

THE CANADIAN PEOPLE.

A Criticism of Some of their Social Peculiarities.

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There is no doubt that the Canadian people believe themselves quite the equal of those of the United States and of Great Britain, and more than the equal of those of any other country on the face of the globe, and justly so. Some of the best blood of the British race flows in our veins; and our system of government, our social organization and our social habits are of a standard which is scarcely equalled in any country in the world. But the Canadian people are peculiar, and it is to some of these peculiarities I wish to draw attention, for as Principal Grant has well said, "The destiny of a country depends not on its material resources; it depends on the charter of its people."

RELIGIOUS PECULIARITIES.

The Canadian people are religious and generous. They contribute liberally to the building of churches. In Quebec, the churches usually cost as much as all the other buildings in the town or village combined. In the other provinces, the people are not quite so extravagant, but the churches are numerous and creditable. In every part of Canada the preachers are well paid and highly respected. The people give generously to foreign missions, thousands of dollars being sent each year to Africa, India and China. Yet on the street corners of any Canadian city you may see a blind man begging, a one-legged patient individual with his crutch and tin cup, or a wrinkled old woman turning a wheezy hand-organ. The business streets are regularly patrolled by ragged, worn-out females, soliciting copers or selling bone collar-buttons. Ian Maclaren tells the story of a woman

who went to the meeting of a "society to help the poor," in London, to seek a position. She was asked her name, address, age, number of children and various other particulars. She was then asked to pay a shilling for registration, and a situation would be hunted up for her. Poor woman, she had no shilling and could not secure help. We have the same spirit in Canada. We build large buildings to accommodate unfortunates and name these edifices after the men who donate the most money. But we initiate no system which will seek out the dying and the unfortunate, no system which will permanently rescue the fallen, no plan whereby the aged and the needy will be able to live without begging. A man will subscribe—with a flourish—a thousand dollars to foreign missions, and on the same day he will dismiss a man ten years in his employ, who has been earning but twelve dollars a week, without a thought as to how this man is to support his wife and five children. Truly we are a peculiar people.

THE SPOILS SYSTEM.

Canadians claim to follow the rule, "the greatest good for the greatest number," and much of our legislation embodies that principle. We have excellent educational systems in the various provinces; not as well administered as they should be, but still doing a great deal for the common people. We have a splendid criminal code for the punishment of all crimes, except political crimes; we have good laws regulating commerce, and honorable judges to administer these laws. Nevertheless ninety per cent. of the discussions in parliament pertain to