

force beliefs upon unconvinced minds. It would be to perpetuate a misnomer to regard controversy as if it were the synonym of confusion and disorder.

Yet this is the mistake which has been made in the present case. No sooner does the Political Economy Club claim for its members the right of freely discussing important public questions, even though they may be unpopular and unpalatable, than the great ban-dog, the *Toronto Globe*, "scents treason," and all the yelping pack of little dogs, "Tray, Blanche and Sweet-heart," follow in full cry. Two honourable exceptions to this senseless clamour deserve mention, the *London (Ont.) Herald* and the *Ottawa Herald*, who have manfully expressed themselves in favour of free discussion. Happily, so far as the real question is concerned, they all got on a wrong scent, and so it culminated in "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

So far is the repression of controversy from being the right way of dealing with the difficulties of our day, that it would only aggravate the evils it was meant to cure. It would drive the discussion of questions into secret societies, and reproduce the tyrannous days of conspiracies and treasons. The healthiest interests of society demand that the formation and the publication of opinion should be free, and that controversy should not be restrained any farther than is necessary for the assertion of the right of society to hold each man responsible for opinions expressed with a design of effecting practical results, leading to an injury of the common rights of men. But the ability to agree—to state opinions so as to observe an exact equivalence between the assertions made and the reasons able to be given for holding it to be true, and to feel and admit the force of an argument or an objection just for what it is worth and no more—conduces to the calm consideration of things affecting the welfare of society; and the power of engaging in controversy in such a way becomes of greater importance as questions of interest become more intricate and more dependent on the proper balancing of the forces of colliding facts and ideas. Such a style of discussion is only to be acquired by publicity and hence it appears that the Political Economy Club may hold an important place among our social agencies, and fulfil a function not unrequired in a land of which free discussion is not only the safeguard but the boast.

So far as we know, the new Club have, "greatly daring, dined." Their chief discussion at their first meeting was that of a good dinner. Surely no harm to the State could result from this. The head and front of Cassius's offending, when he was plotting against Cæsar, was, that "he had a lean and hungry look," but little treason lurks in full bellies.

I am a simple citizen, and I may not be so well informed as the *Toronto Globe*, but I was taught that Economy is derived from the Greek *oekonomia*, "household management," the notion of which is generally understood. It does not signify in the original language merely "saving," or "thrift," but the judicious management of a man's property, and if the *Globe* reads Xenophon it will find it so used. Political Economy, or Public Economy, should mean a management of a State analogous to the management of a private property. Adam Smith gave to his work the title of "The Wealth of Nations," a term which indicates the object of his investigations much better than the term Political Economy. The term Political Economy would have an exact meaning if we understood it to express that economy or management which the State as a State exercises or should exercise for the benefit of all. It would comprehend all the State should do for the general interest, and which individuals or associations of individuals cannot do as well, it would thus in a sense coincide with the term government. Being thus defined, it would exclude all things that a State as a State should not do; and thus the inquiry into the wealth of nations would mean an inquiry into all those conditions under which wealth is produced, distributed, accumulated, and consumed or used by the individuals who compose any given political community. But, though the subject of government is easily separated from the proper subject of Political Economy, everybody must perceive that there is some connection between the two; and this is the foundation of some of the false notions that have prevented Political Economy from attaining the form of an exact science. One easily perceives that a government can do much towards increasing or diminishing the revenue of the great body of the people; but one does not always see what a government should do or should not do in order that this revenue may be the greatest and most beneficially distributed.

The way in which the revenue of the great body of the people is distributed is an inquiry equal in importance to the mode in which it is produced; and the mode and proportion in which it is distributed re-act upon future production.

The question of Co-operation, which is of two distinct kinds; first, such co-operation as takes place when several persons help each other in the same employment; secondly, such co-operation as takes place when several persons help each other in different employments. They may be named Simple Co-operation and Complex Co-operation.

The questions of Capital and Labour, the Balance of Trade, Protection and Free Trade, Rent, Wages, the Methods of Observation and Reasoning in Politics, and although it is distasteful to the *Globe*, the question of "The Best Form of Government," which occupied the attention of the late Sir G. Corne-

wall Lewis, a scholarly statesman,—a thinker of rare genius, devotion and accuracy, and a politician of genuine honesty and true worth.

The influence of government, its functions, the general principles of taxation, the relative value of direct and indirect taxation, the question of the utility of public loans and the reduction of a national debt, and the extent to which governments are justified in interfering with industry, trade, and commerce, are matters which intimately affect the well-being of the State, and are of the highest importance to every individual. These questions are moral and social, and consequently involve the duties of man to man.

The study of Political Economy has an interest for every class, and concerns the artisan and the peasant as closely as the statesman and the philosopher. It is to be wished that the science was more extensively cultivated. In such a case many fallacies which are now-a-days very popular would vanish into thin air, and many errors which now impose upon the people would be swept away. The capitalist would more clearly understand his true position with respect to the labourer, and the labourer would better comprehend the rights and responsibilities of capital, if the principles of Political Economy were more generally known.

To tell any community that it is dangerous to discuss such subjects, and kindred questions arising out of them, is simply childish and ridiculous; and any Society, call it by what name you will, that will undertake this work of educating our people, and faithfully carry it out, deserves our highest praise, and should enlist our sympathy, rather than be hounded down by the empty abuse of party politicians.

I am not a member of the Club, but in the name of the right of free discussion I protest against the senseless clatter which has arisen. I am confident that any member expressing opinions savouring of disloyalty would soon find how distasteful to every right-thinking man in the community such opinions would be, but the fullest right to freely discuss any questions coming within the scope of Political Economy cannot be denied for a moment. A member of the club might claim for himself this right in the words of the old Roman—"Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto." "I am a man; and deem nothing that relates to man foreign to my feelings." *Rupert.*

MONTREAL SOCIETY.

It is amusing to hear the variety of opinions that prevail on this subject, for it is one on which our ideas must depend entirely upon the point of view from which we regard it; and it has as many phases as the moon, and some not so lovely. Yet no city can afford better material for delightful society. We have people of culture, people of class, and people of commerce, and if they would only mingle together more freely each might help and improve the other; but, alas! we are divided up into sets, each of which seems bound either to ridicule or pity the other. Our people of culture are comparatively poor, and reasonably proud. Many of them are also people of class. They, too, have had grandmothers, and cannot bear to be patronized by tradespeople, many of whom do not speak good English, much less know the meaning of culture, yet consider that their wealth alone renders them superior to any amount of culture and refinement. This stupid money-pride has led our cultivated people to form themselves into little sets of their own, and one may meet with really delightful society among them. But is it not a pity that they should be so exclusive? Variety is always charming, and a greater admixture with the moneyed people might be vastly beneficial to both parties. There is no other city of wealth where rising genius has so little opportunity of kindly patronage from its town-folks as in this city of Montreal. The Shoddyites seem determined to despise and ignore native talent of every form; and in no place can a prophet be said to be without honour in his own country more truly than in Montreal. Even the clever people who come to us from other lands soon find the cold shoulder turned to them once they settle down among us and attempt to make a living by the exercise of their talents. Indeed it is scarcely considered respectable, in this good city, that one should earn a living in any way except through trade. In the old country professional people are considered far above tradespeople, but here it is quite the reverse, and even our ministers are supposed to belong, soul and body, to the wealthy people of their congregations, and should any man be independent enough to rebel and have an opinion of his own, why then the rich man rises up in his wrath, takes up his hymn-book and walks off to some other church, where the minister has a better appreciation of the value of dollars and cents and is willing to bow down and worship the golden calf of business prosperity.

Not many years ago one might almost as well be a washerwoman as lady teacher in one of our public schools, so far as position in society went. But now-a-days our teachers have begun to assert themselves; they have formed little social circles where the Shoddys, if admitted at all, are obliged to feel themselves very much at a discount. In summer they unite to go upon educational tours, and this association with each other gives them a higher opinion of themselves and their truly noble profession; and now Mrs. Shoddy finds it no longer possible to snub those who impart to her children the refinement and