

restless, and anxious to find new homes in some country where they can live in peace. "We are offered a welcome," says the leader of this exodus, "in a country where we can have our homes and not be driven from them, where we can earn our money and not be cheated out of it, and where our votes will be counted when we vote. We have waited in the South until our hearts have failed us." Should the movement be successful on any large scale it would press very heavily upon the chief agricultural industries of the South, which would be threatened with ruin by the loss of the best classes of labourers. The very fact of an attempt being made at such a wholesale migration may, however, react favourably upon their condition at home. It would be turning the tables very effectually if, instead of being longer at the mercy of the planters, the coloured labourers should find themselves in the position of being able to exact better terms from their employers, and a fuller recognition of their rights from the politicians.

At a public banquet in Boston not long ago, Mr. James Russell Lowell, who presided, referred to President Cleveland as "the best representative of the higher type of Americanism that we have seen since Lincoln was snatched from us." This has aroused the wrath of "stalwart" Republican journals. They say it was an exhibition of "ignoble servility," that Mr. Lowell is a "Mugwumpian poet laureate" who "acquired the graces of a fawning courtier at the courts of St. James and Madrid;" that his "sickening sycophancy" is an insult to scores of true, honourable, able, and patriotic men; that his assertion is "scandalous and indecent, false and dangerous." "Such an expression," we are told, "coming from such a man, backed by his own high character and learning, is calculated to debauch the public conscience, confuse the public mind and lower the standard of public judgment and justice. On behalf of scores and hundreds of men, Republicans and Democrats alike, who have reflected credit and lustre upon the American name, we resent Mr. Lowell's insulting sycophancy. Even a free trade message, much as it may please Mr. Lowell's theoretical fancy, does not warrant such a piece of impertinent, impudent, insolent, insufferable, and unpardonable servility. Mr. Lowell is his own iconoclast and Grover Cleveland is his supreme avatar. Heaven pity them both and save the rest of us!"

THE distinctive Canadian character, if such a thing is ever to exist, must be now in its formative stage. But no people can ever take high rank for either patriotism or manliness so long as public sentiment amongst them tolerates bribery in any form as a political agency, or any considerable number of citizens think it no shame to traffic in the franchise. And yet, unless political speakers and journals of both parties are utterly untrustworthy, and unless the evidence adduced and the judgments pronounced in the election courts are equally unreliable, such a state of things must exist throughout Canada to-day. To speak with studied moderation, there certainly seems considerable danger that the practice of political bribery, the bribery of individual voters with promises of money or office, and the bribery of constituencies with promises of expenditures of money, by Government, is obtaining such a hold upon the nascent national life as must, unless speedily and effectually checked, corrupt its sources, defile its currents, and make the name of Canadian anything but one to be proud of in the near future. And what seems most discouraging to those who would like to see the foundations of Canadian nationality laid on the rock of sterling honour, is that very few seem to be particularly shocked by the humiliating facts that are being brought to light. The pulpits do not ring with denunciation of the unrighteousness. The religious press is almost silent about it. The secular papers take little notice save for the sake of making a thrust at political opponents. Even the party leaders, some of them, happily, men of spotless reputation, and personally above suspicion, seem to have little or nothing to say, even when some unprincipled, or as the papers euphemistically put it, "too zealous," partisan, has disgraced both himself and his party by the grossest acts of bribery. Worse than all, instances are not wanting in which the release from prison of those who have been undergoing the sentence of the courts for this crime against law and morality, has been made the occasion of a party demonstration.

THE foregoing remarks are suggested in part by what has been going on in Canadian constituencies, and in part by a strong article on *Bribery and its Near Relatives*, by Mr. C. A. Bartol, in the *February Forum*. The recent, but not unusual case in which a leading advocate, against whose client glaring infractions of the Bribery Act had been proved, gave notice of his intention to do his utmost to have the verdict of the court set aside on a purely technical plea, is vividly brought to mind by one paragraph in

Mr. Bartol's essay. "Is there not," he asks, "a germ of bribery even in the administration of our laws," instancing cases in which "acute lawyers are tempted by fabulous fees, or stimulated by the reputation and peculiar glory of winning a desperate if not wicked case, to do their utmost to prejudice or hoodwink juries"; or eminent counsel accept large retainers to hold their tongues and not appear on the other side. "That minister of the law, part of whose office is to check bribery, is himself bribed, who for pay undertakes a case he thinks he can carry, but which he knows or believes to be bad, and who urges it on purely technical grounds, the letter against the spirit, with arguments which have no weight in his own mind." This is, of course, a vexed question in the ethics of the legal profession. Many, the majority perhaps, seem quite agreed with the opinion ascribed to Chief Justice Shaw, that "contending counsellors should do their best to represent or misrepresent, they having naught to do with absolute equity or truth." But the question is still moot, the last word has not been said upon it, and the great public interests involved in the suppression of bribery make the present time not unsuited for further consideration and comment.

THE BANKS AND THE PUBLIC.

EVERYONE will readily admit that our banking institutions are directly and peculiarly interested in the welfare of the community. The prosperity of any section or class of men benefits them; bad crops or bad trade of any description injures them. It is almost as evident that all classes are reciprocally interested in the welfare of the banks, and it is essential that the duty of the public to the banks should be as clearly understood as is the duty of the banks to the public. Parliament has by careful enactments defined and limited the extensive and almost national functions entrusted to our chartered banking corporations. The duty of the public to them is undefined by any act of Parliament, and is largely of such a negative character as to be unnecessary.

It is as the issuers of our national currency that the banks most directly reach all classes. After our favourable experience of the benefits of the convenient and inexpensive medium of exchange which they have provided we cannot imagine any one advocating the adoption of a metallic currency. In addition to its dearness, the cumbrous nature of such a currency would prove intolerable. The only practical alternative is the assumption by Government of the duty of issuing bills. This expedient would be open to the gravest objections whether exercised or controlled by either the executive or legislative branch. Not only are the present issuers more in touch with the trade and commerce of the country; but in a time of crisis there is less danger of our being afflicted with a depreciated currency. The English practice of confining the privilege to one institution need not be discussed because we have no bankers' bank, and such a concern as the Bank of England is the growth of generations. This bank is clothed with powers of an arbitrary character, and exercises them so delicately that the public tacitly acquiesces in the gentle tyranny. It is hardly probable that any department of Government would be permitted to exercise similar powers in the same way. It certainly could not use such powers, and escape hostile criticism so effectively. This example is only useful to us as an evidence of the value which special training and strict adherence to precedent can confer upon a board of direction, so situated that it can feel the pulse of the money market at any moment. The absence of any analogous body on this continent would prevent any copy of such a system, even though it were not undesirable otherwise.

An enlightened policy can only be persevered in when the assent of the multitude is based upon a clear recognition of its wisdom. It is unfortunate that the ills and dangers of existing arrangements should be so evident, whilst the unknown evils of untried and unfamiliar methods cannot be gauged. If the various boards of direction can succeed in exercising their trusts with fidelity and intelligence it would be difficult to suggest any other system that would be an improvement upon the existing one. The law requires each bank to hoist its own danger signal once a month. Those who subscribe to false returns do so at the peril of their personal liberty. There is scarcely an instance in which impending disaster has not been clearly discernible in those returns. It is true that the full extent of the danger has not been so exhibited. The reason of this limitation is apparent. All the liabilities and such assets as are immediately available admit of being summarized under various headings, and the relation between these alone shows good management or the reverse. A summary of totals of other assets of dissimilar values—of values that vary from day to day—excludes the element of discrimination.

Much the best, the most constant, and the most easily understood criticism of bank returns proceeds from the Stock Exchange. There the cus-