

Morality, Immorality and Pauperism in Montreal.

The annual meeting of the Citizens' League of Montreal was held on Monday, April 13. Bishop Bond was in the chair, and, after the reading of the report, he gave his opinion that there had been a marked improvement in social life in Montreal in the last five years. We searched the reports of the Executive Committee and of the meeting, and failed to find any confirmation of this opinion. Not a word or a figure of any value was put forward as evidence; and, indeed, the statements made seem to us to bear a contrary interpretation. First, in regard to the illegal sale of liquor, we are told that the enforcement of Sunday closing has led to the hotels finding means to evade the law, and more stringent regulations are demanded from the Revenue Police. Then a class of "clubs" is referred to, started specially to evade the Sunday law, and dire results are predicted unless they are stopped. Then it is shown by figures that in seven years the licenses for liquor-selling have been reduced from 1,082 to 870. This, of course, may mean very little. Gambling, it is claimed, has been almost stopped—open gambling, at all events; but "art" lotteries have increased badly, and should be stopped. Prize-fighting has been done away with, and disorderly housekeepers have been fined, some five, six and eight times, and one of the most notorious of them promised faithfully to reform, but it is feared she is at her old work again. Then comes a paragraph that we must quote in full:

"CRIPPLES AND DEFORMED PERSONS BEGGING ON THE STREETS.

"We have used our influence towards the suppression of this evil. Enquiry has brought forth evidence from the most reliable authorities of the possible danger to unborn children, that makes the display of a deformity on the street amount almost to a crime. A proposed by-law suppressing these people is now under the consideration of the City Council. It is to be hoped that popular opinion will support the aldermen having it in charge."

We are getting tired of what we may term the poppycock of some of these puritanical repressionists. Not a word of faith, hope, and love, and all of charity, appears in the whole report. "A proposed by-law suppressing these people" is all the sympathy the wretched cripples get from these reverend and pious folks. The "danger to unborn children" is a crankish excuse to "suppress" the poor deformed paupers, of whom the "Rev." Rabbi Veld said that "they should be got rid of. Allowing them to beg was simply allowing them to be lazy and to learn to be dishonest!" Get rid of them! Yes, that's Christian charity. "Take away their licenses!" said Mr. Leet, "and then they can't beg." Not a word as to what should be done with them. Why, the licenses should be a guarantee, if anything, that they are deserving of sympathy and help. Wouldn't the quickest way be the best—shoot them as soon as they become crippled? "Enforce the law in every case," said Bishop Bond. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and—I'll suppress you." Well, the affair is not a very gigantic one. It only fleeced the citizens to the extent of a little over a thousand dollars last year.

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