

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY.

We allow too much of our thinking to be done for us. Clothes are not the only ready-made things we buy, and there is some ready-made thinking which is far too dear at only a cent a copy. The newspaper is not impeccable nor infallible and he who allows himself to be bulldozed by it and the spirit of plutocracy in it and the power of plutocracy back of it, is no more a free man than was the most ignorant and abject Roman Catholic in the days of the inquisition. It has been said that our national vice is dishonesty—not, however, primarily in trade, but in speech and thought. It would seem that one might probe deeper and, seeking for the cause of this dishonesty, find it to be intellectual laziness, fostered by the daily press. If the majority of the people ever read anything else or if all knew, what only a comparatively few do, that much of the editorial writing is done with tongue in cheek, that the free press is practically an extinct species, that the so-called policy of the paper is the policy of the dime museum, then the case would be different. But as things are, it would be hard to name a greater foe to democracy than the newspapers of to-day. To them, as to no other source, may be traced confusion of ideas and consequent blurring of the civic sense, deadening of the social conscience; not entirely by what is said, but quite as much, perhaps, by a silence which at times is scarcely short of criminal. . . .

Upon each of us rests the responsibility not merely of passive obedience to the law as it stands nor of the preservation of peace and order in times of excitement and disruption but no less of making the civil authority such that it be honored and obeyed at all times and by all classes of the community. Whether we will or no, we are part of that civil authority. By our exercise of the electoral franchise and by our personal influence we contribute to the corporate character of city and state. There is no voting by proxy in civic affairs and a man commits himself quite as much by abstention from balloting as he does by any other course. There is nothing sillier than for a man to prate about corrupt politics, etc., while shirking responsibility therefor and imagining that he can keep his hands clean by doing nothing. We are part and parcel of the corporate whole; and the sooner we recognize this and act upon the recognition, the better for ourselves as for all others concerned; for it is the want of this recognition which lies at the bottom of our existing political ills.

In Switzerland, than which there is probably no truer republic in existence, this recognition is impressed upon the individual by a simple process. When a young man, having completed his education, begins the life of active manhood, he is at once assigned to some post of civic duty. His function may be in itself a slight matter—nothing more, perchance, than the keeping clear the course of a certain brook or the care of the common village pump—and the performance thereof requiring only a small fraction of his time; but the responsibility involved he is thereby made to feel and the effect upon him is far from inconsequential. Were such a system in vogue amongst us it is inconceivable that those taking active and intelligent part in political affairs should, as now, consist of only two classes of the community, viz.: those who regard public office as a private snap and so make politics the basis of their livelihood; and those miscalled "prominent citizens," "representative men," who, disdaining public office for themselves, through collusion with the former class and by the power of money, nominate and elect men who will be their servants rather than the servants of the people and buy and sell legislation to suit their own private ends.—Rev. Gustavus Tuckerman, in St. Louis Advance.

"TERRIBLE TEACHING."

Correspondence of the Herald, of Auckland, New Zealand, issue of October 1, 1900.

Sir: Before replying to my numerous critics, which I am quite able to do, kindly afford me space to show the class of people we have to deal with in these single taxers. Beaten in the argument, driven from the platform, scarcely noticed in the press, they now fall back on our children, and are striving to teach them to hate each other and despise their parents.

The following is a document which is now being issued from the business premises of Mr. George Fowlds, one of our city representatives, and chairman of the Congregational union of New Zealand. The "prize ballad for boys" is scarcely worth reproduction. It contains the same teaching as the one for girls, but otherwise is simply stupid. They have both been cunningly selected, the one to appeal to the natural religious instinct of the female nature, and the other to the love of fun in boys.

RECITATION COMPETITION.

(Prizes: Two Silver Watches.)

For the purpose of testing the elocutionary powers of our school children, two solid

silver watches will be given as prizes, at a public competition to be held on October 25. First: For the best recitation, by a schoolgirl under 15, of the poem "Restitution;" and second: For the best recitation, by a schoolboy under 15, of the ballad: "The Sea for the Fishes." For entrance forms and further particulars apply to Mr. Young, at Mr. George Fowlds', Victoria Arcade. Competition absolutely free. No entrance money.

GIRLS' PRIZE POEM—"RESTITUTION."

Enough! the lie is ended; God only owns the land!
No parchment deed hath virtue unsigned by his own hand;
Out on the bold blasphemers who would eject the Lord,
And pauperize his children, and trample on his word!
Behold this glorious temple, with dome of starry sky,
And floor of greensward scented, and trees for pillars high,
And song of birds for music, and bleat of lambs for prayer,
And incense of sweet vapors uprising everywhere!
Behold his table bounteous, spread over land and sea,
The sure reward of labor, to every mortal free;
And hark! through nature's anthem there rises the refrain:
"God owns the earth, but giveth it unto the sons of men."

But see, within the temple, as in Solomon's of old,
The money-changers haggle, and souls are bought and sold;
And that is called an owner's which can only be the Lord's,
And Christ is not remembered, nor his whip of knotted cords.
But Christ has not forgotten, and wolfish human greed
Shall be driven from our heritage; God's bounties shall be freed;
And from out our hoary statutes shall be torn the crime-stained leaves
Which have turned the world, God's temple, into a den of thieves.

—J. W. Bengough.

For downright wickedness it would be hard to beat this. The men who have perpetrated it know that it is utterly impossible for "a schoolgirl under 15" to have an opinion as to the merits or demerits of single tax. Yet under the pretense of teaching elocution, they offer a bribe of a "solid silver watch" to the child girl who in the most forcible manner will denounce her own parents, or the parents of her schoolfellows, or both—it matters nothing to them—as liars, thieves, as human wolves, bold blasphemers, ejectors of the Lord, pauperizers of God's children, trampers on God's word, forgetters of Christ, criminals, etc.

This is terrible teaching for our boys and girls. The men capable of doing this would not hesitate to foment civil warfare—possibly that is