

## Social Subjects.

Persons who, on arriving in Canada from Great Britain, have not succeeded in playing the part of British *somedbys*, are advised to change the *role*, and try if the part of British *nobody* will not prove more effectual.

We cannot pretend to admire the spectacle of a wealthy public officer, who thinks fit to maintain the style to which wealth, if it choose, is entitled—we cannot admire the spectacle of such an one allowing his nephews to run about the gaol, and be kept in that institution, at the expense of the citizens at large.

Until a Register Office is established, wherein remarkable cases of cure, by surgical or other means, can be recorded, we intend to devote a portion of this journal to that purpose. When permission to give the name and address of the person cured can be obtained, such particulars will be published; the community will by such means become better informed, if the doctors will not.

A case of abscess of the liver, and cancer of the stomach known to us, has lately been cured by homœopathic treatment, the particulars of which can be known, by applying to the Editor.

### THE QUESTION OF CIVIC COMMISSIONERS *versus* UNPAID OFFICERS.

The question of municipal government and the necessity for a more thorough system, under which economy would be possible and political jobbery next to impossible, is daily pressing itself on the more far seeing of our citizens. No doubt during the past few years a change for the better has been observed in the character and capabilities of the men chosen to fill the position of mayor and aldermen respectively; but this brief experience should not lull the public into a feeling of false security, for even now we cannot help observing the seeking after prominence or party, which characterizes many of our civic representatives. It would be instructive to analyze the motives which prompt citizens to seek the positions which municipal government has to offer them. In some cases it is the innate thirst for prominence, the taking the "highest seat," notwithstanding the lack of the "wedding garment" of intelligence. In fact, it seems that, the more incapable a man is the more he frets and fumes to spend his idle hours on the stage of the civic council chamber. Others seek the honor for the sake of advancing some scheme in which they are financially or politically interested. In the estimate of this, we must be careful not to be unjust; for some may and do foster schemes which though of personal benefit, are at the same time of great public utility, and even if suggested by a man's private interest, if worked out for the benefit of the citizens generally, we must concede to such an one, credit for public work faithfully accomplished.

A series of incidents which sustain the position we take as to the calibre of the men usually sent to our Council, is that which immediately follows the January elections. First, the selection of Railway Directors to represent city interests, is made, and a struggle ensues for the the "fat things" to be distributed. Next comes the choice of committees, and here the political or financial schemer has an open field for the exercise of his powers, the *rapacity* ruling which transpires produces the desired results, and civic matters are once more, settled for another year to be under the care of men, whose motto usually is "Each for himself, and 'party' for us all."

The annual change of chairmen and members of committees is of itself an evil, for the work has only just been got to go smoothly, when the election takes place, and matters are consigned to fresh hands, to be put through the usual routine once more. Still the work of the city goes on, more by its own force than by the ability of our aldermen, and we find that the real workers are the paid officials, men who have been years in the city's employ, and who, in addition to the discharge of their legitimate duty, have to post the aldermen with suggestions as to what ought to be done. These suggestions are thrown out in the council by some city father, who gets the credit for originality; they are transmitted to the proper committee, reported back to the council, and ordered to be carried out by the man who was the original mover in the matter.

A single year's service in the council can hardly be supposed to qualify a novice to be the best director possible for city works and improvements. Such is an outsider's view of the present state of affairs. Let us look briefly at the other side of the question now before us. A remedy for some of the evils of our civic management, is suggested by the employment of efficient commissioners. In 1874, this plan was adopted in Washington, when three commissioners were appointed by the President, with the consent of the Senate. Such a plan would, we think be found to work successfully here, competent men for each department are engaged at such a salary as to place them above temptation, and ensure a degree of ability which cannot be found among ostensibly honorary workers. Commissioners are responsible for the proper carrying out of all works and improvements, and report progress to the mayor, who needs to be a citizen distinguished for his "integrity and intelligence," not the nominee of some political party. True economy would be maintained instead of frittering away money on continual repairs, if the plan of securing commissioners were adopted; our money would then be expended in such a way as effectually to promote the growth and development of our noble city.

Unbelievers in Revealed religion are invited to present their objections in the form of questions; such enquiries (subject to the judgment of the Editor) will receive a reply so soon as it may be convenient to give one.

There are certain unrecorded rules of propriety which obtain in civilized communities, and which no representative of such communities would think of transgressing; it so happens that the first enquiry which has reached us, in response to the above invitation, is presented in violation of those rules; it is therefore relegated to a position in which it can be seen privately, if anyone desire to see it, but it will not be published.

### Correspondence.

*The columns of THE CRITIC are open to a free expression of opinion, but the Editor does not hold himself responsible for the sentiments of his Correspondents.*

### PRISON LABOUR.

To the Editor of THE CRITIC.

DEAR SIR,—With the legal (or illegal) aspect of the course pursued by the Government of this Province, in adopting measures to appropriate for public uses, the property of the late Adam Mercer, I will not, at this comparatively remote date interfere, but on the contrary, I beg leave to offer a few observations on the subject of the relation the labour of the Mercer Reformatory occupies to that of workwomen outside a Prison. The labour of the inmates of the Reformatory is brought into direct competition with female labour outside. Shirts are said to be made in this establishment at the ridiculous price of 60 cts. per dozen. Can the promoters of this institution hope for the welfare of our numerous female population, who are struggling against the possibility of poverty, handicapped as they are, by the prison labour of the Mercer Institute? This institution may be clapped assel-supporting in more than the sense that the Mercer family paid it as a penalty for the neglect of their ancestor. It is but too evident to the commonest understanding that if female labour outside the walls of this Reformatory is called on to compete with the