

TRUTH.

OLD SERIES—17TH YEAR.

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TRUTH'S MUSINGS.

The question of a new music hall, sufficiently large to meet the growing requirements of the city, is now agitating the public mind. The near approach of the Semi-Centennial celebration has, perhaps, more than anything else, brought the matter prominently before the public; and the question, where to put the chorus—to say nothing of the public—is one that under present circumstances is not easily answered. The general opinion seems to be in favor of so altering the present Horticultural Pavilion, as to render it suitable for the purpose. The site is a good one—somewhat too far east, perhaps, considering the rapid growth of the city westward—about as good a site as could be got. The proposal to incorporate the proposed music hall in the new civic buildings is not feasible. It would necessitate the hall being on the second floor—a fatal objection, when the danger from fire, panic, or other sudden excitement is considered. The proposal to raise funds at the public expense is not feasible, for the simple reason that proprietors of existing theatres and halls would have a well-grounded complaint against such a use of public funds to create competition with them. The most feasible suggestion is, perhaps, the formation of a joint stock company composed of the Horticultural Society and private citizens. The present Pavilion, it is said, yields a profit of 12½ per cent., and the proposed hall would certainly yield as much, if not more. But however, wherever, and whenever the proposed building is erected, it will have to be large enough to meet the requirements not only of the present population, but of that largely increased population which may naturally be looked for in the course of the next quarter of a century or less. It is, unfortunately, too late now to expect anything larger than the present pavilion for the coming celebration, unless indeed, Mr. Schuch's suggestion be adopted, that the rear of the pavilion be torn out, disclosing the chimney, around which the organ could be erected, and that the tiers of chorus seats be extended back at the sides of the organ for a space of say fifteen to twenty feet over the grounds of the Collegiate Institute, with the new wall built over its top in a curve to meet the present cornice of the pavilion, thus making a sounding board which will carry the tone into the hall. This, however, would be a merely temporary makeshift. The proposed new building must be specially designed with a view to the purposes to which it is to be put. The subject is now being so vigorously agitated that we trust ere long matters will take a tangible shape, and a music hall be erected in every way worthy of the Queen City of the West.

What can possibly be the meaning of the 'Dynamite Plot' at the Parliament Buildings last week? Opinion is wonder-

fully divided. The theories of the party organs here, that the whole thing was a plot by the leading men of one or other of the political parties is simply an insult to the intelligence of the people. Probably the writers themselves did not believe any such nonsense, and probably they did not expect any intelligent reader to believe them, either. Was the whole thing an ineffectual attempt of some dynamite Fenians to actually destroy our Provincial buildings and murder the inmates in the ruins, or was it an attempt of some Fenians to merely rouse up a little more interest in connection with their work by a pretence, so as to hurry up the money gathering business; or was it all a practical joke by some one else who had nothing better to do? Time may reveal the mystery, but at the time of this writing there is about as much reason for entertaining one theory as another. It is a well-known fact that several similar attempts have been made to destroy public buildings elsewhere, and there are, doubtless, men wicked enough and foolish enough to make similar diabolical attempts here. It is singular that in almost every instance these plots have been found out and frustrated before much, or any, real harm was done. Has it been because the hand of Providence has interfered to prevent innocent men from suffering in order to satisfy such diabolical desires, or have the hearts of the criminals failed them at the last? It is certainly humiliating to our common humanity to know that we have fellow-beings on the face of the earth who delight in such fiendish work. It is an uncomfortable feeling that we have reason to suspect some such base creatures may be prowling about in our very midst, and that we are being constantly beset with dangers because of them. The Government have done well to offer a large reward for the apprehension of any one implicated in any such attempt. No stone should be left unturned to bring the whole matter to light.

The much agitated Lottery Bill was defeated in the Quebec Legislative Council by a tie vote last week. There was much discussion over the whole subject, and as the friends of both sides were working as hard as possible a great deal of interest was felt in the result. Had the measure passed the Council it would have become law, and lotteries of a gigantic character would have been legalized in the neighbouring Province for the next fifty years. It seems almost incredible that leading dignitaries in the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec should be found as the active promoters of a measure of this nature. This one act of the Legislative Council will do a good deal to disarm the opposition now urged against it as a useless body. The escape was certainly a narrow one, and under the circumstances the effort will, no doubt, be renewed, but the evil is at least postponed for a season.

Let us hope it is for all time. There can be no doubt whatever that the establishment of lotteries tends very greatly to increase the spirit of gambling, already much too prevalent everywhere.

TRUTH has received several letters and criticisms in regard to its expressed view of the part taken by Dr. Dowling and the other members of the Legislature in connection with the "Conspiracy case." TRUTH was then of opinion that these gentlemen were not guilty of a moral wrong, nor was their honor tarnished in the transaction; they acted the part of detectives, which is often a necessary thing to do in the administration of justice. Nothing has since transpired in connection with the case to change that opinion, so far as the writer is concerned. A very able correspondent in the last issue of *The Week* writes very rationally on the question. In his argument he says of those who take it for granted that the M. P. P.'s in accepting, under the circumstances, the money they did, lost their honor and were corrupted and debauched. "If a man from the standpoint of morals may steal without taking another man's property, may he not bribe without taking another man's honor? If the morals of the case lie in the intent, it follows that the motives of one depend upon the motives of another; that, in this particular, the one cannot have an evil purpose unless the other has too. This would be a new doctrine and hard to believe."

In this "Bribery case" were these men "corrupted" or "debauched?" On the grounds that their testimony is truthful, it is difficult to see how such a charge can be sustained. As TRUTH is dealing with the morals of the question it is compelled to consider their acts in the light of their intentions. They acted no traitor's part; they did not sell their country, nor their party, nor themselves; they had no thought of doing so. They had no personal interest in the bribery funds that came into their hands. It was no secret transaction on their side. They stood in the light, in full view of those against whom they were plotting. They had the certainty in their own minds that their act would soon be known to the world. There was with them the entire absence of all the conditions which govern the act of bribery. And whatever may have been their offence, (if offence there be), it cannot be that of being bribed.

It must be confessed that they pretended to be bribed, and how far they were justified in this is a question upon which, no doubt, a great difference of opinion will exist. All pretences are not necessarily sinful; one can conceive of many cases in which misleading is an excellent and proper thing to do, and where the detection of the crime is the object (explain it as we will), there is a com-

mon feeling everywhere that such methods of procedure are quite frequently perfectly safe. . . . When clever misleading devices culminate in the capture of a knave, men bestow their unmeasured applause, with the feeling that the moral sense of the community is with them."

Well meaning men will always differ in opinion in regard to the methods used in connection with this deplorable case. Of course the parties interested in the defence are disgusted that any one in Canada should be found base and immoral enough to resort to any such stratagems of detection, and many of their friends entertain a similar opinion, but why any opinion of that kind should become a general, when the whole case is well understood, is difficult to imagine.

"Arbour days" have become popular in some of the cities in the United States, and an attempt is being made to popularize them in Canada. The idea is an excellent one. To devote one holiday each spring to the healthful recreation of tree planting, would do a great deal for posterity, and a good deal to make things more beautiful and more pleasant in our own time. Planting a few thrifty trees, and giving them, for a time, some needful care, does not require much work indeed it should be a pleasure, instead of work at all—and a thing of beauty, and often of utility too, remains for years and years after to add to our own pleasures and to bless our memories. In most parts of our own country, too little attention has yet been given to ornamentation, in the way of tree planting. The city of Brantford had an "arbour day" last week and reports from there state that it proved a "perfect fizzle." Not a place of business was closed, and scarcely a tree was planted. The fact does not speak much for the taste and spirit of the people of that fine city. Monday, 12th inst., has been selected as arbour day for the whole Province of Quebec, and a laudable attempt is being made to infuse a spirit of national enthusiasm into it. TRUTH sincerely hopes it may prove a success. Families would do well to celebrate an active arbour day each year, whether communities will do so or not.

A bill was introduced in the House of Commons recently, legally licensing Crematoriums in Great Britain, but it was rejected last week. The friends of the new movement will keep on their agitation however, and may be successful in the end.

OUR BILL COMMISSION No. 10.—All interested in the above competition are requested to read carefully the announcement in the *Publisher's Department* of change of questions and extension of time from May 27 to June 10, and govern themselves accordingly.