

which newspapers cannot descant too severely. Political capital is an American expression, but it has found a meaning of its own in Canada. It reveals exactly the *modus operandi* of our popular elections. There is a line of business, a speculation, in getting up parties and candidates. Politics have become a profession, a career in life, out of which a lot of middlemen, who govern elections, draw emolument of different kinds. So long as the people allow themselves to be cozened into advancing the behests of such men, there is no hope of seeing this political capital decline.

#### TENEMENT HOUSES.

The social problem is one which, in some phase or other, is always coming up before the public. At the present time, and in such rapidly growing cities as Montreal and Toronto, that feature of it which relates to habitations for the poor and lower classes, seems to call for particular attention. A few years ago Lord SHAFESBURY, in treating this subject before the British Social Science Association, truthfully stated that "the master evil which nullifies every effort for the benefit of the working people, which leaves us no rest, and on which let us take care that the public also has no rest, the evil that embraces and intensifies all the others, the evil that is negative in preventing every improvement and positive in maturing every mischief, that lies at the root of nineteenth-century corruption, that beset our social state—is the domiciliary condition of thousands of our people." This is strong language, but it does not exaggerate the evil of the tenement system. In whatever light we view it, we cannot sufficiently deprecate it.

In a *physical* point of view, it is extremely injurious to health. People living in tenements generally have bad food. They have no means of preventing food from being tainted, and they have not the ready money to buy fresh food at the daily market. Their supply of water, especially in the upper storeys, is scant both for drinking and washing. There is little or no ventilation. The cellars are often reeking and damp. The courtyards are filled with mire in winter and wet weather, and with dirt-heaps in summer. The dust bins are not regularly removed. There are parts or sides of these houses where the sunlight and heat never penetrate, where the poisonous carbonic acid gas is never burned off, where the pure oxygen never sweetens the atmosphere. Tenement houses are frequent hot-beds of fever. Consumption, especially among women and children, is prevalent there.

In a *moral* point of view, the system is injurious to virtue. Tenements are crowded with families—families of different religions, nations and habits. Curses, blasphemies and obscenities in conversation and song can be overheard through the board partitions. Each family, generally speaking, occupies only one room. Old and young, male and female, are thus in full view of each other, night and day. We need say no more.

Remedies have been devised against the evil, but so far with slender success. The Model Lodging House was planned in England, but experience proved that it could not be built in sufficient numbers, and that, besides, it benefited large capitalists without corresponding advantage to the poor. Suburban Villages and Penny Trains to reach them, were next proposed, neat hamlets for the poor on the city's skirts and passage to and fro for a penny fare. A beautiful, thoughtful project, but one which unhappily cannot be realized, especially in the case of men and women who have no fixed occupation and no regular hours of work. The late Emperor NAPOLEON turned his attention to this important subject. At the Paris Exposition of 1867, he inscribed his name as exhibitor in the 10th class, which comprised improvements of the moral and physical state of man. The Emperor had imagined the model of a house for working people, which combined low rent with every desira-

ble comfort, and the conditions required by public hygiene. By means of a small rental, part of which went to make up a sinking fund, the tenant became, in a few years, the proprietor of the house. The house itself had nothing of the tenement style. It was self-contained, and partially isolated, affording the comforts of a real home. The illustrious inventor believed that his arrangement was destined to be one of the surest means of inspiring the working class with habits of order, economy and cleanliness. In New York, where the tenement system is proportionately as ruinous as it is in European cities, the subject has been much agitated, with a view to radical reform. The merchant prince, Mr. STEWART, lately donated one million dollars towards constructing suitable lodgings for the poor, and we believe his idea was to keep clear of anything resembling tenements. Our own poor should not be overlooked. Of course, we have no crying abuse here yet, such as we have described from European observation, but our city is fast filling up, and we may come to it. The lodgings in our lanes and alleys are no credit to our philanthropy, and we have watched rows of buildings put up expressly for rent to the poor, which we fear are open to many of the objections levelled against European tenements.

#### NEGRO SUFFRAGE.

The question has been debated in England whether the electoral franchise be a right or a privilege. There can be no such discussion in the United States, for in a government which derives its powers "from the consent of the governed," no two opinions can exist about the suffrage being a right. This is a thoroughly, and we believe, a distinctive American principle. But it does not follow thence that there are no limitations to that right, and it is not inconsistent with true democracy as the example of Canada proves, to circumscribe the franchise so that the end of good government may be attained. In theory there are three such limitations for all citizens, native or naturalised—time, property and capacity. The Americans have adopted the first, requiring every citizen to have reached his majority before being entitled to vote. They have discarded the second, eliminating every objection to a voter on the ground of his being more or less blessed with this world's goods. The third has never been called in question until the Fourteenth amendment came up for debate, for it was universally allowed that the ordinary run of white citizens is endowed with sufficient knowledge and good sense to vote one way or the other. But Americans have found out, within the past seven years, and notably at the last elections, that this point can be seriously called into question. A million of black electors were thrust upon them in a lump. Had they, or had they not sufficient mental capacity to exercise the great civic right of voting? If they had, well and good. If they had not—and who will deny that they had and have not?—then their right to voting ought to have been postponed until they were educated for it. We think it consistent with the most latitudinarian democracy to maintain that no man has a right to vote who cannot do so understandingly. Of course, we do not object to color. An educated negro may have his vote. But swarms of darkies—hundreds of thousands of them—who not only cannot read and write, but who have scarcely more than natural instincts, ought not to have the balance of a nation's destinies in their hands. Whoever would be convinced of this truism need only look at the South Carolina of to-day. The Americans are a bold people, it is true, but they cannot have gone quite crazy with catch words and fancy principles. "Universal Suffrage" is a very pretty word no doubt, but the democratic fathers, Jefferson, Jackson and Van Buren, knew full well and have declared that it could not be applied even in free America. What makes matters worse is the fact that this Negro Suffrage was forced upon the country by Northern politicians, not through

any love for the colored people themselves but merely for partisan purposes. They care not a snap for the negro, as their treatment of him at the North abundantly proves. They give him a vote solely as a means to an end—to strengthen their power and perpetuate their domination. Transplant these Southern negroes to the North, and a different treatment will forthwith be manifest. This glorification and idolatry of the untutored African will then cease, if it does not change into that system of extermination which is now pursued against the Indians.

#### POVERTY IN LARGE CITIES

Now that the cold season is setting in, people's thoughts naturally turn to the poor. Their necessities are such, in a large city like ours, that all the resources of charity should be enlisted to supply a prompt and efficient remedy. It is true we have not, in Toronto or Montreal, as in European and in some of the American cities, organized Boards of Relief whose business it is to attend to the wants of the whole suffering population, without distinction of class or creed; but that makes no difference so long as the voluntary system, in vogue amongst us, is kept on the footing it has maintained in former years.

No one will deny that this has been a pretty hard year. The wealthy classes themselves are likely to feel the pinch. The middle classes will have a rougher struggle, and, of course it cannot be expected that the people of the lowest grade should not have their share of hardship. Those who are acquainted with the low places of our cities—Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Kingston, Quebec, St. John, Halifax—the tenement houses, the cabins in the narrow lanes, the extemporised shanties on the outskirts, can testify that the amount of actual misery is always very great, and that the prospective misery, during a severe winter, will tax the zeal and charity of the whole population. It will not do for the dwellers in our little Belgravias to repeat the complacent axiom that no person in Canada, who is willing to work, can lack the necessaries of life. For besides the fact that many who are willing to work, cannot find employment enough to sustain their families, it is painfully certain that thousands who have a full and fair day's work, are doomed, by a variety of outward circumstances, to spend all they earn, and suffer a host of privations besides. We must take into account the high prices of all kinds of provisions. We must make allowances, too, for accidents, for sickness, and for the increased expenses of the winter season, in clothing, light and fuel.

People would open their eyes if the full statistics of poverty and destitution in this city were published. We think a thorough registration of the kind ought to be made, as it would, doubtless, be the best means to arouse the sympathy and generosity of those who are able to give. Our orphans are usually well provided for. Appeals in their favor are generally attended to with abundant charity. But the sick, the aged and the infirm are generally not so well supplied. This is owing to the want of organized almsgiving. In every alley, in every lane, in many streets, sufferers of this description are to be found. Let them be discovered and relieved. Then there is the class of bashful poor, much more numerous than is usually imagined. The sympathy for them should be the livelier that there is not one of us, who by some sudden and unforeseen reverse of fortune, may not be reduced to precisely the same condition as these shrinking shame-faced poor.

It is not our business to urge the motives which should inspire charity. Every body knows them. But there is one consideration which may quicken our generosity. It is that poverty often leads to vice. To single out only one instance. Statistics are there to prove, that whereas a few females are led to sin by seduction and passion, the great majority are driven to vice by a mistaken horror of poverty. Here is

a work for the Ladies, and Montreal sorely needs their cooperation in this labor of redemption.

Considering the prevalence of typhoid fever in several parts of the country, and Montreal more especially, it may be interesting to refer to an important letter just published by Professor TYNDALL on the subject. He supports the theory that the disease is not spontaneously generated by the decomposition and putrefaction of animal and vegetable substances, but is propagated solely through the medium of matter "which has already been in contact" with a typhoid patient. He holds that ash-pits, putrescence, and stench fail to develop the fever, and that even the open privy is powerless so long as it is kept free from the discharges of those who are already attacked. The sanitary measures proposed by Dr. BUDD, in his treatise on this dreadful malady, are, first, flooding all the drains of the place with disinfectants, with a view to destroy, as far as possible, the poison already cast off; secondly, the reception of all discharges from the sick, immediately on their issue from the body, into vessels charged with disinfectants; thirdly, the instant immersion of all bed and body linen used by the sick into a disinfecting liquid before its removal from the ward; scrupulous ablution and disinfection of the hands of the nurses; and, lastly, the burning or disinfection of all beds occupied by the sick as soon as vacated by death, convalescence, or otherwise.

While we have always devoted much of our space to the all-important subject of immigration, there is another side of the picture which must not be lost sight of, however unpleasant it may be to refer to it. According to the New York papers, the number of foreigners who have returned to Europe from that port during the six months, extending from May to November, is as great as, or if not greater than the number of immigrants who have landed in New York during that period. All sorts of theories have been adduced to account for this exodus. With these we have nothing to do, but what concerns ourselves more particularly is the statement of a Quebec journal that, during the last season, four thousand immigrants sailed from the ancient capital on the way to their old homes. At first sight, the announcement is rather startling, chiefly in view of the strenuous efforts made by Federal and Provincial agents, but, upon enquiry, while not vouching for the correctness of the number, we have been informed that almost all, if not all, of those who sailed from Quebec were United States immigrants. This is some comfort. As a rule, Canadian immigrants are content in their new home, and seem disposed to take up their permanent abode therein.

We had occasion some time ago to discuss the question of the union of the Maritime Provinces. We stated that the project was mainly local in its essential features, and should be left to the decision of the interested Provinces themselves. The Halifax *Chronicle* had lately a non-committal article on the subject, in which, however, its leaning to it was perceptible enough. The *Daily Telegraph*, of St. John, in referring to that article, was careful to give expression to no adverse opinion. Since then the matter seems to have progressed somewhat. The Halifax *Reporter*, which, we are glad to see, is about to enlarge its sphere of action, publishes a "programme," one of the clauses of which is advocacy of a Maritime Union. The consolidation of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia into one Province, both for local administration and Federal representation, must, if freely and spontaneously carried out, result in a common gain to both. Faintly, however, and only just faintly, as we view it at present, the step might have some effect on our general system of federation. But there will be time enough to discuss that aspect of the case when the scheme is practically attempted by the Provinces themselves.