

THROUGH A MONOCLE

INDECENCY IN ELECTIONS.

WHENEVER we have a good, racy election trial, decent people are amazed afresh at the exhalations that come up from the pit. Can it be that this sort of thing is going on in the committee-rooms and in the upper chambers of discreditable "hotels" while they—the decent citizens—are making and listening to enobling addresses, industriously canvassing their neighbours and urging everybody to go to the polls and so perform a public duty. It is to be feared that it can. Get an old political worker in a confidential mood some night and hear the tales that he will tell. If they are inventions, then the political parties have some of the finest fictionists in the world doing their dirty work for them; for there is a verisimilitude about the stories told by these veterans which would make the fortune of any "realist" who possessed the art of inventing them.

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YET if this sort of business goes on underground, of what profit is it for the decent citizen to stay out nights and listen to platitudinous speeches and get the smoke of bad cigars in his clothing and canvass people with more vigour than a book agent displays? When he finally talks over another decent citizen to his point of view and so makes a vote for righteousness, his labour is as completely lost as any other drop in the bucket; for he is of little use to his party when compared with the gentleman of the boiled eye and obscene grin who hands out dollar bills to purchased voters who may or may not deliver the goods they sell. The party of righteousness could do without him—the decent citizen—but it would be irretrievably ruined if the "back-room" manipulator refused to look after his fair share of the "loose fish." This is the sort of thing which disgusts the decent citizen and inclines him to have nothing to do with politics.

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THE whole thing would not be so stupid if either party gained any great advantage over the other by dabbling in this cess-pool. But it is generally conceded by good judges that the "dishonours" are about even. Neither party has a monopoly of this sort of cattle; and it is doubtful whether either has even anything like a decisive majority of the breed over the other. Men who make merchandise of their citizenship frequently are in the habit of getting their money every time from the same party; and they would feel it something of a wrench if they had to look elsewhere for the pitiful dole which is enough to buy them, body, mind and spirit. They intend to vote Liberal or Conservative, as the case may be, every time; but they expect to get some of the "dough" which is being passed around for casting that vote. We hear men say at election trials that they were not asked to vote, and did not promise to vote;

but that they voted and then heard that there was "money going" and thought that they might as well get some.

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NOW why is it not possible for the decent men in both parties to combine to disappoint these human parasites? If they could not transfer their greasy patronage from one party shop to the other and so disturb the balance of political power, they would be compelled to vote for nothing or stay away from the polls. In that case, they would infallibly vote. They have got the voting habit. But they would almost certainly vote against the party at whose pig-trough they have been accustomed to feed. However, as they would all do this, it would be a case of "as you were," so far as the party totals are concerned; and politics would be rid of its most squalid and disgusting appendage. It could be done if the decent element were decent enough to trust each other. The fear which would come into many minds would be lest the other party should violate the agreement and make a "deal" with the purchasable vote. But things have gone pretty far in the degradation of the Canadian people if there are not enough thoroughly decent men in each constituency to make such an agreement and live up to it.

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BUT what of the "wicked partners"? What would prevent some of the semi-decent members of a party from violating the pact behind the backs of their wholly decent colleagues? There is just one thing that will do it; and that is the willingness of a wholly decent contingent to make this subject of honest voting the paramount issue—where necessary—for an election or two. Let them give their colleagues—semi-decent and otherwise—to understand that if they find that the election has been won for their side by a breach of this understanding, they will at the next election transfer their ballots bodily to the other party, no matter what herrings the semi-decent coterie may try to draw across the trail. This—if the semi-decent folk can be made to believe it—will settle the matter; for they are in the game to win. If they knew that playing false on one occasion would infallibly lose them the election on the next, they would play honest and try to win both events.

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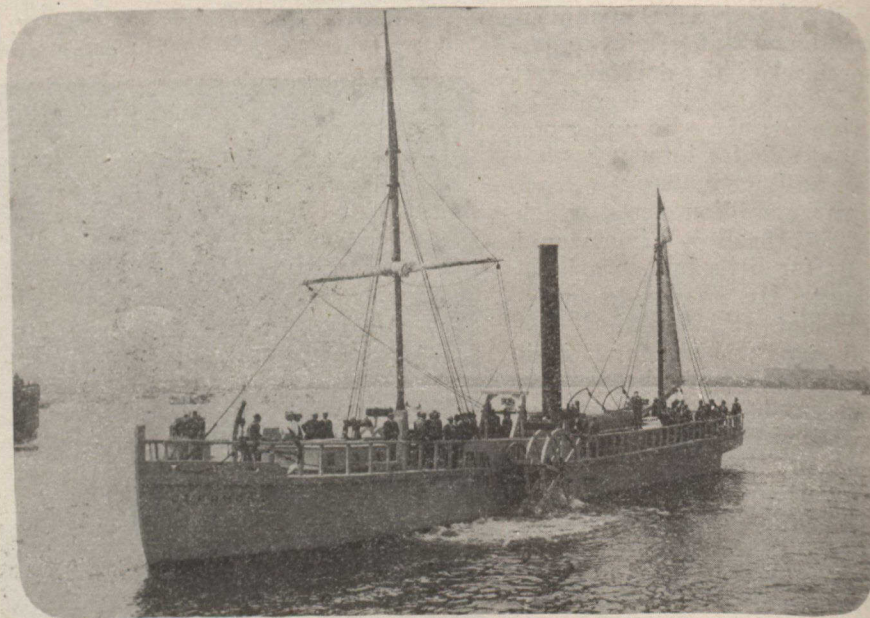
AND it would be easy for the decent section to take this course in Canada to-day; for we have no other issues. There is nothing at stake between the parties at all approaching in importance this question of honest polling. It would be far better worth our while to cleanse the temple of the franchise of this herd of "money changers" than to put either of our parties in or out a dozen times. It would make far more difference in our politics, in our public life, in the policy of whatever government might come to the top, and in the future of the Dominion. Can we not accomplish a beneficent combine of the decent elements to cleanse our worse than Augean stables?

THE MONOCLE MAN.

THE HISTORIC WOODEN SHIPS OF THE HUDSON RIVER



The *Half-Moon* looks much like the *Don de Dieu* in which Champlain landed at Quebec the year before Hudson sailed up through the State of New York. Champlain and Hudson seem both to have been unaware of parallel 49.



Perhaps also a nautical expert might be able to discover that the *Clermont* rigged out by Mr. Fulton, on the Hudson, in 1809, was a good deal like the wooden ship put on the St. Lawrence by Canadian Molson the same year.