

BANKING MORALITY.

In an article entitled "The Crimes of Respectability," in a recent issue of the SPECTATOR, the respect-compelling forces were placed in this order:—

1. Wealth;
2. Social or Political Position;
3. Personal Ability; and
4. Rectitude of Conduct;

and as an illustration of the correctness of this order of classification, allusion was made to Sir Francis Hincks, whose services to the State and personal ability were accounted as nothing when weighed in the balance with the loss of wealth he was supposed to have caused to individuals.

This might seem to insinuate that the prosecution of Sir Francis Hincks was regarded as a vindictive action, undertaken by some person or persons whose desire to acquire wealth had been frustrated by his acts as President of the Consolidated Bank, and lest any misunderstanding should arise, I propose to notice very briefly some of the disclosures of the trial, and to hint at some remedies for the state of affairs revealed.

Hindoos, having no knowledge of a personal Deity, satisfy the cravings of nature and conscience by placing foremost in their catalogue of virtues, faithful service and firm allegiance to their earthly masters, and style their chief virtue "Faithfulness to one's salt."

The native of India who would not solemnly affirm the grossest falsehood in the interests of his master would regard himself, and be regarded by his fellows, as the meanest of mankind.

The evidence given during the recent trial betrays the Eastern origin of the bankers' code of morals, for it plainly appears that the first duty of a bank official is to promote the interests of his present master, the shareholder. If we cannot hope for a standard of morals more consonant with the genius of Christianity and Western civilization, we must turn the existing sentiment to the best account by giving bankers new masters and compelling them to transfer their allegiance to the public. It is to be hoped that future legislation will make this point clear.

The prosecution assumed that the existing laws required a certain obligation to the public, and charged the management with having made returns to Government calculated to mislead, and notably in the items of loans from other banks entered as deposits, and over-drafts entered as notes discounted. The bankers' code wanting the sanction of legal enactment, the defence was compelled to rely on the evidence of officials to establish that other banks were in the habits of submitting similar returns, because there was no way of disposing of the disputed items. If the Appellate Court upholds this view, it may be assumed that the present forms are defective and require to be altered.

The Indian Government has a habit of illustrating the different sections of their acts by examples of imaginary cases, which serve to make clear the intentions of the framers, and we might as well borrow good business habits from the East as pagan morals.

What would be more simple, for instance, than to take the accounts of this ruinously unfortunate bank and prepare from them, as an appendix to the new act, a set of forms showing how each item of assets and liabilities should be entered, and then do away, for all future time, with any possibility of misunderstanding.

Having established beyond a peradventure, that the public is master transferred the allegiance of our bankers and guarded against the possibility of upright men being driven into misleading statements by an imperfectly worded law, we have to provide against deliberate falsification of public returns by dishonest men.

Now it is evident that no President, Manager or Cashier can put forth any statement unless it is prepared by a subordinate bank official. Suppose we define by law the exact position of every individual who has a hand in preparing these statements, and the penalties to which he is liable for wilful misrepresentation or criminal carelessness,—in fine, declare all bank officials, from highest to lowest, to be public servants as far as their duties connected with the preparation of statements for public use are concerned.

One of the most important officers of a bank is the Inspector, and the position should be exalted to a greater importance, and the duties be clearly defined by law. No one should be appointed to this position without a certificate that he is an accomplished actuary and accountant, and the appointment should in every case be subject to confirmation by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province.

It will be objected that Legislative obstructions fetter private enterprise; but this, like all theories, may be carried too far. Every civilized government has recognized the obligation to protect the public in these matters, and the question is how to give effect to the intention.

It is a matter of astonishment that a subject of such overwhelming interest should have provoked so little discussion, and more particularly with an impending change in the law.

It may be necessary to say something more on this subject, at a future occasion: in the meantime, every man in the community is interested in having the order of classification, in the article before referred to, reversed, that the upright man for all future time be considered the most respectable.

Anglo Indian.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL UNDER PRESBYTERIAN DISCIPLINE.

The Rev. A. B. Mackay, of Crescent Street Presbyterian Church, Montreal, is evidently a bold man. He came recently from Brighton, England, the city of the great Frederick W. Robertson. When there, he was the pastor of a Russian ambassador, whose friendship towards him spirited two copies of the *Codex Sinaiticus* from St. Petersburg to Principal MacVicar and his College; they were the gift of the Czarina, whose classical piety had moved her to print a large edition of that rare work at her own imperial expense, only to find that few people, save those found in the Presbyterian College of Montreal and the Bishop's College of Lennoxville, either appreciated or could intelligently read the work. Mr. Mackay was one of the speakers at a recent Presbyterian anniversary in Montreal. The Presbyterian Church in Canada, of which he is one of the foremost Ministers, is up to the eyes in debt in all its Missionary operations, especially those of its Home Mission; and, like all needy organizations, it desires to draw in the contributions of every imaginable and possible supporter. Mr. Mackay, while in England, had heard of the Marquis of Lorne befriending a Society for the relief of underpaid unbeneficed clergymen of the Church of England at home. He is seized with holy jealousy. Why should His Excellency, who is neither an Englishman nor an Episcopalian, do even the little he did for such an object, and do nothing for the Presbyterian Church in Canada in its difficulties? It was a great point to make in an address from a Presbyterian platform; and, rising to a flight of oratory worthy of Maurice or some other eloquent man, he makes it in the following vigorous and choice language. We quote the report of his speech which appeared in the Montreal *Daily Witness*:—

"After relating the efforts the Marquis of Lorne had put forth in England in establishing a sustentation fund for the poor curates in the Episcopalian Church, Mr. Mackay said that if he, the Marquis of Lorne, would only show half the interest in our Home Mission work, all our difficulties would vanish. Am I asked, why should he do so? Scotchman like, I reply, why should he not do so? Is he not Her Majesty's representative in Canada? And are not we doing more for the future of this great Dominion than any other class of men? Therefore because he is the Governor General, he ought to help this work. He ought to help it, because he is a Scotchman and son and heir of MacCallum More, the future Duke of Argyll, a name the most honoured in the annals of Presbyterianism, and because he is a Presbyterian. If he is not, if he is no longer under the blue banner under which his ancestors lived and fought, and some of them died a martyr's death, then he ought to tell us so, and we will part good friends; for it is not the first time that Presbyterians have done good work, despite even the opposition of the nobility, and what Presbyterians have done in Scotland they can and will do in Canada."

Unfortunately for the point of his great point, Mr. Mackay forgets that, while the Governor-General is not an English Churchman and is a Presbyterian, he no more belongs to the Presbyterian Church in Canada, or to the Free Church in Scotland (which had the honour of giving the Rev. gentleman ordination, and in whose struggles for ecclesiastical mastery in that most ecclesiastical kingdom he intensely sympathised), than to the Church of England. His Excellency is an attached member of the Church of Scotland, although, like Her Majesty whom he represents in this Dominion, he can take the Holy Communion with pleasure in both national churches. When M. P. for Argyleshire in the Imperial House of Commons he was, as is also Lord Colin Campbell his brother and Parliamentary successor, one of those conspicuous in their opposition to what is commonly spoken of as the Disestablishment of the Scottish Church. Everybody knows how strenuously his illustrious father, the Duke of Argyll, upholds the Church of Scotland by both voice and pen, while singularly liberal and tolerant to all creeds and denominations. As a churchman there is no inconsistency in the Marquis of Lorne promoting "a Sustentation Fund for the poor curates" of the sister Church of England, and more especially as, since his marriage with one of the Princesses of the Blood-Royal, he has chiefly resided at Court in London, where he, of course, enjoyed the services of the State Church of that part of the Empire. We fail to see any reason why, because His Excellency happens to come to Canada, he should come to the rescue of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, simply because it is Presbyterian, and has been imprudent enough to attempt to do more than it should and so run into hopeless debt. There are Presbyterians and Presbyterians! We have still among us, alive and kicking, however feeble numerically and otherwise, a Synod in connection with the Church of Scotland; and, although we are of those who think that the Marquis of Lorne has acted wisely in not taking sides in the still unsettled controversy as to "Temporalities" and other property between that Church and a certain section of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, yet Mr. Mackay cannot but remember or know that His Excellency did testify his loyalty to the Church of Scotland by, the very first Sunday he worshipped in Canada, attending service in St. Andrew's Church, Montreal, which, if it be anything, is a Church closely and essentially connected with that Church. We pass over the statement made by Mr. Mackay that the Presbyterian Church in Canada is "doing more for the future of this great Dominion than any other class of men." Such an assertion is something very like a slap in the face of the Episcopalians or Methodists, not to speak of other religious bodies, who are generally supposed to be very powerful and aggressive for good and the spread of truth and righteousness, without boasting so much about it