

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BALLOT BILL.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

SIR,—The majority of the Members of the House of Commons seem to have no strong convictions on this question. It was introduced by the Government as a measure of policy, and an event which will mark their administration as an epoch in our history. Mr. Penny said it was an importation and not indigenous to this country. The *Globe* says it is as good as a gold bag to a corrupt government. Yet these and many more who express similar views advocated its adoption. As we are going to have the ballot, with all its vices, I hope we shall have no more corrupt governments, as two such plagues, at the same time, would be intolerable.

The ballot bill, though partly or wholly disapproved by every person whose opinion is entitled to any weight, like the inflation bill just vetoed by President Grant, is sure to pass. Hon. J. H. Cameron, who has given the question consideration and has convictions on it, expressed his intention to divide the House when it came up. I think he was right. Posterity should know who restores this relic of barbarism in the present age of civilization. A man who has no strong convictions on so momentous a question as the ballot should never have a seat in the House of Commons. Convictions are evidences of truth and honesty. If a man says he has no convictions on the truths of Christianity, for example, we very justly cease to attach any importance to his opinions on that subject. So it is with politicians who have no strong opinions on such questions as the present. This Government will give us the ballot, and the next or some subsequent one, will probably give us universal suffrage. Then will come inflation, repudiation, and every other species of dishonesty so fearfully prevalent in the United States at the present time. No person in the United States, whose opinions are entitled to much weight, has any confidence in the popular will as expressed by the ballot. They would rather trust to Grant or any man of ordinary virtue and intelligence for an honest verdict than to a verdict of the whole nation obtained in the ordinary way. A measure cannot be fairly judged without looking from the beginning to the end. Nothing is well that does not end well. It is because we have so many legislators who cannot see two steps before them that we have such measures as the ballot forced on the country.

By adopting the ballot, the Government is putting the blister on the wrong place. The pain is not there at all. Blistering the crown of the head instead of the soles of the feet would not be a greater mistake. The inconveniences which give rise to objections against open voting is not in open voting itself. For example, the best engine will run neither well nor safely over an uneven track. Just so with the franchise. Open voting, the engine, is faultless, but prevention of intimidation, the track, is incomplete, and no amount of tinkering at the engine will ever mend the track. In fact, such a mistake cannot fail to spoil both and make matters worse. Adopting the ballot for the prevention of bribery and intimidation is just like tinkering at the engine when one should be ballasting the track and fastening down the rails. Up to the present time legislation has failed to provide a proper track for open voting. Two great obstacles have been allowed to lie in the way—namely, unnecessary facilities for intimidation and unnecessary facilities for bribery. Remove these two obstructions, as far as practicable, and the engine, that is, open voting, will proceed smoothly and safely. However perfect the engine is it can neither move itself nor draw its ponderous load over an unsuitable track. It is only reasonable that we should put the track in proper repair before we pronounce the engine unfit for use.

The moral courage necessary to perform a virtuous act publicly deserves to be encouraged and protected in every person. In this consists the best part of man's moral nature. A great part of the usefulness of a virtuous act consists in its publicity.

An honest, intelligent vote given in public has a double virtue. By its weight in the proper scale it does good; and by its example it does still more good. The advocates of the ballot dwell largely on the evils of ordinary coercion, but entirely overlook the coercion and example of moral influences, the benefits of which far outweigh the evil effects of the former. The public exercise of the franchise is the safety-valve of political virtue and liberty everywhere.

J. S. Mill, in his essay "On Representative Government," page 85, says: "Neither can it be admitted that even if all had votes, they would give their votes as honestly in secret as in public." Again: "The best side of their character is that which people are anxious to show, even to those who are no better than themselves. People will give dishonest or mean votes from lucre, from malice, from pique, from personal rivalry, even from interests or prejudices of class or sect, more readily in secret than in public." Furthermore he adds: "Almost the only restraint on a majority of knaves consists in their involuntary respect for the opinion of an honest minority." And in conclusion he says: "All this good would be sacrificed by the ballot." Even with universal suffrage Mr. Mill thinks the ballot undesirable. He says, on page 84: "I cannot think that even if the people were fit for, and had obtained universal suffrage the ballot would be desirable." Mr. Mill differs entirely from Mr. Bright on the ballot question and the franchise. Mr. Bright calls the franchise a right; Mr. Mill calls it a trust, saying, "In whatever way we define or understand the idea of a right, no person can have a right (except in the purely legal sense) to power over others; every such power which he is allowed to possess is morally, in the fullest force of the term, a trust. But the exercise of any political function, either as an elector or as a representative, is power over others. Those who say that the suffrage is not a trust but a right will scarcely accept the conclusions to which their doctrine leads. If it is a right, if it belongs to the voter for his own sake, on what grounds can we blame him for selling it, or using it to recommend himself to any one whom it is his interest to please." Hence Mr. Bright's idea of the franchise is essentially selfish, and the ballot offers the facilities for utilizing that selfishness. If the franchise is a right, as Mr. Bright says, the elector is free to dispose of his vote to the person willing to give him most for it. On the other hand, if it is a trust, as Mr. Mill says, the elector, being under a much greater moral obligation, is bound to exercise it not only for

his own good but for the good of those who conferred it on him. Hence, where the ballot is used people become "intensely selfish."

There may be members in our local Legislatures, and in the House of Commons, in as much danger of coercion as the humblest elector who votes at the pole. Ministers, colleagues, factious constituents, aspirations for office, the love of gain, and many other persons and things may be coercing them into acts opposed to their consciences and the public good. To be consistent the advocates of the ballot should recommend its adoption in the local Legislatures and the House of Commons, so that all parties might have equal privileges. The coercion practised in the Legislatures is, in my opinion, fully as bad as that which takes place among electors during elections. It affects legislation more directly and, perhaps, more injuriously than the other. Judges and juries are liable to be coerced, as we know they sometimes are, especially in the States, by powerful persons, cliques, and corporations. The use of the ballot as a remedy for this state of affairs is a fatal mistake. Coercion must be met by coercion. The ballot is an admission of weakness in the law, and a dangerous concession. To the coercion complained of we must oppose that of an enlightened public opinion, moral influences, and law.

The use of the ballot renders convictions for bribery nearly impossible. Knowing how a man votes is the first act which arouses suspicion. If we cannot connect this with something else I do not see how a charge can be sustained. We may see money changing hands, but if we do not know how a man votes it is impossible to prove that the money was given for the vote. Thus the ballot takes away an important link in the chain of circumstantial evidence required to convict. If there are fewer convictions for bribery with the ballot than without it, it is because the ballot renders convictions nearly impossible. Hence the evil is often only smothered when it is considered cured. Suspicion needs to be aroused by some circumstance before there can be any enquiry or conviction. In establishing a charge of bribery there are three main facts—first, a man's political antecedents; second, the act of voting, and, third, the intervening monetary or other consideration known to exist, and not explained by any ordinary business transaction.

Now the final act of voting is the keystone of the whole enquiry, and if concealed is likely to defeat the ends of justice. Convictions for bribery where the ballot is used are rare, simply because so often impracticable. Crime may increase and convictions decrease, if convictions are rendered legally impossible. If the law rendered the discovery of poisoning impracticable by medical men, offences of this kind, and convictions for offences of this kind, would soon disappear from the calendar of crime.

By the ballot, the law says to society, you shall not have a chance to know how this man or that man votes, or whether he is bribed or not. How he votes, and what he does with his vote, is no one's business except his own. This is the idea practically conveyed to the popular mind by Mr. Bright's definition of the franchise.

Mr. Blake, in a speech at London some time ago, said, "I tell you so strong is my conviction on this point, that I decided that if the committee of which I was a member had been turned by the House into a close committee, so that I should not have had the protection of public opinion and the light of day, to decline to sit upon it an hour longer. That was not because publicity alone would be a sufficient protection, but because it would be a partial guard, at any rate, against extreme injustice being done by the majority to the minority."

Publicity affords the minority in elections precisely the kind of protection which Mr. Blake expected from it. As Mr. Mill says, "Almost the only restraint on a majority of knaves consists in their involuntary respect for the opinions of an honest minority." The majority will sanction oppressive measures against the minority by ballot, which they would be ashamed to countenance openly. In open voting individuals become severally responsible to public opinion. In voting by ballot there is no individual responsibility. The greatest outrage may be committed without its being possible to identify those who shared in the act. Hence, whether it is a select committee, a committee of the whole House of Commons, or of the whole nation, publicity in voting is essential to true liberty.

Yours Truly,
W. DEWART.

Fenelon Falls.

HOW CREMATION IS PERFORMED AT DRESDEN.

Nowhere has the proposal, recently revived by Sir Henry Thompson, to substitute cremation for interment, taken such a hold upon the public mind as in Germany. Already numerous cremation societies have been formed in that country and several furnaces intended for reducing human remains to ashes have been and are being constructed. On our front page in this issue we give a sectional view of the cremation apparatus recently erected at Dresden by the Siemens, at the request of Professor Reclam, on the model of a furnace exhibited by that firm at the Paris Exhibition of 1867. The mode of conducting the operation of cremation by means of this apparatus is thus described by Herr F. Siemens, of Dresden:

The entire apparatus consists of three distinct parts: first, a gas generator for the production of the gas necessary to heat the furnace, outside the building; secondly, the proper furnace with the furnace and cremation room, inside the building; thirdly, the pipe or flue for carrying off the product of the operation. Imagine, then, a large, handsome building, suitably constructed for the purpose for which it is intended; in the middle of which is built a furnace, out of sight of those inside the place. The funeral procession enters the edifice, as it now enters the churchyard, and the coffin is placed on a catafalque. After the usual ceremonies, the remains are lowered (as shown in the illustration) into the vault, the cover of which has been previously raised, and is immediately closed upon the reception of the coffin. The manner of performing the operation of cremation by the means of heated air is then as follows. The gas generator is so contrived that every four or six hours the fuel is replenished (apparently on some self-feeding system). The gas is then carried off, as fast as produced, through a pipe furnished with a regulator valve, into

the "Regenerator," or furnace proper, where a regular current of heated air is kept up, by means of which the gas is converted into flame. This flame fills the furnace, keeping the bricks at a white heat and the receptacle for the remains at a moderate red heat, and finally escapes through a conductor leading to the chimney. As soon as the furnace is in this condition the operation may be commenced. The furnace cover is lifted, as shown in the illustration, by a man whose business it is to attend to the furnace, the coffin is lowered into its receptacle, the cover of which is fastened down, and the remains are exposed to a red heat for a longer or a shorter time, according to the physical condition and constitution of the deceased. When the body has been exposed to the heat for a sufficient length of time the regulator valve is closed and the gas shut off. The heated air streams through the furnace and speedily operates a dissolution of the more combustible portions of the now dried up body; while the bones are destroyed by the heat, the carbonic acid passing off through the chimney, and the calcareous matter remaining in the form of a fine powder, which is subsequently collected for preservation as the friends of the deceased may wish. With an apparatus such as this, Sir Henry Thompson has made several experiments. On one occasion he consumed a hog weighing two hundred and twenty-seven pounds in fifty-five minutes—the operation being conducted without the slightest offensive smell, or any perceptible escape of gas.

In conclusion, we may quote the words used by Professor Gottfried Kinkel at the cremation meeting held at Zurich in March last. His argument should appeal strongly in favour of cremation to those who, as is the case with many in Montreal, have had frequent cause for complaint owing to the unchecked and repeated desecration of the resting places of their dead—a desecration shameful beyond words when conducted, as in this city, at the instance and under the auspices of the civic authorities.

"It is not our wish to use compulsion in the introduction of any new practice. There is nothing to prevent those who may desire it from being laid to rest in the bosom of the earth. I should look upon it as a horrible thing if one were to make the idea of death yet more unbearable to some people by saying to them 'You must submit to cremation whether you will or no.' But it is a still more horrible thing if the State is to say to the man who wishes his remains to be consumed: 'You must and shall be buried in this hired lot, and when it seems good to the authorities you shall be removed to make room for another.' Sooner will he trust to cremation for a sure and untroubled resting place for our dead."

HURDY-GURDIES.

I have just discovered that I have been all my life labouring under a stupid and fatal mistake, and hasten to lay my discovery before the public, if, perchance, I may enlighten any deluded mortal. I had cherished the idea from infancy that the organ-grinder went round grinding music out of his never-ending machine for the pure delectation of his hearers, and that for the pleasure which he imparted he received the bits of coin that were thrown into his hat. This was, in my mind, the philosophy of the hurdy-gurdy, and I fancied that the operator was a sort of missionary of good sent to make happy his fellow-men. Alas! alas! for childish hopes and young dreams! I have discovered that this is all a cruel delusion. That the organ-grinder goes about with the diabolical intention of making life so miserable to those whom he pesters, that they are glad to pay him to go away! That black-mailing and extortion are the aims of the grinder, and *duress* is the sequel of his success.

It is needless to say that I blush over my former delusion. I wonder now how it is possible I could have been so cruelly deceived. How could I have ever fancied that the man who assailed you on every street, at morning, at noon, and at night, with his mortal toodle-loodies, was a public benefactor, deserving the generosity of his friends and the community at large? It is beyond all reasonable comprehension.

The barrister to whom I am articulated was engaged in close consultation with a client. Our office fronts on the street. The weather was warm and the windows were lowered. My worthy principal is of English descent, and has a touch of the elevated and aristocratic about him. Presently an organ-grinder came and planted himself directly in front of the open windows, and commenced grinding his mournful music. Mr. B. stood it for a while, with great patience and endurance; he explained his law points on an elevated key. But when the machine started "God Save the Queen" at its melancholyist for the third time, his patience gave way. His pent-up feelings must have vent. He rushed to the window, and viewing the object of his wrath, exclaimed:

"Hi! hi! my man! Do you know you are disturbing the peace? Move on, will you? You must move on, my man."

The proprietor of the hurdy-gurdy looked up with an air of pleasant surprise—but there was a fiendish, gloating smile on his countenance that was unmistakable. He appeared before me at once in his true colours. The scales fell from my eyes, and I saw the professional music-grinder in the right light.

He "moved on," but I haven't yet forgot the lesson about hurdy-gurdies.

Mournfully,

JOEL PHIPPS.

Old and New for this month has some sterling papers on topic, of current interest, such as the initial article of the editor, "Government by Parties" and "A Short Road to Specie Payments." "A Leaf from a Journal," is remarkably fresh, as is also "Country Sights and Sounds." The continuation of "Our Sketching Club" and "Scrope; or the Lost Library" is far out of the beaten path of romance. The poetry of the number is also above the average.

Every Saturday is a weekly publication which is always welcome to the table of the literary man. It is eclectic, that is, it consists of short selections from English periodicals, but these are made with so much judgment and in such tasteful variety; that one generally feels inclined to read them all. Original productions of native pens are, however, not entirely eschewed. "His Two Wives," by Mary Clemmer Ames, is an instance, running through many numbers. Since the periodical has passed into the hands of Messrs. Hurd & Houghton, it has improved in tone and extent.