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— OF —

Religion, Patriotism, Science and Literature.

EDITED BY MATTHEW RICHEY KNIGHT.

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The Editor's Portfolio.

AGAIN the throes of an electoral campaign are ended! Again the representatives of the people, of the combine, of overweening personal ambition, of the power of "the almighty dollar", of the gullibility of many, of the corruptibility of many more, are about to meet in inextricable confusion on the floors of Parliament! Who shall say, who can say which party, which individual member is the choice of the people? By bribes to provinces, by bribes to sections, by bribes to combines, by bribes to individuals, by buying and selling the franchises of men for a few paltry dollars at the polling booths, in the very face of the sheriff or his deputy, both parties have elected their men, and what, in the

name of everything that is honest and true, do these men represent? Neither party can condemn the other for both are equally guilty. The limit of the bribery on either side was determined only by its financial resources. Is this sort of thing to continue? Every time that a general or local election is held, is the public mind to be darkened, the public conscience weakened, the public character demoralised, by this wholesale and overt-bribery and corruption? Good men and pure, true patriots, are lifting their hearts to heaven and asking, O Lord, how long? O that the manhood of our country would rise in its might and destroy this serpent that is flogging itself with treacherous, terrible power about the young electorate of Canada, the hope of our future! Some searching, stringent remedy must be devised at once, or our noble country, of which only noble men are worthy, is lost.

There seems to be a want of enlightenment as to the character of a bribe. What is a bribe? The word is never properly used in a good sense. It is thoroughly bad. It is a price or reward given to a person as an inducement to do something wrong, to violate some law that is written on his conscience. Some of our politicians and electors will accept this definition and by casuistry and sophistry attempt to evade its application. They will say that this definition can be strictly applied only to one case, where a voter has settled convictions as to the rightfulness of the claims of one party, and convictions so strong as to clothe his fidelity to them with the force of a moral obligation, and his infidelity to those moral convictions is purchased by the gift offered. We are sorry that we are compelled to believe that even this clear and indubitable case will cover a very large proportion of the ground we are considering. But what of the man who has no settled convictions in the matter? Is he not an ignoramus, not possessed of sufficient intelligence to be a proper subject of the franchise, or at any rate one who has not troubled himself to investigate the policies of the opposing parties, one who has not enough interest in the welfare of his country to ask which party is the right one, and so is disqualified by his indifference for having anything to say as to his country's government? Honest, earnest, patriotic men have settled convictions, and men of a different stamp have no more right to vote, are no more qualified for voting than the bones of the dead or the stones by the roadside. Moreover, whoever touches this election money sanctions its employment, abets and encourages the unholy work for which it is used. It is blood money, it is accursed, and none can touch it without being defiled.

But, says another, it keeps the money in circulation, it helps trade. Bribery is not the only crime in whose defence this has been urged. It has been repeated a hundred times by advocates of the liquor traffic. Have things, however, come to such a pass in Canada that money will not circulate without burning, blighting and demoralising as it passes to and fro? We are better off a thousand times without such a circulation. We pay in better, costlier things many times