

TORONTO AND ABOUT.

I am given to understand that my illustration of the thoughtlessness or carelessness of the City Council, or City Commissioner, in permitting dead animals to lie on the public thoroughfares, meets with the ridicule and laughter it deserves. My informant said, "I have lived in this city seven years, and never in that time have I seen any such nuisance as mentioned in the SPECTATOR." All I can say is, I am not responsible for other people's blindness, and am prepared to prove what I have said upon the subject. Not once, but often have I been disgusted with the sight of such loathsomeness; and I write advisedly when I say that the inhabitants of this city have apparently forgotten the maxim that "cleanliness is next to godliness," for even on Yonge street the shopkeepers of every description of trade do not hesitate to throw their garbage in the street.

There are thousands in the city who feel keenly the cruel imposition of being compelled to pay enormous taxes to a set of ring jobbers, there being nothing like an adequate return given for the expenditure of the public money. Let it be known, that when a drain is laid down in the city an inspector is appointed to superintend and measure the work, to examine the falls and to look into the qualities of the materials used. One of these inspectors informed me this morning that a few months ago the assistant engineer, while on his tour of inspection, pointed to some inferior bricks and remarked: "Those bricks are too bad to be used, they must not go in." Said the inspector "Yes I know they are bad, of course I shall not permit them to be used." When the excavation was sufficiently advanced for the bricklayers to commence, the inspector informed the contractor that he was not to use the bricks, "all right" returned the contractor, and summarily dismissed his men, and left the job. Two days after the engineer came by. "Hullo, inspector, where are the men?" The inspector told his tale. "Look here, inspector, if you want to keep your place, you must not be so particular, you know; the bricks must be used of course." And the bricks were used and the work completed. Measuring day came. In taking the quantities the inspector, as a matter of course, is supposed to assist, that he may, as inspector, vouch for the accuracy of the measurement. In the afternoon the engineer, with two contractors rode up in a buggy, commanded the contractors, to take the measurements and he would score; they did so, and the inspector stood meekly by and watched the manœuvring of the men in their manipulation of the chain. The total showed an increase of several yards beyond that of the inspector. The inspector a day or so afterwards requested to have a responsible man to measure and verify his figures, which was reluctantly granted, when it was found his original measurements did not vary with his revised measurements one foot. The assistant engineer on being informed of this said, "too late now, the bill has gone before the Board, and it must stand as it is"; and it stood.

That is the way half the public works of the city are managed in our local Tammany ring. Only last week a complaint was made against some soft white bricks that were about to be used in a drain, and the engineer without seeing them said, "O they are good enough," and so they are being used. Whether it be gravel for roads or bricks for drains the same partiality is shown to certain favoured contractors.

There is in the city a set of ring contractors, a useless engineer, and an ignorant Board of Works. It would be decidedly interesting to the curious to know what benefit, real or supposed, the city engineer is to the city. He is not a particularly shrewd man—he certainly is not a thoroughly practical man—so far as the works of a city are concerned. Taking the thing all round, it would be hard to conceive of municipal humbug carried to greater excess than obtains in Toronto.

Speaking of interest between contractors and city officials, one of the contractors informed me that he made out his bill once for some work done, and sent it in. The clerk who received it said, "You want your money, eh?" "Certainly," said the contractor. "Well, you give me twenty dollars and I will get it for you." The

contractor wanted his money—there was therefore no alternative but to comply with the demand; but as an example of the way things are carried on the City Hall, it is simply disgraceful.

The cry is still heard for pure water. Water! we want water to drink. We have exhausted the treasury, and still the water is bad. We have no more money to spend, and the water we drink is unwholesome and exceedingly fishy. Cannot some good soul tell us what we are to do to turn our Water Works to account?

When eight or nine years ago the subject of new water-works was agitated, and three Water Commissioners were employed, or appointed, at a salary of two thousand dollars a year each, it was thought that there would be no difficulty in obtaining an excellent supply of pure water by means of a filtering basin across the bay at the island, two miles from the city. But the people forgot that the Commissioners were ignorant men, so far as engineering works were concerned, and had about as much idea of how to obtain a good and inexhaustible supply of water as they had of the man in the moon. As a matter of fact, the contractor for the filtering basin told me, laughing, that he knew, when he was employed on the work, that it was simply a waste of money, that the basin would be worse than useless, "but, of course," said he, "it is not my business to say anything; I am not such a fool"; and his prophecy is true; the basin is useless. Competent and practical men, engineers of great experience, advised the Commissioners to obtain their supply by gravitation from Lake Simcoe, like the magnificent water-works of Glasgow from Lake Katrine, thereby doing away with the costly pumping engines and maintenance thereof; but no attention was paid to the wise suggestion. Another suggestion was to take the supply-pipe far out into the lake, and through a sunken crib draw a good supply of pure water; either of these suggestions was good, but both were disregarded, the Commissioners preferring to go their own way, and their way has proved most disastrous to the city. And now, with only a few years trial, one of these plans has to be adopted after all. I trust it may be that in a few years our water supply will descend to us by gravitation from Lake Simcoe. Let other municipalities take warning from Toronto.

Toronto has poets by the score; one or two of them have actually printed their poems in pamphlet form, and the public has charitably and half graciously accepted them. But there has been no poem published in Toronto yet, composed by one of Toronto's sons, that can compare with the excellent production of Mr. Lydgate, of the Toronto University, read by him at the last Commencement. The "Livingstone River" is a poem of which he may well be proud, and the prize won by him at the late examination is well deserved.

It is not to be doubted that the Huron and Ontario Canal would have a tendency to benefit Canada to a small extent, though how it can possibly compete with the two lines of railway already laid down, and another in contemplation, is a question open for discussion. If this Canal were completed, the Welland Canal, which at present scarcely holds its own, would be a burden upon the Government; half the tolls would find their way to the shorter route, and the expenses of the Welland Canal would not be diminished. The Erie Canal is unable to compete with the railroads to New York; and, I think, the Huron and Ontario Canal would be in a worse fix. But, after all is said about it, there can be no doubt that a part of the money, as suggested in last week's SPECTATOR, now being expended on the Pacific Railway would be better employed on this Canal than in constructing a colonization road to the Rocky Mountains.

There has been an immense waste of thought and trouble over the Toronto and Ottawa Railway. Can any one give a substantial reason why the line should be built? It is not a necessity to Toronto, and would only serve to benefit Ottawa at the expense of Toronto. It would appear that the undertaking is about to fall to the ground, and certainly, for all the benefit Toronto is likely to derive from the proposed line, it should be a matter for congratulation amongst us if it be so, for we can ill afford to give a bonus of \$150,000 just at this stage of our existence to such a doubtful enterprise.

Queen City.