

franchise through Parliament by street demonstration and menace, to revise the Constitution, bring its several parts into harmony, and place the whole on a sound basis. But this apparently is beyond the range of his statesmanship, or that of any other man now upon the scene.

EVERY day brings forth some proof of the conviction which is spreading among independent and thoughtful Canadians that while our social and industrial system in general is sound enough, our political system is not so sound. In *Election by Lot the Only Remedy for Political Corruption*, the conviction takes the form of a pasquinade. The writer begins, however, by dilating in a serious strain and in trenchant phrase on the evils of political trichiniasis, as he happily calls the domination through the political frame of faction and its wirepullers. He might add that the trichiniasis which has its original seat in politics, and is at first confined to that region, has a terrible tendency to spread over other departments of life, some of which are directly exposed to the influence of the politician, while in all national character is sure to be affected by the moral standard of those who hold the highest place. He is right in saying that a distinction cannot with impunity be made between public and private morality; that the growing dependence of the people on their corrupt rulers is one of the worst signs of the times; that with the spirit of self-reliance free institutions are apt to disappear; and that Canada would not be the first country which had abused the boon of liberty and lost it. His special fear is of the wirepullers and the classes which the wirepuller controls, the populace of cities and the "Celts." The remedy which he satirically proposes is election by lot, to which Greek republics resorted, not, however, as he thinks, for the purpose of defeating the wirepuller, but to ensure an equal share of power to all; for, having little notion of different capacities, they fancied all free citizens to be pretty equally qualified for office. There is a more rational and effectual way of putting an end to party rule and to the domination of the wirepuller with it; there is a better cure for political trichiniasis, if only we were at liberty to apply it. But we are in the wirepuller's grasp, and it is too probable that something like a convulsion will be needed to set us free. The writer of the pasquinade rather lets the cat out of the bag and mars the effect of his own satire at last by a flattering appeal to Sir John Macdonald. Whatever Sir John may have achieved, it is certainly not to him that prayer can be hopefully addressed for political reform.

MR. SANDFORD FLEMING'S "From Old to New Westminster" has been roughly handled by some of his critics, whose severity is not surprising if they failed to get beyond the first portion of the book. Mr. Fleming's aim seems to have been to illustrate the gratifying geographical relations which exist between the different portions of the British Empire and the happy facilities of communication by which each portion is united to the rest. This he does by calling attention to a moving body, of a loyal and optimistic character, which traverses the space between Westminster in England and Westminster on the Pacific along lines coloured red in the map prefixed to the volume. It may be doubted whether the desired impression will be produced upon the minds of all readers, and whether some will not rather be led to infer that a deadlift effort is required to establish any connection between Piccadilly and Burrard's Inlet. But at all events the early part of the book, which is taken up with minute histories of two passages across the Atlantic in a Cunard steamer, can only be regarded as a sacrifice to the political object. Mr. Fleming must be aware that detailed information about state-rooms, steward's fees, extra payments for wine and beer, the large consumption of coal by the steamer, the dinners, the seasickness, the habits of the passengers, and the saloon provided for ladies "when suffering from nausea or depression," might have been interesting forty years ago, but are now only too familiar. The copious narrative of his personal difficulties and disappointments about cable messages is no doubt intended in like manner to produce in his readers a vivid consciousness of the existence of ocean telegraphy. A critic who laid down the book in weariness at this point might be pardoned for pronouncing that, saving its eupeptic geniality, it had little claim on the attention of the public. But one whose patience holds out to the Kicking Horse Pass will there find Mr. Sandford Fleming on his own ground, and will be rewarded for his perseverance both by the interest of the matter and by the freshness of the style. Unluckily the merit is confined to the descriptions. Mr. Fleming is too deeply committed, and he overflows too much with optimism, to admit of his giving us a severely critical judgment on the prospects of the great national enterprise. Of the capacities of the prairie country he speaks in emphatic terms; nobody, however, now doubts the immense productiveness of that region, while we

seem to have positive assurance that a sufficiency of fuel has been found, in which case the prosperity of the North-West is established. But is a reader right in thinking that in British Columbia, to annex which we are piercing these mountains, the chief thing which we shall gain, in Mr. Fleming's judgment, is a military and naval station for the purpose of waging war against Russia on the Pacific in defence of Canadian interests in Afghanistan? Why cannot someone as competent as Mr. Sandford Fleming tell us the plain, unvarnished truth? Unless we are mistaken as to the facts, such a statement would be worth all the "brass bands" as an advertisement for the North-West.

THE clerical victory in the Belgium elections with which Europe has been ringing, and which was taken to indicate a marvellous revolution of opinion, turns out to have been morally less significant, though numerically even greater, than was supposed. Other issues, especially one concerning taxation, were mixed with that of religious education. It appears, moreover, that some who are generally Liberals voted on this occasion with the clergy. That they might do so without being guilty of apostasy from Liberal principles is not difficult to believe; for the enemies of religion in their attempts to cast it out of human life are only one degree less intolerant and persecuting than its false priests. No one but an eye-witness can form a conception of the fury with which atheist propagandism is carried on in France. The anticlerical bookstores are full of literature which, beyond question, would have disgusted Rousseau and have offended the taste, at all events, of Voltaire. Comic lives of Christ and almanacs reeking with blasphemy are systematically employed to kill whatever of belief, or even of reverence, may linger in the breasts of the people. No doubt this crusade of impiety extends to Belgium; and it naturally provokes a recoil even among those who are inclined neither to bend their minds to the priest's creed nor to bow their necks to the priest's yoke. Genuine Liberals may well ask themselves whether true liberty is likely to survive religion, for hitherto it has certainly appeared that the political tendencies of atheists, however revolutionary, were arbitrary and despotic. Nothing is more arbitrary or despotic than Jacobinism. On the other hand it must be remembered in the first place that Roman Catholicism, by the dogmas proclaimed in the Encyclical, has rendered the conflict between itself and modern civilization internecine, whereas Protestantism, closing no road of progress, affords no excuse for revolutionary violence; and, in the second place, that the persecuting priest was the precursor and tutor of the persecuting Jacobin. The victim was changed, but the stake had its lineal successor in the guillotine.

THE enormous price demanded by the Duke of Marlborough for two pictures in his ancestral collection, shows how vast must be the amount of wealth accumulated in England. Some years ago \$50,000 was actually given for a pair of china vases. Of the two gems, on which so fabulous a price is set by their owner, the Raphael, high as it ranks in the estimate of connoisseurs, is not to the uninitiated a profoundly interesting picture, even if they can bring themselves to forget, in their admiration of incomparable grace, the hollowness of all the religious art of the Renaissance; while the Vandyck, however splendid and famous as a picture, is not a true portrait, but idealized, the true portrait of Charles being that by Dobson, which plainly reveals the fatal weakness of the character as well as the likeness to James I. The Raphael may go to America if it will: to permit the Vandyck to leave England would be deemed an abandonment of national honour, and of this feeling the vendor will no doubt make his harvest. *Noblesse oblige*. What plebeian, even when pinched by want, would sell his family Bible, as this patrician of patricians, though he can scarcely be said to be pinched by want, sells the historic heirlooms of his house? If Napoleon was a Jupiter Scapin, Marlborough may be said to have been a Jupiter Turpin, and it is the lower element of his character that has been transmitted to his descendants, while the Jupiter died with himself. The late Duke was a wealthy and religious, though unpopular man, but he neither inherited his virtue nor bequeathed it. It is rather remarkable that the principle upon which the ablest and most august of scoundrels acted—success, letting honour take care of itself—has just been formally avowed in point by a rising politician of Marlborough's family. Into Stowe, Clumber and Blenheim has entered not only misfortune, but disgrace. Yet the fault is not in the men—it is in the system. Titled idleness and entailed wealth are as sure to generate the sybarite and the spendthrift, as spores are to generate cholera. The baron of the Middle Ages had to exert himself: he was a soldier and a local ruler in rough times; but his nominal representative has no salt to save his indolence and luxury from corruption.

A BYSTANDER.