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JOHN WILSON BENGOUGH: ARTIST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

JOHN WILSON BENGOUGH: ARTIST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exhaustive study of one man's social thought, its nature, roots and development, and its relationship to social, political and cultural currents in his contemporary society. It is an exercise in the history of ideas, not as systematic philosophic thought, but as a popular, living, cultural force, acted out in the reality of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canadian historical landscape.

John Wilson Bengough was, in his time, a popular and prominent social critic, journalist and lecturer. Known not only throughout Canada, but indeed over much of the English speaking world, he was perhaps most famous for his didactic cartooning, pathetic poetry, and his untiring support of social reforms such as the single tax and prohibition. Although many Canadian historians have utilized his graphics and commentaries to illustrate their interpretations of the country's past, no one had undertaken a study of the nature and origin of his observations, no one had identified or understood his ideological roots, and no one had even considered the role or effect of the ideas he expressed in the shaping of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canadian society. This thesis, as a study of J.W. Bengough, examines the nature, roots and development of his social thought, explains its application, and attempts, in so doing, to advance a better understanding of mid- and late-Victorian Canadian social processes.

Chapter I sets the framework for the study, documenting some formative influences of his early years, illustrating his rise to national prominence, and identifying his graphic didactic commentaries on political and social



events of the 1870's. Chapters II and III, examine and evaluate his popular appeal and his effect on political events. Chapter IV, perhaps the most important in terms of an identification of the roots of his social thought, examines his ideological foundations in the Protestant ethic, and places Bengough within a tradition of interpreters of a Christian vocational ethic. Chapters V and VI illustrate the adaptation of his ideology to contemporary social problems, and chapter VII identifies Bengough within the tradition of Canadian Protestant thought in its secular expression and application.

In a narrow sense, this thesis argues that Bengough is a representative of an intellectual tradition with its roots deep in the Canadian religious heritage and it identifies his graphic, poetic and vocal appeals for the employment of Christian values in social problems as an important early step in the development of later radical reform movements, especially the social gospel movement. In a wider sense, it illustrates the importance of ultimate values in the impetus for social reform. Using Bengough as an example, it illustrates the essential role that ideas, in this case Christian ethics, played in the development of Canadian culture and social structure. And yet, while it attempts to provide some answers about the role of Bengough and his ideas in Canadian history, its conclusions and arguments often lead, instead of to answers, to further questions.

## PREFACE

As a study in Canadian intellectual history, this thesis is an examination of the thought of one of the most widely known Canadian journalists and social critics of his time, John Wilson Bengough. It examines how his absolute adherence to a consistently worked out Christian vocational ethic influenced not only his own views of society, but in fact represented an ideological commitment to social change that characterized a reform movement of which he was an early and vocal exponent. As the history of what the involved individual thought is often the history of what, at least, an involved segment of the nation thought, so a study of the ideas expressed by J.W. Bengough is a springboard to the understanding of late nineteenth century Canadian social values and cultural peculiarities.

John Wilson Bengough, whose career spanned the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth was a world renowned poet, editor and cartoonist. His fame as caricaturist and littérateur, as contemporaries noted, spread not only from one end of Canada to the other,<sup>1</sup> but to Britain, the United States, and Australia as well. His works were carried by journals as diverse and popular as the Toronto Globe, the Montreal Star, the Single Taxer, the Weekly Templar, the Farmer's Advocate, the Square Deal, the Moon, the Labor Advocate, The Varsity, the Voice, and many others. Internationally, his art and poetry was commonly found in such publications as the Review of Reviews, the Sydney Herald (Australia), the Chicago Public (U.S.A.), and the Daily Express

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<sup>1</sup>For example see comments in E.S. Carswell, Canadian Singers and their Songs, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd, 1925). and W.S. Wallace, ed., The Encyclopedia of Canada, (Toronto: University Associates of Canada Ltd., 1935), and further comments throughout this paper.

(England). Labelled as "one of the ablest cartoonists in the world"<sup>2</sup> by William Stead, reforming editor and author of the controversial book If Christ Came to Chicago, Bengough's extraordinary facility with pen and phrase in commenting upon society in general and Canadian politics in particular prompted a present day commentator to note that he was "the only artist to capture the real John A."<sup>3</sup>

Contemporaries, although recognizing his artistic merits (Bengough was elected a member of the Royal Canadian Academy at its founding), especially praised the didactic messages that his work contained. Championing the causes of political morality, prohibition, the single tax, church reform, and aboriginal rights, Bengough's vocal adherence to absolute ethical principles earned him the admiration of many like-minded men. For example, referring to him as the "Artist of Righteousness", the editor of the Canadian Methodist Magazine, the Rev. W.H. Withrow, approvingly noted that Bengough "uses his crayon as St. George used his spear -- to transfix the dragon Vice."<sup>4</sup>

Today, the Canadian public generally knows little of J.W. Bengough, or of Grip, the magazine he edited -- a journal which contemporaries likened to the best publications of its type in the world:

Grip is the Canadian representative of Punch, Galignani, [and] the Monde Comique.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>W. Stead, in H.J. Morgan, ed. The Canadian Men and Women of the Time, 1st ed. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), p.90.

<sup>3</sup>L. Newman, The John Macdonald Album, (Montreal: Tundra Books, 1974), p. 47.

<sup>4</sup>Rev. W.H. Withrow, "An Artist of Righteousness", Canadian Methodist Magazine (1902), in Bengough Papers.

<sup>5</sup>C.P. Mulvany, Toronto: Past and Present, (Toronto: W.E. Caiger, 1884), p.202.

Indeed, Bengough is not really well-known even in professional historian's circles; only recently have his cartoons become recognized as valuable sources for the study of late nineteenth century Canadian opinion.

In fact, today's historians have only begun to pick up where chroniclers, pamphleters, editors and biographers at the turn of the century left off. For example, Lieutenant Colonel J.P. Macpherson's Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald (1891), and William Buckingham's and George Ross' joint biography of Alexander Mackenzie, The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie: His Life and Times (1892), make use of Bengough's poetic and critical commentaries, giving special prominence to Bengough's eulogistic verse. Ross and Buckingham effectively conclude their exposition in the chapter, "Tributes to his Memories" with the Grip poem of April 23, 1892.

Discovered again by the historians of the fifties, Bengough's cartoons provided illustrative examples for perhaps the greatest and most definitive biography of Macdonald's later years, Donald Creighton's, John A. Macdonald: The Old Chieftan (1955). Following (not unexpectedly) in Creighton's footsteps, later biographers of Canada's first prime minister, those writing for both the specialized and popular markets, including E.C. Guillet, You'll Never Die John A: (1967) L. Newman, The John A. Macdonald Album (1974), and Donald Swainson's John A. Macdonald: The Man and the Politician (1971), have all made extensive use of Bengough's commentaries. And, perhaps fittingly, the second of Mackenzie's biographers (there have been only two to date), Dale Thomson, illustrated his book, Alexander Mackenzie Clear Grit (1960), almost exclusively with Bengough's cartoons and poems.

In the last decade, perhaps spurred on by the impetus of the realization of one hundred years of nationhood, illustrative or analytical examples of the use of Bengough's cartoons and comments to describe Canada's past has increased.

Alongside the biographies using his cartoons have come specialized topical works including G.F. Stanley's "1870's", in J.M.S. Careless and R.C. Brown eds., The Canadians 1867-1967 (1967), and popular works in the "Canadian Centennial Library Series" including such books as William Kilbourn's The Making of a Nation (1965). Many authors, writing texts for use both in secondary schools and universities including J.S. Moir and R.E. Saunder, Northern Destiny (1970), and Peter Waite, in the "Canadian Centary Series", Canada 1874-1896: Arduous Destiny (1971), have seen fit to include many Bengough cartoons and caricatures to illustrate the contemporary view of Canada's past. Even specialized works such as Michael Bliss' study of the Canadian business community, A Living Profit (1974), utilizes Bengough's cartoons as illustrations of past public opinion. And, this small but growing professional and even popular recognition is perhaps best exemplified by the release of a new and abridged edition of Bengough's A Caricature History of Canadian Politics, just this past year.

But, although general awareness of Bengough has grown, especially among interested Canadians after the centennial year; Canadian historical monographs on the life, the thought or the effect of this man are surprisingly absent. In fact, only one scholarly article has been attempted, that by D.R. Keys, entitled "Bengough and Carlyle", as long ago as 1932, not long after Bengough's death. This lack of analytical interest, in a man who has been so widely used by historians as illustrator of past Canadian public opinion, is indeed surprising.

Surely, it is a wonder that the essential Bengough has been ignored. Nothing to date has been written about the man: who he was, what he did, what and why he thought and acted as he did, and what effect he had on his time. True, his cartoons have been used by historians to illustrate contemporary views of past events, but these same historians have never discussed those attitudes and ideas which shaped the nature of Bengough's commentary. Certainly a man who has left such a valuable legacy of social criticism and political commentary,

a man whom his peers recognized as an effective moral and persuasive social and political force, a man whose work present day historians and biographers use to identify and illustrate their interpretations of the past, should himself be studied and the basic tenets of his social thought examined, not only for what that would tell about Bengough, but also for what it would illuminate about the society that spawned and nurtured him.

The purpose of this thesis is to fill that gap.

I must here offer my appreciation to a number of people without whose help I could never have written this account of J. W. Bengough. Special and heartfelt thanks goes to Dr. A. R. Allen, my thesis supervisor, whose insight and excellent criticism often directed me back to the hard road of reality from my wanderings in the swamps and muds of generality and possibility. Also, the staff of the Mills Memorial Library Archives were most helpful, allowing me to poke about at my will, and putting up with my most ludicrous demands. Special acknowledgement must, as well, go to many of my fellow graduate students whose interest in this project provided me with leads on source material, especially Jim Stein who kindly allowed me to read his thesis research notes. And, to my wife, who willingly gave up her summer to help type various drafts of this thesis, I of course can only say "thanks".

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Enumeration of illustrations in each chapter contains chapter number followed by cartoon number within the chapter, while textual references only give the cartoon number (the number following the decimal point).

## CHAPTER I

### ARTIST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

John Wilson Bengough was Canada's greatest political cartoonist . He was also one of the most outspoken and comprehensive Protestant social critics of his time. The first is well-known in some circles, if not now among the general public; the latter is generally unrecognized. For almost two generations, as cartoonist, poet, journalist and lecturer, he not only impaled politicians on a finely pointed wit that now illustrates histories of the time, but, with a moral earnestness that underlay even his most humourous "hits", exposed a broad range of social and economic misconception and malpractice against the background of a consistently worked out Protestant social ethic.

Contemporaries were quite aware of Bengough's power and impact. They noted that his poems and cartoons "made him known from one end of Canada to the other and far beyond."<sup>1</sup> The editor of the Canadian Methodist Magazine observed that "the humourous sketches of no other artist have been so largely reproduced in the Review of Reviews and in journals of Great Britain or the United States, as his."<sup>2</sup> The New York Herald called him "the greatest cartoonist living on this side of the continent",<sup>3</sup> while the Sydney Herald described him as "amongst the leading newspaper artists of the English speaking world."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>E.S. Carswell, Canadian Singers and Their Songs, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1925), p.227.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. W.H. Withrow, "An Artist of Righteousness", Biography and Autobiography, Bengough Papers, Vol. VII, Mills Memorial Library, McMaster University, Hamilton.

<sup>3</sup>New York Herald, as cited in D.R. Keys, "Bengough and Carlyle", The University of Toronto Quarterly 2 (June 1932): p.53.

<sup>4</sup>Sydney Morning Herald, May 3, 1909.

In his prime, he was a political force to be reckoned with. Hector Charlesworth, raconteur and author, noted that "it was admitted that Bengough had contributed much to the Reform victory [in the election of 1873] by his cartoons."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, another commentator stated that "it is confessed on all hands that the Cartoons contributed to the Daily Globe by Mr. J.W. Bengough during the campaign of 1896 did more to win the victory for the Liberal Party than any other single argumentative force."<sup>6</sup> Some would describe his impact as "a healthy political and moral influence"<sup>7</sup> and approving Protestants called him an "artist of righteousness",<sup>8</sup> while others who appreciated his satirical comments on the fads and fancies of the time, complimented Bengough by comparing him to Edward Leach, the great British cartoonist, and the title "the Canadian Leach"<sup>9</sup> was often applied to him. Either way, he "held a unique position in Canadian journalistic and political life",<sup>10</sup> which reveals not only an intriguing personality and the practice and the values of an age, but also, as yet little studied dimensions of the interconnections of religious and social thought of the late nineteenth century.

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<sup>5</sup>H. Charlesworth, The Canadian Scene: Sketches: Political and Historical, (Toronto: The Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd.; 1927), p.128.

<sup>6</sup>Cartoons of the Campaign - 1900, (Toronto: The Poole Publishing Co., 1900).

<sup>7</sup>H.J. Morgan, ed., The Canadian Men and Women of the Time, 2nd ed., (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), pp. 90-91.

<sup>8</sup>Rev. W.H. Withrow, "An Artist of Righteousness", Biography and Autobiography, Bengough Papers, Vol.VII.

<sup>9</sup>Keys, "Bengough and Carlyle", p.54.

<sup>10</sup>Charlesworth, The Canadian Scene, p.125.

John Wilson Bengough was born to immigrant parents in Toronto on April 7, 1851. His father, John Bengough of St. Andrew's Scotland, had recently arrived and found a growing, confident, and bustling city.<sup>11</sup> Toronto had come a long way from the "Muddy York" of the early 19th century. No longer could it be described as "one of the vilest hypochondriac places on the face of the earth",<sup>12</sup> and indeed, visitors were impressed with its elegant streets and spacious, ordered, and prosperous appearance. So taken with his visit to Toronto was the editor of the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, that he firmly stated, "Buffalo, cannot 'make a show' alongside of Toronto."<sup>13</sup>

The dynamic, confident aura of Toronto was indicative of the mood of hopeful optimism generally prevalent in the province. Nearby Whitby, as lake port and commercial centre was, at mid-century a serious rival to Toronto,<sup>14</sup> and soon after the birth of John Jr., John Bengough, "an expert cabinet and stair builder",<sup>15</sup> moved his family to that busy town to take advantage of the many new jobs opening up there. John Bengough was one of the many skilled craftsmen drawn to the town by the opportunities created in the construction of Sheriff Reynold's grandiose residence, Trafalgar Castle, and he remained when the project was completed, opening up a small shop in a town which seemed assured of a prosperous future.

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<sup>11</sup>His mother was Margaret Wilson of Bailieboro Cavan, Ireland.

<sup>12</sup>J. Spelt, Urban Development in South-Central Ontario, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1972), p.94.

<sup>13</sup>W.H. Pearson, Recollections and Records of Toronto of Old, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1914), p.159.

<sup>14</sup>Spelt, Urban Development, p.135.

<sup>15</sup>T. Bengough, "Life and Work of J.W. Bengough, Canada's Cartoonist", Bengough Papers - biographical and descriptive material.

John Wilson Bengough's early life was not out of the ordinary for the son of a successful artisan. He was one of six children,<sup>16</sup> the others being George, an older brother, Thomas -- who became reporter to the Canadian Senate, James, William, and a sister Mary.

The Bengough family was neither very rich nor very poor, living in a one and a half story frame house on one acre of land and owning one cow and one pig, the both of which were calculated in 1871 at a value of twenty-five dollars. The Bengoughs acknowledged the value of education, and all their children attended the Whitby Grammar School where John Jr. won no special notice, being "neither a plodder nor a brilliant scholar".<sup>17</sup>

However mundane his academic career may have been, one incident which foreshadowed Bengough's future vocation indicates that his artistic talent, even at an early age, did not go unobserved. The story goes that the village schoolmaster noticed the youngster's talent and one "Christmas day this pedagogue greatly surprised our [the Bengough] family by stopping in front of our house and leaving for my brother [John Wilson Bengough] a beautiful box of paints."<sup>18</sup> Bengough, in his "Recollections" recalled this incident as instrumental in influencing his later choice of a career, though many another given a box of

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<sup>16</sup>Information contained in the Canadian census does not substantiate the family listing found in Roberts and Tunnell eds., A Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography: The Canadian Who Was Who, pp.45-46, in which George does not appear. The 1861 census lists five children, George, Sarah, John, Thomas, and Mary; and the 1871 census lists George, John, Thomas, James, Mary and William. It seems that George might have been the eldest son, for his age in 1861 is listed as 15, and that of both parents as 40. If the Bengough's conformed to the pattern of marriage and childbirth discovered by Katz and Gagan, George should be the first child. This however still leaves the question of Sarah, and since she is never once mentioned in the Bengough Papers (while the name of George Bengough appears as a partner in the firm of "Bengough Bros."), it seems likely that the census taker made a mistake in listing her as a child. She may, in fact, have been a relative or a servant. (P.A.O., The Canada Manuscript Census, Enumeration District One - The Centre Ward, Town of Whitby, 1861 and 1871.)

<sup>17</sup>T. Bengough, "Life and Work of J.W. Bengough", Bengough Papers.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

paints hardly rose to such distinction, let alone found in it the beginning of a lifework.

John Wilson Bengough grew up in a home of religious convictions. Family instruction in Christian ethics was further strengthened by his exposure to the local journalism of his formative years. As a youngster he was a "voracious reader"<sup>19</sup> and consumed the regular issues of the local newspaper. The Whitby Gazette was a small weekly journal, reporting, in the main, local news, but filled with anecdotes and maxims which were intended to instruct readers, young and old alike, in the mores of a moral life. In this, the Gazette continued the course set by its founder, B. Robinson, who in 1871 founded the Canadian Presbyterian and later assisted in the editorship of both the Dominion Presbyterian and Goldwin Smith's Week.

The themes these maxims continually stressed were the necessity of hard work, the glory of truth, and the sublimity of service:

If you would relish your food, labour for it, if you would enjoy your raiment, pay for it before you wear it, if you would sleep soundly, take a clear conscience to bed with you.<sup>20</sup>

and:

Real Heroes - Men who succeed in removing Wants from the creation, falsehoods from our memory, and disgraces from our nature, are to the realm of truth what the heroes of theology are to the primitive world - they lessen the number of monsters on the earth.<sup>21</sup>

The Gazette often iterated the didactic worth of magazines and newspapers, singing ethical praises of the journalistic career to an impressionable lad who had been raised in the melody of the Protestant ethic.

We sing the honour of the plough  
And honour of the Press -  
Two noble instruments of toil  
With each a power to bless.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Whitby Gazette, September 30, 1863.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

The bone - the nerve of this fast age  
 True wealth of human kind-  
 One tills the ever generous earth.  
 The other tills the mind.<sup>22</sup>

Bengough, later on in life, restated these same themes with regularity in his advice to young people.

You have hands. Use them in doing deeds of kindness and generosity.  
 You have feet. Use them in going on errands of charity and helpfulness.  
 You have a head with brains. Use it for thinking good thoughts and the tongue in it for speaking words of truth and good will. You have a body with a heart in it. Cultivate feelings of friendship and happiness.<sup>23</sup>

It was during his school days that Bengough developed his lifelong love for art. Throughout his academic career he paid more attention to his sketching than his school work, and indeed, he himself noted that he could not "claim to have been a diligent student."<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, he won a proficiency award, which, he said, was "more of a testimony to the liberal views of the examiners on the subject of proficiency, than to his own deserts." Drawing was a pleasant and convenient way of passing the time or escaping from the tedium of uninteresting lessons, and was, of course, a legitimate highlight of the "golden Friday afternoon" when the strict curriculum of the week was put aside, and the students of the country school were allowed to follow the more relaxing pursuits of sketching, poetry, and composition.<sup>25</sup>

Upon graduating from Grammar School, Bengough "flopped about considerably"<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Feb. 4, 1863. These moral maxims were not peculiar to the Whitby paper. In fact, many newspapers carried these poignant messages. For example, the Brampton Standard, July 30, 1857 noted: "The best capital that a young man can start with in his life is industry, good sense, and the Globe noted: "Strive to do your duty and you will soon discover what stuff you are made of. But what is your duty? To fulfill the claims of the day." (July 1, 1876).

<sup>23</sup>J.W. Bengough, Chalk Talks, (Toronto: Musson Book Co. Ltd., 1922), p.154.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p.3.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>T. Bengough, "Life and Work of J.W. Bengough", Bengough Papers.



obtaining temporary employment as a photographer's assistant, and even attempting to study law. However, he did not stay long at any one occupation, and eventually, his love of writing and the "mysterious charm"<sup>27</sup> of the printer's ink led him to a job as a type setter with the Whitby Gazette.

While employed as a "printer's devil" in the composing room, Bengough satisfied his desire for writing by submitting local interest stories and short articles, and when editor George Ham, later of C.P.R. fame, issued a daily bulletin of four pages during the height of popular excitement over the Franco-Prussian War, he engaged Bengough to contribute a serialized novel. This addition to the Gazette, vividly entitled "The Murderer's Scalp", or "The Shrieking Ghost of the Bloody Den", caused quite a popular stir, and the success of this venture gave added impetus to Bengough's determination to enter the field of journalism at the editorial level.

During his tenure with the Whitby paper, Bengough had the opportunity to read the many exchange newspapers and magazines delivered to the Gazette offices, and his favourite soon became Harper's Weekly, for it carried Nast's cartoons. Thomas Nast, the premier American political cartoonist of the 19th century, became Bengough's "beau ideal",<sup>28</sup> and Nast's work and success convinced Bengough "that there was a great and influential field known as cartooning in conjunction with journalism...."<sup>29</sup> Of this period in his life Bengough writes:

I divided my time between mechanical duties for sordid wages and poetry for the good of humanity, and meanwhile I kept an eye on Thomas Nast the cartoonist.<sup>30</sup>

Nast, who "saw issues in terms of a moral crusade of absolute right against

<sup>27</sup> Bengough, Chalk Talks, p.6.

<sup>28</sup> T. Bengough, "Life and Work of J.W. Bengough", Bengough Papers.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Bengough, Chalk Talks, p.9.

subject wrong and translated his beliefs into unequivocal, graphic statements"<sup>31</sup> was most admired by Bengough for his cutting, ethically inspired, pictorial portrayal of social ills. Most impressed with Nast's deep moral convictions, and his damning denunciations of political graft and corruption in the famous "Tweed" cartoons, Bengough decided to "emulate Nast in the field of Canadian politics."<sup>32</sup>

With this goal in mind, in 1871, at the age of twenty, Bengough went to Toronto to seek his fortune, and managed to secure a position as reporter for the Globe. However, he found, to his dismay, that there was "at that time no opportunity for cartoon work on the Globe, or indeed on any daily paper in Canada."<sup>33</sup> To satisfy his artistic designs he enrolled at the Ontario School of Art, from which he soon withdrew, for he found the pedantic activity annoying and totally unsuitable to his restless temperament. Upon leaving the art school, Bengough may have become resigned to forgetting his ambitions of imitating the critical moral graphics of Nast had he not, almost by chance, successfully drawn a comic caricature of James Beatty, the editor of the Leader, that "very badly printed organ of the Conservative party."<sup>34</sup> The success of this cartoon, as expressed both in the adulation of friends and his realization of the mechanical feasibility of lithographic printing, inspired what Bengough later termed "a happy thought" -- "Why not start a weekly comic paper with lithographed cartoons?"<sup>35</sup> Out of this speculation came Grip, the first number of which appeared on May 24, 1873.

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<sup>31</sup>C. Visson, Thomas Nast - Political Cartoonist, (Athens Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1967), p.6.

<sup>32</sup>Charlesworth, The Canadian Scene, p.128.

<sup>33</sup>J.W. Bengough, "Recollections of a Cartoonist", Bengough Papers, Vol.VII.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Bengough, Chalk Talks, p.12.

Grip, so named after the raven in Charles Dickens' Barnaby Rudge,<sup>36</sup> continued for twenty-one years as a weekly journal devoted to independent criticism of the contemporary social and political scene. The first issue stressed this essential of independence: "Grip will be entirely independent and impartial, always and on all subjects."<sup>37</sup> The basis of Grip's criticism was also clearly spelled out: a retelling of an Aesop Fable made it clear that Grip expected honesty to be the basis of all political action. "Honest men, like piano-fortes, are grand, square and upright."<sup>38</sup>

This morally couched impartiality was consistently reiterated in the early volumes of the journal. On July 12, 1873, Grip stated: "Our cartoons will be of the most important current topics of the day, . . . neither fearing nor currying favour, we intend to use the lash of ridicule in whatever direction abuses call for it."<sup>39</sup> Likewise, on September 13, 1873, under the new editorship of "Barnaby Rudge" (J.W. Bengough), it exclaimed:

"Grip is politically independent and unfettered; and intends so to remain. He will never be neutral where his voice may serve the right . . . His cartoons he will strive to have essentially true, whatever else may be lacking."<sup>40</sup>

Grip, under Bengough's direction (he contributed the leading cartoons and controlled the editorial policy of the magazine until August 1892), pronounced itself to be politically independent, but this political independence, based on the advocacy of ethical direction in political life, was not to be taken as requiring Grip to desist from supporting any political party on any given issue. On the contrary, Grip editorialized:

<sup>36</sup>Contemporaries noted that "Bengough was all his life a Dickens enthusiast," Charlesworth, The Canadian Scene, p.127.

<sup>37</sup>Grip, May 24, 1873.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., July 12, 1873.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Sept. 13, 1873.

Grip will continue to pursue a course of strict unswerving independence -- not that pseudo-independence which consists in steering a middle course exactly between the two opposing parties, being 'on the fence' in popular parlance; but by upholding that party which is in the right, on each particular question as it arises.<sup>41</sup>

Grip, from its very inception assumed that there was always a clear right and wrong in every political situation, and saw its role as the moral referee of political issues. It reserved for itself the right to judge the participants and condemn or acquit either party at its discretion.

This political impartiality and the self-appointed role of moral judge of the social and political process was the singular feature of Grip throughout the period of its existence. It was a period when Canadian newspapers were beginning to shake free of political partisanship, with new popular papers like the Montreal Star and the Toronto Telegram soon to make their appearance. Grip had all the conviction of the older press and all the independence of the new.

Although Peter Waite, Canadian historian and author, charges that Grip's "sympathies were clearly for the many causes that the Liberal party espoused"<sup>42</sup> and Hector Charlesworth in his caustic biographical sketch of Bengough in The Canadian Scene notes that Bengough "shared the views of the Brown School of Reformers that "John A." was the root of all evil and the Tories incorrigibly perverse and wicked"<sup>43</sup>, careful analysis of both the cartoon and editorial content of Grip indicates that these criticisms missed the point. Although Bengough did indeed repeatedly berate 'Sir John A.' and the Conservative party (and not because they didn't deserve it), his criticism

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., July 26, 1873.

<sup>42</sup>P.B. Waite, "Sir Oliver Mowat's Canada: Reflections on an Un-Victorian Society", in D. Swainson, ed., Oliver Mowat's Ontario, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1972), p.29.

<sup>43</sup>Charlesworth, The Canadian Scene, p.128.

was always based on the ethical standards by which he measured political issues. When the Liberal party, or individual members of that party transgressed the lines of political honesty, they did not go un-noticed. As Bengough himself put it:

I suppose it is inevitable that some bias in favour of Liberal principles must have been manifest, because all my personal instincts were then, as they still are, in a democratic direction... I was not blind to the shortcomings of the Liberal party however, and took a special pleasure in lampooning the Liberals if they gave me a chance.<sup>44</sup>

Grip's political commentary did indeed follow the ethical lines of political honesty that Bengough demanded, and both political parties came in for their share of criticism. Sir John A. Macdonald was castigated in both sketch and verse for his political "faux pas",

There was a Premier named John A.  
Who, wishing in office to stay,  
To one Allan did barter a great railway charter ---  
And dated his ruin from that day.<sup>45</sup>

However, even those men whom Bengough knew and admired came in for their share of criticism when they seemed to stray from the "straight and narrow". George Brown's abrupt loss of reforming fervor upon ascension to power was insightfully and caustically noted:

There was an old Humbug, and what do you think,  
The Globe which he ran gave him victuals and drink;  
Now that Government pap forms part of his diet,  
This raving Reformer is rather more quiet.<sup>46</sup>

The statements of Grip's impartiality received little support from the Conservative party. In a speech before the House of Commons, Charles Tupper once remarked that the last letter in the journal's name should be changed to a "t". All criticism did not come from the Conservatives

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<sup>44</sup>Bengough, "Recollections of a Cartoonist", Bengough Papers, Vol.VII.

<sup>45</sup>Grip, Jan. 10, 1874.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., Feb. 7, 1874.

however --- Edward Blake, when leader of the Liberal party, incensed at a particularly caustic cartoon, "went so far as to order his paper stopped."<sup>47</sup> This criticism, coming as it did from both sides of the political spectrum, vindicates Principal George Grant's analysis of Grip and the ethical basis of its commentary. "Grip", he wrote:

is impartial in a country where it is very hard to be impartial, and harder still to have your impartiality acknowledged. Grip is also patriotic . . . . He is scrupulously clean. He never sneers. In the best sense of the word, he is religious.<sup>48</sup>

Grip made its success on the issues of the day. Ernst Kris, art historian and past director of child psychiatry at Yale University, in his book Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art, argues that "the comic, in its tendentious forms cannot really find a mark where indifference prevails."<sup>49</sup> The period 1870 to 1890 was one in which political issues were the entertainment, the business, and the focus of the day, and newspapers were the locus of passionate attention. "What else was there to break the daily round and take men briefly outside themselves and the little world they moved in, but newspapers and politics?"<sup>50</sup> It was impossible for anyone with an awareness of events in Canada to be indifferent about politics. Grip, for its part, rode to popularity on the greatest political issue of the day --- the "Pacific Scandal".

Grip's first few issues received no great notice, and not until the rumors of political corruption in high places became the full-blown spectacle

<sup>47</sup>T. Bengough, "Life and Work of J.W. Bengough", Bengough Papers.

<sup>48</sup>George Grant, preface to A Caricature History of Canadian Politics, J.W. Bengough, ed., (Toronto: The Grip Publishing Co., 1886), p.8.

<sup>49</sup>E. Kris, Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art, (New York: International Universities Press Inc., 1952), p.185.

<sup>50</sup>Waite, "Reflections on an Un-Victorian Society", p.26.

of the "Pacific Scandal" was the success of Grip assured. Bengough candidly acknowledged the fortunate timing of events:

There was no great public furore over the initial number and it is hard to say what might have been but for, [sic] the sudden occurrence of a great political sensation which is now known in history as the "Pacific Scandal."<sup>51</sup>

Bengough's cartooning, aided to no small degree by the remarkable ease with which 'Sir John A.'s' features lent themselves to caricature, castigating the political principles of the prime minister and party alike, caught the public eye and the public interest, and Bengough's career as a major public moral critic was launched.<sup>52</sup>

The election of 1872 was a crucial one for the Conservative party. Faced with the liabilities of its record -- the Riel question, the discontent of the Maritime Provinces, and the failure to obtain any real concessions in the Treaty of Washington, electoral defeat seemed more than a mere possibility. The Tory party fought a hard campaign, a campaign in which money was freely spent, substantial amounts of which were donated to Macdonald by Hugh Allan, the Montreal business magnate who immediately after the Conservative victory became the president of the new Canadian Pacific Railway Company. The leaking of the Macdonald - Allan correspondence, and the ensuing allegations of bribery and political corruption, made even the more vocal by Macdonald's seeming attempts to avoid the question altogether, created the great controversy which eventually led to his resignation and the ensuing victory of the Liberal party.

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<sup>51</sup>Bengough, Chalk Talks, p.13.

<sup>52</sup>"The weekly issues of the youthful editor were poorly received at first, but the terrific treatment which he administered to the "Pacific Scandal" soon made him famous." (C.G.D. Roberts and A.L. Tunnell, eds., A Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography: The Canadian Who Was Who, Vol.I. (Toronto: Trans-Canada Press, 1934), p.45.)

Bengough's great moral fervour, graphically translated into caricature, presented a striking indictment of Macdonald and his political tactics. The fact that Macdonald seemed to have dishonestly attained office, and the delays he created in the investigation of the "Scandal", provided the fuel for Bengough's moral fire.

Bengough saw the issue in absolute moral terms. Macdonald and Allen were villains, the Grits who had exposed the nefarious scheme were the heroes of the hour:

Horrible Pacific Scandal! Base Sir Hugh! Corrupt Sir John! Worthy-Honest-Great McMullen! Purest-motivated Huntingdon!<sup>53</sup>

The impact of Bengough's cartoons was immediate and widespread. The Grip cartoon of August 23, 1873, entitled "The Beauties of a Royal Commission; When shall we three meet again?" (see Cartoon 1) was described in detail in newspapers throughout the country. The Toronto Globe commented:

Altogether it is a very clever piece of drawing. The sting lies in its truth. Judge, prosecutor, and culprit all in one. A good jest indeed! Why should we not all laugh?<sup>54</sup>

The recognition of Bengough's graphic critique went right to the floor of the House. L.S. Huntington, who had instigated the demands for the inquiry into Macdonald's actions which launched the "Pacific Scandal", in a speech to the house in late October of 1873, emphasized the essential truth which Bengough had so strikingly portrayed:

Those excellent men -- the Commissioners -- those impartial men whose duty it was to save the honor of the Government -- were well aware of having a part to play in that celebrated cartoon, in which the Right Hon., the Prime Minister, was represented as being on the bench, in the dock, and prosecuting the criminal. It was called "When shall we three meet again?" Oh! what a hangdog look had that criminal in the dock (laughter) How sage, wise, dispassionate, and blind was the

<sup>53</sup>Grip, Aug. 30, 1873.

<sup>54</sup>Globe, "Scrapbook", undated clipping, Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.





1.6 THE BEAUTIES OF A ROYAL COMMISSION.

Grib. Aug. 23, 1873 "WHEN SHALL WE THREE MEET AGAIN?"

judge on the bench; and what a flippant, spruce, determined, plucky, and resolute appearance had the fellow who, as Attorney-General, was prosecuting the prisoner. (great laughter) This is scarcely a caricature, but is really a living representation of what actually took place.<sup>55</sup>

Criticism of Macdonald's moral principles was nowhere more striking than in the Grip cartoon of August 16, 1873 -- "Whither are we Drifting". "John A." is pictured tramping on the figure of virtue, Canada, and on the basis of that virtue, the Holy Bible. As he rides roughshod over truth and morality he cries, "these hands are clean", while plainly written on his left palm is the damning evidence of the infamous telegram, "send me another \$10,000."

This single cartoon (see cartoon 2) sums up Bengough's approach to the issue of the scandal. He was not motivated by party loyalties. He was driven to criticize by his total acceptance of the idea of the necessity of moral values in politics, a point of view which caused him to view issues in terms of absolute rights or wrongs. Bengough could give no quarter to John A. Macdonald. 'Sir John A.' had committed a grave error, an error not of a political, but of a moral nature. This was the type of error that could not be ignored.

Bengough's ethical approach to political issues came at a time when politics in Canada was based on tactics of deceit, patronage, and influence peddling, when "an honest politician, in the cynicism of the times, was one who stayed bought."<sup>56</sup> There was, as Waite says, "nothing to choose between Conservatives or Liberals, equally hungry, equally vicious, and equally squalid."<sup>57</sup> Flagrant misbehaviour of public figures was common and widely

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Grip, Nov. 1, 1873.

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J.H. Gray, Booze, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1972), p.174.

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P.B. Waite, Canada 1871-1896: Arduous Destiny, The Canadian Centenary Series, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1971), p.56.



WHITHER ARE WE DRIFTING?

accepted. Even the electoral process was corrupt, and attempts to change it were viewed with suspicion by politicians. George Brown, in a letter to Alexander Mackenzie, complained that the introduction of the secret ballot had lessened the chances of a Grit victory, for now a voter could cast his vote in private. No longer could the party be certain of the votes it bought.

The ballot has stripped us of the moral controul [sic] we had over electors and has I fear inaugurated a lower form of political warfare than before.<sup>58</sup>

The sordid reality of political manoeuvring came under fire from Bengough's pen. In poetry, prose and sketch he argued that the mores of political life should follow the ethical strictures of Christianity. Only when politicians accepted Christian morality could the country prosper and grow.

So long as we have men amongst us of clean hands and pure hearts --- men who believe in the God of Nature and are not ashamed or afraid to acknowledge His laws as the rule of their political action --- Canada is safe.<sup>59</sup>

This point of view was also shared by one of his well-known friends, Principal Grant of Queen's University, who noted that "public policy should be honest, just and in accordance with the will and purpose of God."<sup>60</sup>

However, it was not only the office holders that Bengough and Grant addressed their message to. It was to the electorate as a whole. Grant iterated this direction when he stated that "the tone of political life is not high, and recent revelations show that there is a wide-spread corruption in the electorate."<sup>61</sup> Bengough, in the medium of the pen, with his moral

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<sup>58</sup>P.A.C., Alexander Mackenzie Papers, Brown to Mackenzie, Nov. 13, 1875, cited in Waite, Arduous Destiny, P.24.

<sup>59</sup>Grip, Jan. 23, 1886.

<sup>60</sup>G. Grant, As cited in Grant and Hamilton, George Munroe Grant, (Toronto: M<sup>o</sup>rang and Co. Ltd., 1905), p.351.

<sup>61</sup>G. Grant, "The Religious Condition of Canada", Queen's Quarterly 1 (April 1894); p.319.

condemnation of Macdonald's actions, sought not merely to expose political corruption, but to teach a moral lesson to everyone who would look at his drawings.<sup>62</sup>

Bengough's moral commentaries did not begin and end with destructive criticism. He upheld, as Grip had promised, those men or that party which followed the mores of virtuous political action. For Alexander Mackenzie, that "dour and righteous Scot, quick and confident in debate and of angular honesty",<sup>63</sup> Bengough had a great admiration. Bengough's admiration for Mackenzie arose from Mackenzie's ethical conduct in political affairs. Upon Mackenzie's victory in the 1878 election, Bengough portrayed him as an up-right mason, and caricatured him as a virtuous politician embodying the spiritual values of the honest workingman (see cartoon 3). Through his hard honest work, Mackenzie followed the ordinance of God, and thus took on the shining moral character of an honest politician and true statesman.

He was a Christian of that old time sort ---  
 Unfashionable now and growing rare ---  
 Who knew no sacred barr's from secular,  
 But worshipped God by doing honest work!  
 Whether with mason's tools as artisan  
 Or in high place of state.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>The condemnation of government corruption was to become a common theme in the rhetoric of reform. The "reform mayors" of Toronto, Howland and Oliver, rode into office on promises of weeding out municipal corruption. The more militant labour movement for whom the Labor Advocate spoke regarded "both parties as utterly corrupt and bent only on the retention or acquirement of power" (Labor Advocate, Jan. 23, 1891). However, the Advocate mistakenly noted that the "Dominion Government is corrupt and nobody particularly cares". When that line was written, the government may indeed still have been corrupt, but Bengough had been waging a graphic campaign against political corruption for some twenty years.

<sup>63</sup>W.L. Morton, The Kingdom of Canada, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1972), p.346.

<sup>64</sup>Grip, April 23, 1892.



I.3 - THE PREMIER'S MODEL;  
OR, "IMPLEMENTS TO THOSE WHO CAN USE THEM."

CANADA—"WELL AND BRAVELY DONE, MACKENZIE; NOW STAND BY THAT POLICY, AND I'M WITH YOU ALWAYS!"  
Grip, November 29, 1873.

Mackenzie's policies were good, for Mackenzie himself was good, honest, just, hardworking; and on his death, April 17, 1882, Bengough penned the following lines of highest tribute.

His amplest service to the land was this --  
 Beyond, above the toils he undertook,  
 And those he finished --- be not one forgot!  
 He gave the world an answer in his life  
 To that smug lie of this degenerate age --  
 "An honest Politician cannot be."<sup>65</sup>

Bengough's impartial moral criticism extended beyond the political arena, and he commented on the most emotionally charged social issues of the day. His pen graphically denounced bigotry and dogmatism as it appeared in the tense arena of religious animosity.

Although he considered himself a Protestant, Bengough was not a doctrinally bound follower of a particular church or sect. He advocated religious toleration and personal freedom from dogmatic authority. Bengough argued for the liberal concept of the separation of church and state, and himself was "a Presbyterian who felt equally at home with all churches."<sup>66</sup> As such, he plunged into the thorny debates on the church-oriented issues of the 1870's, and first made his plea for toleration and civil liberties in his cartoon comments on the celebrated Guibord case.

Nineteenth century Ontario was permeated by the ideas of the Orange order.<sup>67</sup> Ontarians, in the main, English, rural and Protestant, had little use for the Roman Catholic religion with its ultramontane features and its obvious French support; and religious animosity was further intensified by complementary cleavages along racial lines. The Roman Catholic position was

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<sup>65</sup>Grip, April 30, 1892.

<sup>66</sup>Morgan, Men and Women, pp.90-91.

<sup>67</sup>For a good general discussion of this topic see Hereward Senior, "Orangeism in Ontario Politics, 1872-1896", in Donald Swainson, ed., Oliver Mowat's Ontario.

no less strident. When the "Orange Order Incorporation Bill" was being debated before parliament, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Hamilton, John Farrell, wrote Macdonald threatening: "unless that incorporation bill is kicked out of the Dominion Parliament, as it should be, you will not have a Catholic supporter of your administration."<sup>68</sup> It was in this milieu of religious intolerance and animosity, that Bengough made his appeals for toleration, brotherhood, and unity.

Bengough, basing his statements in his own ethics, argued that all creeds and racial groups should have equal rights before civil law. Consequently, no one religious or racial group could dictate to the state. This applied to any group whether Irish and Protestant, or French and Roman Catholic. The first graphic statement of this view came in Bengough's comments on the Guibord case.

The open warfare in Quebec between the Roman Catholic Church on the one hand, and the liberal idealism of the middle nineteenth century on the other, led to the founding of a radical political movement, the members of which became known as the Rouges. Conflict between the Rouges and the Church was intensified when the Bishop of Montreal attempted to suppress the clubs -- Instituts Canadiens -- which were the locus of the movement. In 1869, the Institutes were banned, a decision upheld by the Vatican Council of 1870. One example of the fighting between the two was well illustrated in the case of Joseph Guibord.

Guibord was a member of the Institute, and on his death, the Church insisted that he be given a civil burial, thereby forbidding his interment in the consecrated ground of a Roman Catholic cemetery. However, legal action aiming at a reversal of the Church's decision resulted in a Privy Council judgment of May 6, 1870, in which the Church was ordered to inter Guibord in consecrated

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<sup>68</sup>H. Senior, "Orangeism in Ontario Politics, 1872-1896", p.138.



ground and pay the court and funeral costs. The first attempt to bury Guibord on September 2, 1875, in accordance with the court order was interrupted by crowds who would not let the interment take place.

At this point, Bengough invoked the full fury of his pen. Basing his argument on the supremacy of the state and the necessity of obedience to a civil law which treats all persons equally regardless of religious creed, Bengough jumped into the emotional battle with his cartoon (see cartoon 4) "Civil Law Must Triumph". Queen Victoria is pictured as ordering the Church to "Open the gate" of the cemetery. Isonomic civil law, not dogmatic ecclesiastical doctrine, must be the ruling basis of society.<sup>69</sup>

Bengough's criticism was not a religiously bigoted attack on the Roman Catholic Church, but a criticism which sprang out of an ethical conviction irrespective of definite religious affiliation. This same ethical conviction was invoked in October of 1875 when Bengough illustrated the right of the Roman Church to hold its religious processions without fear of Orange Protestant interruption.

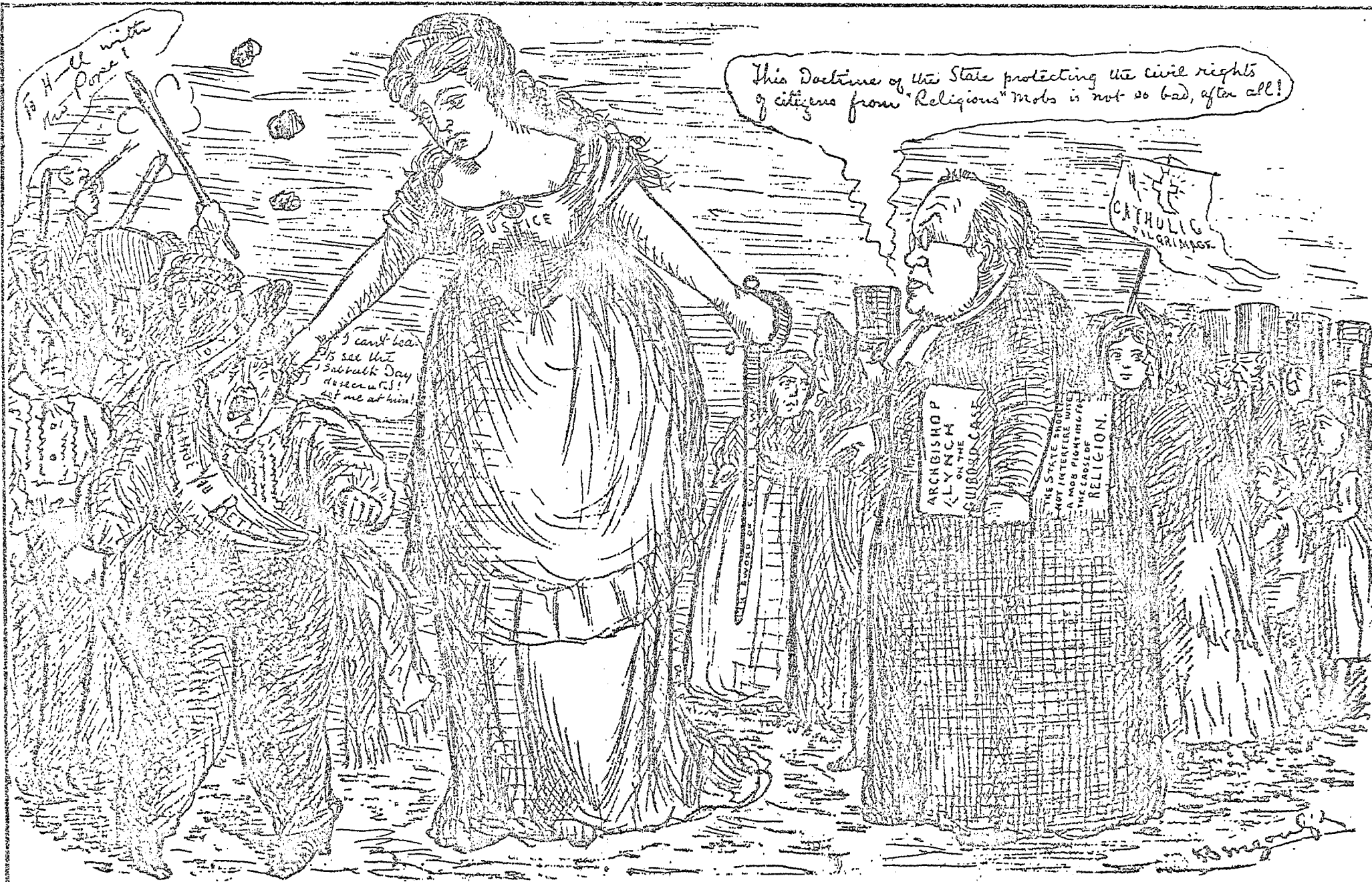
The Grip cartoon (see cartoon 5) of October ninth, "Guibordism Reversed --- Civil Law Must Triumph", criticizes from the same ethical basis of the necessity of a protective isonomic civil law. "Justice", holding the "sword of civil law" is defending the religious freedoms of the Roman Church from the rabid threats of the Orange Order. Archbishop Lynch, a vocal supporter

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<sup>69</sup>Not until November 16 of the same year, and only with the personal intervention of Lord Dufferin was the re-interment carried out in peace. Although the case appeared to result in victory for the state, the last say went to the Church, when the bishop de-consecrated the particular piece of earth where Guibord's body lay.



# CIVIL LAW MUST TRIUMPH!



GUIBORDISM REVERSED--CIVIL LAW MUST TRIUMPH!

of the ultramontane position in the Guibord case, is illustrated as realizing the value of state directed civil law, saying: "this Doctrine of the state protecting the civil rights of citizens from "Religious Hobs" is not so bad after all!"

Bengough did not "take sides" on religious grounds, but advocated the freedom of creeds under the state direction of an equitable civil law. Though a Protestant himself he was not a defender of narrow religiosity, nor was he a critic of all that was not Protestant. Even to those whom he on occasion criticized he gave credit when he felt credit was due. Archbishop Lynch, Archbishop of Toronto, was, in the Guibord case, severely castigated by Bengough's pen. However, Bengough also realized the spiritual and social contributions of the man, contributions which cut across denominational boundaries, and on the occasion of Lynch's death, he penned the following lines:

And we, not of his fold.  
We too, have known his kindly Irish heart,  
And in his people's sorrow claim a part,  
As when his praise is told.<sup>70</sup>

Bengough deplored religious conflict and hoped for a unity of purpose amongst differing religious denominations. He advocated a brotherhood of churches based not on a dogmatic creed, but on the bond of fellowship in the common God. Poetically, he put it this way:

"Peace", says one above the clamor  
"Listen children to my word  
He who takes the sword of battle  
He shall perish by the sword . . .

God is love! In peace together  
Live as children loved by me  
Green and Orange blend together  
In a wealth of charity.

Let the dead past bury its dead  
If ye love me keep my laws;  
Fire and sword and words of hatred  
Never once advanced my cause.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>J.W. Bengough, "Archbishop Lynch", in Motley: Verses Grave and Gay, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1895), p.56.

<sup>71</sup>Grip, Aug. 4, 1877.

The brotherhood of men under the acceptance of the common God, the supremacy of a tolerant civil law respecting and guaranteeing the rights of all creeds, and the protection of religious freedoms were the messages Bengough artistically presented. These were both the principles which he believed in, and the precepts which he attempted to teach.

The case of religious toleration was, in Bengough's eyes, not only an inter-church issue, but one which applied to the interpretation of doctrine within each church itself. Nowhere was this argument more forcefully put than in his critical comments on the Macdonnell case of September 1875 to May 1877, a case which received widespread attention in both the secular and religious press, and which threatened to destroy the very fabric of the newly constructed union of the Presbyterian churches.

The Macdonnell controversy commenced innocently enough, when on September 26, 1875, the Reverend D. J. Macdonnell of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Toronto delivered a sermon in which he voiced doubts on the doctrine of unconditional and conscious eternity of punishment for all those who died impenitent, as it was stated in the "Westminster Confession of Faith." Macdonnell determined that he himself might preach a hope of future pardon, for the Westminster Confession was no guarantee of a true interpretation of scripture: "what God may do hereafter, is apparently not among the things revealed or intended to be known."<sup>72</sup>

He was charged with preaching doctrine at variance with the Confession, and a special investigating committee of the Toronto Presbytery recommended that unless he recant his views he should be expelled from the Presbyterian ministry. Macdonnell replied in a statement of recantation, but still upheld what he felt to be his right, to interpret scripture free from dogmatic stricture.

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<sup>72</sup> Christian Guardian, May 3, 1876.

In regard to the Eternity of Future Punishment, I have arrived at no conclusion at variance with the doctrine of the Church. I do not conceal that I have difficulties or perplexities on the subject; but I adhere to the teaching of the Confession of Faith in reference to it, expressed as it is, almost entirely in the language of the scripture.<sup>73</sup>

The Presbytery was not satisfied; the offending phrase "expressed as it is almost entirely in the language of the scripture" being taken to imply the invalidity of the Confession. The issue dragged out until a compromise solution was worked out at the Synod level in May of 1877.

This essentially internal church conflict had an audience and effect far beyond the boundaries of the church walls. The Christian Guardian spoke for the popular interest in the case when it editorialized:

The Protestant Churches all occupy similar positions, and aim at similar objects. Anything, therefore which disturbs one interests all the rest. We cannot altogether feel that this is a matter which concerns only Presbyterians. The great interest which the public have taken in the case shows that this is not so.<sup>74</sup>

The question was not the validity of Macdonnell's statement, but the issue of doctrinal obedience. Was the minister of the church (and then, by extension, possibly the members and adherents) bound by church dogma when his conscience dictated otherwise? The whole foundation of Canadian Protestantism seemed to be at stake.

The Canadian Baptist showed no sympathy for Macdonnell, arguing that it was impossible for a Presbyterian minister to deny the Confession's teachings and still remain a Presbyterian minister. "Has a man a right to engage as a servant, pocket the wages of his employer, and at the same time act contrary to his orders in respect to the very work he was engaged to do?" it asked. "Every Presbyterian minister is required to give an unqualified adhesion to the Westminster Confession of Faith."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Globe, May 4, 1876.

<sup>74</sup> Christian Guardian, May 10, 1876.

<sup>75</sup> Canadian Baptist, June 29, 1876.

The Christian Guardian, although acknowledging the virtue of Macdonnell's position and the necessity for periodic revision of doctrine, nevertheless concluded that "it is for the authorities of the church to make the revision, and not for each individual to omit what he pleases."<sup>76</sup> Even the Globe although it professed to be "predisposed to take a favourable view of Mr. Macdonnell and his position", could not understand why he wouldn't recant in full, and upheld the action of the Presbytery.<sup>77</sup>

Support for Macdonnell was not extensive, but was advocated on two grounds: the ability of the minister involved, and the necessity for open-minded discussion of doctrine in the Church. George Grant, in a letter to the authoress Agnes Machar, noted that even though he did not agree with Macdonnell, and thought his actions indiscreet and ill-advised, would, if the matter went into the church courts "back him through and through." "He is too honest", Grant wrote, "too able, too noble a fellow to have a hair of his head harmed by fools."<sup>78</sup>

Bengough, arguing from his position of the necessity for religious tolerance, castigated the Toronto Presbytery for its condemnation of Macdonnell. In a Grip cartoon, November 20, 1875, the Toronto Presbytery is pictured in papal habit defending the infallibility of its doctrine. The utter ludicrousness of the stand is further emphasized by the presence of Archbishop Lynch who waves a Vatican Decree and solemnly declares, "this is infallible too." The Globe is portrayed as a blind George Brown who cannot see the dogmatic shackles which chain the view that individual freedom to search for divine truth in the Bible is the basis of the Protestant faith.

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<sup>76</sup>Christian Guardian, May 3, 1876.

<sup>77</sup>Globe, May 4, 1876.

<sup>78</sup>As cited in Grant and Hamilton, George Munroe Grant, p.153.





LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE  
AND  
AN OPEN BIBLE THE BASIS  
OF PROTESTANTISM. ROBB.

DELIVERY OF PRESBYTERY.  
THE WHOLE TRUTH IS STATED  
BY THE WESTMINSTER CON-  
FESION OF FAITH. PROGRESSIVE  
FAITH IS NOT PROGRESSIVE.  
THEREFORE THERE IS NO  
APPEAL FROM THE  
CONFESION TO THE  
BIBLE. I

I.6 - PROTESTANT INFALLIBILITY;  
OR, IS THE "CONFESION" ABOVE THE BIBLE ?



Bengough's convictions, his belief in religious toleration and the higher moral value of individual conscience over doctrinal statement was the source of his criticism of the church to which he belonged. His moral views remained consistent, whether in criticism of Romanist ultramontism, Orange bigotry, or Presbyterian doctrinalism. Bengough maintained a consistent stand throughout the differing religious issues, and he hoped, through the medium of his cartooning, not only to influence the specific cases upon which he commented, but to inspire the public to accept the ideals which he himself advocated.

Bengough saw himself as an impartial moral critic, ever ready to take up the case of the "right" no matter how unpopular that position might be. He judged the political and social issues of his day in the forum of journalistic criticism, and always from the same set of ethical standards, based on his understanding of Christian morality. He was an advocate of "true liberalism" --- "the desire to be fair to all creeds and to respect the rights of both the minority and the majority";<sup>79</sup> and it was in this respect that the Reverend Dr. Withrow, editor of the Methodist Magazine, noted Bengough was "always on the right side of every moral question."<sup>80</sup>

John Wilson Bengough, as Canada's premier cartoonist, retained religious principles he initially had imbibed in his youth, and utilized them as the foundation of his caricature critiques. His understanding of political events in terms of "absolute rights and abject wrongs," his championship of the ideals of brotherhood, toleration, and freedom from dogmatic authority, coloured his perception of contemporary events and

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<sup>79</sup>A.M. Evans, "Oliver Mowat: Nineteenth-Century Ontario Liberal", in D. Swainson, ed., Oliver Mowat's Ontario, p.45.

<sup>80</sup>Withrow, "An Artist of Righteousness", Bengough Papers, Vol.VII.

provided an unshakable foundation for his graphic commentaries. His didactic cartoons critically evaluating issues as diverse as political corruption (the Pacific Scandal), religious intolerance (the Guibord case), and dogmatic despotism (the Macdonnell case) stand as poignant examples of the application of his moral principles in his judgment of the issues of the day -- judgments that he would further express not only in his cartooning but in verse, speech, and political activity as well.

## CHAPTER II

### THE APPEAL OF THE DIDACTIC CRITIC

"Journalism", Thomas Nast, premier American cartoonist of the nineteenth century, wrote, "is the criticism of the moment at the moment, and caricature is that criticism at once simplified and intensified by a plastic form."<sup>1</sup> John Wilson Bengough, journalist, poet, and author, was above all else, a caricaturist. His cartoons in the words of George Grant, "not only generally hit the nail on the head, but sometimes hit like a blacksmith."<sup>2</sup>

Caricature, notes eminent art historian E.H. Gombrich,<sup>3</sup> is "the condensation of a complex idea in one striking memorable image."<sup>4</sup> The artist isolates one particular visual aspect of the subject, and his distortion of that isolated image identifies the subject within the framework of the distortion. This "deliberate simplification"<sup>5</sup> based on the resemblance of the

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Nast, as cited in Chal Vinson, Thomas Nast -- Political Cartoonist, (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1967), p.41.

<sup>2</sup>G.M. Grant, introduction to J.W. Bengough, A Caricature History of Canadian Politics, Vol.I (Toronto: The Grip Publishing Co., 1886), p.7.

<sup>3</sup>His books include: Art and Illusion; Meditations on a Hobby Horse; Norm and Form; Symbolic Images; and the definitive work, The Story of Art.

<sup>4</sup>E.H. Gombrich, Meditations on a Hobby Horse, (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1963), p.130.

<sup>5</sup>E. Kris, Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art, (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1953), p.193.

graphic image to the reality of the object it portrays, captures the attention of the viewer, influencing him to accomplish a particular effort of imagination, and forcing him to accept the image as the essential truth of the object it portrays.

Look here, the artist seems to say, that is all the great man consists of.<sup>6</sup>

The psychological effects of caricature can be quite devastating. In the hands of an insightful cartoonist, caricature becomes "a social weapon . . . killing by ridicule."<sup>7</sup> Satiric art, speaking as it does directly to the unconscious,<sup>8</sup> becomes one of the "most potent devices by which one man can strike at another."<sup>9</sup> As W. Hofman, an historian of caricature art put it:

The great caricatures pass sentence of death, and their moral seriousness is not content with simply making their victims ridiculous.<sup>10</sup>

The caricature, in its distorted reproduction of reality, "by means of condensation, displacement, and allusion [creates] certain elements in the distortion which point to the existence of other ideas."<sup>11</sup> The artist

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.191.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p.194.

<sup>8</sup>Gombrich, Meditations, pp.120-137; Kris, Psychoanalytic Explorations, pp. 183-200.

<sup>9</sup>M. Keller, The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast, (New York: Oxford Universities Press, 1968), p.4.

<sup>10</sup>W. Hofman, Caricature, (New York: Crown Publishers Inc., 1957), pp.11-12.

<sup>11</sup>Kris, Psychoanalytic Explorations, p.184.

defines the essential meaning of his subject; the viewer accepts the characterization. "The cartoonist", Gombrich emphasizes, "can mythologize the world .... by physiognomizing it."<sup>12</sup>

Caricatures, isolating specific images and presenting them as truths, speak in the language of universal metaphors. They view reality in terms of dialectic opposites; either light or darkness, good or evil, justice or abject wrong. As such, their comments are essentially moral. Political events and social situations are judged in ethical terms, and are condemned or lauded according to the degree of their similitude to universal principles of justice.

The history of caricature is the history of artistic moral judgment of contemporary events. Gillray, famous British cartoonist and "father of caricature",<sup>13</sup> not only condemned social practices of his milieu, especially in his series "Sin, Death and the Devil", but he entered the field of international comment with his damning portrayals of a baby-eating, cannibal, dragonlike Napoleon.

William Hogarth, "a heavyweight opponent of wickedness in general,"<sup>14</sup> levelled a devastating attack upon the social mores of his mid-eighteenth century Britain. In his tableaux, "Gin Street", "The Rakes Progress", "The Harlots Progress", "Marriage à la Mode", and others, he castigated the ethical stupor of his times, damning the vices of drink, prostitution, and gambling, as well as the conditions which spawned them.

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<sup>12</sup>Gombrich, Meditations, p.139.

<sup>13</sup>David Low, British Cartoonists, Caricaturists and Comic Artists, (London: William Brown and Co. Ltd., n.d.), p.10.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p.8.

Caricatures record and comment upon the political and social issues of different historical periods. Honore Daumier's "The Dream of the Inventor of the Needle Gun" evokes the terrors of technological progress in the hands of the unscrupulous, and warns in no uncertain terms, that the age of invention and technological progress, must seriously consider the fact that the invention itself is not the end; the use to which it is put determines its value.

David Low's "Rendezvous" scathingly comments on the purity of ideological beliefs when exposed to the reality of modern day power politics. Hitler meets Stalin over the body of Europe: "The scum of the earth I believe?"; "The bloody assassin of the workers I presume?"; and both approve the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact. The unthinkable had occurred, "two ideological systems sworn to eternal enmity had signed a non-aggression pact and agreed to live in peace with one another."<sup>15</sup>

The caricature does not depend for its success on artistic technique. The message lies in the morality of the symbol, and it is immediately and universally recognizable and understandable. Cartoons are pictures that even the illiterate can read at a glance. Their moral condemnations do not rest on subtleties of argument, but on vivid, graphic distortions of a recognizable reality.

Boss Tweed, whom Thomas Nast continually criticized, hounded out of Tammany Hall, and publically condemned for graft and corruption, realized this universal effect of caricature, and its result in the political arena. "I don't care what they write about me", he stated, "but I hate the pictures, for my

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<sup>15</sup>H.S. Hughes, Contemporary Europe: A History, 2nd ed. (New Jersey; Prentice Hall, Inc., 1961), p.320.

constituents can understand them."<sup>16</sup> And Goethe, perhaps best iterated the effect of the cartoon when he wrote:

Stupidities you can talk at your will  
 You may also write even more  
 Neither body nor soul are they likely to kill,  
 All will remain as before.

But stupidity placed before our eyes,  
 A magic power gains.  
 As our sense, it rivets and ties,  
 The mind is held in chains.<sup>17</sup>

The caricature is a weapon of moral criticism, but also, it is a source for the study of the society to which it was addressed. "We understand current events in the social life of England", wrote Principal Grant, "from the illustrations of 'Punch' more truly than from the columns of the 'Times' or the 'Morning Post'."<sup>18</sup>

Caricatures provide a means of discovering what people thought, and how and why they acted. To the historian, they are documents

in an endless discussion on politics and persons, war and diplomacy. . . . They are history, concrete, personal and tendentious, seen through contemporary eyes.<sup>19</sup>

The caricature, speaking in allegory and metaphor, coloured opinion and yet responded to the fashion of the moment. Socially recognized, it wielded an influence unmatched in the world of print. Criticizing in moral terms, it educated the society it addressed. Yet, the use of these "ugly little images",<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>"Do Caricatures Count", Grip, Sat., April 9, 1884, from a Detroit Paper (unidentified).

<sup>17</sup>Goethe, "Zahme Xenien II", as cited by Gombrich, Meditations, p.139.

<sup>18</sup>G. Grant, introduction to Bengough, Caricature History, p.7.

<sup>19</sup>M.D. George, English Political Caricature: A Study of Opinion and Propoganda, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p.3.

<sup>20</sup>Gombrich, Meditations, p.127.

as Gombrich calls them, as documentary evidence, provides serious difficulties for the historian -- difficulties that arise out of the educational effect of the caricature itself.

Although caricatures do condemn or laud in moral terms, their didactic criticism can indeed lead to improper action and discourse. The cartoonist, although himself not Omniscience itself, may affect popular judgment of absolute morality while he himself lacks knowledge or understanding; the result of a misguided decree may lead to a mistaken popular sentence of a man. Whether it be Thomas Nast's caustic critiques of Horace Greenley, which some contemporaries felt were so unfair and degrading that they ultimately influenced his untimely death, or Bengough's facile description of a sly and self-seeking "Sir John A." which has since been repeatedly reiterated in "liberal" Canadian historiography, the modern day researcher must at least be aware that the artist of a bygone era was no less humanly fallible than he is today, and that caricature, as product of his pen, although damning and morally serious, while judging in terms of absolute verities, does not necessarily always speak the language of absolute truth.

John Wilson Bengough, Canada's greatest moralizing cartoonist, followed the best traditions of didactic caricature. His cartoons condemned, criticized, applauded and educated on ethical grounds. And his effect on his contemporaries can be measured in part by their universal acknowledgment of his moral graphics.

J. W. Bengough was conscious of what he was about. He repeatedly asserted that his cartoon commentary on social and political issues was a morally founded criticism. "A cartoon", he noted, "to carry any weight or influence must have the element of truth in it, whatever else it may lack."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Bengough, Chalk Talks, p.84.



As editor of Grip, he further affirmed this stand, stating:

His [Grip's] cartoons he will strive to have essentially true, whatever else may be lacking.<sup>22</sup>

His efforts were identified and appreciated as such by his contemporaries.

The Kingston News, for example, in an article on Bengough's caricaturing noted:

We all know that the pen is mightier than the sword. I sometimes think the crayon is mightier than the pen. From the days of the immortal Hogarth to those of Cruikshank, Leach, and Du Maurier, the art of the cartoonist has fulfilled an important function in the realm of moral reform. . . . An artist can convey to the mind in a single flash what perchance an editor could not in weeks and months of consecutive writing.<sup>23</sup>

And George Grant, introducing A Caricature History of Canadian Politics, noted that Bengough's graphics had a morally instructive value that could even supercede the effect of the pulpit. "The educational influence of pen and pencil", he wrote, "may be greater than that of the living voice."<sup>24</sup>

Recognized as a man of no mean artistic talent, Bengough was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy in the year of its founding, 1880. Often compared to the finest cartoonists of other countries<sup>25</sup> his fame as cartoonist and illustrator spread throughout the country and beyond. "Canada," the Victoria Times editorialized, "has to congratulate herself of [sic] having produced a man who can vie with Nast and the prolific geniuses of Puck and Judge."<sup>26</sup>

The Orillia Times asserted that "Mr. Bengough, is without peer as a caricaturist",<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Grip, Sept. 13, 1873.

<sup>23</sup>Kingston News, undated clipping, "Scrapbook" Bengough Papers, Vol.XIV.

<sup>24</sup>G. Grant, introduction to Bengough, Caricature History, p.8.

<sup>25</sup>See above pp.1-4.

<sup>26</sup>Victoria Times, undated clipping, "Scrapbook", Bengough Papers, Vol.XIV.

<sup>27</sup>Orillia Times, undated clipping, "Book Notices", Bengough Papers, Vol.XIV.

and at an honorary dinner given for him at the New York Canadian Club in 1887, the most prominent cartoonists of the north American continent, including Keppler of Puck, Gillam and Hamilton of Judge, McDougal of The World, and Bengough's boyhood idol, Thomas Nast, gathered to pay him homage.

As editor and staff cartoonist for Grip, he contributed the leading cartoon, and usually one or two others in almost every edition of the magazine. Even while engaged with his world lecture tours he found enough time to forward the needed weekly centre-page sketch.

Grip, its circulation in 1881 standing at 10,000 copies, was successful primarily because of its cartoons. The Montreal Sentinel noted that "its [Grip's] cartoons secured for it a considerable circulation and, it cannot be doubted, a still greater influence."<sup>28</sup>

Bengough's cartoon comments on leading political and social issues were described in detail on the editorial pages of newspapers from Victoria to Halifax. Under such headlines as "Barnum out Barnumed", and "Capital Production" leading Canadian newspapers devoted columns of print to each Bengough "hit", and often availed themselves of additional comment.

After describing in detail Grip's cartoon, "The Great Political Conjuror" (August 7, 1878), the Ottawa Citizen noted that Bengough had admirably identified the immoral nature of the Tory economic policy. "The dishonesty of Sir John's tariff professions", it editorialized, "is admirably illustrated in this cartoons."<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, the Brantford Evening Telegram, noted the ethical apprehensions

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<sup>28</sup> Montreal Sentinel, undated clipping, "Scrapbook", Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

<sup>29</sup> Ottawa Citizen, undated clipping, "Scrapbook", Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

expressed in another Bengough cartoon. "Grip cuts up Mowat pretty nicely this week in a cartoon representing the poverty and misery of the Muskoko [sic] sufferer." "How long", it asked, "will the latter have to knock at the door of the Ontario Government before his voice is heard within?"<sup>30</sup>

The Globe, the Winnipeg Times, the Manitoba Free Press, the Moncton Transcript, the Quebec Chronicle, the Kingston Daily News, the Oshawa Reformer, the Woodstock Sentinel Review, the London Free Press, the Halifax Chronicle, and countless other daily and weekly newspapers gave full coverage to Bengough's cartooning activities. Canadians of all walks of life, living in cities, small towns, or on the farm, if they could not obtain a copy of Grip, were kept posted on all of Bengough's latest efforts.

Other journals carried Bengough's caricatures to support specific issues that they championed. Various prohibition magazines, such as the Weekly Templar, ran a Bengough cartoon in each issue. Single Tax journals, such as the Square Deal gave front cover prominence to Bengough's moral condemnations of landlordism. The Globe carried front page cartoons in all its election issues, and often included a topical Bengough caricature in its daily runs. Even the vigorous and radical labour organ, the Labor Advocate, ran Bengough cartoons in support of its fight against the private ownership of the Toronto street railway company, and its campaign to institute free textbooks for all school children.<sup>31</sup> Wherever a morally justified cause needed his pen, Bengough was willing to oblige, and the editors of his time eagerly snatched up his work and often reinforced his ethical statements.

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<sup>30</sup>Brantford Evening Telegram, undated clipping, "Scrapbook", Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

<sup>31</sup>Labor Advocate, Dec. 12, 1890, Jan. 9, 1891, May 1, 1891.

In fact, Bengough cartoons, or mention of them, appeared so often in newspapers throughout the country, that it was virtually impossible for any journal-reading Canadian and certainly for any Ontarian, at a time when newspapers provided the staple intellectual diet and news of the day, not to have known Bengough and been subject to his moral appeals.

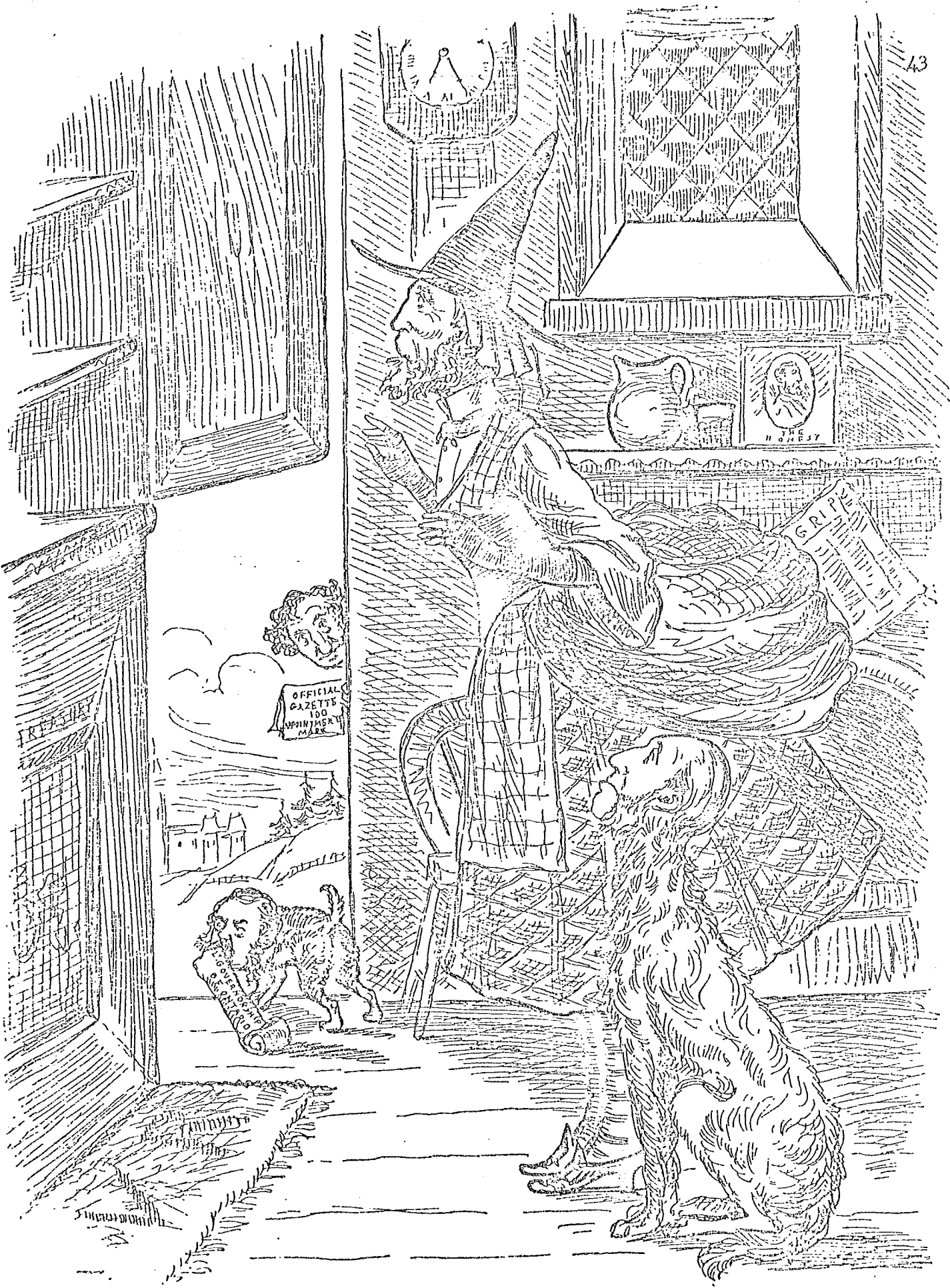
What Bengough had to say was important. The extensive coverage of his every moral "hit" indicates that Canadians were interested in his commentaries, and that even if they did not agree with him, they at least allowed him the ethics of his position. His caricature comments, carried in the only media of his day affected the lives of reading Canadians everywhere, and his criticism also carried to the highest political forum of the land, to the House of Commons.

The astuteness of Bengough's ethical commentary on shady political practice was often well received by members of the House, especially by those who were not themselves being chastised. Alexander Mackenzie, in a speech at Sarnia, November 1873, referred to Bengough's "Mother Hubbard" cartoon as correctly representing the political situation immediately after the Grit electoral victory. Commenting on John A. Macdonald's dispensing of patronage immediately before his government left office, thereby denying the victorious Grits the traditional privilege, he said:

The Ottawa Administration did not die without resorting to their usual tricks. You have seen a cartoon in Grip, representing Mother Hubbard looking for some appointments that were supposed to be left in the political pantry (cheers and laughter). But it seems, from the picture, that they were all away before she could reach it, for Sir John A. Macdonald is seen stealing out at the door with a hundred of them in his pocket; while Mr. John Crawford the present Lieutenant Governor of Ontario; in the shape of a little dog is represented as trotting away with that bone in his mouth. (loud cheers and laughter) Sirs, there is no little significance in that picture (hear, hear).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Toronto Globe, Nov. 26, 1873; Grip, Dec. 6, 1873.



II.1 - THE POLITICAL MOTHER HUBBARD  
AND JOHN A.'S "DYING INIQUITY."

Similarly, Mackenzie, in 1878, no doubt ignoring the Reform party's unspectacular record, a record marred by party division over Blake's Aurora speech and the Letellier affair, and as well as by the Liberals' failure to pull the country out of a depression, attempted sarcastically to belittle Macdonald's attempts to exploit the issue of "hard times" as an election platform. Referring to a Bengough cartoon, Mackenzie noted:

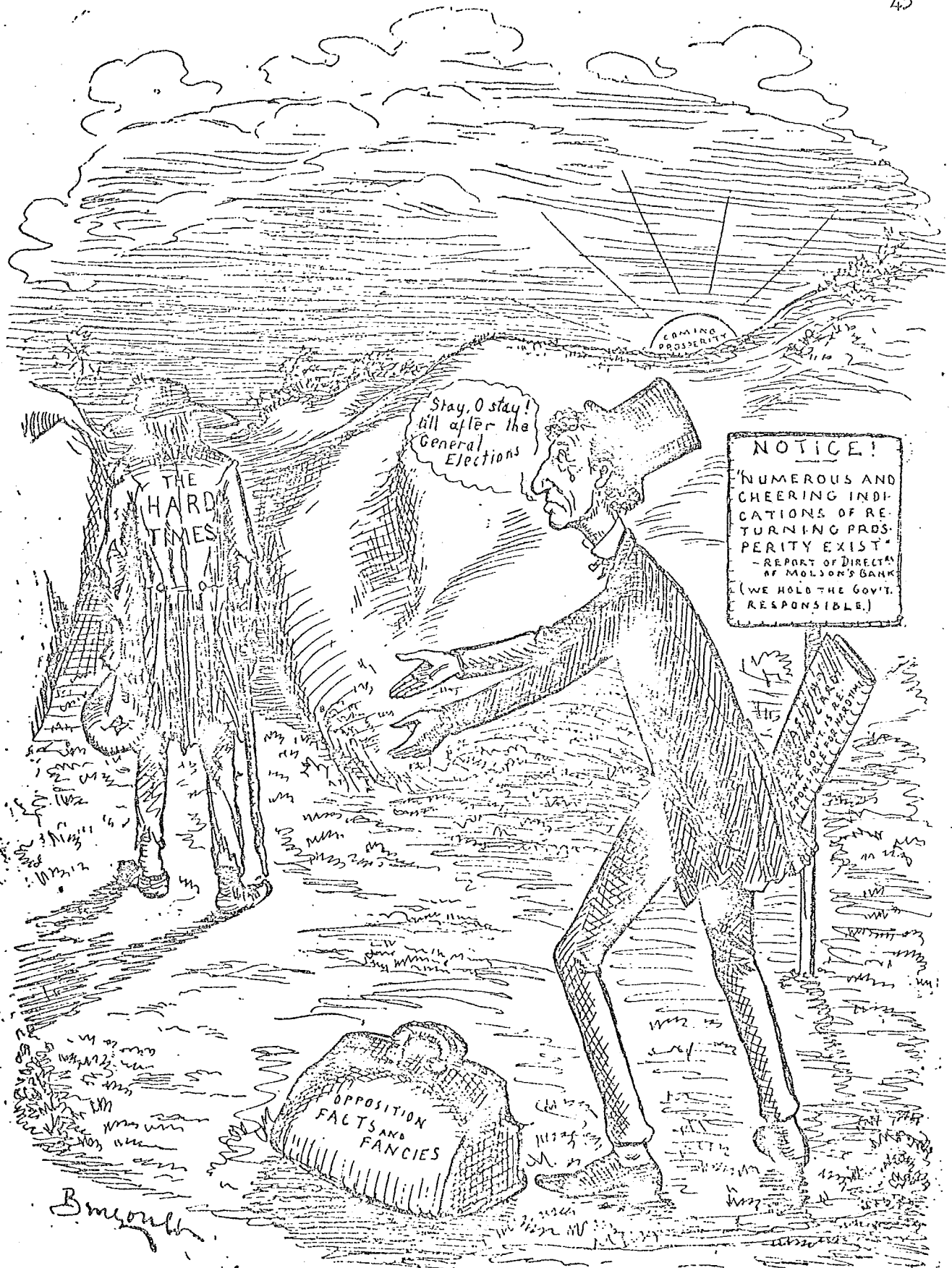
In one of our comic papers, not very long ago, there was a representation of a dilapidated figure called "Hard Times" taking his departure from Canada; while another - no, it was the honorable gentleman who speaks on this subject sometimes, and who represented "a hard times" politically - (loud laughter) - he was begging and entreating this lonely, shrunken, dejected fugitive not for any sake to take his departure for just a little while (loud laughter), as he wished to avail himself of his great services at the coming elections. (laughter and cheers)

Characteristically, Sir John A. had the witty, and as it turned out, prophetic last word:

"Yes, and he's going to help too. (hear, hear, and laughter)"<sup>33</sup>

Although Bengough found frequent issue with the Tory party, his criticism did not follow partisan party lines. He drew great delight in harpooning the Grits, and his graphic criticism of political issues, whether directed at Tory or Grit, was always based on his ethical commitment to a Christian morality. Bengough's criticism, although morally damning was most often received in good faith. Although both Sir Charles Tupper and Edward Blake went on record as violently agitated by some of his critiques, Sir John A. Macdonald, Bengough's favourite target, took the criticism rather genially. When Robert Harris, leading Canadian portrait painter, was being considered for the commission to paint the now famous "Fathers of Confederation", Sir John A., stood up in the House and questioned as to the possibility of employing another artist. Tongue in cheek, he suggested someone who had much experience with political portraits -- Bengough.

<sup>33</sup>"Scrap Album", undated and unidentified clipping, Bengough Papers, Vol.XIV.



II.2 - HIS BEST FRIEND DESERTING HIM.

Grip. October 20, 1877.

Writing of the incident, Harris' biographer describes the scene thus:

As regards this particular painting, he [John A.] would have no personal objection to have another artist try his hand upon himself. There was another Canadian artist who had drawn him with great power and graphic skill, he thought, under the principle of wholesome competition, he might hope that Mr. Harris, whose paintings he had not seen, might by slow degrees, rise to the artist's skill and perfect accuracy in portraying his [John A.'s] countenance that his friend Bengough possessed - (laughter).<sup>34</sup>

However, inevitably, not everyone who felt the sting of Bengough's pen responded in a like manner. F.A. Hunt, a Justice of the Peace, in a letter in which the handwriting still flames, angrily notified Bengough that he felt that this time the artist had gone too far. "I perceive", he wrote,

that you are holding me up to ridicule and contempt. Now I am getting weary of being the butt of all the farmer's boys in the neighborhood. I cannot walk the streets without being followed by a gangle of hoodlums hooting and hollering at and reviling me. It greatly detracts from the dignity of my position.

Continuing, he icily threatened Bengough with a law suit.

Unless I at once receive an apology from you, a retraction of all former innuendoes [sic] and a discontinuance of caricaturing me, I will instruct my solicitor to institute proceedings against your paper to recover damages.<sup>35</sup>

Obviously, Bengough's roasting of any peccadillo did not go unnoticed, either by the guilty party or the ever inquisitive public.

While Bengough was perhaps best known as a cartoonist, he also achieved a certain modest fame as poet, author and lecturer. As a featured writer, Bengough contributed a weekly column, "Caleb Jenkins --- Commissioner at Large", which appeared with regularity in the Saturday editions of the Toronto Globe. His humorous and piquant accounts of government misdemeanors and common every-

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<sup>34</sup>T.M. Williamson, Robert Harris 1849-1919: An Unconventional Biography, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p.49.

<sup>35</sup>F.A. Hunt to Bengough, May 20, 1886, Correspondence, Bengough Papers, Vol. I.



day follies, were augmented by other contributions which also appeared during the last decade of the nineteenth century, including "Hash", which was written under the pseudonym "Artemus Ward", and "Motley: Topics Grave and Gay", a collection of chitchat, humorous sketches, political commentary, pathetic verse, and didactic lesson. The latter column eventually gave its name to his first published collection of poetry.

Bengough's published works included books on history, poetry, and topical issues. His A Caricature History of Canadian Politics, introduced by George Grant, was a well received attempt to record the history of Canada, as it had been perceived, in graphic, cartoon, and caricature. While, in the main, the two volume set drew most heavily upon his own work as found in Grip, his inclusion of cartoons from the defunct Punch in Canada, Fly Sheet, Diogenes, Grinchbuckle, and the newly launched Canadian Illustrated News, provided a graphic documentation of Canadian historical highlights from 1849. Each caricature accompanied by an explanatory note, commented on salient issues, and at once illustrated, and judged each political and social event.

Among his topical works, The Whole Hog Book, (1902), and the Up-to-Date-Primer, (1896), both explications of the doctrine of the single tax, incited great popular interest. The Up-to-Date-Primer, for example, published under the auspices of the Free Trade and Tax Reform Leagues of Canada, had an "immense run".<sup>36</sup> Sold out in two editions, it was even translated into Japanese. Another, a prohibitionist argument, The Gin Mill Primer, (1898), enjoyed almost equal success, and was utilized as one of a collection of anti-drink booklets, pamphlets and flyers in the federal campaign over the prohibition plebisite of 1898.

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<sup>36</sup>T. Bengough, "Life and Work of J.W. Bengough", Bengough Papers.

Although Bengough wrote and published extensively --- other non-poetic works include: Grip Cartoons; Popular Readings, Original and Selected, (1882); and Chalk Talks, (1922) --- his greatest literary fame came from his two volumes of poetry. Already, prior to 1895, Bengough had contributed many poems to leading newspapers, magazines and journals throughout Canada, the United States, and Britain. In fact, his moral verses had been so well received, that the Maritime journalist, J. B. McCready, had suggested that Bengough be named the poet laureate of Canada.<sup>37</sup> While his work never measured up to the standard of an Archibald Lampman or a Bliss Carman, his deeply pathetic, poignantly eulogistic, and honestly didactic verse captured the heart and conscience of the reading public.

The London Advertiser, representative of the popular acclaim given Bengough's first poetic volume --- Motley; Verses Grave and Gay, (1895), noted, that the work "was a distinct gain to Canadian literature."<sup>38</sup> Saturday Night called it "unique and valuable"<sup>39</sup> and the Globe, while perhaps in a fit of over-reaction labelled Bengough as "not an unworthy disciple of Blake, Thackeray and Du Maurier", still managed to come down from the clouds to issue a more genuinely appropriate critique which approvingly emphasized the book's moral content.

Mr. Bengough does not belong to the current impressionist school. He has a clear conception of what he wants to tell, and is frequently candidly didactic or pathetic, with an old fashioned pathos that has not lost its power.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> London Advertiser, April 8, 1895, Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

<sup>39</sup> Saturday Night, undated clipping, "Book Notices", Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

<sup>40</sup> Globe, April 16, 1895.

Similarly, the Orillia Times also noted Bengough's contribution to Canadian literature. "The book [Motley]", it stated, "should be in the hands of all who admire a good thing and desire to patronize Canadian talent."<sup>41</sup>

And the educational value of the book was stressed by the Methodist Magazine:

We always admired Grip for one special feature, that it was always on the right side of every moral question. This marks also the volume before us [Motley]. The Salvation Army and its work, Sunday cars and social reform, are illustrations of this. The author's broad humanity and sympathy with the suffering are admirably shown in many of these poems.<sup>42</sup>

Bengough's second book of poetry, which appeared seven years later, In Many Keys, received a similarly enthusiastic reception. "Mr. Bengough", the Globe noted,

seldom writes without a purpose, whether that be to drive home political criticism by irony, to impress a sociological principle through the "horse-sense" of some provincial, or to quicken [sic] human feeling by incidents of sacrifice and devotion. His tone is always wholesome and his point of view that of a chivalrous spirit. . . . Mr. Bengough may be a preacher, but he preaches to the point.<sup>43</sup>

Similarly, stressing the didactic qualities of the work, another critic stated:

His occasions are all fine, elevating and full of suggestion. On some of them a man might moralize for a whole year.<sup>44</sup>

The popular response to his moralizing verse is perhaps best illustrated by a letter to the editor of a Montreal newspaper. The writer, who signed himself "Templar", eulogized:

Have read the book, and with it read the man, and learnt how grand he is: rich in sublimity of thought, his charity, far-reaching as the world is wide, doth thus inspire the humblest of earth's son's [sic] to grasp their rich inheritance.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup>Orillia Times, undated clipping, "Book Notices", Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

<sup>42</sup>Methodist Magazine, May 1, 1895.

<sup>43</sup>Globe, undated clipping, "Book Notices", Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

<sup>44</sup>Undated clipping, "Book Notices", Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

<sup>45</sup>Undated, unidentified clipping, "Book Notices", Bengough Papers, Vol. VIX.

Bengough's verse, deep in pathos, rich in religious allegory, and didactically aimed, found a ready and responsive audience. Although he, as the Christian Guardian emphasized, wrote "no thing that would claim any high rank as poetry", his works lay "close to the purest and simplest passions of the human heart."<sup>46</sup> The laudatory reviews, the success of his sales, the public acceptance of his verse, indicates that in that ever important role, of instigator and jostler of public conscience, Bengough was eminently successful.

While Bengough's literary work reached the libraries of the reading public, his speeches reached anyone who could or would listen. Canadians, in all parts of the country, flocked to hear John Wilson Bengough, "chalk talker".

The chalk talk was a variation of the travelling lecturer entertainment so popular in nineteenth century North America. Along with phrenologists, musicians, poets, magicians, and evangelists, the illustrated lecture, or chalk talk, often provided the only socially sanctioned or available entertainment for many people. Bengough, after viewing the successful lecture tours of Thomas Nast, decided to take to the road, and "do the work of a Cartoonist on the public platform".<sup>47</sup>

His first appearance was on March 20, 1874, under the auspices of the Mechanics Institute of Toronto at the Music Hall --- corner of Church and Adelaide Streets. His speech, "Pleasantries of Public Life", introduced by the Alderman J. J. Withrow, and presented to a "large and fashionable audience",<sup>48</sup> was a triumphant event. With the post-lecture sale of his sketches to the

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<sup>46</sup>Christian Guardian, July 18, 1900.

<sup>47</sup>Bengough, Chalk Talks, p.15.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p.17.

prominent Toronto lawyer, J. H. Harrison, for the princely sum of forty-five dollars, and the highly complimentary, fully detailed account of his lecture in the next morning's Globe, Bengough's success as a "chalk talker" was assured.

For over forty years Bengough took to the road during the "lecture season". Under the auspices of Mechanics Institutes, various citizens groups, the Y.M.C.A., and various church sponsors he "stumped" the North American continent, travelled to Britain, and enjoyed remarkable successes in Tasmania, New Zealand, and Australia. In the United States, he spoke mainly in the large cities, often visiting Cleveland, Chicago, Minneapolis, Detroit, and Boston, and was everywhere enthusiastically received. The response to his program in Australia was so wholehearted that he was forced to lengthen his planned stay, and public interest in this Canadian visitor with his humorous ethical entertainment reached a remarkable pitch. During his sojourn in Sydney, for example, every newspaper -- the Sydney Morning Herald, the Sydney Star, the Sydney Evening News, and the Daily Telegraph, gave extensive coverage to Bengough and his lectures. Along with full descriptions of his chalk talks, each newspaper ran interest stories on Bengough, his wife, and their efforts to organize a playground movement in Toronto.

Bengough's Canadian reception was no less enthusiastic than the acclaims that he received in the Antipodes. Tickets to his lectures were often sold out nights in advance, people lined up for hours to gain admittance, halls were usually packed with a standing room crowd long before the evening entertainment was ready to begin, and often scores were turned away. People came to hear him speak and see him draw. They came to be amused, to laugh at his "hits" and sympathize with his comments on political and social events. The Winnipeg Times, describing a typical Bengough chalk talk, especially emphasized the good attendance:

It is estimated that the hall will seat between six and seven hundred, but last night's audience must have exceeded the latter number, as many stood from beginning to end, while others who were more thoughtful brought camp stools with them.<sup>49</sup>

In whatever city Bengough spoke: Ottawa, Vancouver, St. John's, Halifax, Quebec, Winnipeg, or Charlottetown, the response was overwhelming.

Bengough, however, not only "stumped" the cities. He took happily to the small towns, the farming hamlets and fishing villages from coast to coast. From Yarmouth, Pictou, and Bridgewater in Nova Scotia, to New Westminster in British Columbia, small town Canada welcomed him. With titles as varied as the scenery, including "Education", "Santa Claus and Mother Goose", "Free Trade", "Anti-Barlycorn", "The Social Question", "Woman Suffrage", and "Do Your Bit", he brought living social and political issues to the schools and meeting halls of Red Deer, Owen Sound, Stratford, Elora, Cobourg, St. Thomas, and countless other places.

The audiences that flocked to see him were as diverse as the people that made up the country. Important officials, politicians, and men and women of independent means, rubbed shoulders with those who could barely afford the price of admission. His lectures knew no social distinctions and were intended humourously to trumpet ethical appeals for anyone who would listen.

When he spoke in Winnipeg, for example, Premier Norquay introduced him, and the New Westminster Truth, after taking great pains to note that nearly the whole town had managed to hear the lecturer-cum-cartoonist, stressed that Bengough's second lecture was "delivered at the opera house . . . before a very large audience in which nearly all the elite of the town could be numbered."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Winnipeg Times, undated clipping, "Scrapbook", Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

<sup>50</sup>New Westminster Truth, undated clipping, "Scrapbook", Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

Bengough's appeal was universal, and if those with the power to channel the course of events came to hear his entertaining didactics, so much the better.

Bengough also exploited the popularity of his chalk talks in attempts to aid the less fortunate members of society. The vogue of the Bengough chalk talk could always be counted on to ensure the attainment of a charitable goal. At a benevolent lecture in Toronto, in which the audience included Mayor W.P. Howland, Senator Macpherson, and Mr. Blain, M.P., Bengough's inspired exhortations raised the funds needed to found an Infant Home. Although he readily made himself available for public benefits, Bengough also utilized his talents in unique and private ways. Using the medium of the cartoon, he taught the Gospel to non-English-speaking Chinese immigrants at Knox Church in Toronto. Bengough practiced what he preached.

In his many trips throughout the country, Bengough generated news and excitement wherever he went. Even those who could not attend his lectures had the opportunity to read the detailed accounts carried by the daily press in almost every town he visited. Whether it was Prescott, Galt, or Uxbridge, Belleville, Aurora, or Barrie, local newspapers gave full coverage to his every "hit", describing in detail the sketches and accompanying comments. The Elora Express for example, gave this circumstantial account of just one of Bengough's sketches:

The artist next drew a hungry-looking fox, put a head upon it representing John A. Macdonald's placed a couple of bars a few inches of Reynard's back upon one of which a bantam, with the frightened physiognomy of Mowat sat, the artist remarking that when John A. was around the little Premier roosted high. This sally gave onlookers the cue and the very walls of the building shook with the sounds of laughter.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Elora Express, unidentified clipping "Scrapbook", Bengough Papers,

Bengough's lecture career took him from one end of Canada to the other, attracting audiences as varied as the wide country which sustained them. From politicians to voters, industrialists to labourers, urbanites to farmers, the young and the old, all came to hear his humourous didactics, laughing at the pretensions of the powerful, cheering at the piquant "hits", absorbing his ideas about social movements such as woman's suffrage and prohibition, and always looking at social and political events through Bengough's eyes: seeing them in a moral light, and almost unconsciously, while accepting his humour, they judged them on his terms.

Bengough's platform performance equalled the moral commentaries expressed in his cartoons. "Mr. J. W. Bengough's recitations", a journalist wrote, "were simply grand --- vigorous in delivery, elevating in character, yet mirth producing."<sup>52</sup> The same tone and direction was clearly evident in the caricatures which made him famous not only in his own country, but throughout the English-speaking world.

Bengough's purpose in poetry, prose, and sketch was to describe conditions as they were, in the hope of changing them to what he felt they should become. "Always", as E. S. Carswell, author and editor noted, "inspired by the highest ideals of public service,"<sup>53</sup> Bengough popularized an ethical approach to social and political issues. His cartoons, in the tradition of caricature, spoke with a moral seriousness that demanded the viewer's acceptance of his ethical suggestions.

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<sup>52</sup>Unidentified, undated clipping, "Scrap Album", Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

<sup>53</sup>E. S. Carswell, Canadian Singers and Their Songs, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1925), p.227.



Bengough indeed, mythologized the world of Canadian politics by physiognomizing the men in the public eye. His caricatures of prominent politicians spread his ethical evaluations of the men and their activities throughout the country. Canadians everywhere came to identify certain moral characteristics with members of the political élite from Bengough's physiognomic commentaries.

The graphics of a sly fox -- Sir John A. Macdonald; the honest, upright, Alexander Mackenzie; the gnome-like Oliver Mowat; the emaciated, timid Foster; the evil and grouchy Charles Tupper; and the virtuous, idealistic Laurier, all became nationally known symbols, representing political issues in graphic, ethical terms. Bengough's juxtaposition of Mackenzie and Macdonald (see cartoon3) said more about the moral conduct of the participants involved than countless columns of newsprint or hours of oratorical harangue.

Bengough exposed the Canadian political process to the didactically critical eye of caricature. He kept politicians posturing before the public in the symbolic roles he attributed to them. Sir John A. rarely appeared as anything but a trickster. The glint of his eye, the half smile on his mouth, all clearly identified what Bengough conceived to be Macdonald's moral worth (see cartoon4).

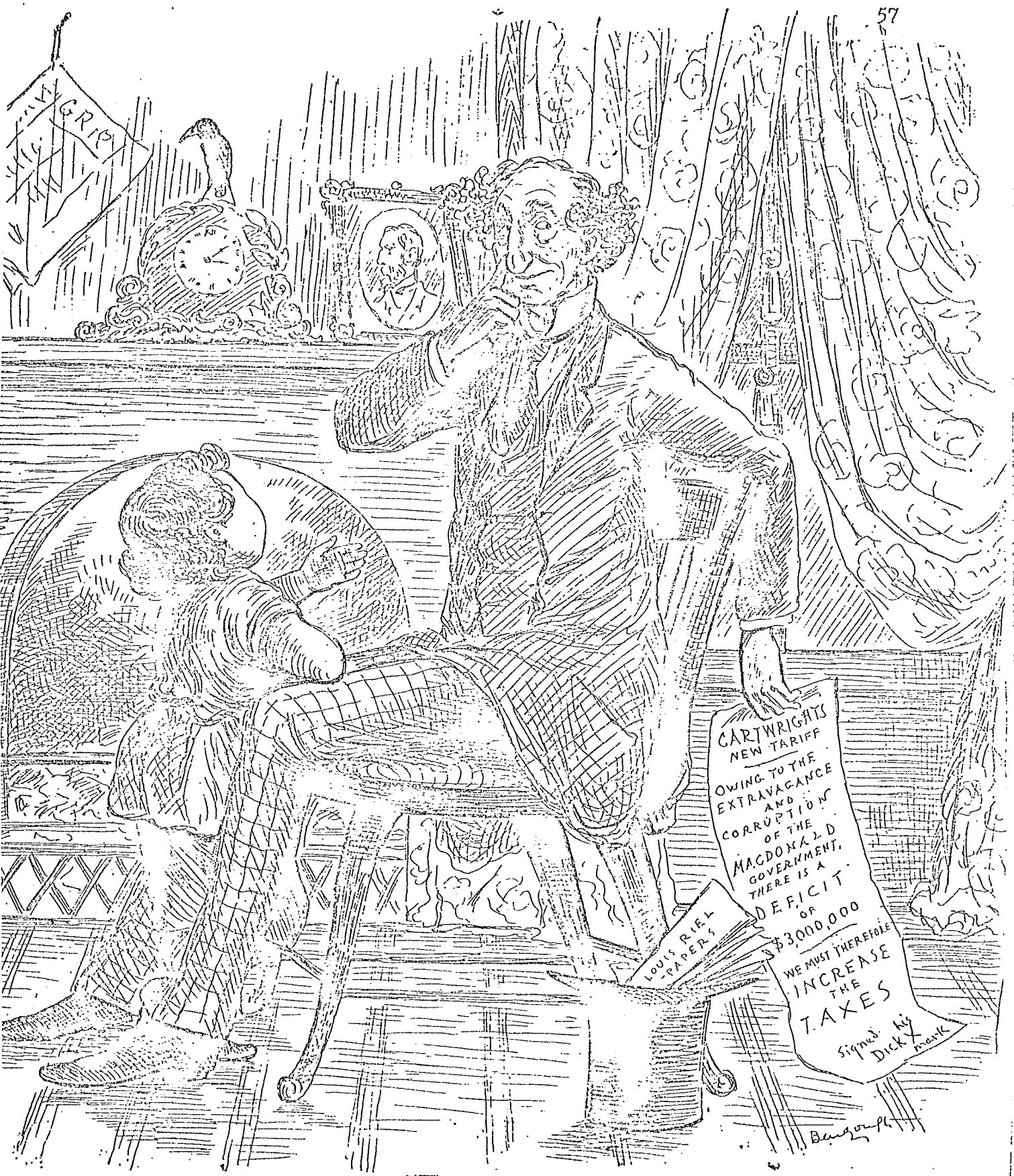
Alexander Mackenzie, on the other hand, whom Bengough admired for his ethical principles, was a complete contrast to Macdonald. Mackenzie's dour Scot's features, framed by a briar bush beard, exuded simplicity, honesty, and truthfulness. Mackenzie, portrayed in the allegory of his earlier occupation, took on all the political virtues that the stone mason's art embodied. The cartoon in Grip, graphically foretold the sentiment of the later poem. The viewer had no doubt that Mackenzie was "a Christian of the old time sort", a man who



II.3 "DUFFERIN'S TORMENTORS, OR *PER VIAS RECTAS*."

Grip, August 2, 1873.

- J-N A. (ANXIOUSLY).—"CARRIAGE, SIR? 'MINISTERIAL' HOTEL—ONLY CONSTITUTIONAL PLACE IN THE CITY—COME ALONG WITH ME, SIR."
- Mc-K-NZ—(EAGERLY).—"THIS WAY, MY LORD—'REFORM' HOUSE! TAK' THE RIGHT COURSE—GIE' US YER CHECKS!!"
- L-D D-FF-N.—"MUCH OBLIGED, GENTLEMEN, I ASSURE YOU; BUT I HAVE A 'RIG' OF MY OWN AT HAND, YOU KNOW."



11.4 - A TOUCHING APPEAL. Grip. April 18, 1874.

( "TOUCHING" THE SECRET OF INCREASED TAXATION.)

YOUNG CANADA "SAY, UNCLE JOHN, WON'T YOU GIVE ME A 'DEFICIT?' MA SAYS YOU GAVE THE GRITS ONE!"

worshiped God by doing honest work,  
 Whether with mason's tools as artisan,  
 Or in high place of state.<sup>54</sup> (see cartoon 5)

Edward Blake, Liberal party leader after Mackenzie; dreamer, ambitious, unpredictable, was caricatured in all the nuances of his character. Bengough's excellent cartoon in Grip aptly summed up both the temperament of Blake, and the reaction of his peers, in the framework of the political situation of the day.

After his famous, brilliant, but disturbing speech at Aurora, no one, least of all Blake himself, knew exactly what he advocated. Bengough drew "Signor Blake", clothed in circus garb, lying flat on his back, balancing the Globe and the fortunes of the Reform Party on his toes, while a horrified Mackenzie and a disapproving George Brown looked on. Goldwin Smith and William Howland, seeing a glimmer of hope for Canada First, although happy with the course of events, are yet uncertain as to whether or not the ball will slip, and if it does, in what direction it will fall (see cartoon 6).

Blake's type of visions and high ideals, combined with practical, realistic politics, came together in the person of Wilfrid Laurier. His integrity, conciliatory prowess, and dedication, excited Bengough's admiration, and the caricature image of a virtuous, strong and compassionate leader became a staple of Canadian political commentary. Nowhere was this portrait more vividly drawn than during the election of 1900. The honest, upright Laurier, disciple of the compassionate Gladstone and the generous Lincoln, student of the wisest authors --- Carlyle, Gibbon, Milton, and the Bible --- his gaze steadfastly fixed on the highest ideals of mankind, presents a stark contrast

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<sup>54</sup>Grip, April 23, 1892.



II.5 - THE PREMIER'S MODEL;  
 OR, "IMPLEMENTS TO THOSE WHO CAN USE THEM."

DA—"WELL AND BRAVELY DONE, MACKENZIE; NOW STAND BY THAT POLICY, AND I'M WITH YOU ALWAYS!"

Grip, November 29, 1873.



SIGNOR BLAKE IN HIS POPULAR ACT OF KEEPING THE *GLOBE* IN SUSPENSE.

to a pudgy, baneful Tupper, and an emasculated crone, Foster. The message was loud and clear. One did not have to be an astute analyst of the political scene to understand the didactics of the situation (see cartoon 7).

Bengough's caricatures of Canadian politicians passed moral judgment on the man, the party, and the policy. The physiognomized characters took on symbolic meanings in the context of ethical political conduct. No good policy, the cartoons asserted, could be made by anyone as obviously evil as Tupper. No political issue could be taken at face value when the reynard Macdonald was involved. Political issues, Bengough argued, were clearly ethical at heart, and therefore, they were to be morally judged.

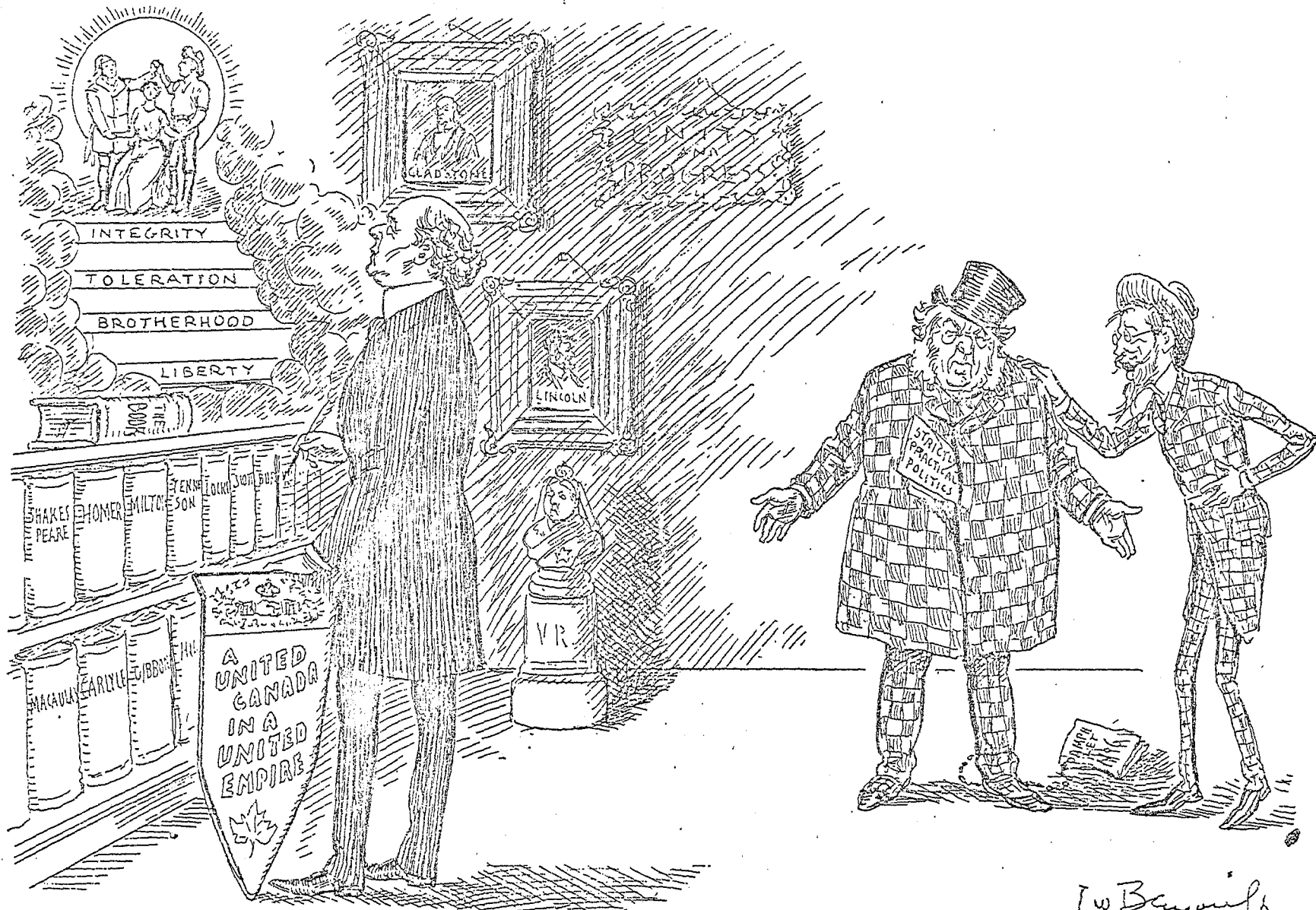
Bengough's graphics likewise carried the moral thunder of caricature into the question of social conditions. The use of symbol, damning and powerful, gave him a weapon unequalled in the world of print. With his caricatures he castigated the trade and traffic in liquor. The repulsive, destructive, immoral nature of drink was nowhere better explicated than in Grip's cartoon "The Fellow You Can't 'Libel'", and equally effective were Bengough's graphic suggestions for eradicating the evil (see cartoons 8, 9, and 10). His moral commentary was devastating, bringing down the wrath of the heavens, implicating and condemning in the worthy tradition of a Hogarth or Daumier.

To further stress the ethical nature of his criticism, Bengough often utilized Biblically-derived metaphoric and allegoric symbols. Free trade is brought to the world by an angel who sweeps away the foolish pretensions of men, and with the promise of earthly peace, friendship, and prosperity, proclaiming that "God meant man to be a free trader."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>J. W. Bengough, "The Loose Screw", m.s. Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.





J.W. Bauwens

II.7 - THE DIFFERENCE IN THE MEN.

SIR CHARLES.—He is one of those absurd fellows who has what they call an "Ideal"—really believes something, you know, in dead earnest; preposterously ridiculous I call it!

FOSTER—Yes, goes in for "statesmanship," as if Canada was really a nation—it makes me laugh!!





II.8 THE FELLOW YOU CAN'T "LIBEL." II.8



II.9 - A JUSTIFIABLE LYNCHING.

II.10 - source: Bengough, the Toronto Star Cartoons, 1892, part 1, m.s. University Library.

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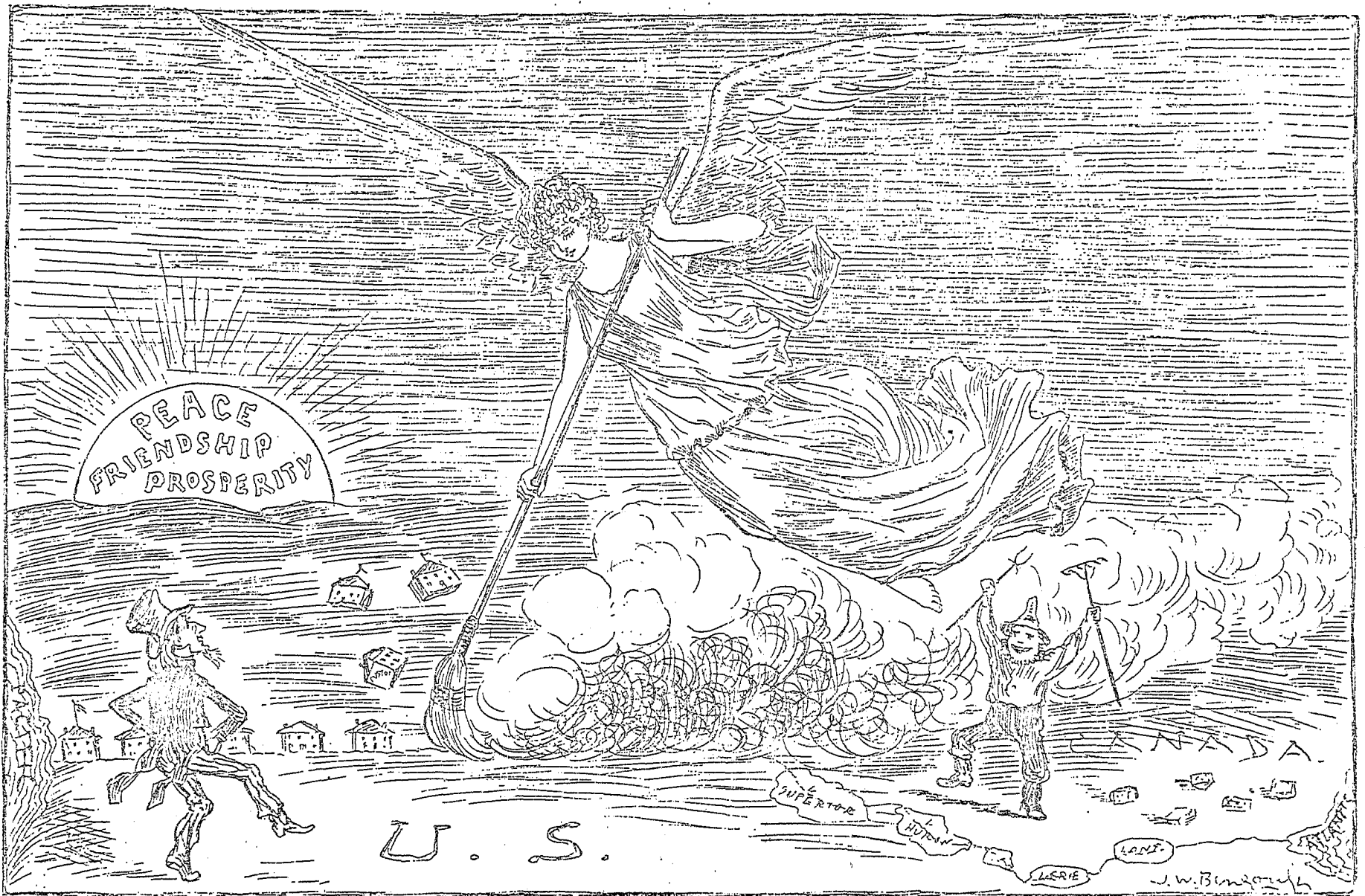
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# BEFORE THE (PLEBISCITE) BATTLE OF BOSWORTH FIELD.

Liquor Traffic (King Richard III.) awaking from a horrible vision of the Crime, Death and Misery it has caused :

"On coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!  
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight  
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,  
And every tongue brings in a several tale,  
And every tale condemns me for a villian!  
Methought the souls of all that I had murdered  
Came to my tent, and every one did threat



THE GENIUS OF CIVILIZATION SWEEPING AWAY THE CUSTOMS LINE.

Similarly, Edward Blake, clad in the garb of a Hebrew prophet casts the deadly viper of scandalous innuendo into the fire while the scheming Tories cower in the background (see cartoon 12). Alexander Mackenzie and the Grit cabinet take on the roles of Belshazzar and his thousand lords. As they make merry around the table, drinking wine from golden cups, they sneer at the handwriting on the wall. Although Macdonald, and not God, is doing the writing, the message is prophetically clear: "Mene, Men, Tekel, U-Pharsin." The days of the government are numbered. Mackenzie has been tried and found wanting as leader, and the kingdom shall be given again to the Conservatives<sup>56</sup> (see cartoon 13).

Bengough's didactic caricaturing, his moral criticism of social conditions and political events was both a whole hearted attempt to identify and expose injustices in Canadian life, and simultaneously, an identification of ethically inspired social ends. In illustrating his desired moral goals, Bengough's cartoons advanced certain methods that he felt would ensure the realization of a just society, ways more implied than explicitly stated: courses of political action, what platform to vote for and whom to elect, and what causes merited support.

Unequivocally condemning the liquor traffic, for example, his cartoons carried the message that it must be eradicated --- and the sooner the better. Similarly, physiognomically identifying Sir John A. Macdonald and Charles Tupper as, on the whole undesirable, and Alexander Mackenzie and Wilfrid Laurier as essentially virtuous, Bengough's caricatures suggested that Canada,

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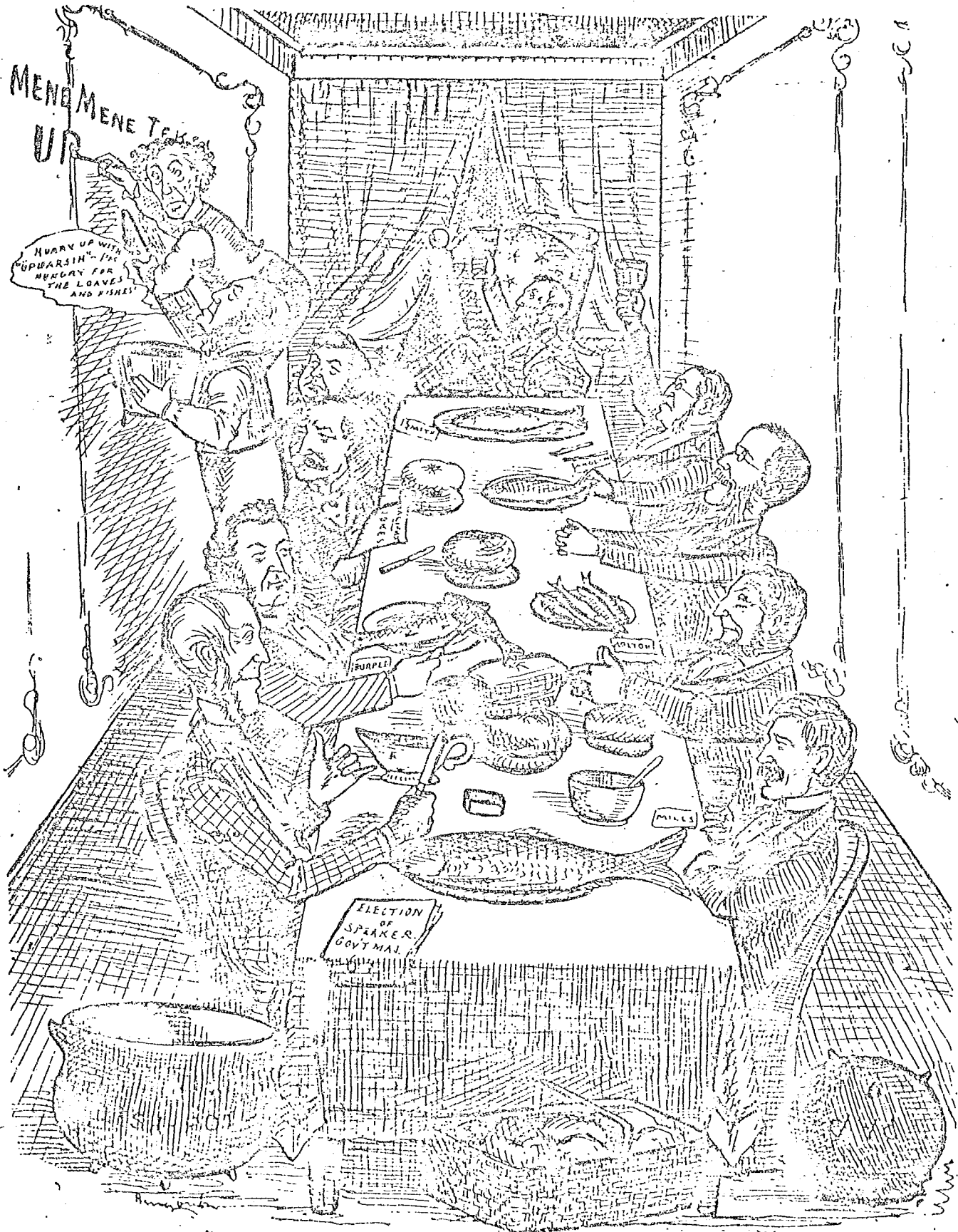
<sup>56</sup>For the original version see, Daniel 5: 1-31.





II.12 THE INNOXIOUS VIPER.

"AND HE SHOOK OFF THE BEAST INTO THE FIRE, AND FELT NO HARM."



II.13 - THE MYSTERIOUS HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

if led by the Liberal party, would be morally superior to what it was when the Tories were in power.

His great popular appeal, however, cut across any party lines that his political cartooning might at times have implicitly favoured. Indeed, it was his humourous and pointed wit, directed at both political parties, and society in general, that attracted audiences to his lectures and sustained their interest in his cartoons. Didactic preacher that he was, Bengough<sup>also</sup> drew audiences by the sheer novelty and artistic skill of his presentations. As the original Canadian "chalk talker", his illustrated and witty lectures had an immense appeal for people who had heard too many musicians, phrenologists, and temperance speakers. However, his novelty and humour were not Bengough's only drawing cards. Many viewers no doubt shared his convictions, and, if they did not, his didactic but witty presentations of social questions, while it left them chuckling also gave them food for thought.

Especially in his lecture swings throughout rural areas, although evident in cities as well, Bengough's lessons touched the deep chords that resonated with a moral earnestness commonly shared by many mid-Victorian Canadians. Hard work, honesty, simplicity were the themes these people valued --- themes which were prevalent in Canadian evangelical Protestantism --- and Bengough struck them constantly. And at one level Bengough spoke to the simplicity of those whom the hard working Leslie Graeme of Ralph Connor's novel, Black Rock, symbolized.

I haven't much of a creed . . . don't really know how much I believe.  
But . . . I do know that good is good, and bad is bad, and good and bad are not the same.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>R. Connor, Black Rock, (Toronto: New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900), p.294.



Bengough's cleverness bespoke a mind far from simple, yet obviously he shared a strain of simple Dibilicism that seems to have underlain more of Canadian society than most historians to date have realized.

The elements of Bengough's skill as didactic critic seems to have been his ability to sense the critical centre of an event or personality, his commitment to a moral code widely enough shared to have made his judgments seem simple and direct, and his skilful use of a Biblical imagery so familiar among his contemporaries. But the essence of his effectiveness was an artistic imagination both subtle and powerful enough to impress these elements in an irresistible graphic form. Taken altogether, the result was a mythicizing of the Canadian scene that at once freed his various audiences by giving shape to half-formed thoughts, but also bound them to his world the more securely in the process.

Since caricature, as Dr. Kris argues, "is a psychological medium rather than a form of art",<sup>58</sup> Bengough's skill as a caricaturist did not rest on his artistic merits alone, but affected every one who viewed his cartoons. Combining the psychological effect of his cartoons with his own deep moral fervour, Bengough, like Hogarth before him, "became a heavyweight opponent of wickedness in general" and in terms of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canadian society was, not unlike Nast, "the pictorial advocate, censor and statesman of his age."<sup>59</sup> Touching countless Canadians with his pointed wit and didactic art, he affected their perception of themselves, their society, and above all, their conception of the entire political process.

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<sup>58</sup>Kris, Psychoanalytic Explorations, p.197.

<sup>59</sup>Low, British Cartoonists, p.8; A.B. Paine, T.H. Nast: His Period and His Pictures, (Glouster Mass, Pearson Publishing Co., 1964), p.528.

### CHAPTER III

#### BENGOUGH'S CRITIQUE OF CANADIAN POLITICAL MORALITY

John Wilson Bengough's didactic appeals, in sketch, lecture and verse, reached people throughout the country. As a caricaturist he defined standards of political morality and, judged actors appearing on the public stage. As poet, his verse touched the emotions of a pathos appreciative reading public. As lecturer, his humorous nomistic presentations brought him face to face with countless Canadians from all walks of life. So successful was he in describing unjust practices, and the solutions to pressing contemporary problems, that, as the editor of the Methodist Magazine and Review put it, "his quips and cranks, his wit and wisdom, hold his auditors as with a spell."<sup>1</sup>

Believing in the morally suasive power of law, Bengough postulated that governments were responsible for providing ethical guidelines for social activity and, as a result, he was especially concerned with the quality of political life. Although he continually stressed the non-partisan nature of his political commentaries, Bengough did take party and personal sides on election issues, seeking at all times to support those who he felt would be most likely to advance the ethics he had at heart. "To be independent", he reasoned, "it is not required or understood that a torturous path is to be followed with the object

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. W.H. Withrow, "An Artist of Righteousness: J.W. Bengough, Canadian Cartoonist and Humorous Poet", Methodist Magazine and Review 46 (September 1897): 207.

of favouring each party alternatively."<sup>2</sup> Practical considerations demanded that he cast his influence behind specific political parties or politicians, and his effectiveness as a social reformer can in part be appreciated by determining how his political endorsements compared to, or may have affected, Canadian election results. For, in the words of historian D.D. Thelen, "the most significant criterion for any reformer is, in the end, his effectiveness."<sup>3</sup>

The election of 1874 "turned", as Peter Waite points out, "on the Pacific Scandal".<sup>4</sup> The result saw Macdonald's party defeated and Mackenzie and the Grit's untarnished by charges of political corruption, form the new government. The election of 1874 was fought on the issue of scandal, and was lost and won on the realization of the immorality of government corruption.

The Reform party's overwhelming victory, expressed in a seventy seat majority however, was not based on a similarly impressive popular vote. What produced the Grit victory was a popular vote of only 53.8 per cent, and as Waite points out, "a swing of only 4.2 per cent from one side to the other was to produce an equally resounding victory for the Conservatives in 1878."<sup>5</sup> This "uncommitted vote" was sufficient to swing election results around, and this was the vote which recorded the country's moral indignation.

J.W. Bengough, in an era of adamant political party loyalty, appealed especially to the uncommitted voters. Judging issues not merely on partisan preferences, his commentaries carried a great weight. Bengough saw the 1874 election in terms of a crusade against evil. Political corruption was the sole

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<sup>2</sup>Grip, September 13, 1873.

<sup>3</sup>D.D. Thelen, "Social Tensions and the Origins of Progressivism", The Journal of American History 56 (September 1969-70): 341.

<sup>4</sup>P. Waite, Canada 1874-1896: Arduous Destiny, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1971), p. 20.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

issue. The Tory party, with "Sir John A." at the helm, was the sole culprit. It was not a question of political expediency or traditional party manoeuvring, of Tories versus Reformers or Macdonald versus Mackenzie, but a question of moral rectitude, and Bengough jumped into the fray with all the moral fervour of his caricature art.

His cartoon "Canada's Laocoon"<sup>6</sup> early dramatized the ethical quandry of the Tory party. Like the ancient priest of Greek mythology, Macdonald and Hugh Allan struggle unsuccessfully against the two serpents of "scandal" and "investigation". The struggle, as in the legend, is fruitless. The moral odds are overwhelming. The ethics of the situation, Bengough argued, were clear enough. The issue was bribery, and governments that accepted bribes had lost the last vestige of morality, and could not be trusted to rule. "We in Canada", Bengough thundered, referring directly to Macdonald, "seem to have lost all idea of justice, honor and integrity."<sup>7</sup>

Picturing a defensive yet arrogant Macdonald in conversation with a Mackenzie who literally cozes righteous indignation, Bengough further underlined the morality of the situation. "I admit I took the money and bribed the electors with it," Macdonald asserts, "is there anything wrong about that?" It was bad enough to have the prime minister admit to unethical conduct. But, for him not to realize that this conduct was immoral, made the situation unforgivable. Only a change of leadership could remedy the deplorable state of events.

Bengough's didactic criticism was directed at those nebulous uncommitted

<sup>6</sup>Grip, July 19, 1873.

<sup>7</sup>The Mail, September 26, 1873, as cited in J.W. Bengough, Grip, Sept. 27, 1873.



III.1 CANADA'S "LAOCOON:" Grip, July 19, 1873.  
 OR, VIRGIL ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

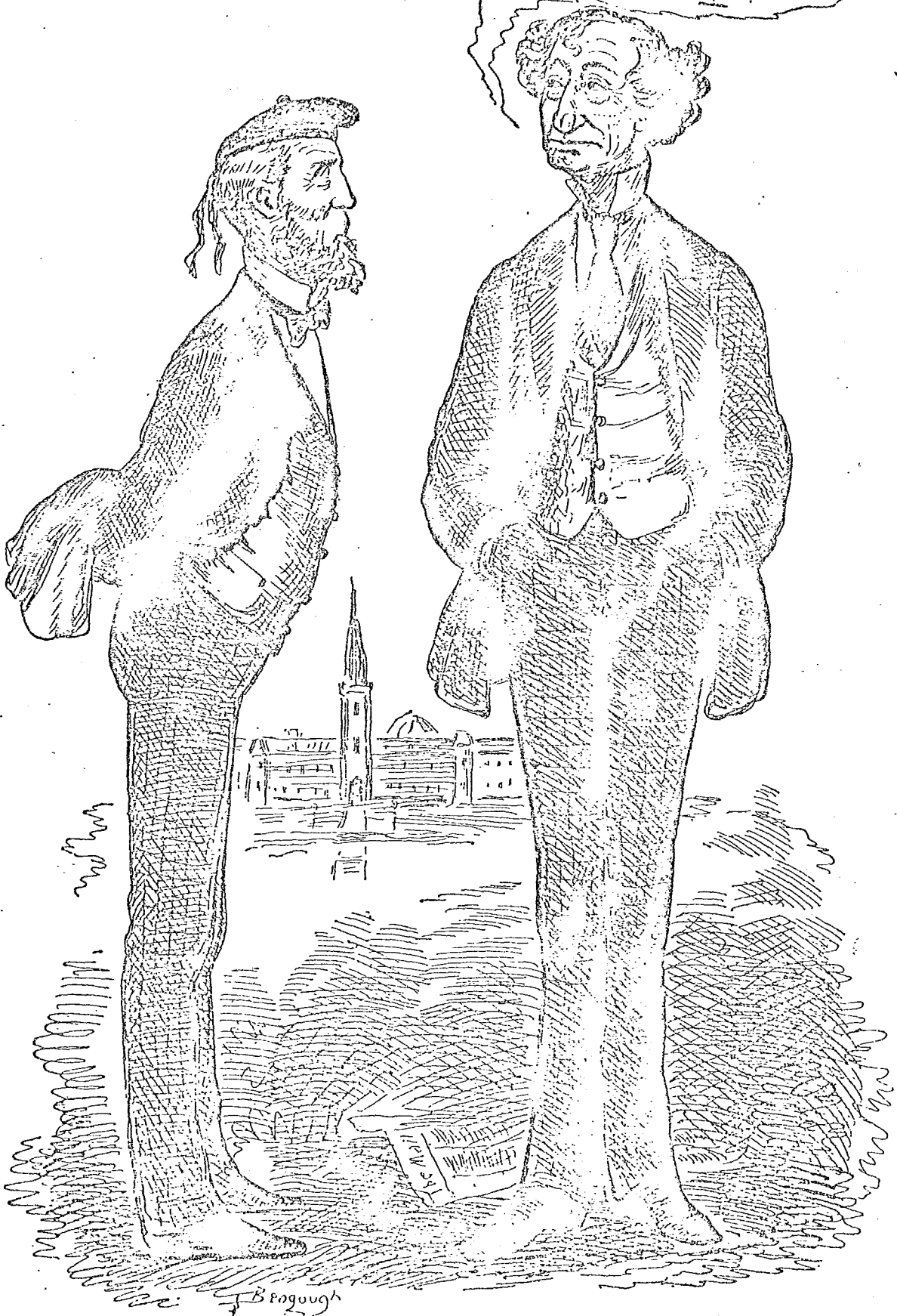
"Ecce autem gemini a Tenedo, tranquilla per alta, &c."—ÆNEID, BOOK II.

(Freely translated)

"When lol two snakes (perhaps from the Yankee shore),  
 Together trail their folds across the floor,  
 With precious scandals reared in front they wind,

Charge after charge, in long drawn length behind!  
 While opposition benches cheer the while,  
 And Joux A7 smiles a very ghastly smile!—and—

I ADMIT I TOOK THE MONEY, AND  
BRIBED THE ELECTORS WITH IT,  
IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG  
ABOUT THAT?



"CANADA SEEM TO HAVE LOST ALL IDEA OF JUSTICE, HONOR AND INTEGRITY."—THE MAIL, 26TH SEPTEMBER.  
III.2 Grip, September 27, 1873.

voters, whose ballots could swing elections from one party to another. The result was celebrated in his famous cartoon showing James Beatty, editor of the Conservative paper, The Leader, wandering through the graveyard of the Tory party. Macdonald himself, popular mastermind of Confederation, fell victim to Bengough's scorching attack, and very nearly lost his personal electoral contest, maintaining his parliamentary seat by the slim margin of seventeen votes.

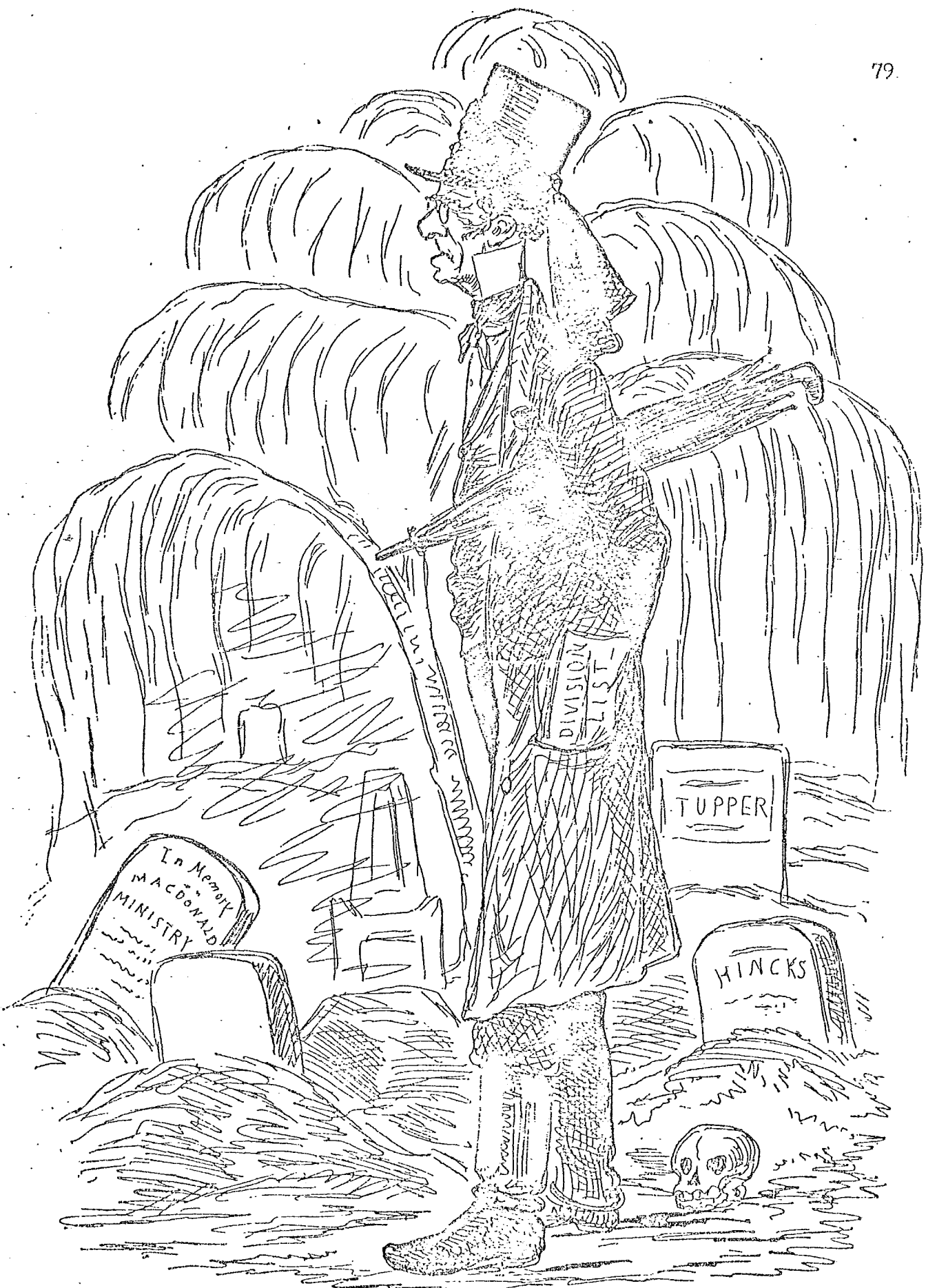
The Grit's had ridden into power on the swell of a voting minority who were disgusted with the immoral conduct of the previous administration. The Reform party had won office because the Tories had proven themselves incapable administrators of the public trust. Great care, Bengough cautioned, had to be taken to ensure that they the Grits did not follow in the tarnished footsteps of their notorious predecessors. Political honesty, above all else, was the best policy.<sup>8</sup>

By 1878, although the Grit party had indeed kept their image untarnished, they had not accomplished much else. A party divided by Letellier's antics in Quebec, admitting its inability to solve the depression of the late 1870's, and headed by a man too concerned with his role as Minister of Public Works to lead with any semblance of authority, the Liberal party fell to the combined onslaught of political picnics, Macdonald eloquence, and "hard times". Indeed, the Tories swept the whole country, winning 124 seats to the Grit's sixty-four. So complete was the rout, that only in the province of New Brunswick, were the Liberals able to win a majority.

Mackenzie, bitterly surprised at the outcome, complained that the Canadian electorate had given up honest government, and had returned to the

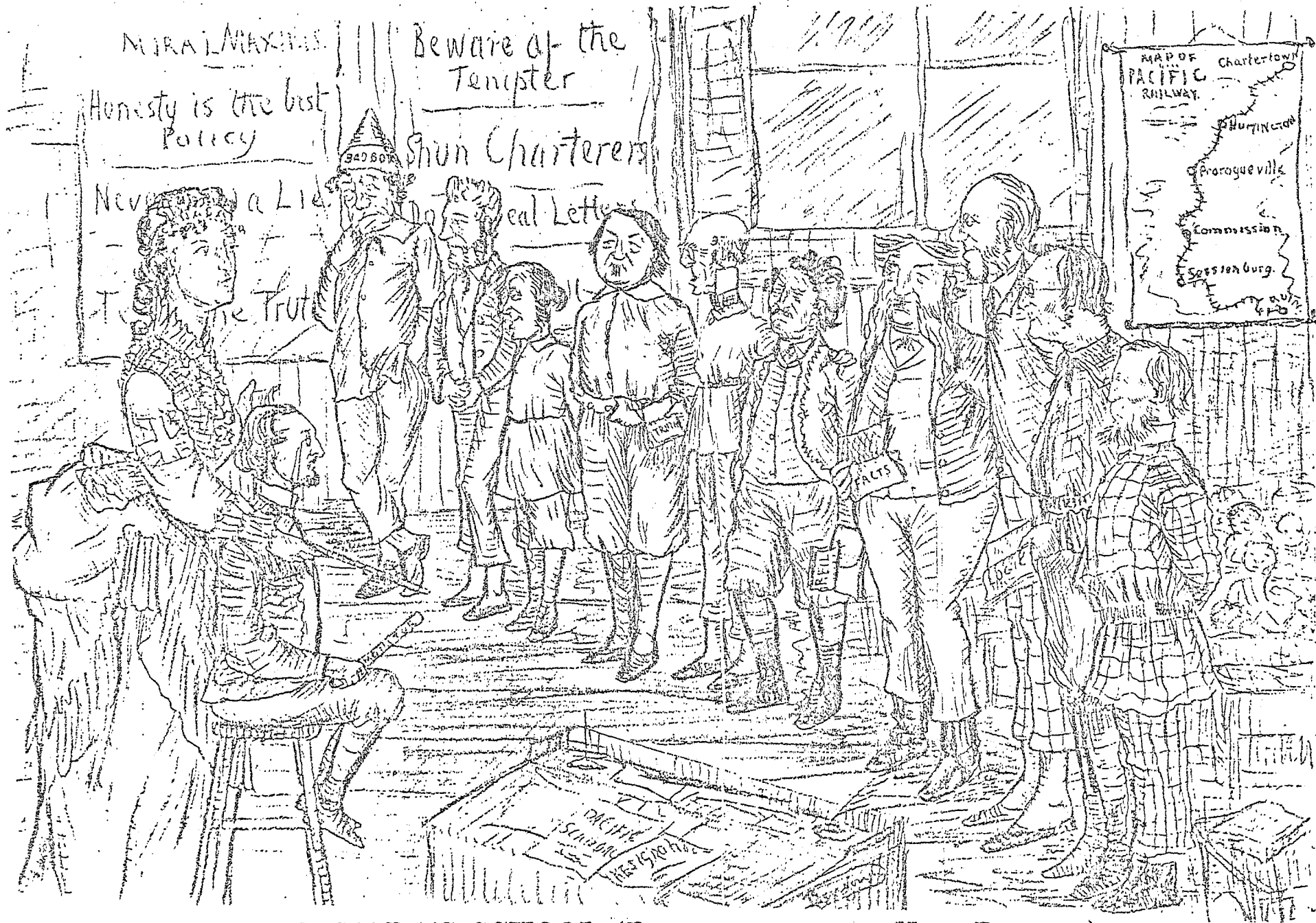
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<sup>8</sup>Grip, November 8, 1874.



"OF COMFORT NO MAN SPEAK;  
LET'S TALK OF GRAVES, OF WORMS, AND EPITAPHS!"—SHAKESPEARE.  
III.3





MISS CANADA'S SCHOOL (DEDICATED TO THE NEW PREMIER):

H. G. G. 1873. November 8, 1873.

MISS CANADA (to the Root of the Matter): "NOW" ALEXANDER BE VERY CAREFUL OR ILL BUT FOR WHERE JOHN IS"

highest office in the land the most unscrupulous politician in the country. "Canada", he protested, "does not care for rigid adherence to principle in the government. I administered her affairs with a more scrupulous regard to economy and justice than I would shew in my own affairs but one who shamefully and shamelessly abused the trust has been preferred before me."<sup>9</sup>

The Conservative party had taken the summer of 1878 to "talk-up" their protectionist arguments, and the National Policy was a recurrent theme of countless Tory picnics. The Grits had no practical program with which to counter, and the resulting ambiguous and at times ridiculous statements which issued from both sides, led Bengough to comment on the absurdity of the economic question.

1st Politician: You know you shout Free Trade, you do,  
to keep yourself in place.

2nd Politician: You shout Protection to get in, which  
does you much disgrace.

1st Politician: A vile Starvationist you are, and  
would the land consume.

2nd Politician: You're a Taxationist, and would tax  
window, house, and room.

1st Politician: Deliver us, I pray from folks  
who do intend as you.

Grip: Delivery us from both, and bring some honest  
fellows, do.<sup>10</sup>

The election of 1878, as far as Bengough was concerned, was one in which there was no real issue, and although he favoured Mackenzie because of his commitment to principles of political honesty, Bengough actually took no sides. Instead, he sent his "wit-tipped arrows" into both camps, castigating Macdonald for his grandiose, unfulfillable promises, and rebuking Mackenzie for not fully

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<sup>9</sup>P.A.C., Mackenzie Papers, Mackenzie to Charles Black, Oct. 23, 1878, as cited in P. Waite, Arduous Destiny, p.91

<sup>10</sup>Grip, September 7, 1878.

entering the political fray.

In his cartoon "The Great Political Conjuror", Bengough made his only real attack on Macdonald's questionable campaign tactics. Labelling him as "Professor John A. the Wizard", Bengough proceeded to criticize Macdonald's practice of promising everything from high tariffs to low prices, depending of course on the audience present.

He [Sir John] professes to be able to perform all the standard tricks of the sleight of hand business; besides many never before attempted, or even thought of by anybody in the profession of state-craft. His program embraces . . . the well-known hat-trick, in which the professor takes an empty hat, and by merely giving it a shake, fills it to overflowing with promises which he distributes indiscriminately throughout the audience to merchants, manufacturers, millers, farmers, ship-builders, coal owners, etc. etc. These promises are produced without the slightest trouble, and the supply can be kept up to an indefinite extent.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, Bengough rebuked Mackenzie, not for false campaign promises, but for his refusal to meet the Tory challenge head on with a viable policy of his own. The Grip cartoon of August 10, 1878, illustrates an adamant Mackenzie turning away from the political arena and the Tory challenge, taking his most able followers with him. Mackenzie, Grip was later to ruefully note, did not possess even the slightest savvy of a practical politician. When the time came for action:

He was sitting . . . like a clerk; slaving, I may say, as he always would do, when it would have been better for the party had he been seeing people and wining, dining and poking bartenders in the ribs, jovially, like John A.<sup>12</sup>

Bengough's participation in the election campaign was not based on the endorsement of any political party. Although Grip predicted a Mackenzie victory, in the next issue, Bengough cheerfully acknowledged his mistake. The cartoon of September 21, 1878, shows Macdonald, the "clean sweep" broom of victory in hand, admonishing Bengough for his mistaken prediction. And

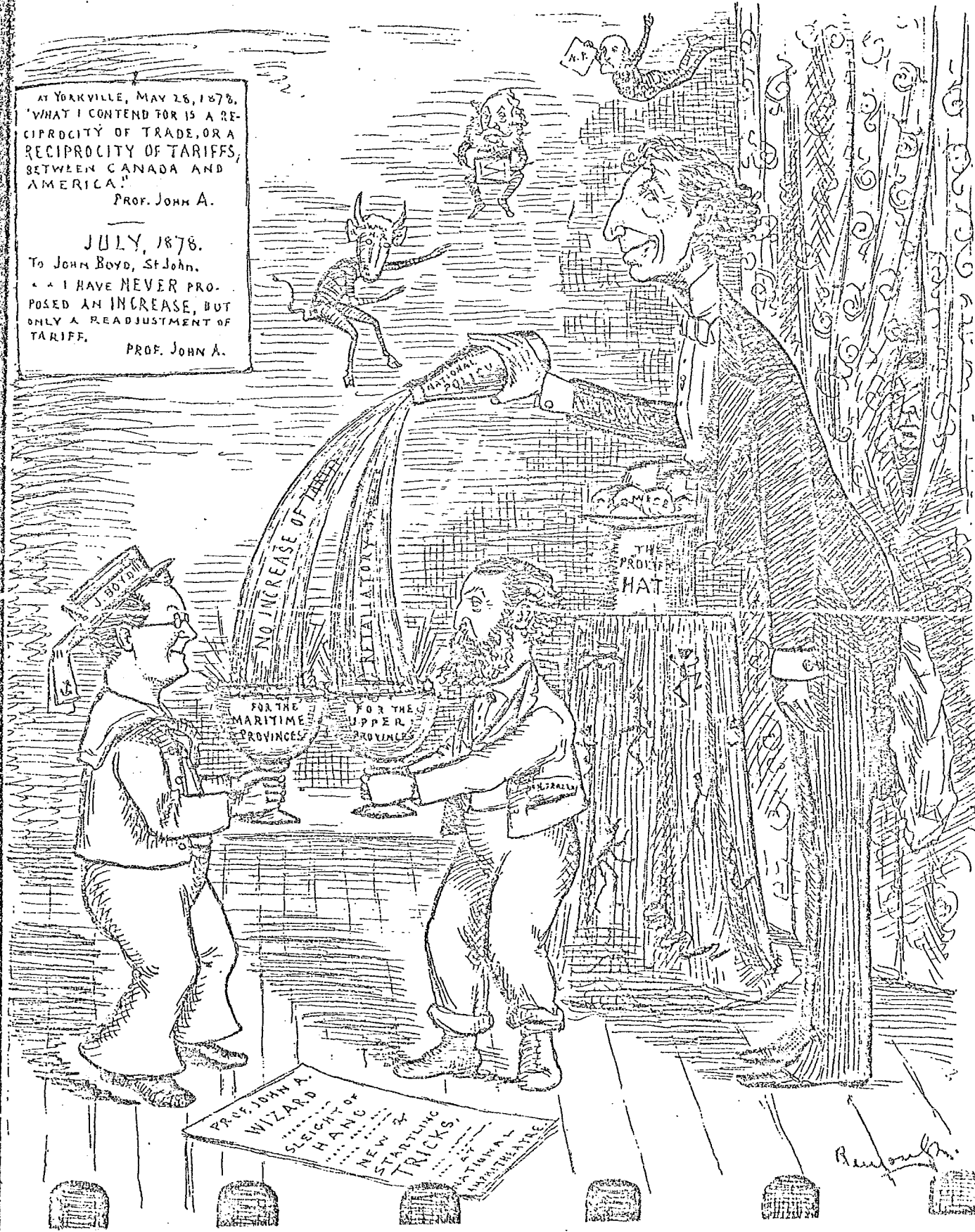
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<sup>11</sup>Grip, August 3, 1878.

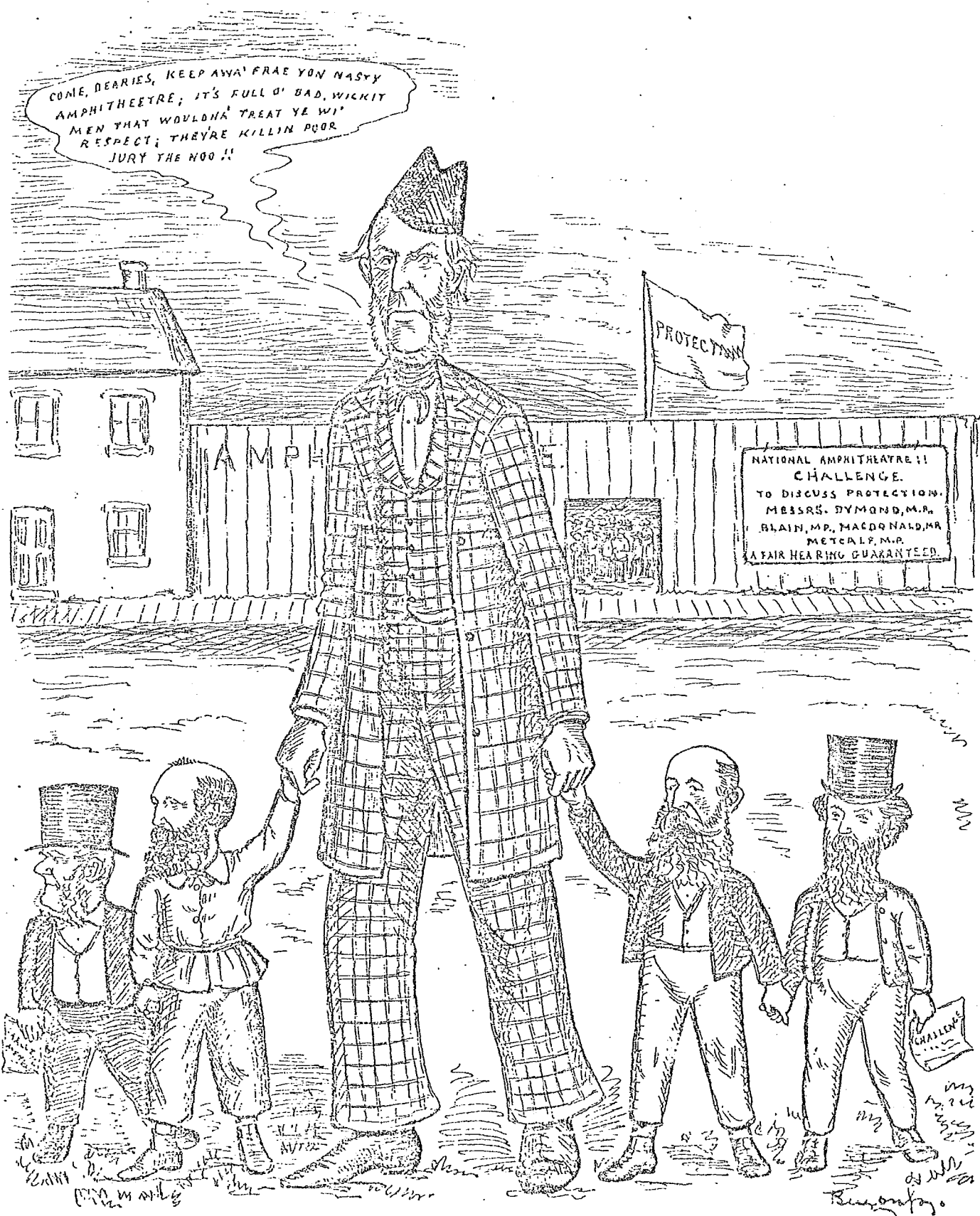
<sup>12</sup>Grip, April 3, 1880.

AT YORKVILLE, MAY 26, 1878.  
 "WHAT I CONTEND FOR IS A RECIPRO-  
 CITY OF TRADE, OR A  
 RECIPRO-  
 CITY OF TARIFFS,  
 BETWEEN CANADA AND  
 AMERICA."  
 PROF. JOHN A.

JULY, 1878.  
 TO JOHN BOYD, ST. JOHN.  
 "I HAVE NEVER PRO-  
 PISED AN INCREASE, BUT  
 ONLY A READJUSTMENT OF  
 TARIFF."  
 PROF. JOHN A.



Remondin



THE CAREFUL GUARDIAN

Bengough replies in the words of the raven: "I'll retire from the Prophecy business after this."<sup>13</sup>

Lacking any real issue, Bengough's 1878 election commentaries were confined to criticizing only the occasional follies of either party or leader, and, in the main, his election comments were equally divided between both camps. For example, Grip satirized the partisan party press in its pre-election column, "The Campaign Glorious Outlook All 'round!".

From the Globe: Ontario, Sept. 4 - A careful canvass of this electoral division convinces that the Government will be sustained by an overwhelming majority. We have failed to discover a single individual that will vote for the Tories. Keep the ball rolling.

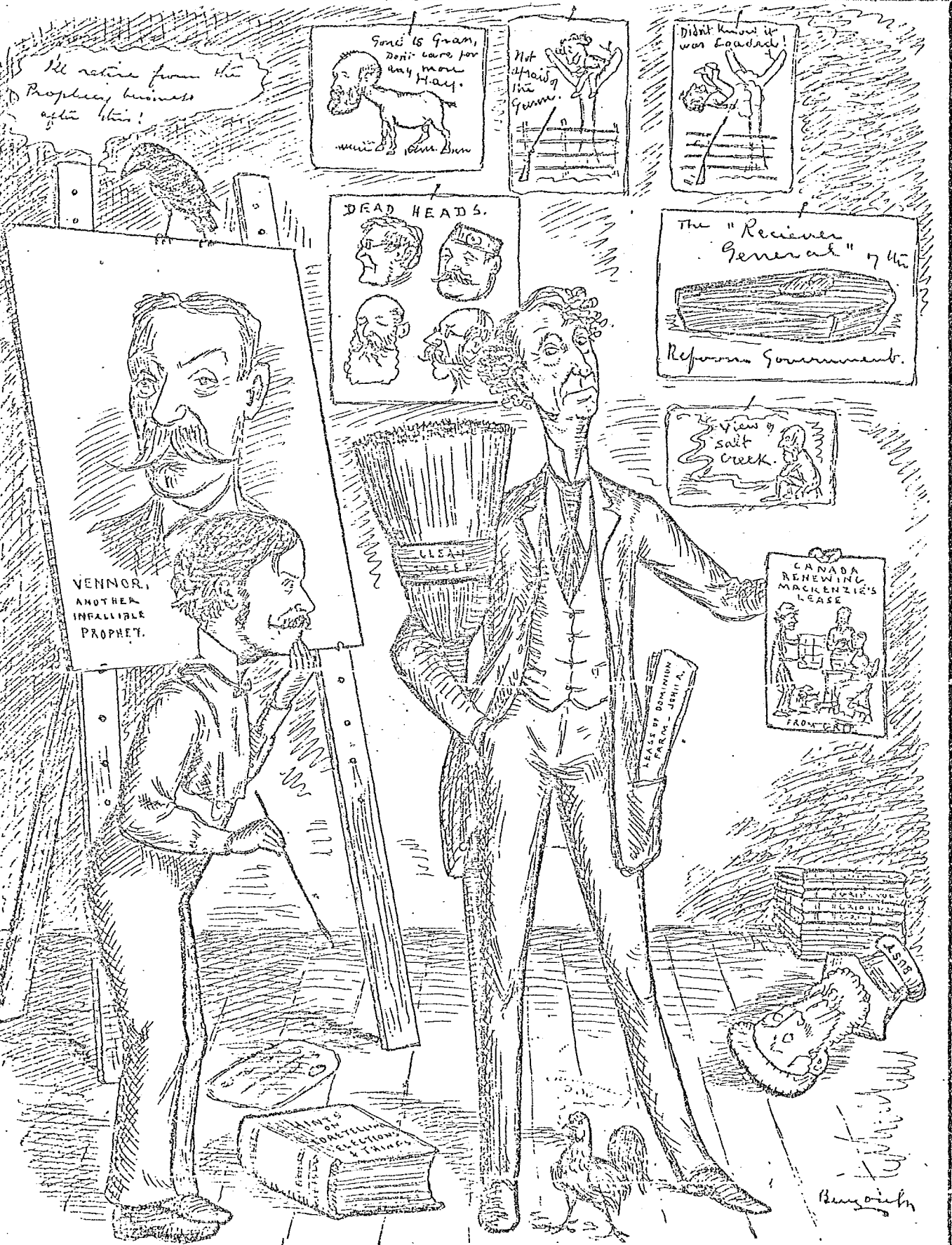
From the Mail: Ontario, Sept. 4 - The Grits are already as good as squelched in this province. The most sanguine, and rabid one amongst them doesn't presume to expect any of their wretched candidates to be elected.<sup>14</sup>

With no emotional issue to support, Bengough held back from the full ethical fury of his pen, and was content merely to comment on the vague generalities of what, ideologically, was a non-election. Although he did not support the Tory party, neither did he fully endorse the Grits and, as a result, his commentaries had little direct influence on the voting public. While Mackenzie still epitomized honest politics, his obvious inability to lead, made even the more odious by "hard times" swung the balance towards the Tories, who, although they did not possess a guiltless record, at least offered a constructive program for dealing with pressing economic problems, and a man well-known for his leadership ability. In an election with no

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<sup>13</sup>Grip, September 21, 1878.

<sup>14</sup>Grip, September 7, 1878.



VENNOR,  
ANOTHER  
INFALLIBLE  
PROPHET.

DEAD HEADS.

The "Receiver  
General" of the  
Reformed Government.

Views of  
Salt  
Creek.

CANADA  
RENEWING  
MACKENZIE'S  
LEASE

WAYS OF  
DIRECTING  
LECTIONS  
& THINGS

LEASES BY DOMINION  
PARLIAM. - JENKIN A.

Benj. Smith

# III.7 - O, OUR PROPHETIC SOUL!

(See last week's Cartoon).

JOHN A.—I DON'T KNOW, BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THIS PICTURE OF YOURS, MY "ADJUSTMENT" DON'T IT HEY?



ethical issue involved, Bengough stood on the sidelines.

The election of 1882, won by a Conservative party riding the crest of a wave of general prosperity, excited little comment from Bengough. The paucity of ethical issues, the obviously pathetic attempts by Edward Blake, heir apparent to the Liberal leadership, to decide upon a viable economic platform and the resulting lack of policy debate, did not create the emotional or ethical material for Bengough's pen.

Bengough, on the whole, stayed pretty well away from the entire campaign, and only the introduction of the song "Ontario, Ontario" at an important Liberal rally in Toronto really brought his name, albeit indirectly into prominence. No one really knew just who the author was, although popular suggestions identified him as Bengough. The lively, ludicrous lyrics, sometimes verging on the prejudiced, were at a later date firmly attributed to him, and though, in his Globe column, "Motley: topics grave and gay", he denied the authorship of the anti-French comments in the song: "I did not write such a line", he never disavowed himself of the credit for the general authorship.

The election, as Bengough saw it, should have been fought over economic problems on the platforms of protection versus free trade. As it turned out, however, Blake waffled and waivered, committing himself as often to the Tory position as stating the Grit party line, and Bengough soon determined that, on the economic issue at least, Blake could provide no new answers or challenges.<sup>15</sup> Bengough could hardly advocate one party over the other. The Grip cartoon of June 17, entitled "Head or Tail", appearing a mere three days before the contest, aptly summed up Bengough's election commentary. Blake and

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<sup>15</sup> See Bengough's cartoon "Miss Canada Vaccinated" in Grip, February 25, 1882, on the following page.





### MISS CANADA VACCINATED. III. 3

DR. JOHN A.—AH, MADAM! IT IS TAKING *SPLENDIDLY!*

DR. BLAKE.—YES; LOOKS AS THOUGH IT WOULD END *FATALLY!* MADAM, DISMISS THAT QUACK AND TAKE ME ON!

MISS CANADA.—AND WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN THE CASE?

DR. BLAKE.—I WOULD OCCUPY HIS POSITION!

Macdonald toss a coin into the air, the outcome seems to be uncertain, yet Macdonald has the deck stacked in his favour. The Gerrymander Act of 1882 provides the basis for Macdonald's tricky call: "Heads I Win; Tails You Lose!"<sup>16</sup> Even in an election which invoked no ethical questions, Bengough could not resist a cutting remark about Macdonald's political principles. Yet, in 1882, as four years previously, the lack of emotional ethical issues kept Bengough once again out of the thick of things.

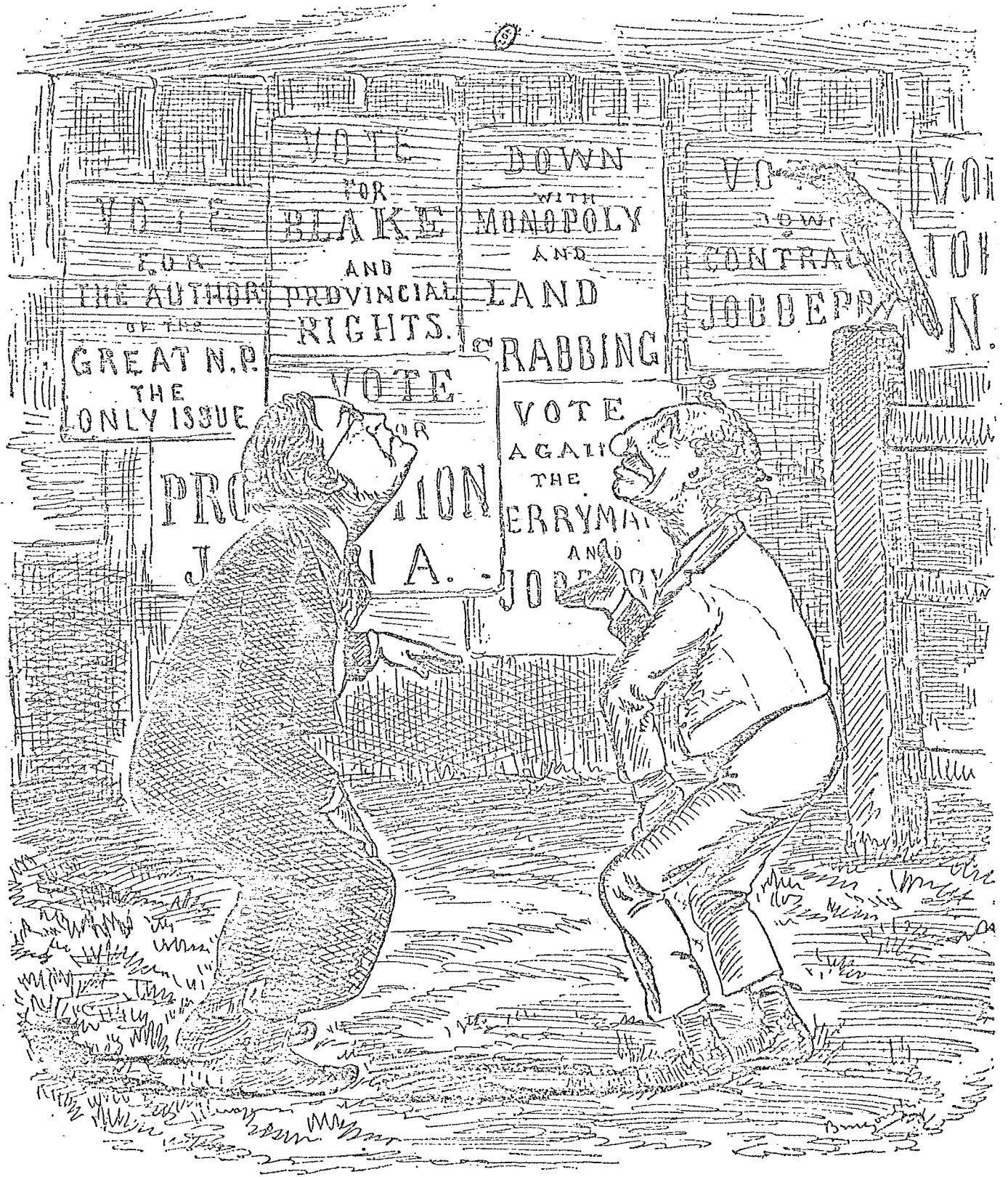
The election of 1887, called in the aftermath of the Riel agitation, with the country appearing less cohesive than it had twenty years previously, was, like the three elections previously, characterized by the conspicuous absence of a concrete issue. Although discontent over the national policy was welling up both in the Maritimes, where Fielding continued his perennial secessionist agitations, and the west, where Manitoba farmers were raising a clamorous din against the failings of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Liberal party apparently had neither the ability nor the inclination to take the fight to the Conservatives.

Edward Blake, as Grit leader, unsuccessfully attempted to present his party as an alternative government, and took up the Tory appeals to the manufacturers. In his January Malvern speech, and in subsequent orations, he stated that the Liberal party would not abolish the tariff but merely revise it, despite pronouncements to the contrary by the Grit's financial expert, Sir Richard Cartwright. Unwilling to tackle the Riel question, and half-heartedly acquiescing in a Tory held economic platform, neither the Liberals or Blake hit upon any real election issue.

Bengough gave up on Blake. Although originally in favour of the intelligent and principled, though highly erratic lawyer, Bengough could take

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<sup>16</sup>Grip, June 17, 1882.



III.9 - HEAD OR TAIL ?

[A question to be decided on the 20th.]

Blake's eternal wavering and indecision no longer. Especially criticising Blake's decision to adopt Tory economic policy, Bengough caustically attacked the well-meaning but politically naive Liberal leader. Portraying him as a chameleon which periodically changed from "protection" to "free trade" colours Bengough graphically summarized the bewilderment of the electorate.<sup>17</sup>

Portraying Blake as a sword swallower, taking in the National Policy, Bengough wondered why Blake wouldn't pick up the prohibition platform instead.<sup>18</sup> But perhaps his most damning portrayal of Blake was found in the Grip cartoon of January 29, 1887.

In the cartoon "A Want of Confidence", the bumbling, well-intentioned Blake tries to entice the manufacturer's vote with the sweets of tariff protection. "Yes my dear", he soothingly states, "I won't hurt you; in fact I couldn't if I wanted to! Come give me your vote, and you can have the candy." The ludicrousness of this position was further illustrated in Bengough's comment on the cartoon. Taking the Tories economic policy to task, he also cynically noted that only Blake's high opinion of himself could save him from Macdonald's sins.

The Government is relying entirely upon the National Policy to carry the present election, and if Mr. Blake can convince the high tariff advocates and those manufacturers who are benefited thereby, that a Reform victory does not necessarily mean a return to a tariff for revenue only, he will "at one fell blow" destroy the hopes of the Cabinet. . . . Mr. Blake, modest though he must be, must have the consciousness that he is a much better boy than Sir John, and would make a much more capable ruler.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Grip, February 19, 1887, "The Chameleon; or, what's his fiscal color?"

<sup>18</sup>Grip, February 5, 1887.

<sup>19</sup>Grip, January 29, 1887.

★ GRIP ★



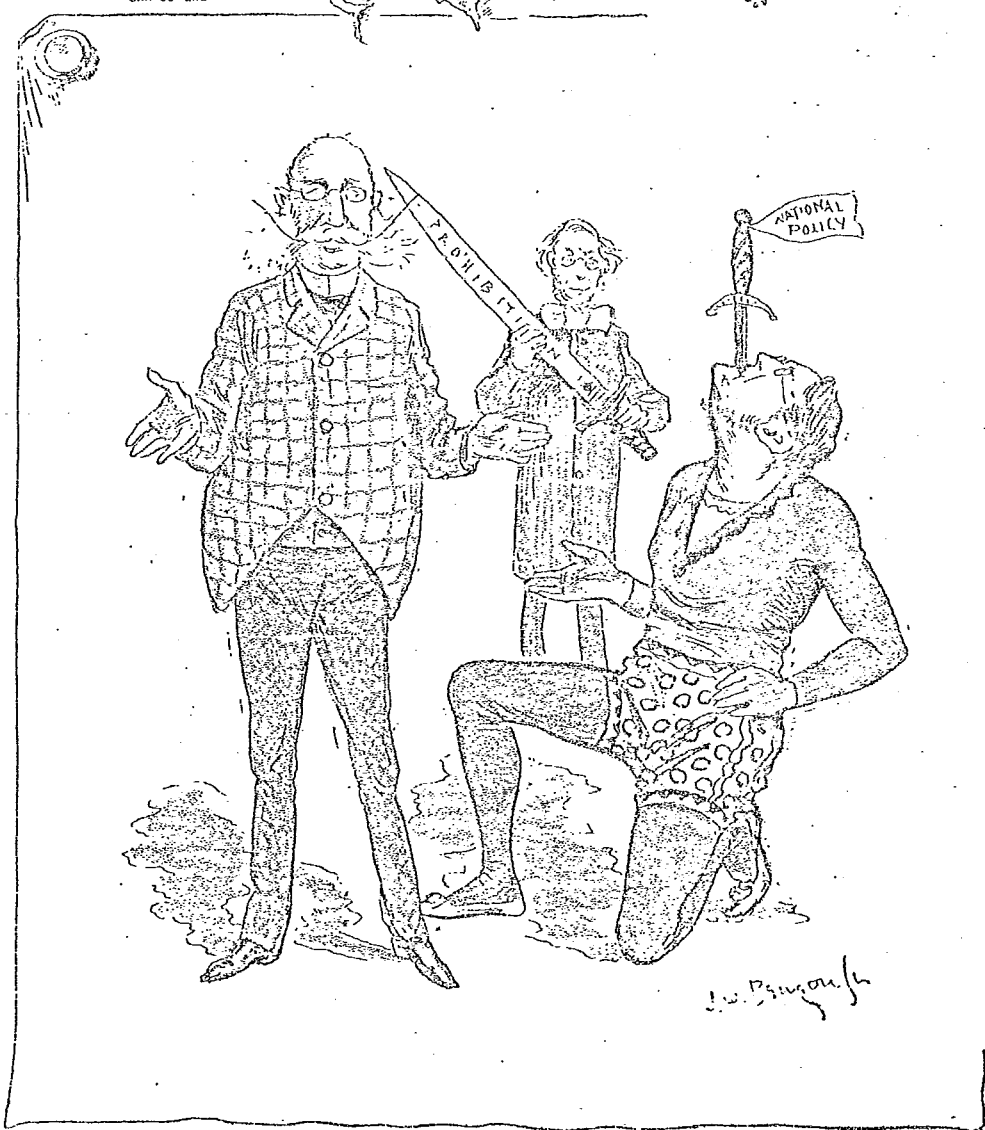
THE CHAMELEON;  
OR, WHAT'S HIS FISCAL COLOR?

(Leech's cartoon in "Punch," 1852, adapted to Canadian situation.)

# GRIP

EDITED BY J. W. BIRNBOUGH

GRIP CO. ENG.



LITERATURE

MUSIC

DRAMA

The gravest bear is the ASS.  
 The gravest bird is the Owl.  
 The gravest fish is the Oyster.  
 The gravest man is the fool.

### THE SWORD SWALLOWED !

*Manager Cartwright*—IT'S A REAL, GENUINE SWALLOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! NO DECEPTION! ANY MANUFACTURER IN THE COUNTRY CAN COME UP AND EXAMINE FOR HIMSELF!

*Urgent Party in the Background*—H'M! WONDER WHY HE CAN'T SWALLOW THIS SWORD!

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III.11



\* GRIP \*



A WANT OF CONFIDENCE. III.12 - Grip, Jan. 29, 1857.

Miss Canale (to the "Infant Industry")—Won't you go to the good, kind gentleman?

Mr. Blake—Yes, my dear, I won't hurt you; in fact I couldn't if I wanted to! Come, give me your vote,



Although the election of 1887 was not fought over one concrete national issue, local questions did assume a high prominence, and in Ontario at least, the moot issue was a moral one. The 1887 election in Ontario, was, as Douglas O. Baldwin argues, "certainly a contest of principles . . . with Liberals on a high moral platform simply because the Conservatives seemed particularly corrupt and inefficient."<sup>20</sup> And the focus of the moral issue was financial. To whom did exorbitant profits fall, and why? Which politicians found the rough road of campaigning greased by a little cold hard cash?

The Carleton Place Herald, summed up this ethical approach:

In a nutshell the issue in this election is between public integrity and official dishonor. . . . The boodlers, the railway charter grabbers, the colonization land appropriators should be dismissed and public life purified.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, Grip argued that financial questions were at root, ethical in nature: "the people must cast their votes upon the issue of boodle and anti-boodle", and Bengough's cartoon of February 12, "The Protected Manufacturer!" left no doubt in the minds of the viewers as to just who the chummy culprits creating communal woes were. Macdonald and the fat manufacturer, each supporting the activities of the other were at the basis of all financial immorality; the manufacturer growing rich at the expense of the common weal and the Tory party, prospering and implementing a protectionist trade policy, benefitting from the financial "kickback".

1886 also saw the pictorial arrival of a familiar villain of the political scene -- Sir Charles Tupper, as served up by Bengough's graphics of the burly, pearshaped Maritimer, soon became synonymous with moral corruption. The real power in the Tory party Bengough feared, was not the now ailing "Sir John A." but that harbinger of evil -- Tupper. Seizing upon the rumour that

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<sup>20</sup> D.O. Baldwin, Political and Social Behaviour in Ontario, 1879-1891: A Quantitative Approach. Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, York University, 1973, p.228.

<sup>21</sup> Carleton Place Herald, February 23, 1887, as cited in D.O. Baldwin, Political and Social Behaviour, p.233.





III.13 - THE PROTECTED MANUFACTURER

Grip, Feb. 12, 1887.

BLEEDING FOR HIS COUNTRY.

Tupper would take over immediately following a Tory victory, Bengough viewed the future with trepidation, and his apprehension added a sharper edge to his already damning caricature.

For Sir John Macdonald there is a universal feeling of chivalrous attachment throughout the Conservative ranks, but it is quite different as respects the burly Nova Scotian, whose political record is bad, and who lacks the personal qualities which have made Sir John what he is.<sup>22</sup>

This double-barrelled attack levelled against the unethical practices of political financing, and the spectre of the evil Tupper, was led and encouraged by J.W. Bengough, who graphically and verbally, in his paper Grip, continually stressed the immorality of the Tory party. This attack, while it did not lead to the defeat of the Conservative party, did much to increase the margin of the Grits' Ontario vote. Both the Methodist and the Presbyterian vote, traditionally split between the parties, now went strongly to the Liberals.

Whether or not the moral conscience of the Methodists was touched by the didactic nature of Bengough's appeals, it moved in the same measure, and as D.O. Baldwin notes, "strong Methodist sub-districts . . . did change their allegiance",<sup>23</sup> and to the Liberal party.

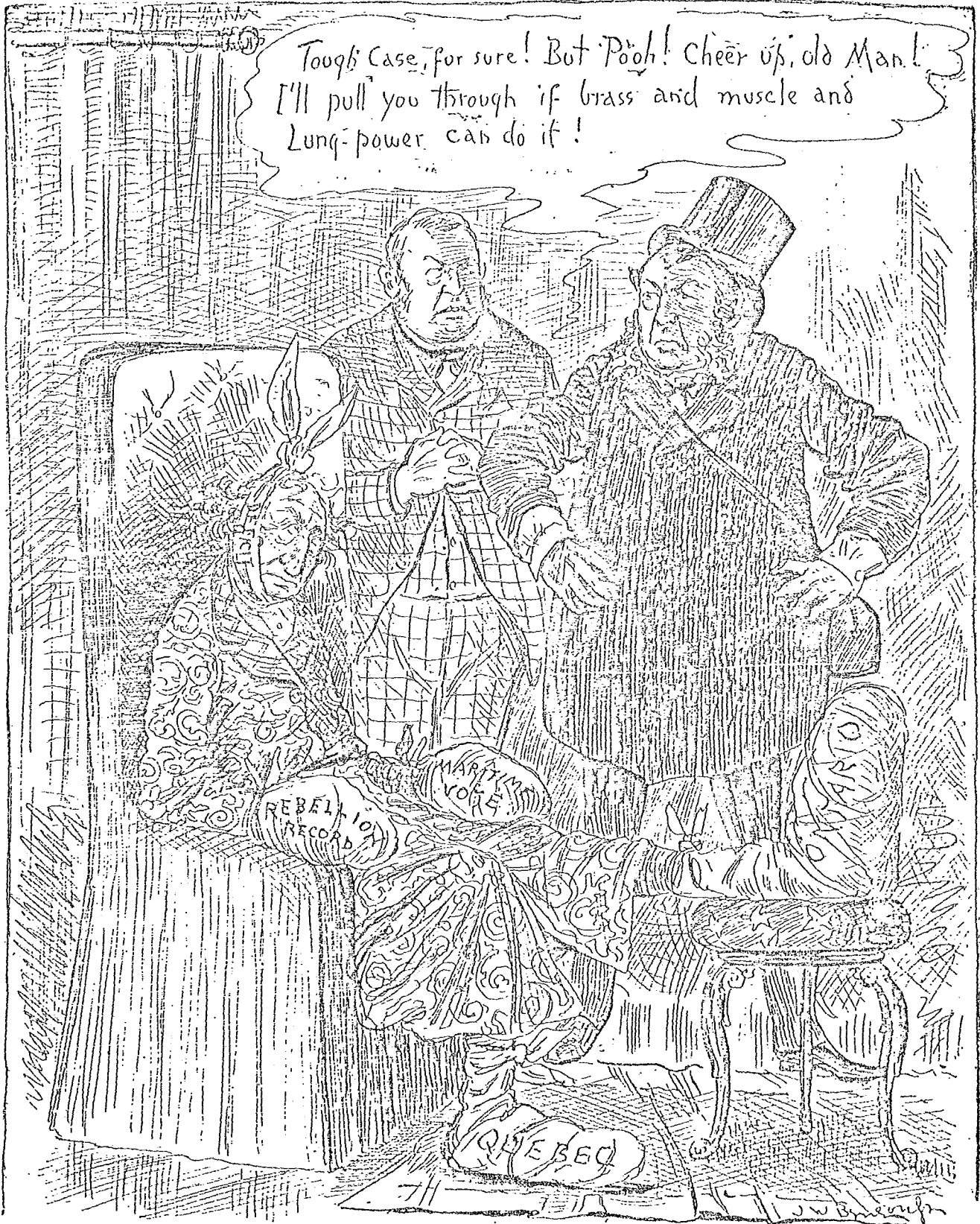
And, just as impressive was the shift in the Presbyterian vote. Traditionally anti-Romish in their stand, Presbyterian areas did not support Macdonald who hanged Riel, but went Liberal even more strongly than ever they had before. Again, as Baldwin suggests, the influence for the change was the emotional appeal of moral issues.

Bengough, at his inspiring best when ethical questions were involved, influenced this morally oriented Ontario vote shift. In an election in which national issues did not exist, his portrait of Blake as a bumbling although well-

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<sup>22</sup>Grip, February 5, 1887.

<sup>23</sup>D.O. Baldwin, Political and Social Behaviour, p.241.



III.14 --THE DOCTOR ARRIVES! Grip, Jan. 22, 1887.

intentioned politician, did the Grit cause more harm than good. However, his moral indignation, his portraits of the evil Tupper and the money worshipping Sir John, helped to arouse the Ontario public to a new political awareness, a political awareness founded deep in their religious heritage, and reflected in their political behaviour.

The election of 1891, it is most generally agreed amongst Canadian historians, was won by Macdonald on the loyalty issue. Craig Brown writes:

there were two, ostensibly, two issues in the election of 1891: trade relations with the United States and loyalty to Dominion, Crown, and Empire. . . . And in the final analysis, there was but one issue, loyalty.

Similarly, Paul Stevens notes:

there were two basic issues in Ontario, the question of trade with the United States, and the loyalty cry . . . the battle was fought and lost on the latter.

And Peter Waite, quoting J.V. Ellis, Liberal M.P. for St. John agrees: "the main thing was the loyalty cry."<sup>24</sup>

The Liberal party, now under the leadership of an urbane and eloquent Wilfrid Laurier, adroitly modified their earlier platform of commercial union with the United States, and argued for unrestricted reciprocity. The prevailing discontent with the outcome of the National Policy plus the innuendos of scandal, linking the Minister of Public Works, Hector Langevin, to the type of corruption so prevalent in Mercier's regime, which practically nullified the electioneering effectiveness of Macdonald's Quebec lieutenant, gave the Grit cause an excellent opportunity to wrest the reigns of government from a party which had almost become a national institution. Macdonald, astute politician that he was, did not wish to fight the battle on the platform of trade relations. Indeed, the Tory

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<sup>24</sup>Brown and Stevens, as cited in D.O. Baldwin, Political and Social Behaviour, p.246; Waite, Arduous Destiny, p.225.

party had instigated secret reciprocity discussions with the Americans, discussions that, if exposed during the campaign, would help the Grit cause to no small degree.

Instead, seizing on the "faux pas" of one Edward Farrer, a writer for the Globe, Macdonald exposed Farrer's arguments, which, while presumably for unrestricted reciprocity, could become an economic plan by which the United States could force Canada into commercial union. Accusing Farrer, and by implication, all Liberals of conspiracy with the Yankees, Macdonald turned a rather thorny trade-oriented campaign into a heady, emotional cry for Canadian independence and the British connection.

As for me, my course is clear. A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die. With my utmost effort, with my latest breath, will I oppose the 'veiled treason' which attempts with sordid means and mercenary proffers to lure our people from their allegiance.<sup>25</sup>

This was Macdonald's manifesto, and this became the issue of the campaign.

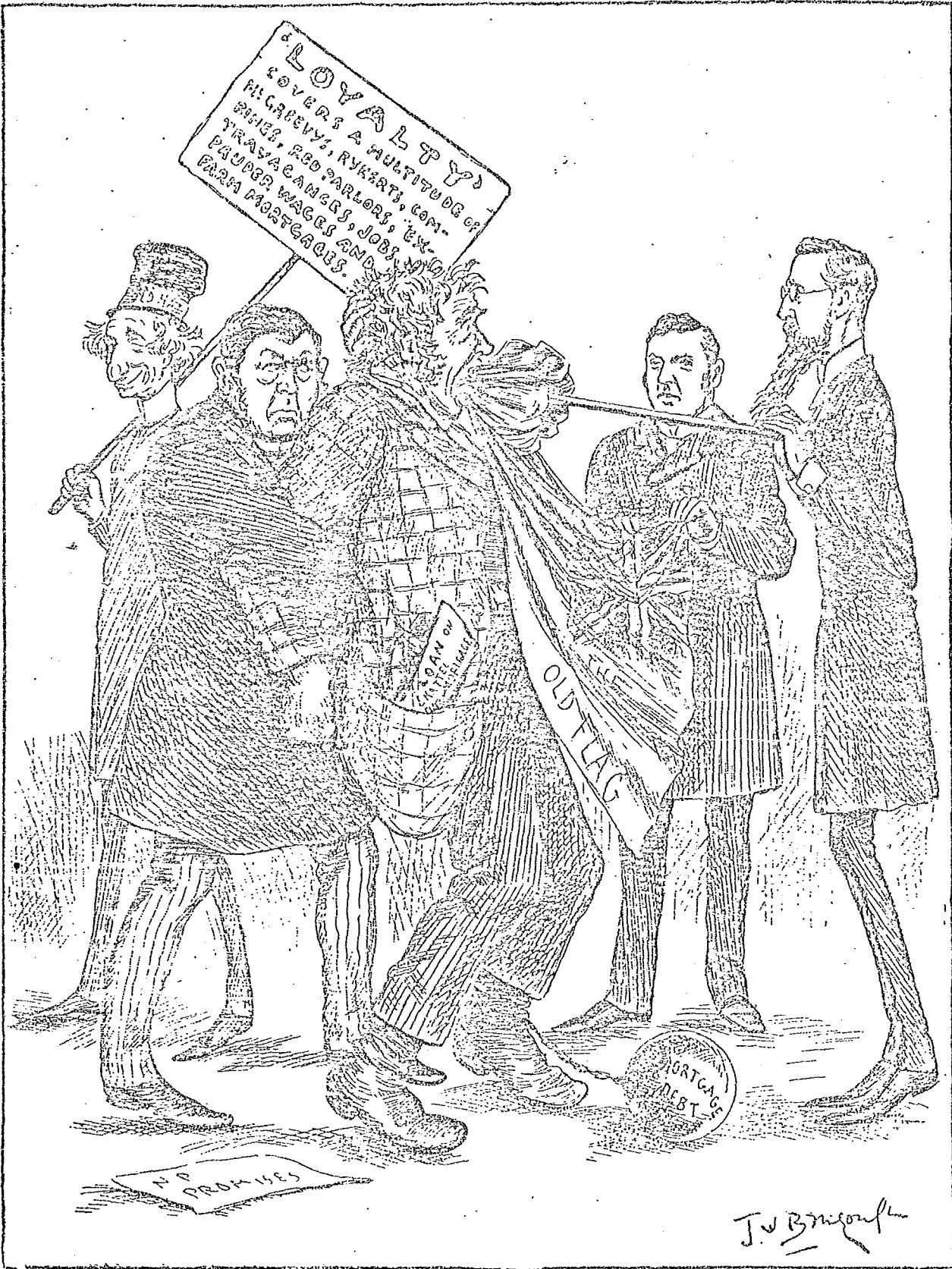
Bengough did not buy Macdonald's political manoeuvring. The loyalty issue he declared, was a red herring, a "nauseous mixture of cant and impudence",<sup>26</sup> calculated to turn the voter's attentions away from the real issue --- reciprocity or protection.

In his Grip cartoons of February and March, 1891, Bengough caustically illustrated Macdonald's underhanded tactics. "The 'Loyalty' Gag", sums up, as no words can, the Tory campaign. While the burly Tupper holds the voter, laden with the ball and chain of bad debts, Foster stuffs "the old flag" into the elector's mouth. As this scenario takes place, a sly, wizzened John A.

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<sup>25</sup> Sir John A. Macdonald, as cited in W.L. Morton, The Kingdom of Canada, second edition, (Toronto: Mc Clelland and Stewart, 1969), p.386.

<sup>26</sup> Grip, February 28, 1891.



III.15 THE "LOYALTY" GAG. Grip, February 28, 1891.

The Farmer justly complains, and into the mouth of clamor the "Old Flag" is stuffed.

parades in the background, carrying a placard which explains the real reason behind the "loyalty gag":

'Loyalty' covers a multitude of McGreevys,  
Rykerts, Combines, Red Parlors, Extravagances,  
Jobs Pauper Wages, and Farm Mortgages.<sup>27</sup>

And the total ludicrousness of the whole situation is aptly summed up in "I'll rant as well as thou!" Macdonald and Mowat, animals of totally different political stripes, both mouth the catch-all cry: "A British subject I was born and a British subject I will die."<sup>28</sup>

Aside from Macdonald's patent political dishonesty, the real issue, Bengough emphasized, was that of trade: unrestricted reciprocity against the National Policy. The National Policy, he argued was the "baby" of mercenary monopolists, in cahoots with a Tory party which was fed by their pecuniary contributions. The real loyalty, as Bengough explained, was not to the British connection, but to the grasping mercenary monopolist. Why else, he asked would the Tory party seek trade with the far off West Indies, when the best customer for Canadian goods was just next door?<sup>29</sup>

Reciprocity, Bengough asserted, was the only answer to Canada's financial problems. Not only was free trade divinely ordained, but, Bengough argued (and with a prophetic logic that foretold the branch-plant imperialism of the early twentieth century) free trade would not lead to commercial and political union with the United States. On the contrary, it would ensure the development of a strong, viable, self-sufficient Canadian economy, thereby lessening dependence

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<sup>27</sup>Grip, February 28, 1891.

<sup>28</sup>Grip, March 7, 1891.

<sup>29</sup>Grip, January 10, 1891.



III.16 "I'LL RANT AS WELL AS THOU!"

Grip, March 7, 1891.  
Shakespeare.





III.17 RIGHT PAST OUR NEIGHBORS DOOR!

Grip, Jan. 10, 1891.

UNCLE SAM—"Whar' ye be'n, Mr. Foster?"

HON. G. E. (*distantly*)—"Down to the West Indies to try and work up trade for Canada."

UNCLE SAM—"What's the matter with trading *here*? You won't find no better customer anywhar than *I* be."

HON. G. E.—"Perhaps so, but the Old Flag forbids! We must be loyal (*aside*) to the protected monopolists who provide us with soap."

on the neighbour to the south, and ensuring Canadian chances for independent survival on the North American continent. "Reciprocity", he wrote, "not only does not mean annexation, but it is the only thing that can save us from ultimate political union with the United States."<sup>30</sup>

As well as reciprocity, Bengough championed, as always, the cause of political morality. The contest, as he saw it, was between the corrupt Tory party and a revitalized Grit party, led by a man who exemplified all the finest qualities. Laurier, Bengough asserted,

is manifestly a Christian gentleman, permeated through and through with the best sort of British Liberalism.<sup>31</sup>

The Tories, on the other hand, were vile and tarnished with the taint of scandal. And their leader was hardly the example of virtue.

Are they the purest, the wisest and the best men in our midst, or are they the authors and abettors of nearly all the scandals our public life has known in recent years?

Bengough asked. The answer was obvious.

As far as Bengough was concerned, the election was a contest between a party exemplifying the highest forms of political virtue and upholding the divine ordinance of free trade, and a party epitomising all that was evil and corrupt in Canadian political life. His choice for the highest office in the land was self-evident.

The Tory victory, engineered by the emotional effect of their catch-all loyalty slogans, was not a resounding one. The Conservatives only managed a twenty-seven seat majority in the House, and took a minority of seats in Ontario and Quebec. In Ontario, the Liberals augmented their 1887 vote by six thousand, the Conservatives only by two thousand, and rural Ontario electors, denizens of small villages and farms, returned an overwhelming Liberal

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<sup>30</sup>Grip, February 28, 1891.

<sup>31</sup>Grip, November 2, 1889.

majority. The urban areas, in contrast, went for Macdonald.<sup>32</sup>

The ethical appeals made by Bengough would have touched home most readily in the farming districts of Canada's central province. The rural areas, losing their rootless wandering populations, so common in the middle nineteenth century, to the lure of the cities, became the repository of traditional values -- ethical constructs which stressed private and public morality. As such, the appeal of Bengough was both immediate and forceful. The evil corrupt Tory machine of Bengough's pen never had a chance against the "Christian gentleman". And, strange as it may seem, Protestant rural Ontario was won to the support of the urbane Catholic Laurier.

A short six weeks after the April opening of Parliament, the unrepentent and elderly Macdonald suffered a final severe stroke. Thursday, May 29, Langevin announced the news to the House. All activity ceased. On Saturday, June 6, 1891, the architect of Confederation died.

Canadian public life faltered, halted, and ceased. An entire nation seemed to know only too well the debt it owed to its dynamic, resourceful, and popular leader. Grip, speaking for a mute and grieving people realized Macdonald's unforgettable contributions to the country that he, above everyone else, had fathered:

On the day that Sir John, with trembling steps retired from the House of Commons never again to enter its portals, the Dominion of Canada arrived at the turning point in its history. From the date of Confederation down to that day, with but a momentary interruption, Sir John Macdonald was the absolute autocrat of our destiny. Whatever we are to-day as a people politically he made us.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>D. O. Baldwin, Political and Social Behaviour, p.246.

<sup>33</sup>Grip, June 13, 1891.

Bengough buried the hatchet of the years. All Macdonald's political sins were forgiven, only the richness and vigour of his leadership was remembered. Although seemingly addressed to the Conservative party, the Grip cartoon of June 13, 1891, "The Empty Saddle", perhaps Bengough's finest, expressed in stark simplicity the sorrow of a whole people. No other Canadian work of art so eloquently captures the heart-wrenching grief of a nation in mourning. And Bengough's poem, carried in the same issue, gave verbal expression to the sentiment of the disbelieving and leaderless country.

And he is dead, they say!  
 The words confuse and mock the general ear --  
 What! can there be House and Members here  
 And no John A?<sup>34</sup>

An era had indeed ended, and a new was just about to begin.

The Conservative party, never again the same without Macdonald, went from one crisis to another, sinking ever lower in terms of effective government. Finally, in desperation at Bowell's total mismanagement, the Cabinet revolted and, in January of 1896, seven members left the party caucus. A disunited Tory party, under the leadership of a hastily summoned Tupper went to the people although still in the morass of the Manitoba School Question that was neither solved nor even clearly identified by the complex and unwieldy "Remedial Bill". In response to the coercive policy expressed in Tupper's approach to the school question and the perennially important issue of the tariff, the Laurier Grits adopted a policy of conciliation and tariff reform. Pushing for a stable tariff and trade policy, the Liberal party abandoned their cries for free trade and won a narrow, thirty seat, election victory. A new era, as Bengough graphically proclaimed had indeed begun.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Grip, June 13, 1891.

<sup>35</sup>Globe, June 24, 1896.



J. W. Bengough saw the election in terms of conciliation versus coercion, clerical interference in state affairs versus an isonomic civil policy, rampant protectionism, versus an enlightened tariff policy, which even though it did not promise free trade was at least closer to that position than anything the Conservatives proposed. Now cartooning for the Globe, he identified himself solidly with the Liberal party, for it seemed more congenial to his goals than did the Tories, and his caricatures praised Laurier in Biblical allegory, emphasizing his upright virtuous character.<sup>36</sup>

Linking Laurier with the equally just Mowat, Bengough's call for "Laurier, Mowat and Victory" stood in stark contrast to the rascalion Tupper and his equally ragged cronic, Foster. Tupper now became the chameleon, spreading contradictory themes in different parts of the country. Tupper was the bully, champion of coercion; Laurier was the concilliator, champion of political virtue and honesty.

The same theme was reiterated by Bengough in the election campaign of 1900. Making Tupper, Foster and the Tory party appear both foolish and ridiculous in juxtaposition to an upright, almost venerated Laurier, Bengough pictured the contest in the context of the two leaders involved. Both in 1896 and 1900, the choice, as Bengough saw it was between the scheming Tupper and the righteous Laurier.

As Macdonald's death ushered out an era of Canadian political history, so did it turn a chapter in Bengough's role as political critic and watchdog of the public conscience. With the final issue of Grip, early in 1894, Bengough took a position as cartoonist for the Globe. Now he was able to throw his considerable weight into the political fray totally onto the side of the virtuous Laurier.

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<sup>36</sup>Globe, April 17, 1896, and July 14, 1896.

London, April 22.—The Times has not yet received the Times' comment on the letter.

London, April 22.—The Times prints a long dispatch from Mr. G. W. Smedley, its correspondent in New York, which is devoted to describing the illu-

must allow the report to remain a dead letter or carry out its threat to enforce a decision by resort to war. There is reason to believe that an attempt will now be made to work up an English feeling in favor of the surrender of our Government. This is vain. Our position is simply that British frontier questions are matter

negotiations between a sovereign and Italy, violently attacks the Government, declaring the Ministers to be responsible for the "dishonor suffered by Italy through King Merelli's haughty attitude."

The total public subscriptions to the new Italian national loan amounts to 1,272,699,000 lires (about \$250,000,000).

London, April 22.—The Times prints a long dispatch from Mr. G. W. Smedley, its correspondent in New York, which is devoted to describing the illu-

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IN EXTREMIS.

TUPPER.—Say, pard, before we go to the country it would be a fine thing if we could get a couple of the ornately-looking "sticks."  
FOSTER.—Yes; they mightn't be much good as supports, but they would add grandly to the respectability of our appearance.

for negotiation only with the parties Milan subscribed 500,000,000 lres, Rome 250,000,000, Turin 200,000,000 and Genoa 100,000,000.

Decapitation of a Cabinet

A Brief Respite Granted—A-crescent For the Cabinet in Quebec—A False Step

Ottawa, April 22.— general elections are expected on Monday, June 23rd; nominating day, or on Tuesday, if Parliament will be prorogued evening at 8 o'clock on Monday morning. The new Parliament will convene on the same day. A movement was made in the House by Premier Bowell, regarding the last official and will make before being will succeed on Friday. assassination of which victim, and Sir Charles High Priest of Corruption to the office of First Incubations were shown by his having a long interview in one of the Senate with Sir Hector hero of the McGreevy days, who was too badly hurt for Sir John Thon him to remain in the Chapleau will not enter but Sir Hector is quite what he has not got to reputation. The talk of coping in and swearing dishonored for the purpose some influential man to enter the new Cabinet, impression that the recent can retain power. the Government are in confidence. In Quebec as the elections by talking of securing a general election in place of Sir 3rd. Sir Charles Tupper with Sir Hector Lange forming his Cabinet extracts the Government Quebec. The only grand front Quebec left a declaration of want of sincerity or honesty. The King. It is not believed Justice Meredith will be instructed Ministry, for first, he would destroy for the possession and, second, Mr. Mr. Montague do efface themselves as to from Ontario by leaving from the bench and p. The possession of the Chief Justice Meredith power in Messrs. Haxague settle the question Sir Adolphe Caron was land as High Commissioner Charles Tupper, now protests to the contract that for himself in event of a fall in power best days are gone, as self in search of a seat.

LIBERAL GAINS

The Globe's Quebec stated recently in an result that the Liberals fifteen out of the two the District of Quebec mistake, the Liberals carrying 21 out of 25 of the total of that Province make their largest gain of Montreal. They are not five, of the seven of Montreal, where they strong against the Government. The present Conservative House from Nova







Yet, with the Liberal party's ascent to power and with Macdonald gone and the divided Conservatives in opposition, no longer did Bengough have any persistent ethical imperative to warn the Canadian public of the dangers of Tory rule. Also, upright and honest though he was, Laurier, pressed by the necessities of his conciliatory policies, was bound at times to fail to live up to Bengough's exacting moral prescriptions. Bengough was faced with a seemingly unresolvable dilemma. How was he to castigate the only political party which he firmly believed could provide the necessary moral leadership for Canada, and yet, could he ignore their misdemeanors and thus compromise his beliefs? And, although to the credit of his principles, he graphically scolded the Liberal leader for failing to measure up to his moral standards, Bengough's political cartoons drawn after the turn of the century began to lose some of their former fervour and sting. And, this, no doubt, contributed to the general emotional mellowing of Canada's electoral passions.

Although Bengough's political commentaries on federal politics lost much of their cutting effect after the election which was to usher in "Canada's Century", his activity in the Toronto political arena, both as commentator and later as alderman, kept his ethical strictures as alive as ever. "Reformers", as D.D. Thelen writes, "operate in their hometowns. . . . and it is in their hometowns that they should be studied."<sup>37</sup> Certainly Bengough's involvement in municipal politics sheds further light on the nature of his appeal and political effectiveness.

Bengough's didactics greatly affected the Toronto political scene. Toronto, after all, had been his base of operations throughout his career,

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<sup>37</sup>D.D. Thelen, "Social Tensions", p.341.

and Grip had not left it untouched. Its pages had criticized city hall corruption; Bengough had exposed particular political candidates, the most famous being his support of William Howland for Mayor in the election of 1886, and had appealed for a solution to the hygienic problems of the new and growing metropolis. And, throwing his hat into the political ring in 1906, his career as alderman in 1907, 1908 and 1909, capped a long interest in civic affairs.

Later nineteenth century Toronto was beginning to feel the effects of its rapid growth. As wealth and prosperity increased,<sup>37</sup> and "doing King Street" became an expression of fashionable activity, so in geometric proportion, did poverty grow, and the squalid slums of St. John's Ward and Corktown stood in stark contrast to the tree lined elegance of Spadina, Floor, and Jarvis. The burgeoning population and the unforeseeable explosion of the city limits<sup>38</sup> led to conditions that were, at the best of times, unhygienic. A water system designed for a city half the size, chaotic and totally unsatisfactory sewage and waste disposal, inadequate knowledge and application of the minimal standards of preventive medicine, conspired to create in the oven of a summer's heat, a situation which was unaesthetic at best, and <sup>which</sup> held the ever present danger of cholera or typhoid.

Late nineteenth century Toronto, in the words of a contemporary, was a mixture of the new, the old, and the decrepit:

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<sup>37</sup>In 1885, the total assessment, with all the inaccuracies that it entailed, stood at an impressive \$68,905,470. Often the assessment figure was much lower than the actual property value for many citizens commonly lowered their evaluation in order to avoid paying higher taxes. (D. Morton, Mayor Howland: Citizens Candidate, (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973), p.3.

<sup>38</sup>Toronto expanded from 6,771 acres in 1880, to 10,528 in 1887; and in population, from 75,110 in 1880, to 104,276 in 1885.

[Toronto] had many fine public buildings, stores and theatres. Stables were numerous, since transportation was all by horses. . . . Steam was used to propel many beautiful boats and trains in and out of the city. . . . There were few paved streets, and many of the roads were macadam and the sidewalks were mainly of board planks. Although there were a few arc electric lights, most streets were lit by gas lights and most homes by oil lamps. There was a great lack of knowledge of hygiene but numerous coloured cards on doors warned people to stay away from houses where somebody had scarlet fever, diphtheria or smallpox. A guard usually walked up and down in front of the latter. Many houses had backhouses from which huge barrels were removed regularly and loaded on wagons for an unknown destination, and these drays, as they passed, left a stench that lingered. Perhaps the swarms of flies that were common in those days enjoyed the odor. Public drinking cups were common in the parks; milk was delivered in bulk in the middle of the night by milkmen who poured it into pitchers placed outside. Sometimes, the numerous cats got it first. . . . Toronto used to dump its raw sewage into the bay, but get its drinking water from the lake. The pipe from the lake came through the bay, and when it broke, sewage got into the tap water.<sup>39</sup>

J. W. Bengough, as early as 1884, pointed out both the severity of the health problem, and suggested a method for its solution. Grip ran an illustrated article discussing the "foot of Yonge Street", referring to the Yonge Street Slip as a "cesspool", and calling on the city council to remedy the situation, which was a menace to public health. City Hall, as Bengough asserted, definitely had an ethical responsibility to the citizens of Toronto. Both the mayor and council, as elected representatives of the public interest, had a duty to safeguard the common weal. The bay sewage had to be cleaned up.

It would be bad enough if we were securing our drinking water from the northern lakes, but the strongest stomach must turn when we reflect that all this disgusting stuff is being vomited into the bay and must contaminate the water that supplies our household taps. If a deputation of the city council waited upon King Cholera and elaborately invited him to visit us they would be doing just what is now being done most effectively. Grip seizes the Mayor by the coat collar and holds him over the stench metaphorically. If this were done literally with the whole box and dice of the city fathers they might be made to exhibit a little zeal in abating this abominable nuisance.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Harold N. Sheppard, An Account of My Life, unpublished personal memoirs, pages 34 and 46. Mr. H.N. Sheppard grew up in Toronto in the 1890's, and later served as head of the Department of History at Jarvis Collegiate for twenty years.

<sup>40</sup>Grip, August 30, 1884.

By August of 1885, the Yonge Street "cesspool" had become the "Yonge Street Cholera Puddle".<sup>41</sup> The horrors of the Montreal smallpox epidemic were only too well known, and although Grip had charged the victorious mayoralty candidate Alexander Manning (in January of 1885) on his ascent to office with the duty of cleaning up Toronto's waterfront and drinking water, nothing, characteristically, had been done. This obvious breach of official responsibility for the public welfare, added to Grip's exposure of a public works scandal in which rotten blocks were used by a favoured contractor to pave College Street, at considerable expense to taxpayers, set the stage for the ethical appeals of the William Howland election campaign.

The Toronto mayoralty race of 1886, between the incumbent Tory Alexander Manning and the politically independent William Howland, early took on all the characteristics of a moral crusade.<sup>42</sup> Manning, a self-made business contractor, a well known anti-temperance man, popularly identified as the richest man in Toronto, supported by the powerful Conservative party, was challenged by the young, religiously inclined, teetotaling philanthropist, William Howland.

Long past the fiery radicalism of his Canada First manifestos, Howland had settled down to a life of social service; a former wealthy insurance company president, onetime president of the Toronto Board of Trade, and spokesman for the Ontario Manufacturer's Association, Howland was a founding member of the Christian Missionary Union. Involved in work with the slum dwellers of St. John's

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<sup>42</sup>For a detailed account of Howland's mayoralty campaigns, see Desmong Morton's little book, Mayor Howland: Citizen's Candidate, (Toronto: Hakkert Ltd., 1973). Morton gives a lively chronological account of the various campaigns, but his assertions of status anxiety reform are in the main unproven. This failing may have been remedied or indeed, the argument may never have been attempted, had Morton considered in detail the ideological platform of the mayor whose first act upon entering office was to erect his motto, "Except the Lord Keep the City, the Watchman Waketh in vain."

Ward, the Mercer Reformatory for Women, the Mimico Boy's School, and the Temperance Electoral Union, he had secured a popular image as a Godly, goodly man. With no experience in municipal politics, his campaign logically became an ethical one. "Let us keep the city with the character of an honourable city, a God fearing city", he thundered to a packed election meeting, "and I would rather see it thus than the greatest and richest city in the continent."<sup>43</sup>

Bengough, impressed with Howland's personal qualities, enthusiastic about his platform of temperance, law enforcement, and his promise to implement needed programs to clean up the Toronto waterfront, especially pleased with his political independence and non-partisan stand, jumped into the election fray, throwing his considerable influence on Howland's side. If Howland was to be elected, Bengough promised, Toronto could look forward to good, efficient, honest leadership. With the election of Howland, Bengough prophesied,

Toronto is likely to have the right kind of a Chief Magistrate for 1886 - an honest, upright gentleman, above the suspicion of partisanship and scheming and an earnest advocate of all that will advance the city's honor and prosperity. Mr. W.H. Howland will be in all respects a credit to the city, which is what Toronto cannot always say of her mayor.<sup>44</sup>

On the other side of the coin, Grip predicted, Manning's mayoralty, based as it was on his personality defects, of which the part ownership of a brewery was just one, would lead to poor and dishonest city management.

Selfishness is the great ruling power in the human heart, and in many instances self crowds out everything else. It is hard to blame poor human nature severely for erring in this regard, as the failing is so natural. A man is moulded by his surroundings and his interests. And this is just why Grip believes that Mr. Manning cannot be as good and efficient a mayor for Toronto as Mr. Howland.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Globe, December 2, 1886, as cited in D. Morton, Mayor Howland, p.20.

<sup>44</sup>Grip, December 12, 1885.

<sup>45</sup>Grip, January 2, 1886.

Bengough made the issue crystal clear. On the one hand there was the honest, upright, God-fearing Howland. On the other hand, there was the corruption tainted, irresponsible Manning. Manning had failed in his duty to the electorate. He had not kept the public weal at heart. He had not instigated any hygienic or ethical reform. In fact, Manning had even failed to enforce the laws already in existence, allowing unscrupulous contractors to steal city funds, allowing unlicensed saloons to lure innocent labourers to their doom, and failing to clean up the crime wave (sandbagging) which had struck with the advance of summer. "Manning", Bengough editorialized;

can lay no claim to being a man of moral earnestness in his office, and as the results to the city are much the same, whether the cause be corruption or carelessness, it is high time to have a change. "The strings hang loose", of a truth! Pick up your morning paper and read the evidence of this in burglaries, sandbaggings, rotten block-paving, bob tail-car accidents, waterworks bungling, sickness from bad sanitary arrangements, etc. etc. Let us have a mayor for 1886 who cares something for the city as for himself.<sup>46</sup>

The fault with Manning was that he was not "his brother's keeper". He was careless, sloppy, and tainted with corruption, for he cared only for himself. This was immoral in any man, in a politician it was doubly so, and could not be tolerated.

The issue was ethical. There was to be no compromise. And, the outcome was never to be doubted. Howland, Bengough argued, was so straight-forward, that even his election campaign was conducted honestly and without the unscrupulous tricks so common to the period. This unheard-of phenomena merely emphasized the desirability of Howland's mayoralty.

The fight for the mayoralty is growing warm, though there is a notable difference in the methods of the candidates. Mr. Howland, as becoming an upright Christian gentleman, fights his battles fairly and manfully, using temperate language and confining himself to facts. Mr. Manning conducts his canvass by the unscrupulous use of all the customary clap-trap of the ingrained professional ward politician.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Grin, December 19, 1885.

<sup>47</sup> Grin, December 26, 1885.

Pictorially, Manning was the sleeping, uninterested politician. All he cared for was himself. While he slept, the lawless of the city cavorted. Unlicensed whiskey mongers, thieves, muggers, crooked contractors, all made a mockery of justice and the responsibility of governments. "The Strings Hang Loose", Grip's front page stated.<sup>48</sup> What was needed was a man who would tighten the civic controls and eradicate the attendant evils. William Howland, as Bengough asserted, was that man. The choice was obvious, self-interest or public responsibility, and Toronto, by a margin of 1718 votes, agreed with Bengough and gave the nod to the municipal "Christian gentleman".

Always involved in municipal political life, not only as cartoonist, but also as a director of the Toronto Exhibition, auditor for the Canadian Peace and Arbitration Society, vice-president of People's Forum, and president of the Toronto Single Tax Association in the 1890's, and yet, never as an elected representative of the public interest. Bengough decided to enter the arena of municipal politics and, in December of 1906, contested a seat for alderman in Toronto's Ward Three. His social critiques and personal involvement were already well known, and immediately after his successful campaign, the Globe, speaking for popular interest in his aldermanic career noted:

Among the new members of the Aldermanic Board J.W. Bengough has already made a name for himself in other fields, and his work among the practical details of municipal administration will be watched with interest.<sup>49</sup>

Would a man whose vision far exceeded the limits of pragmatically bound politicians become bogged down in the pedantic affairs of everyday administrative activity? The Globe, and with it, the citizens of Toronto, "watched with interest".

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<sup>48</sup>Grip, Saturday, December 19, 1885. See following cartoon.

<sup>49</sup>Globe, January 2, 1907.



GLOVER HARRISON,  
 CHINA  
 HALL  
 49 KING ST. E., TORONTO



GLOVER HARRISON,  
 CHINA  
 HALL  
 49 KING ST. E., TORONTO.

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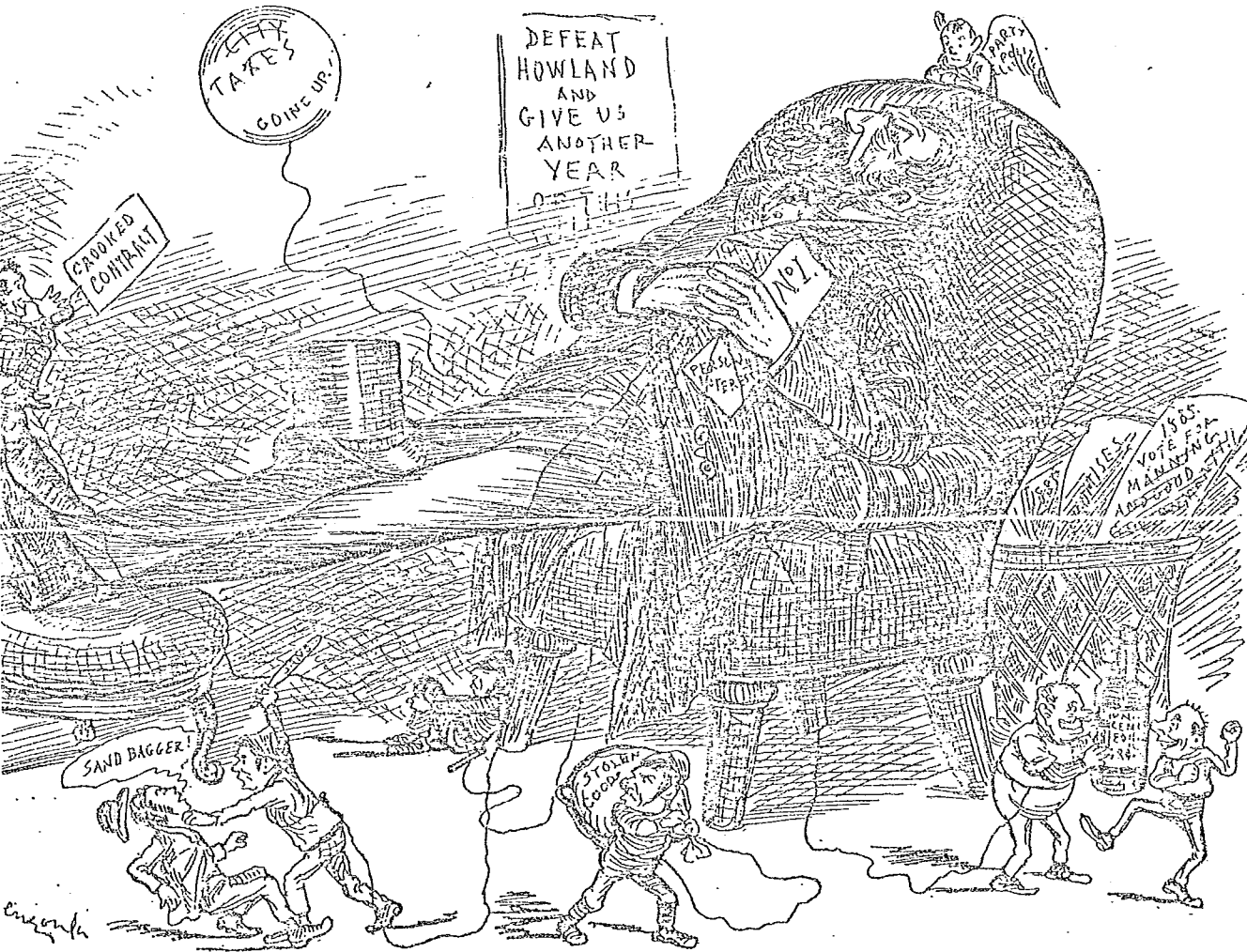
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PURE WATER	PROMOTION ACCORDING TO MERIT ONLY IN OUR POLICE FORCE	THE INTERESTS OF THE CITY ABOVE AND BEFORE PARTY AND NEXT TO THE FAMILY.	NO MORE JAIL FOR ERRING CHILDREN.
THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE SHOULD BE INCREASED, NOT CURTAILED	NO MORE BURNT CON- TRACTS, HOLT LEASES, ETC. ETC. ETC. ETC.	THE CHARACTER OF THE CITY ITS MOST SACRED INTEREST.	
ABOLITION OF THE SAND-BAG	FAIR AND STRICT OBSERVANCE OF THE STREET- CAR AGREEMENT ON BOTH SIDES	THE ISLAND FOR OUR WOMEN AND CHILDREN. NO LIQUOR SHALL BE SOLD THERE.	NO INCREASE OF TAXATION
HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS SHOULD BE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THE CITIZENS	AN END TO THE CORRUPT DICTATION OF PARTIZAN WARD ASSOCIATIONS	CITY BUSINESS TO BE CONDUCTED ON BUSINESS PRINCIPLES	
VALUE SECURED FOR TAXES PAID	IMMEDIATE SANITARY IMPROVEMENTS	TRUNKSEWER.	EFFICIENT POLICE PROTECTION

VIGOROUS ENFORCEMENT OF THE CITY LAWS ON LIQUOR AND ALL OTHER MATTERS IN THE INTERESTS OF GOOD CITIZENS OF EVERY PARTY AND CREED. EQUAL RIGHTS TO ALL.

If I am Elected, it will not be a Reform Victory, nor a Conservative Victory, neither a Scott nor an Anti-Scott Victory, but a Victory of the Citizens, as Citizens of Toronto.  
W. H. Howland.

Bengough wasted no time in serving notice that he was determined to advance his programs of social reform. From his election to the Board of Directors for the Victoria Industrial School (a position he held for three years) on the first day of council business, to his resolutions calling for a single tax scheme in Toronto, Bengough followed the dictates of his moral social conscience, often at the political expense of his proposals.

By the end of February 1907, Bengough had introduced three pieces of legislation directed at improving social conditions. The first was designed to enable homeowners to realize a respite from excessive home improvement taxes, because these taxes, as Bengough argued, unjustly appropriated the value of honest labour. His attempt took the form of a proposed application to the legislature of Ontario to allow the City of Toronto to introduce a by-law "exempting dwelling-houses from taxation to the extent of \$700 of their assessed value."<sup>50</sup> The second was an amendment to the liquor license act which proposed the possibility of reducing the number of licenses in the city. The third was concerned with the welfare of tenants, and was a direct attack upon those landlords, who, out of motive of profit, encouraged human habitation in unfit surroundings. The by-law number 4329 was to be amended, declared Bengough,

so as to provide a means of compelling landlords and owners of homes to keep the same in a proper and reasonable state of repair, with a view to the protection of tenants from suffering in cold, wet and inclement weather.<sup>51</sup>

All three of these early legislative proposals "got lost" in the red tape of committee procedure, and none even ever came to a vote.

The lesson was not lost on Bengough, and he soon acquired the dexterity

<sup>50</sup> Minutes of Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto - 1907, (Toronto: The Carswell Co., Ltd., 1908), sub-section 182, February 25. City Hall Archives, City of Toronto.

<sup>51</sup> Minutes of Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto - 1907, (Toronto: The Carswell Co., Ltd., 1908), sub-section 135, Feb. 25, City Hall Archives, City of Toronto.

and political sense necessary to a more successful promotion of his programs. Allying himself with Alderman J. Hale, a man whom the Globe had recommended to voters as "one of the new men whose election would be a satisfaction to all citizens who desire honest clean civic government",<sup>52</sup> Bengough soon found himself part of a small, mutable and undefined group of like-minded men who together supported various social reforms in a council more interested in other matters.

Bengough's second attack on the liquor licenses was better prepared and had the support of Alderman Hale, who seconded Bengough's motion. He proposed that the

Board of License Commissioners refuse to entertain any application for license to sell liquor in any public amusement park of the City of Toronto.<sup>53</sup>

Following a long and drawn out fight, the motion, after amendment by alderman McBride and Wilson which added the words "not heretofore been granted a license" was carried. The political novice had learned to play the game. What he had to accept, however, was that the idealism of his legislative resolutions would never be fully realized. Often his proposals would be so amended and altered, that they remained merely shadows of their former selves.

Bengough took up a wide variety of causes, all generally falling under the catch-all phrase of "social reform". He championed his pet peeve of sanitary reform and insisted that the City Engineer be compelled to report on the feasibility of a Trunk Sewer to end "the present method of Depositing sewage in the Bay".<sup>54</sup> This resolution, primarily because it did not call for immediate action passed easily, but his demands for the establishment of super-

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<sup>52</sup>Globe, December 21, 1906.

<sup>53</sup>Minutes of Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto - 1907, (Toronto: The Carswell Co. Ltd., 1908), sub-section 257, April 8. City Hall Archives, City of Toronto.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., sub-section 389, June 24.

vised city playgrounds, his appeal for standards defining and controlling the quality of milk sold in Toronto, and his call for city council to study the "practical results of the system of taxing land values now in operation"<sup>55</sup> in Australia and New Zealand, the single tax system, were turned down.

His idealist visions and honesty were recognized by his colleagues, and following his second victory in 1908<sup>56</sup> Bengough was elected a member of the Harbor Trust and appointed to head a special committee to investigate irregularities in the Department of the Commissioner of Parks, with instructions to organize and direct another committee to control and manage the City Parks System during the investigation. Although pre-occupied with these responsibilities, Bengough still managed to help secure the further reduction of liquor licenses, and to continue his unsuccessful campaign for a single tax approach to the collection of municipal revenue.

By his third successful contest, in the election of 1909, Bengough had become popularly known as an aggressive municipal reformer. In his nomination address of the previous year he had "favoured the power by-law, the establishment of a filtration plant, better disposal of sewage, the building of viaducts if possible at the expense of the railways, and the making of civic-administered playgrounds."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., sub-section 521, October 28.

<sup>56</sup>Bengough's victory in 1907 was followed by equally solid returns in 1908 and 1909. The vote for Ward 3 of those years for the three elected aldermen was:

1907	1908	1909
G. Geary - 2,718	Bengough - 2,583	Bredin - 2,989
Bengough - 2,386	J. Bredin - 2,155	Bengough - 2,650
S. McBride - 1,936	S. McBride - 2,136	C. Maguire - 2,408

see Minutes of Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto, for the years 1907; 1908; and 1909.

<sup>57</sup>Globe, December 24, 1907.

Bengough fought for every cause he felt was just.

His support of the public ownership of hydro-electric power, for example, alongside others who included his friend and temperance colleague Controller F.S. Spence, Oliver (the mayor of Toronto whose defeat of Nesbitt in the election of 1907-08 was heralded as a victory for justice and right), and Adam Beck, the cigar box manufacturer who had left the mayoralty of London to become the director of the Whitney government's hydro-electric power commission, was based on his conception of the public interest: hydro-electric power as a private monopoly, he argued, would not be utilized for the benefit of the common weal. Bengough's moral reasoning could not sanction a profit-motivated company to dictate terms of such a beneficial and obviously God-given source of social improvement as "white coal". This was one more practical instance, he argued, where governments had a duty to ensure the equal benefits of God's creation to all men. Governments were to assist the popular weal. In complete agreement with Bengough, Adam Beck asserted:

I do not understand that any revelation has ever been made from Heaven to the effect that a democratic government commits an unpardonable sin when it assists in the establishment of a great and necessary public work for the well being of the people of whose interests it is the trustee.<sup>58</sup>

During the 1909 term, Bengough asked for and received, a leave of absence from city council. Departing from Toronto in late March, he travelled to the continent of Australia - New Zealand, to present what became an extremely popular lecture tour. On his return, Bengough never again re-entered active politics. Although he had fought hard for his social programs he had enjoyed only a modicum of success, and his real interest did not lie in the daily round of pedantic administrative activity, His was the self asserted duty of judge

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<sup>58</sup> Adam Beck, after R.C. Brown and R. Cook, Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1974), p.106.

and prophet; the often frustrating role of practical politician held little lasting appeal for him.

Bengough was, above all, a man who stirred, pricked, and even created the public conscience. His talent for the pathetic phrase, the glorious challenge, the devastating caricature was too turbulent, too passionate and emotional to be restrained by the detailed particulars of everyday political decision-making. Bengough's real worth lay in his independent position outside the political arena. In his non-partisan stance he could help keep public men honest, he could fulfill his self-realized duty of the "watchdog of the public interest", he could preach the values he felt were necessary for a society that needed reform. In terms of his political contribution to concrete social reforms, Bengough's record shows his limited success. Apart from a reduction in the numbers of liquor licenses in Toronto, his real accomplishment lay not in his activity as a municipal politician, but in his didactic critiques of the Canadian political process.

Bengough was unable to agree with Laurier's rationalization of the role of high ideals in politics:

In politics, the question seldom arises to do the ideal right. The best that is generally to be expected, is to attain a certain object, and for the accomplishment of this object, many things have to be done which are questionable, and many things have to be submitted to which, if rigorously investigated, could not be approved of.<sup>59</sup>

Bengough continually stressed the primary necessity of moral commitment. Every politician had a responsibility to the electorate, a God-ordained duty which held certain quite clear requirements to care for and protect the public weal. The politician, Bengough continually asserted, was "his brother's keeper", and

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<sup>59</sup>Laurier, as cited in R.C. Brown and R. Cook, Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), p.8.

thus was bound to act in the interests of justice, honesty, equality, and truth. The Canadian political scene, identified as it was with corruption, unscrupulous campaign tactics and rampant partisanship had to be changed, to allow public men to follow the dictates of a Christian conscience.

Bengough's expressed purpose was to identify and advance Christian principles of social activity, hoping, while identifying unjust social practices, to instill the ethical values necessary for the reform of society. Bengough's concern with the quality of human relationships, with the welfare of all men, whatever their social standing; his championship of ethical principles of political activity; his stress upon the divinely ordained duty of all men to work for the common weal; all arose from his interpretation of a vocational Christian ethic. His application of this ethic to the social problems of his day; corrupt political practices, unfeeling and uncaring governments, self-seeking business activity, and the physical and spiritual poverty of the labouring masses, led Bengough to his damning and didactic political and social commentaries.

"It is the men who have a future, and who know what that future is, that can give that future to others",<sup>60</sup> the Canadian Baptist noted, and Bengough had a vision of an ideal Canadian society and his political and social activity was directed towards realizing that vision.

Through the medium of his drawing, writing and speaking, his great enthusiasm and moralizing lessons gave that vision to others. His didactic commentaries epitomised his single-minded devotion to his Christian principles, and his cartoons perfectly illustrated Robert Harris' advice to all artists:

Never forget that there is a noble side to nearly everything and never be content with a mean ideal. Seek always to see and render the essential characteristic truth.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Canadian Baptist, August 3, 1882.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Harris, as cited in M. Williamson, Robert Harris, p.93.



Bengough's whole career entailed the application of ethical principles to the problems of the day; and those principles, whether expressed in his social criticism, his political commentary, his support of movements such as the single tax, prohibition, and church reform, were based on his perception of the moral values of Christianity. Indeed, a full understanding of Bengough's social thought; what he thought, why and how he criticized his society, and what he hoped to accomplish in his commentaries, can only be achieved through a detailed analysis of the Christian world-view which animated all his thought.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROTESTANT ETHIC: BENGOUGH'S SOCIAL THOUGHT EXPLAINED

John Wilson Bengough's social commentaries, expressed in a wide range of ethically inspired criticisms, arose from his total commitment to Christian principles. His calls for religious toleration and brotherhood, his demands for political honesty, and his criticism of contemporary Canadian business practice were the applied expression of the tenets of community, duty and service; concepts which Bengough derived from his interpretation of a vocational Christian ethic.

The idea of a work ethic was an accepted mid-nineteenth century Canadian cultural norm that underlay social thought ranging from imperialist nationalism to commercial theory, and from Protestant missionary fervour to popular literary romances.<sup>1</sup> Painters such as Homer Watson and Daniel Fowler pictorially expressed the dignity of labour, and George Reid, "the acknowledged dean of Canadian artists",<sup>2</sup> whose genre paintings of pioneer life gave artistic conveyance to a growing Canadian nationalism, often portrayed the intrepid labouring pioneer, emphasizing those historic qualities of hard work which remained as the heroic legacy of a nation newly born.

Other Canadians expressed similar sentiments in their veneration of Thomas Carlyle. From J.W. Bengough, who illustrated a copy of Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, to George Munroe Grant, principal of Queen's University; from Sir

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<sup>1</sup>For an informative, albeit specialized discussion of this see Carl Berger, The Sense of Power, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), pp.221-223. passim

<sup>2</sup>Toronto Star, February 24, 1947. From a clipping in the Ontario College of Art Archives, O.C.A., Toronto.

George Parkin, imperialist and educator to John McCrae, poet and professor of medicine; from Stephen Leacock, author and political economist to Bliss Carman, Canada's mystical nature poet; mid-Victorian Canadian intellectuals joined in expressing their admiration for the English Sage who taught that labour was spiritual self-fulfillment.

Similarly, later nineteenth century Canadian Protestant churches traced their ideological roots to earlier assertions of a vocational ethic which had not only defined doctrine, but also justified their independent existence. Egerton Ryerson, for example, in one of his numerous battles with Bishop Strachan, well illustrated the dignity and desirability of toil, arguing that Methodist preachers who, unlike their High Church counterparts, had earned their bread by the sweat of their brow, actually followed a historically justified role:

Methodist preachers do not value themselves upon the wealth, virtue and grandeur of their ancestry; neither do they consider their former occupation as farmers, butchers, cobblers, etc. an argument against their present employment or usefulness. They have learned that "Venerable" Apostles were once fishermen, that a Milner could throw a shuttle and that Newton was not ashamed to watch his father's flocks.<sup>3</sup>

And Protestant worshippers of various denominations united in singing hymns of praise which enjoyed them to "go labour on" and to "work for the night is coming."<sup>4</sup>

The sentiments expressed in the lines of Anna Louisa Coughill's hymn,

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<sup>3</sup>As cited in W.H. Elgee, The Social Teachings of the Canadian Churches, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1964), p.23.

<sup>4</sup>See hymn numbers 579 and 595 in The Book of Praise, (Presbyterian) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1918), and hymn numbers 384 and 390 in The Hymnary, (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1930). Both hymns were written in the later nineteenth century, the first by Horatius Bonar (1808-1889), and the second by Anna Louisa Coughill (1836-1907).

are an interpretation of a vocational approach to Christian ethics which had found its early origins in ideas expressed by Christian mystics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. For centuries following, various Protestant thinkers, building on interpretations advanced by Luther and Calvin, repeatedly re-defined aspects of the vocational ethic. John Wilson Bengough was one in a long line of such interpreters. His particular expression of a vocational ethic was not only the result of his own understanding of Scripture, but was also dependent upon both the climate of contemporary Canadian opinion, and historical theological antecedents in which men had searched the Scriptures and their innermost consciences in developing a Christian vocational ethic.

John Wilson Bengough based the whole spectrum of his social thought on a single primary assertion that both acknowledged the role of God as creator and emphasized that man, as His creation, was ever dependent upon Him. "The will of God", he postulated, "is back of all, and from him all things come."<sup>5</sup> God not only made man and the world in which he lived, but also, in His benevolence, provided the means for man's existence.

Since, as Bengough argued, God was both the creator and the ultimate fulfiller of all man's needs, all human life activity was to follow His ordinances. Man was created by God, he was given all he needed by Him and, as such, man was obliged to live by the laws of God, laws which would ensure both the further propagation of man and the continual glorification of the One Creator. "God's will", Bengough paraphrased, "shall be done on earth."<sup>6</sup> From this basis, Bengough further noted that not only was man dependent upon God, but, also upon God's gift -- nature. "The first essential to all that concerns the body

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<sup>5</sup>J.W. Bengough, "The Gist of George", m.s., Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.

<sup>6</sup>J.W. Bengough, The Whole Hog Book, (Boston: American Free Trade League, 1908), p.99.

and soul of this world", he wrote, "is that soul and body be kept together."<sup>7</sup>  
 Bound by the limits of physical necessity, man had to prepare nature for his subsistence. Without some activity of his own man could not survive, and it was that activity which Bengough isolated as the principle pursuit of mankind -- labour.

While God gave the world as a gift to man, a world which echoed His splendor:

. . . this glorious temple, with dome of starry sky,  
 And floor of greensward scented, and trees for pillars high;  
 And songs of birds for music, and bleat of lambs for prayer.  
 And incense of sweet vapours uprising everywhere.<sup>8</sup>

He also ordained that men should "dress it and keep it". Man, in the wisdom of God's law was to fill his physical needs by toil. Man's life activity was his labour. Man was a worker because God decreed him to be so.

A man's work, however, Bengough argued, was much more than mere preparation of nature for his survival. It was also the means by which man came to realize his Creator. In his work, man emulated God who was the greatest and original "Craftsman", and in his performance of divinely ordained labour, man entertained the presence of his Maker. "Toil", Bengough stated, "is that . . . by which the Soul of Man comes in touch with the world God has made: and in that he makes things, he shows that he is a Son of God."<sup>9</sup>

Labour was spiritual as well as physical, the two could not be separated. Man, Bengough argued, needed both in equal quantity; the direction of life activity was not merely worldly, but heavenly as well:

Man does not live by bread alone, nor need  
 Bread chiefly, for his is a living soul,  
 And his soul-hunger cries for the Ideal,  
 The bread on which it lives.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>J.W. Bengough, "Restitution", Motley: Verses Grave and Gay, (Montreal: William Briggs, 1895), p.18.

<sup>9</sup>J.W. Bengough, "The Gist of George", m.s., Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.

<sup>10</sup>J.W. Bengough, "The Apology of Edwin Markham", In Many Keys, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1902), p.132.

Toil was essentially religious, ordained as such by God, and directed to his glory, and thus, labour was a form of worship, a means by which man in his everyday activity, affirmed his realization of God. Properly engaged in, labour satisfied both physical and spiritual needs; and, it was, as Bengough poetically put it,

. . . a gift of God  
 A humanizing power, a holy thing  
 Redemption for man's soul is in his craft  
 If he has grace to work a right. He makes  
 Himself who truly, nobly makes his home;  
 He shapes his soul invisibly, who carves  
 A cornerstone with Godly honesty.  
 Labour! 'tis a religious sacrament  
 Whate'er it be that's true, hoeing a field,  
 Guiding a plow, writing a true born poem  
 Ruling a nation, high or holy each;  
 If the true spirit but informs the toil  
 Such labour is not drudgery, but prayer.<sup>11</sup>

Arguing that God was directly involved in everyday life, Bengough noted that men's labour was essentially futile unless blessed by Him. "Redemption for man's soul [was] in his craft", but only "if he had grace to work a right." And, God's blessing was not given indiscriminately, but allowed only to those who dutifully fulfilled His ordinances regarding work.

The essential point that men must appreciate, Bengough argued, was that man did not work primarily for himself but for God. A man's labour was, above all, a service to his Maker. Bound by his dependence upon God, man could realize His necessary blessing only if he directed his toil to the divine glory.

However, to serve God, Bengough argued, man must serve his neighbours. "The only way in which we serve God", he wrote, "is by serving our followmen."<sup>12</sup> This is indeed the only way in which man could gain God's grace; "in blessing

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> J.W. Bengough, Chalk Talks, (Toronto: The Musson Book Co. Ltd., 1922), p.66.

others we have blessed ourselves".<sup>13</sup> However, this service to humanity was not done for the sake of mankind, nor for the glory of the individual himself, but as a worship or service to God. And, Bengough arrived at this assertion by building upon two theories which formed essential kernels of his social thought.

Since man was made in God's image, he was charged, as arbiter, to do God's work in the everyday world. Man's labours were to be the metaphoric work of Christ applied to the necessity of ministering to the needs of mankind; needs both spiritual and physical. This activity was divinely ordained and arose, of course, from man's necessary emulation of his Maker.

But through my servants I must do my work;  
Now, take your loaves and fishes and go forth ---  
'Tis yours to feed: 'tis mine to give increase.<sup>14</sup>

Man found unity with God in the work of mission to mankind. And, just as man was bound to serve God, so was he bound to serve his fellowman. Work, as ordained by God, entailed social obligations.

Thou art not thy brother's keeper?  
At that answer deeper, deeper  
Glow the mark -- thou knowst thou art.<sup>15</sup>

Also, as men were charged by God to minister to their fellows so too did they realize a bond of unity in the Divine. As the term "Fatherhood of God" expressed the kindred nature of man and God so did Bengough's call for the brotherhood of man imply a common relationship among men. Men were related both in their origin and spiritual natures. Men were enjoined to "maintain the doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of humanity" in a constant activity of service to each other.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>J.W. Bengough, "The Miracle", Motley, p.92.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>J.W. Bengough, "The Doomed Ship", Motley, p.30.

<sup>16</sup>J.W. Bengough, "Address From the Single Tax Association to the Ministers of the Christian Churches", The Social Reformer, (Toronto: June 1892).

Man's work was to daily exude brotherly sympathy. Concern for the welfare of his neighbours was to predominate over individual self-interest, and as in the parable of the Good Samaritan, everyone was a man's brother.

Think of my brother! yea, but everyman  
In peril is my brother, . . . 17

Work, in Bengough's ideological structure was a "calling", a sacred necessity of life, ordained by God, and directed by His laws. Service was both the performance of man's duty to the Lord and the activity in which he worshipped his maker by ministering to the needs of mankind.

Further, as well as providing the means to physical and spiritual goals, work, as Bengough emphasized, also taught the virtues necessary for a happy and purposeful life. Industry, diligence and sobriety were all values demanded by work and through these, along with the fulfillment of duty, labour made the "full life" and the "great man".<sup>18</sup> Indeed, in his Comments on Carlyle Bengough admirably notes that Carlyle:

. . . by his own effort . . . rose from being a barefooted laddie in a little Scotch [sic] village, to the position of Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh, and the greatest man of letters of his day.<sup>19</sup>

However, he is quick to point out that even Carlyle's efforts would have been in vain had they not been blessed by "the Will of God".

Bengough's analysis of the meaning of work as necessary activity engaged in for the worship of God and service to man, dependent upon His blessing and directed out of a commitment to the Father of the brotherhood of man, was shared by many Protestants of his day. Indeed, church-going members of the community

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<sup>17</sup>J. W. Bengough, "The Hero Fisherman", In Many Keys, p.137.

<sup>18</sup>J.W. Bengough, "Justice", m.s., Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.

<sup>19</sup>J.W. Bengough, "Comments on Carlyle", Bengough Papers, Vol. VI.



united in appealing for God's blessing of their labours:

Hear us, O Lord, from heaven Thy swelling-place:  
Like them of old, in vain we toil all night  
Unless with us Thou go, who art the Light --

and

Except the house he built of Thee  
In Vain the builder's toil must be ---<sup>20</sup>

and musically pronounced their realization of God's divine ordinance of toil.

As Jesus was a worker, so were they. And, their labour although an expression of brotherhood was yet directed not to man but to God.

Jesus, Thou divine Companion,  
By Thy lowly human birth  
Thou has come to join the workers  
Burden-bearers of the earth.  
Thou, the Carpenter of Nazareth,  
Toiling for Thy daily food,  
By Thy patience and Thy courage  
Thou hast taught us toil is good  
Every task, however simple  
Sets the soul that does it free  
Every deed of human kindness  
Done to man is done to Thee.<sup>21</sup>

Both Presbyterian and Methodist hymns written in the latter part of the nineteenth century express these dominant themes of service, brotherhood and community as means of worship. The Christian is directed to "work for Jesus", to do "God's work on earth":

Work, with lips so fervid  
That they words may prove  
Thou hast brought a message  
From the God of love

However, he is constantly reminded that his work is not for himself, not pri-

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<sup>20</sup>Hymnary, praises 338 and 369.

<sup>21</sup>Hymnary, Praise 375.

marily for his fellow man, but above all directed to God.

Work, with heart that burneth  
Humbly at His feet  
Priceless gems to offer  
For His crown made meet.

Work, with prayer unceasing  
Borne on faith's strong wing,  
Earnestly beseeching  
Trophies for the King.<sup>22</sup>

Other Canadians, clerics, poets, and artists, echoed these themes of brotherhood, community, and work as worshipful service. George Munroe Grant, for example stressed that man's duty was to do God's work on earth so that he might become more like God. Speaking at the Synod of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, in June of 1866, he stated:

Our work is to get His Kingdom established on earth. . . . When God made the world, he put man into it, to dress it and keep it; to be its head and ruler, and representative. . . . He had sent him [man] into the world not as a playground; but as into a school, that he might be educated into likeness of Himself. . . .<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, another Maritimer, the mystical nature poet Bliss Carman, noted that man as arbiter realized unity with God upon whom his man's ability depended. "Man", he wrote,

the workman in the world, is a pygmy creator. It matters not at all whether he draws or digs and makes music and builds ships, in the work of his hands is the delight of his heart, and in that joy of his heart lurks his kinship with his own Creator, from whom through the obedient will and plastic hand of the artist, all art and beauty are derived.<sup>24</sup>

And this concept was the theme of Henry Van Dyke's poem "Where Christ Dwells", (lines of which had earlier been incorporated into a Protestant hymn)<sup>25</sup> which

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<sup>22</sup>Book of Praise, Number 585.

<sup>23</sup>G. Grant, "Sermon preached before the Synod of Nova Scotia and P.E.I. in connection with the Church of Scotland -- June 26, 1866", James Bowes and Sons Printers, 1866, Grant Papers, Douglas Library, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.

<sup>24</sup>B. Carman, The Friendship of Art, (London: John Murray, 1905), p.141.

<sup>25</sup>Hymnary, Number 375.

the Farmer's Advocate used as text to the reproduction of Homer Watson's spiritually sublime landscapes.

They who tread the path of labor follow  
Where My feet have trod;  
They who work without complaining, do  
the holy work of God.

Where the many toil together, there am I  
among my own  
Where the tired workman sleepeth, there  
am I with him alone.<sup>26</sup>

Work was honourable and desirable, the scriptures made that point, and George Grant, emphasizing it, noted that toil was the worshipful petition of man to his maker. "All work is honorable", he preached, "St. Paul's words imply a perfect oneness between man and God, a sympathy and companionship in labour, a unit of aim and effort."<sup>27</sup> Also, Daniel Fowler, world renowned Canadian water-colourist, winner of the gold medal at the International Centennial Exhibition in 1876, a man whose paintings "could touch existence itself",<sup>28</sup> noted that his guiding principle in life was this acceptance of a similar work ethic. Writing in his autobiography he noted:

I grudged no amount of labour, so long as it did not actually exceed my strength and I could fully understand what people call its dignity. "Laborare est orare", literally, to labour is to pray; or in other words, to offer an act of worship.<sup>29</sup>

These interpretations of the meaning of labour arose in a society which was imbued with ideals stressing the virtues of work. That diligent, honest labour should form the social foundation of mid-Victorian Canada, was not dis-

<sup>26</sup> Farmer's Advocate, Dec. 13, 1906.

<sup>27</sup> Grant, "Sermon"

<sup>28</sup> D. Reid, A Concise History of Canadian Painting, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973), p.75.

<sup>29</sup> D. Fowler, "Autobiography", in R.R. Lee, "Autobiography of Daniel Fowler, R.C.A.", Ontario History, 52, (June 1960): 104.

puted. The church press, labour journals and the newspapers all acquiesced in calling for a Canadian society in which hard work played a formative and pedagogical role. For example, the Christian Guardian moralized: "Let the society thou frequentest be like a company of bees gathering to make honey, and not wasps, which do nothing but hiss, devour, and sting";<sup>30</sup> and the Brampton Standard, speaking for the viewpoint of the solid Ontario farmer, emphasized the social respectability work entitled a person to: "In this country, no man or woman should be respected who will not work bodily or mentally, and who curl their lips with scorn when introduced to a hard working man."<sup>31</sup>

Work was the accepted mode of activity, idleness was discouraged, and labouring, of all types was defined as a lifetime proposition.

There is work to do by the way my boy  
That you can never tread again.  
Work for the loftiest, lowest men --  
Work for the plough, adze, spindle or pen;  
Work for the hands and the brain.<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, the highest values of society arose from the process of labouring. As the Ontario Workman put it:

In short, labour is the attribute of all that is great and noble, and grand in our civilization.<sup>33</sup>

And the almost joyful acceptance of a future which would be assured by the common attention to earnest work is well illustrated in the song of the 1897 McMaster University graduating class.

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<sup>30</sup>Christian Guardian, March 13, 1872.

<sup>31</sup>Brampton Standard, Sept. 3, 1857.

<sup>32</sup>Christian Guardian, Jan. 3, 1872.

<sup>33</sup>Ontario Workman, Oct. 18, 1872.

Hark the sounds of joyous voices  
 Blending now in sounding chorus  
 Telling of the earnest forces  
 Joined in union long.  
 Sturdy men and noble women  
 Eager in the work that waits them  
 Now to do their part.<sup>34</sup>

From this common acceptance of the idea that work lay at the very foundation of society, two distinct explanations of the meaning of work emerged. The one, as expressed by Bengough and some of his contemporaries offered an interpretation in which work as life activity was viewed as worship and community service. A second, also expressed by later nineteenth century Canadians, stressed that although work was undertaken as a duty to God, it was directed for individual ends. Service to the community in terms of stewardship was a corollary and not the prime motive of life activity. Both these interpretations found vocal exponents in mid-Victorian Canadian society and both traced their roots deep into the religious traditions of Protestantism.

Mid-Victorian Canadian culture borrowed many of its ideological concepts from religious doctrine which so often underlies secular social value systems. Max Weber, in his seminal work The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism noted that "the magical and religious forces, and the ethical ideas of duty based upon them, have in the past always been among the most important formative influences on conduct."<sup>35</sup> Based upon what was commonly accepted as the revealed word of God, ideological interpretations of a Christian vocational ethic gave impetus to the social and economic thought of nineteenth century Canada, and indeed, throughout the centuries which preceded the earliest colonial settlements.

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<sup>34</sup>McMaster University Yearbook, 1897, as cited in C. Berry, "McMaster University Students: A Study in Student Life." Graduate paper, McMaster University, 1975, appendix.

<sup>35</sup>M. Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Talcott Parsons trans., foreword by R.H. Tawney, (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1958), p.27.

The vocational ethic in both its religious and secular use owes its genesis to Scriptural roots. Biblically, man is portrayed as a worker. Work is God's ordinance, and man must toil because God expressly desired him to do so. Before the Fall, man is created to "replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over all living things" for he is placed in the Garden of Eden "to dress it and to keep it."<sup>36</sup>

Work ordained by God, is also physical necessity, and thus becomes an integral part of the regular order of things. The Psalmist writes:

The young lions roar after their prey and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.<sup>37</sup>

And this order is created by God,

O Lord, how manifold are they works! In wisdom hast thou made them all.

The necessity of work and its place in the divine plan is illustrated throughout the pages of Scripture. Paul in II Thess. 3:7 advises the members of the early church that; "if any would not work, neither should he eat." Idleness is denounced for it opposes God's ordinance: "Go to the ant thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise"; work becomes a necessary ingredient of Christian living.<sup>38</sup>

Historical encounters with God further strengthened this sense of the natural order of things. Saul ploughed with his oxen to enhance his royal dignity. David, Israel's great king, was first a shepherd lad, and in New Testament times "it was the rule that no rabbi should receive payment for his teaching

<sup>36</sup>Gen. 1:23 and Gen. 2:15.

A Richardson, The Biblical Doctrine of Work, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1952), p. 25

<sup>37</sup>Psalms 104: 21-23.

<sup>38</sup>Proverbs 6:6., Richardson, Biblical Doctrine, p.39.

or for his other professional activities, each must acquire a trade and support himself by honest toil."<sup>39</sup> Fittingly, therefore, in the context of this tradition Jesus Christ was by profession an artisan -- a carpenter. Thus, God, "when He chose to be made man, was incarnate in the person not of a king or statesman or general, or yet of a philosopher or priest or rabbi, but in that of a village workman."<sup>40</sup>

Work, in biblical authority, is defined as necessary for man. It is man's nature to be a worker for he was created in the image of God who himself is metaphorically understood as worker.<sup>41</sup> Work is the method by which man strives to be like God, man was created in His image and was given dominion over nature. (Genesis 1:26,27). Man is so made "that not only can he not satisfy his material needs without working but also cannot satisfy his spiritual needs or fulfill his function as a human being."<sup>42</sup> Man as worker embodies the design of God and as such lives in harmony with Him. Man can only live in harmony with God "as a being created in the image of a working God", and only thus "can he fulfill his true destiny."<sup>43</sup>

Building on this biblical description of work, theologians and laymen interpreted the concept of toil and from their explanations evolved a doctrine of ethics couched in the realization of the meaning of labour. Eckhardt and Tauler, two mystics of the 14th and 15th centuries argued that perfection, the realization of God, could be attained by the humble working man as well as the most pious monk, but it was not until the Reformation and its ensuing doctrine of "calling" that a viable vocational ethic became a cultural determinant.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p.27.

<sup>41</sup>See Psalms 8:13; 19:1; 104; 86:6; Gen. 2:4; 7; 8; and Isaiah 45:9.

<sup>42</sup>Richardson, Biblical Doctrine, p.24.

<sup>43</sup>W.H. Boggs, All Ye Who Labour, (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1962), p.12.

<sup>44</sup>This at least is the thesis developed by Max Weber. For an example

Luther, as Kemper Fullerton notes, couching his theology in justification by faith, translated the Greek word  $\tau\omicron\nu\upsilon\varsigma$  -- toil, as "Beruf" -- calling. Arguing against the contemporary Roman Catholic division between secular and religious morality -- "praecepta evengelia" and "consilia evangelica", he asserted that the higher morality, usually reserved for religious orders was indeed possible in the secular world. Man, Luther argued, served God within his "calling" (every day labour). And in Luther's use of "calling" -- "a religious significance came to be attached to the secular life even down to its humblest details."<sup>45</sup>

Calvin further expanded and emphasized the meaning of work as "calling". Arguing from his basic conception of God as absolute Will who determines natural events, Calvin created a theological system (which though modified remains impressive even today), which centered the total universe of worldly activity upon God. The Shorter Catechism for example, begins its first lesson with this question.

What is the chief end of man?

And the answer is:

Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.<sup>46</sup>

And the popular Presbyterian hymn "O Quanta Qualia", written by Horatius Bonar during the mid-nineteenth century, describes this over-riding power of God.

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of a divergent opinion see H.M. Robertson, Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism, who questions Weber's philological arguments and who also asserts that Weber's contention that only Protestants shared a pro-capitalist tendency was incorrect.

<sup>45</sup>Kemper Fullerton, "Calvinism and Capitalism: An Explanation of the Weber Thesis" in R.W. Green ed., Protestantism and Capitalism, in the series, Problems in European Civilization, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1959), p.9.

<sup>46</sup>The Shorter Catechism, Question One, The Confession of Faith, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1913).



Soundeth the heaven of heavens with His name;  
 Ringeth the earth with His glory and fame;  
 Ocean and mountain, stream, forest, and flower  
 Echo His praises and tell of His power.<sup>47</sup>

Building on this primary description of an all-powerful God, Calvin expounded the concept of work as "calling", using the word "vocato" to mean everyday task or station. Man, Calvin, argued, was appointed by God to a particular position in life, and the only way in which he could fully serve his Maker was in the dutiful fulfillment of the toil that was the condition of his station. Work was ordained by God and man was to perform his appointed labour as service and worship to the all-powerful One.

Calvin further noted, that just as God's world was made to serve man, so was man made to serve the community, and social activity was directed to the glory of God. Since both the individual and the community were to glorify God, social improvement, achieved by faithfulness in one's calling, exalted the Lord. The individual was to be involved in his society but, in his service to the community, he was to direct his work to God and not to his fellow men. Work, even social improvement, was above all, service to the Lord. The individual was to be "in the world but not of it."

Calvin, in explaining the meaning of work, as Professor W.H. Boggs, Jr. argues, also emphasized certain values of conduct in the performance of labour.

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influenced his followers to shun idleness and devote themselves to conscientious labour, to enjoy the good things of creation while practicing moderation in manner of life and to combine industry with sobriety, frugality and honesty.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, along with his spiritual endorsement of industry, Calvin advocated a doctrine of self-discipline and asceticism; the pursuit of one's toil could not be separated from the discipline of the self.

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<sup>47</sup>The Book of Praise --- 253.

<sup>48</sup>Boggs, Labour, p.58.

Calvin also argued that God must bless the labourer's toil, or his work would be fruitless. This argument rested on the Biblical perspective which tended to downplay the creative faculty in man for fear of a humanism which would exalt "the creature rather than the only Creator",<sup>49</sup> and Biblical writers, in Psalms, Isaiah, Exodus and Kings, as Richardson points out, taught that a labourer's skill was the result of the Lord's instruction and that, apart from Divine blessing, the worker's effort went for nought.

"Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

Calvin's exposition of his ideas on work, became, as H. Richard Niebuhr argues, a "dynamic conception of the vocations of men as activities in which they may express their faith and love and may glorify God in their calling."<sup>50</sup> Calvin stressed that work was ordained by God and that since man's chief end was to glorify his Maker, man was dutifully bound to honestly perform the labours to which he had been appointed. As well, man was to cultivate the qualities of self-discipline and asceticism in his labour, remembering all the time that as the activity of work was directed to God, so were the fruits of that labour properly His.

Although in Calvin's theology, work was not to be directed for personal gains, popular misrepresentation of his doctrine of assurances lent credence to social appropriation of the idea that man's ordained purpose was to create wealth. Calvin's assertion of the doctrine of election raised the question of assurances. How could people know they had been saved? Although Calvin himself favoured the explanation that the elect, filled with the spirit of God,

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<sup>49</sup>Richardson, Biblical Doctrine, p.19.

<sup>50</sup>R. Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), p.217.

would indeed realize that they had been saved, popular sentiment seemed to prefer his doctrine of good works.

Good works, in Calvinist theology were "the fruits and evidence of a true and lively Faith." Ability to perform them came "wholly from the Spirit of Christ", and could only be done by a "heart purified by faith".<sup>51</sup> Thus, good works took on the form of assurance of salvation and, while they did not merit pardon of sin, they indeed gave rest to tempestuous and wondering minds.

From this emphasis upon works as assurances of salvation, to an identification of works as a moral justification of commercial profit was but a short yet complicated step.

Although pages of print have been filled by authors who identify the Puritans as those who most readily provided the means of transition from a Calvinist to a modern capitalist spirit,<sup>52</sup> and conversely by others who argue that the first group were biased, unsympathetic, and essentially incorrect,<sup>53</sup> the situation remains, that the industrious pursuit of toil led to commercial success which resulted in the accumulation of capital in such amounts as to present a definite temptation to the holder.

The Puritans had tempered their industrious activity with a demanding, austere, ascetic ethic -- one which denounced Mammon, and upheld the virtues of frugality. However, with the influence of an ever present worldly asceticism, in which earning was an end in itself;<sup>54</sup> and the growth of new economic ideas

<sup>51</sup>The Confession of Faith, Chap. XVI, pp.24-25.

<sup>52</sup>(See for example, Max Weber, R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, Kenneth Fullerton, "Calvinism and Capitalism").

<sup>53</sup>See for example, W.S. Hudson, "Puritanism and the Spirit of Capitalism", Church History, 18 (March, 1949): 3-10.

<sup>54</sup>H.M. Robertson gives the example of the Renaissance financier, the Catholic Jakob Fugger, who in answer to a query as to why he did not retire was reported to have replied that he "had quite another disposition, he would make money as long as he could". As cited in H.M. Robertson, "A Criticism of Max

at the turn of the seventeenth century, ideas which as Henri Sée pointed out were being stripped of their religious content as economic life sought to secularize itself; and the rise, as Robertson argues of a new bourgeois individualism of profane origins, the Calvinist sanctions holding the pursuit of wealth in check gradually dissolved and began to crumble away.

When the religious foundations crumbled and the spiritual vitality . . . disappeared, the ethical injunctions which derived their force from a vivid faith in God as a righteous judge, quite naturally lost their compelling power.<sup>55</sup>

Eventually, as Weber, Fullerton, and W. S. Hudson point out, the pursuit of wealth came to epitomise the end and not the by-product of toil. Men still retained the virtues of industry and efficiency for those values led to the realization of profit, but their work was now not directed to God but to themselves. Community service was no longer, as Calvin had instructed, engaged in by dutiful fulfillment of appointed activity, but instead rested on an idea of philanthropic endeavour which interpreted the socio-religious duty of a wealthy industrialist and financier as returning to society a portion of the wealth which he had obtained from it. John Wesley correctly interpreted this turn of events, correctly identified its cause, and proposed a cure for the popular turpitude:

I fear whenever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore I do not see how it is possible in the nature of things for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches. How then is it possible that

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Weber and His School", in R.W. Green, ed., Protestantism and Capitalism, in the series -- Problems in European Civilization, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co. 1959) p.66.

<sup>55</sup>W.S. Hudson, "Puritanism and the Spirit of Capitalism", in R.W. Green, ed., Protestantism and Capitalism, in the series, Problems in European Civilization, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co. 1959), p.61.

Methodism, that is, and religion of the heart, though it flourishes now like a green bay tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal. Consequently they increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away. Is there no way to prevent this continued decay of pure religion? We ought not to prevent people from being diligent and frugal; we must exhort all Christians to gain all they can and to save all they can, that is, in effect, to grow rich. What way can we take that our money-making may not sink us to the nethermost hell? There is one way, and there is no other under heaven. If those who gain all they can and save all they can will also give all they can, then, the more they gain the more they will grow in grace and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven.<sup>56</sup>

His appeal, however, if critical commentators of mid-Victorian Canada are to be believed, went generally unheeded in a world indeed increasingly engaged in a worship of Mammon.

Criticism of work directed merely for monetary gain pervaded all strata of Canadian society, and was voiced by wealthy entrepreneurs like Joseph Flavelle, and radical labour reformers like E.S. Rowe; concerned Christian clerics like George Grant and Salem Bland, and confirmed theosophists like Phillips Thompson. Indeed, the Canadian commercial community was seemingly obsessed with criticism of Mammon worship. Most influential business journals, including the Journal of the Canadian Bankers Association, Monetary Times, Financial Post, Journal of Commerce, and the Canadian Grocer, repeatedly berated those who sought only riches in their commercial transactions.

Similarly, speakers to businessmen's associations, such as the Toronto Retail Growers Association and the Winnipeg Board of Trade warned of the utter failure of the man who spent his commercial career "worshipping with ever increasing veneration the golden calf."<sup>57</sup> And, the Protestant churches attempted to both shame the businessman who strove for profit at the expense of the human

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<sup>56</sup> As cited in K. Fullerton, "Calvinism and Christianity", p.19.

<sup>57</sup> As cited in M. Bliss, A Living Profit, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1974), p.17.

weal:

O shame to us who rest content  
While lust and greed for gain  
In street and shop and tenement  
Wring gold from human pain,  
And bitter lips in blind despair  
Cry -- "Christ hath died in vain."<sup>58</sup>

while at the same time luring him away from the worship of Mammon by,  
strangely enough, promising him greater commercial success.

Christians as a general rule, because under the guidance of safe principles, suffer less in commercial failures than men whose god [sic] is the world, and whose rules and aims in business are apt to be loose and wild.<sup>59</sup>

That such a wide spectrum of criticism directed against an acquisitive ethic existed, especially within the bounds of the later nineteenth century Canadian business community, strongly suggests that "Mammon worship" was quite a common feature of the Canadian commercial scene. Bengough, for one, totally agreed that Canadian businessmen seemed solely concerned with the pursuit of profit, often to the detriment of the community which they professed to serve. "Is there a city on this continent", he asked:

in which we do not witness extraordinary disparities in society, proverty appelling in the midst of aggregaions of avarice -- hovels of wretchedness within a stones throw of palaces gorgeous in their luxuriousness.<sup>60</sup>

Contemporary Canadian society Bengough argued, had strayed away from the nomist precepts of Christianity. Disregarding the divine ordinance of "calling" some Canadians had developed social approbations which not merely ignored God's law, but directly contradicted it. The basis of this immoral social value was, as he identified it, the contemporary 'business' ethic;

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<sup>58</sup> Book of Praise, 577, and the Hymnary, 382.

<sup>59</sup> The Presbyterian Yearbook -- 1878, (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, n.d.), p.79.

<sup>60</sup> J.W. Bengough, "Address From the Single Tax Association to the Ministers of the Christian Churches", The Social Reformer, June 1892.

The golden rule is: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you". The rule upon which society seems to act at present is: "Look out for your own welfare, and if, . . . it is necessary for you to take advantage of laws that bear hardly against your fellow-men, why business is business, you must do it."<sup>61</sup>

Arguing a community oriented ethic, in which a man's work was directed to the benefit of society, and condemning the prevalent creed of individual success that underlay the business man's view of society,<sup>62</sup> Bengough lampooned them in sketch and verse. Businessmen were

Sturdy, eager, pushing merchants  
Each one with an anxious "phiz"  
That bespoke the down-town maxim  
Self for self, and biz is biz.<sup>63</sup>

Identifying them as basically immoral and unjust, Bengough didactically damned their lack of a Christian ethos in a fashion designed to arouse popular indignation and horror, to the point where businessmen themselves would be ashamed of their methods, and the general public sufficiently aroused, would take corrective action. His poem, "The Golden Idol", expresses the full range of his sentiments clearly:

Does Christ look down  
On the surging town  
As the Christmastide draws near;  
Does he mark the smile  
Of grasping guile,  
And the innocent baby's tear;  
Does he hear the sigh  
Of the poor who die ---  
For the greed of the profiteer?

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<sup>61</sup>Bengough, "Address", The Social Reformer, June 1892.

<sup>62</sup>Michael Bliss, argues that this creed formed the basis of businessmen's morality: "When they [businessmen] talked about success in business, and anything else in life, businessmen were deeply individualistic. They held each man personally responsible for his success and failure". (Bliss, Living Profit, p.138).

<sup>63</sup>Bengough, "On the Corner", Motley, p.149.

Do his wounds on the tree  
 Bleed afresh to see  
 How His humble ones are slain;  
 That traders in milk  
 May be clad in silk  
 And pile up unneeded gain?  
 Is it not his Word  
 That the Commerce Board  
 Has spoken the truth so plain?

O, the fiendish greed  
 That can mock at need,  
 And grow rich on babies graves;  
 That mankind would curse  
 To fill the purse  
 Of a junto of sordid knaves.  
 And the purblind eyes  
 Of a Government wise  
 That would act as their willing slaves!

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Shall this Herod-crime  
 Of our gain-cursed time  
 Go on, with its cruelty cold?  
 Shall markets and marts  
 Be more than hearts,  
 And the soul of our land be sold?  
 Or shall we rise  
 Swift, strong and wise  
 And crush this idol of Gold?<sup>64</sup>

Never content with merely identifying the immorality of the situation, Bengough also proposed the solution. Business practice must become moral by adhering to the laws and will of God. This ideal he translated into a call for action, demanding that men and women of Christian principles enter the world of commerce and change it for the better, demanding in fact, that Christians be "in the world but not of it."

A typical Bengough poem, in which the religious imagery runs rampant, tells the story of a conscience - stricken young man who left the immoral, Mammon worshipping, commercial arena, searching for the peace and honesty which

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<sup>64</sup>J. W. Bengough, "The Golden Idol", "Poems -- Disbound Poems", Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.



did not exist there. While watching a cricket game, the hero hears the voice of the Lord, who shows him, in the allegory of the match, that he must get into the game of life and play it hard, aiming at scoring the highest ethical goal. Thus directed, the hero, determined, returns to his trade with the goal of bringing Christian principles into the business world.

To mart and market again I come,  
 To play like a man life's fateful game;  
 And I score, thank God, from the ills I meet  
 In the daily strife of the busy street;  
 For I live to honor my Master's name.<sup>65</sup>

Basing his analysis on his interpretation of the vocational ethic, Bengough further criticized the 'business' ethic for its assertion that social duties could be fulfilled by private philanthropy. Philanthropic ideology stressed that the extensive profits earned by the industrialist, businessman, etc. were actually a social trust, and the holder was a steward of the community wealth, who was obligated to return a portion of his profits back to the community in the form of good works. This doctrine held an added attraction for the wealthy, for, by doing good with his excess money, a man increased the sum of his good works and strengthened his assurances of election. On this point, a Methodist publication, The Christian Guardian, was explicit.

By doing good with his money, a man as it were, stamps the image of God upon it, and makes both pass current in the merchandise of heaven.<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, many prominent and wealthy Canadians took this doctrine of stewardship and social responsibility to heart, and in fact, by their philanthropic activity did manage to, if not alleviate their problems at least temporarily improve conditions for the poor. Montreal businessman, Herbert Brown Ames, for example, funded and published the first Canadian sociological

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<sup>65</sup> J. W. Bengough, "The Parable", "Poems -- Disbound Poems", Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.

<sup>66</sup> Christian Guardian, April 8, 1885.

survey of working class conditions, The City Below the Hill, (1896). In Toronto, the wealthy Massey Family, especially in their support of the Fred Victor Mission, instituted various endeavours aimed at alleviating the physical burdens of the needy, and benevolent societies, their membership roles too heavy with the "better families" engaged in rounds of feverish philanthropic activity, establishing Houses of Industry, Homes of the Friendless, and Orphan's Asylums.

Though not condemning the positive aid provided by private philanthropy, Bengough argued that this doctrine was essentially contrary to God's ordinances. First, the practice of private philanthropy set the giver in the place of God -- unthinkable in Bengough's absolute adherence to a Calvinist conception of the divine role. Or, as B.F. Austin, in his little book The Gospel to the Poor, (1884), put it,

The moment you introduce into the transaction any selfish interest, that moment you rob giving of its noblest characteristic, pure unselfishness, and destroy in a large degree its power to elevate and enoble the character.<sup>67</sup>

Second, when a man performed good works with the fruits of his labour, and not with the activity itself he failed to fulfill his obligation to God through his vocation -- he neglected to profess his calling. There was always the possibility that in his race to amass wealth, the businessman had broken rules of just and moral conduct, whether in the treatment of his employees, his colleagues or his customers. Thus his generosity and charity sustained by financial profits that may have come from unjust and corrupt business practices, or from an immoral motivation, were far from Christian doctrine. Third, free doles of money, for which a man did not work, lead to moral decrepitude,

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<sup>67</sup> B.F. Austin, The Gospel to the Poor versus Pew Rents, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1884), p.53.

for the recipient could neither learn the virtues necessary for a just life, nor would he be able to glorify God -- especially since he did no work; and the giver was as guilty of this neglect of God's law as was the recipient.

"Alms will not cure the case of the Poor if kept up to the end of Time, but will in fact make Bad Worse"<sup>68</sup> he wrote. True, the poor must be helped, but the primary focus of assistance was instilling in them a will to work, and giving them ample opportunity to do so. Instead of private charity, Bengough suggested, wealthy businessmen should not take extensive profits, but should use that money to improve working conditions for hired labour. Also, exhorting them to active service, he argued that they should work to change laws which discriminated against others, and that concurrently they should cleanse their hearts of their "Greed for Gold" and devote their energies to furthering God's glory on earth. This he contended was the only true social service, and his poem "The Vision" concisely sums up this position.

Think ye my Spirit is satisfied  
When in charity's name ye have supplied

To mothers and children from homes so drear  
A day in the green fields once a year?

Is it not rather both cruel and vain  
When they must return to the slums again?

Nay, think my brothers -- why should there be  
For toilers such prisons of Poverty

In a land so bounteous, free and fair?  
Why should not all in comfort share?

Search your laws, their foundations trace:  
Are Justice and Mercy their certain base?

Search and see if this Wrong is the fruit  
Of a tree that springs from an evil root.

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<sup>68</sup>Bengough, Up-to-Date-Primer, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), p.44.

Search your hearts: perchance fell Need  
Is but the shadow of selfish Greed.

Till ye have striven with honest mind  
The cause or remedy to find

Dare not to think that the God of Right  
Has decreed for his children this curse and blight.<sup>69</sup>

Canadian businessmen, as Bengough pointed out often justified their activity and their gains by pointing to the community benefit that their products provided. For example, George Cox told the Senate that "the nine million-dollar profit on William Mackenzie's development of the Toronto Street Railway was justified in view of the growth of Toronto it stimulated" and F. H. Clergue, American entrepreneur and mineral developer emphasized how he took God's gifts and converted them for "the beneficial use of mankind."<sup>70</sup> This ethos though not totally dissimilar to the ethic that Bengough argued, differed on one very essential point. Bengough argued that the motivation of the business activity must be moral, and the process of that activity must be just. Businessmen were to enter the world of commerce, not to make money, but to fulfill their "calling", and in their business activity, they were to follow laws of charity, kindness, and fairness. Some businessmen, on the contrary, were apt to ignore this embarrassing argument, and instead noted that the results of their activity sometimes served beneficial ends.

Bengough's poetic story, The Woodpile Test, perhaps best explains his argument against contemporary business ideology which stressed the possible benefit of the ends of their activity and ignored unjust practices in their

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J.W. Bengough, "The Vision", "Disbound Poems", Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.

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Bliss, Living Profit, p.29, 28.

means. A half-starving man works hard and diligently, late into the evening, cutting wood to make enough money to buy food for his famished family. The poor labourer's temporary employer emerges in a favourable light because instead of giving the needy man money (which he most easily could have done when driven by pangs of his conscience) he provided him with work so that the poor fellow could duly earn the needed sum. And while the man worked, the employer saw to it that he was fed a steaming mug of tea and a good sandwich --- and beseeched him to slow down his labour so as not to overwork himself.

In this way the employer fulfilled both his duty to God and to mankind. He provided a man with work thereby allowing him to make his own way and to realize the spirituality which only came with honest toil. He also paid the labourer much more than just a fair wage, and took no profit from his toil, and he provided this employee with pleasant working conditions thereby showing a sincere interest in his well-being.

The labourer, for his part, also fulfilled his duty to God and his fellow man. He worked diligently and industriously at the kind of toil that had been ordained for him. He worked not for himself but for the welfare of his wife and children --- and as such, his toil was directed to the glory of God. Both the labourer and employer emerged as heroes, they both passed "the woodpile test", and the sentiments Bengough expressed in this poetic tale formed the basis for his description of the proper employer-employee relationship.

Realizing that in Biblical authority the duties of worker-master relationships were concisely worked out, (Exodus 21-24), Bengough agreed with the New Testament's decree that masters and workers must live harmoniously and deal fairly with one another because they are both servants of God, Masters are obliged to,

render to their workers . . . what is just and equal, knowing that they have a Master in heaven (Col. 4:1) who is also their servant's Master and with whom there is no respect of persons (Eph. 6:9).<sup>71</sup>

Arguing that since all men are brothers in the fatherhood of God, Bengough asserted that "labour and capital are Siamese twins", "toil and capital are friends",<sup>72</sup> and that both were entitled to a fair share of wealth produced by their mutual activity -- "to labour wages, to capital interest".<sup>73</sup>

Similarly, advancing Scriptural teaching on the proper rhythm of work,<sup>74</sup> Bengough argued that although work was a necessary ingredient of human life it was nevertheless, not the whole of it. Work, he asserted must be alternated with rest; man needed time away from his labours to reflect on the meaning of his toil and the sublimity and grandeur of God.

Man cannot find joy in this life if he is not free, or if he must keep his nose to the Wheel of Toil from the day he comes into the World to the day he dies. Man does not live just for Bread; he needs a chance to Train his Mind as God meant he should.<sup>75</sup>

Metaphorically identifying the church as "a haven of calm Sabbath rest, . . . a Sabbath island",<sup>76</sup> Bengough repeatedly stressed the spiritual necessity of Sunday's holy rest. The man who in his scramble for riches ignored the Sunday rest became, essentially, less than a man.

<sup>71</sup>Richardson, Biblical Doctrine, p.45.

<sup>72</sup>J.W. Bengough, "The Loose Screw", Bengough Papers, Vol. IV., Bengough, The Up-to-Date-Primer, p.27.

<sup>73</sup>Bengough, "The Loose Screw".

<sup>74</sup>Exodus 20:9-11; 31:15-17; Genesis 2:3; Deut. 5:12-14.

<sup>75</sup>Bengough, Up-to-Date-Primer, p.13.

<sup>76</sup>J.W. Bengough, "The Old Church", Motley, p.44.

A being with no outlet to his life,  
 No uplift to his soul; no time to rest,  
 To think to pray, to nurse the mighty hopes  
 That make us men.<sup>77</sup>

Bengough's arguments against the use of Sunday streetcars in Toronto, for example, (see cartoons 1, 2 and 3), illustrates his call for a work-rest pattern of life. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work", but the sabbath day is a day of rest and the working man who realizes this spiritual-social truth will vote against the Sunday cars which threaten to disrupt this God ordained rhythm.

Concerted action will lead to the defeat of fat, grasping, mammon-worshipping businessmen, with their appeals to a worldly ethic; both the foes of labour and the enemies of God. In the end, since the working men are vessels of true virtue, labour will triumph: God will take up their cause, and Toronto shall have her quiet Sunday and a greater disposition towards a more peaceful, happy and justly ordered community.

That business activity should follow Christian ethical guidelines was a call not unique to Bengough, but shared by many of his contemporaries, whose activity over a period of fifty years (1870-1920) indicates the remarkable continuity of Canadian reform thought. George Grant, Presbyterian clergyman and educator for example, argued that a labourer's activity entitled him to much more than just a living wage. Asserting that human toil imparted human value into the mode of production Grant argued that labourers not only provided productive energy, but essentially helped to create the industry, and their return, as a result, should include not only wages but better working conditions.

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<sup>77</sup> Bengough, "The Apology of Edwin Markham", Keys, p.136.

They [labourers] believe that when they have aided, it may be for half a life-time, to build up a great industry by their skill, honesty and heart, their share in it is not fully represented by the wages received and which were determined by the market price. Wages, even good wages, cannot measure the rights in equality of the human workers . . . . The human element in labour is different in kind from every other element, and to ignore its potentiality is not only to treat it with injustice but to diminish the quantity and quality of the product.<sup>78</sup>

Salem Bland, fiery Methodist clergyman whom Bengough had admirably portrayed as denouncing the Manitoba Parliament buildings scandal of 1915,<sup>79</sup> argued that Christianity was incompatible with social inequality and business competition, and called the church to a war against competition and an economic order based on profit-seeking.<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, novelist and suffragette Nellie McClung exposed the immoral nature of the "business ethic" in her novel The Second Chance. A bartender in his reply to the heroine's request not to serve liquor to one regular customer so that customer could spend one special day, sober, with his family, perfectly exemplified this view of a grasping, mammon worshipping, self-seeking business ethic.

No, it's not our business who buys. We're here to sell. That's one thing I don't believe in, is refusin' liquor to anyman. Every man has a perfect right to as much liquor as he wants.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>George Grant, "Current Events", Queen's Quarterly 1 (July 1893).

<sup>79</sup>Salem Goldworth Bland Collection, United Church Archives, Toronto, as described to the author by Bland's biographer --- Dr. A.R. Allen.

<sup>80</sup>S.G. Bland, The New Christianity, introduction by A.R. Allen, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973, original edition 1920), pp.23-27 passim.

<sup>81</sup>N. McClung, The Second Chance, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1910), p.173.



Typically, in this novel genre, the bartender seduces the one he was implored to protect and the demon rum runs true to course, killing the helpless drunkard. The moral lesson of the immorality of the "business ethic" is hammered home in the tearful lamentations of the widow and her young but toil-worn child.

The novels of Ralph Connor often described the same glory of work as service which Bengough taught. The three heroes in his The Doctor, for example, the minister Dick, his surgeon brother Barney, and the faithful nurse Margaret, rise to the highest pinnacles of social appreciation in their work directed to both the spiritual and physical benefit of the community, and their noble sublimity rests on the realization of a duty well done.

The prominent western labour journal, the Voice, in a similar vein, editorially emphasized that profit taking and Christianity were incompatible:

Profit taking is immoral, anti-Christian and contrary to the Golden Rule. That the world does not yet recognize this to be true does not change the fact.<sup>82</sup>

And William Howland, Toronto's reform mayor, taking Christ's call to heart, gave a sterling example to the business community of which he was a part when instead of giving alms to the poor he actually took time to go and work in the slums and wretched hovels of St. John's Ward. Bengough, Grant, Bland, Connor, McClung, the Voice, Howland, and many others heartily agreed with the Rev. W. Hinks, writing in the Methodist Magazine and Review that:

Christ must be let into the market place to govern its morals and into the counting-house to govern its finances, before He can save us from economic anarchy.<sup>83</sup>

Supported by other Canadians who shared his criticism of the "business ethic" and his championship of the rights of labour, J.W. Bengough's social

<sup>82</sup> Voice, December 30, 1898.

<sup>83</sup> Rev. W. Hinks, "Applied Christianity", Methodist Magazine and Review 46 (July - December 1897): 235.

commentaries found utterance as sincere expressions of his total commitment to a vocational ethic. Rationally interpreting what he understood to be the "Will of God," and influenced by his Presbyterian roots in the Calvinist heritage, Bengough criticized contemporary concepts of right and wrong, and proposed alternative methods of conduct based on his understanding of the vocational Christian ethic. Arguing that labour was functionally divine, Bengough proposed social ideals of community, brotherhood, and worshipful service in daily activity -- ideals which, although commonly expressed by some radical clerics, journalists, and social reformers, essentially differed from the culturally accepted doctrines of individualism and success so common in mid-Victorian Canadian society.

Although Bengough never proposed a revolutionary, ideological restructuring of society, his call for a new interpretation of the social ethic, led him to advance plans for social improvement that were anything but conservative.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE CASE FOR THE SINGLE TAX

Progress and Poverty, Henry George's signal call to ethical economic theory,<sup>1</sup> the doctrine of the single tax, was published in 1879, and in the next decade, achieved not only national but world-wide popularity. In Canada, George's economic arguments persuaded such well known figures as the author William D. Le Sueur and businessman William Douglass of Toronto<sup>2</sup> to take up the campaign of, quite literally, spreading the economic gospel. J. W. Bengough, an early convert, also became a widely acknowledged popularizer of Georgeite economics, and his travels on behalf of the "cause" took him not only across Canada but to Britain and the Antipodes as well. Bengough, however, not only popularized but reinterpreted George's thought, advancing the doctrines of the single tax from premises unique to himself, building on his genuine commitment to a Christian vocational ethic, and the revelation of God's plan as found in Scripture.

Bengough's economic thought was grounded in his acceptance of the Christian understanding of natural and human origins. That is, in the doctrine

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<sup>1</sup>For an excellent exposition of George's ethics and their effect on his economic thought, see G.R. Geiger, The Philosophy of Henry George, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933), especially chapters 1,3,7,9 and 10. Geiger, a student of John Dewey's, explains George's thought as a philosophy of means, and this work stands not only as a fascinating study of George, but also as an excellent example of the best form of critical, ethical pragmatism.

<sup>2</sup>C.D.W. Goodwin, Canadian Economic Thought, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1961), pp.33-36 "passim".

of creation. Nature and man both had their origin in the Will of God and were dependent upon each other, though for Bengough, as for most men up to his time, man's dependency upon nature was the more urgent part of the equation. Survival was the pre-condition of all else, and the basic natural element which both combined God's beneficence and provided for man's sustenance was the land. As such, land, the prime constituent of nature, became the focal point of Bengough's economic argument.

Stressing the biblical imperative of the fatherhood and sovereignty of God, Bengough described nature as His "glorious temple" and frequently asserted that it belonged to the Lord and was given by Him to all men equally and freely:

He [is] equally the father of us all, so that each one of us has an equal right to His heritage.

It is God's earth and His free gift to the whole race, like the air, the light, the sea, . . .<sup>3</sup>

However, while calling on his familiarity with Scripture, and invoking the psalmist's authority, he also buttressed his arguments with citations from Pope Gregory the Great -- "The earth is the common property of all men"; Immanuel Kant -- "All men from the beginning have an equal right to the soil"; and J.S. Mill -- "The earth's surface is in truth the heritage of all mankind".<sup>4</sup> The train of authority led to conviction and conviction to judgment:

Enough! the lie is ended. God only owns the land!  
No parchment deed hath virtue unsigned by His own hand.<sup>5</sup>

Since, Bengough argued, God made the land and gave it to mankind in common, the land was ruled by His laws. Man, in his use of nature was bound,

<sup>3</sup>Bengough, "Restitution", Motley, p.18; J.W. Bengough, "Address from the Single Tax Association to the Ministers of the Christian Churches", The Social Reformer, (Toronto: June 1892); Bengough, The Whole Hog Book, (Boston: American Free Trade League, 1908), p.84.

<sup>4</sup>J.W. Bengough, "The Crux of the Social Question", m.s., Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.

<sup>5</sup>Bengough, "Restitution", Motley, p.18.

by virtue of his dependence on God, to follow those laws. Man's spiritual individualism as Bengough understood it, did not preclude a corporate sense of society, but on the contrary, encouraged it:

though each man has a soul and will of his own . . . the body  
E-con-omic, the Vast Man . . . is also ruled by the laws of God.<sup>6</sup>

Although God gave the land to men, His gift did not mean that man should pacifically enjoy the fruits of Nature. On the contrary, God ordained that man was to actively engage in ensuring his own well being, and He enjoined him to prepare nature, to "dress it and to keep it", The mode of this preparation was labour, and it was necessary for man's sustenance; "all that ministers to man's physical needs is produced by human labour applied to the raw material of nature".<sup>7</sup> As such, toil in God's ordained scheme, became "the art of making a living", the "fundamental art."<sup>8</sup>

However, as Bengough repeatedly pointed out, labour was not merely objective activity directed towards physical survival, but the method by which man worshipped God. As we have seen,<sup>9</sup> Bengough believed that "toil is that . . . by which the soul of Man comes in touch with the world God has made", and that man, in his labour emulates the work of God: "Man is . . . the son of God because he can make things".<sup>10</sup> Only through labour could man combine the worship of the Divine with the satisfaction of his earthly needs. The act of toil, then, had for Bengough, a dual aspect, and as such it transcended the mundane world of physical reality and took on a spiritual connotation which further bound it to the law of the one God it glorified.

Given this intrinsic worth of labour, it is not surprising that Bengough,

<sup>6</sup>Bengough, "Gist of George", Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.

<sup>7</sup>Bengough, "The Loose Screw".

<sup>8</sup>Bengough, "Crux".

<sup>9</sup>See above, chapter four, pages 130-133.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

like George, accepted a labour theory of value. Work created value. Value was "the real cost of a thing in toil"; any object was "worth what it will cost a man to get or to make it."<sup>11</sup> As work was both spiritually and physically defined, every object created by toil had both spiritual as well as material value. Thus, Bengough pointed out, the product was not only the labourer's but God's as well. Since his concern was not so much with creating a sophisticated economic theory as with stressing the grounding of ethical foundations of economic life in Scriptural revelation, Bengough, once he had established this essential point, cut short his explanation of "value" and proceeded to the concept of "wealth". Wealth was "the fruit of work", and would only be realized through the "toil of Man". Things had value, men who possessed those things had wealth.<sup>12</sup> Wealth, was, in Bengough's rephrasing of George's definition, the possession of

that which the wit and skill of man, out of the raw stuff of God gives us in the world, can make fit for his [man's] use by a change in its [the world's] form, state or place.<sup>13</sup>

Wealth was created by man's toil, a result of his productivity -- his product. Only that which included man's labour in its production could be considered wealth, "a thing must have toil in it to be wealth".<sup>14</sup> Thus land, since it was not the product of man's toil was not wealth. Land, in fact, was actually God's wealth, for not only had He made it but he owned it, and thus Bengough's argument came full circle -- God only owned the land!

The biblical metaphor of God as Creator, provided both the essential premise for Bengough's argument and a final logical support to his conclusion.

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<sup>11</sup>Bengough, "Gist of George".

<sup>12</sup>Bengough, "Gist of George".

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Bengough, "Gist of George".

Biblical revelation, such as his emphasis on Lev. 25:33, "the land shall not be sold forever for the land is mine", and his methodical application of a labour theory of value from his belief in a Scripturally sanctioned Christian vocational ethic, united in his summary conclusion. Since all law was grounded in God's will, land ownership was contrary to any valid economic law.

A man can not Make a piece of Land, nor can he Buy it from God who made it, and if he puts it out of use he does Harm to Men, and so he may not own the land.<sup>15</sup>

Having developed his concepts of labour value and wealth, and having excluded land from man's wealth and hence land ownership from economic law, Bengough turned to the question of wages. Once again he based his argument upon the ownership of nature by a sovereign, equitable God, and the spiritual significance of labour, which guaranteed man both the rights to life and to work.<sup>16</sup> As God given rights these were not to be denied to any man. On this basis Bengough advanced a natural law, the law of remuneration, by which the fruits of toil must be fairly accorded to the labourer: "I will not toil if the fruits of my work are not in some fair sense to be my own."<sup>17</sup>

There were two ways, primarily, by which this law was abused. First, the labourer might assert his right to life and expect reward without labour. Bengough repudiated this abuse citing and paraphrasing Paul's well known phrase: "Who so will not work shall not eat" -- "They who have planted, they alone shall eat".<sup>18</sup> Second, and by far more pernicious in practice (though not in principle) was the abuse of the law of remuneration by "landlordism", or the private owner-

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<sup>15</sup> J.W. Bengough, The Up-to-Date Primer, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1896), p.16.

<sup>16</sup> J.W. Bengough, "Justice", m.s., Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.

<sup>17</sup> Bengough, "Gist of George".

<sup>18</sup> Bengough, "Apology"; "Justice"; Up-to-Date Primer.

ship of nature. Explaining the evils of "landlordism" brought Bengough to what he considered to be the cause of the economic and social malaise of his time.

Private ownership of nature was unjust for it broke all economic laws. First, it contravened the essential verity of God's act of creation. God had made the earth, thus the land was His, no man could own it, yet under the system of "landlordism", in which the land was "parcelled out among private owners",<sup>19</sup> men appropriated for their own that which rightfully belonged to the Lord.

But see, within the temple [nature], as in Solomon's of old  
The money-changers haggle, and souls are bought and sold;  
And that is called an owners which can only be the Lords . . .<sup>20</sup>

Since private ownership of land essentially meant the right to exclude others from its use, landlordism broke another Divine ordinance -- man's right to work. The landlord denied a man his right to work, by giving him leave to work. Similarly, in collecting rent or appropriating value from production in which he did not share, the landlord broke God's law of fair remuneration, he gave the worker nothing of value while himself taking the labourer's wealth.

What does he do to entitle him to this handsome reward? Nothing.  
What equivalent does he give for the money? None.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, while the labourer lost his wealth, and although hard working, determined, and virtuous sank into poverty, the landlord, unjust, immoral, and lazy, grew rich.

This immoral collection of rent led to what Bengough considered an equally odious feature of the system of "landlordism" -- the desecration of the spiritual essence of wealth. Wealth was created by toil -- worshipful toil, and as such was equally the labourer's and God's. Also, toil was divinely ordained

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<sup>19</sup>Bengough, "Crux".

<sup>20</sup>Bengough, "Restitution".

<sup>21</sup>Bengough, "Justice".





v.1 - KING LANDLORDISM.

THE NEXT DOM PEDRO WHO WILL HAVE TO GO

(HE WILL NOT RECEIVE A HANDSOME MONEY BONUS, HOWEVER, BUT AN OUTFIT OF TOOLS WITH WHICH HE MAY HEREAFTER MAKE A LIVING FOR HIMSELF.)

as man's life activity, activity by which man honoured God, and which was necessary in His scheme of things. The landlord, who appropriated another man's wealth, not only stole from his fellow being, but also from God. The landlord who acquired wealth without working by-passed the divinely ordained necessity of toil, "rent goes on whether he wakes or sleeps, whether he is at home or on a journey";<sup>22</sup> indeed, he ignored his fundamental "raison d'être".

Yet instead of calling for the abolition of private ownership of land, Bengough plainly affirmed that it was both necessary and desirable. Perhaps agreeing with the sentiments expressed by John Locke who saw the development of private ownership of land as a progressive and necessary step, bringing the world from a wild into a civilized state,<sup>23</sup> Bengough asserted that "civilization demands that individual men have exclusive possession and ownership of the land."<sup>24</sup> However, he probably viewed this "ownership" as a highly qualified term, which really meant that man held the land directly under the tutelage of the real owner -- God, thus guaranteeing a supply of labour and the certainty of reward in early stages of society's development -- a guarantee instituted by God to ensure the progress of his children. However, now faced with an increasingly complex society in which private property seemed more harmful than beneficial, yet bound by the historical traditions of bourgeois values, Bengough astutely recognized in the concept of "land-value" a way of applying his ideas in contemporary society, which would alleviate conditions caused by private ownership without begetting the problems of socialism. For, as Bengough understood it, the opposite of private property was not necessarily nationalization. And, although he most likely borrowed the term from George,

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<sup>22</sup>Bengough, "Cruz".

<sup>23</sup>See especially The Second Treatise of Government, chap. 5 -- "Of Property" sections 40-49.

<sup>24</sup>Bengough, "Justice".

Bengough uniquely stressed what he perceived to be its spiritual fundamentals. Emphasizing that "the kernel of evil is not the private ownership of the land, but the private ownership of the land-value";<sup>25</sup> Bengough defined "land-value" as not created by man's labour but by the toil of God, and therefore, land value was really God's; a source of God's wealth. Yet, man did have a role to play, not increasing "land-value" but in determining its limits. The amount of "land-value", in worldly economic terms, was set by men, not arbitrarily, but naturally, by the pressures of population. As population increased so did "land-value".

Therefore, Bengough concluded, since "land-value" was God's and not man's, man, while he could own land could not own "land-value", for it was "Land-value ownership that defeated the manifest design of God."<sup>26</sup> Now, faced with the reality of the economic existence of "land-values" and pressed by the question of how man could deal with it since it obviously belonged not to him but to God, Bengough found a solution in the doctrine of his Protestant ethic. Since man could best serve God by serving his fellow man, "land-value" was to be appropriated for the service of the community. As the community would benefit, so would God receive his just dues. Earthly monies could be used in the divine economy.

Once he had identified the economic problem as the evils perpetrated by "landlordism" and the private ownership of "land-value", Bengough proceeded to frame a workable solution. The answer to the problem was, he argued, simple enough. It lay in the redistribution of wealth. Wealth created by toil, private wealth, should go to those who created it. Likewise, public wealth

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<sup>25</sup>Bengough, "Crux".

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

created by God's 'toil,' and set by the natural increase of population, should go to the community.

It seems obvious to me that the free gifts of nature to the community ought to belong to the community, and the fruits of human labour to those who do the work and give a full equivalent for it.<sup>27</sup>

What was needed was a system of distribution which would, in his paraphrasing of Christ's words, "render unto the community that which is the community's, and unto the private citizen that which is his."<sup>28</sup> This system also must be based on the laws of God, for one problem with wealth, he argued, was that it was "arrived at through the laws of God, but spread by the laws of man."<sup>29</sup> The system of distribution which could fulfill the necessary requirements was the single tax.

The single tax would not tax a man's income, which was value created by toil, because, as Bengough put it, "income, is private when it comes from toil, and no government can justly tax private property."<sup>30</sup> Instead, the single tax would tax land, which although held in private was a public commodity, one which was given to men by God. This tax would be so regulated as to appropriate all revenue that a man might now earn through rents, value that he himself did not produce. Since mere ownership of land which a man himself did not work would then become a liability, the tax would regulate the amount of land any man would want to own, thus, there would be, Bengough argued, enough land to enable anyone who wished to work on it to do so.

This system, in all its vague references (for once Bengough had identified

<sup>27</sup> Bengough, Chalk Talks, pp.124-125.

<sup>28</sup> Bengough, "Justice".

<sup>29</sup> Bengough, "Gist of George".

<sup>30</sup> Bengough, "Justice".

the problem he did not delve into the fine points of its solution until after the turn of the century, and then only superficially) would, as Bengough argued, ensure every man's right to work, and the right of the community to share in the enjoyment of God's gift -- land. This would, then, in effect, rid society of the problem of landlordism, and ensure conformity to the laws of God and the progress of civilization, all without disrupting the contemporary social practice of private land ownership.

The proper distribution of wealth, however, could not be realized solely by the imposition of the single tax. The single tax had to be augmented and supported by another, equally just device, free trade. Bengough's argument for free trade, and his consequent criticism of the Canadian government's tariff policy, arose from his Scripturally grounded economics, and in particular from his interpretation of the labour theory of value.

Trade, Bengough argued, was a natural adjunct to labour, and it arose out of man's need for rest. "Man must work", he stated, "but not more than is really necessary."<sup>31</sup> Since man should take a day's rest every week, in order to properly worship God, so he must, to have the time, satisfy his wants with the least amount of extra effort:

our lives are full of wants . . . if we are sane we seek to meet them in the best way, and that is by the way that will cost us least in time and or toil or both.<sup>32</sup>

This does not mean that man should avoid work. On the contrary, man was to work as hard and as diligently as was necessary to fulfill his needs. What was not necessary, Bengough argued, was extra work -- work which was directed to

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<sup>31</sup>Bengough, "The Loose Screw".

<sup>32</sup>Bengough, The Whole Hog Book, p.36.

satisfy needs which could be easily satiated by exchange. Through the medium of trade, man could fill his physical needs and yet leave himself time for necessary rest and reflection.

The mode of exchange was trade, and trade was the exchange of like qualities of value. Only those goods which had true value, those which had been produced by labour, could be traded; and trade was also to be fair; the exchange of goods was to be amongst those who produced the goods; the benefit of the exchange was to go to those directly involved in the act of production. Since both value and wealth were, to Bengough, essentially similar, the fair trade became the means for the just distribution of wealth.

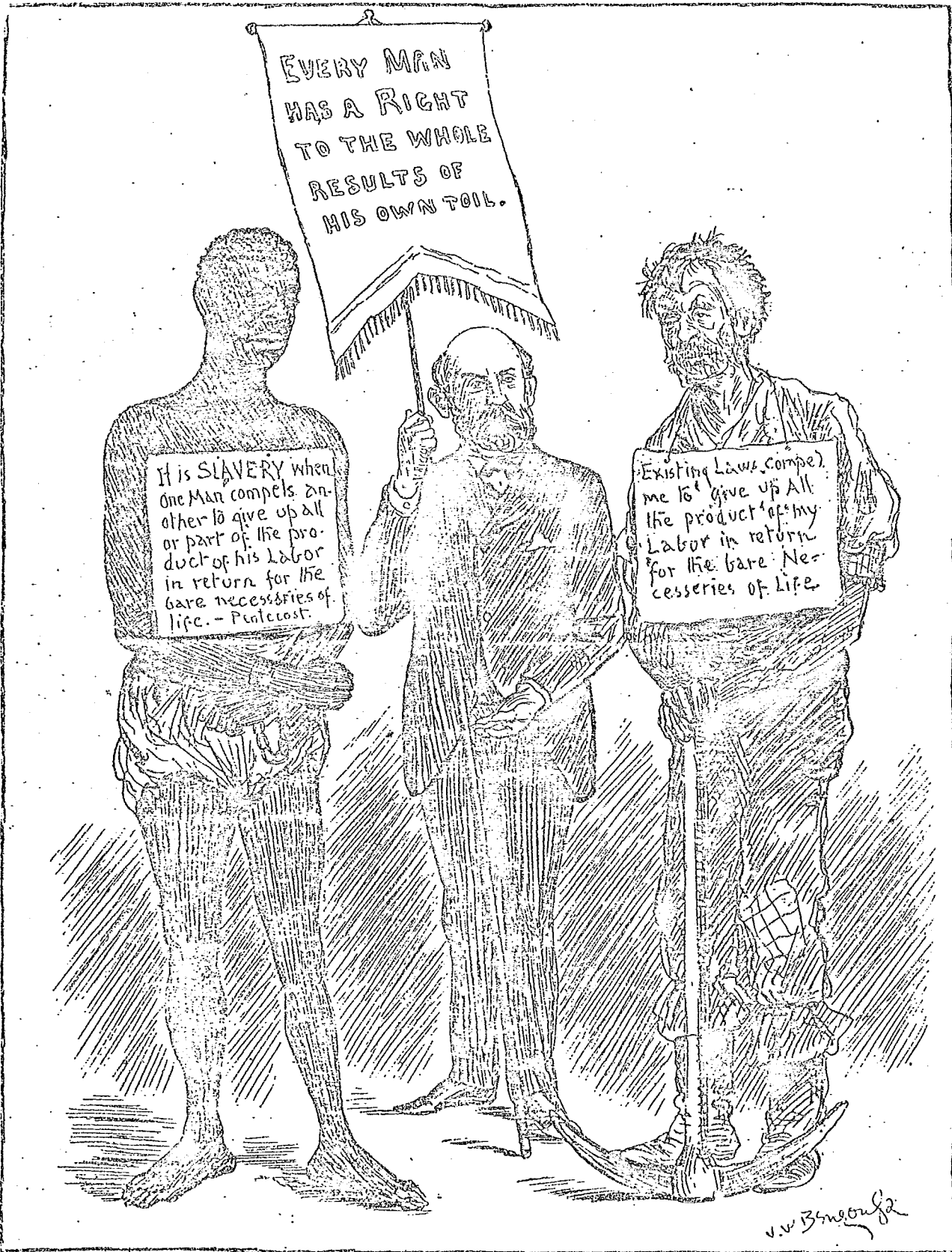
Since wealth was "those things which meet man's needs",<sup>33</sup> fair trade could, Bengough argued, not only fill particular needs, but increase the general stock of wealth. "In a fair trade", he wrote, "each man gets more than he gives . . . that is to say, he gets what he wants or needs more. Each gains by the act of trade, and this means a growth of wealth as a whole."<sup>34</sup> Since each man gave what he needed least, and received what he wanted most, he increased his material wealth (by satisfying his particular wants) and also his spiritual wealth, (by gaining time for rest and reflection). Thus, fair trade increased both the physical and spiritual well-being of man and mankind.

Since fair trade was to take place unimpeded, between producers, with each participant realizing the full value of the exchange, fair trade, Bengough argued, could only be free trade. Not only was free trade the logical extension of his vocational ethic argument, but, he noted, it was God's law. "Trade", he

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<sup>33</sup>Bengough, The Up-to-Date Primer, p.55.

<sup>34</sup>Bengough, "The Gist of George", p.32.



V.2 - VERY MUCH ALIKE.

Henry George—I DON'T SEE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SLAVERY AND—SLAVERY.

wrote, "is a God given instinct making man different than animals . . . God meant man to be a Free Trader."<sup>35</sup>

Only those who produced goods could exchange them for an equivalent. This of course ruled out landlords. Moreover, the producer had the God-given right, by the "law of remuneration", to the equitable transaction of the exchange. Thus, any method which impeded the just exchange of value, whether that method was a restriction of trade or simply a tariff barrier which had the effect of destroying the value symmetry of the exchange, was a contravention of God's law, and therefore unjust. Only a free trade would assist the fair and natural distribution of wealth, and consistently carried out "would set free the wage slaves of the day".<sup>36</sup>

Free trade, since it was God's law, and since it fulfilled the necessary criteria by which man may increase his wealth, thereby prospering materially and at the same time drawing ever closer to God, became a vehicle of progress, civilization, and brotherhood.<sup>37</sup> Free trade became "the law of man's life", the "life of the race, and the lamp which sheds the light of help and peace through all the world."<sup>38</sup> By engaging in free trade man would follow God's law, realize his own physical and spiritual well-being, and so increase general prosperity and good-will.

Bengough's economic thought was an outcome of the application both, of what he understood to be Scriptural truths and the principles of a Biblically

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<sup>35</sup>Bengough, "The Loose Screw".

<sup>36</sup>Bengough, The Whole Hog Book, p.92.

<sup>37</sup>Bengough, "The Loose Screw".

<sup>38</sup>Bengough, The Whole Hog Book, p.21.



founded Christian vocational ethic, to the social problems of his milieu. The doctrines of single tax and free trade were, as he described them, "the earthward side of the gospel", the applied expression of historically understood religious conviction: "the honest rule, the principle laid down by St. Paul", and the religious-secular realization of the necessity of toil, "based upon the principle that God made the land for use."<sup>39</sup>

In his appeal for the social application of both the single tax and free trade, Bengough acknowledged his debt to the American economist and social thinker -- Henry George. George was, in Bengough's eyes, a prophet, bringing Christian values to a society deeply in need of an ethical re-orientation and on the occasion of his death Bengough penned the following tribute:

His cause undone? nay sprang anew!  
 His cause was God's -- his prophet call,  
 "God made this fruitful earth for all,  
 Not for the few!"  
 The sun is up and lights the world, and men have seen that  
 truth is true!<sup>40</sup>

And indeed, although Bengough did in fact uniquely reinterpret many of George's premises, much of Bengough's thought closely followed the economic system created by George.

Henry George's explanation of economic malpractice and his resulting panacea of the single tax were unique in their interpretation of classical economic tenets in the light of over-riding ethical concerns. Although launched by the stimulus of a social conscience struggling with the paradox of poverty in an increasingly wealthy age,<sup>41</sup> George's thought was essentially a further

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<sup>39</sup>Bengough, unidentified, undated clipping, Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

<sup>40</sup>Bengough, "Henry George", In Many Keys, pp. 219-220.

<sup>41</sup>Geiger, Henry George, p.14.

development of a labour theory of value premised on the necessity of subsistence which had previously been interpreted by Ricardo, Locke, Smith and John Stuart Mill. Considering value as a dynamic concept, a function of present labour, George distinguished between value created by individual exertion --- "value from production", and value created by the irreproductability and uniqueness of the goods (land, rare art, etc.) --- "value from obligation", and defined wealth only in terms of the first type of value --- value created by toil.

While Bengough as we have seen also asserted that wealth was determined by toil he differed from George in that he did not see toil as just a function of existence, but as a divinely ordained social duty. Where George derived his condemnation of private ownership of "land-value" as a rational deduction from his given definitions of value, Bengough not only also defined a rational condemnation of "landlordism" but primarily stressed its fundamental inconsistency with the Divine scheme as revealed in Scripture. Always stressing simplicity and brevity Bengough often fell back on his religious beliefs to both strengthen or even make his arguments.

George on the other hand, making more extensive use of secular premises, and with a greater command of economic concepts, argued out his position in terms of greater sophistication. Insisting upon a "productivity theory of wages" where he stressed that wages were paid out of the product and not taken from capital, he made a fundamental break with classical "wage fund theory", with its insistence upon a fixed external capital and its iron-clad laws regulating the rise and fall of real wages based on Malthusian principles. From this argument, which led him to a dynamic conception of labour value, he directed his attention to the distribution of wealth, and in his interpretation of the Ricardian rent theory asserted that the essence of political economy was found in the "marginal concept" of the law of rent. Rent was that -

excess of produce over what the same amount of labour and capital obtains on the least remunerative occupation.<sup>42</sup>

If land was monopolistically controlled (as it was), rent had no direct connection with either value production or land utility and thus became the price extracted from the productive process as unearned increment. Therefore, private ownership of the land actually meant the ability to appropriate part of the product without the expenditure of productive effort, in effect, decreasing the wealth created by work. "Land-value" thus became an economic millstone, hanging around the neck of the two partners in production -- labour and capital, a hindrance to progress, and inequality made all the more odious since land was universally necessary in the mechanics of production. Thus, as George concluded, with any increase in production if "the labourer gets no more, and the capitalist no more, it is a necessary inference that the landowner reaps the whole gain."<sup>43</sup> With the landlord not sharing in production, yet reaping the benefits of toil, "land-value" -- through the system of rent, created an unjust distribution of wealth, leading to poverty in the midst of plenty, the puzzling paradox which had first struck his conscience.

This argument was not attempted and indeed may not have been fully understood by Bengough. George's discussion of "marginal rent" and the "productivity theory of wages" were to Bengough merely rationalized explanations of God's "law of fair remuneration" -- rational explanations he felt neither inclined towards or comfortable in making. While George gave ethical guidelines to his thought,

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<sup>42</sup>H. George, Progress and Poverty, (New York, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1960), p. 170.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

If private property in land be just, then is the remedy I propose a false one; if, on the contrary private property in land be unjust, then is the remedy the true one.<sup>44</sup>

Bengough totally grounded his economic thought in religious conviction. All problems could be solved by the application of Christian principles, all social activity was to be considered in "the light of Christ's teachings as to justice and righteousness",<sup>45</sup> and it was on this issue that Bengough basically differed from George. Where George's economics rested on essentially utilitarian proofs, though ultimately subjected to judgment on ethical grounds, Bengough's economic thought was an expression of deeply felt religious convictions, which not only stimulated but totally justified and directed his arguments.

Especially trumpeting the vigour of his Christian convictions, Bengough seized upon the single tax not as a social panacea, but as the economic means towards building the moral society. Taking up George's economic suggestions during the early years of the single tax movement in Canada, he contributed countless cartoons which condemned "landlordism" and praised and explained the single tax, through journals and newspapers ranging from partisan publications such as The Square Deal, The Single Taxer, and his own Grip, to the uncommitted daily press, such as the Globe.

Also spreading his ideas by writing, Bengough included several poems on the single tax in his published works of poetry, Motley: Verses Grave and Gay and In Many Keys. His little book on political economy, The Up-to-Date Primer, sold out in two North American editions and was translated into foreign languages.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 333.

<sup>45</sup> Bengough, "The Dogs Bad Name", m.s., Bengough Papers, Vol. III.

Travelling to England at the turn of the century, he campaigned for the single tax legislation then before the House of Lords, contributing cartoons to the Daily Express, and the St. James Gazette, and while on a lecture tour of Australia and New Zealand, he took time from his busy schedule to deliver single tax speeches to enthusiastic audiences throughout the Antipodes.

However, not content to just popularize ethical economics, Bengough joined organizations dedicated to pressing for single tax legislation, and in this capacity, for example, he served as president of the Toronto Single Tax Association for several years, beginning in 1891. As auditor for the Canadian Peace and Arbitration Society he worked together with the well-known essayist and single taxer -- William D. LeSueur and during his tenure as alderman for the City of Toronto urged council to:

adopt the system of apportioning the rate of taxation as between land and the other sources of municipal revenue in such a way as to impose a higher rate upon land than houses, business, stocks and salaries, to the end that encouragement may be given to labour and capital in all departments of productive industry, and that the mere holding of land for rental and for speculation may be correspondingly discouraged.<sup>46</sup>

When the single tax became popular among prairie reformers in the second decade of the century, Bengough, now a patron saint of the movement, was still, as a Chalk Talker, carrying the message across the country. In April, 1915, at the age of sixty-three, his appearance in Winnipeg filled the Industrial Bureau Hall to overflowing, as he provided local supporters such as Salem Bland, F. J. Dixon, and Nellie McClung with what A.W. Puttee in the Voice, called a "red letter day for the history of the Single Tax League."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Toronto Council Minutes, Jan. 13, 1908, section 47.

<sup>47</sup>The Voice, (Winnipeg), April 9, 1915.

The single tax, as Bengough understood it, was one more necessary step towards the realization of a happy and ethical Canadian society. Social problems of vice, slums, and poverty were, he argued the result of an "unnatural order of things", an order which disregarded the essential spirituality of work, and the ethical basis of economic life. Good order could arise only once this unnatural order was overthrown and the single tax was an essential part of the concerted attack on unjust conditions.

The wrong would be righted if those who possess the land were obliged --- as they ought to be --- to yield a fair share of its benefits to their fellow mortals through the medium of taxation.<sup>48</sup>

In his tireless campaigns for a just social order Bengough not only made a unique contribution to Canadian economic thought with his stress on Scriptural revelation and a Christian vocational ethic as both premises and proof for economic theory, but he also illustrated the proposition that a change in social value must be accompanied by changes in the structure of society. Not only must men believe that a Christian order was the best for society --- they must implement that order in all spheres of life --- economics, law, and conduct.

Living at a time when industrialism and the factory system were not yet highly developed and land was still generally available,<sup>49</sup> Bengough with his call for a single tax was a part of a genuine attempt by concerned Canadians to come to grips with a new exploitive system and its accompanying ethos. Bound

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<sup>48</sup> Grip, July 30, 1887.

<sup>49</sup> M. Roblin, Radical Politics and Canadian Labour, (Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre, 1968), p.33.

by the traditional acceptance of bourgeois property values, these reformers identified land monopoly and not private property as the source of economic "malapropos", and their solution was tailored to the degree to which the factory system had developed. In time, as industrialism proceeded apace criticism became increasingly directed towards capitalists and profit-making rather than landlords and rent.

Bengough's ideology marks him as a transitional figure. He did not view the single tax as a social panacea and he often criticized the profit system. Yet, he never joined the rising socialist movement, probably because his deep ethical convictions led him to mistrust much of its materialistic appeals. His was, above all, a search for an ethical society. The single tax, at the time it appeared, seemed best to fit his particular religious point of view and seemed to offer the best alternative to a contemporary economic system that was anything but just.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE VOCATIONAL ETHIC APPLIED: PROHIBITION

Prohibition, the case for it and the morality behind it, forms a substantial portion of Bengough's social thought, and nowhere was his criticism more explicit than in his statements on the liquor question. Taking up the standard of total prohibition, he hammered home his message in print, in sketch, and from the speaking platform; always stressing the moral aspects of the problem. Although, in 1896, he declined the Prohibitionist Party's nomination to contest the federal riding of North Bruce, during his three year tenure as Toronto alderman (1906-1908), he repeatedly introduced resolutions calling for the legislative control of liquor outlets.<sup>1</sup> His oratorical and artistic prowess was in great demand by various temperance groups, from the Women's Christian Temperance Union to the the Sons of Temperance and the Royal Templars, and at the height of prohibitionist agitation, the Methodist publishing company, William Briggs, released his well received book -- The Gin Mill Primer.

Bengough's prohibition arguments were all founded on his interpretation of a vocational Christian ethic. His stand on the liquor question was based on his assertion that the liquor traffic was evil, for it contravened God's laws, both as they were revealed in scripture and as they were expressed in the activity of toil. Prohibition, Bengough argued, was a necessary step on the road

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<sup>1</sup>Toronto City Council Minutes, Feb. 25, 1907; April 8, 1907; and Jan. 27, 1908.



to the realization of a just society, founded on God's laws. Prohibition was a logical legislative extension of his particular ideological conviction.

The ideological grounds of the Canadian prohibition movement have, on the whole, been ignored. Graeme Decarie, historian of the Ontario prohibition movement, writes that, in the 1890's, "some 40,000 Ontarians belonged to such organizations as the Sons of Temperance, the Independent Order of Good Templers and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union."<sup>2</sup> Surely the organization of such vast numbers of people was based on some ideological affinity, at the very least, a like recognition of the problem. Yet, to argue as Decarie does, that prohibition was "essentially a class movement"<sup>3</sup> at a time when the existence of a class structured Canadian society, with all the implications that the definition involves, is itself doubtful, seems tenuous at best. Although he gives token recognition to the existence of social values affecting the movement, observing that, "seeking to protect a value system, prohibitionism implied the abandonment of important elements of it",<sup>4</sup> his failure to identify and explore this value system, seriously limits the validity of his study, and actually, as the following analysis of J. W. Bengough's prohibitionist arguments indicates, prohibitionists were not protecting, but advocating change in the contemporary value system, emphasizing certain elements of it and radically reinterpreting other aspects.

Similarly, G. S. Hallowell, in his study, Prohibition in Ontario: 1919-1923,

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<sup>2</sup>G.M. Decarie, "Something Old, Something New. . .; Aspects of Prohibitionism in Ontario in the 1898's", in D. Swainson, ed., Oliver Mowat's Ontario, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1972); p.154.

<sup>3</sup>G.M. Decarie, The Prohibition Movement in Ontario: 1894-1916, Unpublished Ph.D., thesis, Queen's University, 1972), p.265.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.(iii).

identifies the "average prohibitionist" as "predominantly comfortable, respectable, and middle class".<sup>5</sup> Stressing the themes of social control and status anxiety that Decarie explicates, Hallowell notes that "prohibitionists belonged; they considered themselves to be the best and most respectable people in Ontario, and they were often the people who mattered."<sup>6</sup> Prohibition, he argues, was an attempt by a class who had attained social respectability to consolidate their position and protect themselves from a steadily growing poorer class.

Hallowell seems to imply that Protestant values underlay the movement. "Prohibitionists", he writes, "came from all walks of life but farmers, women and Protestant church-goers could perhaps be relied upon more than others to support the cause".<sup>7</sup> However, he never explicates or identifies the common values. Decarie totally ignores the possibility of ideological affinity based on a common understanding of Christian morality among the various Protestant groups when he argues that prohibition was essentially a movement for preserving the status quo, and that even the "churches shared in the movement, inasmuch as they were a part of the life style of Ontario's middle class."<sup>8</sup>

These approaches, while they may have some explanatory value in the context of status group anxiety and reform, neglect the obvious ethical basis on which the ideological foundations of the movement was grounded. To ascribe the impetus of the prohibition movement to the nebulous chameleon of "middle class" is only to say that some people advocated prohibition while others did not.

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<sup>5</sup>G.A. Hallowell, Prohibition in Ontario: 1919-1923, Ontario Historical Society, 1972, p.185.

<sup>6</sup>Hallowell, Prohibition, pp. 17-18.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. p.17.

<sup>8</sup>Decarie, "Something Old, Something New", p.161.

What were the common values of the adherents? What were the common goals of the temperance people? Surely a study of the ideology of reform is necessary before the structure of the movement can be analysed.

The American historian, James H. Timberlake, in his informative and detailed book, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920, notes the importance of understanding the ideological basis of the prohibition movement.

"In a society", he writes,

where nearly everyone possessed or aspired to middle class respectability, where material prosperity and success were regarded as evidence of virtue and marks of divine favour, and where poverty and failure were considered as probable symptoms of vice, intemperance naturally came to be viewed with stern disapproval and sobriety with high esteem.<sup>9</sup>

Tracing the prohibitory movement through its pietistic, evangelistic Protestant roots, its absorption of contemporary belief in science, its anti-Darwinian stress on community, and its espousal of traditional democratic precepts, he draws together the various themes and illustrates how a belief in a moral law, a demand for industrial efficiency and material progress, and a desire to curb the power of industrial plutocracy arose from a common ideological - cultural base.

The Canadian experience, realized as it was in the Atlantic triangle of cultural influences, was indeed based on a common ideological denominator. The prohibition movement was, as Peter Waite points out, a "genuine attempt to reform society"; a reform which was part and parcel of a larger movement, a movement which hoped to rebuild the structure of Canadian society into a better, moral community.

Toronto controller, F.S. Spence, who, with his friend and fellow

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<sup>9</sup>J.H. Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement: 1900-1920, (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p.9.

politician, John Wilson Bengough, was a prominent exponent of this new social reform, best expressed the moral ideology behind the prohibition movement.

"The prohibition movement", he wrote,

is not a mere human invention or fake, created by some novelty-seeking cranks. It is the inevitable result of great universal conditions and forces. Wherever you find an evil of any kind, something that curses and hurts humanity, and into contact with that evil you bring men and women of Christian character, unselfish thought, and earnest purpose, there you have the elements of moral reform.<sup>10</sup>

And the Winnipeg Tribune, at a later date, echoed the same sentiments. Commenting on the dry's defeat of 1902, it announced:

The cause on behalf of which we labour is the cause of righteousness, the cause of humanity, and must ultimately triumph. The act may be killed, but the cause is not dead: Phoenix-like it will rise purified and strengthened from the tribulations through which it has passed.<sup>11</sup>

The fight against liquor was at heart an ideological crusade, based on Christian morality, identifying drink as evil. J. W. Bengough, a prominent prohibitionist, continually asserted the ethical arguments of the movement. His reasoning, his advocacy of total prohibition arose out of the Christian morality common to the crusade.

Bengough's fierce attack on the liquor traffic arose out of his conviction that society must abide by God's laws. Since, he argued, all men were brothers in toil within God's bountiful nature, they were bound by bonds of community responsibility. All men had a duty to repulse evil and encourage good, and Bengough himself, in poem, story, and sketch, fiercely assaulted the iniquity of the trade and usage of alcohol. Liquor, Bengough asserted, was

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<sup>10</sup> As cited in Hallowell, Prohibition, p.31.

<sup>11</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, April 1902. C. Brown and R. Cook, Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), p.24.

both a moral and physical evil. It was, he wrote, "the demon foe", and the saloons where it was made publicly available were "the artillery of hell", the "gates of hell", and the "haunts of sin and sorrow".<sup>12</sup> Indulgence and trade in liquor was totally evil, the antithesis of all that was good, just, and Godly.

Reasoning from his assertion of a vocational Christian ethic, Bengough stated that drink was "a bad thing" for it "ruins the Soul as well as the Body".<sup>13</sup> The use of alcohol inhibited man's physical and spiritual well-being, and it did so by interfering with man's ability to work. Laboratory studies of the late nineteenth century had proven, to a scientifically conscious public, the damaging physiological effects of even small amounts of alcohol. In 1866, Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson, a well-known English physician had disproved the notion that alcohol heated the body, and by 1892, the work of Emil Kraepelin, noted German physiologist, had scientifically demonstrated that alcohol was in fact a narcotic, a drug which, even in small doses, depressed the action of the nervous system, thereby causing loss of muscular control resulting in a diminished capacity for work. "Alcohol and effective work", as one investigator concluded, "are incompatible."<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, Bengough, utilizing the scientific evidence to support his case, identified alcohol as "an insidious habit forming drug",<sup>15</sup> and argued that

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<sup>12</sup>All metaphors are taken from various poems in Motley: Verse Grave and Gay.

<sup>13</sup>J.W. Bengough, The Gin Mill Primer, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), p.7.

<sup>14</sup>Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, p.42.

<sup>15</sup>Bengough, Chalk Talks, p.137.

its use, even in moderate amounts impeded productive activity. A man "in such a state [drunkenness] . . . is of no use", he wrote, "He can not do his work."<sup>16</sup> If a man could not work, he could not satisfy either his physical needs or spiritual obligations. Since toil was the only secular activity by which man could worship God and meet his material wants, and since alcohol destroyed man's ability to work, liquor led man directly to spiritual damnation and physical destruction.

Also, Bengough argued, the physiological effect of drink could permanently impair a man's ability to work. The addictive nature of the drug created "drink slaves".<sup>17</sup> Once the "habit got him", a man could never do his work properly, and with drink as his master, could never realize the fulfillment of his talents, or enjoy the necessary spirituality of life. The effects of alcohol were both deadly and lasting.<sup>18</sup>

The problem as Bengough identified it, was far greater than individual indulgence. The organized trade in alcohol was even more morally reprehensible. Unlike the individual drinker, dealers in spirits induced others to drink, thus providing the impetus for the deterioration of their work. As such, saloon keepers, brewers, distillers and distributors were responsible for the evils arising out of the traffic.

The liquor traffic -- the Gin Mill -- Bengough argued, was nothing but an attack on man, destroying his ability to work, creating and feeding upon drug

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<sup>16</sup> Bengough, Gin Mill Primer, p.9.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Bengough, Chalk Talks, p.137.

craving appetites, and ultimately leading to death and destruction. The Gin Mill had no ideal of social responsibility; its sole concern was money:

. . . sinful human passion, the lust and greed of gold  
That slaughters these our brothers, to-day in hosts untold.<sup>19</sup>

Along with impeding productive activity, the Gill Mill contravened God's laws of remuneration and fair trade. The liquor traffic, Bengough reasoned, was detrimental to the general stock of the community and the wealth of the individual. "A saloon", he wrote, "robs the Man of what he earns by his Toil",<sup>20</sup> it gives something of no value and takes productive value in exchange. And, not only was the trade unfair, but the physiological effect of the goods -- liquor -- effectively incapacitated the labourer, thereby causing him to suffer a loss in productivity that only increased the amount of value already lost in the trade. The liquor trade, Bengough reasoned, was nothing but thievery, "for, to take a Man's Coin and Goods and give him not their worth in some form is to do the Act of a Thief."<sup>21</sup> In a fair trade, participants added to the increase of both individual and general wealth, but saloons made no positive social contribution.

Unlike stores and shops, which "give a man fair value for his money", and which therefore are "good in God's sight and in the Eyes of good men",<sup>22</sup> saloons by exchanging liquor for wages, something of no value for something of

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<sup>19</sup>J.W. Bengough, "The War Cry", Motley, p.21.

<sup>20</sup>Bengough, Gin Mill Primer, p.36.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p.37.

productive value, obstructed the progress of general prosperity inherent in fair trade. In fact, they created such a horrible moral and physical decrepitude, that the general stock of a nation was depleted by the fact of their operation.

Since the Gin Mill exploited the worker, "the liquor business", Bengough asserted, "is labor's deadly enemy". The worker was being robbed of his rightful reward, and the Gin Mill, even though it employed men, could not atone for its crimes by emphasizing its capacity as an employer. For, not only did that argument hold no ethical force, but the Gin Mill employed fewer men and less skilled labour than any other trade in proportion to capital, and its product was simply social vice -- "drunkards, crime, misery, and death".<sup>23</sup>

The liquor traffic added nothing to community prosperity, in fact it had a directly opposite effect. By creating a system of unfair, destructive trade, the Gin Mill stole from both the labourer and the community.<sup>24</sup> It impeded the productive process, and added nothing of value to society by its own operation. As such it was "only a parasite upon legitimate business."<sup>25</sup>

Further, the Gin Mill interfered with man's spiritual and physical well-being. The saloon keepers, brewers, distillers, and distributors, had no sense of duty, and while creating no social value, bled the community of its wealth, and by encouraging the "evil habit" exploited and damned their fellow men. "The Rummy liquor dealer", Bengough scornfully declared, "is worse than a bed bug because . . . he lives by sucking the blood of his Own

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<sup>23</sup>See cartoon 1.

<sup>24</sup>Bengough, Gin Mill Primer, p.37.

<sup>25</sup>J.W. Bengough, The Prohibition Aeson, (Hamilton: Royal Templar Book and Publishing House, n.d.), p.7.



**THE LIQUOR TRADE  
IN RELATION TO LABOR  
AND CAPITAL**  
(Figures from Dom<sup>o</sup> Govt. Returns)

Name of TRADE	CAPITAL INVESTED	No. of Hands Directly Emp. Employed.
LIQUOR	\$15,368,953	2395
COTTONS	\$13,208,121	7433
AGRIC'L. IMPLEMENTS	\$8,528,535	393
WOOLENS	\$9,365,158	8125
BOOTS & SHOES	\$9,671,170	17,318
CABINET & FURNITURE	\$6,061,485	7142

There's Room for more Capital too in decent lines of trade:  
Canada's Home market:  
IMPORTATIONS last year:  
Cotton: value \$2,084,081  
Implements: 322,932  
Woolens: 32,154  
Boots & Shoes: 50,000  
Cabinet: & over 300,000

You employ fewer men and less skilled labor than any other trade in proportion to capital - and what is your product? - DRUNKARDS, Crime, misery, and Death!

**FIGURES THAT TALK!**

THE LIQUOR BUSINESS IS LABOR'S DEADLY ENEMY!

Kind."<sup>26</sup> The liquor traffic: spirits, dealers, and even, he emphasized, drinkers, were all morally reprehensible. Adding nothing to the welfare of the individual or the community, and destroying the physical vigour and spirituality of the labourer, the Gin Mill was a detriment to progress and a check on the advancement of civilization.

As well as interfering with the proper activity of men -- work -- liquor, Bengough argued, by virtue of its narcotic character, led also to psychological and physical downfall. Secure in the latest medical evidence of his day, he reasoned that alcohol was "essentially destructive by nature"<sup>27</sup> and he took great pains to emphatically illustrate this point in his many speeches and sketches.<sup>28</sup> A favourite theme was found in his stories of the "fall" of a promising young man into the clutches of the demon rum. These stories were all generally the same, and they all taught the same lesson: stay away from the bottle and the bar. A "bright, hopeful, intelligent young fellow . . . moved by high ideals and noble ambition",<sup>29</sup> once <sup>he</sup> came into contact with that "insidious enemy of souls",<sup>30</sup> would gradually lose his self-esteem, his wits, his abilities, and even, in serious cases, his life. The first step on the road was that single drink, followed by a neglect in personal appearance, when "his patronage of the bar diminished his patronage of the barber",<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

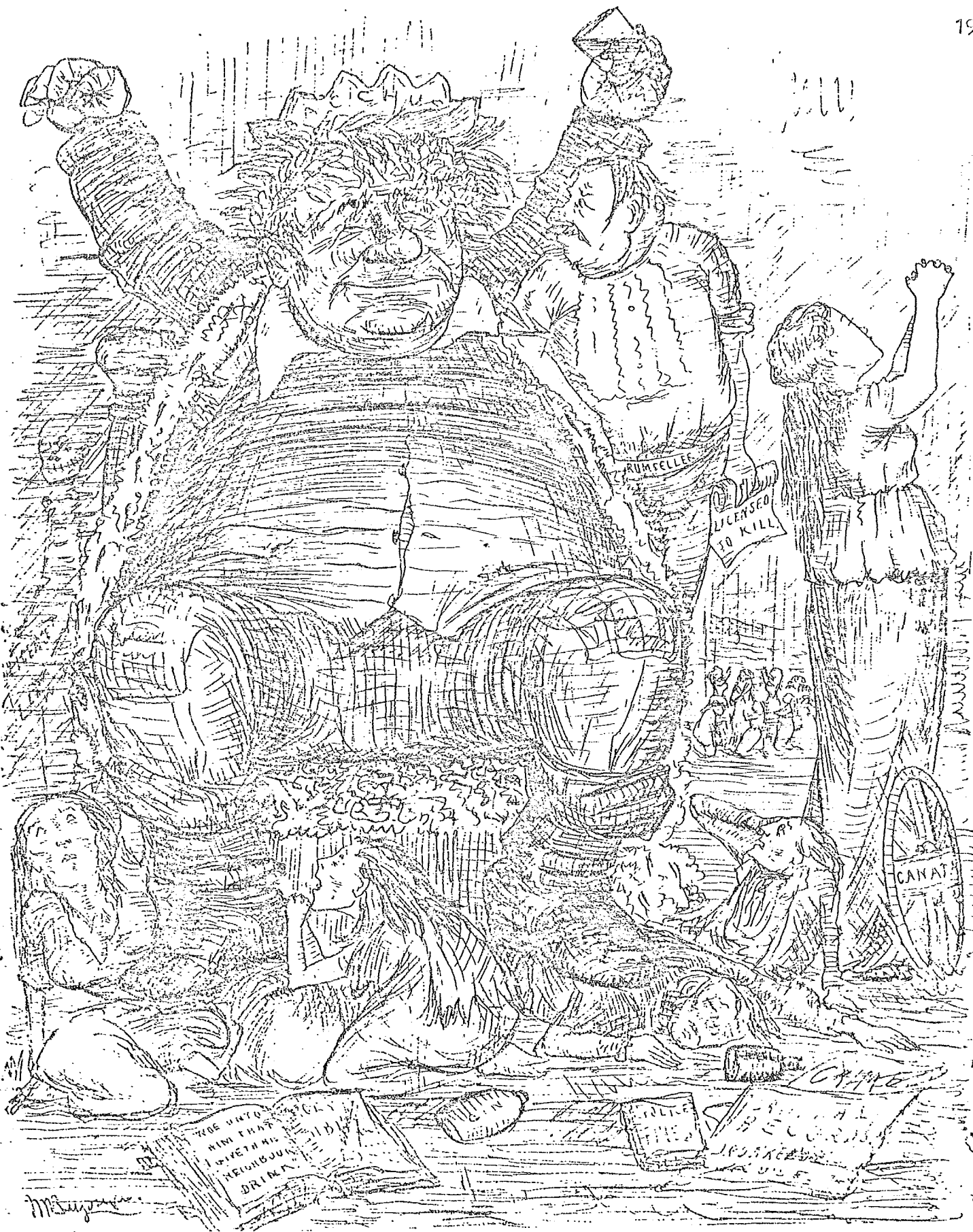
<sup>27</sup> Bengough, Chalk Talks, p.136.

<sup>28</sup> For an excellent example of the destructive nature of the drink menace see the cartoon on the next page.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p.137.

<sup>30</sup> Suzanna Moddie, Life in the Clearings, (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada -- reprinted 1966), p.44. Ms. Moddie, although writing in an earlier period, had no love of liquor either.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 137-138.



# THE CURSE OF CANADA. VI.2

IS THERE NO ARM TO SAVE ?

resulting in a speedy slide to obscurity, poverty, and wretchedness.

If the poor unfortunate was married, and perchance had children then the horror was magnified many times over. The Gin Mill, by robbing a man of his wages and feeding him a deadly poison, soon made him unfit for work, and reduced him to begging to support his family. His wife, forced to work her fingers to the bone did not have time to properly care for the children, who, as a result of parental neglect and example, grew up not only in poverty, but in crime as well, far removed from the moral influence that a good home should provide.<sup>32</sup>

Drink brought ruin to a man, and through him to all members of his household, and the line of tragedy did not end there. For, through the home, drink brought ruin to the state. "The state", Bengough explained, "is built on the Home, and if we would have a good, free, pure State, we must have Homes of the same kind."<sup>33</sup> Homes which know liquor were prisons for the souls of men, only homes without the evil influence, Christian homes, would do.

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Church and mansion melt in one,  
 Shaping forth a blessed spot -  
 A home, a home! and that his own!  
 Where in peace his babes are sleeping,  
 Where for joy his wife is weeping,  
 Where his noble heart may know  
 Safety from this demon foe;  
 Where's God's blessed rich may dwell,  
 Far from open gates of hell!<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>This theme of juvenile development in an alcoholic household runs throughout many of Bengough's works. For example: The Gin Mill Primer, "The Play Within a Play", Chalk Talks, etc.)

<sup>33</sup>Bengough, Gin Mill Primer, p.14.

<sup>34</sup>J.W. Bengough, "The Open Gates of Hell", Motley, p.54.

The liquor traffic, with its accompanying squalid conditions of poverty and crime, Bengough could only conclude, must be eradicated. The Gin Mill, affecting as it did the home, by extension affected the whole state. Those who abstained as well as those who drank equally shared the social burden created by drink.

As the ravages of liquor pointed out the organic nature of community life, Bengough's approach to the solving of the problem began with an assertion of the Christian sense of community. Every member of the community had a responsibility to his fellow citizens. The social ties instituted by God's laws and realized in the every-day activity of labour, defined every man's social obligation. If every member of the community had a duty to his brother, every man had an obligation to aid the poor "drink slave". If every man shared the cost, moral and economic, of the Gin Mills, every member of the community had a moral duty to solve the problem of the liquor traffic.

The solution, he urged, could not be a half-way attempt. Drink was an absolute evil and an abject social wrong. It could only be eradicated by a total attack. Moderation in drinking habits was not the answer. It would not solve the problem, and demands for moderation only hid the grim realities of the issue. The "respectable moderate drinker", Bengough vehemently announced, "is the lynch-pin of the whole evil".<sup>35</sup> Only total prohibition could erase the evil affects of the Gin Mill. What was needed Bengough argued was, "1. stopping sale; 2. stopping importation; 3. stopping manufacture" --- total "bone dry prohibition".<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Bengough, Chalk Talks, p.147.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 140.

The only way in which this could be achieved was by aggressive activity on the part of those who were concerned. "Talk", he wrote, "does no more harm to the Gin Mill than Peas do to a Vast Rock."<sup>37</sup> What was needed was action which could force the Gin Mills to close down -- political action. "Nothing", he emphasized, "counts but ballots".<sup>38</sup> Platitudes, official condemnations, Royal Commissions, or pious utterance had to be upheld by an all-out fight in the political arena. The participants were to be those men and women who realized that simply rescuing the drunkard was not enough.<sup>39</sup> The very source of the traffic had to be shut off.

While we do all we can to pull the poor Drink Slaves from the Stream, we must by all means shut up the Mill that threw them in.<sup>40</sup>

Although every man had an obligation to assist the unfortunate victims of the Gin Mill, no amount of personal aid would erase the evils of the liquor traffic, unless the source of the evil, the tempting, corrupting influences, "the big rich Mills where they brew Beer and make Rum, as well as the Bars where they sell it"<sup>41</sup> were destroyed. All other action would be stop-gap at best. Individual assistance had to be augmented and indeed preceded by social,

<sup>37</sup> Bengough, Gin Mill Primer, p.50.

<sup>38</sup> Bengough, Prohibition Aesop, p.27.

<sup>39</sup> For example, see Bengough's satirical parody of a W.C.T.U. member in his screenplay manuscript "The Tramp's Triumph". Miss G., a prim spinster, finds a hungry tramp hiding himself on her porch and immediately diagnoses the source of his poverty as drink, and begins to lecture him. "Striking an oratorical vein like a temperance advocate and waving her arms at him (Stage Direction). . . O Besotted man, fly from this horrible monster . . . the giant evil that is striding through our land and laying waste to our homes, bringing ruin and devastation to all that is pure and holy, slaying our youths, killing our maidens, wrecking our happiness, cursing our children. . . " Weary Willy, pragmatically answers her, "I don't want a lecture, I want something I can digest." (J.W. Bengough, "The Tramp's Triumph", m.s. pp. 6-7 "Moving Picture Plays", Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.)

<sup>40</sup> Bengough, Gin Mill Primer, p.53.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.61.

collective activity.

Since the method was political, the means of attack would be through the making of laws which would destroy the Gin Mill. Laws, Bengough argued, could alleviate the social effects of the liquor traffic. By condemning consumption, the law would protect the worker from the physical and moral depravities caused by alcohol. By prohibiting the manufacture, importation, and sale of liquor, the law could rid society of the thieving, "blood-sucking"<sup>42</sup> Gin Mill. Social health and welfare would then have a chance to increase.

Although laws were the means of the attack, Bengough realized that they were not the whole of it. Laws could not change a man's character, they could only direct his activity. Good laws, he argued, laws which followed God's rules, could make it easier for men to cultivate a righteous, Godly temperament. Thus, laws prohibiting the Gin Mill, while not changing men's nature, would allow them to realize their social worth, and in so doing, would give them the time and direction needed to cultivate a good character.

It is oft said by the Gin Mill Crew that you cannot make Men good or pure by Law, and no one said you could. To make a man pure you must get at his Heart. But though you cannot make Folks pure, you can make them drunk by Law, and that is what is now done, and it is the thing we wish to stop. It is the true sphere of the Law to keep the Path of Life clear, and to make it hard for Men to go wrong.<sup>43</sup>

With the liquor traffic outlawed, men would be freed from the clutches of drink. No longer would they remain unproductive. No longer would their homes be visited by misery and wretchedness. No longer would their children lack moral teaching, for the home, that bulwark of the state, would be set upon

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<sup>42</sup>Bengough, Prohibition Aesop, p.7.

<sup>43</sup>Bengough, Gin Mill Primer, p.71.

a firm foundation. As a result, the state would benefit. Costs involved in crime prevention and poverty alleviation would decrease. Better citizens would create a better state.

Thus, Bengough argued, since the end of the state is to ensure the greatest good for itself, and by extension, for its citizens, it must act to incorporate prohibition. "The state", he wrote, "has both a right and a duty to protect people against the saloon as a public institution".<sup>44</sup> The role of the state in the making of law, was to ensure that civil law would conform to God's law.

The purpose of law was to ensure a just society, a climate in which "joy and peace will take the place of age long wrong, and God's will shall be done on earth."<sup>45</sup> In order to create this harmony civil law must be, Bengough argued, above all, moral. It must follow the teachings of Christ. The true test of a law, he wrote, is, "is it in harmony with the spirit and purpose of Christ?"<sup>46</sup> Only those laws which would ensure the unimpeded right of every individual to work, only those laws which protected the labourer from the exploiter, only those civil laws which were based on God's law of fair trade and fair remuneration, were "good laws". The Gin Mill, for it created and encouraged activity which broke God's law, was immoral, unjust, and evil. Legislated prohibition would create a moral climate, direct the individual in the paths of righteousness, and hasten the approach of a just society.

Bengough specifically directed this moral argument at those who knew the word of Christ. Invoking the traditional themes of millennialism and

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<sup>44</sup>Bengough, Prohibition Aesop, p.11.

<sup>45</sup>J.W. Bengough, The Whole Hog Book, (Boston: American Free Trade League, 1903), p.99.

<sup>46</sup>Bengough, Gin Mill Primer, p.78.



pietism of nineteenth century evangelical Protestantism, he called upon every Christian to act in the recognition of his duty. In poetry and sketch, he trumpeted an aggressive Christian responsibility:

Christian man with pitying thought,  
Use that ballot in your hand!  
Here's the battle to be fought --  
Church of Christ arise and stand!

Break these chains that bind our brothers,  
Dry the tears of pale-faced mothers,  
Rise and crush this demon fell,  
Shut up all the gates of hell!<sup>47</sup>

The sincere Christian, the one who realized the severity of the problem, the one who joyfully fulfilled his obligation to God and man, must act to vote out the Gin Mill, and create the legislation which would hasten the earthly brotherhood of man.

Every individual, every institution concerned with the welfare of society must join the fight. There was no room for apathy. Any who did not act against the Gin Mill were in league with the enemies of justice, freedom and opportunity. Every man, Grip editorialized, must do his duty:

So long as this traffic is licensed for purposes of revenue, the country is unquestionably a partner in the vile business and every citizen who does not regularly protest against the arrangement with his ballot is equally as guilty as those immediately engaged in the business of making drunkards.<sup>48</sup>

And the failure of Toronto's Roman Catholic Archbishop to condemn or act against the Gin Mill, invoked the full fury of Bengough's pen.

We join in the appeal to Archbishop Lynch to take a stand upon the Liquor Question worthy of himself and the great Church he represents. His present attitude is creditable to neither, and it is entirely at variance with that of Cardinal Manning and many other distinguished Catholic prelates. The day is past for Christians to be content with the reclamation of the indivi-

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<sup>47</sup>Bengough, "Open Gates of Hell", Motley, p.54.

<sup>48</sup>Grip, July 9, 1887.

dual victim of this inhuman traffic in drink; and the Church which claims to be Christian par excellence should be above all others determined upon legal Prohibition. . . . The Archbishop is no doubt anxious to rescue drunkards, but the world is now awake to the hopelessness of work in this line while the drunkard factories are working at high pressure to transform decent citizens into drunkards. These factories must be stopped, and it is high time the heads of the Christian churches said so with the voice of authority.<sup>49</sup>

The battle against the moral evil of the liquor traffic was, Bengough announced, a Godly fight. God was on the side of Prohibition, and would aid in the destruction of the hydra-headed Gin Mill. Invoking Scriptural support (see cartoon 4), he encouraged every member of the community to join the righteous battle. Victory was imminent, for the force of God's pleasure was on the side of the prohibitionist.

On those who were involved in the traffic itself, he heaped scorn and moral reprehension, attempting to touch their consciences with throat-clutching descriptions of the misery that their business wrought. In his poem, the "War Cry", Bengough penned the lines with which the heroine, a young girl, a member of the Salvation Army, drove a hard-hearted, selfish, uncaring liquor manufacturer to tears.

Oh sir! Are you a helper in this awful work of woe?  
Do eyes of murdered babies glare icily at you?  
Do ghosts of famished mothers and wraiths of ruined sons  
Cry from the tomb, for vengeance on you, who man the guns.<sup>50</sup>

Legal authority, as he had noted before, was not enough. Bengough, in poetry, prose and cartoon, also touched the heart.

While he tried to build support for his program by pathetic persuasion,

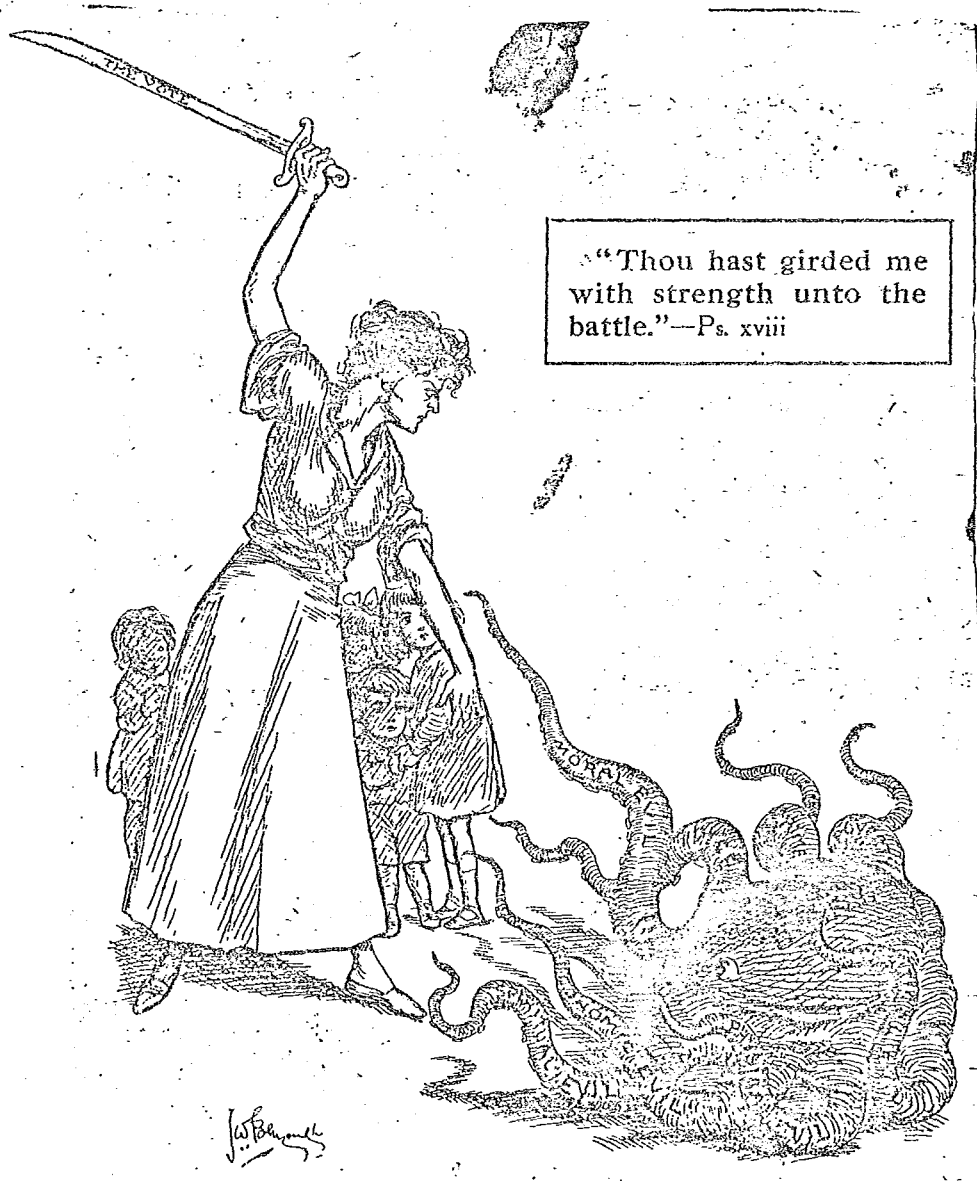
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<sup>49</sup>Grip, Oct. 30, 1886.

<sup>50</sup>Bengough, "War Cry", Motley, p.21.



VI.3 - STOP THE DEATH FACTORIES! Grip, Oct. 30, 1886.



VI.4, Bengough Papers, Vol. II.

Bengough realized that political activity undertaken by morally motivated individuals was necessary for success. Agreeing with the Methodist clergyman Rev. D.Y. Ross's statement "let legal suasion rule where moral suasion is rejected",<sup>51</sup> Bengough advocated a pragmatic plan for introducing prohibitory legislation. In a radical stand, agreeing with others such as A.C. Steele, Dr. D.L. Brethour and the stubborn Dr. Alexander Sunderland, who eventually became president of "Canada's New Party" in the spring of 1888, he argued for the necessity of creating and supporting a new political party, a prohibition party.

The old parties, Grit and Tory, he felt, owed much to the Gin Mill which contributed to their campaign funds. Therefore, they could not be trusted to favour legislation which would hurt the vested interest of the liquor traffic. The ship of state could never reach the "beulah land" of total prohibition while the Gin Mill held the helm (see carton 5). What was necessary, he argued, was another political party, dedicated to the prohibition cause and owing no debt to the powerful liquor interests. "Cast off Allegiance to the uncongenial Parties [Grit and Tory] ," he advised, "and put yourselves under the protection of a Decent creature like yourselves [Prohibition Party]".<sup>52</sup> Practical political activity had to go hand in hand with moral persuasion. Or, as another temperance radical put it,

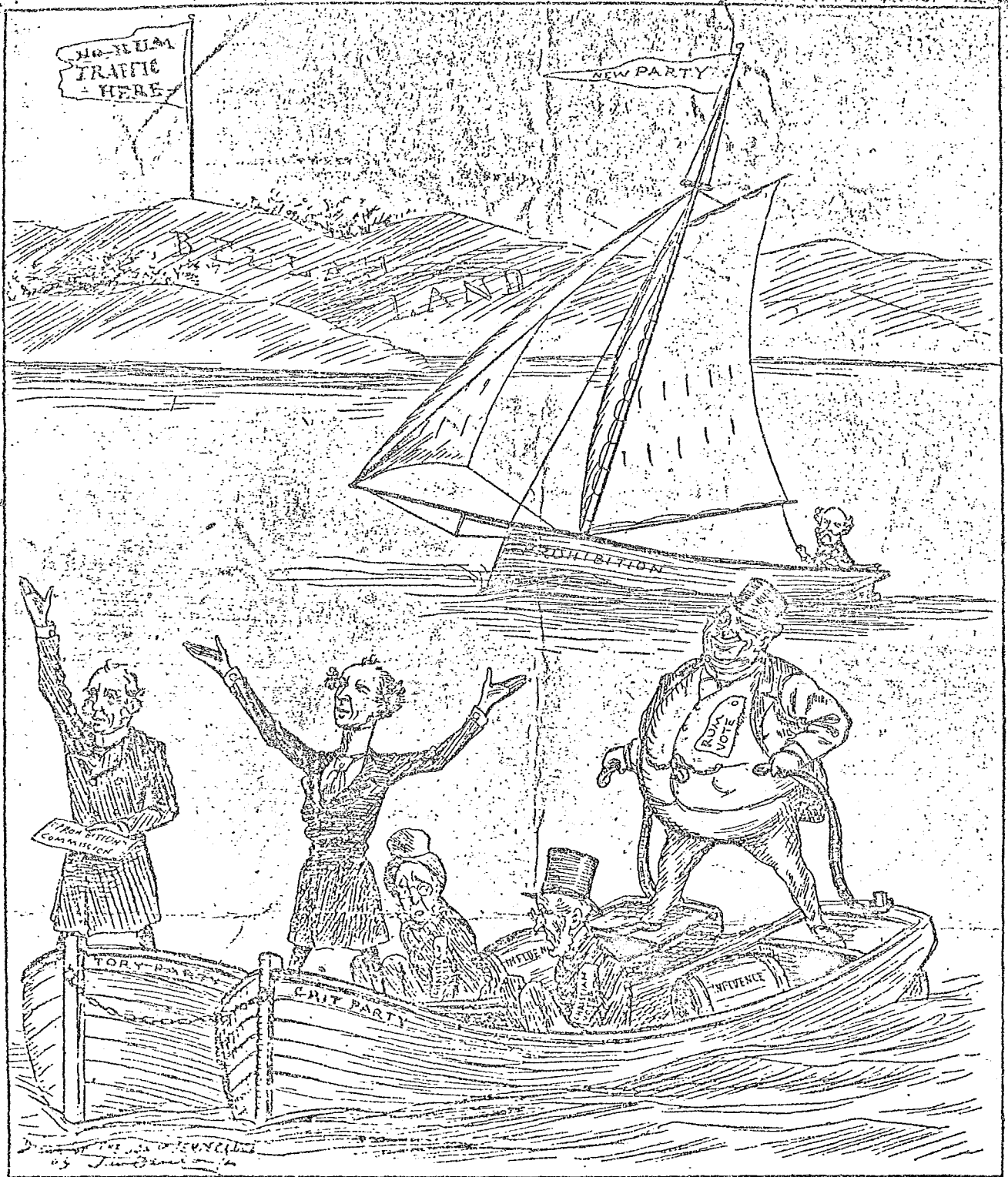
It is not too much politics that is the trouble with the temperance cause, but too little. . . . Politics is a part of religion, and religion that has no politics is only half a religion at heart.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Rev. D.Y. Ross, Christian Methodist Magazine, 1877, as cited in Decarie, "The Prohibition Movement", p.68.

<sup>52</sup>Bengough, Prohibition Aesop, p.25.

<sup>53</sup>As cited in Ruth Spence, Prohibition in Canada, (Toronto: The Ontario Branch of the Dominion Alliance, 1919), p.140.



VI.5 WHAT'S THE GOOD OF FINE SPEECHES IN THE BOW, WHILE THE RUM  
POWER HOLDS THE HELM?

source: Toronto Star Cartoons, 1893, -And, by the way, which Boat do YOU Sail in?  
vol. 1. McMaster University Library

The onus of responsibility for the needed changes, in law and approach, fell to the individual. Although just civil laws would benefit the whole society, only the concerted activity of individuals could create these laws. The state was to ensure that the civil law was just, the impetus for the creation of an isonomic law lay with every member of the community.

Given Bengough's elevation of the virtue of labour; it followed that a primary appeal be made to the working man to take up the task of bettering society and thereby helping himself. The labourer, symbolizing as well as realizing Bengough's central ethic, was called upon to leap into the fight against the Gin Mill. In caricature, the working man, loving and considerate, his arm flung around his goodly wife, marks his ballot for prohibition.

The labourer, with the weapon of the vote in hand can destroy the liquor traffic tiger. As each toiler works towards the moral goal, the whole labour movement will rise up and sweep away the menace of the Gin Mill. The action is individual, the activity is common, the goals are moral, and the effect is social. The "men of toil", he wrote, "fix their fate. . . . They have the strength; they have the votes; they are the ones who rule . . . theirs is to undo the evil".<sup>54</sup>

While Bengough believed that social conditions of poverty, crime, and moral deprivation were found wherever the liquor traffic operated, he did not ascribe social misery solely to the effects of the Gin Mill. Unlike some temperance advocates of his day,<sup>55</sup> Bengough did not see prohibition as the

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<sup>54</sup>Bengough, Whole Hog, p.6.

<sup>55</sup>Both M.G. Decarie, in "Prohibition Movement in Ontario: 1894-1916", and G.A. Hallowell, Prohibition in Ontario, 1919-1923, argue that most prohibitionists saw drink as the fundamental cause of poverty, and temperance as the panacea to all social ills. The validity of this assertion can be seriously questioned, for in neither study was any systematic attempt made to understand the ideology of the reform. Decarie labels Bengough as a "typical prohibitionist", but Bengough certainly does not fit the framework proposed by either of these authors.



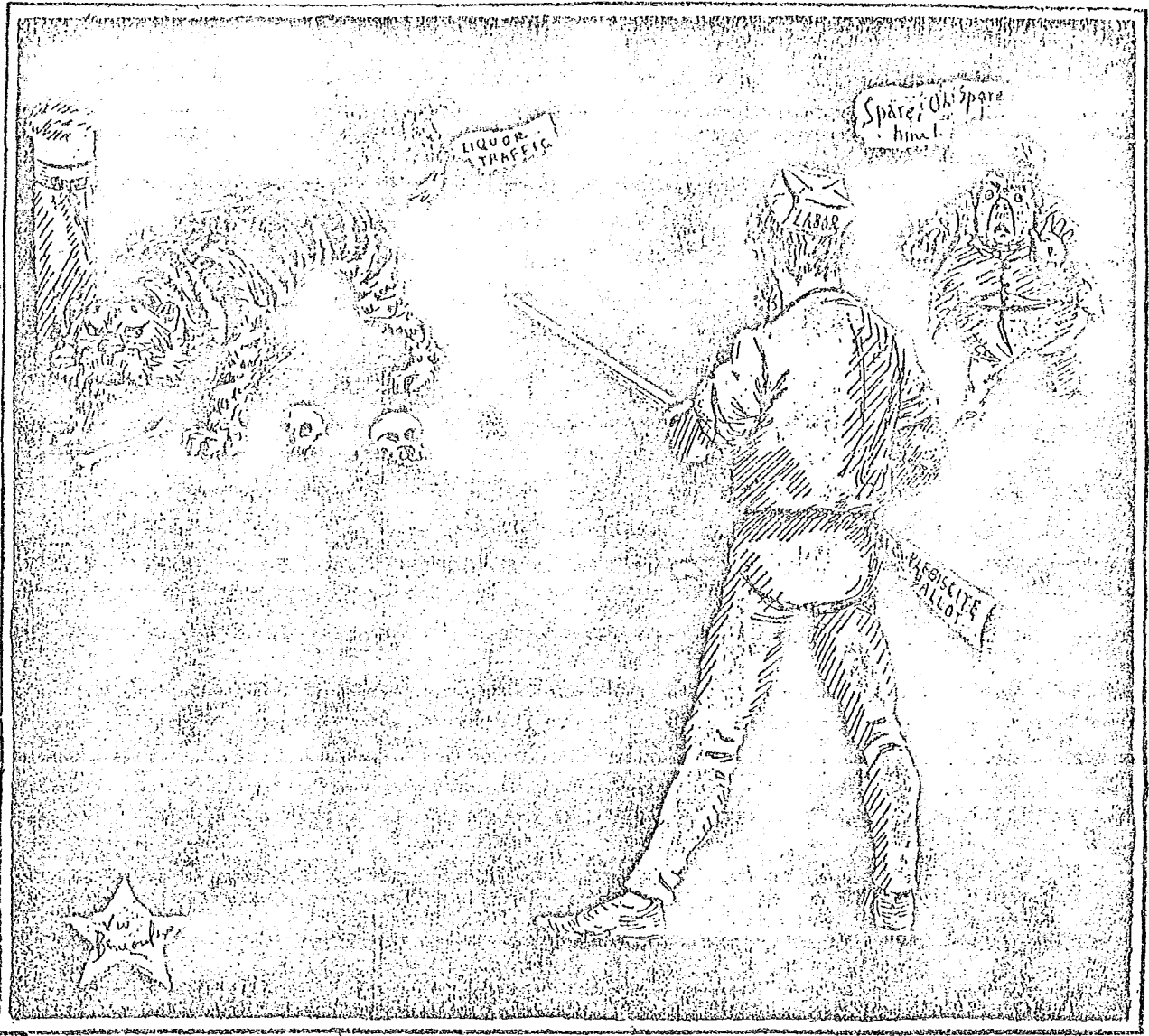
# HOW THE WORKING MAN WILL MARK HIS PLEBISCITE BALLOT.

THE WIFE—Never mind him, John; mark it for ME AND THE CHILDREN!

VI.6

"Toronto Star Cartoons", 1893, part II," m.s. Bengough Papers, Vol. I.





### THE TIGER MUST GO!

ONTARIO VOTER.—Yes, I'll spare his life if you'll mention ONE REDEEMING FEATURE he possesses that entitles him to live!

VI.7

"Toronto Star Cartoons, 1893, part II," n.s. Bengough Papers, Vol. I.

panacea for social ills extending from lunacy to the white slave market.

Although many would have concurred with Father L. Minchan's analysis as reported in the Brockville Recorder and Times:

Wherever I have in my long experience found blasphemy, filth, moral and physical defiance of God and man, I had no difficulty in the great majority of cases in finding the bottle at the root of all evil. The bottle is the deadliest foe of Christianity, of industry, of liberty.<sup>56</sup>

Bengough did not agree with the priest that drink was the "greatest and often the sole cause of poverty."<sup>57</sup> He argued that although drink was an appurtenance to social misery, it was not of itself, the cause of the wretchedness.

The cause lay deeper than the problem of drink. "The fact that we have large masses of people who do not drink and yet are in abject poverty", he wrote, "proves that Drink is not the fundamental evil of our social problems."<sup>58</sup> Prohibition was only one in a series of social reforms necessary to solve a very complex question. The root was not the liquor traffic, but socially accepted ideological convictions which led to the exploitation of the labourer, daily contravention of God's laws, and community acquiescence in immoral social activity. The resulting fabric of the social system was faulty, and paramount in the perpetration of evil, Bengough argued, were the "laws upon which [the] social system is based".<sup>59</sup> The laws of his day, he reasoned, were so structured as to "defeat the manifest design of God".<sup>60</sup> They were based on an over-riding belief in profit-making and an incorrect interpretation of the vocational ethic.

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<sup>56</sup> Brockville Recorder and Times, April 16, 1921, as cited in Hallowell, Prohibition, p.16.

<sup>57</sup> Decarie, "Prohibition in Ontario", p.44.

<sup>58</sup> Bengough, "Justice", m.s., Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

The popular idea that "work is a boon", Bengough asserted, was the source of labour exploitation, unfair trade, landlordism, and intemperance. By the phrase "work as a boon", was meant the provision by one person to another of the opportunity to work. This perversion of the Christian idea of work gave the employer, and not the worker credit for progress, and it created a moral sanction for an unjust system. Not work in itself, Bengough argued, but work as worshipful production was the true meaning of the concept. The fruits of work must go the labourer, and not to the one who allows him to toil. Calling for a reinterpretation of the social ethic, he stated:

We must deal with this root thought that work is a boon, and that he who lets us work for him ought to have our thanks.<sup>61</sup>

Work was ordained by God, not man. Thanks went to the Lord, not the employer. The reward was properly the property of the worker, not the employer. No man held property in the right of a man to work.

Laws which regulated men's social activity reflected this improper ideological foundation, and therefore were to be changed. Civil law was to be moral, it was to reflect God's ordinances. All activity was to be judged by the measure of Christian principles.

How do the rules taught by Christ bear on the life of a land? . . . it is not hard to tell a good act from a bad one when we see it in the light of Christ's law.<sup>62</sup>

Only when civil law was founded firmly on true Christian ethics, could property be set to its proper function, the wage slaves be set free, the drink slaves rescued, and the just society realized.

However, changing the law and creating the brotherhood of men on

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<sup>61</sup> Bengough, Whole Hog, p.72.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p.7.

earth was not an easy task. It demanded both a change in the hearts of men, and pragmatic activity by moral men and women in the political arena. Although Bengough argued that labourers must "vote to undo the evil", he stipulated that they also needed moral instruction, to recognize the evil and identify their duty.

This vote they can not do 'till they see just what is wrong and how it is to be made right. What they need is light.<sup>63</sup>

This, Bengough envisioned, was his task. Basing his appeal on the law of God, a law which when followed led to social justice, Bengough entered the political and propaganda arenas, most often combining the two. He had a message to popularize. His was the self-proclaimed duty to point out the wrong and demonstrate how it was to be made right. His was the self-realized responsibility of exposing injustices, destroying the foundations of what he felt was an immoral, un-Christian social ideology, and identifying a new moral direction. And, prohibition was merely one step, albeit an important one, towards the realization of his just society.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

## CHAPTER VII

### NATION, NATURE, AND THE TWO THEOLOGIES

John Wilson Bengough, his acute social conscience stricken by the deplorable conditions of the urban poor who existed side by side with the extravagantly wealthy, angrily protested against a social ethos which seemed to perpetuate this injustice. Criticizing contemporary profit-oriented business activity, intemperance, and political morality, arguing from his total acceptance of a Christian ethic, and often illustrating his comments with references to scriptural authority,

If it is true that righteousness exalteth a nation, we had better cease putting our whole dependence on the N.P. [National Policy] and go in for a little common decency amongst our rulers.<sup>1</sup>

he advanced a pragmatic, muscular Christianity as the source for a solution to contemporary problems. Ideals were not merely to be piously uttered, they had to be put into practice in everyday, rational activity. And, in arguing for political involvement, Bengough agreed with his learned friend, George Grant, who stated that,

as patriots, we must not be satisfied with dreaming dreams; we must belong to a party. As Christians we must not stay in the closet, nor fly to the desert; we must belong to the church. But sell yourselves to no party or sect. Supremely loyal to Christ alone, ever follow that which He reveals, no matter where it seems to lead.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Grip, May 15, 1886.

<sup>2</sup>G. Grant, as cited in Grant and Hamilton, Grant, p.212.

Taking his own commentaries to heart, Bengough practiced what he preached, and became involved in administrative and decision-making political and institutional activity. However, it was in his self-realized "calling" as critic, cartoonist and educator that Bengough best popularized those values which he felt were both necessary to reform contemporary Canadian society and set the ideological foundations of the new.

Extending his commentaries to cover all facets of Canadian life, Bengough carried his values into his vision of Canada's ideal character and role. As part of a wave of writers in what Professor Frank Watt somewhat cynically describes as a "national policy for Canadian literature",<sup>3</sup> Bengough expressed poetic themes which not only described Canada in religious terms, but identified a glorious future resulting from her Godly identity. In describing Canadian virtues in the metaphor of field and stream, and in concurrently calling upon the church to not only reform its social practices but also assert its role in the creation of a Christian national identity, he was consciously working out of his Protestant heritage. His calls for a Christian national consciousness and church reform identify not only the variety and richness of his thought but also illustrate aspects of a nineteenth century Canadian debate on the nature and source of divine revelation.

Expressing a value system which stressed community, service, and above all, dependence on God, Bengough advocated a Christian universalism in his ethical prescriptions. Stressing the "equal heirship of every one of God's

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<sup>3</sup>F. Watt, "Nationalism in Canadian Literature", P. Russel, ed., Nationalism in Canada, (Toronto: McGraw Hill Co. of Canada Ltd., 1966), p.240.

children to God's gifts",<sup>4</sup> he repudiated the call to individualism and the emphasis on personal success so common in the cultural ideology of late nineteenth century social Darwinism, and in criticizing the materialism of his day argued for a return to what he considered a simpler and just ethic.

The universalism of Bengough's Protestant ethic did not allow him to conceive of the nation and its benefits in any exclusive sense. His assertion<sup>was</sup> that the goal of all activity should be for the community, whether of differing race, creed or social standing. Especially important in the application of this ethic, was his championship of aboriginal rights. His campaign for the solution of the problems faced by the Canadian Indian and Métis populations advanced a point of view not so fully shared by Protestants of his day as were even his views on business and politics.

The Riel Rebellion of 1885 brought home to a generally complacent and uninterested central and eastern Canada the unhappy state of the aboriginal population in the west. Cultural contacts between the two races had been few and even the dedicated efforts of Protestant missionaries had, by the later nineteenth century, not yet added sufficiently to popular knowledge of aboriginal problems and needs. For example, only since mid-century had the Church Missionary Society, an evangelical arm of the Church of England under the leadership of Henry Venn, insisted that its missionaries imbibe the lifestyle of the culture to which they were sent. Venn, advising missionaries to the Ojibway Indians in 1868, encouraged them to

live among them; respect their national peculiarities; and ascertain the industrial pursuits which may be introduced amongst them with the best prospect of meeting their peculiar habits.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Bengough, "Address", June 1892.

<sup>5</sup>H. Venn, as cited in J. Usher, "Apostles and Aborigines: the Social Theory of the Canadian Missionary Society", Social History: A Canadian Review, 7 (April 1971): 47.

And early Presbyterian missions to the Northwest, perhaps best exemplified by the dedicated work of Dr. James Robertson, were initially directed to the growing white population in that area.<sup>6</sup>

With dedicated missions sentiment, motivated as it was by a sincere belief in the Divine call to Christianize the world still tentatively feeling its way towards the notion of cultural equality, secular Anglo-Saxons, brought up in the imperialist arguments of Rudyard Kipling and John Stuart Mill, and influenced by the "scientific" theories of social Darwinism, could hardly be faulted for treating aborigines as social inferiors and lower beings on the evolutionary scale.<sup>7</sup> The resulting common infatuation with mysterious, romantic descriptions of the savage often led to popular misconceptions about native peoples, and worse still, to apathy about their problems and needs.

The Riel Rebellion abruptly changed this general Canadian complacency. The Christian Guardian, speaking for the bewildered reaction of the Protestant church press, noted the cause of rebellion as rooted in the failure of Protestant churches to Christianize the Indians. The Rebellion it asserted, "has thrown a livid light on the character and state of the un-Christianized Indians of the North-West"; yet, it also realized the moral imperative that the outburst identified: "Their benighted condition should excite our sympathy and interest".<sup>8</sup>

The Toronto Globe, albeit seeking to make political hay on the subject, put its finger on what many felt to be the real cause of the rebellion. Charging

<sup>6</sup>H.K. Markell, "Part II: 1850-1925", A Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, undated), p.56. Dr. James Robertson was appointed "Superintendent of Missions in the Northwest" in 1881.

<sup>7</sup>For an analysis of this attitude in Canadian society see C. Berger, "The True North Strong and Free", P. Russel, ed., Nationalism in Canada, University League for Social Reform, (Toronto: McGraw Hill Co. of Canada Ltd., 1966), pp.18-21.

<sup>8</sup>Christian Guardian, May 27, 1885.



the Tory government with "willful criminal neglect", it asserted that the real cause of the rebellion was not so much current social attitudes towards the Indians and Métis, but the failure of 'Sir John A.' to govern properly.

The people of Canada of all parties believe that this rebellion might have been prevented. The people of Canada of all parties believe that Sir John A. Macdonald's willful, criminal neglect of his duty is the real cause of this rebellion.<sup>9</sup>

Bengough, while agreeing that the government had failed in its duty, especially emphasized that the Indian agents who had forsaken their "calling" and bowed to the lust for profit, that all-too-common "business ethic", had to share much of the blame. While speculators made money selling bad pork and flour, and Indian bands were forced to the brink of starvation, the Ottawa government had refused to heed their cries for justice (see cartoon 1). The speculators were immoral, the government unjust, and the combination of the two spelled a violent outburst from the oppressed.

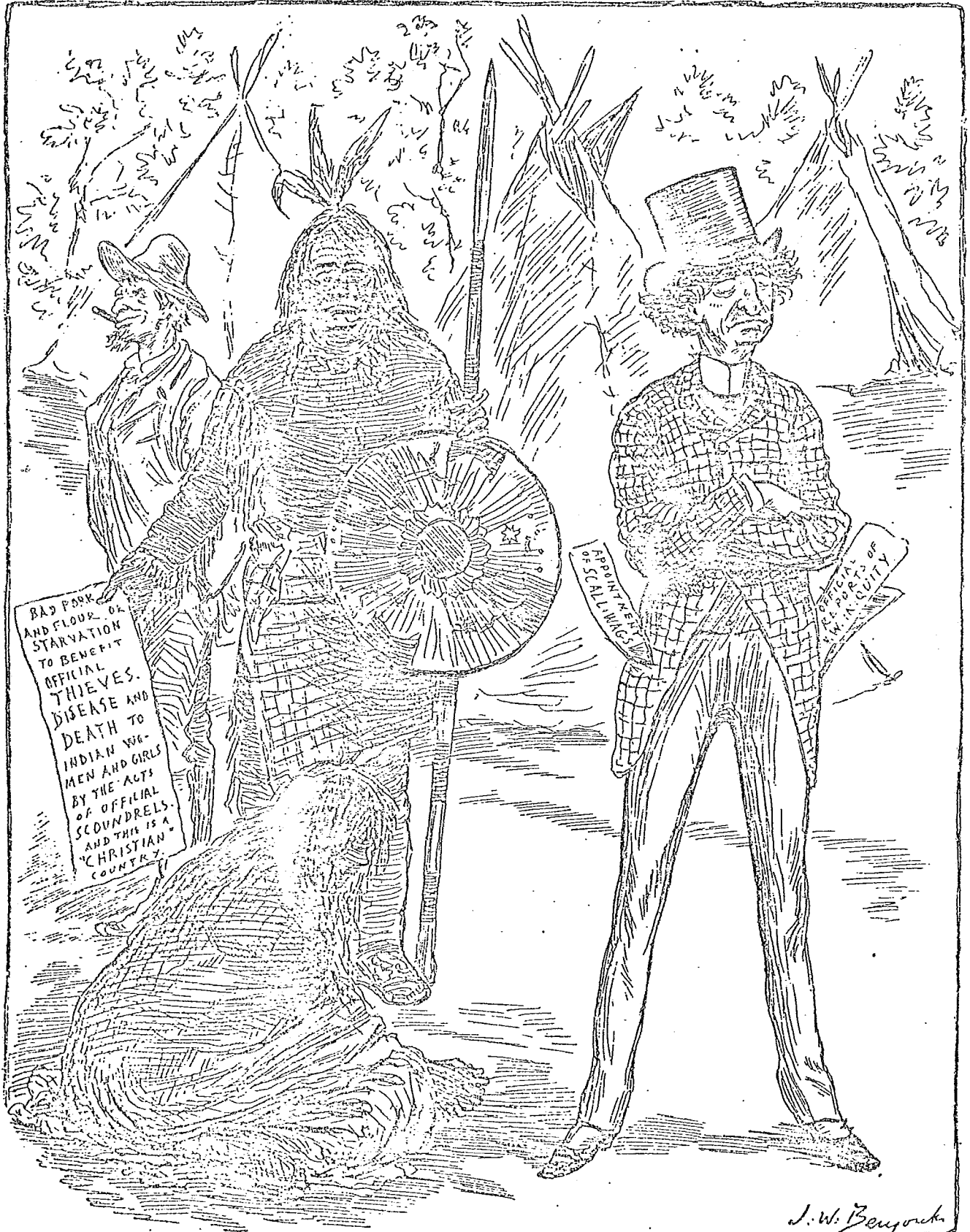
The 'contractors' whose rotten pork and stinking flour have killed many a poor famishing wretch, are allowed to go on with their knavery -- putting in their thievish pockets the full price of wholesome food; the officials whose beastly lust has overwhelmed the Indian tribes with disease and death are allowed to go on in the devilish work. . . .<sup>10</sup>

However, as Bengough further argued, the blame did not end there, but the injustices perpetrated by mercenary speculators and an irresponsible government implicated all Canadians. Canadians, as members of a Christian country had failed in their duty to their Indian communicants -- they had complacently forgotten about the aboriginal population and thus allowed the speculators "while drawing pay from the treasury of a Christian people", to

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<sup>9</sup>Globe, April 7, 1885.

<sup>10</sup>Grip, June 19, 1886.



VII.1 -

# BLIND AND DEAF!

THE WRONGS OF THESE POOR WRETCHES CRY TO HEAVEN FOR VENGEANCE!

Grip, June 19, 1886.

do their devilish work," While never asserting that the rebellion was justified, Bengough did imply that the uprising was a Divine warning. "There are some Canadians" he wrote, counting himself as one, "who still believe in God as a Being who will avenge the wrongs of his friendless children upon the nation that inflicts them or allows its rulers to do so."<sup>11</sup>

Bengough's indictment of a grasping business ethic, and general Canadian complacency as causes of the rebellion, although recognized, were not given primary attention by the Protestant press. The Christian Guardian for example, made light of the unjust practices of some Indian agents and noted that although bad conditions probably affected the decision to rebel, those conditions were mostly due to a decrease in buffalo. Rekindling religious factionalism, it was certain that only "bad Indians" had anything to do with the whole affair:

We are pretty confident no Methodist, nor Protestant Indian have any sympathy with the rebellion. Neither, we believe, have the scotch [sic] half-breeds shown any disloyalty. It is the Roman Catholic half-breeds, and the Pagan and Catholic Indians that have made the trouble.<sup>12</sup>

The solution, obviously, as the Guardian saw it, was to convert the Indians, not just to Christianity but to Protestantism.

On grounds of patriotism, as well as Christianity we should put forth earnest efforts to bring them under the transforming influence of the Gospel of Christianity.<sup>13</sup>

This, the Guardian argued, was of primary necessity --- all other problems could only be properly tackled once this conversion had occurred.

The Canadian Baptist echoed similar sentiments, but conveyed the impression that the aboriginal culture was much inferior to that of the whites,

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<sup>11</sup>Grip, June 19, 1886.

<sup>12</sup>Christian Guardian, May 13, 1885.

<sup>13</sup>Christian Guardian, May 13, 1885.

and urged the church to take the lead in the destruction of the Indian's language, customs, and tribal relationships. Only if the Indians accepted white culture, it argued, could they "ever . . . be transformed from savages and pagans into self-supporting and self-respecting citizens."<sup>14</sup>

Although Bengough never shared the view that the aborigines should be denied their cultural uniqueness, and indeed, on the contrary, often asserted the value of the Indians cultural heritage, his view of the Indian was based on a curious mixture of romanticism and genuine Christian concern. His graphic portrayals of the native people exude majesty, honesty, and solemnity (see Grip, Jan. 29, 1887; cartoon 2), but he also considered them essentially child-like and under the necessary guardianship of the state. And indeed, he identified them as "wards of the nation".<sup>15</sup> This curious mixture of concepts arose both from his commitment to universal Christian principles of brotherhood, and from the influence of a contemporary culture which he could not escape, and resulted in his expressions of a gentle, protective paternalism towards the Indian peoples.

Arguing that the Riel Rebellion was only one instance in a history of Canadian mistreatment of the natives,

the splended lines which our poet Mair puts in the mouth of one of Tecumseh's braves, as representing the perfidy of the white man in the olden days, are, we know to our shame, perfectly applicable today in connection with the administration of Indian affairs. . . .<sup>16</sup>

Bengough demanded that the real causes of the rebellion be identified and immediately solved:

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<sup>14</sup>Canadian Baptist, May 28, 1885.

<sup>15</sup>Grip, Jan. 19, 1887.

<sup>16</sup>Grip, Jan. 29, 1887.



GRIFFIN CO. ENG.



The gravest beast is the ASS.  
 The gravest bird is the OWL.  
 The gravest fish is the OYSTER.  
 The gravest man is the FOOL.

VII. 2. A TIMELY QUOTATION.

North-West Indian—

" Our sacred treaties are infringed and torn,  
 Laughed out of sanctity and spurned away,  
 Used by the Long-Knife's slave to light his fire,  
 Or turned to kites by thoughtless boys, whose wrists  
 Anchor their fathers' lies in front of heaven ! "

Sir John (applauding) — AH! MAIR'S "TECUMSEH"! FINE POETRY AND WELL SPOKEN! (Aside) BUT MORE TRUTH THAN POETRY, HANGED IF IT ISN'T!

PRICE 5 CENTS PER COPY, \$2 PER YEAR.

Riel was but an incident of rebellion; justice will not be satisfied until the actual authors are exposed and punished, whether they turn out to be plotting speculators at Prince Albert or drowsy Ministers at Ottawa.<sup>17</sup>

This was the duty of all Canadians. "Civilization to say nothing of Christianity",<sup>18</sup> demanded it and, he noted that, while bringing the Gospel to the aborigines was both necessary and commendable, Canadians should make a special effort to first alleviate the Indian's immediate conditions of physical hardship.

Christian mission as he understood it, had to go hand in hand with rational solutions to pressing problems. And, while he did not illustrate just how this Christian concern should be applied to the whole problem of the aboriginal population and although he probably agreed with the Protestant missionary methods at their best, his realization of the value and merits of Indian culture, and his lack of religious factionalism did identify his concern as, if not more truly Christian; then at least more universal, understanding and compassionate than that held by many Protestants of his time.

Bengough's sense of Christian universalism also determined his larger outlook on Canada. Canada was, in his eyes, a single community. Although it was a nation, a group of diverse peoples, it was despite unfortunate religious tensions, bound together by the bonds of a common religious tradition. It was faced with a glorious future, once every member had accepted the guidelines of the communal Protestant ethic, and in his description of the country he expressed a nascent nationalism that brought together current ideas of mid-Victorian Canadian imperialism with a genuine concern for the spiritual vitality

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<sup>17</sup>Grip, Nov. 21, 1885.

<sup>18</sup>Grip, Jan. 29, 1887.

of the Dominion.

As historian Carl Berger so well explains, late nineteenth century Canadian imperialism

rested upon an intense awareness of Canadian nationality combined with an equally decided desire to unify and transform the British Empire so that this nationality could attain a position of equality within it... For imperialists the sense of nationality and the idea of imperial unity were interlocked and identical.<sup>19</sup>

Bengough, along with other well-known Canadians, such as George Parkin and George Munroe Grant, in poetry, prose and sketch often expressed the necessity and glory of the British connection, but always emphasized the unique role of Canada. For example, he found evidence of heroic British military traditions in the Canadian Army of 1885, and proudly noted that "Canada is British still!"<sup>20</sup> And, even when Britain failed to uphold Canada's interests in the fisheries disputes of the mid-1870's, although Grip castigated the mother country, it still upheld the value of the British connection.

So we must be proud of our British connection, though the true, old, uncorrupted British blood in our veins, boils with indignation at the cautious, cowardly, bullying of our mother.<sup>21</sup>

Part of Bengough's esteem for Britain came as a result of her free trade policy, a policy which, he argued,<sup>22</sup> was the only just management of trade. His poetic attempt, expressing delight with most things British, "British Free Trade", which he intended for publication as a Liberal party campaign song (before the better sense of his friend, the Rev. W.H. Withrow, prevailed), is an excellent example of this mixture of imperialist manifesto

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<sup>19</sup>Berger, Sense of Power, p.49.

<sup>20</sup>Bengough, "The Charge at Batoche", Motley, p.69.

<sup>21</sup>Grip, Feb. 14, 1874.

<sup>22</sup>See above, chapter five.

mixed with his belief in an economic policy arising out of his ethical convictions.

--- Canadians, Sons of old Britain  
Lovers of freedom and right  
Arouse yet the country is calling  
Arm, Arm, for the oncoming fight.  
Ring out the new watch word inspiring  
O'er the hosts of Protection dismayed  
Three cheers for Laurier our Leader  
And Hurrah for British Free Trade.

Protection that Knavish invention  
Imported from over the line  
Is the choice of the stall-fed combinester [sic]  
And the Tory lip-loyalist fine;  
'Tis a stale out-of-date Yankee notion  
And outing existence must fade  
In the light of the truth that is beaming  
From our banner of British Free Trade.

Monopoly farms out its hoodle  
Twould fain keep its license to steal  
And to selfish or motives [sic]  
The Tories will make their appeal.  
Our cause is the cause of the people  
Of every condition and grade  
The robbery of masses by classes  
Shall cease under British Free Trade.

Then rally ye Lovers of freedom  
Of Justice and Honor and right,  
Monopoly's minions we'll scatter  
And put the oppressor to flight  
Too long have our toilers been stunted  
That a few millionaires might be made  
There'll be British fair play for the worker  
When our country has British Free Trade.<sup>23</sup>

Although he shared the imperialist sentiment of many Canadians, Bengough did not arrive at his understanding of Canada's role in the empire from similar ideological premises. For example, while often portraying the north

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<sup>23</sup>J. W. Bengough, "British Free Trade" m.s. Bengough Papers, Vol. VII.



in general, and Canada in particular as hardy, strong and free --- "the ample bracing west"<sup>24</sup> --- Bengough never subscribed to the notion shared by anthropologist and author Robert G. Haliburton, Colonel Denison, and poet and political idealist Charles Mair, that it was Canada's climate which was the "dynamic element of national greatness".<sup>25</sup> Many other Canadians, including Dr. William Hales Hingston, professor of clinical surgery at the Montreal School of Medicine,<sup>26</sup> in variants of a Canadian "scientific" racial social Darwinism argued for Canadian racial unity on the grounds that the French Canadians had, by virtue of their successful fight with the northern climate, proved their Norman heritage and thus qualified for Canadian citizenship.

Putting little stock in such popular social theories with their doctrines of the survival of the fittest, Bengough instead noted that all races could exist in unison in Canada, for they were all members of God's family. While the social Darwinian view of racial supremacy moved many Canadian imperialists to look down upon non-whites, and agitate to limit immigration to northern Europeans, Bengough's commitment to Christian universalism led him, whenever feasible, to advocate a racially non-discriminatory immigration policy, and indeed, he often did all he could to assist and educate new Canadians --- Chinese as well as Anglo-Saxon.

Bengough's idealistic vision of Canada as a virtuous Christian nation was often expressed in the metaphors of nature. Beginning with the historical certainty of creation he described the country as "God's temple" and, His

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<sup>24</sup>J.W. Bengough, "Canada's Welcome", Motley, p.115.

<sup>25</sup>Berger, "True North", p.7.

<sup>26</sup>Dr. Hingston wrote a series of papers entitled "The Climate of Canada and its relation to life and Health", (1884), which was the epitome of this "scientific" racial social Darwinism.

"table bounteous".<sup>27</sup> Nature, although the source of man's life activity was, however, not merely to be worked in, but, also a source of spiritual renewal for man. Nature mirrored God's truths, and man could always refresh himself, and remember God's lessons by quiet communion with the rivers, lakes and fields, or silent contemplation of tree and bush and flower.

For instance, Bengough poetically illustrated that nature provided an example of God's call for the brotherhood of man. Just as rain fell on the just and the unjust, snow fell on the whole land, covering with a God-given mantle of purity all manner of social, and economic differences. Man rejoiced in this equally bestowed gift from God:

Welcome thee, heaven-born snow, to the earth again!  
 Welcome they face and the joys that follow thy train!  
 Hail to thee, pale and beautiful bride of the plain!

Kissing the forest, and mountain, and moor,  
 Broad over castle and cottage, for rich man and poor,  
 Hiding the cross of the earth under vesture so pure.<sup>28</sup>

A similar identification of a spiritual Canada, based on a study of nature as a mode of both reaffirming or discovering God's revelation to man was a focus of early Canadian nationalist literary sentiment. From Canada's first nature writer, Catherine Parr Traill, who often described the sanctity and spirituality she felt in the woods:

We stand beneath the pines and enter the grand pillared aisles with a feeling of mute reverence; these stately trunks bearing their plumed heads so high above us seem a meet roofing for His temple who reared them to His praise. . . . There are melodies in ocean, earth and air . . . heard by unseen spirits in their ministrations of love, fulfilling the will of our Father.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Bengough, "Restitution", Motley, p.18.

<sup>28</sup>Bengough, "To the Snow, on New - Year's Morning", Motley, p.128.

<sup>29</sup>C. Parr Traill, Pearls and Pebbles, as cited in A. Lucas, "Nature Writers", in C.F. Klinck, gen.ed. Literary History of Canada. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p.368.

and William Kirby, who identified the Quebec basin as "God's footstool",<sup>30</sup> to Bliss Carman who, at the turn of the century declared that it was "in the woods", that "one hears the glad oracular whisper of the universal message", and in the same vein suggested that,

religion is not only from above but from below. . .not only the living Word sent down to us from the clear skies, . . . but the whisper breathed from the ground as well.<sup>31</sup>

sensitive, intelligent Canadians, for almost three generations, searched their countryside for vestiges of God's truths. And, while there is evidenced in their work of the sentiments of the two theologies tradition (natural and revealed), most were interested not in arguing for specific, theological approaches but in stressing the essential spiritual characteristics of their Dominion.

Popular Canadian art of the later nineteenth century, for example, did not stress, as Carl Berger continually argues, the themes of rugged individualism and the north.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the Group of Seven, simply because of their contemporary popularity, are too often given credit for illustrating mid-Victorian Canadian sentiment when they did not really come into their own until the years of World War I, while too little attention is paid to the messages of those artists of later nineteenth century Canada, who were not only giants in their own country, but recognized masters abroad. The landscapes of Daniel Fowler, Homer Watson, and George Reid, for example, stressed the absolute power of God, the sublimity of toil, the serenity of rest, and man's search for God not only in the field and sky but in the very lines and colour of the intricately

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<sup>30</sup>W. Kirby, as cited in F. Watt, "Nationalism in Canadian Literature", P. Russel, ed., Nationalism, p.245.

<sup>31</sup>B. Carman, The Friendship of Art, (London: John Murray, 1905), p.226 and p.130.

<sup>32</sup>See his discussion in "The True North", pp.20-22, and in A Sense of Power, p.133.

detailed feathers of His birds.

This search for God's truths, as nature disclosed them, was not confined to poets and artists. Sir William Dawson, Canada's eminent geologist, viewed his explorations of nature as a religious quest, and sympathetic contemporaries were impressed that "by his biblical scholarship and Christian faith he was able to interpret the teachings of science in harmony with Scripture."<sup>33</sup> Nature and the Bible he argued, could not be separated, both were revelations of God's manifest works. In his introduction to his book Nature and the Bible, (1875), he explicitly noted the religious bent of his geological studies:

The standpoint of the writer is not that of a theologian or a metaphysician, but of a student of Nature, who while he has been chiefly occupied with investigations and teaching in Natural Science, has been a careful and reverent student of Holy Scripture, not with a view of supporting therefrom any particular school of theology, but of learning from his own spiritual guidance the mind of God.<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, even the church press carried articles, poems and stories all describing in glowing detail the "gospel of the woods". The Methodist Magazine and Review for example, gave religious expression to the feelings of "A Summer Morning":

Give me the gospel of the fields and woods --  
 The sermons written in the book of books;  
 The sweet communion of the things of earth  
 Fresh with the warm baptism of the sun.  
 Give me the offertory of bud and bloom,  
 The perfect caroling of happy birds.  
 Give me the creed of one of God's fair days  
 Wrought in the beauty of its loveliness;  
 And then, the benediction of the stars,  
 His eloquent ministers of the night.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Methodist Magazine and Review, "Moses Vindicated", 48 (Jan. - June 1896): 370.

<sup>34</sup>J.W. Dawson, Nature and the Bible, (New York: Robert Charter and Brothers, 1875), p.6.

<sup>35</sup>Methodist Magazine and Review, 58, (July - Dec. 1903): 32.

From the humanitarian animal adventure novels of Ernest Thompson Seton, to the deep mysticism of a Bliss Carman, sensitive, literary Canadians attempted to express their deeply felt religious feelings through analogy with the country that they loved and hoped for. That they described nature in religious terms was not surprising, for they commonly shared a view of Canada that expressed her vitality and promise in accordance with a belief in the fatherhood of the one Creator.

Bengough, with his emotional and ideological foundation in a Protestant ethic understood and expressed similar sentiments. He identified with the evil influences of the city as expressed in differing degrees by both Archibald Lampman or Nellie McClung.<sup>36</sup> He also shared the sublime serenity of Bliss Carman and Catherine Parr Traill. Much of his poetry fitted into the contemporary current of nature literature, in which the author expressed the glowing nationalism of Canada in terms of the religious unity experienced in a common continuous involvement with God's nature. Yet, his metaphoric use of nature in his description of Canada, was primarily a source for the reaffirmation of God's historical revelation.

Nineteenth century Liberal Protestant theology, taking its cue from Friedrich Schleiermacher's attempts to reinterpret Christianity to a romantic age seemingly no longer able to accept the rational intellectual premises of eighteenth century Protestantism, stressed the primacy of human religious emotions over the historical traditions of Bible and Church as vehicles of

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<sup>36</sup>This sentiment varied from the dark, dismal "City at the End of Things", to heroine Pearl Watson's matter of fact statement in McClung's The Second Chance, that the family should leave the town and move to a farm, for on the farm there was always work to do, and in the town, "every day was bringing fresh evidence of the evil effects of idleness on the boys.", Nellie McClung, The Second Chance, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1910), p.65.

Divine apprehension. The resulting bent towards an anthropocentric Christianity went hand in hand with the dominant North American expression of Protestant evangelicism with its stress upon revivalism, the individuality of spiritual meaning, and the symbolic character of religious affirmation, and also motivated man's identification of the natural world as a source of religious revelation. This ideological trend was tempered by conventional emphasis on the Calvinist concept of the supremacy of God and the traditional, Protestant dependence upon the ultimate authority of Scripture as the revealed word of God and its corollary expression --- the theocentricity of the Christian faith. Emphasizing the continuity of man and divine, popular mid-Victorian Canadian Protestant thought at times so closely identified natural with historical revelation that historical revelation became "natural", and serious dichotomies in interpretation seemed to subside.

Bengough, in his description of field and stream, although representing this mixture of natural and historical revelation, was yet prone to refer back to his Calvinist background, with its emphasis on Scriptural authority. Indeed, as he argued, through man's communion with nature, man did not attain knowledge of God, but only reaffirmed his dependence upon Him.

I revel in this elfin under-world,  
 And easily could spend the live-long day  
 Beneath a shady tree in comfort curled,  
 Or lying flat, face downwards, just this way.

While in my breast poetic fancies burn ---  
 What Titan I must be in insect eyes!  
 And what still lesser insect in my turn  
 I am when I look upwards to the skies!<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>J. W. Bengough, "In Touch With Nature", In Many Keys, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1902), p.113.

Furthermore, his call for a religious Canada, expressed in the metaphor of river, wood and stream, arose from his primary commitment to an historically revealed Christian universalism. This religious-natural imagery appealed to countless Canadians who shared a common feeling for the lessons found in the scarlet of the maple tree and the thundering waters of Niagara. And, in his most passionate poetic appeal for nationalist Christianity principles, "Unity Day --- July 1", he perfectly expressed the popular religio-nationalist connotations of the nature metaphor.

. . . Canada!

Behold the emblem of thy polity  
 From God's own hand; read well the parable  
 Here spoken by His lips. These diverse streams  
 Of North and West that flow and join and roll  
 In one triumphant volume to the Gulf,  
 Find voice in loud Niagara to preach  
 The lesson to thy heart of Unity:  
 They typify the faces gathered here  
 From all the ends of earth, with life-ideals  
 As various as their features. Oh, behold,  
 If you would'st weld them into one great state,  
 One strong and valiant nation, there must be  
 True unity of hearts, as waters mix  
 To form thy splendid river --- there must be  
 Not toleration cold, but human love,  
 And brotherhood and large-soul'd sympathy!<sup>38</sup>

Building on these Christian foundations he further developed his theme, arguing for a country, diverse in colour, race and creed, yet united by the common realization of the fatherhood of God and brotherhood and community of man.

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<sup>38</sup>Bengough, "Unity Day --- July 1", In Many Keys, p.16.

Sink differences; build love on things agreed,  
 Remembering, with bowed and humble soul,  
 That all alike, in this dim mystic life,  
 Are children crying in the dark for God.  
 The old dead age preached tolerance; the new  
 Has a new watchword -- catholicity;  
 Be no test known to thee, but loyalty,  
 And let Canadian be the dearest name  
 To all they sons and daughters; scattered streams  
 From many sources form in unity,  
 Thy nation's river; yet each separate lake  
 Mirrors its own choice picture of the sky;  
 So, tho' the separate creeds reflect one heaven  
 In differing views, and varied modes and forms,  
 All hearts may be Canadian, one stream  
 Of patriot faith in liberty and right,  
 And in our flag, our empire, and our King,  
 May grandly flow in ever-widening power  
 To match our one St. Lawrence.<sup>39</sup>

And, like George Grant, Bengough

regarded Canada as the last clear field given by a beneficent Creator in which the children of men could have scope, untrammelled by ancient institutions, to work out the best ideas derived from the experience of the past.<sup>40</sup>

Canada, Bengough argued, although faced with a glorious future, would not however realize her greatness by default. She needed men and women of upright moral character, men and women who would work together to spread the ethical values on which her future would be built. Canada's moral foundations needed shoring, her ethical framework required strengthening, but before this work could begin, the institution entrusted with the guardianship of Canada's religious values, the church, itself had to be reformed.

Bengough's call for church reform arose from his unquestioning acceptance of the historical revelation of God as expressed in Scripture, and from his support of that institution which purported to interpret God's word to man.

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<sup>39</sup>Bengough, "Unity Day -- July 1", In Many Keys, pp. 16-17.

<sup>40</sup>Grant and Hamilton, Grant, p.135.



Yet, although he firmly believed in the necessity of church authority, Bengough was influenced by liberal protestantism's emphasis on religious emotion which challenged church dogma and stressed a spiritual message resting, not in elaborate doctrine, but in simple, Biblical maxims. Creeds, he urged, should be simplified, dissent tolerated, and complex theological issues relegated to university scholars instead of clergy and their congregations. Simple moral lessons, he felt, could adequately illustrate the themes of a Godly life, and poetically and gratuitously, equating wisdom with scholasticism he criticized those churches

Whose preachers preach theology a deal more than they should,  
And try to make men wise when they should try to make them good.<sup>41</sup>

Along with simplifying their creeds, churches, Bengough felt, should set an example for the community. The church was Christ's institution, and as such it was charged with the responsibility for both the spiritual and physical welfare of the entire community it served. The church, he poetically observed, "spoke the words of life . . .

Words full of power, because, words Spirit-taught;  
Words, too, of liberty and human rights  
Against oppression when the State had need.<sup>42</sup>

As Christ's spiritual descendent, the church was to uphold the absolutes which He advocated. Actions were either right or wrong, just or unjust, ethical or immoral. Any activity which was not right, just or ethical, should never be clerically condoned, for had not Christ himself driven the money changers from the temple?

As Christ's spokesman, the church, Bengough noted, was bound to follow the guidelines established by Him. As He had ministered to the needs of society

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<sup>41</sup>Grip, Jan. 9, 1875.

<sup>42</sup>Bengough, "The Old Church", Motley, p.45.

(he had compassionately taken up the cause of the weak and poor), so did the church have not only a responsibility, but an historical precedent to do the same. Since Christ held no respect for a man's social status, meeting with publicans and rich men, Samaritans and Jews, the Church was committed to a similar course. The labourer or the shopkeeper, the Chinaman or the Anglo-Saxon, were all to be equally welcomed into the community of believers. That the church of his day had failed in this charge and seemed to favour the wealthy and the well-bred, gave Bengough ample cause to criticize it:

I heard the rustle of a silk dress as a society belle swept up the aisle,  
 a diamond cross flashing at her neck, and an ivory-bound, gilt-edged  
 prayer book in her kid-gloved hand;  
     Hark! the rustle of that dress,  
     Stiff with lavish costliness  
 Here comes one whose cheek would flush  
 But to have her garments brush  
 'Gainst the girl with finger thin  
 Bending backwards from her toil  
 Lest her tears the silk might soil;  
 And in midnight's chill and murk  
 Stitched her life into the work.<sup>43</sup>

Bengough's criticism of ecclesiastical ethics and the church's social activity was shared by many of his contemporaries, ranging from radical labour reformers and confirmed religious cynics to prominent members of the clergy themselves. Agreeing with Bliss Carman's criticism of a "cushioned chromo-Christianity",<sup>44</sup> George Grant, for example, unequivocally castigated the ethics of his colleagues. According to him, many of them had failed in their duty to God and the ideals of the church. They had ignored their heritage of firm unshaken commitment to principles and practices of justice and the right. They had lost the reforming passion which characterized their spiritual ancestors.

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<sup>43</sup>J.W. Bengough, "The finest stories, sketches and poems", Bengough Papers, Vol. XIV.

<sup>44</sup>B. Carman, The Kinship of Nature, (Toronto: The Copp Clark Co. Ltd. 1902), p.285.

To preach that men should live noble lives and cultivate heroic characters, while the preacher himself is satisfied with belonging to a dependent, ignoble community that has no thought but of selfish pleasure or money-making and no passion save for party triumphs, is not to fulfill the function of a prophet of Israel.<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, in agreement with sentiments such as those expressed by Bengough and Grant, the Rev. Hincks, writing in the Methodist Magazine and Review, stressed that the church should take an active interest in social welfare.

It is within the scope of the pulpit to bring society into right relations with God; to apply Christianity to our industrial life so that good-will shall take the place of greed; to teach that the relations between labour and capital should be on a moral basis, and not merely on a foundation of supply and demand; to let the gentle Christ . . . effectively humanize industry.<sup>46</sup>

And, B.F. Austin, in his tract The Gospel to the Poor, arguing for a similar revision of church practice on the grounds of historical precedent, asserted that since God was no "respector of persons" social distinctions were "entirely out of place in the Church of God,"<sup>47</sup> and further argued that, the Church of Christ was,

under the imperative obligation to consider the circumstances, the needs and the claims of God's poor; to so frame the ordinances of God's house that no distinctions on the grounds of wealth and poverty shall be created; to so govern the house of God that the poor man may have equal rights and suffer no disadvantage. . . .to extend to the poor that sympathetic and cordial welcome to the public worship that shall make them feel equally as much at home there as their rich neighbours.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>George Grant, "Thanksgiving and Retrospect", Queen's Quarterly, 9 (October 1901): 221.

<sup>46</sup>Rev. W. Hincks, "Applied Christianity", p.236.

<sup>47</sup>Austin, Gospel to the Poor, p. 39.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

C.S. Clark, author and opinionated social commentator on the mores of Toronto, was somewhat more explicit and harsh in his criticism. Stating that Toronto churches were little more than status organizations, he attacked the pro-business attitude of clergy who pandered to their rich patrons, ignoring all the while their unjust business activity. Those ministers who did not speak out against the gouging business practices of their communicants were not only cowardly, but unfaithful to the doctrine they themselves professed to follow. Unfortunately, Clark argued, most Protestant clergy fit this deplorable description:

I do not consider the great and overwhelming majority of Protestant preachers of the present day any higher than the lowest and most degraded ward political heeler, whose ambition is to pander to the mob.<sup>49</sup>

Even the Canadian Baptist, albeit in totally atypical fashion, printed the sermon of a Dr. T.L. Cuyler, which pointed out the favouritism that the church showed the well-to-do. Calling clerical and popular attention to the parable of the widow and her mite, Dr. Cuyler appealed for an examination of the type of real worship that went on in contemporary churches.

There are too many of our churches in which "the worship of riches" and the undue deference to men because they are rich too much invade the pulpit. The commendation of the widow that she gave more than they all, seems to be forgotten, and the millionaire who gives but, it may be, a hundreth part, according to his means, as does the poor man, gets all the praise.<sup>50</sup>

The common popular and clerical criticism, that the late nineteenth century Protestant church too often appeared to be a church of the successful and wealthy, was taken further by the radical labour press of the 1890's. A contributor to the Labor Advocate, professedly speaking for all labourers

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<sup>49</sup>C.S. Clark, Of Toronto the Good, (Montreal: The Toronto Publishing Co. 1898), Coles Canadiana Collection, p.162.

<sup>50</sup>Canadian Baptist, April 27, 1882.

charged that the church worshipped money instead of God.

The church in all its divisions worships money. The church knows that there is a God and by words they address Him, but only a few, a remnant, the salt, mean it, and all the others worship money. Money is the chief god of the Christian Church, and when the earth's foundation of purity is thus prostrated what else is left to be pure?<sup>51</sup>

And the Advocate, editorially, repeated this sentiment, stressing that lavish church buildings and a well-fed clergy were in part responsible for the unwholesome conditions of the labouring poor.

While costly churches are being built; while hundreds of millions of untaxed church property is in reality added to the unjust taxes they already pay; while sleek, well-fed, well-to-do clergymen preach content and submission to the toiling poverty stricken masses, who listen to them, the rich are ever faster becoming more rich, the poor are ever faster becoming more poor.<sup>52</sup>

Bengough's criticism of the moral standards of the contemporary church were part of a growing dissatisfaction with what had become normal clerical activity. Essentially, whether the charges came from a radical labour journal like the Labor Advocate, or from a highly respected cleric like George Grant, the criticisms were very similar. The church had strayed away from the true principles of Christianity. It had lost its identity as a community for all believers, it had neglected its charge to teach absolute moral values, it had failed to live up to its divinely ordained responsibility for the spiritual and physical welfare of all mankind, and thus, it needed reform.

The church, as Bengough saw it, had to be once again directed back to the principles of its founder. Its role in Canadian life was to be re-evaluated, and its message revised, so that it could respond to the new demands of the times. However, as he noted, it had also to reassert its traditional role as

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<sup>51</sup>Labor Advocate, Sept. 11, 1891.

<sup>52</sup>Labor Advocate, Dec. 5, 1890.

educator and guardian of social values, and become once again, the locus of the entire Canadian community.

Supremely conscious of working out of his Protestant background, Bengough combined traditional elements of Calvinist thought, especially an insistence on the awesome transcendence of God and His message for mankind as revealed through Scripture with a partial acceptance of emotionally directed liberal Protestant thought. As a result, his ethical pronouncements were never expressed above a popularly identifiable level of generality and almost fundamentalist simplicity. For example, his poetic critique of Biblical criticism reasserted his faith in the credibility of the Bible as the revealed word of God, and both underlined his sincere Christian faith and his belief that the Scriptures were essentially simple to understand when not cluttered and adulterated by pedantic, secular scholasticism.

I have no quarrel with learning --- wise doctors have their place ---  
 But the scalpel of the scholar can not dissect God's grace.  
 Adieu sir, I must hasten; heaven bless all critics true,  
 But with the Rock on which I build, their task has nought to do.<sup>53</sup>

His religious thought represented Canadian Protestantism in transition, neither fully traditional nor fully liberal, neither Ritschlian nor totally theocentric, yet genuinely asserting that Christian standards made the only viable framework for society.

As president of the Toronto Single Tax Association, Bengough agreed with that organization's identification of the basis of social reform. The moot question in the Association's eyes was: "How can we bring our social adjustments into harmony with the principles of Christianity?"<sup>54</sup> Members

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<sup>53</sup>Bengough, "The Higher Criticism", Motley, p.166.

<sup>54</sup>Social Ethics, (Toronto Single Tax Association, 1889).

and adherents to the Single Tax movement, all over Canada, saw it not as merely an economic theory, but as a "great movement for peace, for democracy, for civilization, for freedom, a great moral and religious force".<sup>55</sup> Bengough's social critiques echoed these same ideals. The essential question that faced contemporary Canadian society he wrote, was "how do the rules taught by Christ bear on the life of the land?"<sup>56</sup> And, it was not simply social reform that he sought, but a regeneration of moral sentiment and the release of a new spirituality as well.

Bengough was part of a group of men and women ideologically committed to regenerating the moral sentiment of later nineteenth century Canadian society. Social values, they asserted, had to follow Christian ethics. From a radical labour newspaper, which noted:

In our constitution we first of all acknowledged our dependence upon Almighty God; believing that all good impulses on earth spring from his heart, and that no government can prosper which does not possess his blessing.<sup>57</sup>

to a Protestant Church publication which agreed:

There is . . . only one solution . . . the diffusion of more of the spirit of Christ and Christianity in the community -- not merely in the Churches. . . but in its trades and industries and manufactures.<sup>58</sup>

this growing group of dedicated men and women, saw their purpose as restructuring society in terms of the ideals of service, duty, and community obligation, as creating new institutionalized methods of solving problems once the responsibility of the family, and, while upholding the religious traditions of the

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<sup>55</sup>The Single Taxer, (Winnipeg), December 1913.

<sup>56</sup>Bengough, Whole Hog, p.7.

<sup>57</sup>Labor Advocate, April 17, 1891.

<sup>58</sup>Canadian Methodist Magazine, 22 (July - Dec. 1885); p.236.

of the national heritage, building a new social framework in which to solve new problems. Bengough's part in this movement was that of a journalistic spokesman, a critic of contemporary conditions and ethics and a popularizer of the values that could create the land of "Thingsastheyoughtobe".<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Bengough, The Queer Theory of George Henry, Bengough Papers, Vol. IV.



## CONCLUSION

The previous chapters have outlined the intricacies of J.W. Bengough's thought, tracing its origins in the religious tradition of a vocational Christian ethic and stating and identifying Bengough's application of these ethical ideals, his popularity and effect, and his ideological relationship to his contemporaries. Yet, a few remaining questions have still to be answered. What does Bengough's social thought tell us about his age? Does the analysis of his ideological arguments for social reform hint at new approaches to the study of Canadian reform movements; approaches which may clarify and expand others previously proposed? These questions are too important to ignore, and yet too extensive to admit satisfactory answer here. However, it is important to propose tentative conclusions to them, for without this attempt, no study of Bengough's ideology can ever hope to be complete.

John Wilson Bengough was a well-known journalist and social critic. As caricaturist, poet, author, and lecturer, his fame spread throughout the country and far beyond. Indeed, it was highly improbable that any Canadian except maybe the illiterate or totally uninterested, was not aware of Bengough's name or the critical, didactic nature of his social and political commentaries.

Bengough's analysis of, and proposed solutions to, social problems, identify him as a vocal proponent of a rigorous ethic of moral behaviour. As a journalist, he attempted to identify and popularize what he felt to be the highest guiding moral principles of social and political activity, thereby dwelling, in Ralph Connor's description of contemporary journalism, in the

"upland regions of clear skies and pure airs".

The Journalistic World has its own diversity of mountain and plain, and its own variety of inhabitants. There are its mountain ranges and upland regions of clear skies and pure airs, where are wide outlooks and horizons whose dim lines fade beyond the reach of clear vision. Amid these mountain ranges and upon these uplands dwell men among the immortals to whom has come the "vision splendid" and whose are the voices that in the crisis of a man or of a nation give forth the call that turns the face upward to life eternal and divine.<sup>1</sup>

Although he vigorously criticized any immoral activity, and many contemporaries felt the sting of his pen, Bengough's work never descended to personal diatribe. Persons were not his object, practices were. Directing his barbs at the activity and not the man himself, Bengough voiced the ethical lessons learned in early Whitby days:

Unhappy is the man who hates any fellow-being . . . . The Omnipotent hath set his eternal fist against every such sentiment.<sup>2</sup>

And, in his final book of verse he underlined this approach,

For no true poet ever hated man,  
Tho' hating deed and policies of men.<sup>3</sup>

Bengough was, above all, a social reformer. His works, in caricature, poem and speech, advanced the ethical values he proposed for a society in need of reform. Hoping to eradicate poverty, want, injustice and inequality, he critically evaluated contemporary conditions, judging them on an ethical basis, and hoping, through his comments, to teach the values necessary in a society reformed.

Seeking to understand and influence the direction of change, Bengough rejected the legitimacy of the modern factory system, from its ownership through to its ethos. Arguing that the self-seeking, profit-oriented industrial ethic

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<sup>1</sup>R. Connor, The Doctor, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906), p.199.

<sup>2</sup>Whitby Gazette, November 5, 1862.

<sup>3</sup>Bengough, "The Poem of Pretoria Day", In Many Keys.

underlay the unequal and unjust system of material appropriation, Bengough asserted that technological advances, to be socially beneficial, had to be accompanied by a community-oriented Christian ethic. Moral progress, as he noted, must keep up with material progress.

Most social or economic problems, conditions of paucity paralleling affluence, and political chicanery, were the results of a prevailing unethical, anti-social ideology. Only by founding social morality on Christian principles could these problems be solved; religion was to be not merely a conventional expectation, but a primary commitment.

So long as we acquiesce in the maintenance of these wrongs of what avail our professions of Christianity? What the proclamation of its sublimities while we keep our fellows degraded beneath a huge injustice? What avails our preaching unless it begets a spirit zealous to rectify wrongs, to establish the triumph of righteousness? What avail our ceremonies and organizations unless founded on the eternal principles of justice? . . . there are things God will not do for us, things the accomplishment of which He has left for us to do, for which He holds us responsible. As we sow shall we reap. Do men gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? Sowing injustice can we reap the fruits of justice, sowing unrighteousness can we reap righteousness? Building on the foundation of the kingdom of evil, how can we establish the kingdom of God?<sup>4</sup>

Arguing from his complete acceptance of a Christian vocational ethic, Bengough asserted that social injustice could only be ameliorated by a diligent application of the proper, Biblically sanctioned, principles of work. Labourers were to be fairly reimbursed for their toil. Work was to be fulfilling and properly alternated with periods of rest and spiritual reflection. And, only those who assisted in the means of production were to realize return from the produce, for work was divinely ordained, ruled by God's laws, and properly understood, was a means for spiritual as well as physical fulfillment, and not merely a method of ensuring survival or attaining material abundance.

Implied within this vocational ethic were the ideals of community, brotherhood, service and duty. All men, Bengough asserted, were brothers in

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<sup>4</sup>Bengough, "Address", Social Reformer, June 1882.

that they were given equal access by God to the fruits of His creation. This demanded that men treat each other as themselves, that the community good and not merely individual benefit should govern all social, economic and political activity. And, only when these Christian vocational ideas were accepted and implemented could Canadian society realize the just and glorious future that awaited it. However, merely stating these values, he realized, would not deliver the future. They were to be implemented through programs of social reform, directed not only to educate and instill new social values, but to change the structure of social institutions as well; and Bengough combined this dual imperative in his championship of both the single tax and prohibition.

Never viewing the single tax as a panacea for social ills, Bengough nevertheless argued that, due to its foundations in Scriptural revelation and its ethically supported arguments, it was a necessary step in the total plan of social reform. In recognizing the right of every man to work and the supreme authority of God, the single tax as he understood it, not only defined the Christian values necessary for social intercourse -- service, equality and community -- but it created the economic framework which would lead both to the realization of those values and provide the structural sanction for their implementation.

Likewise, prohibition iterated moral values and so structured society as to encourage their realization. Bengough championed the ban on liquor not because he felt threatened and wished to re-affirm his social position, but because he genuinely believed that the Scriptural and vocational values that prohibition expressed were necessary for the reform of contemporary society. Alcohol impeded men's life activity by confusing their ability to work, thereby leading them to physical and spiritual depravity. No just or moral society

could condone such a "demon fell", for the "curse of heaven"<sup>5</sup> damned it. Prohibition, the legal embargo against alcohol, not only taught that intemperance was immoral and contrary to the Divine will, but provided structural sanctions against it -- a law which would ensure that every member of society would be directed in the moral path.

This same thematic development of the verity of historical revelation as found in Scripture and the Biblically sanctioned application of a vocational ethic determined not only Bengough's public commentaries, but his whole outlook as well. Consciously working out of his Protestant heritage, he stressed the religious basis of secular thought, and his social ideology was developed out of the application to his contemporary society, of principles arising from his mixture of traditional Calvinist with new Liberal Protestant thought. Stressing both the rational and emotional appeal of the Christian message, he advocated a vocational ethic which advanced simplicity, service, community and the universality of the Message. And, further applying this approach, he described Canada in terms of the essential spirituality reflected in her terrain and charged the Church with its responsibility in the creation of a national sentiment based on her fulfillment of her historic mission to mankind.

This illustration of the basis of Bengough's social thought identifies a direction of study for later nineteenth century Canadian society in general and reform sentiment in particular. As yet, little extensive work has been done on Canadian social ideology. A.R. Allen has identified the religious foundations of early twentieth century social reform, Michael Bliss

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<sup>5</sup>Bengough, "Open Gates of Hell", "The Curse", Motley, p.54, 127.

has attempted to describe and analyse the social ideas of the late nineteenth century business community, and Carl Berger has explained the nature of nineteenth century Canadian imperialist sentiment. But no one has yet studied the popular concept of the idea of work. Even in the two last mentioned examples, both authors commented on, but had not the time to fully explore the ideals of community and service which underlay the expressions of both imperialist and business sentiment, ideals which Bengough identified as arising from a vocational Christian ethic.

The nineteenth century Canadian preoccupation with ideas of work is so obvious as to beg no further identification here. Newspapers, journals, novels, speeches, of all varieties and topics, often carried some mention or analysis of a work ethic. Such a broad and general popular appreciation of a single concept, however varied its interpretations may have been, must have had a great impact on mid-Victorian Canadian culture, and analysis of this concept, as it relates to Canadian reform movements in particular, might yield some valuable insights.

For example, not until after World War I, were women fully recognized as contributing members of Canadian society. This recognition was based on their contribution as war workers, once they had proven their ability to work, they became generally accepted as voters. Similarly, in earlier stages of the suffrage debate differing Canadian viewpoints on the question also revolved around the question of work. George Grant, for example, supported the movement, for he felt that women had proven their ability to work:

Since women have been admitted to the Universities, their average standing is higher than that taken by men. Why? Because their brains are larger, stronger, better? Not at all. I still hold to the old faith, that man is head of creation. As a rule, he has the bigger brain. The creditable, intellectual stand women have taken is mainly due to their moral earnestness. They are more conscientious than men. They work from the beginning of the session.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>G. Grant, Inaugural Address, (Toronto: Grip Printing and Publishing Co. 1885).

Bliss Carman, on the other hand, rejected the whole notion as absurd, on the grounds that women did not know how to work:

Their existence does not depend upon their efficiency, and therefore they can be almost as useless and inefficient as they please . . . Have you ever noticed a nursemaid getting her baby carriage over the curb? Usually she manages to give it the greatest jolt possible. And I think as soon as women can get off a streetcar properly they should be allowed to vote. It is never enough to put strength into the work, one must put heart and brains as well.<sup>7</sup>

An analysis of cultural concepts of work could also lead to a fuller understanding of differences in the social outlook of various individuals and groups of Canadians. Although businessmen such as Joseph Flavelle of National Trust, Fredrick Nicholls of Canadian General Electric, or W.C. Edwards of lumber fame may all have agreed with Bengough's idea of the necessity and virtues of work, they differed in their fundamental approach to the concept. Where Bengough argued that value and service inhered in the very activity of work itself, many influential businessmen argued that it was the product of work that held value and was of service. This seemingly trivial difference in interpretation of an over-riding cultural concept, actually identifies two diametrically opposed social attitudes that in turn influenced different conceptions of the nature and goals of mid-Victorian Canadian society.

Further, the concept of work, arising from a Christian ethic, stressed the necessity of social involvement. With its accompanying ideals of duty, responsibility, service and community, a vocational ethic could, in part, explain the genesis of reform movements and underline the relative autonomy of ideas in history. Social reform, regarded in this light, does not become primarily, or even necessarily, an attempt to reduce tensions growing out of

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<sup>7</sup>Carman, Friendship of Art, pp. 195-198.

a man's efforts to maintain his social position, but a rationally worked out, consciously directed, ethically motivated, impetus.<sup>8</sup> Considering the Canadian cultural tradition, such an argument is more tenable than theories stressing social reform as a product of status anxiety. But, this thesis can only raise that possibility.

Bengough's contemporaries recognized the absolute sincerity of his Christian convictions and resulting social criticisms. His cartooning, damning political dishonesty with all the moral fervour of the caricaturist's art, charged his peers with the responsibility for public morality. Supporting those politicians and parties who, in his opinion, were ethical, honest and dedicated (Mackenzie, Mowat, and Laurier), his graphics influenced the course of all levels of Canadian politics --- federal to municipal, and earned for him a nation-wide reputation as "the Christian Cartoonist", and the "Christian Gentleman".<sup>9</sup> Critics and supporters noted that he had "dedicated his art to the Kingdom of God", and that "his ideals were for the social and moral benefit of mankind".<sup>10</sup> His magazine Grip, was, in the words of one historian, "the prickly conscience of Canada",<sup>11</sup> and Bengough's call for Canadians to build a new social order on Christian principles was similarly expressed by leading intellectuals, labour reformers, and clergy of his time.

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<sup>8</sup>See for example, D.D. Thelen, "Social Tensions and the Origins of Progressivism", Journal of American History, 56 (Sept. 1969-70), and Clyde Griffen "The Progressive Ethos", Cohen and Ratner, eds., The Development of an American Culture. (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1970).

<sup>9</sup>Rev. W.G. Withrow, as cited in T. Bengough, "Life and Work", Bengough Papers, The Toronto Globe, November 23, 1923.

<sup>10</sup>"John Wilson Bengough" Bibliographic Scrapbook, Vol. V, Toronto Public Library.

<sup>11</sup>D.C. Thompson, Alexander Mackenzie Clear Grit, (Toronto: The Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd, 1969), p.391



For example, E.S. Rowe, publisher of the reform journal Citizen and Country, noted that social problems could be solved only with the application of Christian principles:

We believe too, there can be no radical or lasting reform of society except through the influence of the Divine Spirit upon the hearts of men and the embodying of the principles of Jesus in the structure of society.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, the Labor Advocate, another radical reforming labour journal, noted that the new labour movement was at heart a religious one, striving to embed ultimate ethical principles in the industrial order:

The present industrial movement, looking towards a higher social and industrial life for the masses of humanity, is emphatically the great moral and religious reform movement of the Age. We can only serve God by serving humanity. Whatever we do to the most humble of our fellow citizens we do to Him, who commanded us to 'help one another'! This is the spirit which is stirring the hearts and quickening the pulses of the social and economic reformers of the day.<sup>13</sup>

On a less partisan note, the Rev. H.R. Grant, outspoken advocate of prohibition in the Maritimes, told the Presbyterian Synod that:

Public affairs, the social and political business of the country must be brought under the Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount . . . the pulpit must have an outlook on the everyday life of men . . . the state as well as the individual has a character and must obey the . . . teachings of Christ.<sup>14</sup>

And Salem Bland, Methodist clergyman and social reformer, arguing for an almost revolutionary change in the quality of social life, in an address to the Christian Endeavour Union, Brockville, the eighth of November 1899, concluded that Christians "cannot permanently acquiesce in a society organized on un-Christian principles."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Citizen and Country, "Reflections", April 1, 1899.

<sup>13</sup>Labor Advocate, "True", January 30, 1891.

<sup>14</sup>H.R. Grant, as cited in Brown and Cook, Transformed, p.25.

<sup>15</sup>S. Bland, as cited in A.R. Allen, Introduction to Bland, New Christianity.

Bengough's revolt against political partisanship and party government was consistent with an intellectual class' abhorrence and distaste for political trickery; leading Canadian thinkers such as Goldwin Smith, Colonel Denison, Henri Bourassa, Stephen Leacock, George Parkin, and George Grant were outspoken on the subject. Echoing Grant's faith in the "capacity of educators and publicists to exert a profound effect on the popular mind and hence upon the course of politics", economics and other social activity, Bengough was joined by other such well known littérateurs and educators as the McGill University group of William Dawson -- geologist, and Andrew McPhail and John MacCrae of the medical faculty.<sup>16</sup>

Emphasizing the necessity of Christian ethical principles in every day life, Bengough provided a link between earlier expressions of religious ideals and a later progressive movement of social reform which basically reflected the same spiritual principles -- the social gospel movement. When the Congregationalist J.B. Silcox, speaking at a meeting of the first Brotherhood group in Canada, in April 1895, called for a "political faith in Jesus based on the charter of the Sermon on the Mount",<sup>17</sup> he in effect gave another voice to the essential

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<sup>16</sup> Much of this is based on Berger, Sense of Power, pages 199-210 passim, but information on Dawson and MacCrae (who is perhaps best remembered for his poem "In Flanders Fields"), is original.

<sup>17</sup> J.B. Silcox, "Social Resurrection", as cited in Allen, Social Passion, p.7. For a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis which examines the ideological context of the Canadian social gospel movement's most influential years, see Allan, The Social Passion. The early years of the movement remain as yet unexamined. However, some encouraging preliminary studies have been carried out which include: Allen, "Background of the Social Gospel in Canada", Stewart Crysedale, "The Sociology of the Social Gospel -- A Quest for a Modern Ideology", and B.G. Smillie, "The Social Gospel in Canada: A Theological Critique", all in Allen ed., The Social Gospel of Conference Papers, (Ottawa: National Museum of Manitoba, 1975).

concerns that had preoccupied J.W. Bengough since the first issue of Grio came to press in the Spring of 1873. Bengough was surely a major figure in the transition of Protestant social thought in Canada from the preoccupations of mid-century evangelicism to the social gospel.

Bengough echoed an intellectual tradition with its roots deep in the Canadian religious heritage. In his appeal for Christian values, his condemnation of worldliness, his crusading approach to social ills, he called to mind the dedicated circuit rider who brought not only the word of God, but ethical values as well to a rough frontier society hewing a nation from the dense virgin forest. In his appeal to the new nation builders, industrial workers, capitalists, farmers and merchants, Bengough reminded them of the historic values which had shaped their country and which now had to be re-affirmed and re-interpreted in the light of an increasingly complex and industrialized society. It was his firm dedication to absolute Christian principles which helped spur Canadian society on to the social achievements of later years. Every society needs a critic who can express ultimate values and set them against social reality, for social progress, as sociologist Wolfgang J. Mommsen argues, depends upon it:

It is the enormous tension between any given set of ultimate values on the one hand, and empirical reality on the other, which begets extraordinary social achievements. It is only by grasping far beyond the everyday reality that great inner-worldly achievements come about.<sup>18</sup>

In late nineteenth century Canadian society, Bengough was that critic.

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<sup>18</sup>W.J. Mommsen, The Age of Bureaucracy: Perspectives on the Political Sociology of Max Weber, Explorations in Interpretative Sociology, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), p.102.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

Since this thesis was an examination of the social thought of one man, John Wilson Bengough, it made exhaustive use both of his personal papers and Grip, the magazine he edited. Especially helpful were his manuscript writings discussing various aspects of the single tax and prohibition. Equally as important were his poems, for the gifted poet can express in one phrase an idea or feeling which an essayist must take pages to develop. Further, and perhaps most valuable, were the collections of Bengough's cartoons, both in unbound and book form, for in their pictorial messages they not only provided an insight into the scope and nature of his thought, but gave concrete examples of his reaction to changing political and social events.

Mid and late-Victorian Canadian thought was examined in sources which varied from published books and pamphlets, to newspapers and manuscript collections --- of which the George Munroe Grant Papers, the Edith and Lorne Pierce Collection, and the Ontario College of Art Archives Collection proved the most valuable. The use of selected issues of the Whitby Gazette and the two Brampton papers led not only to an identification of the cultural concepts influencing Bengough's boyhood years, but also to an illustration of the values common to a rapidly growing rural Ontario. When balanced with the urban outlook as expressed in the Globe, various Protestant points of view as found in the Canadian Baptist, Christian Guardian, and Methodist Magazine and Review, and other perspectives found in the labour press, single tax publications, and the Queen's Quarterly, these sources identified a wide cross-section of later nineteenth and early twentieth

century Canadian thought.

Secondary sources, in book or article form, which deal with the culture and social ideology of this period are slim, and except for A.R. Allen, The Social Passion which deals with the religious thought of the nation at a somewhat later period, and C. Berger, The Sense of Power which examines a specific cause -- imperialism, are indeed almost non-existent. Important steps towards the understanding of the development and change of ideological and cultural perspectives have actually only begun to be made in recent American historiography, and those articles and books containing concepts and approaches most useful to this study have been noted in the section on secondary sources.

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