

## ARCTURUS:

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In the next number of ARCTURUS will appear a complete original story written specially for these columns, entitled **GAGTOOTH'S IMAGE.**

In the number for Saturday, February 5th, will appear an original sketch entitled

**ASPECTS OF AUTHORSHIP.**

In the number for Saturday, February 12th, will appear the first of a series of original sketches entitled

**LITERARY EXPERIENCES,**

embodying some remarkable unpublished letters by distinguished English men and women.

In an early number will appear the first of a series of original papers entitled

**GHOSTS OF EMINENT CANADIANS.****THE CAUSE OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION.**

THERE is probably no constitutionally governed country—certainly no English-speaking country—where the charge of corruption is so continually brought against the ministry of the day as in Canada. Allowance must of course be made for the habitual exaggerations of the Opposition; but making every reasonable discount on this score, it may be said that nowhere is the expenditure of public money by the government, with the object of purchasing support, so systematic and shameless. Even those ardent supporters of the ministry who in public profess to deprecate the attacks of Opposition newspapers as unfounded will in private admit that government is carried on by wholesale corruption. The excuse which in the eyes of many amounts to a justification of this system is that it can be carried on in no other way. Corruption, in short, in the opinion of a much larger proportion of public men and political thinkers than is generally supposed, is a governmental necessity. Liberal newspapers may reply to such a statement with a shrill shriek of protest, but on what other ground can the complacency with which the majority of Canadians regard the matter be accounted for? There is no reason to suppose that the people of this country are on a lower plane of public morality than Englishmen or Americans. Yet despite the clearest evidence that the Dominion administration depends for its existence on purchased legislative votes: that it has reduced corruption to a system, and squandered the public money recklessly in order to retain power: it finds defenders and champions among men of excellent personal character, and the repeated exposures of the most flagrant acts of corruption by a vigilant Opposition press excite little indignation. To what is this due, but to a widespread conviction that such methods are really the only means by which a Canadian government can be conducted, and that a change in its *personnel* would be unavailing

to change the conditions which make corruption an essential feature of administration?

To denounce corruption in unsparing terms: to publish specific instances, showing the manner in which the government have expended public money in the bribery of provincial delegates, influential corporations or individual members of parliament: is unavailing in the face of a public opinion which is prepared to condone bribery as an unfortunate necessity. Should it not rather be the part of those sincerely anxious to remedy the evil to try to discover the root of the disease, instead of turning all their attentions to the symptoms? The underlying cause of corruption is the need which every administration is under of securing a working majority in a Parliament which consists of a number of cliques and sections having little in common but the general desire to turn their positions to account. Theoretically the Canadian people are politically divided between the Liberal Conservative and Reform parties. Practically, as our rulers know to their cost, the purely party tie is weak, excepting in Ontario, and the real dividing lines are those of locality, race and creed. Each party, instead of being a homogeneous whole, animated by distinctive principles and held together by the force of old associations, is divided and subdivided in a dozen directions. There is no real community of sentiment, for instance, between the Ontario Orangeman, the Quebec Bleu, and the ministerialist from Nova Scotia or British Columbia, whose sole reason for supporting Sir John Macdonald rather than Mr. Blake is that the former has shown his willingness to yield to repeated demands for "better terms." The elements which make up the Opposition are equally incongruous. The politics of Old Canada were always complicated by sectional divisions; the war-cries of race and creed, and the selfish clamours of petty cliques anxious to barter parliamentary support for the bestowal of patronage upon their adherents. And what but confusion worse confounded could be expected when the party divisions of Grit and Tory—which had largely lost any small significance they at one time possessed in the provinces where they originated—were forced upon the people of the other provinces on their admission to the Dominion?

It is the system of responsible government, applied to a country and a population to the requirements of which it is wholly unadapted, that puts a premium on corruption. When the essential condition of a government's existence is that it shall possess a continuous majority in a legislative body which is a fortuitous concourse of electoral delegations, cliques and factions, what but corruption could possibly result? Sir John Macdonald is the development of these political environments. Were he displaced to-morrow and Mr. Blake installed in power, he would either be compelled by the force of circumstances to adopt similar methods to those of his predecessor, or—if he maintained his integrity and determined to rule honestly—he would speedily find that he had undertaken an impossible task, and would be compelled to resign the leadership to less scrupulous hands. "But," exclaims the Reform reader, "Mr. Mackenzie was honest, as even his opponents now admit." True, and the fact that Mr. Mackenzie's administration lost ground from the outset, and only remained in power for one parliamentary term, is a strong illustration of the impossibility of honest government under our present system.

Responsible government, as practiced in England, is the outcome of a long period of growth under peculiar conditions which obtain nowhere else. It is only workable where the parlia-