

and others introduced the municipal customs of the mother country, and which they long regarded as the chief bulwark of their liberties. We consider the leading fault of the system to be, that under it the same person exercises legislative and executive functions, and which should always be kept asunder. This is the leaven which leaveneth the whole lump. In England they have abated the evil by depriving corporations of many of their ancient powers and prerogatives, while leaving them others which they could beneficially or harmlessly wield. The police was taken out of their hands, for instance; and in the great towns, such as London and Liverpool, many important public duties which formerly appertained to the civic fathers, are now performed by commissioners and trustees, independent of, and apart from, the Council. It is this direction that the reform of our town municipalities ought to take; or the cure, we fear, will be worse than the disease.

It is not in Quebec alone, that municipal government has been found wanting. Almost every town and city in the Province has suffered from it. All are indebted, and several are unable to meet their engagements. Here, in Montreal, our finances are in a somewhat flourishing condition, at present; yet, for a quarter of a century, we have been afflicted with mismanagement, or worse, in every shape and form. The misdeeds of their civic rulers are an endless subject of complaint among our republican neighbours; and the city government of New York has long been a by-word for extravagance and corruption. We repeat, then, that the reform of this great modern nuisance must be thorough and complete.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY.

The man who declared that if he could make a nation's songs, he cared not who made its laws, was wise in his generation. It is no less true, that the wants, wishes and purposes of a community are generally indicated by the opinions uttered in every private circle, or at every street corner; and that more faithfully, too, than they are to be traced in the columns of party newspapers, or the declamation of party speeches. Instead, therefore, of imparting to our readers our own speculations concerning affairs public and political, we prefer to repeat to them what "all the world" think and say about a few of the matters which command general attention at this moment.

The late ministerial mission to England is spoken of with anything but satisfaction by the opponents of the men now in office. It is asked what it is that our ambassadors have effected? Feasted sumptuously with princes, nobles, ministers of state, and wealthy corporations, certainly; but what more? Nothing but obtained the permission and assistance of the British Government to burthen the people of Canada with an immense debt for the erection of fortifications, and to enable us to buy out the Hudson's Bay Company. Without calling in question the wisdom of fortifying the country against the Americans, and of purchasing the vast tract lying between Canada and the Rocky Mountains or the Pacific, can we afford, it is asked, to do either just now, when we cannot meet the liabilities which we have already incurred? Fortifications are excellent things no doubt; but they are not a profitable investment in a pecuniary point of view: and

the Hudson's Bay Territory will not make very large returns to the treasury for many a long year to come. With a heavy deficit in the Provincial Exchequer, it is difficult to discover how we are to pay interest on some millions more of borrowed money, though such money could be procured at four instead of six per cent., or even less, were that possible. Sinking capital in unproductive works or speculations, is not, one would think, a wise step on the part of this Province, in the existing state of our finances, except under the pressure of an undoubted and immediate necessity. Is there such immediate necessity? Ministers, Imperial and Provincial, say yes; and surely that is high authority. But the Canadian Ministers say more than this. They insist that their mission to England has been highly successful, or, at least, as successful as they expected, or had a right to expect. They have done much to secure the early union of the British North American Provinces into a Confederation which must eventually become one of the great nations of the world; they have ascertained that Canada can be made safe from foreign conquest, and they have received the pledge of the English Government to maintain the existing connection, with the whole means and power of the empire; they have been promised Imperial aid for the erection of the Intercolonial Railway, the improvement of our canals, for arming and defending the Province, and for the extension of our territory; they have turned the tide of public opinion in England, and called forth expressions of sympathy and kindness for these Provinces from the leading men in both Houses of Parliament, from public bodies and private individuals throughout the land; as one of the great results of their labours, the Queen has addressed Parliament in terms of affectionate concern for the welfare of Her North American subjects, as well as of acknowledgment of their loyalty to her person, and attachment to the mother country; lastly, they have learnt the exact position of our relations with the parent state, and consequently the best mode of strengthening that position in the present, and maintaining it in the future. Such are some of the benefits claimed to be derived from this mission.

As to the great subject of the Reciprocity Treaty—the popular mind being relieved from the mist caused by *ad captandum* arguments and arrays of figures and facts which may mean anything or nothing, the case resolves itself into a few plain propositions. 1st. The American farmer and producer pays heavy taxes to meet the interest on the great debt created by the late war, and for the other expenses of his Government; the Canadian farmer and producer pays comparatively light taxes to his own, and none at all to the American Government. 2nd. Under these circumstances, will the American farmer and producer consent to the free entry of Canadian products to undersell him in his own market? 3rd. Is the free use of our great fishing grounds; the free passage of American timber, &c., down the St. John river; the free navigation of the St. Lawrence river and Canadian canals; the free entrance of certain American products into our markets and those of the other North American Provinces,—are these a sufficient equivalent for the advantages we wish to gain from the renewal of the Treaty? They are questions more easily asked than answered.

There is one thing, however, on which all men agree, namely, that the business of legislation

has not, for a long time, been conducted in Canada in a manner creditable to those engaged in it or profitable to the country. While the Parliament, which lately expired in England, is praised by the whole nation for the numerous and important measures it has passed for the general welfare of the empire, our legislators, for about the same period, have left a record behind them of which neither we nor they have reason to be proud. Session after session, they have assembled to quarrel, talk much, and do little or nothing else. The house now sitting is not at all likely to differ from its immediate predecessors in that respect, for the legislative programme consists chiefly of loose promises of what mighty things shall be done when Parliament meets again. This is a real and crying grievance, the cure of which is in the hands of the electors who should apply the proper remedy at the earliest opportunity.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

SCIENCE, LITERATURE AND ART.

August, 12th, 1865.

At this season of the year there is, as usual, great dulness in the world of science, literature and art. All who can afford it, and very many who can not, are holiday making. The watering places of England and the show places of Europe generally are crowded with visitors during these hot summer months. The novel writer is either abroad searching for "incidents in real life," wherewith to embellish his pages, or, closely shut up in his apartments, is labouring to be in readiness for the fast approaching time when the reflux of fair ones to town will once more tax the powers of ever circulating Mudie and Booth. The artist is in Italy studying the masterpieces of ancient art. The philosopher, the dealer in wondrous discoveries concerning things material and immaterial in this universe of ours, is awaiting the coming together of the learned societies, ere he opens his budget and pours forth his treasures. The seed is being sown, the harvest has yet to be gathered. The less now, the more in a not distant hereafter.

PALESTINE AND THE DEAD SEA.

Among the few books which have lately been issued, the most noticeable, certainly the one which has received the most notice at the hands of the at present almost occupationless critics, is a work on Palestine, by Mr. H. B. Tristram. The author combines in his person the printer and the philosopher, though the latter quality predominates over the former. He throws considerable light on the natural history of the land, and some of its physical characteristics. His narrative of adventure is amusing enough. Birds and beasts fell plentifully before his remorseless arm; but in reading his accounts we cannot help feeling that the mere pleasure of the hunt was greater to him than the study of the victim after he had been secured. He holds amongst other things, wherein he differs from various travellers, that the Dead Sea has been sadly maligned. This wonderful lake, believed by the people of the land to cover the wicked cities of the plain, which emits unpleasant odours, and upon whose shores it has hitherto been thought no breathing thing can long live, will yet, if justice be done it, become a favourite place of resort for seekers after health. Its waters, albeit eschewed by fish, and destructive of vegetation, Mr. Tristram believes to be highly medicinal, while the wind which has travelled over its surface is health-giving as the zephyrs of the Blessed Isles. But a more valuable, though not to the general reader so interesting a work as the one named, is promised shortly. It is the result of the labours of a commission of scientific men. The details have not yet transpired, but it is said that the vexed questions concerning the level of the Dead Sea is at least settled and placed at 1280 feet below the waters of the Mediterranean. For the purposes of further exploration a Society was recently