

## ON THE MANUFACTURE OF PUBLIC OPINION.

A new industry has sprung up in this City. Peculiar alone to Halifax, it is not dependent upon or created by the National Policy. It requires no capital and but little ingenuity. We refer to the manner in which the daily press of this city, though quarrelling upon every conceivable subject, at once unite when anyone ventures, by word or deed, to interfere with the present order of things, either to improve the laws, or promote the material interests of our citizens.

The City Council has declared, and every citizen knows, and it has been repeatedly pointed out in the columns of the daily papers, that a reform is necessary in our City government. We all know that the present system is ill-defined, cumbersome, and ineffective; that if gross corruption and favoritism in the civic government does not exist, it is not because the Aldermen do not lack the opportunity or the power. It is known that the enormous sum of \$21,000.00 is paid out directly every year for salaries to civic officials, not to mention twice that sum indirectly for the same purpose by Boards over which the Council has no control. Thus the civic executive business is performed by means of a series of committees who have no relation to, or knowledge of, each other's duties or doings. These committees are often at open war, one with the other, and from the nature of things, cannot work in harmony for the common good. The Mayor is little better than a figure-head, and charged with no special duties. Although, presumably, a man having a full knowledge of civic affairs, he has no part more than the meanest servant in the employ of the City in directing or controlling its government. The citizens are yearly taxed \$20,000 for the support of services common to the County and City, without having any right under the law to question any of the expenditures for those services. The Street appropriations are expended, the Police service is conducted, and the License system is controlled by the Aldermen without any reference to the opinion or judgment of the heads of those departments, and with a single eye to their own interest and advantage.

In the past, it is notorious that saloon-keepers were permitted to sell liquor without licenses for months at a time, under the patronage of some influential Chairman of a License or a Police Committee.

Yet with all these defects in our present system, within the knowledge of our three city contemporaries, the City Council, when it makes an honest effort to map out a new scheme, whereby these evils are impossible, the city press offers no word of encouragement or advice. Nay, more, the originators of the scheme are covered with abuse and ridicule. Does any of our contemporaries point out a method of its own, or offer a single suggestion to assist the Council? Not they! They give no intelligent analysis of our present system, whereby that which is good is pointed out, and that which is capable of evil, is condemned. No suggestion as to how to proceed to meet the views of the citizens, or to protect their interests, nothing but a rapid clamor wherein the voice of all honest effort at reform is drowned, and those who are making a real effort to rescue the City from its difficulties are disheartened and disgusted. Is this the part that should be acted by honorable members of the fourth estate?

In ancient times, the reformer who stood forth to advocate a change in the law, did so with a halter around his neck; we are much more liberal and civilized in these days. Now, the reformer only risks his reputation for honesty, and takes his chances of being denounced as an imbecile!

Alderman McSweeney hinted that the opposition of one paper was to protect the vested interest of a relative of the writer. It is a great pity that the position of a civic official should be imperiled for so trifling an object as the public good. In this respect also, we have reversed the policy of the ancients in law-making.

It is now rumored that the aforesaid civic official has another relative on the staff of the *Herald*, who moulds the civic policy of that paper. The real editor is too busy to trouble himself with so trifling a matter as civic reform. His attention is too fully engrossed with higher politics.

The third paper has been for years in the sweet enjoyment of civic printing patronage, which may not be quite so remunerative, if dispensed by an active and business-like executive under the new regime. We wish the citizens joy of their pure and vigilant public educators. We hope the advocacy of the old system will be set down at its true value.

## THE INHUMAN THEEBAW.

The Burmese have good reason for the bitter hatred they have towards the dethroned King Theebaw. The exiled Monarch, who usurped the throne which by right belonged to his brother, Nyang Yan, spent his early days in monastic seclusion, and upon ascending the throne at the decease of his father, appears to have completely lost his head, and to have allowed his crazed imagination unrestricted sway. Fearful that his relatives might incite a plot to destroy him, he took the initiative, by inviting them to royal banquets, at the close of which, they were all brutally murdered. Finding himself dreaded and deserted by the leaders among the people, he gave himself up to a life of debauch; and living in constant terror of rebellion, he trembled when he thought of the men and women who lay sweltering in his noisome dungeons. The salutary influence of Britain served for a time to check the cruelties of this blood-thirsty monarch; but when the news of the British defeat in Zululand reached Meiktila, the king decided upon the carrying out of a butchery, which has no parallel in modern history. Speaking of this wholesale massacre, the *London Figaro* says:—"Relatives to the number of ninety were dragged from their cells and massacred. There was no quarter; men, women and children alike were murdered. The majority were tied with their heads to their ankles, and then despatched with a blow on the back of the skull. Many, however, were merely stunned, and their

quivering bodies thrown in the common grave, there to die of suffocation. The Prince Mekhaya, whose ferocity to foreigners was proverbial, became insane with terror, but suffered the common fate. Thongzai, a brother of Theebaw, on the contrary, scorned and spat upon his brother, and, shortly after, was flogged to death." But Theebaw is not a type of the Burmese people who are proverbial for their kindness and hospitality to strangers, mutual good fellowship among themselves, and the desire to draw from life the sweets and pleasures of to-day, irrespective of the morrow that is to follow.

## NEW INVENTIONS.

Prof. Bell, inventor of the Telephone, has just given to the world a new and wonderful instrument, designed for making soundings. The instrument is described as a submarine telephone, through which may be heard the echo of the sound made by a stone as it strikes the bottom of the harbor or bed of the river, thus enabling the listener to judge of the depth of the water. The Prof. is evidently not inclined to rest content with the laurels he has already won. Almost every month he adds another invention of more or less practical utility to those he has already given the world. Not long since, he invented a curious machine by which he was able to measure the exact volume of sound which partially deaf persons were capable of hearing. Prof. Bell is at present engaged in perfecting a mechanical instrument by which he expects to reproduce over the wires the face and form using it. In the absence of a better name, this invention has been styled the photophone. The inventor is sanguine as to the success of the new instrument, and expects to realize from it a larger monetary return than that yielded him by all his previous inventions.

## FAIR PLAY.

The New England fishermen are up in arms over the prospect of the renewal of the Fishery Treaty with Canada; and Mr. Cleveland's Cabinet stands a chance of being buried alive beneath the memorials, petitions, etc., now pouring in upon it. These memorials set forth the advantage that would be derived by the United States, in the event of war, from having its own fishing fleet, from whence sailors might be drawn to man her battle-ships. They elaborate the wrongs which American fishermen would suffer, were fish caught in the cheaply-manned and cheaply-supplied Canadian vessels allowed to enter the United States duty free; and lastly, they point out the utter worthlessness of the British American Fisheries lying within the three-mile limit. We think our American cousins living along the New England coast know how to appreciate a good thing when they have it. They now have free access to the Canadian Fisheries, without the annoying competition of Canadian-caught fish in their own market; but if they think we Bluesnoses intend to rest content with such a one-sided arrangement, they must have forgotten that they have the same blood flowing in their veins as we, and that we believe in fair play, not only in theory, but in practice.

## ALARMISTS.

In this age of surprises, demagogue alarmists are always on the *qui vive* to awaken in the minds of the people some new apprehension of danger, hitherto unthought of. By a wise treaty provision, Great Britain and the United States agreed to limit their naval armaments to one gun-boat each upon Lake Ontario, and one upon the Upper Lakes. As a matter of fact, these gun-boats have in past years been serviceable only as revenue cutters, and none of the lake-shore inhabitants have heretofore thought their property endangered. But at this juncture, up rises Mr. Thomas, a Congressman, of Illinois, deprecating the defenceless condition of the American lake cities, and declaring that immediate steps should be taken by the Washington Government to place upon the Lakes a fleet capable of protecting the property of American citizens, in the event of war. Considering that Canada has no fleet upon these Lakes, it can be readily understood that Mr. Thomas is an alarmist, who must have at heart some other and more cogent reason for the fitting out of a Lake navy than at first appears. It now turns out that Mr. Thomas bases his claim for the unnecessary expenditure of public money, upon the ground that, heretofore, all sums paid out for naval defence have been for the benefit of Sea-board States, giving these States an undue advantage over those lying in the interior of the country. Such school-boy logic might be pardonable in a member of a State Legislature, but in a Congressman, it is mean, silly, and deplorable.

## SCOTCH PRE-EMINENCE.

Those who affect to undervalue university and higher education, are not slow to admit the enviable position taken by Scotchmen the world over in the varied walks of life. How much of this pre-eminence is due to the thoroughness, efficiency, and economy with which Scottish Universities are conducted, it might be difficult to ascertain, but the relative proportion of those receiving college training in Scotland, compared with other countries, is significant. England has but one person attending college to each five thousand of her population. Germany has two, and the New England States five, while Scotland leads the van with eight; thus England, with a population of 25,000,000, sends 5,000 students to her two universities; Germany, with a population of 48,000,000, sends 23,500 to her universities; New England, with a population of 4,100,000 has 4,000 students in her eighteen universities and colleges; Scotland, with a population of 4,000,000, has 6,500 university students.