

purpose undoubtedly, if the other side had not oversized his pile." In England, we are pleased to notice, the election law seems able to cope with the evil. But it is only of late that this has been the case. Formerly, and especially during the last century, bribery pervaded the whole political system of England. Walpole's saying, that "every man has his price," was amply justified by his own experience; and the evil continued almost unabated down to the election before the last. In that campaign, \$7,500,000 were spent for election purposes, including, of course, the price of votes. But since then, 1883, the present rigorous election law was made. This limits the total amount which it is lawful to spend at an election. Thus a borough of 2,000 electors is allowed £350 for each candidate, while the maximum for a constituency of 66,000 electors is £3,000. This sum must cover all expenses—printing, postage, hiring rooms, clerks, teams, and everything necessary in a campaign. All disbursements are to be made by one person, either the candidate himself or his agent. An account, with vouchers, is kept of all payments made, and after the elections, this has to be sworn to before the proper officers. In the first elections held under the new Act, only one case was discovered in which the expenditure exceeded the prescribed limit; and in that case, though the expenditure was accidental, the successful candidate, Mr. Jesse Collins, was unseated.

It might be difficult to apply such an election law to our Canadian elections, because it would not be easy to arrange an equitable schedule of expenses for the different constituencies. But difficult legislative tasks must be undertaken, and our legislators could not be better employed during the coming session than in making a law to purify in some measure the political atmosphere. Corrupt practices at elections have a demoralizing effect upon the masses. In a certain section of London, at a recent election, many would not go to the polls because, as they indignantly protested, they "always had got a quart of ale for voting, and they wouldn't vote without it." Men who will sell their birthright, and throw into the wrong scale their influence upon the destiny of their country for a quart of ale or paltry sum of money, ought to be deprived of the franchise. Any legislation on this question should aim at disqualifying unworthy voters as well as unworthy candidates.

THE WINTER PORT AND THE BRIDGE AT QUEBEC.

The *Montreal Bulletin*, in a leading article, condemns Halifax as a winter port, pointing out that the blockade of freight at Richmond depot during this winter has been most disastrous to the merchants of Montreal, and averring it would be far better to have Portland, Boston, or New York their recognized winter port, rather than submit to the paralyzation of their trade in this outrageous manner. As a commercial paper, the *Bulletin* has always sustained the claims of Halifax to being the winter port of the Dominion, but we think our contemporary is somewhat hasty in its unqualified condemnation of Halifax as a port during the winter season. It frankly admits that the failure is the result of the lack of the rolling stock upon the I. C. Railway, and not due to the snow blockades on the road. For this deficiency in rolling stock, Halifax is in no way responsible, but those interested through the Chamber of Commerce should call the attention of the Government to the inadequate equipment of the railway, and take such other steps as would effectually prevent the annoying delays of freight, of which the Montreal merchants complain. The *Bulletin*, however has completely overlooked the fact that the Grand Trunk, even more than the I. C. Railway, is responsible for the tardiness of the delivery of freight shipped west from Halifax. In time, we may have the short line to Montreal to overcome this difficulty; but to our mind, all that is required to prevent further complaint of Halifax as a winter port, is a bridge at Quebec, which would at once place the G. T. and C. P. Railways in competition for the trade. The building of that bridge is manifestly of vital importance to the commercial interests of Halifax, but hitherto we have been content to allow Quebec to be the sole advocate of its construction, never having given her that support which the merits of the scheme deserve. We should like to hear Mr. Pickford, or some other well-known shipper, give the Chamber of Commerce his views on this question. It is, we think, one that deserves the consideration of that body, and one which, if considered in a broad light, and without reference to localism, could not fail to convince the members of the Chamber that the construction of the bridge is even more important than we have represented it to be.

WHITE SLAVERY.

Under the farming-out system, the class of people who take paupers to board, are mostly but one remove above pauperism themselves, except in cases where the paupers are taken as servants. The usual price paid for the board of an adult is about one dollar a week, children half-price. A very small margin, if any, is estimated for medical attendance, judging by the reports of medical men in such localities. Upon those items is based the calculation for the annual vote for the support of the helpless and uncomplaining poor.

But even the amount of the annual vote in many places is subject to a very considerable discount. A middle man, called an Indemnifier, engages to provide necessaries for all the paupers of a given district for a lump sum. For this office of Indemnification there is competition, so that a private auction of downward bids, with vigorous canvassing, is often the result,—thus, as also in the case of choosing boarding places from the lowest bidders, evading that clause in the Provincial Statute which forbids the public sale of paupers.

The Overseers of Poor are in this Province appointed by the Municipal Councils, on the nomination of the councillor for the district. Should this councillor afterwards desire it, he stands an excellent chance of being

chosen Indemnifier or middle man, by his grateful nominees, the Overseers of the Poor. An Indemnifier, under such favorable auspices, having calculated the probabilities, names the lump sum for which he will provide food, clothing, and medical attendance for the paupers of the district for the year. Cases are known in which an Indemnifier has admitted that he cleared for his own benefit a sum equal to one-sixth of the amount voted for the poor for the year. In the first place, he is chosen by his own nominees, and runs no risk of loss, as such a one's loss, if any, is made good on petition. Next, it was proved in the Digby investigation, that so far as medical attendance is concerned, the present system leaves the Indemnifier to use his own discretion as to the necessity of employing a physician for an ailing pauper. Want of space forbids our quoting from the Digby investigation some shocking instances of neglect in this respect on the part of the Indemnifier—a neglect followed by the death of the paupers under dreadful circumstances.

Cheapness being a matter of the first importance, the boarding places selected by the Overseers or the Indemnifier, are mostly in out-of-the-way places, or back settlements, removed from charitable observation and oversight. Here, the small sum allowed by the rate-payers for the support of the pauper, after yielding a bonus to the Indemnifiers, must afford a profit to the boarding-master; and in many cases what is too little for the sufficient maintenance of the district pauper is shared by the family of the pauper-host.

Sometimes, though not always, the Indemnifier is himself the boarding-master. Such was Joe Nick Tebo, who was hanged not long ago for murdering a pregnant female pauper in the forest. On the night of his arrest at his home in Digby County, some pauper children under his care were found by the constable and his posse at a very late hour asleep on mats on the kitchen floor.

Female paupers, many of them half-witted, being under no proper oversight, as in a Poor House, and having, as a rule, no religious teaching or privileges, are made the victims of the lecherous around them. Illegitimacy, to use a very mild term, is exceedingly common among them, and this, in some instances, with the connivance of those who have the care of them, as the Tebo case, and another instance attested to, as the Digby investigation clearly proved. Covetousness and secrecy are under this system the hand-maids of the tender mercies of the wicked, and with them the cries of the helpless are smothered.

"IN DIVERS TONES."

We have received from the publishers, Messrs. Dawson Brothers, Montreal, a neat little volume of poems, entitled "In Divers Tones," by Prof. Chas. G. D. Roberts, of King's College, Windsor. The title suggests the general make-up of the book, for it is most varied as to the subjects treated of, the structure of the verse, and the mode of treatment. The poet has availed himself of the great sources of inspiration—patriotism, love in its widest sense, and classical mythology. In his patriotic poetry, he proclaims himself above all things a Canadian. There can be little doubt about the meaning of these words, addressed to Canada:—

"How long the ignoble sloth, how long
The trust in greatness not thine own?
Surely the lion's brood is strong
To front the world alone!"

The longest, and perhaps the best, poem in the book is "Actæon." The legend of the punishment of Actæon is told with really dramatic force and vividness, the coloring is strongly Grecian, and the descriptions are well worthy of the theme. The bathing scene is especially inspiring to the poet, and elicits charming bits of description. Actæon's character is revealed to us in these words:—

"But this mount,
Cithæron, hoisted deep in soundless hills,
Its fountained vales, its nights of starry calm,
Its high chill dawns, its long-drawn golden days,—
Was dearest to him. Here he dreamed high dreams,
And felt within his sinews strength to strive
Where strife was sorest, and to overcome:
And in his heart the thought to do great deeds,
With power in all ways to accomplish them.
For had not he done well to men, and done
Well to the gods? Therefore he stood secure."

Among the other poems based upon Greek mythology there is a charming one named "Off Palorus," descriptive of the resistance of Ulysses and his companions to the seductive music of the Syrens.

When we mentioned love among the sources of the poet's inspiration, we referred not only to love of women, though that has its due share of attention, but to that love of the beautiful, of nature, of mankind, which warms every poet's heart. We regret that we have not space for more quotations, but we must insert the following lines from an exquisite poem called "In the Afternoon." These words are addressed to the afternoon breeze.

"Or hast thou any power to bear
Even a little of my care?
Ever so little of this weight
Of weariness can't thou abate?
Ah, poor, thy gift indeed, unless
Thou bring the old child-heartedness,—
And such a gift to bring is given,
Alas, to no wind under heaven!
Wind of the summer afternoon,
Be still: my heart is not in tune.
Sweet is thy voice: but yet, but yet—
Of all 'twere sweetest to forget!"

The sonnets and the humorous poetry must be read in their entirety, although from the former we might select some fine descriptive passages. Altogether the book is a work of real merit, contains much true poetry, and will be a welcome addition to our rather scanty Canadian literature.