

turn the votes of some village or township against him, so he may share the fate of his predecessor. Here is another, but this religious sect, or that semi-religious association, can be conciliated only by naming one of its members, and, as it holds the balance of power, he is out of the question. And so on, until, at last, as in the United States' Presidential elections, it frequently happens that a candidate is selected chiefly because, being a Nobody, no sins of commission can be brought forward against him. At last, however, a candidate is chosen, and now comes the tug of war. Two candidates are opposed to one another, and they and their supporters struggle, not as fellow-countrymen equally interested in promoting the good of the commonwealth, but as ancient foes, whose only object is to crush their opponents at any cost. Nothing is sacred to the ruthless hand of party spite. The sanctity of the domestic hearth is often violated. Old transactions, which have lain buried for years, are dragged to light, again to sink back into obscurity the day after the close of the polls. If a candidate has been previously in the Legislature, his words and votes are misrepresented in a manner calculated to make the unfortunate man howl with rage, even if to this misrepresentation there were not added the further sting arising from the fact that his foes strive to penetrate into secrets known only to the man and his Maker, by pretending to explain the *motives* by which his conduct was influenced—which motives, we may feel pretty sure, are not admitted to have been unselfish. And now, at last, polling-day has arrived! Votes *must* be won; and men work to win them by ways and means which, if proposed to them in their calm moments, would elicit the indignant reply: 'Is thy servant a *dog* that he should do this thing?' Patronage, money, liquor, and intimidation are called into play as influences, while the three former seem, in very many cases, to be eagerly welcomed, if not demanded, by electors. And now comes the climax. At the declaration of the poll, the majority in each constituency has all the representation; the minority has none, even though the difference between them should be only a single vote. Hence, it often happens that elections are virtually decided by the votes of a dozen rowdies purchased at two dollars each.

Such a system of election cannot fail to demoralize the electors and to deform the House. The scene which I have described cannot fail to be most mischievous to the electorate, for a near acquaintance with vice always tends to render the mere spectator increasingly charitable to it, which is the first step towards its adoption. In this instance, all are spectators, and, where the franchise is so widely extended as it is in Canada, nearly all men are participants. Few, then, can escape infection of the disease. Besides which, the actualities of an election tend to blind men to its true ideal. In any event, it is a most serious exercise of power, which cannot fail to influence the welfare of the existing generation, and the effects of which may be felt by unborn millions. To render its influence beneficial, the action of the electors must be kept subordinate to the dictates of patriotism, intellect, knowledge, and uprightness; but it must, I fear, be admitted that the man who takes his stand on the possession and exercise of these qualifications is not one most likely to come to the front of his fellow-electors in a contest; that what is wanted is rather one who is ready to go anywhere and do anything for the party. Passionate and unreasoning ardour prevail everywhere. The consequence is that the electors are led to regard the whole scene as a mere struggle for power, in which victory belongs of right to the strongest, and to look upon their votes, not as trusts to be used for the promotion of the good of the commonwealth, but as private properties of which they are entitled to dispose according to their own sovereign will and pleasure—forgetting that their action will affect, not themselves alone, but will be powerful for good or evil on their fellow-countrymen in the present day, and on their children in future times; and that, for acting aright towards these they are responsible to their God! As like produces like, it follows that these influences on the electorate react on the Legislature. The first requisite of any candidate is, that he shall be a popular man. To be this, he must be prepared to swallow all the popular shibboleths of the day; and a disposition to do so is usually developed in an inverse ratio to the power of independent thought. A man who 'has a mind of his own, and is not afraid to speak it,' is always least in favour. Then,