

One of the premises from which the statistician argues may be true; yet the conclusion is an absurdity. One might just as well argue that because the mean temperature in a given locality is in March 40 degrees, in April 50 degrees and in May 60 degrees, therefore in January it must have been 20 degrees and in December it will be 130 degrees above zero. And yet, much of this kind of reasoning is, on important questions, passed off as science.

### THE FIRST GUN.

**Editor News:**—The Granite Paper Mill should be re-built for reasons too numerous to mention. If a bonus is necessary to induce the company to build, I heretofore subscribe \$50 to the same.

GEORGE J. TAYLOR.

That is a good starter, and if those who take a similar view of the case and are able will step to the front in like manner, the paper mill will not long slumber amid its ashes. The list being thus informally opened, the thing to be done now is to make it formal and then let it grow as fast as possible. We have none too many enterprises of that kind in our midst, and would rather encourage their erection by popular subscription than not have them at all, more particularly when, as in the case spoken of, it is a loss in which all are concerned and a few comparatively poor men have been the principal sufferers in a financial sense. They can not rebuild the mill alone, and it ought to be a pleasant duty to all who can afford it to aid them. Who comes next?

### NO GERRYMANDER.

When Elbridge Gerry conceived the idea of so arranging communities in voting districts as to give the greatest possible benefits to the party doing it while preserving the semblance of fairness and equal representation, he little thought he was creating a legacy for posterity down perhaps to the end of time. There is some excuse to be found for him, in that the country then had but just emerged from British control and the parties were more nearly American and anti-American than they have since been, and it was necessary at times, perhaps, to make secure by strategy what had been gained by the force of arms and the shedding of blood.

It is altogether different now—has been different for a century nearly. Yet the seed planted by Gerry and which grew up and served its purpose, had acquired an existence and, like the Canadian thistle, it was able thereafter to grow and spread without assistance. It now pervades every department of our political system, high and low. It is only necessary that a party have supreme control in any state or part thereof to set it at work gerrymandering to perpetuate its power, whether the people want it or not. To this end, districts, divisions and precincts are sometimes thrown together in the most irregular, inconvenient and grotesque fashion—some of them re-

sembling, when mapped, a whiplash, others a river bottom, others the subside of a freshet, others still a calf pasture with numerous outlets, and few if any possessing the symmetry and compactness which the founders contemplated, and which ought to be required by the charter itself. It is everything for the party of the first part, every consideration for the state or community being secondary and incidental.

This kind of thing has become so nearly the rule that the people have almost entirely ceased to oppose it, although its plain and unmistakable tendency is to circumvent if not to completely baffle the popular will in places. But the recognition which the system has obtained does not make it one whit the less mischievous or vicious. This is particularly so in cities or crowded commonwealths where everybody is in touch to some extent with everybody else and where something like comity and business principles should prevail. It is a bad citizen that tries to accomplish the unjustified discomfiture of a neighbor or to take a mean advantage of him, and in a city, while we may properly enough conflict as partisans, there is no call for the party holding the reins to seek to obliterate the representation of those who worked and voted against it.

The News does not charge our City Council with the social crime of suppressing representation in this municipality or with the intention of doing so, because there is no evidence except what is circumstantial to that effect. We do say, however, that the record so far made by the solons is far from assuring; that there has been too much of a tendency to do things on a strict partisan basis; that there is a great array of precedents which they could point to in support of such a proceeding; and that with all these taken into consideration and the opportunity which they have of doing the thing mentioned and at the same time taking shelter behind the presently unequal and irregular population of the precincts, it would not be altogether a careless charge if made. Still, we prefer to believe that no such thing will be attempted.

### NATIONAL SCANDALS.

France should be pretty well purged of her great scandal by this time. Certainly she has not sought by devious methods or at all to modify the shame which she undoubtedly felt in the presence of the nations, nor to screen the actors in the rascally business. The appeal taken by Charles de Lesseps, M. Baihut and M. Blondin did them no good whatever, unless postponing the operation of their sentences for the time being can be so considered, for the judgment of the trial court was affirmed, that of the six other participants being reversed.

There is still, however, as shown by an eastern cotemporary, much left undone in that connection that it thinks should have been looked after. For instance the deputies to the number of 104, who were bribed, are untouched; Messrs. Floquet, Rouvier and De Freycinet, accused of complicity with the Panama directors in

using Panama money for political purposes and in other ways, have resigned their respective portfolios, but have not been brought to trial. Arton, the agent employed in bribing the deputies, was suffered to escape and has not been found. The deputies who were corrupted still retain their seats and vote solidly for the government in the hope of retaining it in power until the next general election, which takes place some months hence, by which time, with the close of the trials, it is thought that the excitement over Panama will have subsided. We can see no good reason why it should not subside. The nation has gone about as far as practicable in the matter. It would be an exceedingly difficult if not impossible task to follow up and prosecute every person connected with the Panama job; and after making full exposures of all aud prosecutions of the ringleaders, to go further in that direction would seem to be vindictiveness as well as a wanton waste of the people's money and public officers' time.

Our cotemporary, however, refuses to be comforted. "It has been demonstrated," it says, "that over two millions of francs were distributed among the deputies and the Paris and provincial newspapers for their concurrence in and support of the lottery bill. The journals so subsidized number some hundreds, those supporting the government receiving three hundred thousand francs of Panama money during the Boulangist excitement as secret service money, besides the vast amount paid to opposition journals by the agents of the Panama directors in the shape of costly advertising for the influence of their editorial columns. These journals steeped themselves in corruption, but, alleging that their transactions with Panama were simply matters of business, have never ceased to denounce the government for consenting to the Panama trials—which it certainly did most reluctantly—and have sought in every way to minimize the result. The attacks on it, nevertheless, have been incessant, and in every way the Panama directors have been defended for their acts."

Except for the innuendo contained in the foregoing lines there can be no successful denial of them. The directors were defended, of course; it would have been a very uncivilized performance if they had not been. There must be a defense as well as a prosecution in order to have a fair trial. It is admitted that their principal if not their only guilt was an ardent faith in the ultimate success of the work they had undertaken and too generous a weakness in submitting to the "crowd of blackmailers that surrounded and strangled them." Very well; the important element of interest to defraud is thus weakened if not destroyed, and it is a very indifferent sort of offense in which that element is not conspicuous. When we think of our own national scandals, or some of them—the Credit Mobilier, the Pacific Mail subsidy and the Star Route matter, for instance—and compare the prompt, energetic and determined manner which characterized the procedure of our early ally with our puny and half-hearted efforts, it does seem as though the less we said on the subject the better off we would be.