

VENAL VOTING: METHODS AND REMEDIES.¹

IN a previous paper the proportion of venal voters according to race, habits, and police record was given in tabular form for two Connecticut towns and one city ward. And upon these, together with less specific, but quite reliable, reports from a number of other towns and from one of the larger cities an estimate was made for the entire State. It was also shown that venality followed the laws of infectious disease in the phenomena of its distribution.

We now inquire: Of what sort are the venal? We have seen what their habits are. What is their method of life? In one town their occupations were as follows: boatmen, six; mechanics, nine; mechanics and farmers, three; mill hands, six; owners of farms worth three thousand dollars or more, six; owners of good farms, not mortgaged, worth one thousand to fifteen hundred dollars, four; owners of poor farms, sometimes mortgaged, worth four hundred to seven hundred and fifty dollars, eleven; pensioner, one; teamster, one; renters of poor farms, ten. The remainder and by far the largest class are farm laborers, unskilled laborers, wood-choppers and doers of odd jobs, and there is one man who is retired on what for the locality is a comfortable little property. A few have large families. All can read and write, though the majority may be somewhat below the general standard of popular education in the place. I can give no such accurate census of the city purchasables. But in many instances, as I am credibly informed, men who earn good wages or salaries expect pay regularly from their own side, and "hold off" until they get it; and one case has been given where the man had property worth seventy-five thousand dollars. But as may be easily divined from the facts as to drinking-habits already given, the great majority are more or less of the out-at-the-elbow and down-at-the-heel class. A few are marked "thrifty" with emphasis. "What that man gets goes right into the savings bank every time, you may be sure!" was related of one. But to the greater part, probably more than three-quarters, the election

¹This article is supplementary to the article on "The Alarming Proportion of Venal Voters" which Professor McCook contributed to the September FORUM.

earnings mean only a payment on account at the favorite doggery, an immediate and immoderate indulgence in the pet tippie; and for no mean proportion, a brawl and a speedy renewal of acquaintance with the station-house turnkey.

I could hardly be forgiven if, having the means, I were not to gratify curiosity as to the political complexion of the purchasable element. Here it is for two country towns and one city voting district. It may be relied upon:

PERCENTAGES OF PARTY VOTE.

	Precinct I. Country.	Precinct II. Country.	Precinct III. City.	Three Precincts.
Democrat.....	15.7	19.7	10.5	13.0
Prohibition.....	0.0	0.0	7.1	5.0
Republican.....	1.6	21.9	7.3	8.9
Other party.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Doubtful and unknown.....	19.4	40.0	19.4	20.9
Totals.....	9.8	20.9	9.3	11.3

This seems to show that if Prohibitionists be, as is commonly claimed, in natural sympathy with the Republicans, the two great political camps will be found to be not far from evenly infected—which is what I have heretofore surmised. Otherwise there are about fifty per cent more venal Democrats than Republicans. The largest percentage of disease appears among those of doubtful and unknown political preference. If these two terms were synonymous with Independent, the fact would be of ominous significance.

But it is perhaps more prudent to leave comment upon this set of figures to professional statesmen. The general public may rest assured that the raiding in one another's territory is not confined to any one side, but is limited on either side only by the ordinary conditions of active campaigning—combativeness, energy, skill, money, exigency, and opportunity. And as matters now stand it is perhaps not wholly unfortunate that such is the case; for in each of the two rural towns and in the two city wards tabulated in detail, the actual venal vote is considerably in excess of any party majority, and with no disturbing element it readily carries the election. The same is true of the entire city. As for the State, it frequently shows no majority on the popular vote, and even its pluralities are small. But for the nearly equal energy and financial strength of the two parties, therefore, there is no reason why towns, cities, and the State

should not be completely at the mercy of the unhappy beings who offer their political virtue in open market to the highest bidder.

How is the bribery accomplished? Where the ballot is open the process is simple enough. The person is handed a ticket, accompanied to the polls, watched with hawk-like sharpness until the ballot is in the box; he then goes to the cashier and draws his pay, takes a fistful of tickets and poses as a ticket-peddler for half an hour or so —then quietly drops off and disappears. This is very common in cities. In the country, and not infrequently in cities, the ticket-peddling is omitted as being a useless and too public farce; otherwise the method is the same. While treating of the disease aspect of the offence I have said that the seller usually seeks the purchaser. This is not always the case. There are in both country and city certain men, who have been dubbed in my hearing "a sort of gang-contractors." These in one town were three in number. Two of them, of the informant's own party, were ready to work for either side, the third only for his own. These persons receive from twenty-five to fifty dollars in elections "when there is any money up," arm themselves with jugs of whiskey, and start for the habitat of the commercial coterie which they specially affect. What cannot be done through the inspiration of the jug is done by the persuasiveness of money; and what can be economized in money stays in the contractor's pocket.

The contractor in the city is likely to be a liquor dealer. If he can get himself chosen to the chairmanship of a ward committee, so much the greater his chance of perquisites. He may, indeed, have been helped to this position by money of his own or of the opposite party. In this case he draws double pay. His own party intrusts funds to him to use, and the other party goes far beyond in their bid. He is not simple enough to return his party's money, and to use it would be idiocy; for his pay from the other side is to be proportioned to the reduction he can effect in the vote of his own people. He therefore pockets both the campaign fund and the bribe, and accounts for the falling off in his party vote by the "big pile of money the others were using." This is not invariably done, nor perhaps frequently; but it is sometimes done, I am assured by those who ought to know. Sometimes, however, certainly not. I have even heard of one instance in which a liquor dealer returned nearly half of the money intrusted to him as not having been spent. My "practical" friends will most of them smile incredulously at this, but it is true.

This suggests the inquiry, How is liquor used on election occa-

sions? Its most impressive use, perhaps, is when the candidate goes down into the ward and talks pleasantly with "the boys" and "asks them all in for a drink." But this is hardly its most efficient employment. The "boys" would be very unusually unintelligent indeed and not at all usually thirsty if they were to refuse liquid refreshments thus tendered, from whatever source. But the most telling work is put in by the dealer himself. He receives a liberal donation to be employed for refreshment purposes. This he deals out in the most judicious manner, discriminating of course in favor of those who are "going in with the rest of the boys to elect A. or B." In many instances the patron is in debt for previous libations. His credit is now stopped until he "falls into line." "You may clear out! We don't want nothing to do with you if you're not going to be friendly!" The power of such an edict to a man devoured by a thirst which probably surpasses that of the fever patient, or of the wounded soldier under a July sun on the battle-field, can be appreciated only by those who have studied this curious disease face to face with its victims. As a check upon fraud and for the increase of personal influence, bunches of drink-tickets are sometimes prepared—to be issued only on the day of election. I have heard of several instances of this kind. In one the orders were forged to a serious extent. But the bill was meekly paid. Such accounts are not likely to be disputed. The tickets are given out with but little show of concealment at the very polling-place, and are honored instantly. To this end the drinking-place must of course be open, though that is contrary to law.

What sets the bribery machinery in motion? The initiative of the candidate and of local managers, in local elections. In general elections, word from the State Central Committee, with or without previous consultation with the local managers, but always followed by such consultation, that such a town "must be got." The towns chosen will naturally be those where there is the best fighting chance; that is, where the majority of the other, or the minority of one's own, side is smallest. Who the most available local candidate is to be, how much he will give, how much must be thrown in from the outside, and all such obvious details are then arranged with more or less care. Sometimes, when for any reason the financial integrity of a smart local manager is suspected—and men in this business, I am assured, cannot be relied upon to keep straight for more than two or three years—he is permitted to "make the contracts" and all that sort of thing, receiving a lump sum for personal compensation; but the money passes

through the hands of another. In order to divide responsibility in the forum of conscience and of the State, one man will sometimes "contract," direct a second to see that the person votes straight, and on his certificate a third pays.

The mention of contracts recalls a previous statement of mine which was perhaps as much doubted as any other. This was that men had sometimes contracted for a term of years to deliver their votes as desired. I have since conversed with a professional man of high standing, who informs me that he has handled and accepted such a list where the term was three years. "If we had not taken them the other side would," was his naïve and sufficient explanation. In this whole process each party to the transaction tricks the other. That happens in all trade. Why not in this? Stories in illustration constitute a veritable embarrassment of riches, and they are from both sides. But they might not prove to be altogether edifying reading and the space will be saved for other uses.

"But the secret ballot has done away with all this!" Not at all, in Connecticut at least. The first year it seriously interfered with it. But ways of evading it have already been discovered. Ballots have begun to be successfully marked. The famous printer's specks are not the only marks possible. A paster applied to a certain name in a certain way, or an agreed-upon fictitious name written in, may be an effectual mark. A manager may sacrifice his own vote in the morning, carry away the stamped official envelope, inclose a vote in it, securely seal it, place it in the hands of a "worker" and condition payment upon the delivery of a new and unbroken envelope; and this may be kept going all the day. The booth-tender or some one else may be hired to open the door "by accident" to see whether a ticket in the vest pocket is substituted for the ticket in hand on entering. It may be made a condition precedent that the door be left slightly ajar so that the booth-tender, previously signalled, may see whether the ticket carried in is put into the envelope. I mention only methods which I am credibly informed have already been used. Therefore I run the risk of "corrupting" no one, but may warn many. Even the Australian system may be evaded by the use of a stencil of the exact spacing of the ballot. And for every such system there remains the easy, though twice as expensive plan of paying men to stay away, which has probably been used in a certain, though not great degree, but which is sure to be used when all else fails.

And how much does it all cost, and where does the money come

from? I can speak only of Connecticut with any particularity, though I have items from three other States. A veteran tells me that in his opinion a presidential campaign here costs each party four hundred thousand dollars, all told, of which his party gets about one-tenth from the National Committee, and he supposes the other side gets at least as much from theirs. There is a multitude of expenses constantly rising—headquarters, music, fireworks, uniforms, speakers, “literature,” getting men naturalized, etc. For all these vouchers can be given. And then there is the item, which for years has been still more rapidly rising, the appropriation for election day, for which no vouchers are given or expected. This is the fateful item. I know of one country town in which over six hundred dollars, probably not far from eight hundred, was used in this way—a considerable part of it coming from the outside. The total expenses there of one party were probably not quite double that sum. In another, twelve hundred dollars is mentioned as the aggregate outlay of one party. In each case the testimony is concerning the informant’s own party. In a third instance the opposite party was said to have had thirteen hundred dollars to dispose of, and so “we couldn’t get anywhere near them.” How near they actually got, or whether they simply gave it up—which often happens in the presence of overwhelming financial opposition—was not stated. But the party vote dropped in one precinct ninety per cent! Another gentleman tells me that it cost him on one occasion just eleven dollars to get into the legislature; on another seventeen dollars. He is now informed, and he has ample opportunity to know, that the same seat costs the candidate eight hundred dollars. And he mentioned a second town, where the cost is from eight hundred dollars to one thousand dollars. One municipal election is said to have cost the successful candidate six thousand dollars in direct expenditure, and much more is thought to have been expended in the manner previously described upon the managers of the hostile party.

Ward expenses are not commonly so heavy as those of the country towns, owing to the greater importance of the towns than of any single fraction of a city, which, however large, counts only as part of a town in much of the voting. When it is remembered how slight the legitimate expenses of an election are, it will be seen how much must be spent on direct action upon voters. One hears a good deal of talk about the cost of ticket-peddlers, printing, carriage-hire and the like, from those who count upon your ignorance or who are juggling with

their own consciences. The cost of printing four hundred and ninety-two thousand four hundred tickets, certainly an ample supply for one party, in a recent State election was only three hundred and ninety-four dollars, with five per cent off. Six ticket-peddlers are all that can be really used and as many as any manager would employ if it were a mere matter of business. So one of them frankly admitted. When, therefore, I asked him how many he actually hired, and he replied, "Perhaps fifty, and the others as many more," both he and I saw a sudden light. As for hack-hire: there are about eighty-three hacks in the city of Hartford. If they were all hired at the all-day price, they would cost less than seven hundred dollars, or eighty-eight dollars per ward. But in the very greatest election only about one-fifth of them are used all day, and one-half of them for the afternoon, at an aggregate cost of not more than five hundred and thirty-six dollars, or sixty-seven dollars per ward—thirty-four dollars each side. So the actual legitimate expense in a city ward is from twenty-five dollars to fifty dollars a side. In a country town more and further hauling may have to be done, and refreshments are more required for the real workers and for voters from a distance. But one hundred and twenty-five dollars a side would be a generous estimate for everything. How much of the vastly greater sum often used goes for bribery can be approximately estimated from these figures. The cost on this score has indeed been growing so serious that in more than one town the local managers have agreed to divide the legislative delegation and to elect one member each without opposition. But on other issues there is the old liability.

Where does this money come from? In general elections, where interest is universal and excitement tense, a paper is circulated among all solid citizens known to be earnest partisans. In general, however, the money comes from the candidates. These are assessed on a scale graduated according to office or salary. Thus: councilman, twenty-five dollars; alderman, fifty dollars; first selectman, two hundred dollars; mayor, whatever can be got. Ten per cent of the annual value of the office would not be far wrong. Even offices which bring no salary, but only expense, are assessed. I know of one instance in which a presidential elector was assessed five hundred dollars, and the bill repeatedly presented, though payment in this case was refused. The civil-service-reform rules have doubtless done something toward diminishing these levies. But they can reach only a fraction of the offices. States and localities are still untrammelled. New York has a

law limiting candidates in their expenses and requiring them to divulge these items under oath, and an act to the same effect has been considerably discussed in other States, showing a movement in this direction. But it must be said that practical politicians are skeptical as to the effectiveness of the law. They do not question that it has already been evaded and that it will be. Applicants may ask for contributions to churches, or schools, or hospitals in their neighborhood, and apply the checks to political purposes—this was the suggestion of one veteran; or they may contrive to make their statement before the heaviest bills have come in, was the suggestion of another; or they may have rich sisters, or relatives, or friends who will put up the money without their direct knowledge, was still another suggestion. New York politicians may take that law seriously. I think it only raises an incredulous smile in Connecticut. It is possible that a law of the kind might be so framed as to prove effectual, though I doubt it. And I have similar doubts concerning the possibility of enforcing the well-meaning laws lately introduced in two or three of our States requiring committees to publish their campaign accounts.

The committees, then, are the money-raisers. First the national; next the State; next the town; next the ward or district. The candidates, speaking broadly, are the victims. Beside the orderly levies, they are liable to be plundered, more especially when green, by every local pot-house and "bum." And what between the pecuniary drain and the annoyance, it is, or is said to be, becoming more and more difficult to get men of mere fitness to stand. On account of the first, poor men cannot; and on account of the second, most rich men will not. There are compensations in this latter. If wealth were not for the most part repelled from personal engagement in these conflicts, I see no limit to the corruption which might exist. When a rich man goes into politics on his own account, he is very apt to leave a wide swath of corruption along his track. And it generally comes to stay.

How do the briber and the bribed look upon their *rôles* respectively? I have already remarked, concerning the latter, that they are largely persons in whom self-respect has been deadened or extinguished by habitual intemperance. Their course is explicable enough. For the rest of the class, there is but one thing that explains it—greed of gain. They have often not a particle of interest in politics. Somebody else has and is willing to pay for their help. But the oath—why does not the oath restrain them? Partly because most of them have

taken none. Out of thirty-six States the attorney-generals¹ of which have been good enough to answer my questions, only the following require an oath on registration: Alabama, Idaho, Louisiana that the individual is qualified under the constitution; Maryland, to answer truly the questions of the registration officer; Minnesota, that he has resided in the State the required time; Montana, as to name and residence and that he has not voted before; Virginia, that he is not disqualified under the State constitution; Wyoming, as to residence and qualifications; California does not specify. Only Connecticut, Mississippi, and North Carolina seem to have any moral element in their oath, and this goes but little beyond the vague promise of allegiance to the constitution of the State and to the United States. Connecticut adds an excellent clause as to voting, always "touching any matter that concerns this State or the United States—as you shall judge will conduce to the best good of the same without respect of persons or favor of any man." But though I myself have taken that oath three times, I may say that I came away every time with this thought uppermost in my mind: "that was a pretty stiff dose of State rights," and little else. Partly the oath does not bind because oaths in general are administered without much decorum and taken without much seriousness. I own a number of farms in a Western State. In one instance two reputable men swore to fifteen hundred dollars' worth of house and fence, when subsequent inquiry showed there had never been a sign of either; and in seventeen or eighteen other cases it was in like manner bravely sworn that the value was from three to five times the loan, when inquiry established the fact that it could never have been, or have been thought to be, more than the loan, and was actually in few, if any, cases equal to it. In many such ways it becomes plain that where gain is concerned judgment and conscience are easily warped. So let us not too severely condemn this aggregation of drunkards, jail-birds, poor men with large families, and thrifty fellows "on the make" for doing much the kind of thing that is known to be done all around them under the dignified name of business.

Of the go-betweens, nothing need be said. They will be comprehended. Of their employers it may, and it must, if the truth is told,

¹ The principal facts bearing upon this question of qualification of voters, disfranchisement, etc., for their respective States, were kindly supplied for this article by the attorney-generals of thirty-three of the States, by the Secretary of State of one, and by the recorder of the Supreme Court of another. The blank for Connecticut was filled by myself. The States not included are Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, Nevada, Rhode Island, Vermont, Wisconsin.

be said that they are in general excellent people, of fully average morality and piety, who are carried off their feet by excitement or by the quiet determination to win. We call it a campaign and they act up to the name. Moreover, we virtually require them to win, and should not pardon them if they were to neglect measures adapted to winning. They, however, keep themselves frequently aloof from the "dirty work." They give their money or their directions, virtually saying, "Do it, but tell me not when it is done, or how."

Two stories will illustrate this; the first was related to me by an actor in it; the second is not direct, but is probably true. It was Sunday and the eve of an election. Word came to the management that a certain gang could be had for five hundred dollars. The candidate was rich and he was at prayer-meeting. He was called out and the situation explained. He looked uncomfortable, faltered, finally replied: "Well, gentlemen, I don't know much about such things; but if you say it's all right, I suppose it is." So he gave his check—and was elected. Again: A well-known and most exemplary man was governor. A local magnate visited him with the usual story. He coldly replied, "I am sorry, sir, but I never have anything to do with such methods of procedure." The visitor grew red, arose, and was leaving in a high state of surprise and indignation, for he had understood that his visit would be appreciated. But just as his hand was on the door-knob he heard a placid voice remark, "Perhaps you'd better call on Col. —, a member of my staff, before you go." He called and was satisfied. Meanwhile the governor turned to his secretary and remarked, with a gentle smile, "You know one must exercise Christian guile sometimes." This was a war governor, and no doubt anybody would have said that the outcome of the political might have been expected to have a real influence upon the success of the military campaign. And the military leader notoriously employs money and deception and corruption of every kind as freely as powder and ball. I am not excusing, I am only explaining the incident.

Bribery is often resorted to in defence of party or individual or in punishment of a supposed affront. Thus from two independent sources comes the story of the revenge a politician, now long dead, sought to take upon a newspaper man, then a candidate for office. Both informants were of the politician's own party. This man took five thousand dollars in bills out of the bank and flung it into the campaign, having ascertained on careful inquiry that that amount would certainly beat his enemy. "Dirty dog!" he exclaimed; "he accused

me in his paper of corrupt practices and refused to acknowledge his error!" And one of the commonest explanations, I find, of admitted connection with the business is, "We have to do it, you know, to defend ourselves." Whether for defence or offence, it is resorted to, I am bound to say, in many instances from the profound conviction that the good of the country requires it. The bribers are earnest men often, and often patriotic. And in some instances I know they have not gone into politics from improper motives.

Still, whatever our respect for their possible sincerity or sympathy with the contemptuous estimate which they set upon their tools, and whatever our pity for the latter, we are bound to condemn the practices of both parties to the transaction and to ask whether there may not be some remedy. The disease is bad enough in itself, but it shows signs of not stopping within its former bounds. The secret ballot in this State has perhaps done some good. But the very legislature which gave us that law was doubtless the most corrupt legislature the State ever had. What wonder that men who had graduated from such a school in home politics should show their proficiency on the larger field! I have it from most competent sources that not far from one-half of the members of that body received compensation direct or indirect for their vote on the occasion of the "great railroad war," as it has been called. The stories told are all but unbelievable but for the detail of the evidence and the authority of the witnesses. One man actually carried back the money given by one side on accepting a higher bid from the other. In the lobby of the House the managers of both sides were circulating money all but literally in hand. "We will give as much as anybody," says one. "But I've been offered fifteen hundred dollars by the others," objects a member. "We'll give you fifteen hundred dollars, too," is the reply. "Well, wait a moment till I speak to —," of the other side. A few moments' parley in the open vestibule, then back, and, with a "There's no use in you people trying; — tells me he'll give me eighteen hundred dollars," the incident closes. One member of the Senate, then and since notoriously venal, was "working like a dog to get the bill through the House, and fairly cried his eyes out because it was defeated there and he failed to get a bite out of it." Another had prepared a grand *coup* for the side that thought he was with them by accepting in private a promise of several thousand dollars from the other for his vote at the last. And the money was actually drawn from the bank and was on the spot ready for use. Imagine his feel-

ings when with the adverse vote of the House his hold upon the big bribe fell off!

Nor is Connecticut the only sufferer. There are, it is true, causes operative here which may be less powerfully felt elsewhere. One of these is the unusual closeness of the State. The other is the apparent extravagance and carelessness of many of its town republics in almsgiving. In one of the most venal towns the venality was formerly far worse than it is now. And I find the improvement came simultaneously with root-and-branch reformation of the alms system, whether in consequence of it I cannot say; my informant thought not. Another town still worse in venality has been and continues to be very reckless in such expenditures. In a third town there were thirty-five persons who had been convicted before the police court three or more times in 1890, once at least for drunkenness, or else had been adjudged common drunkards and punished accordingly. All but three of these were paupers; and I now find that with but one single exception all of them who have votes are also venal. In another list of seventy-two persons convicted at least twice during the same year, out of fifty-nine males there were thirty-eight who were recognized by my informant; and of these thirty were known to be venal and just one was pronounced "straight." These facts may, it is true, not prove the mutual dependence of crime, pauperism, and venality; but they at least show that the relations of good neighborhood heretofore shown to exist between venality and crime are not disturbed when pauperism is superadded. But Connecticut is not the only close State, nor does she enjoy the monopoly of crime, pauperism, and reckless almsgiving. Similar causes operate in other States. This has been demonstrated for Rhode Island by Mr. Howland,¹ of the "Providence Journal." An old friend, recently candidate for Congress in New Jersey, sends me evidence of it from that State;² and a most interesting letter from a New York gentleman,³ formerly but not now an office-holder, and who

¹ He has kindly sent me a letter confirmatory of the well-known statements made in his paper.

² A precinct usually carried by the other party by a majority of one hundred was formally offered him for fifty dollars.

³ The chief points in his statement are as follows: In New York City there is but little direct buying of votes and not much indirect, the Democrats being too sure of success on the general ticket. The indirect method pays men five dollars a day for "working." The details of the campaign, including local disbursements, are left by the Republicans chiefly to captains of districts, who have about four hundred voters to look after and from fifty dollars to one hundred dollars to do it with. Their direct action upon voters is more through

has enjoyed unusual opportunities for securing an inside view of State and national politics, admits it for the Empire State. It is true the attorney-general of South Carolina says, "We are all too honest or too poor to spend anything in elections. No vote can be bought in South Carolina"; and the attorney-general of Texas declares, "We never had any venal voting to speak of. We are pure, honest patriots and good Democrats and vote for our country—not for money"; and the attorney-general of Washington states, "There is no venal voting to diminish here." But human nature is much the same everywhere; and since our Connecticut laws are better than most laws, I know not why many other States may not be nearly or quite as bad as my own. And therefore the question, What should be done to reform these abuses? ought to be of more than local interest.

1. Insist upon fair education and a good moral character before admitting men to vote. A wild raid upon the foreign element and immigration is not here in place; in some of our States the foreign element distinctly raises the average of education among

"treating." They are too shrewd to keep written lists of the purchasable. There are about one thousand tramps who, however, register and vote often. They receive from three to five dollars a day. Eighty detectives were successfully employed in their exclusion in 1888. In the county (this by hearsay) many are squarely bought—they treat the fee as a *per diem* for "work lost." A hundred dollars is sometimes paid for a vote there. The proportion of purchasables in one rural town goes beyond ten per cent. Colored voters are more venal than the whites, though the venal among them have decided preferences and will follow these even at some pecuniary sacrifice. Presidential elections are not greatly influenced by bribery, but local ones, more particularly congressional, are. One candidate for Congress spent twenty thousand dollars. Owing to the great cost local managers frequently agree to run only certain candidates on each ticket in earnest. The majority of the bribed belong to the so-called respectable class. When bribery is once introduced it stays. It is like leprosy. The Republican National Committee had a million and a half dollars to spend in 1888. The New York State Committee has more often under than over one hundred thousand dollars. It makes grants to senatorial, rarely to assembly districts, for the most part only where there is a fair prospect of success. A Republican candidate for mayor in New York City seldom contributes over twenty-five hundred dollars. Democratic candidates go as high as twenty-five thousand dollars. Candidates for judgeships on the latter ticket have been known to pay one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. Of late ten thousand dollars and fifteen thousand dollars are the usual amounts. The law requiring candidates to divulge expenses is a failure. Candidates swear as required; but how they reconcile their consciences to it my informant does not understand. The law might have been so cast as to more nearly accomplish its purpose. The new ballot law has diminished venality. More votes are influenced by employers of labor than by bribers.

whites. In Alabama, 25 per cent of the native whites over ten years of age are unable to write, against 7.7 per cent foreign; in Mississippi, 16.6 per cent native against 6 per cent foreign; in North Carolina, 31.7 per cent native against 3.3 per cent foreign; in South Carolina and Virginia, respectively, 22.4 per cent and 18.5 per cent native against 4.9 per cent and 5.4 per cent foreign. And the tables given from Connecticut show the importance of the contribution to venality made by voters of American stock. What is needed is rather a fair educational qualification rigidly insisted upon. Connecticut has long had such a requirement, but it has been loosely administered. The law makes the constitution or statutes the text-book for reading. This has often been made void by collusion of examining officials, themselves interested. A poor fellow had, as was supposed, learned thoroughly his lesson. It was Art. I., Sec. 17, one line and one word long: "Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defence of himself and the State." "Read that," said the selectman, pointing at the place. The scholar hesitated, blushed, perspired, and then blurted out: "Every man shall have a right to carry a goon!" The constitution specifies no particular language. Accordingly I find that seven or eight voters in one town have been admitted on an examination in a Hebrew version of a clause in the constitution, translated by a rabbi and read in his presence! Not so striking philologically, but more droll, is the following: Under a former selectman great numbers of men "presented Irish," as college examiners would now say. A local leader who was dubbed "King" M— acted as interpreter, and for a score of years numbers of the sons of Erin were admitted to the privileges of freemen on the "King's" translation and his oath. One day the selectman broke out: "'King,' I don't believe you know Irish yourself!" and thereupon he sent for a man whom he thought surely "up" in Irish; and the verdict of this judge was that if the "King" knew Irish he didn't—which was of doubtful decisiveness, but sufficed nevertheless to banish one king, if it did not set up another. From whatever cause, it is said to be a fact that there are one thousand voters to-day in the city of Hartford who cannot read. Connecticut's case is an example of what a law might have been and has not been made.

The same is true of her moral qualification. The first selectman in Hartford, whose official memory goes back ten years, tells me he never knew of a man being refused on that score. And yet many voters must have been made whose record would not have borne examination. "That is not what people are thinking about when they

make voters," he dryly remarked. But they ought to be. It is to my notion an infamy second only to that of similar laxness in religious associations that political commonwealths should let in and keep in all that any political clique may want to see in, without regard to moral qualification. While speaking of education preliminary to voting, attention should be called to the office of the school-teacher in this respect. Even with our present manuals, silent for the most part it is to be feared on the subject, if the teachers of the United States were to use thoroughly their opportunity, a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the voter might presently come to prevail. I refer here to teachers of all kinds, in Sunday and in day schools, and to those teachers *par excellence*—the clergy and the editors. Thus far the last named, whatever their shortcomings, have had a virtual monopoly of the work.

Naturally, sanity should be insisted upon as a qualification of the voter. This is done in fourteen States—California, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming—but not in Connecticut. In the three towns already tabulated one idiot votes; and one man who for habitual drunkenness is under a conservator, and one crazy man, who, however, has not voted for years, are on the list. The superintendents of the Hartford and Middletown insane-hospitals inform me that only one each of their respective charges has been known to vote. But the law ought to be clear. There ought also to be an oath, and it ought to have some direct relation to the matter in hand and be administered in a distinct voice and a decorous manner. If it in terms pledged the candidate to vote always according to conscience and never to give or take a bribe of any kind, some good might be accomplished and no harm.

2. Make continuance of the enjoyment of the suffrage dependent upon the sustaining of a good moral character. The facts above related will show how far this is from being the present status of things even in Connecticut. What it is in the numerous States where nothing of the kind is thought of at any stage in the history of the voter may be divined. I am aware that there are many States, including Connecticut, which disfranchise for certain crimes. But the curious thing is that the line is drawn where it is. In one town in Connecticut there have been two recent disfranchisements—for stealing a rooster and a pair of reins. Yet the one hundred and five persons in the two lists already referred to who are not of the female sex, with

four exceptions disfranchised for theft, go on voting year after year, and will so continue until they are buried in drunkards' graves. They know every doggery and brothel by heart; they have been through every mire of filth and degradation; they are never in possession of their faculties except when unwillingly forced to temporary sobriety by the lack of the wretched funds wherewith to purchase cheap drink—and yet they vote. They are utterly lost to self-respect, and their very contact pollutes and degrades—and yet they vote. They are incorrigible criminals and pass half their time in jail; but their offence is formally styled "misdemeanor," and the place of incarceration happens to be called "jail," not "prison." And so they vote and are not disfranchised. Common sense and public policy require that these persons be restrained of their liberty by confinement in some prison where the discipline will be suited to their cases—and that for an indefinite period. The present course gives them no chance for recovery and gives society no respite from the fearful financial and moral burden of their presence and their support. Concerning this class the Hon. Nathaniel Shipman, Judge of the United States Circuit Court, writes to me:

"Reformatory institutions of the character which the large wealth of a State can provide, under the care of officers who have acquired by study and experience some knowledge of the discipline and the means which are adapted to cure rather than to punish, will be in the not far distant future provided for these victims of disease, of heredity, and of crime, and in which the length of confinement shall depend, so far as may be, upon the benefit which has been attained. A second commitment to such an institution should, alike for the sake of the criminal and society, carry with it his disfranchisement, subject to reinstatement by judicial decree."

Judge W. J. McConville, of the Hartford police court, writes in a similar strain, adding that his conclusions are based upon the experiences of his court, most of the business of which grows out of drunkenness. The Hon Elisha Carpenter, of the Supreme Court of Connecticut, has also expressed to me his sympathy, with the suggestion that incorrigible misdemeanants should be disfranchised. Such persons are costing Hartford each not far from five dollars a week year in and year out, in police and almshouse charges alone, and there are more like them there and elsewhere. They are generally self-perpetuating, both physically and morally. To the other counts in the formidable indictment against them is now added that of political debauchery, from which henceforth they can never escape. Hartford has done well in appointing a committee to approach the legislature in behalf

of more reasonable treatment of them and their kind. Good success to it in its labors!

But the proper treatment of common drunkards will reach only a fraction of the cases. There is another class among whom venality has been seen to prevail very largely—the intemperate. The law has not yet taken hold of these because they avoid disorderly conduct while intoxicated. A more judicious treatment of them is called for. They belong to a corrupt and corrupting school, and do not merit the forbearance they commonly receive. They demoralize the young by the exhibition of themselves upon the streets. The police in some communities show them to their homes, in others rarely molest them. They should be arrested and punished, whether disorderly or not. And here, as everywhere, obedience to the law should be made a condition to the exercise of the franchise. A man who cannot or will not keep the law is not the person to make laws for himself or for others. Two arrests, followed by punishment, the same year, or arrest and punishment two successive years, might without injustice be followed by disfranchisement.

And both these considerations call for more rational treatment of the whole drink question. The most available remedy seems to me to be the elimination of personal greed from the business of selling intoxicants. The profits are now so large and certain for the conscienceless that the conscienceless go into the business, and the condition to which they degrade the trade keeps the better class of people out of it. The Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., came very near the remedy in 1878.¹ And the Scandinavians have perhaps come still nearer a remedy. They give the monopoly of the business to corporations of reputable citizens, who bind themselves to retain only a moderate and fixed profit for themselves, turning the balance into the municipal treasuries. Having no incentive to the contrary course, these dealers sell legally and rationally, refusing minors, paupers, and drunkards, and selling only in moderation to any. There seems no doubt that drunkard-making has greatly fallen off there with the growth of this system; and the local communities frequently derive from their share of the profits enough to cover their

¹ His plan was to authorize municipalities to purchase the interests of the rum-sellers and thereafter to conduct the business themselves in lawful and reasonable methods. His bill was offered in Parliament, but not pressed because, as he tells me in a letter recently received, he found that the Teetotalers were going to oppose it. He says that he is, however, more than ever convinced of the soundness of his former views.

entire expenses. What we want is to stop drunkard-making. Temperate men, besides their other uses, are found to be for the most part non-purchasable.

3. When these things have been duly attended to, let us have the best secret-ballot law you can contrive. There are twenty-eight States of the thirty-six from which I have returns that have introduced some kind of a secret-ballot law, seventeen of them the Australian, eight a modification of it, and yet require no reading test; they represent more than forty-four millions out of the fifty-five enumerated. There are seven which are at least consistent. They are Alabama, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Wyoming. Of these, Alabama and North and South Carolina are consistent at the expense of what is perhaps quite as valuable, for they have no secret-ballot law and no reading test, while the other four have both. Curiously enough, those four are the only ones out of the thirty-six which require even a reading test, while Massachusetts stands alone in exacting the meagre qualification of ability to write one's own name! Now, one of the uses of the Australian system may undoubtedly be to weed out illiterate voters. But one would say it might be more direct, at least, to do that by an efficient education clause honestly enforced. Otherwise the system is, from this standpoint, not much more than a trick; not essentially different from the "eight-ballot-box system" of my correspondent the attorney-general of South Carolina, who thus describes that system:

"The eight-box law requires considerable mental attainment, and is really an educational qualification, nothing more, nothing less; and we find it absolutely necessary to preserve our civilization in the presence of the horde of ignorant slaves turned loose upon us by our conquerors."

This Australian system and its modifications have hardly been tried here long enough to show what the scheme is really capable of doing in the way of stopping bribery. Ten of the twenty-five States which have introduced it discreetly fail to answer the question on this point. Virginia thinks it has not diminished venality and California and Massachusetts say it has had no effect. Including other secret-ballot systems with it, a majority of the evidence is in favor of the utility of a secret-ballot law for preventing corruption. But since all secret-ballot laws can be defeated by bribing people to stay at home, it might become necessary to disfranchise people who do not actually vote. And if thereupon the pleasant fiction of the representative character of the voter should be abandoned and political power,

whether of towns or States, graduated according to the actual number qualified to vote, permitted to vote, and voting, some of our present troubles and dangers might possibly be averted.

4. There should be absolute frankness and plain dealing with ourselves and others. Open the windows! Let in light and air! We need to learn the exact facts before a remedy can be devised. And as long as local vanity and Commonwealth pride deter people from seeing and admitting the truth concerning their own States we shall be and continue to be irreformable. The truest friend of any locality is the man who in a proper spirit tells the truth to that locality. Similarly, this is no occasion for Pharisaism. "Let every man sweep before his own door."

When these stages of improvement have been successively made, then, and not till then, as I venture to believe, will bribery be practically punishable, for much of it will have been abolished, and public opinion would sustain, as it will not now sustain, serious attempts at enforcement of the laws against that part of it which remains. It might then, as now it would not, be fair and safe to punish the briber with disfranchisement or imprisonment, leaving the bribed to go free in consideration of his testimony, or to adopt any other drastic measure. At present bribery is in the peculiar position of being everywhere condemned and nowhere punished. There are only two States, New Hampshire and North Dakota, which have no provision for disfranchisement. Yet who ever heard of the exaction of the penalty?

But I am painfully aware that the cause of the disorder which we have been studying is deep-seated. It is moral, and morality cannot be produced by legislation. Legislation can only make it harder and more unpleasant to do wrong. I have been struck by the remark of a man, himself "not much of a Christian," as he would probably say, that "among the foreign element you will find venality most where the religion of childhood and its restraints have been abandoned." That this is true for both the American and the more recently transplanted stocks, I think this paper shows. Organized goodness is the best remedy against organized badness. But the State, too, can do much. It is high time people should begin to care. The bird of America is not an ostrich. There are some things it cannot keep on digesting forever; and one of these is venal voting.

J. J. McCook.

THE LITERATURE OF THE FUTURE.

AMONG the questions the importance of which no one understands very clearly, there is one, I am told, that is put as often as any, not only to writers and artists, but to every one and by every one: What will be the literature of the future? This suggests to my mind the guessing games we used to play when we were children, and even a long time afterward, if we had the good fortune to remain children for a long time. These are called social games, and as it is good form not to avoid answering the questions asked in them, I do not see why I should not give my answer in my turn. "Come enter the round," says an old popular song. So here I am, and after the circle of literary standard-bearers has formed around me, I shall be able to say exactly whom I like and what I like: that is, what writers and what works I hope will live.

For the past few years the cry has been repeated in every key, "Naturalism is dead." But did it ever really live? The school has undoubtedly created a stir, and it has been very much talked about. But has it ever found real friends? We paid altogether too dear for the amount of truth it had to offer when we obtained it at the price of accepting the works in which it gloried. If some writers of this school have by their merits and in spite of all obstacles acquired great repute, it is because they have possessed qualities almost in contradiction to the principles that the school professed. As for the crowd of poor little disciples that applied conscientiously the theories their masters preached, I do not believe there ever were writers that produced weariness and disgust more surely and more speedily. There is hardly a work of theirs that you do not wish to throw aside after reading the first few pages. With the imitators of other schools, if you are bored by their works, too, you at least need not lose your self-respect because you keep their books in your hand and let your eye glance over their pages; if they do not charm you, they certainly will not hurt you, and that is something after all.

Naturalism could not live. It seems that after its first triumph its generals and its soldiers were dispersed, and the most talented of