

A CORRESPONDENT'S COMMENTS.

To the Editor of the Critic:

DEAR SIR,—In my letter on Farming in the North-West Territories you have printed me as saying, "Timber for building, firing and fuel." Now, I am not chargeable with such a piece of tautology as that is. What I wrote was, "Timber for building, fencing and fuel." There were some other slight alterations which did not seriously affect the sense intended to be conveyed, but, as a critical rule, I should say it is better to correct nothing but the "bad grammar," or, more properly, "bad construction," in a contributed article, as the feeling that you are never sure of your utterances appearing as they are written takes the heart out of a writer, and is a main reason why the present one has stopped contributing to the newspaper press. I should like to see THE CRITIC something more than a newspaper in this respect, and that it would rely upon the comments of its editor to correct opinions, or even expressions, that seem faulty, and I would not have these comments tacked on as a short paragraph between brackets at the end of a correspondent's letter—a practice which seems to me to savor of indifference or presumption. The place for editorial comments I conceive to be the leading columns of the journal. Now let me make another "comment of a correspondent." The style of the genial "old lady"—if she be old—who has commenced a new serial in your paper, will be I think fresh and racy; but I am anxious to know from her where she gets her authority for the justification, in the moral sense, of "wild oats," and the practice of sowing the same; not within the limits of the Christian church, I am sure. Neither clergyman nor layman will aver that it is right to leave the young to the foolish courses into which they are likely to fall in the absence of instruction, and the grace of God. Such an appeal is rather to the lax human affections than to the instructed judgment. If a fall of any sort does take place it is a happy thing to have the subject of it converted, that is turned from the error of his ways, and this is the first step towards the reception of moral and religious truth acting on the practice of the daily life. The phrase "wild oats" is one of the world's delightful vagaries of expression, by which it ensnares the mind to the reception of a good deal more than appears on the surface. We are beginning to find out some of the old world's bad tricks and to repudiate them, and, to come back to our authoress, she is right in saying that modern educated women are deficient in humour. If they have any humour they keep it wofully to themselves, relying, I suppose, upon their physical charms, and the entrancement of sweet eyes. But the Nuremberg Doll should not be their accepted model, I believe, and so a good, fresh, hearty story about a live woman who is also a lady, will be very acceptable, I should think, to THE CRITIC's readers, and so the further "remarks" of this "correspondent" may be reserved for the next occasion.

Yours,
Quebec.

CANADIAN.

P. S.—By the way, that "Long Lake" beyond Qu'Appelle is said to be the finest fishing lake in the North-West. Somebody ought to build a large hotel there. They are already furnishing a railway line from the C. P. R. C.

POLITICS.

To the Editor of the Critic:

All men and women are interested in politics, or ought to be. What! farmers, mechanics, teachers and gospel preachers interested in politics! Yes, if they care for the welfare of their country.

Perhaps some persons may think that such statements and intimations require a little explanation or qualification. Most readily shall the requirements be met. Let us define the meaning of the word here used and then we will know what we are thinking and writing about.

What is politics? Ans.—*The science of government.* And what is government? Ans.—*The administration of public affairs.* Surely every man and woman would like to see public matters so managed as to contribute to the comfort and enjoyment of the people generally. This management must be in the hands of men whom we call politicians. And they must, in civilized countries, be elected by the people to this position. They are the servants of the people to carry out their well "understood wishes." And when, after trial, those thus selected will not do it, the people have the right and ought to select others. It is, therefore, plain that as public affairs affect all, less or more, every person should use his or her influence to correct the wrong and promote the right in governmental matters.

I know there is another sense attached to the word politics which presents the subject before us in quite a different light. Webster's second definition of the word politics is, "In a *lower sense* political affairs, or the contest of parties for power." That, certainly, is a very truthful definition of politics in our day. It seems impossible, in this day, to run a government by a coalition of both parties. Hence the idea of an opposition. I suppose that does not mean opposition to government but opposition to being governed in a certain way. Neither party desires to destroy government but each one thinks he could do it better than the other one.

What then can be done to purify party politics? Send the best men available,—men of integrity, good moral character, reliable and intelligent men, to parliament, whether avowed party men or not. The idea has been too prevalent that good men ought not to engage in political matters for fear of corruption. Does that mean we should keep all the salt at home and let the body-politic putrefy? No, let us send more salt, until the whole lump is seasoned. There are sufficient men in our country of the right stamp, but too many of them hesitate to face the difficulties associated with political life. This is to be regretted. A nation or dominion cannot be rightly governed unless wise and good men are at the helm of affairs. Shakespeare's ideas on this subject are still appropriate:

"Now call we then our high court of Parliament,
And let us choose such limbs of noble counsel,
That the great body of our state may go
In equal rank with the best-governed nation."

Burke's words are equally suggestive and important: "Refined policy has ever been the parent of confusion. Plain good intention, which is as easily discovered at the first view as fraud is surely detected at last, is of no mean force in the government of mankind. Genuine simplicity of heart is a healing and cementing principle."

If men are ambitious only for popularity and power they are not suitable for parliamentary duties. Colton says: "It is an easy and vulgar thing to please the mob, and not a very arduous task to astonish them; but to benefit and improve them is a work fraught with difficulty and teeming with danger." Franklin uttered important truths one hundred years ago, which are being illustrated in political circles in our day: "We assemble parliaments and councils to have the benefit of their collected wisdom, but we necessarily have, at the same time, the inconveniences of their collected passions, prejudices and private interests. By the help of these, artful men overpower their wisdom and dupe its possessors."

There has been no progress of late years in political dignity, eloquence and integrity. Improvement is very desirable. And the press ought to be an educator in this matter, but generally it is not. Some papers are chiefly occupied in presenting only the leading features of their party. Nor are these all presented. Faults and failings are studiously concealed.

We would not like to say of all politicians, but we hesitate not to declare it of some, that the language of Dryden concerning the populace is applicable to them:

"The rabble gathered round the man of news,
And listen with their mouths wide open; some
Tell, some hear, some judge of news, some make it,
And he that lies most loud is most believed."

Perhaps that will do for the present; you may again hear something on this theme from your occasional correspondent.

ALPHA.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

A STORY OF LAHAVE.

There is a beautiful river in Acadia, the LaHave. It is comparatively unknown, no romantic ruins of castles are on its banks giving it interest to tourists. It is, however, beautiful and, lacking the ruins, a -lthine in miniature. Many islands, lying at its mouth with their jagged granite cliffs, form a barrier to the billows sweeping in from the Atlantic. There mists from the ocean have their home, enveloping islands and sea in their fleecy folds. On each side of the river are gently sloping hills, dotted with clumps of spruce and hemlock, forming a border to the blue waters of the river. Fishermen's cottages fringe either shore. Many islets scattered up and down in the quiet reaches of the stream, are like so many emeralds set in a ground work of sapphire. On a summer evening the sun on going down sometimes sheds a crimson glow over the calm bosom of the river, and shadows deepening over shore and forest, tell that day is drawing to a close. At other times the river is even more beautiful. When on a summer's night the moon sheds a flood of light on its dancing waters, whilst the hills on either side are wrapt in sombre hues, it is a happy scene. The echo of songs comes faintly across the water or the dull heavy thud of the oars in the rowlocks of some belated fisherman's skiff, breaks in upon the silence. Fire flies like winged diamonds flit through the darkness. The last note of the evening songster dies away in yonder wood, and then the spirit of night on dusky pinions, wings its flight from the serene sky, veiling every object from view with the shadow of its ebony wings.

Where the river narrows a promontory juts out called Point LaHave. When it breaks the waves it rises perpendicularly in a cliff. Here are the ruins of what was once Fort La Main, its outlines may yet be distinctly traced, though after more than a century the parapet has crumbled into ruins. The embrasures, six in number, can well be counted, the glacis is faintly outlined, the parade is still there, but the magazines have crumbled into ruins, but where the walls remain intact they show how substantially built they were and with what nicety the small stones of which they are formed were fitted together. A well that formally supplied the garrison with water is now filled up with stones. There is a tradition among the fishermen that it has a wall of marble. Near the ruins of the fort are those of the chapel. The stones of its foundation have to a great extent been carried away. Near the chapel is the graveyard, where the old inhabitants of the village sleep. Even here rest is denied them. The intruder is the ever restless sea, which is invading their dark and narrow homes. Every year it washes away some of the cliff, till now human bones bleached white may be seen protruding from its side or washed entirely out, lie on the beach at its foot. The sea respects neither the living nor the dead. Not far in rear of the fort is a large pond. On its surface now float, as in olden days, the large leaves of the lily, concealing amidst green drapery their white and scented blossoms. At the left hand corner of the pond is an oblong shaped island covered with willows and rushes. Into this pond, says tradition, the French threw the guns of the fort, the chapel-bell and the treasures on their retreat to Annapolis.

This then is all that remains of the labors of Le Main. This was the place he selected for building and establishing his trading post and the port. The scenery of the place captivated him. Not far from the fort, on a gently sloping declivity, are the decaying and crumbling ruins of an old stone house. This was the dwelling of the Commandant, Le Main, in the old and happy days of French Acadia. The house commanded an extensive prospect of forest and river scenery. Long, long since, has it been a deserted