democratic England as democratic America.

Whether the sovereign or the people, or both united, govern there will always be less or more friction in the revolution of the wheels of government. There is so frequently "a wheel within a wheel," that it is difficult to ascertain the direction of the movement. The state or nation is sure to suffer, if those in Legislation Halls are characterized by selfishness and filthy lucre aims rather than by patriotism. Governments are prone to waste trust funds, and they dispense no other. There is no doubt about the fact that party government tends to political corruption. It was so to some extent in Shakespeare's day. Hear him:—

"O that estates, degrees and offices
Were not derived corruptly! and that clear honor
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover, that stand bare!
How many be commanded, that command!
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
From the true seed of honor! And how much honor
Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times,
To be new garished!"

There is doubtless less or more political corruption in all human governments, and not always most in the larger ones. Our Dominion government is young, but it is growing. But offices, with clerks to do nearly all the work, tend to deterioration. The high places of the world are not the purest. We want men to make our laws who have respect to the law of God, men of integrity, who can neither be bought nor sold. We have such, but not all. The people are in part responsible for the evils of government. "A statesman," we are told, "should follow public opinion. Doubtless . . . as a coachman follows his horses; having firm hold on the reins and guiding them."

We are grateful for a tie of connection with Britain which cannot be easily broken. Let it never be severed. But we can do without the Federation recently discussed in Halifax. That would be more expensive than beneficial. And as a province we can do with repeal. To go back into provincial isolation would be selfishness and humiliating retrogression.

ALPHA.

LaHave, 1887.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

STRAY SHOTS.

The latest absurdity of fanaticism comes from a village not far from Halifax. An "unco guid" woman of this place has been holding forth of Temperance (so mis-called) and tells the young fry of her audience that it is wicked and dangerous to eat grapes or raisins, as they may beget a taste for wine. Surely the force of folly could no further go!

The force of impudence, however, impelled by ignorance, bigotry, and the ludicrous spiritual pride of these two, goes quite as far. The village in question has been afflicted for the last two years or more with the obnoxious activity of an obscure sect whose self-sufficiency is perfect, being in that respect on a par with its gross ignorance. One of the pleasant conceits of its hierarchy, or adepts, is their certain knowledge of their own salvation, and their equally confident assurance that no one but themselves, and such as they "convert," can be "saved." One female of this agreeable folk established a Sunday school, and gathered in some children, whose parents were not of the "elect." These she exhorted to pray for their "unsaved parents!" Even this sublimity of importuneness will not, I believe, prevent the falling off of the youngsters. They do not, it is to be feared, quite appreciate the sublime, pure and simple.

These troublesome people who have managed to rot the village by the ears through their absolute unscrupulousness, and their cacophonies of proselytism, do not hesitate to interfere with regular churches, and to endeavor to seduce their members. They got, I believe, a thoroughly good dressing last Sunday from the Rev. Mr. McMillan, (Presbyterian, I think), at least I am not mistaken in the reverend gentleman's name.

The *Graphic* has a very remarkable story running for the last two or three months. "She, A History of Adventure." It is by Haggard, the author of "King Solomon's Mines." The plot is worthy of a modern "Arabian Nights"; but there are serious and suggestive thoughts in it, and glances at many modern facts and isms, re-incarnation for one. The current society novel, even in the *Duchess's* hands, has grown sickening, and it is quite refreshing to turn over a leaf of originality and vigorous endeavor, however extravagant. In the *Graphic*, of course, it is illustrated, but the illustrations are somewhat feeble. It would take a Fuseli to produce an Ayesha, a Leo, and a Holly. I suppose it will shortly appear in book-form.

FRANK-TIMEUR.

COMMERCIAL.

The past week has witnessed no marked movement in wholesale circles. Prices have ruled steady, and, as the tendency has been upward in nearly all lines during the past six months, profits were consequently better—especially for those who secured stocks before the advance—and the outlook is encouraging. As a rule, merchants speak hopefully, and the trade of 1886 was, on the whole, fairly satisfactory.

An event that has caused considerable comment during the past week was a fire that occurred on the 6th inst. in premises on Granville Street owned by Mr. Henry Lawson, and occupied by Messrs. Hiesler Bros., hat-makers and furriers. The fire was discovered in the rear of the premises at about 4 o'clock in the morning, and the firemen succeeded, by the most energetic and heroic exertions, in confining its actual ravages to the building in which it originated. The stocks, however, of Messrs. Baldwin & Co., (crockeryware), and of James Fortune & Co., (dry goods), were considerably damaged by smoke and water, and, in the case of the first-named firm, by broilage. The firm in whose shop the fire originated had only recently rented the premises, and had their stock insured for \$6,000. Certain circumstances led to a suspicion that there was something crooked about the affair, and a rigid examination was ordered. Detectives were engaged to collect evidence, and the suspicions appear to be made stronger by their investigations. The official enquiry has not been concluded, and we have no wish to prejudge the matter. Still the Hiesler's have been "afflicted" with fires—this being their third visitation—and in each case they have been well insured. It is, therefore, only natural that their underwriters should make careful enquiries before paying over the insurance money. Some very peculiar evidence has already been elicited, and the course and results of the examination will be watched with much interest.

About six thousand immigrants landed at this port from Europe during 1886. We regret to say that very few of them were intending to make permanent homes for themselves in Nova Scotia. Most of them were bound for the western Provinces. It is a pity that the great possibilities of this Province are not properly set before the classes who are likely to emigrate from Europe. The greater part of these immigrants arrive with sufficient capital to give them a fair start, and they become the best class of citizens. We have inherent natural inducements that would make such arrivals prosperous if we could induce them to stop among us. That they do not more generally avail themselves thereof is indisputably due to the fact that no proper effort is made to lay the truths before them that would be calculated to decide them to take up their residence here.

The *Montreal Trade Bulletin* of last week has a very sensible article on "Our Winter Port," from which we copy the following: "Halifax ought to be the winter port of the Dominion, and the efforts she is putting forth to secure that position deserve recognition both from the government and the merchants of the Dominion. Halifax has been successful in opening up a large winter grain trade with the continent of Europe, several cargoes having already been secured for Hamburg and Antwerp by the Hanes