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CURRENT TOPICS.

The agitation being carried on in Germany by Ahlwardt, the Jew-baiter, affords a singular instance of how much mischief may be caused by one ignorant, coarse, and not very clever individual, if he is only sufficiently bigoted, or sufficiently unscrupulous in the search for notoriety. The influence of this man seems to be not only deteriorating to the whole nation by its influence on the masses, but even to be lowering the dignity of the Reichstag itself, by stirring up the worst passions among its members. It is, perhaps, difficult or impossible, at this distance, to place the man and his crusade in the proper perspective, but one can hardly follow the course of events from day to day, even in the meagre reports which reach us, without perpetually wondering how it is that such a man can create such a situation in such a nation. The national or rather the popular preju-

dices must be very deep-seated and very far beyond the reach of reason or logic, or his evident shallowness and lack of all the higher qualities of patriotism would long since have destroyed him, so far as his power to affect the movement of the national life is concerned. It seems impossible that his career can last much longer in view of the exhibitions which he is constantly making of his own unreasonableness and incapacity. But the whole case is a curious one and it would be very unsafe to make predictions as to the outcome.

It must be particularly gratifying, not only to the personal friends of Mr. Dalton McCarthy, but to all who like to believe that there still remain in Canadian public life a goodly number of men who have not bowed the knee to mammon, as represented in the advantages, direct or incidental, with which it is always in the power of a Government to enhance the loyalty of such of its supporters as are responsive to that kind of influence, that that gentleman was able to declare from the platform in Orangeville that his hands are absolutely clean, and to deny emphatically and in detail the statements of the President of the Council touching his alleged obligations to Government favour and patronage. Mr. McCarthy's declaration that he has never received from the Government one dollar, directly or indirectly, is unambiguous and complete. As we commented on the strong insinuations to the contrary which appeared in one or more of the papers supporting the Government, we gladly put on record this satisfactory reply. Mr. McCarthy's description of the National Policy as an act of self-denial by which the people voluntarily refrained for a time from purchasing their goods in the cheapest market, would be more accurate had the self-denying ordinance been enforced only upon the willing citizens. His contention that the experiment has now been tried long enough will commend itself to multitudes all over the country, as it did to the large audience at Orangeville, whether they regard his proposal to make a special exception in favour of the Mother Country by giving her free-trade in return for free-trade is or is not deemed feasible.

The records of municipal elections in Kansas, in which women have had the right to vote in four successive biennial elections, do not give much support to the opinion that women, especially those of a better class, would not use the franchise if they had it. The number of women voters has

steadily increased from one election to another, until at the last election of mayor in Topeka, said to be a typical city, out of 4000 registered women voters, 3163, or 79 per cent. of the whole, cast their votes. Another noteworthy fact in connection with this city is that the women have shown such independence that their vote has been the confusion and despair of the party and machine politicians. In Topeka, where the Republican majority had usually been reckoned at 2000, the women two years ago caused a Democratic mayor to be elected by a plurality of nearly 200. But that this result was not due to their Democratic proclivities is proved by the fact that this year, when it was supposed that the Democrats would easily triumph on the Populist ticket, the women gave three-fourths of their votes to the Republican candidate, electing him by a good majority. The only female candidate running was a candidate for the position of school commissioner, but, instead of voting for the only representative of their sex, the women cast their votes for her masculine opponent, because, as the source of our information says, they thought him the "better fitted for the place." Should it prove to be the fact, as implied in this statement of results, that the mayor elected in each case was a better man for the position than his opponent, the history of Topeka and of Kansas will afford a strong argument in favour of women's receiving the franchise elsewhere.

A movement is just now being made or advocated in Toronto which can scarcely fail to enlist the sympathy and aid of benevolent citizens. We refer to the proposal to found a home for aged and distressed gentlewomen. "There is," says a writer in a recent number of the Empire, "no class whose helplessness is more pathetic and whose sufferings are more embittered than ladies who have seen better days, but who, through misfortune or bereavement, or the wrong-doing of others, have been reduced to a straitness of circumstances with which they are utterly unfitted to contend." In the days when such ladies were young, it was not customary or thought desirable that young ladies whose parents were in comfortable or opulent circumstances should be educated with a view to self-support in case of need. Their accomplishments were seldom such as could be turned to practical use, especially now that times have changed and the requirements of almost every position have changed with them. We are unable to give details with reference to the