

escape for the pent-up mortification caused by the humiliating Franco-German war. The belief that France was getting into a promiscuously bellicose state of mind was strengthened by the hostile utterances of the French press, and by the coquetting of France with Russia about the Eastern embroglio. At the same time the hand-shaking of the three Emperors was suspended, and it seemed as if Russia were about to give up the friendship of Germany for that of France.

But the aspect of the heavens has changed. Russia shows a disposition to go back to her old love; and has only flitted with France to gain an end. The new Pan Slavonic organ, *Grajdanin*, gives the following not very flattering estimate of France and Frenchmen.—“Away with a nation that does not believe in the Almighty, a nation incapable of defending itself, and which surrenders itself to an enemy in hundreds of thousands.” * * * The Frenchmen of the present day are a depraved body, destined by fate to exhibit the spectacle of degenerated patriots. The present Frenchmen is composed of nothing but words—everything is words; and, in fact, there are wanting in his practiced qualities, a superabundance of which is found in his words—manliness, bravery, patriotism, solidity, and sincerity.” Whether or not we can subscribe to the whole of this character-sketch, whether or not parts of it remind us of the proverbial pot reproaching the kettle with blackness, at least one thing is pretty clear—the spirit it breathes is not a friendly one. Thus with France isolated, and with the old harmless good-understanding between Russia and Germany, the peace of Europe may be looked upon as safe for some time to come.

SCIENTISTS AND THEIR THEORIES.

It is, perhaps, well for the peace of mind of many human beings that their circumstances do not admit of their closely investigating the scientific theories of the age; or of their reading the articles upon scientific subjects which have been contributed by savants of the nineteenth century. Not long since in perusing a report of the late meeting of the British Association, we were particularly struck with the hard matter of fact way in which the questions were discussed, as well as with the positive manner in which the scientists undertook to prove that the human race was fast going to the dogs. One writer declared that man was fast reverting to an earlier and lowlier ethnic form, and, as a proof of this fact, he called attention to the growing popularity of trousers among men, and to the divided skirt among women. In India, he claimed that the missionaries appear to be as much pleased when the natives donned the latter garment, as when they became converted and were baptized. Another savant of high standing stated that the increase of consumption was due not to hereditary causes, but to the low physical conditions of mankind. One speaker declared that we ate a much greater amount of food than did our forefathers, while another asserted that owing to the prevalence of dyspeptic and other kindred complaints, we could not now digest as much food as our ancestors. In speaking upon economic matters one gentleman remarked, that while the material wealth of the world is greater than ever before, the general uneasiness that exists in commercial circles prevented mankind reaping the full benefit therefrom. We might go on and give the gist of several other papers read before the Association, all of which were tinged with the same despondent feeling, and show that scientific investigations have not a tendency to make the intellect more hopeful, or the spirits more buoyant.

The human race may be deteriorating; consumption may be on the increase, and the economic malaise universal, but does any man whose brain is not excited by overstudy, and who enjoys good health, believe for a moment that the human race is not advancing mentally, morally, physically and materially? Science itself proves that we are now in a position to take an intellectual grasp of many subjects of which our predecessors were profoundly ignorant. Who that has dipped into the history of bygone ages can question the moral superiority of the men of to-day over their blood-thirsty progenitors? If there are in this nineteenth century many persons whose physical condition is far from perfect, it proves nothing but that the conditions of life aided by medical skill have enabled them to live and enjoy their existence, whereas a few centuries since persons similarly conditioned would have probably sunk into an early grave. No one whose memory extends back over a quarter of a century can doubt that materially our advancement is phenomenal. Our parents' luxuries we now regard as necessities; and with each decade we find, as our wants become more numerous, the means of supplying them are improving. The man who believes that the world is going to the dogs, will have to shut his eyes to the visible evidences to the contrary which surround him on every hand; even the members of the British Association, while they take occasion to air their pet theories, would scarce dare to assert that the wheels of civilization were rolling backwards, and that, in the course of centuries, the human family would return to its primitive state, and live upon the spontaneous products of mother earth.

CORRUPT PRACTICES AT ELECTIONS.

We have frequently been surprised at the comparatively low moral tone of public opinion with respect to bribery at elections. This or that representative, may be unseated for bribery, but, saving in the columns of the newspapers opposing the candidature of any such men, we never hear or read of any protest against trafficking in franchises. We are, of course, aware that the party of purity is a myth, and that few strong party men have any hesitation in buying up votes as if they were goods and chattels. We are also aware that hundreds of persons who would shrink from committing a dishonorable act, or to whom the idea of interfering with

freedom of religious thought would be regarded as detestable, have never yet come to look upon the purchase of a man's vote as in any way a reprehensible act, or one that would imply political immorality. Any one who has had much to do in political campaigns knows that what we have said is true, and yet, beneath all this apparent corruption, there is a strong sentiment of justice and fair play which will eventually force its way to the surface and aid in purifying the methods by which men are chosen to be the parliamentary representatives of the people. Meantime, it is the duty of every man who wishes to preserve his honor unsullied, and his character free from the leprosy of conscious wrongdoing, to strive by all the means in his power to prevent the offering of bribes to those among the electors whose poverty often, alas, makes them susceptible to such corrupt practices. It is the briber rather than the bribed that is to be condemned, for it is he who, by the use of money or by undue influence, throttles the free expression of public opinion, purchasing for a mess of postage the birth-right of a brother citizen. It may be claimed that there are many electors who have no definite opinion as to the merits or demerits of either political party, and who have no particular preference for either of the party candidates, but in answer, we would say that this is due to the false tone of public sentiment with respect to bribes, of which the greedy or needy classes of voters take advantage, and that were there no such thing as the purchasing of votes, such electors, instead of marketing their citizenship, would study more closely the public questions of the day, and deposit their ballot according to their own convictions.

Within the next few weeks we are to have in this Province four or five political contests, in all of which party feeling will probably run high; but as four of these have been made necessary owing to bribery by agents of the former candidates, it is to be hoped that the lesson of these contested elections will have a wholesome influence upon the constituencies, and result in an abstention from those corrupt practices which have too frequently thwarted the will of the people and called in question the wisdom of popular representation in the government.

THE N. W. MOUNTED POLICE FORCE.

We received some communications about three months ago from the N. W., which induced us to notice what seemed to be current opinions among those qualified to know, as to the state of the Force. There was evidently dissatisfaction, more or less widely spread, and it was especially asserted that the Force was recruited from unfit material, and that the rate of desertion was higher than that of the army.

We regret to find that the dissatisfaction still exists, and is the subject of frequent discussion by the press of the Territories. It is not likely that there is so much smoke without some fire, and if the system under which the force is being worked by its chiefs is vexatious and faulty, the more public attention is drawn to it the better.

Private advices, which we occasionally receive from persons competent to judge, agree with more than one respectable newspaper in the territories in allusions to a tone of discipline calculated to encourage a rash use of fire-arms in effecting arrests, and to an excess of militarism. It is said that mere smartness of appearance on parade in the person of a recruit of a few days standing, outweighs appreciation of the superior qualities of prompt readiness for service, and the coolness and self-reliance which are absolute requisites in dealing with law-breakers—white or Indian.

Comparisons are drawn between the alleged recent muster of every man along a considerable section of railway to arrest a single Indian, who was not after all arrested, and the capture by Major Walsh, out of Sitting Bull's camp, of all the Indians he saw fit to secure with about eight men only of his force. Allusion is also made to the rapidity (a little exaggerated) with which Major Walsh's troops were accustomed to respond to the call of "Boot and Saddle," a rapidity which, it is implied, cannot be attained under a system of excessive drill, burnishing and pipe-claying. Now, the methods of Major Walsh, probably the smartest officer the force ever had, were not without some points of particularity which were not always agreeable to his men, and he was by no means altogether indifferent to drill, having been himself a particularly capable adjutant. Still, we fear, from what we gather, that drill and pipe-clay are being carried on to an extent detrimental to real efficiency, and provocative of discontent and doubts of the competency of superiors.

If such errors of judgment are prominent, they can lie only with the actual chief, the commissioner. The Comptroller, Mr. Frederic White, is a gentleman of excellent judgement, but it would not occur to him to interfere in the details of executive command, unless indiscretions were specially brought to his notice.

The Assist.-Commissioner is a gentleman who has had more experience in continued active service than any officer in the Canadian Forces, his employment having been without intermission from 1870, when he was appointed a captain in the Red River Expedition of that year. He has been eleven years in the police, entering as a Superintendent (then Inspector), and he has, we believe, always been popular.

Superintendents McIlree, Neil and Greisback, and Inspector Norman, have been in the force from its inception in 1873, and Superintendent Cotton's service has been continuous in the N. W. for 13 or 14 years. He is also in every respect a good officer. The former Commissioners, Col. French, Col. MacLeod, and Col. Irvine, were all men peculiarly fitted by natural ability, as well as by N. W. and military experience, for their important post; but, beyond the fact that Mr. Lawrence Herchmer was, we believe, at one time a Lieutenant in the army, we are unaware what were either his fitness for, or his claims to, the supreme position.

We shall take some pains to arrive at the root of this matter.