

baser sort?" Surely, then would "the wicked walk on every side, and the vilest men be exalted." The influence exercised by men in authority upon the material interests of the country is such, that a Christian citizen is justified, on that account, in fulfilling such political functions as are open to him. But the moral influence of those on whom the eyes of the whole community are fastened every day, and to whom so many aspirants look for honour, employment and reward, is so constant, so universal and so strong, and leavens the whole community so powerfully, for good or evil, that it is a matter of the utmost moment to the character of the nation, that they be not only "able men," but "fearing God and hating covetousness." To secure such men in places of power, the country needs the active services of Christian voters, Christian legislators, and Christian ministers of state.

Such is our conclusion, in the abstract, sitting in the study. Says Cowper

" 'Tis pleasant, through the loopholes of retreat,
To look at such a world."

But when we come down from our philosophical elevation into the world itself, we must confess that our theory of Christian politics sustains some rude shocks, as it is put into practice. The atmosphere of political life is unwholesome, and few can breathe it unharmed. The scrupulous are few, the unscrupulous many, and the majority carry the day. When one party resorts to dishonest means, there *seems* to be no alternative but to counter-work them by the same means. If we do that, we forfeit our good conscience; if we do not, we are defeated, and may as well retire before the battle, for the toil and trouble will be all in vain. Is not this very often the actual outcome of good men's going into public life—from a city or a township council up to Parliament—that they become either demoralised or disheartened? that they do little good and receive much harm? What with electioneering slander and bribery, parliamentary log-rolling, and executive abuse of patronage, very few pass through the ordeal unscathed.

The circumstances of our new country aggravate the usual dangers of political life. We have no class of men of independent fortune, to whom it offers scope for employment and for honourable ambition; so that we are in danger of falling into the hands of those who seek our suffrages because, in our own expressive phrase, they "have an axe to grind" for themselves.

Few men here can afford to go into Parliament, unless it can be made to pay, in some form or other. The universal contempt into which the professional politician has fallen in the neighbouring States, and the intense loathing with which many of the best people there recoil from becoming politicians themselves, may well be a warning to us. And it is but small comfort to remember, that even in Old England, with its hereditary legislators and ample fortunes, bribery at elections has been carried to a nefarious perfection, that a great party can turn its coat at the waving of a conjuror's wand, and that nepotism and jobbery pervade every branch of the public service.