

and proof of the fact of the use of such means annul the contract? If not, there is surely a gross failure of justice in the state of things under which a few agents may be punished, but the principals, who are really the chief culprits, are enabled to go on from year to year to make large profits out of the contract thus fraudulently obtained. If corporations have no souls to be appealed to on grounds of honour or righteousness, and no sensitive bodies to be made to suffer physical penalties, they have, nevertheless, property, a very sensitive part of their organism, through which they may be most effectively reached by legal penalties.

The same reasoning applies with equal force to all individuals or firms which may have resorted to similarly dishonest means in order to procure a contract, or any other pecuniary advantage from the city. If the principle that such individuals or firms should not be permitted to go on reaping the fruits of their dishonourable doings be granted, the application of that principle should not depend upon the accident of the success or failure of the corrupt methods employed. For illustration, let us suppose again that the bribes given or offered on behalf of the Street Railway Company were not successful in changing the vote of any aldermen, or that the contract would have been awarded to that Company without the aid of the purchased votes, or even that, irrespective of the manner in which the contract was procured, it is deemed the best arrangement available in the interests of the city. Neither of these suppositions diminishes, in the least, the guilt of the Company. Consequently, neither, we conceive, should avail to prevent the infliction of the penalty appropriate to the crime of bribery or attempted bribery, used with the object of obtaining by fraud, a contract which it was feared might not be procured on its merits.

These considerations are, we aver, worthy of attention. The fact is that a very grave danger to society, and to the interests of every commonwealth, large or small, national or civic, arises from the presence of immensely wealthy corporations, having selfish ends to serve, with an inordinate greed for gold, unscrupulous as to methods, and ready to spend at any moment large sums of money, illegitimately and corruptly if deemed necessary, in debauching those with whom they have to deal. A companion fact is deplorable, but it is none the less the fact, that there are too often to be found, in the service of state or municipality, a sufficient number of representatives who have their price to make the question of the success or failure of dishonest methods simply one of money. This being so, the danger that these millionaire syndicates may become practically supreme is serious. It is doubtful whether their corrupt and corrupting operations could be by any other means so effectually checked as by causing them to know that not only will all the members be held individually responsible for all acts done in the name of the Company, but that any and every corrupt act done or attempted on behalf of the Company by its accredited agents will, if discovered, involve as its immediate effect the cancelling of the contract, and pecuniary responsibility for whatever loss can be shown to have been suffered because of its operation up to the date of the cancelling. Would this be too heroic a measure? In what other way can the interests of the community be effectually safeguarded?

* * * Modern Manners.

A WRITER who signs himself "Old Style" has asked us some serious questions. These questions we would willingly avoid, but for our hope that the letter in question and our own comments upon it may lead to some serious consideration and discussion of a subject of very great importance indeed. Two things are clear to ourselves, if not

to every human being: first, that manners are of very considerable importance, as indicating character, as having a very considerable influence upon the comfort, convenience, and happiness of those who are round about us; and secondly, that the ordinary manners of men and women in society are decidedly inferior to those of earlier times. We are asked to account for this difference, and to say what is to be done. Far from professing to be able to do what we are asked to do, we will only venture to make a beginning, hoping that the subject may be followed up by some of our readers and contributors.

In the first place, then, we can hardly deny that the manners of people "in society" were more beautiful in times past than they are at this present moment. And one reason for this may be given at once—the people who were then "in society" were of "higher birth" and had been surrounded from their earlier days by well-mannered people. From them they caught the tone which was never lost, which was never much disturbed, because they seldom came in contact with people much worse-mannered than themselves. Now, we are quite ready to admit that there were evils connected with this state of things. These people were often supercilious and insolent, regarding themselves as a superior class of beings, looking down upon the "lower orders" as hardly belonging to the same race as themselves. Still they were well-mannered in society, graceful, courteous, and altogether pleasant to contemplate, which can hardly be said of the ordinary "society woman" of the present day.

What is the cause? Well, partly there has been an irruption of the barbarians. When the Goths and others swept down upon the Roman Empire, in many places, the civilization which had been the product of centuries disappeared before them. And so now, when men and women, who have been brought up among coarse surroundings, and have had a very imperfect education, and have merely learnt to dress well—and some of them dress very well—what can be expected?

This is the curious thing. Many of those women do dress very well. They have learnt the trick from others, and the result is not unpleasant so far, and if they would only hold their tongues and be a little retiring, they might pass muster very well. But these are just the things they cannot do. Hold their tongues! And such tongues! Angels and ministers of grace defend us! What a terrible thing is the tongue of a half-educated woman! And retiring! Just imagine the average girl "in society" thinking of keeping herself in the background. So much for the irruption of the barbarians. They are there. Whether they are there to stay, we cannot tell. Whether they are there to be civilized, we cannot tell. But they are there, and they are not civilized; and our correspondent may think this over.

But there is something else. It is not merely that we are uncivilized; we are also "free and equal." Courtesy is servile. To bow, to say, "I am much obliged," or "I thank you," is to imply that, in some way or other, we are dependent upon others, perhaps even inferior to them! And this is intolerable! "Is not one man as good as another?" asked the demagogue. "To be sure he is," replied the Irishman, "and a great deal better." This is the spirit of a great deal of modern society. We are not content to think that anyone can be our superior.

Well! let us admit that there was something not quite satisfactory in the old state of things. Perhaps one class was insolent and another servile; and this was inconsistent with the idea of brotherhood which the Gospel brought into the world, and which modern society has been trying to learn. Yet surely there are other ways of putting things the falseness and inhumanity of the old régime without falling into the barbarity of which complaint is now so frequently made. We read such words as these: "in honour preferring one another," "be courteous," "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," and we ask whether we may not, in the spirit of Christ, build up a society which shall be tolerable to men and women of high culture and gentle susceptibility. But here, for the present, we must stop.