

rently reported, and as Mr. Mercier evidently believes, that the Lieut.-Governor has received a majority and a minority report from the Baie de Chaleur Commissioners and is withholding them from Mr. Mercier and the public, he is surely not only committing a great wrong but is putting a second and still more potent argument into the mouth of his late First Minister. By every principle of British justice the accused is entitled to know the verdict of the jury as soon as that verdict has been given. The situation has one redeeming feature. In case Mr. Mercier should return triumphant from the polls and be reinstated in the Government, in so far as the voice of the people could reinstate him, the occasion would furnish a crucial test of the sincerity of the Liberals of the Province in their condemnation of political dishonesty. Their opportunity would then have come to prove themselves determined to condemn those who betrayed their trust and robbed the treasury, by promptly expelling from the Legislature every ex-Minister found guilty. Would the Liberals of Quebec do it?

THE great lottery fight in Louisiana is over, if Mr. Morris, the President and chief manager of the notorious Lottery Company, and his associates are to be believed. Shortly after the announcement of the decision of the Supreme Court at Washington, affirming the constitutionality of the postal act passed by Congress at its last session, forbidding the carrying of the circulars, receipts, advertisements, etc., of lotteries by the United States mails, was received, Mr. Morris published a letter declaring that it was the intention of the managers of the Company to accept the decision and refrain from violating the law in any way. He even went so far as to affirm that they would now refuse to accept a renewal of the charter even were it to be proffered them "without the payment of one dollar of license tax." There is a good deal of difference of opinion amongst the opponents of the lottery as to the degree of confidence which can be safely placed in this declaration. While some of the most influential papers, such as the *Independent* and *Christian at Work*, think that Mr. Morris and his associates mean what they say, and that the danger is therefore over, others, including the *New Delta*, the most uncompromising and powerful opponent of the lottery in the State of Louisiana itself, are disposed to regard the letter as an attempt on the part of the Company to secure by guile what they despair of winning by open bribery. They fear the Greeks even when making obeisance to the will of the nation. Considerable ground for the suspicion was afforded by the fact that the pro-lottery press, which includes almost all the newspapers of the State, except the *New Delta*, immediately on the publication of the letter, took up the cry that "the lottery question is no longer before the people," and tried to persuade the anti-lottery party to break ranks. It is not a little ominous, too, that on the day following the publication of the Morris letter the Company imported twenty-six boxes of Winchester rifles and twenty-six thousand rounds of ball cartridges: a transaction which certainly gives much colour to the suspicion that, failing to carry their point either by bribery or by treachery, they are "determined to win by bullet." In the letter in question Mr. Morris recounts the history of the Company's offers to pay into the coffers of the State, in consideration of the renewal of the charter, first \$500,000, then \$1,000,000, and finally \$1,250,000. Its publication was followed by despatches from New Orleans, which were widely circulated, to the effect that the income of the Company had been so seriously affected by the anti-lottery postal law that it could no longer afford to pay the last-named sum annually for permission to carry on its operations. But from other sources it appears that, in spite of the crippling effect of the law in question, other States are still sending to Louisiana fifteen millions a year, from which the lottery campaign candidates will draw for the prosecution of the struggle. The wise thing to be done is evidently that which all parties opposed to the further legalization of this huge robbery seem resolved to do, viz., to persist in their demand for a law controlling express and telegraph companies, and forbidding the sale of lottery tickets beyond the borders of the State which may charter them. Such a law alone would enable the national sentiment to slay the serpent which the amended postal act has but scotched.

SOME of our American exchanges are moralizing upon the evidence afforded by the lottery struggle that the public has a conscience and that that conscience, once thoroughly aroused, is supreme in the councils of the

nation. "The omnipotence of the public conscience is," says the *Independent*, "the great lesson of the struggle. It was to this that the people of Louisiana appealed. They spoke themselves with great power." It is an interesting question to what extent this view of the case is correct. We should like to accept it without reservation. We should like to believe that the voice of the people, when once their consciences are fairly reached and a distinct moral issue placed before them, is the voice of God. But one consideration makes it difficult, we confess, for us to take so much comfort of this kind out of this victory as our New York contemporary is able to do. It is this. The battle in its moral aspects was peculiarly Louisiana's battle. The bribe offered was for her alone. Yet the virtuous among her citizens had to appeal to the nation for aid. There is no good reason to believe that they could have conquered without that aid. It is something, it is indeed much, that these better classes were sufficiently strong and sufficiently in earnest to appeal with power and success for the help of the nation. But so long as the only State which stood to be affected by the temptation was unable to resist it in her own strength it is impossible to say that the public conscience is "omnipotent" in that State. Nor, on the other hand, much as we could wish to believe in the omnipotence of the national conscience, can we overlook the fact that the nation, the State of Louisiana alone excepted, would have been the losers rather than the gainers by the operations of the lottery. No prize of \$1,250,000 was dangled before the eyes of the people of New York or Pennsylvania. On the contrary, millions upon millions of dollars are being drawn out of these and all the other States of the Union by the lottery every year. It does not seem that any great credit for conscientiousness is due to the people who have legislated to hamper the movements of the corporation which was draining them of their resources. This assumes, of course, that the number of individuals who were interested in the perpetuation of the lottery because they hoped personally to profit by investing in its tickets, however large in the aggregate, was not relatively numerous enough to affect very materially the view of the case we have presented. This is, however, but a one-sided view of the case after all. We have no doubt whatever that the majority of those, both in Louisiana and elsewhere, who worked so energetically and contributed so liberally to fight the lottery were actuated by much higher motives than any consideration of financial loss or gain. We gladly recognize the great and growing power of the "public conscience" both in the United States and in the Mother Country, for it is substantially the same impulse, or let us rather say principle, which has triumphed over the lottery abomination in the latter, which is manifesting itself from time to time in the former, in driving from the public service those whose private lives are immoral, no matter how great their abilities, and which will before many years decree the abolition of such national iniquities as the Chinese opium traffic. In spite of all the abounding public and private iniquities which often tempt one to despair of human progress, conscience, especially in Christian communities and nations, is a mighty and constantly increasing power, though it will be long we fear before it even approaches "omnipotence."

THE last experiment in capital punishment by electricity in New York has brought to the surface again the unsettled question of the comparative painlessness and propriety of this mode of "taking off" those who have been declared by a jury of their peers unfit to live. The question is a painful one to think about or discuss. It is one, nevertheless, which demands settlement, if settlement is possible, as soon as possible. The eyes of other countries are watching the operation of New York's unique law with profound interest. We question whether what is known of the results up to the present time is likely to convince many of the desirability of substituting the electric fluid for the rope, as an agency for inflicting the extreme penalty of the law. And yet it is very evident from the keenness with which every execution by the old method of hanging is scrutinized and criticized that the necessity for providing a substitute, if the death penalty is still to be inflicted, is becoming constantly more pressing. It is indeed questionable whether the state of feeling which makes the public of the present day so sensitive to any symptoms of suffering on the part of the victim of retributive justice, or exemplary justice, whichever it may be, will long be able to tolerate capital punishment in any form, since death by violence without a

certain amount of contortion and other evidence of suffering is probably impossible. The nearest approach to what is demanded would, it seems to us, be found in the action of some powerful drug, such as was used by the ancient Greeks. If euthanasia is what is sought for, as seems to be the case, to satisfy the modern feeling of humanity, surely modern chemical science could furnish an agent which would produce the required effect much more satisfactorily to the sentiment in question than is possible through the use of any external force. One thing seems pretty certain. If some means of execution, less revolting to the sight or conception of the sensitive or supersensitive public than any now in use, is not soon devised, the crusade against the infliction of the death penalty will become too powerful to be resisted. Whether that result would be so disastrous to society as many now think, is a question which it is, perhaps, impossible to decide otherwise than by experiment.

THE times are continually changing, and the currents of popular opinion are changing with them. In few things are the mutations wrought in a generation more strikingly apparent than in the contrast between the estimation in which trades-unionism is held to-day and that in which it was held a generation ago. Those who can embrace the events of a quarter of a century within their recollections will readily trace the gradual transition in public sentiment, which has taken place within that period, in regard to the legitimacy of these workingmen's combinations. It was, we believe, considerably less than twenty-five years ago that some union printers in this city were arrested on a charge of conspiracy for having dared to work together to secure a better rate of wages from their employers. To-day we find the foremost political economists, as well as the more intelligent and liberal-minded employers, not merely consenting under protest to recognize unionism as a bitter necessity, but welcoming it as a beneficent force—a force which has, it is true, been often unjustly used for tyrannical purposes, but which has on the whole been of great service to the workingmen, and at the same time beneficial rather than otherwise to employers. This result was not wholly unforeseen by a few of the foremost political economists long before the mass of employers of labour could see in unionism anything better than a foul conspiracy to defraud the capitalists and the public of the benefits to which they were fairly entitled from the operation of the beneficent law of competition. Not only so, but many of the workingmen themselves for a long time held aloof from union with their fellows on the ground that unionism was an interference with their freedom of contract; whereas the fact is, as most of them have since found out by experience, and as such far-sighted economists as John Stuart Mill perceived long ago, combination was absolutely necessary to secure for them that very freedom which they so highly prized. The presence of Professor Ashley as chairman of the meeting in the interests of labour which was addressed a few evenings since by Mr. P. J. M'Guire, General Secretary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, was a significant reminder of the new order of things to which we have referred. The three advantages which Professor Ashley enumerated as derived from trades unions, viz.: that in proportion as they are well organized they render strikes less frequent, that they afford the most hopeful basis for arbitration and that they furnish the most efficacious antidote to revolutionary socialism, are all in accord with the facts of history as well as with the deductions of scientific sociology. Nor is their practical value as arguments in favour of the highest development of the union principle at all weakened by the fact that as arguments they seem at first thought to be somewhat of hibernistic, seeing that in the absence of unions there could be no strikes and there would be no place for arbitration.

THUS far there was substantial agreement between the views of Professor Ashley and the economists and those of the leaders of the labour movement, of whom Mr. M'Guire is evidently no unworthy representative. But there was, none the less, a broad contrast in one important respect between his speech and that of Mr. M'Guire. The difference was not so much one of divergence or direction, as of goal. The one seemed to begin where the other left off. It might also have been inferred from Professor Ashley's mode of treating the subject that he regarded the perfection of the union organizations as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end. It is impossible to