



## Through A Monocle

### THE SIN OF ANANIAS.

**Y**OU may have noticed that an Atlantic City Councillor, who was lately proven guilty of "grafting," gave his reasons for yielding to temptation. The most significant was that he "only did what practically everybody else in the Council did at one time or another." That is, it was the usual thing. This is a statement which it is well worth our while to consider. If we permit a sort of concealed public opinion to grow up in our representative bodies, that all politicians are more or less corrupt, and that "every man has his price," we may be very sure that, sooner or later, the majority of chosen legislators will fall in line. It is hard for a man to be honest when he sees men all about him pocketing dishonest profits on the very "goods" he possesses; and sees, further, that this dishonesty, so far from losing them the respect of their fellows, appears to augment it. Where a member of Parliament, or a municipal Councillor or any other man in a position of trust, "gets rich quick" amidst a shower of winks and innuendoes, and still holds his position and the right to speak for the people, other men come to think themselves fools to remain poor, honest and—despised for lack of cleverness.

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**W**HAT the people of this continent—especially—must do is absolutely to kill and bury the corrosive, cynical, insanely tolerant theory that we cannot expect our public representatives to serve the nation with a single mind. This is a false toleration which lowers our standards of public morals and degrades public life and opens the door to the grossest embezzlements and robberies. The public man is precisely the man whom we must not permit to step an inch aside from the straight path of honest-dealing and sensitive honour. Where we send a sneak-thief to jail for a year, we should send a public representative, guilty of a similar crime, to prison for life. The private thief has taken only our property; the public thief has dynamited a large part of the foundations of our system of government.

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**D**ID you ever stop to think why Ananias and Sapphira suffered "capital punishment" for a "white lie"? You must have been conscious of the fact that you tell bigger lies yourself every day; and yet Divine justice does not demand your life. Consider what it was that these two people did. They sold "a possession"—the presumption is that it was all they had—and gave by far the larger part of it to the Church. Wouldn't you think that an exceedingly generous act? Do such things happen often in your neighbourhood? But they did not

give it quite all to the Church. They kept some of it for themselves. And they had the vanity to pretend that they gave up the whole price. That was their "lie." If you happened to be building a church in your district, and one of your fellow worshippers did that, would you think him worthy of death? Certainly not. You would want to put in a stained-glass window to his honour, deeming it quite prudent in him that he kept back some of his "possessions." As for not mentioning it, that would surely be a trivial weakness in so generous a man.

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**B**UT Ananias and Sapphira died for it. Why? Turn back a chapter or two, and read—"And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need." And, again, "Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

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**H**ERE was a form of communism established; and it rested upon the complete good faith of the members of the young church. If any one of them pretended to sell all that he had and put it in the common fund, out of which he would draw as he had need, but kept back a part of his possessions for his private use, and this act of bad faith became known, the whole communistic structure would be undermined. He would have to be dealt with summarily and severely to prevent other members from taking the same canny precaution. If men were going to come on the common fund, while holding out a little purse of their own, the whole Apostolic plan would fall to the ground like a house of cards. Thus the sin of Ananias and Sapphira was not a "white lie," or even stealing a little money, but of laying dynamite at the foundation of the proposed system of Government. And the Divine penalty was death.

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**S**URELY there is a hint here for us in our responsibility when dealing with betrayal of trust in high places. So far from cynically winking at it as what we have to expect from "politicians," and so regarding the taking of a "rake-off," or the pocketing of a little "graft," as a far less degrading and dangerous crime than burglary or pocket-picking, we should hold exactly the opposite view, and insist that a dollar stolen from the public by a public trustee is worse than a thousand dollars stolen from a private till by a dishonest clerk. The place

for a member of Parliament who takes a bribe in any form is the Penitentiary; and public opinion should make the very suspicion of betrayal of trust finally fatal to a public man.

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**W**HAT we want to escape from is the era of cynicism regarding our elected representatives. It is the worst possible spirit we could permit to exist regarding them. Instead of expecting little and being agreeably disappointed when we get more, we ought to expect everything and act like astounded and mightily indignant people when we get less. A "politician"—so far from being a term of mild opprobrium—should be a badge of high honour; and no one suffers more from the fact that it is nothing of the kind than the foolish people who shrug their shoulders and think it "knowing" and clever to assume that all "politicians" are "on the make." **THE MONOCLE MAN.**

### The High Cost of Living

Editor, CANADIAN COURIER:

Sir,—To the convinced free trader who is also convinced that free trade is out of the question, the answer is still to seek. A glance at the ground plan of this Dominion might convince even the unwilling that, "the great first cause, least understood," of the high cost of living, is the idle holding of land by private or corporate owners.

Does society, which gives and protects the title, grant absolute and unconditional ownership to the individual? Or what does the grantee on his part undertake to do in return? Clearly the essence of the agreement is that he shall utilize the land to approximately the same extent that the surrounding land is utilized. And what then?

Why, then, it remains that society wake up and provide statutes to guide the land owner in carrying out his obligations under the contract.

From the reflections of a reader,

HANOVER.

### C.P.A. at the Chateau Laurier

**T**HE Canadian Press Association was re-engaged last week on its occasional business of rediscovering Canada. The convention of the C. P. A. this year was held in the Chateau Laurier, Ottawa. Now the Chateau was opened to the public only about a week before the Association arrived.

A few years ago the C. P. A. took a pre-railroad trip to Temiskaming before Cobalt was discovered or Porcupine dreamed of. Some years before that they explored the Canadian West before the Saskatchewan Valley was known to many but fur-traders and mounted police. They have jaunted through Quebec and the Maritime Provinces; seeing Canada wherever railroads or rivers run, and at the same time transacting business of great interest to the Association. On this recent trip to the Capital the C. P. A. toured Ottawa, visited Hull, inspected the great match-works of the Eddy Co., attended theatre parties and garden parties, and inspected Parliament Hill, all this being in addition to transacting business.

### The Parliament of the Press Convening in the City of Parliaments



The Canadian Press Association in Convention Last Week at the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa.