

inefficiency or fraud on the part of those entrusted with the work, the strongest reason for the preference usually given to the outside contractor as against direct construction is no longer valid. So, we may expect, will it be argued by those who are opposed to the contracting system.

The Folly of Criminality.

Whatever of truth there may be in the ancient maxim, "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad," is as applicable to individuals of lesser degree as to the potentates of whom it was originally spoken. Certainly it is strangely true of most of those who, in our days, allow themselves to cherish evil thoughts until they develop into criminal designs and finally culminate in those great crimes which are so often perpetrated, not only in the dens of vice in great cities but even in quiet country districts, shocking whole communities with revelations of human depravity such as would have been thought incredible amongst the dwellers in those peaceful retreats. Probably there is not one of the cases of deliberate, cold-blooded murder, which from time to time send a thrill of horror through the land, which was not, in the mind of the guilty projectors, so well planned that detection was well-nigh impossible. And yet how rare are the cases in which the perpetrators themselves do not leave clues which lead surely and often swiftly to their conviction. A striking instance of this is afforded by the recent Middelmarsh atrocity. It is not necessary for our momentary purpose to assume the guilt of any particular individuals, in advance of trial and conviction by the proper courts. But it is beyond all doubt that a murder most foul was committed and that the plot was long and carefully studied. Now, looking at the thing in the abstract, so to speak, it would not seem to be so very difficult a matter for the death of an utterly unsuspecting young man to be brought about by those who worked with him from day to day in field and wood, in such a manner that no suspicion of foul play would ever arise. Of course it may be that such things have been and are being done much oftener than has ever been suspected; that is, with complete success. It is impossible to prove the negative. But the probabilities seem to be quite the other way. One would suppose that the person or persons who are wicked enough to plan and have satanic nerve enough to execute the murderous schemes would be cool and far-seeing enough to cover up all evidences of the crime. But the nemesis seems to overtake them beforehand, so to speak, in the shape either of a judicial blindness which prevents their perceiving the most obvious flaws in their reasoning, or a paralyzing terror which renders them unable to remember or carry out the details of their infernal programmes. How, for example, could the slayer or slayers of young Hendershott have been so fatally stupid as to leave the wood without having first obliterated the blood-marks which stood in plain sight as unanswerable contradictions of the story, on the acceptance of which their very lives depended? How could they fail to foresee that the axe-gashes in the head of their victim would bear swift witness against that story? Assuming, as is morally certain, that the motive was the insurance money, what but a judicial blindness could have shut their eyes to the wisdom, the absolute necessity of waiting at least a year or two after the placing of the insurance before perpetrating the deed, if they would save themselves from immediate suspicion.

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In view of the pitiless persecution of Jews, Stundists, Lutherans and Catholics under the late Czar of Russia, the remark attributed to the young Czar Nicholas is one which all will hope may prove to be well founded: "I am a Christian; but my belief in the Saviour does not entitle me to persecute others on account of their faith."

A Question of Justice.

IT is but a righteous indignation which causes every good citizen to wish, in the interest of justice as well as of civic security, that every alderman or other official or citizen proved guilty of accepting a bribe in any shape to influence his action in what should have been simply a question of duty, should be severely punished by way of warning to others. But what about the punishment of the bribing corporations? Can anybody deny that it is at least as criminal to give as to receive a bribe? No one who heard or read the evidence brought out in Judge McDougall's investigation can doubt that the agents and managers of certain companies which were in pursuit of large civic contracts did, as a matter of fact, directly or indirectly attempt to bribe aldermen and other civic officials to vote in their interests. Were not those corporations at least as guilty in the matter as either their agents in bestowing, or their victims in accepting their gifts? Assuming the previous innocence of those whose weak principles gave way under the stress of temptation, it would not be difficult to show, from the purely ethical standpoint, that, as tempters, the givers were worse than the receivers, seeing that the worst possible injury that can be done to a human being is to injure his character? It is an injury far worse than the mere filching of a good name. The truly honest man may bravely and cheerfully survive the loss of reputation, sustained by his consciousness of rectitude, but when the character, the manhood itself, is shattered and debased, all is lost.

Would it not, then, be a glaring anomaly, a deplorable failure of justice, were those who may be convicted of accepting bribes to be imprisoned or otherwise severely punished for the crime, while those who were primarily responsible for giving the bribe, not only go scot free, but continue to profit and grow rich from the proceeds of the contract procured for them by means so unworthy? We do not profess to know how the law bears upon such a case, but in equity, as both loss of position and direct legal penalty follow the receiver, so surely loss of the fraudulently obtained contract, and fine or imprisonment, should be visited upon the giver. By "the giver" we, of course, mean not merely the worthless and pitiable agent who degrades himself to become the tool in a most dishonourable transaction, but the corporation itself, both as a company profiting by the purchased contract, and in its individual members as accomplices before the fact in a criminal transaction. It is true that Judge McDougall's report classes Everett, one of the members of the Street Railway syndicate, amongst the guilty against whom criminal prosecutions should be entered. But this recommendation, which goes as far, no doubt, as the judge thought himself warranted in going under existing laws, seems to have regard to the fact that this man was an active personal agent in the bribery. Moreover, it is pretty well understood that he is beyond the reach of Canadian law, by reason of his absence from the country. The question we wish particularly to raise is whether a company which has procured a contract with the city by the use of nefarious devices and methods, can be punished only in the persons of individual members or agents who can be convicted of having been directly concerned in the use of those methods, while that company retains and profits by the contract obtained through the use of such dishonest and unworthy means.

To make our point more distinct, let us suppose that the Street Railway Company, some of whose members and agents are proved guilty of having successfully or unsuccessfully attempted to bribe members of the City Council to vote for the acceptance of its proposals, did, by the use of such dishonest means, obtain, on terms grossly injurious to the city, a contract for a long term of years. Should not the discovery