

appearance of a paper treating this question in a light eclectic way, though with an inclination apparently to the side of faith, and clearly assuming that it is an open question in the minds of readers in general. Fifty years ago it would have been difficult to find ten people among the educated classes of England who did not believe in the immortality of the soul; those who did not believe in the Christian version of the doctrine were a small minority. The materialism of the French Revolution which inscribed Eternal Sleep over the gate of the cemetery was regarded as a portentous manifestation of the atheistic madness of those times. But now the number of disbelievers is large, that of the doubters still larger; and disbelief or doubt is evidently gaining ground. It is impossible to conceive a revolution more profound. The effects of great changes of belief are not fully felt at once, because men still live in the penumbra of the old faith and continue mechanically to act upon the traditional motives. But when they begin generally to act on the conviction that their individual existence, their aims, their hopes and their responsibilities are entirely limited to this life, this life itself will surely undergo a fundamental change. If the belief in a future existence departs, Theology can scarcely survive, at least it can retain little practical interest. The conditions of our existence here are fixed; we no longer expect them to be altered by miracle; we have only to study them and acquiesce in them; and it can signify little to us practically whether they are the laws of an intelligent Creator or the mere manifestations of a blind force.

POLITICAL PAUPERISM IN QUEBEC.

If the principle of Representative Government is to be judged by its results in the Province of Quebec we may venture to predict that it will not survive the days of the present generation; but even then it will have done incalculable mischief to the community as a whole. The apostles of "Representation by Population" honestly believed that they had discovered a potent remedy for all the evils to which the body politic was heir, and many of them have died under the pleasant illusion; but those who still survive and who follow the course of events in the sister Province of Quebec must have their faith in representative institutions put to a severe test by the daily revelations which, somehow or other, work into publicity. In former years corruption was limited by distinct boundaries and occasionally involved very serious consequences; but in the main the people were not criminally involved, being as a general rule more sinned against than sinning; however, all this has been changed, and so far from representative institutions affording a guarantee for honest Government the reverse appears to be the fact. It may be that certain inevitable defects must always cling to our present methods, and more particularly so while these methods suffer from the aggravations and hypocrisies of party Government; but apart from these we are obviously on dangerous ground, and if the people of Ontario escape the humiliations of Quebec politics, it is because the people of Ontario possess a certain constitutional aptitude for representative government which appears to be utterly absent in the Lower Province. Why this should be so is in itself a curious problem, which we cannot at present discuss.

One thing is very clear, when we get the average Quebec politician under analysis we discover in the first place that he is desperately in need of money, and in the second place, like a good many other people, that he is not over scrupulous as to his methods of obtaining it. The French Canadian politician lives under the pressure of poverty and of keen competition with others of his own nationality not richer than himself; and here let it be noted that the French Canadian politician is not the highest, nor even a high type of his race: he lacks the simplicity and faith of the *habitant* and is an utter stranger to those high principles of honour and chivalry which distinguished the early French colonists. He often begins his career by fawning upon the Church and ends by hating her; he affects a liberality in religion which he does not feel, or feeling it, which he is too politic to avow. When in opposition to the Church he is an Infidel, and as Infidelity is no recommendation to the suffrages of the French of Lower Canada, he has a difficult time of it in keeping up appearances. His race is prolific, and each year increases the number of competitors for the few political or other positions to which he may hope to aspire; but as these are mostly filled his business is to empty them with all convenient despatch, and it is at this stage that his poverty plays him the shabbiest tricks; he cannot afford to wait because he must live, and he is therefore compelled to have recourse to desperate methods and the employment of the least scrupulous agents. This constitutes the weak link in the chain of wrong-doing and is about the only protection which the public has. Under other circumstances he might possibly be just and even generous, but as it is he cannot afford to be either. The English minority are at present

the greatest sufferers, but by-and-bye it will be French against French, and for the simple reason that for every provincial loaf there are at least one hundred hungry French Canadians to eat it, so that everything considered it is tolerably certain that some of them must go to bed fasting.

The necessities of existence which are causing the French Canadian politician to monopolize everything in Quebec are steadily forcing him into Dominion politics, where unfortunately the exigencies of party Government have given him a foot-hold which he is well able to appreciate and sufficiently adroit to turn to the utmost advantage. When he speaks in hearing of English audiences he never wearies of pointing out the loyalty of his compatriots, and of drawing fancy pictures of the destinies of the two great nations going arm in arm to cut down great forests and to settle vast prairies; and if we are to place the least reliance upon his post-prandial eloquence the presence of the English in Lower Canada is the thing above all others which makes the cup of French Canadian happiness run over. Of course nobody treats his statements seriously, and I to confess the truth the speaker himself never intended that they should be so treated. He simply gives you a display of oratorical fireworks which costs little but are very admirable as an exhibition. Your admiration is all he expects, and if you give more or treat his eloquent periods as the expression of French Canadian opinion, you have really nobody to blame but yourself. It would be an advantage if we could always ascertain from some trusted leader of the race on what lines French Canadian thought was moving, but at present this is an utter impossibility and in the future will be still more so.

The politicians who are now finding their way into the front ranks are utterly lacking in those high moral and patriotic qualities which compel respect; in a word, they are "the sharpers" of their race, without principle, frequently without religion, and nearly always without honesty. To see the ruin that these men are working in the commonwealth and the discredit they are bringing upon representative institutions, we have only to turn our attention to the course of current history in the Province of Quebec. While a strong English element preponderates in the Dominion Parliament the enterprising pauper politician from Quebec will be held in check, and his presence will only be felt in his vigorous efforts to make somebody's nest his own. Just now his voice in Dominion matters is the voice of Jacob; but give him a chance of power and you will find that he has the rough hands of Esau. We are not of those who have much faith in the stability of Confederation. Ontario may be quite willing in the future, as she has been in the past, to make sacrifices in the interests of a great national ideal; but when that ideal presents itself in the shape of a hungry set of French Canadian politicians, we think that even Ontario will refuse to bear the burden. In Quebec the French Canadians, Liberal and Conservative, give it to be understood very distinctly that they only value the partnership for the advantages which it brings them; and, in their own pauper Province, they never lose an opportunity of discrediting the ultra-loyalism of their Ottawa representatives. We have no desire to remind them that for a conquered people they have been treated with a degree of consideration unprecedented in the history of nations; but we do remind them that their Anglophobia is, to say the least of it, in very bad taste and ought to be held in check.

BUT Canada has the right to adjust her duties on imports as she pleases. And if the adoption of our tariff were understood to be the preliminary to absolute freedom of trade with us, she might find the means both to alter the tariff and to abolish the custom house line on her southern frontier, without asking imperial leave. It is true that the most natural way of approaching the question would be for Canada to declare her independence of the Mother Country. There already is a strong and growing party which favours that policy. It includes nearly the whole French population of Canada, all the Irishmen except the Orangemen, and a considerable number of business people, who see that Canada is sacrificing its prosperity and murdering its finances for merely political objects.—*The American*.

CHARLES LAMB in the briefest and wittiest autobiography in the language, confessed that he had been "a fierce smoker of tobacco," though he desired at the time of writing to be likened to "a volcano burnt out and emitting only now and then a casual puff." Years before he had written, I design to give up smoking, but I have not yet fixed on the equivalent vice," and in a letter to Wordsworth on the occasion of sending him the "Farewell to Tobacco," he says, "Tobacco has been my evening comfort and my morning curse for these five years. I have had it in my head to write this poem for these two years, but tobacco stood in its own light when it gave me headaches that prevented my singing its praises." His "loving foe," his "friendly traitress," the "great plant," as he variously denominates tobacco, seemed to him the cause of that indisposition which Carlyle was inclined to attribute to his "insuperable proclivity to gin." Nevertheless the delights of smoking haunted his imagination to the last. "I once," says the late Mr. John Forster, "heard him express a wish that his last breath might be drawn through a pipe and exhaled in a pun."