

against free government and the interests of the people of this city, of all classes and parties. If he fights it, he fights the truth; if he misrepresents it he will be known for a perverter; if he lampoons it he will be recognized as a buffoon.

The People's Party should now prepare to go into the campaign with vigor and enthusiasm. On so sound and broad a platform their cause must commend itself to the best people of the city, and it will doubtless gather upon its firm, well supported and closely fitted planks, a majority of the permanent citizens, no matter what may be their professions of faith or their affiliations of political party.

THE QUEBEC DISASTER.

THAT was a startling disaster that occurred recently in the city of Quebec, Canada. The darkness gave additional horror to the scene. It is a peculiar town, being partly built upon a high eminence, and a portion of it at the base of a precipitous cliff.

A great mass of rock on the upper face of the crag gave way and rolled down the steep declivity a distance of 800 feet, reducing dwellings to ruin on the way and burying them and their inmates, to the number of considerably over two hundred under a pile of debris 300 feet long and fifteen feet thick. After thirteen killed and sixteen injured had been exhumed the latest news from the scene of the disaster states that at least 200 bodies were still in the ruins.

The calamity is a pitiful one. The anxious corps of rescuers could hear shrieks and plaintive appeals for help uttered by the mangled and imprisoned people under the mass of rock and rubbish, but the process of reaching the unfortunates was slow, so they had to listen and work.

The present epoch, take it all in all, is certainly one of dire disaster, nearly every electric vibration of the wires bringing news of fresh catastrophes, involving death and destruction.

"A SCREW LOOSE."

THE action of the grand jury in ignoring the cases of several noted culprits, including the young ruffians who have been so long a nuisance to the community and whose crimes are of no common character, must give

surprise to the public and be regretted by lovers of law and order. In some of the cases ignored the defendants plead guilty in the police court, and the evidence against them was thought to be conclusive.

There may be reasons for the course taken in their cases that are hidden from the common sight, but it will be believed that they are not of the kind which should prevail in the administration of law and justice. Of what avail is it that proofs of crime are obtained by the officers who are entrusted with the preservation of the public peace and that committals are obtained on this evidence in the lower courts, if the body selected to frame indictments in such cases turn the offenders loose to prey again upon society.

We have no disposition to find fault with public men in the discharge of their duties or the exercise of that discretion which the laws permits. But we must confess to some surprise and not a little indignation, that such flagrant cases as some which the grand jury have ignored are removed from possibility of punishment, and the notorious offenders are free to repeat their depredations. The general remark is "there is a screw loose, somewhere."

It looks like an attempt to throw cold water upon the zeal of the lower court in the proper enforcement of criminal law.

THE LAND QUESTION.

THE *Statesman* for September contains a capital article from the pen of Fontaine T. Fox, under the caption of "Henry George and the Gracchi." In view of the present social and political situation and tendencies of the times in this country, we commend it to the perusal of those who are desirous that the land and water should be held by the people and not in vast tracts and quantities by individuals and corporations. The causes and effects that presaged the disruption of the Roman empire exist largely in our own republic. These danger signals ought to be heeded, lest the final result should be uniform with the premonitory symptoms. We here present an extract from Mr. Fox's article:

"History repeats itself." Mr. George in undertaking to correct the social and political evils of the present time, and to reform the science of political economy by his theory of land taxation, is attempting what the Gracchi tried in Rome. That the social and political condition of the American people today is quite

similar to that of Rome during the period of the Gracchi, is a fact easily established and well known to students of history.

"Froude, in his sketch of Caesar, says:

"It was an age of material progress, and material civilization; an age of civil liberty, and intellectual culture; an age of pamphlets and epigrams, of salons and dinner parties, of senatorial majorities and electoral corruption. The highest offices of state were open in theory to the meanest citizen; they were confined, in fact, to those who had the longest purses, or the most ready use of the tongue on popular platforms. Distinction of birth had been exchanged for distinctions of wealth. The struggles between plebeians and patricians, for equality of privilege were over, and a new division had been formed between the party of property and a party who desired a change in the structure of society. The free cultivators were disappearing from the soil. Italy was being absorbed into vast estates held by a few favored families and cultivated by slaves, while the old agricultural population was driven off the land, and was crowded into towns. The rich were extravagant, for life had ceased to have practical interest, except for its material pleasures; the occupation of the higher classes was to obtain money without labor, and to spend it in idle enjoyment."

"Mommson speaks of the struggle between these classes in the state as a great conflict between labor and capital, which grew out of the economic, social and political conditions of Rome. Without going into a minute and detailed description of the landed system of Rome, analyzing it so fully that its entire nature will be here laid bare, it is sufficient for the purpose of this discussion to say that there was under the Roman Government two kinds of lands or titles to lands—lands belonging to private citizens, and lands belonging to the state or government, called "public lands," of which there were originally many millions of acres. The state had, in times past, under authority of law, leased it to tenants in small holdings, which had in various ways been acquired by the great lords and rich commoners, sometimes by purchase and bribery; at others by illegal process and even by forcible seizure, and frequently by an eviction of the wife and children, while the husband was at work in his fields. Returning to his mid-day meal, he found his hapless family houseless and homeless from the grasping demands of the rich man for more land—too weak to resist, he was strong enough only to submit. Whatever was necessary to get possession of this public domain by or for the rich, the idle rich of the city, was done, and when so acquired the former tenants had nowhere on earth to go but to Rome, and to Rome they went in vast numbers, until the population of the city was only equaled by its pretension. There was no pretense of title under the law to the land, as held by these great capitalists and lords. They had no right to the