

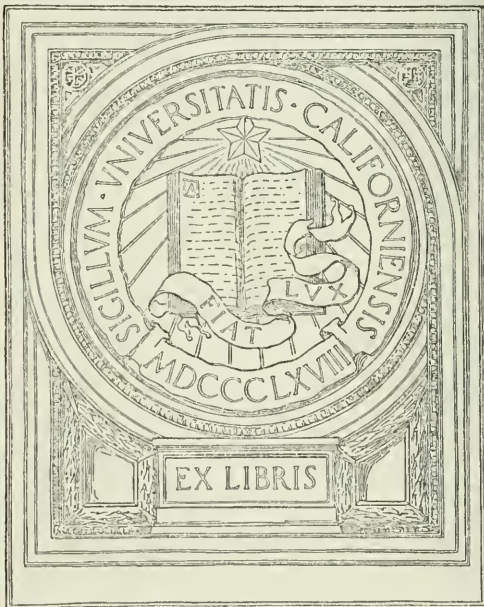
Letters

 to a

ALBION W. TOURGÉE, LL. D.

King

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LETTERS TO A KING

BY

ALBION W. TOURGÉE, LL. D.,

AUTHOR OF "A FOOL'S ERRAND," "AN APPEAL TO CÆSAR," ETC.

Where the word of a king is, there is power.

—ECCLES. VIII, 4.

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To the Sons
Of those who died that the Republic might live,
This volume is inscribed,
In the earnest hope that it may aid them
To appreciate their heritage.

462391

P R E F A C E.

A LETTER of congratulation addressed to the son of an old comrade, on his twenty-first birthday, has grown into a volume, the aim of which is twofold. It is designed in the first place to impress upon young men that they are the recipients, not only of a priceless political inheritance, but of a commensurate responsibility, bequeathed to them by a generation which did not hesitate to shed its blood to perpetuate the idea of "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people," on the soil of America. The fact of individual responsibility on the part of the citizen has been very little considered, even by those who have dwelt upon the ethical principles of our government.

The doctrine that politics is the broadest, richest, and most important field of Christian endeavor, will probably seem to many a startling proposition; but it is one on the truth of which the future, not only of republican government, but of Christian civilization depends. Neither of these can be regarded

as secure until it is accepted as a principle of Christian ethics that a man can no more stand idly by and see public evils prevail and expect to be held guiltless, than if he were a willing witness of his brother's murder.

From this principle flows the other which this is work designed to set forth,—to wit: that responsibility for political evils can not be avoided by a mere perfunctory exercise of the electoral franchise. A soldier using arms of precision might as well claim to have discharged his duty by merely pulling the trigger in the hour of battle as a citizen console himself with the idea that nothing more is required of him than merely to cast a ballot. The soldier who fails to take aim, and thereby make his shot effective, is a coward and a traitor to the flag he pretends to serve. The citizen who casts a ballot at hap-hazard is not a whit better. The soldier's eye is trained on purpose that he may take aim; the citizen's brain and conscience are given him that he may use his power to the best advantage—to secure the greatest good of the greatest number. This work, therefore, concerns itself very largely with political instrumentalities—the means by which the citizen's power may be made effective.

There has been of late a curious tendency among

political thinkers to rely too much upon mere mechanical reforms. Individual responsibility is too often thought to end with the enactment of laws. It is very generally assumed that political evils may be cured by cunningly contrived devices which shall trip the "heeler" at his finest work, and leave the "boss" to gnash his teeth in impotent rage at his inability to cheat the patent "automatic self-registering" ballot-boxes, or evade the rigorous restraints of the "new, warranted pure because imported" system of State ballot-supply and ticket-adjustment. Such devices are in the main merely scarecrows, which serve to lull the husbandman to slumber while the fowls of the air despoil his crop. Good laws may arm the citizen for the performance of his duty, but no device will ever be invented that will permit him to relax his vigilance or intermit his care.

This work is not founded upon the idea that a political millennium is imminent or even possible, but is the outcome of an irresistible conviction that the common sense, intelligence, and conscience of the whole people is a surer guarantee of good government than all the speculative wisdom of those who, falsely claiming to be "the better classes," are not unfrequently the very worst and most dangerous elements of our society. While partisanship is set

forth as the very foremost duty of the citizen, the work is not in the least degree intended to subserve the interests of any party. The principles it enunciates are universal, applying to one party as well as to another—party itself being regarded only as an instrumentality by which popular purpose may be carried into effect.

If this volume shall help to awaken those who may peruse its pages to the fact that self-government is not only a glorious privilege but a priceless trust, which it is the highest duty of to-day to transmit, not merely unimpaired, but greatly strengthened and improved to-morrow; and if it shall serve to make clear to any the fact that to exercise the power of the citizen is a personal duty in the performance of which the individual is subject always to the obligations of Christian morality, the author will count himself well repaid for the labor of its preparation.

THORHEIM, July 4, 1888.

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LETTERS TO A KING.

I.

“BE A MAN.”

MY DEAR JOHN:—

THIS is your twenty-first birthday. Yesterday you were an infant ; to-day you are a man. I should content myself with formal congratulations upon this most notable event of your life, were it not that the relations I once sustained to your father may, perhaps, be thought to entitle me to speak somewhat more familiarly to a son whom he, alas! may no longer instruct save by the influence of a noble example.

We were not only contemporaries—your father and I—but compatriots as well. Our entrances upon the stage of life were so nearly simultaneous that we may almost be said to have responded to the same cue. In boyhood we were playmates ; in youth companions. When we crossed the median line between youth and manhood by which you are standing to-day, the shadow of impending conflict hung over the land. Side by side we received “the baptism of fire” on the first great battle-field of the mightiest struggle that history records. In its lurid

light we learned how close is the bond that unites each individual life to the common destiny—how the great world-life rests evenly on every man's shoulders; how the atoms make up the mass and the whole is colored by the life of each. In that hour our friendship was cemented by the strange intimacy which community of peril gives—the comradeship that fuses the hearts of those who stand shoulder to shoulder amid the red glare of battle—a sentiment which no diversity of rank or station can ever afterward wholly destroy. Hardly a year had passed when already bronzed and toughened veterans, standing by his side on the crest of a hill, which that autumn day made forever memorable, I heard most forcefully expressed the injunction which I would might first of all things fall upon the ears and impress itself upon the soul of every young American as he crosses the threshold of manhood:

“Be a Man.”

It is no light thing to be a man. “Behold a man-child is born,” is the celestial greeting to those into whose hands the destinies of unnumbered generations are committed. Crowns may crumble; kings may perish; dynasties may be forgotten; but in the lives of those who are to come after him, each man finds an immortality. It is no unusual injunction, yet the One Divine did not esteem it unworthy of obedience, and taught us by His example that it is

the golden door by which humanity may be approached. He who would faithfully serve, worthily lead, or pleasantly consort with his fellows, must, first of all things, be a man. It is strange how this simple phrase was stamped that day upon my mind. No doubt the surroundings had much to do with the vividness with which it stands out in my memory of a scene which itself was one of those that leave a scar upon the soul no after life can obliterate.

It was a fair October day. The Indian summer haze hung on the distant hillsides. The elms were already bare and brown. The red berries of the holly showed through the prickly leaves where they grew in clusters by the road-side. The hickories made golden gashes in the wooded horizon. The sumach flamed in the hedge-rows, and the persimmons were just changing their dull green for the duller red that tells of the ripening touch of frost. The fields were white with dry, feathery sedge-grass, or dark with the rank growth of sere ragweed that clothed the stubble-lands. The walnut-trees had strewn their pale leaves and green-coated fruit in amber circles on the unfrequented roadway along which we had marched that morning. Our feet had slipped upon the acrid shells and crushed the nuts into the dark red soil, filling the air with spicy aroma. The oaks that crowned the Kentucky "knobs" were showing russet tints, and the low-branching chestnuts held up the velvet lining of their burrs in

mute protestation of the faithfulness with which they had surrendered their treasures, keeping nothing back to tempt the hand of the ravisher.

We met the dropping irregular fire of the skirmishers before the sun had climbed half-way to the meridian, and pushed them backward over hill and dale until the noon glared hotly down upon us, and the angry roar of artillery began to mingle with their scattering fire. Yet there was no hostile force in sight. Our light skirmish line easily advanced, almost unhindered by the shots which they returned, no doubt, with like harmlessness. The preparations for conflict were deliberately, though foolishly, made. The general in command was a soldier by education, and a palterer by instinct. He had an overwhelming dread of his opponent, was without confidence in those he commanded, and had an invincible distrust of himself. He was a scientific soldier, who wanted to see all the enemy's powers before making a move!

Marching through a cornfield, where the maize stalks stood in serried rows of rankest growth, as the rifle balls came whistling by, we learned to distinguish by the sound whether they cut stalk or leaf or scattered the golden grains from the ripe, drooping ear. Halting beneath the shadow of a grove of oaks, we laughed, not altogether joyfully, as we felt the ripe acorns, rattled down upon our heads by the shells that came screeching through the heavy-laden

branches. At length we reached an unprotected crest where the stubble showed yellow in the midday sunshine. Cannon to right and left, in front and rear, made the earth tremble, and filled the palpitating air with soft, fleecy clouds, that floated away from the exploding shells. All were hidden from our sight by the wooded “knobs” around, except one battery to our left and rear that fired spitefully into the silent woods, and one that with reckless audacity was pushed forward in our very front. The fire of the skirmishers had died away, and the stillness of the hot noonday was only broken by this angry duel waged over our heads. Not an enemy was to be seen, and with all the clangor that filled the balmy air, it was difficult to realize that we were standing on a battle-field. The blue line halted. The alignment was corrected. Those who wore swords fell back to their respective stations in the rear of the steel-crowned ranks. We waited only for the order to advance in line upon the unseen foe.

Just in front of me stood a lad whose great brown eyes and dark waving locks were like those your mirror reveals when you look into its silvery depths. He was yet in his teens—the down of coming manhood scarcely casting a shadow on his fine lip, which quivered with excitement as he asked in a tense whisper as I passed down the line, “Do you think there will be a battle?”

It was the first time he had witnessed the pre-

liminaries of such a conflict. Hardly more than a month before he had left a peaceful home, despite a brother's remonstrance and a sister's prayer, to undertake a soldier's duty and encounter a soldier's perils. Almost as he spoke, from a wooded crest scarce a bowshot away, leaped flashing tongues of flame that brought the message of death to hundreds of our ill-fated left wing on that day so fecund of the angry memories which fill the soldier's heart when he feels himself balked of triumph, and knows his comrade's blood to have been vainly shed through a leader's gross incompetency.

A shudder ran along the line. Men moaned and sunk into eternal silence. Others spun quickly round, and with upstretched arms and rigid muscles fell stiff and prone to rearward, as if the thought of flight had flashed in that last instant through the shattered brain. Still others crept pallid and trembling to the rear, pressing with bloody hands the pulsing fountains through which their life-blood ebbed away. I took little heed of those things at the time. They were only incidents that photographed themselves upon my memory. At such a moment a subaltern has time and thought for nothing but the men composing that part of the line for which he is responsible. His eyes are upon them; his ears open only to the commands that may be transmitted; his whole attention concentrated upon those few files which he must encourage, assist, inspire.

No one waited for orders after that deadly blast. All knew that we were in the very vortex of battle. Before any officer's lips could frame the command to fire, the polished barrels had fallen to the poise; there was the fateful click of back-drawn hammers; the gleam of flashing eyes along the leveled steel and the roar of the answering volley. Then came the indescribable turmoil of battle. The air seemed full of hissing metal. Men stood or knelt, but kept on firing steadily. The files grew fewer. I paced back and forth behind them, proud alike of the living and the dead. The young lad bit his cartridge and rammed home the ball, his fair face aglow with excitement, but his hand as steady as a veteran's. As he fixed the cap, his eye sought with quick, stolen glances the flame-lit copse in which the foe lay hid. On either hand his stricken comrades were falling thick and fast—dropping where they stood or staggering backward in that pallid swoon that tells the woeful tale of death even more terribly than the silent heaps of clay that fall unmoving at our feet. Ah me! how swift the blue line melted! and still the unseen enemy poured upon us the pitiless leaden hail, and still we loaded and fired at the smoking thicket.

Then the weak line wavered, bending backward here and there where it had grown thinnest in the breath of the hot tornado. At that moment the brother of this lad, a veteran to whom battle-scenes had grown familiar, rushing for an instant from his

post of duty, sought along the weakened line for the boy who was to him as the apple of his eye. His face was lighted with the glare of battle; his lips shut close and his eyes blazed with the fierce joy that comes to the hero-soul in the hour of supreme peril. As his glance fell upon the youth he sought, the half-anxious look faded from his face and a smile of grim satisfaction took its place. He laid his hand upon his brother's shoulder, and said in the even tone that sounds so clear above the roar of battle: "Be a man, John!"

There was a look of proud reproachfulness on the fair, powder-stained face that turned to meet his gaze, and a smile of yet prouder approval curved the bearded lip as the veteran's hand rested an instant on the boy's shoulder, and he repeated tenderly his injunction, "Be a man, John!"

The tide of battle ebbed and flowed, and when the moon rose after that tumultuous day, it shone on John's face, white and cold, lying where he had stood, with the pallid ranks stretching away on either hand, his feet the very foremost towards the foe. He sleeps in peace under the giant oaks which seem to exult even yet in the valorous fight that was waged in the shadow of their branches.

You bear the name of that young hero. The blood that swells your veins is akin to that which stained the stubble on that fateful field. You, too, are entering upon a mighty conflict. The battle field

of life stretches away before your feet. Every point of vantage is held by an enemy open or concealed. The world looks on, expectant of valorous deeds. The country for which your honored namesake died asks no less of you than it demanded of him. It may not call you to the field of conflict. Your heart may never throb with "that stern joy that warriors feel." You may never know the intoxication of triumph or the sickening woe of defeat. Yet all the same, the country expects, and has a right to expect, that you will protect her interests, conserve her liberties, and devote yourself to her service with a courage, devotion, self-sacrifice, and intelligence not excelled by him whose name you bear. The battles of liberty and right are not all fought with the sword, and the noblest victories are oftentimes peaceful and bloodless ones; but the same heroic attributes are required to win them that sustain the soldier in the hour of battle. It was the hero poet-king who put to rout the enemies of Israel, but it was the son whose hands knew not the stain of blood, who builded the temple of the Most High.

"Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war."

It is not for me to prescribe what you should do. You hold in your hands the weapons of to-day. You are in the fore-front of the battle. I am of the past, lingering in the rear, once more a subaltern who seeks to inspire rather than direct. You

are armed and equipped and on your courage and skill the outcome of the conflict rests. Presumably, you have been taught to use your weapons and trained to perform the duties devolving upon you. You have the right to ask the veteran, who has often watched the signs of coming conflict, "Do you think there will be a battle?" though the answer will not come from his lips but from the foemen who ever beset the pathway of progress and threaten the temple of liberty. Yesterday can never fight the battles of to-day, nor even point out how its victories shall be won. It can only train the soldiers who shall join battle with unseen foes, and fight, and fall perhaps, in the never-ending conflict for the right.

As a part of the past which lays at once its behest and benison upon the present, and, relying upon its courage, fortitude, and devotion, bids defiance to the ills of the future, I can but repeat the injunction your honored father laid upon his young brother amid the roar of battle, "Be a man, John!"

You and all those who will come with you into the birthright of American citizenship in this year of Grace, have a rich inheritance of example to inspire to patriotic endeavor. You were born at the climax of an heroic epoch. You were the first-fruits of peace. The cannon's triumphant echoes rocked the cradles of the rescued nation's new-born sons. The songs of the camp were your lullaby, and the story of a father's heroism the food on which your young

imagination fed. In all the world's history there has never been a generation so splendidly equipped, so proudly sired, and of whom the world has a right to demand so high an ideal of duty, such complete devotion to the right, and so grand a tale of noble achievements. If blood tells, surely men begotten by heroes in the first moments of peace, after a quadrenniate of the most glorious warfare, should be braver, stronger, and truer than the children of care or the petted offspring of prosperous ease.

There is scarcely one in all the thousands whom this year will usher into American citizenship, and who will for the first time exercise the powers of a citizen, who is not able to point to some spot in our national domain, sanctified by the very blood that flows in his veins undiluted by intervening lives. Whether shed under the "Stars" or beneath the ill-fated shadow of the "Bars," the lesson of hero-blood is still the same matchless truth sanctified by the lips of the noblest spirit of even that climacteric epoch—"Devotion to the right as God gives us to see the right!"

The heroic past looks to its first-born for the performance, not of specific testamentary injunctions, but for the fulfillment of the one all-comprehending behest which the heat of battle distilled from your father's lips, itself the very essence of his own heroic life:

"Be a Man."

II.

“LONG LIVE THE KING.”

THERE is a story of the Tsar Nicholas, which every American mother ought to tell to her children when she would teach them “that country’s a thing men should die for at need,” or, what is more difficult, live for, since

“Peace hath higher tests of manhood
Than battle ever knew.”

It is said that when the first section of railway ever built in Russia was completed, the great Tsar made a tour of inspection over it, attended by a numerous and brilliant suite. The American engineer, under whose direction it had been constructed, accompanied the party, and, naturally enough, was called on by the sovereign to point out the difficulties which had been overcome, explain how the work had been accomplished, and unfold the advantages to be derived by the Muscovite empire from the system of railways which he had devised, and of which the line they were testing was only the beginning. It was an opportunity he had long desired; for he thought, not without reason, that if he could once get the ear of

the sagacious monarch he would be able to convince him that the future strength and glory of the empire depended on just such an adaptation of the great force of modern civilization.

In anticipation of this occasion, therefore, the engineer had prepared a map which showed how, by lines which would require no protecting forces, being beyond the reach of hostile attack, and approaching foreign borders only at what are strategically termed “points of contact,” every frontier of the empire might be made more accessible from within than by any hostile power from without. By it he was able to demonstrate that England’s sovereignty of the seas might be set at naught; the barricades of the Bosphorus be laughed at; Persia made a wall of defense rather than an obstacle to the empire’s enlargement; India threatened without exposing Cronstadt; the Turk’s position attacked from the rear, and Austria and Prussia left powerless to intervene. The plan has since been carried out in part, and the fact clearly established that the American engineer fully comprehended the military advantages of the Muscovite empire, and fathomed the necessity for constant aggression which underlies the throne of the Tsar—a fate at once terrible and resistless, which impels the empire towards its destiny. Even as these sheets are passing through the press, the half-completed system he devised is one of the most important elements of what is known as the

“European situation.” When it is perfected, and the whole strength of the great empire can be readily concentrated at any point on its borders, no adjoining nationality will be able to resist its power, and no allied forces able to punish it for aggression. “Russia has but to wait and watch,” said the great Peter. More truly might it now be said that she has but to wait, and build railroads diverging from her great, unassailable center.

So interested did the American become in his great project that unconsciously he took a seat beside the emperor, and unfolding the map upon his knee, began to point out to the autocrat of all the Russias the capabilities of his vast dominion. Mile after mile the train sped on, and still the two continued their conversation. Sometimes it was the engineering difficulties of the line over which they were passing, and sometimes the future of the empire that occupied their attention. In the suite of the autocrat were cabinet ministers, generals, officers of his body-guard, and many of the most illustrious nobles of the realm. All of them remained standing; only the Tsar and the American, in his plain frock-coat, were seated. The engineer was unconscious of this breach of royal etiquette, and the Tsar had either been too deeply absorbed to notice, or had chosen to overlook it. To the courtiers, however, it was a most heinous offense. Their eyes flashed, the black Muscovite brows contracted, and their swarthy cheeks burned

with rage, as they noted the unconscious impudence of the American. At length their muttered indignation reached the ear of Nicholas. He was not one to allow inferiors to comment on what he chose to permit. Turning towards them with that imperial dignity which characterized him, he said:

“You are wrong, gentlemen. This man is *a king!* You are only subjects. He may be the ruler of his people to-morrow; you can never be more than the servants of your sovereign!”

The Tsar was not only right, but in a sense which he could hardly have understood, the man with whom he conversed was not only a possible ruler, but an actual sovereign, and, as such, entitled by royal etiquette to sit in the presence of kings.

You have no doubt come to accept the modern notion which sneers at American political ideas as, in the main, correct. You have, perhaps, been accustomed to speak of our government as the “republican experiment,” and wagged your head in grave premonition while discoursing of specific ills that seem to impend. You may even have questioned whether citizenship in the great Republic is a thing to be proud of; though I trust you have not yet come to profess yourself ashamed of the birthright hallowed by your father’s blood. Comparing our American life with specific phases of life in other lands, you may, however, have become sufficiently “advanced” in your views to coolly ask yourself whether there is any solid distinc-

tion between the terms "citizen" and "subject," and whether "republican institutions" really imply an enlargement of human liberty and individual rights. It is a curious fact, that among those claiming to represent the most highly cultivated and intelligent classes, especially of the Eastern and Middle States, the general trend of sentiment is in the direction of admitting the failure of republican institutions, and the acceptance of modifications and limitations thereof which will restrict the privileges of the many and enhance the power of the few. In other words, there is to be found among those claiming to represent the most advanced thought, the highest aspiration and purest purpose, a distinct tendency to restrict the operation of the distinctive principle of American democracy,—equality of right, privilege, and opportunity.

We are often told that the "experiment" of self-government and unrestricted privilege has proved a failure—as if it were a *completed* experiment, a system, a form, and *not* an evolution or condition of individual and collective life.

The fact that kings have become tyrants, and that misgovernment and revolution resulted, though it has been repeated over and over again for centuries, is not regarded as sufficient to establish the conclusion that monarchy as a form of government is a failure. Yet monarchy is an experiment which has failed a hundred times for every instance in which democracy has proved unsuccessful. In such cases,

however, the world has very properly attributed the failure, not so much to defects of the system, as to the folly of the sovereign. It may be doubted if there has thus far in the history of mankind been any great popular movement which was at the outset aimed specifically against the *form* of government,—demanding the overthrow of monarchy and the establishment of a republic as its prime object,—unless, perhaps, it was the French Revolution of 1848. Even then it was more the folly of the sovereign than the form of government that provoked the uprising of the people. Almost invariably the chief aim of popular revolution has been the reform of abuses which a sagacious ruler should have granted without compulsion, and a really wise one would never have permitted to exist. Good government rather than self-government has usually been the incentive to revolution.

Even in the case of the American Colonies, it may be questioned whether the rebellion was not against specific acts of Parliament and the traditional policy of Great Britain, rather than against monarchical government; or, rather, I might say, it is almost impossible to doubt that such was the real fact. To this may be added, no doubt, the personal unpopularity of George III and the non-English character of the royal family. In Great Britain the choice lay between the House of Hanover and the Stuarts; in the Colonies, antipathy to the representative of sov-

ereign authority intensified the feeling against a government which, despite all that may be said in glorification of our fathers, had become irksome because of its character rather than its form. The skill of Jefferson planted the seeds of democracy in the Declaration of Independence, and made action under it, of necessity, a movement in the direction of popular government as an well as independent government. Even in this instance, therefore, it can not be properly predicated of the monarchical *form of government*, that it proved itself a failure; but only that the Parliamentary and ministerial policy of Great Britain and the personal unpopularity of a foreign dynasty drove the colonists to elect between their hereditary sovereign and the only possible alternative,—the experiment of popular government.

But if repeated instances of failure and unnumbered revolutions are not enough logically to establish the insufficiency of the monarchical form of government, as such, what shall be said of the pessimistic inconsistency which, after less than a hundred years of trial, begins anxiously to inquire whether “the experiment” of republican government has not proved a failure? Why in the case of a republic are we inclined to leap at once to the conclusion that the “form of government” is at fault, and in the case of a monarchy attribute the “failure” to the folly or incapacity of the particular sovereign who at the time bears sway? If we admit that it was

the policy of Great Britain and the character of the Hanoverian dynasty that produced the evils which resulted in our War of Revolution, why should we not attribute our present ills and those prospective ones to which we look forward with such universal dread, not to the system of government, but to the character of the sovereign and the policy of the nation, which has become as fixed as the colonial theory of England was when we revolted against her dominion? It is not alone the republican theory of government that is on trial in our country, but the American people—the sovereign power of the land—as well. Indeed, the most important inquiry presented for our consideration to-day, is not whether a republican government is susceptible of successful and permanent application to the affairs of a great nation, nor even whether the American system contains the proper checks and balances, but whether the American people are fitted for the successful administration of a democratic form of government, and if not, why not.

In every experiment two things are tested—the process and the material. A defect of either may produce failure, and only a fool will condemn the process for lack of strength, purity, or fitness in the material. The history of every nation is but the record of an experiment, in which the wisdom and capacity of the sovereign is the material, and the form of government the process. As for the governed,

they are a constant factor. They may be separated by the whole distance between the lowest barbarism and the highest civilization, but their relation to the governing power remains always the same. That government is the best for any people which produces the highest average of happiness—"the greatest good of the greatest number," as we are accustomed to phrase it. This it is the function of the sovereign—the government—to secure, and a failure to effect this result demonstrates either that the form of government is unsuited to the needs of the people, or that the sovereign is unfitted to administer it so as to produce the best results. The republican theory is, that monarchy can *never* be conducive of "the greatest good of the greatest number;" and the American idea is, that a government "by the people" will *always* be productive of this result.

Both these statements are fallacies, because both ignore the most important element of the mighty problem—the capacity and fitness of the sovereign. Undoubtedly an absolute monarch, possessing all the qualities of an ideal sovereign, might advance the welfare, secure the peace, promote the prosperity, and, generally, subserve the highest interests of the greatest number of his subjects more effectually than is possible by any other form of government; for absolute power is able to cut many a Gordian knot which a sovereignty hampered by conditions must laboriously untie. In like manner, a people possess-

ing neither aptitude nor inclination for government may very easily make a democracy the most corrupt and debasing political organization the world has ever known. The trouble in both cases is not so much in the "form of government" as in the character of the sovereign power. As tyranny hides forever in the shadow of the throne, so anarchy lurks always within the verge of popular government. "A wise ruler maketh a glad people," is equally true whether the scepter is wielded by one hand or many, and the character of the sovereign is always the most important element in every governmental experiment, whether the sovereign be a unit or a multitude.

History gibbets the incapable or unjust king, holding him up to future ages as an object of everlasting infamy. Responsibility is not lessened by partition. Even infinite subdivision can not relieve or excuse the very least of the component factors. Wisdom, courage, honesty, and zeal are demanded of every one on whom the burden of government rests, whether separately or in conjunction with others. To fail in either of these requirements is to fail in all. Wisdom without courage makes the ruler the tool of the ambitious; without honesty he becomes an oppressor; without zeal, the victim of the unscrupulous. Courage without honesty is a consuming flame; and zeal without wisdom the sure precursor of destruction

Are YOU fitted to be a KING?

This is the question which the country anxiously propounds to those upon whose brows is placed the crown of citizenship. Do you know the needs of your fellows—how the happiness of the greatest number may be best subserved? Are you brave enough to stand by your convictions, and maintain the right as God gives you to see it, with brain and with brawn, too, if need be? Can you face ridicule as well as power; resist craft as well as force; and submit graciously to the popular will when fairly outnumbered? Are you honest enough to prefer the right and frugality, to the wrong and profusion; the comfort of the many to the luxury of the few; the right of your fellows to your own opportunity? Have you zeal to undertake whatever task wisdom may prescribe, courage may demand, or honesty impose?

This, and more than this, it is to be an American citizen worthy of the name and of the sovereignty it confers. The world, as it welcomes you to the estate of manhood, calls upon you to "be a man!" The nation, as it places upon your brow the crown of sovereignty and admits you to the plane of citizenship, solemnly enjoins you to *be a king!* Religion sanctions and confirms these behests as fundamental, both to "the life that now is, and that which is to come!"

III.

THE ANTECHAMBER TO THE THRONE.

No DOUBT you think, my young friend, that I am inclined to magnify the importance of the legal transition from youth to manhood which marks the opening of your twenty-first year. You are yourself unconscious of any change. No fitting ceremonial marks the momentous event. No *toga virilis* encumbers the hitherto untrammelled limbs, and attests the transformation from infancy to adulthood. One more birthday—that is all! You think you have passed a mile-post on the path of life, not that you have entered a new way or become a new creature.

In a sense this is true. Regarding yourself introspectively, it is no wonder that you observe no transformation. In your nature none has taken place, nor even in your surroundings. The same faces meet you on the streets; the same friends greet you in the same careless tones. John, the man, is nothing more to them than John, the boy. If you are a king, they do not see the mystic circlet on your brow. To them, as well as to yourself, the change is imperceptible, though to both it is of vital importance.

This will seem less remarkable if we keep in mind the fact that the change is one of relation purely, and not of character or condition. What you were yesterday morally and intellectually, that you are to-day to yourself and to all the world. Potentially, however, you are altogether transformed. Yesterday you were a cipher; to-day you are a significant figure in the world's notation. Yesterday you were a subject; to-day you are a sovereign.

From the window where I sit at my work I sometimes see a pile-driver, sending home with mighty strokes great quivering masts, on which some weighty structure is to rest. I love to watch it and to think of its similitude to life. The engine groans and puffs; the great wheels creak as the strained cable is wound about the drum; the ponderous weight is slowly raised to the very top of the supporting stanchions. Thus labors the past, from whose life to-day is born. Untold generations travail "and bite back the cry of their pain in self-scorn," to start a new soul in the journey of life from the height they have slowly and painfully attained.

One instant's pause! A ratchet is loosed! A force is generated! Then there is silence! Down the guiding ways slides a dull, inert mass—doing nothing—only falling without check! The wind whistles past it! The by-standers watch it carelessly. If it holds its course, it will strike the mast beneath. If it escape from the guiding grooves, it will fall useless to

the earth, a wasted force! Nay, it may even so strain and rend the mechanism by which it was raised, that it shall be unable to perform its work until repaired. It falls swiftly, surely, with what accumulation of power your studies have taught you to estimate. It strikes! The dust rises! The earth shakes! The mast quivers and groans and shrinks! The weight lies dull and dead! Its force is spent. But it has done its work!

Such is life. A child is born, and grows to youth an aimless force—a silent potentiality. It reaches the verge of manhood, and suddenly it is transformed into an effective agency, giving out its stored energy, doing its work, and leaving the mechanism of society undisturbed—ready to repeat the blow! The transmutation from latent to effective force is a perfect type of the change by which the infant becomes an adult.

I am sorry to be compelled to use these terms, "infant" and "adult." To you they may be almost meaningless. You have perhaps at best but a dim idea of their significance. Your notions of infancy are probably associated with the cradle, and your idea of adulthood with mustachios. I do not mean by this to reflect on your intelligence. I am aware that you have received that approved equipment for life's duties which the public school gives to every young American, and have besides pursued with creditable success the ordinary college curriculum. I do not mean to

imply that you have been unmindful of your opportunities or neglectful of your privileges, but simply to call attention to the fact that our American system of education permits the boy to grow to manhood without any clear conception of the rights, privileges and responsibilities of either station. I doubt if one of a hundred of your fellow-graduates of this year of grace could give an intelligible statement of the difference between the legal estate of the "infant" and of the "adult." In nine cases out of ten, if required to do so, they would probably aver that the distinction lay in the fact that an "adult" can vote and hold office, while an "infant" can not. This, like most definitions by negation, is hardly half true, since these facts are merely results of the distinction, and not the distinction itself. A man must be an "adult" to become a voter, but does not become a voter simply because he is an "adult."

You would probably excuse yourself and your fellows for such inaccuracy of definition on the ground that "infant" and "adult" in the sense I seek to use them are technical terms, which a general education, however complete, is not expected to prepare one to define with the nicety required by the professional mind. If you had been asked to state the difference between a "solid" and a "fluid," you would not have thought of making any such excuse for failure. Yet the terms "solid" and "fluid" are just as much technical in character as "infant" and "adult." It

is true that "solid" and "fluid" concern the fundamentals of physical science; but "infant" and "adult" sustain a similar relation to the far more important science of human rights. The only difference is, that the study of physical science has come to be regarded as an essential of liberal culture, along with many other things of doubtful use or unquestionable uselessness, while the most important branch of human knowledge, the relations of humanity as affected by political convention, finds no place in our educational system.

In your whole course of study you have only lightly touched upon two branches of law, which is the greatest of all sciences—the science of human right and privilege, the principles of which condition every man's existence from its inception until the last will and testament is made and published. These two branches, which you have cursorily glanced at, are the most uncertain in their terms and most infrequent and unsatisfactory in their application; to wit, international and constitutional law. As to all the rest of the domain of legal right and privilege, wrong and remedy, the well-educated American is sadly and profoundly ignorant; and, as a rule, the better his education the more dense will be found to be his ignorance of the relations he sustains to his fellows, collectively if not individually.

This is the more remarkable because our English law—and by that term is meant the whole body of

Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence—rests, both in civil and criminal matters, on the irrefutable presumption that every inhabitant of an English-speaking country knows, not only the general principles of the law, but even its utmost niceties. Yet the English-speaking peoples are almost the only ones that take no pains to teach their youth either what the law is or what it ought to be.

The Jewish law was taught in the synagogue and in the market-place. We think of it as moral philosophy, but it concerned itself far more with individual relations than with the abstractions which now constitute the domain of philosophy. The Romans posted their laws at the cross-roads, and the schoolmaster was required once a month to take his pupils for a day to witness the proceedings of the judicial tribunals. In the Continental countries of Europe the code is read in every public school once each year. In France special text-books have been prepared and adopted in the schools, illustrating the provisions of the law, so as not only to bring them to the attention, but also to impress them upon the memory of every learner. Knowledge of the conditions which affect the estate of "infancy" is there all but universal.

With us the reverse is true, and not a few of the evils that afflict our political and economic life are the result of a system of education which carefully abstains from teaching what the whole body of our

people most require to know. So that even you who have been an "infant" almost all your life, hardly know when that relation ended, whether it was seriously modified in character during its continuance, what were the limitations it imposed, the privileges it gave, the responsibilities it implied, or the magnitude of the change attendant upon your accession to the estate of manhood.

Yet with all this lack of knowledge of its real character, you have no doubt, in common with your fellows, been inclined to consider the fact of legal "infancy" a hardship. Now and then, it may be, you have looked upon yourself as something of a martyr to an effete and worthless system, which holds its place only in the brains of narrow-minded sticklers for legal form and antiquated custom. I am not surprised that such should be the general feeling of your associates. Representing, as it does to their minds, only the deprivation of political privilege, and a purely nominal subjection to parental authority, it is hardly strange that you should conclude that the distinction might well be greatly restricted, and legal manhood be made to begin several years earlier or perhaps be made dependent, as some have proposed, upon intelligence and capacity to be ascertained by specific tests.

Practically, you have no doubt been lord of yourself for several years at least. You have deferred to your parents' wishes in most things, probably, simply

from a proper sense of duty, and not at all from a feeling of legal obligation. At all times you have been at liberty to leave the parental roof, go whithersoever you might choose, and engage in any business or calling you might elect, without apprehension of any interference with your freedom of action or the proceeds of your labor. Enjoying such privileges, you have, perhaps, thought that no serious harm would have been likely to ensue to the body politic, if you had also been endowed with the rights usually attending their exercise. You are accustomed to think of parental control as a thing of the past. The reins by which you have been guided have been of such silken texture that you have hardly noted their restraining influence. Subjection to parental authority, as it was understood even a generation ago, is now almost unknown. Obedience is no longer a matter of compulsion. The child is treated as quite the equal of his elders long before the estate of legal subordination is ended.

All things considered, it is perhaps well that it is so. The relation between parent and child has grown more intimate and familiar as a consequence, and reason has very largely usurped the functions of the rod. Perhaps there is not so much readiness and literalness of obedience. If Casabianca had been an American lad of the present day, our language would probably have lacked one poetic gem.

It is customary to bewail the laxity of parental

discipline manifested by the rising generation. For one, I am inclined to think the apparent lack of obedience quite compensated by the elimination of needless brutality from our domestic life, even if it were not—as I believe it is—attended with a more general observance of the parent's wishes than was attainable under the old system. This feature of the legal estate of "infancy" does not depend on force. Subjection to the parent's will was never the object sought by the law, but the continuance of parental guidance—not for the parent's sake, but for the infant's advantage. In a certain sense, the young man of to-day is almost sure to be wiser than his father; but there is another sense in which the father's wisdom is not likely to be superseded by the acquirements of the son.

You have no doubt compared yourself, also, with many of those who exercise the elective franchise, perhaps even with those who are the visible instruments of collective power, and have sneered at the law which barred you from the ballot-box, with your quick intelligence, your cultured judgment, and your pure purpose, and admitted to that sanctuary of a people's sovereignty the ignorant, the debased, and the corrupt. It seemed to you a farce, and, in one sense, it is.

There can be no doubt that so far as the training which the schools give is concerned, the great majority of those who will cross the threshold of manhood this year are much better prepared to perform the

functions of citizenship than the majority of those who have long exercised this crowning civic privilege. There is one thing, however, which they presumably and all but universally lack—one form of knowledge that the law, which, despite all our cavilings, is “the treasured wisdom of the ages,” declares to be of more importance to the ruler than all other wisdom, to wit:

A PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF LIFE.

This is a knowledge akin to the wisdom of God, since it is dependent upon the study of his noblest work in its most difficult and abstruse relations, and is to be learned only in that school over which He presides, where it is taught always according to Divine method—the school of experience. It is in order that the child may learn something in this school that the law has created and defined the estate and condition of “infancy.”

It is a pretty conceit which finds expression in the ritual of the most numerous and important of modern secret benevolent organizations, that the antechamber is the place of preparation for the right-minded seeker after knowledge. The legal estate of infancy is the antechamber in which the citizen is, or ought to be, “duly and truly prepared” for the duties of life, where the squire waits for the accolade which is to make him a knight, the prince for the crown and consecrating oil which is to mark his accession to kingly privilege and kingly duty.

IV.

SHYING AT A SHADOW.

THE sense of humor which is all but universal in mankind has transferred, with the entire approval of every one who reads the story of his woes, the title assumed by Job's fault-finding friends to the physical ailment with which he was afflicted, as being by all odds the more comforting of the twain. Such a consoler is that "Amicus," who has written to protest against the course that has been adopted in these letters, as likely to give the young American too exalted an idea of the dignity, excellence, and power of the position of the citizen. This protest might very well be dismissed with the simple statement that no man was ever yet injured by magnifying the dignity of any position he might be called to occupy, if a proper sense of his own responsibility attended such exalted estimate of its importance. As a rule, it may be said that the man who most fully appreciates the dignity of any position is the one most likely to perform its duties with exactitude and faithfulness. But "*Amicus*" is such a perfect example of that pessimistic piety which esteems fault-finding an unfailing

evidence of purity, which we shall have occasion to consider more at length hereafter, that I am glad indeed, my young friend, to call your attention to his views, by laying his letter before you *in ipsissimis verbis*:

THE WORDS OF A FRIEND.

“I suppose I am one of those for whom your ‘Letters to a King’ are indited. At least I have ‘come of age,’ to use the vernacular, and I suppose I am a ‘citizen,’ though it is long since I have exercised any civic privileges. It is true, this momentous event did not occur yesterday, nor even this year. I presume, however, that I have none the less right to count myself ‘a man,’ according to the flattering injunction of your exordial epistle; to feel myself ‘a king,’ according to the plain inference of your second number; or regard myself as no longer an ‘infant,’ as defined by your third, because I passed the boundary-line of minority some twenty years ago, have a business and a home of my own, and some of my own ‘infants’ are approaching the age of ‘adulthood’ as you choose to term it (though why you should not use ‘majority,’ or ‘manhood,’ instead, I can not see).

“I do feel myself a man—what is termed a practical man, too—one who has achieved some measure of success in his undertakings, and has consequently very little regard for what may be termed mere theorizing. I think I have a right to speak for a section of our life which at least has done no discredit to the name American, and I wish to say plainly at the outset, that I believe I express the real sentiments of a great majority of this class when I declare that after twenty years of experience I do not

feel myself a king, nor any thing like a king, but rather a slave, fettered, helpless, hopeless, save for my faith in God. To my mind American citizenship is a sham. Our politics have become so corrupt that no decent, self-respecting man can take any part in public affairs. We are governed by bribe-takers and bribe-givers, by ignorance in unholy alliance with vice.

“I do not believe that any man holds a position of honor or trust at the hands of the people, from the highest to the lowest, who is not the beneficiary, directly or indirectly, of fraud or violence or some sort of crime against another’s civic rights. If he has not bought votes himself, others have done it for him; if he has not cheated the ignorant or deterred the weak, others have done it for him. These things have been done, too, with his knowledge and consent, for they are a part and parcel of the common belief. A man may turn his back and shut his eyes, and so avoid express knowledge of specific acts. All the same he knows such acts were perpetrated to secure his elevation, and both his honor and his official purity are stained thereby. As a consequence, not one in a hundred, perhaps hardly one in a thousand, of those holding official stations among us, fail to use their power corruptly and basely to promote their own self-advantage or the prospects of their party. This may seem a ‘hard saying,’ but I sincerely believe it to be the truth, and that the majority of your readers will avouch its verity.

“It is useless to argue with good men—Christian men, who esteem the common good above their own gratification, I mean—upon this subject. When we see merit ignored and fraud exalted; when monopoly grinds and anarchy threatens; when poverty increases and fraud triumphs; when law is grown too weak to protect the

citizen or deter the criminal—at such a time it is folly to talk about the citizen-king!

“Do you realize, sir, what tribute we pay to the rum power? Do you know what a tax the Standard Oil monopoly levies upon poverty? Have you noted how the poor are multiplying, and how the wealth of the rich increases while their numbers proportionately decrease? Have you noted the ‘prisoners of poverty,’ herding and swarming in the great cities where one-fifth of our population is found? Have you observed that even in the very journals where your articles are published there is a standing advertisement calling upon Christian men and women to contribute a fund to secure the conviction of the murderer of a Christian minister who dared oppose the rule of rum?”

“In the face of these results of self-government, I submit that it is time to stop boasting of American citizenship, or magnifying old-fogy notions of government and life. For my part—and I believe I represent nine-tenths of the honest, God-fearing men and women in the land, the fathers and mothers who are really the ones who will read your letters and feel something of the vague old aspiration for the common welfare and trust in the common honesty which so long delayed our present sad condition—I say for my part, in view of all these things, I would be quite willing to surrender my ‘kingship’—the glory and dignity of self-government, as you term it—to any form of government that would cure these evils or even restrain their growth. The safety of the future is worth more than the glorification of the past or the gratification of the present. I would rather think that my children will be saved from the anarchy and demoralization that impends than have my self-pride

inflated by contemplation of my individual beatitude as a citizen-king! I know this may seem like political heresy; but I think that so far as justice, right, public honor, and private morals are concerned, self-government has proved a failure.

“For myself, I have so long lost hope that I have not even exercised the right of suffrage for many years; and for years before that time did not do so without feeling myself a slave, chained to the chariot of an infamously corrupt and debauched party system. I felt that though I might be personally incorrupt, my vote was bought and sold for another’s benefit, and that I was powerless to prevent such a result.

“Feeling as I do, I do not want to hear any thing more about politics, political duty, or political privilege. The Church still remains. God alone is the refuge of those who have lost faith in human virtue and human devices. I am willing to give up the task of government into His hands, satisfied that only by divine direction and control can it be well performed. I do not know how it will be effected, but I look for some power to arise that shall do the will of God—some form of government which shall do away with the shams and falsehoods of our present political system, and put power in the hands of good men and wise men only, who will use it for the common benefit, and leave the pure currents of our common life uncorrupted and undefiled by the contaminating and degrading influences and unwholesome fevers of politics.

“The young men of to-day—‘the uncrowned kings of to-morrow,’ whom you address—understand these things just as well as you and I. They know that there are but three courses open before them. They must either be slaves or dealers in slaves, or neuters who eschew politics.

Party 'bosses' great and small, and party slaves more or less abject—these are our political forces. Outside of these classes are a few men, brave enough and strong enough to stand alone. Some of them protest against the shame and infamy of the situation, and some are too proud or too weak, or perhaps too sorrowful, even to protest. They only stand and wait—wait for nothing it may be; but they at least avoid, by so doing, personal responsibility for the crime and dishonor that is destroying our life.

“What is the sense in requiring an educated American to wait twenty-one years before allowing him to vote, while a foreigner who can not read or write, secures the same privileges in five years, even if he is so unfortunate as not to find his naturalization papers, and the pay for his first vote, waiting for him when he lands at Castle Garden?”

“Wherein lies the great advantage in being a citizen without power rather than an infant without rights? I confess I can not see that the change from one condition to the other is so very great. In the one case you are without rights, and in the other without responsibility. An infant is legally a slave by virtue of the law; a citizen is simply one enslaved without law. That is all the difference. One is a child to whose crying nobody pays attention; the other, one that is given a rattle to keep it still. What is the use of gilding this bauble—theorizing about this toy?”

So says “*Amicus*.” He is very much in earnest. He esteems himself a good man, and desires every one to be informed of that fact. He believes that all who do not agree with him in doctrine are “mere

theorizers," and that all who do not concur with him in practice are corrupt. The *good* people are with him; the *bad* people are on the other side. These good people, he would have us understand, have already determined that the only thing to be done to cure the ills he delineates, is to do nothing—just leave it to the Lord, and let him do as he sees fit. No doubt the Lord will take his own course, whether such as "*Amicus*" give him leave or not; but most unfortunately for the consolation which he administers to himself with such solemn unction, God works His will in human affairs by human instrumentalities, and the man who simply sits still and cries, "Hands off! leave this matter to the Lord!" is merely the devil's chosen instrument of evil.

The future "*Amicus*" draws is a very dark one. That it is altogether incorrect, few will care to aver. If but half of what he implies be true, it establishes beyond question a very bad state of affairs. Has he ever paused in his denunciation of others to consider who is responsible for this condition of affairs and this state of public sentiment?

He says he is a "practical" man. He has been successful. He has accumulated tangible assets. He has little patience with "mere theorizing." He would have us understand that he is a model, after whom it would be well if others were patterned. He is afraid young men will be injured by being taught that they are kings. Has he ever thought what must

be the natural result of teaching them that they are "hopeless and irresponsible slaves?"

He wishes to hear nothing more of "politics" and political duty. Political affairs are so bad that nobody but God can improve them, and he is almost angry that any one should be willing to be God's instrument in a task he apparently thinks almost beyond divine power. He evidently deems himself a valiant Christian soldier; and so he may be—on parade. He is a fierce Ezekiel in his denunciation of political wrongs, and no doubt thinks himself a faultless citizen. He neither robs nor murders; he neither bribes nor accepts a bribe; he is responsible neither for monopoly nor anarchy, nor the resulting ills of either. Happy "*Amicus!*" He and such as he are the only pure and brave men in the land!

Let me be his Nathan and say to him:

"*Thou art the man!*"

Because such men as he have lived to scold, and fume, and failed to do, proclaiming themselves all the time the best and purest in the land—because such as he have not earnestly and valorously contended for the right—all these evils he has depicted have come to us. What he so bitterly denounces to-day, he and such as he might have prevented yesterday. They had the power; the scepter was in their hands; and the evil of to-day is but the natural fruit of their negligence and apathy. The king who fails to govern righteously leaves always an inheritance of woe to

his successor. It is because such as he live and boast and denounce the evils they will not help to cure, but declare to be hopeless—it is because these are so many, that I must strive to awaken and inspire the rising generation to do rather than scold, to fight rather than despair. If he had been a king instead of a coward, a doer instead of a shirk, there would have been no need to urge the young man of to-day to devote himself to the cause of good government, to become an active force in Christian civilization.

There has never been a day nor an hour in the history of any State or city of the land when those claiming to be the especial representatives of its best forces—its Christian citizens—might not have controlled its politics. Instead of performing their plain duty, such men as “*Amicus*” stood quietly by and let evil intrench itself, not only in “high places,” but even in the hearts of the people. Nay, they are not content to see our social and political life imperiled by their selfish apathy, but they even desire to destroy all hope of its amendment. They would kill “not only the life that now is, but that which is to come!” Knowing the right, they prefer to see evil abound rather than labor for its overthrow. Such men are *infinitely the worst of all the dangerous classes of our population, and should be so held by all who believe the will of God to mean the good of men.* They are cowards who seek to hide their cowardice by boasting

of their purity; the stragglers and shirks, who denounce the battle others are fighting for their advantage. They constitute the greatest peril of republican government to-day!

This is how a "mere theorizer" esteems a "practical" Pharisee like "*Amicus*."

We are indebted to "*Amicus*" for one thing, however. He shows how well it is to be careful of the foundations on which we build. He wonders why we dwell on the transformation from "infant" to "adult," and then defines the infant to be a person "without any rights," and the citizen a being "without power or responsibility." It is precisely because this view is a common one that we have taken some pains to elucidate the truth that the "infant" is *not* "without rights," as we expect to show that the citizen is *never* "without responsibility." He wonders why we use the terms "infant" and "adult," and "infancy" and "adulthood," instead of "minority" and "majority." Simply because they import *the whole*, while those which he prefers define only a *part* of the contrasted relations.

If you have noted their Latin roots, my young friend, you will see how perfectly these terms are suited to the conditions they are used to describe. "Infant" (from *infari*) implies an inability to make known one's wants by speech, while "adult" (from *adolescere*) signifies growth, maturity—the product of

the state of adolescence. Neither is concerned with the question of power, but merely describes the conditions of a particular phase of existence. "Citizenship" is but a part of "adulthood;" "minority" is only one of the disabilities of "infancy."

Instead of depriving the "infant" of his rights, the law is especially careful of them. It is for this reason that it counts him an infant, and refuses to hear him speak. Only by the mouth of a "next friend," one presumably older and wiser, will it listen to his plea, except when charged with crime. Up to a certain limit it will not even allow him to be so charged; then there follows an interval during which the evil intent must be affirmatively shown; after which he finally arrives at full responsibility, with the law's presumption of malice lying always against his wrongful acts. So, too, his business development is gradual. He may be a witness when he can not be an actor; an agent when he can not be a principal. He can bind another in whose employ he is, by his declarations, but the law will not hear his words intended to bind himself. The law makes him subordinate to the parent and the teacher, but allows the parent to release him from subjection by formal act or reasonable implication. The law permits him to contract marriage under certain restrictions, but will only hear his plea for dissolution of that bond by the mouth of another.

The absurdity which impresses "*Amicus*" as

existing between the twenty-one years of infancy and a lesser period for naturalization, disappears when we thus see that "infancy" is not a mere condition precedent of citizenship, but a period of growth, development, and preparation for manhood. You may think such growth unnecessary, and say that "knowledge is power." So it is, but science is not all of knowledge; and fact is not power. There is a knowledge which is hard to define. We term it sometimes knowledge of life, sometimes knowledge of men. It distinguishes between youth and manhood, between immaturity and ripeness. It marks even more certainly than any physical condition the fact of incompleteness. Thus far no method for acquiring this has been found but by the lapse of time. It is taught only in the school of experience. And it is in order that you might not be tempted to forego this education; that you might easily and surely acquire this knowledge; that you might not be inclined to undertake life's weightier matters until the thews of mind and soul are toughened for the strain; that you might have full opportunity to learn your privileges, comprehend your duties, and understand your powers,—because of these things, the law mercifully regarded you as one mute to its demands, irresponsible to your fellows, and powerless to shape the course of public events.

It was deaf alike to your ambition and your greed. It demanded of you only growth and preparation.

When this was ended, or was presumed to have ended, the door of opportunity swung wide before you. You became a man. Was the probation any too long? Curiously enough, you will find upon investigation that almost all of those who have left great names in history, who have colored the world's life or flexed the world's thought, are those whose period of probation, of silent, unnoted preparation, have extended far beyond this limit. Especially in this age, when the tendency to overaction and swift decay is so great, let no young man bemoan the delay of life's responsibilities.

But if this transition from infant to adult is of vast importance in the ordinary relations of life, what shall be said of it in that most responsible and most comprehensive of all, your relations to the whole body of your fellow-citizens—that relation on which all other relations depend? Yesterday you were a subject; to-day you are a king. Can you measure the distance between?

V.

A JOINT AND SEVERAL LIABILITY.

I SHALL not be surprised to learn that you, in common with almost the whole body of your well-educated compeers, are inclined to take issue with me upon the concluding sentiment of my last letter. It is a curious fact that of the little we are taught about our civic relations, the greater portion is false and misleading. It will be nothing strange, therefore, if the views which I shall formulate should be somewhat at variance with those you have come to entertain. Prosperity and opportunity are certain to wean men from the consideration of public duty, and the past twenty years have been more notable for the invention of devices to avoid the responsibility of self-government than the manifestation of a general willingness to meet it. What the American people seem now most anxious to discover is not how the duty of the citizen may be best performed, but how it may be safely neglected.

Though we have had more than a hundred years of experience of republican institutions, so far as the relations, duties, and responsibilities of the citizen

are concerned, we are still, as Madison phrased it, "in the twilight of constitutional government." Our government, in spirit even more than in form, was just as much a discovery as that which Columbus made when he first sighted the shores of the new world. Nations had been called republics before; but in the sense which we have impressed upon the word there had never been a republic of any considerable extent. Indeed, it is clearly apparent to one who will study with a discriminating mind the history of the first quarter of a century of our national life, that our forefathers themselves had no very clear perceptions of a republic in the modern sense of the term. In what Randolph so aptly termed "the infancy of the science of constitutions," it was yet believed that the ancient lines might be followed in the creation of the new republic. It was supposed that the column of American liberty would be a mere composite. The English plinth was to be surmounted by a Græco-Roman shaft, having a capital embracing something of the elements of all ancient democracies, intermingled with a few indigenous notions which were expected always to remain subordinate to the imported ideas.

In pursuance of this principle we have, in theory at least, and so far as mere sciolists could determine our tendencies, ever since been trying to import improvements of our original plan, instead of encouraging its healthful growth and natural development.

We have studiously imparted to each new generation the notion that all that is of value in our American system of government is borrowed from some foreign source. The Anglomaniac in politics has been as disgusting in his slavish subjection to an imported ideal as the "dude" in fashion, and infinitely more harmful than the counterfeit cockney could possibly be. In truth, we borrowed from our English history only a few names and forms. Even these we endowed with new significance, just as we established our government on an absolutely new basis while classing it under the ancient name of a republic.

The fundamental idea of British government is a careful avoidance of the principle of equal civic right. It is true there has been a constant progression toward it, as there must be with all enlightened peoples; but all the mechanism of the English government, under every change of policy, has been designed to hinder rather than to promote this tendency. This very idea which has been the *bête noire* of Whig and Tory alike, and is now the "unclean beast" which even the Liberals are afraid to mount, is the basis principle of our government. We builded upon the rights of men rather than the rights of things—not *private* rights, but *public privileges*. Instead of seeking to avoid the popular will, we sought to devise machinery for its clear and unmistakable expression. The English principle of government is based upon a careful adjustment of *class*

interests; ours upon the joint and several responsibility and equal power and privilege of *individuals*. The two ideas are utterly inharmonious, and the nearer we approach the model our modern political abstractionists have attempted to set up for us, the farther we are going away from the true principles which have underlain our century of progress. The safety of the future does not depend upon the approximation of our government to foreign ideals, but in effectual appeal to its fundamental principles, and in faithful and logical expansion of its distinctive ideas.

Of this fact those who claim to rank as authoritative expounders of our political philosophy have been curiously unconscious. It is notable that nearly all of them have been mere theorists—men who have looked at our political life from the outside, and have sought to devise remedies for ills they but half understood, or to adjust mechanism, the motive power of which they seem unable to apprehend. When we fully realize this fact we shall not be surprised to learn that almost every grave political evil which has confronted us in the past has arisen, not from the natural and unobstructed working of the American system, but from foolish attempts to graft upon it alien ideas. The truth is, that in our political history new principles have so completely dwarfed and overshadowed old theories and borrowed forms, and so clothed old terms with new signifi-

cance, that the whole fabric has become unique ; so that analogies drawn from the experience of other countries become for us the most dangerous of all political speculations.

The first duty of one who would truly comprehend our national life, therefore, is to clear away this mass of false speculation and foolish theory. Instead of trying to fit our new-world life with the cast-off clothing of old-world relations, we must begin to realize the fact that we are teachers, and not learners, in the science of self-government ; that we are the torch-bearers, and not groping followers along the path of political progress. It becomes us to develop theories and demonstrate truths, and not to borrow half-developed notions and try to fetter our new life with their limitations. By so doing we have already clouded our political thought with assumptions based on forms of expression so imperfectly apprehended as to make the conclusions drawn from them, in the main, absolutely unreliable. Among the least understood of political terms is the word "citizen," in its strictly American signification. Thus it happens that you no doubt deem both phases of my statement—that you were yesterday a subject and are to-day a king—if not actually incorrect, at least only metaphorically true.

Yet I had no intention of resorting to verbal subterfuge. I meant deliberately and positively to assert that your relation to the United States and to the

State in which you live was but recently that of a subject, and is to-day that of a ruler. You will, perhaps, be inclined to tell me that this is impossible. You have been carefully taught that "the people of a republic are citizens, and the inhabitants of a monarchy, subjects." As you have not changed your residence it is evident, therefore, that you can not have figured in both rôles. This is the general view, and one by no means without recognized authority. Yet when we come to investigate the question, we shall find that the real distinction between "subject" and "citizen" does not lie in the fact of domicile nor depend on allegiance being due to a monarchy in the one case, and a republic in the other, but on the relation which the individual sustains to the sovereign power.

There is a singular defect in the definition of these terms by authorities, both legal and etymological. This is probably due, in part, to the fact that the specific difference between "citizen" and "subject" has never yet been made a matter of sharp contention in any national or international tribunal, and in part to the generally unrecognized fact that our political history has impressed upon one at least of these terms a new and peculiar significance. "Subject" is defined as "one brought under authority," "one owing allegiance," or "one owing permanent allegiance." This latter definition Great Britain insisted upon as the basis of her right

to search American vessels for British subjects, which gave rise to the War of 1812. It has been practically abandoned. It will be observed, however, that neither of these fully defines the relation of the subject to the sovereign, which is a mutual one. The "subject" is one not only owing allegiance to a sovereign, but one entitled to protection *by* the sovereign. This is the entire relation—obedience and allegiance on the part of the individual, and protection on the part of the sovereign. This is exactly identical with the relation which women and infants sustain to the government of the United States and its constituent commonwealths. They owe obedience and allegiance, and are entitled to protection in their private rights—that is all. They have none of the public rights which go to make what we call citizenship in the strictly American sense. Some would perhaps include in this category "Indians not taxed," but it is a matter of grave doubt whether they are even "subjects." To a certain extent we claim the right to exercise restrictive power over them, but have never recognized any right to protection on their part.

Unnaturalized foreigners—resident aliens, as they are legally termed—owe obedience, but not allegiance. They are neither citizens nor subjects. They can claim the protection of our laws only while within the national limits, and then only in a restricted sense. They must obey the law, but are not required to enforce or maintain its authority. As to

native-born women and infants, however, and the wives and children of naturalized foreigners, they sustain precisely the same relations to our government, whether at home or abroad, that the subjects of a monarchical government sustain to the throne. So you will see that it was neither in jest nor metaphor that I declared you, although a native of the great republic, to have been but recently a "subject"—an American subject, if you will.

It may be a matter of interest—perhaps of surprise—to you to know, also, that our American "subjects" greatly outnumber our American "citizens." In 1880, out of 50,150,000 people, the males of all classes, twenty-one years old and upward, numbered 12,830,000. Of these it would probably not be an overestimate to regard the 830,000 as representing the unnaturalized adult males of the 7,000,000 of foreign-born and Indians included in the enumeration. So that we may safely say that three-fourths of the population of the United States are simply "subjects," owing obedience to its laws and allegiance to its power and entitled to the protection of its authority, but having no more right or power to shape or modify its character or control the exercise of its authority than if dwellers on another planet. They are not "citizens" in the more restricted sense of the term, having no particle of civic power or privilege beyond that pertaining to the subjects of every civilized monarchy.

But what of the other one-fourth of our population? Was it a flattering metaphor to term them kings? Let us see. The term citizen has been used with a great variety of meaning. It originally indicated the possessor of peculiar municipal privilege or power. On account of this, having no distinctive term to represent the specific status of that fourth part of our population who exercise political power, we call them, in contradistinction to the others, citizens. The broadest use of this term that is sanctioned by our law is the definition found in the first section of the fourteenth article of the Constitution of the United States. It is as follows:

“All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the States wherein they reside.”

In this sense it is precisely equivalent to the term “subject,” the term “jurisdiction” being used in international law in the sense of owing allegiance to and being entitled to protection from a particular nationality. It has a like significance in the second section of the fourth article of the same instrument. The term was no doubt first used in this sense in order to emphasize the separation from the mother country. It was intended to differentiate between the “subjects of Great Britain,” which was the previous condition of the people of the Colonies, and the equivalent relation they had assumed to the

new nationality. From this sprang the ordinary distinction that the people of a republic are "citizens" and those of a monarchy "subjects," on which is based the idea that there is of necessity some specific difference in the two relations. The continued use of the term with this significance became a political necessity, because we had among us a class who were denied even the ordinary rights of subjects. The very purpose of the Fourteenth Amendment was to secure to the negro the rights of a subject. This is at once apparent when we note the fact that it especially provides for his exclusion from the rights and privileges of "citizenship" in the more restricted sense of that term.

In this restricted and peculiarly American sense, the word citizen has been very tersely and exactly defined in the Supreme Court of the United States, to be

*"One of the sovereign people, a constituent member of
THE SOVEREIGNTY."**

Every young American should impress these two definitions of a term so apt to be used in different senses upon his memory with the utmost care. In the one sense it is used to distinguish the American people from the allegiants of a foreign power; in the other to distinguish the class in which sovereignty inheres from the rest of the American people.

* 19th Howard, 404.

This is the basic distinction of our American political system. It is not, therefore, by any figure of speech, nor from any desire to appeal to your vanity, that I have addressed you as a king; but simply because you are, in serious truth, one of those in whom *the sovereignty* of the nation resides! The very thing that distinguishes the monarch from his subjects distinguishes you from three-fourths of the American people—the power to make and unmake, to bind and loose, without review or modification by any other power! In you resides one aliquot part of the supreme will of the nation, from whose decision there is no appeal! The fate of sixty millions of people and the destiny of their descendants are in your hands! As an individual, even now you are a “subject of the law.” You labor, enjoy, hold, possess, and exist, as a “*subject*.” As a “*citizen*,” you rule, govern, and decree. The emblem of sovereignty is upon your brow! The scepter is in your hands, the responsibility upon your soul! The American citizen is not merely a potential, but an actual king. He is the ruler and controller of a people’s destiny.

Your responsibility as such is not in any degree lessened by the fact that the sovereign is not a single individual, but twelve millions. *Your* thought, *your* will, *your* conviction, and *your* honesty constitute an essential increment of the aggregated sovereignty. “We, the People,” is the royal style by which *your* acts are affirmed! They who legislate speak with

your voice! Those who execute the law, perform your will. "By the grace of God," the wisdom of the fathers, and, above all, by that gradual and unnoted growth by which the American nation has been unconsciously shaped into a singular distinctiveness of political character, you have become jointly and severally liable, with every other of the class to which you belong, not for a specific part, but for the character of the whole indivisible sovereign power. There is, however, one great difference between you and the hereditary monarch—THE CITIZEN-KING CAN NOT ABDICATE.

VI.

A PERPETUAL COVENANT.

I FANCY that I hear you ask, with some asperity of manner, if by the statement, "The citizen-king can not abdicate," I mean that you are required to "go into politics" whether you desire to do so or not. You wish to know whether I mean to intimate that, if you do not care to undertake the task of government, you can not step aside and leave it to others who have a taste for it. You may even assert with some heat that, if this be true, instead of being a free government, our American Republic is the most atrocious tyranny ever invented.

Softly, softly, my young friend. Liberty is not the mere indulgence of inclination. In a certain sense a man is free to do or not to do the duty of the citizen as he pleases; just as he is free to do or not to do any other duty—just as he may be said to be at liberty to be a good or a bad man. He can no more neglect his political duties and be a good citizen, however, than he can live a life of crime and be a good Christian. One of the evil inheritances we have received from the Old World is this idea,

that political responsibility is like a coat that may be put on or taken off at will. And this evil has been intensified, rather than lessened, by the zeal with which some of our Anglomaniac theorists, especially at the East, have lately urged upon educated young Americans the duty of "going into politics"—using that phrase in the Anglican sense, and meaning thereby offering themselves as candidates for office. That merciless satirist of Boston life, who paints its pettiness and self-sufficiency so deftly that his victims take his ridicule for praise—that universal pessimist, Mr. Howells—has no finer bit of satire than when he puts into the mouth of the typical Boston matron the delicious bit of taffy she addresses to the Harvard undergraduate :

“How splendid to have them going into politics the way they are!”

Adding, in justification of her exultant approval:

“So many of the young university men do—in England.”

It is this idea that politics is a trade, a profession, or a calling inseparably connected with office-holding, and not a part of the every-day business of every American life, which in one form or another has wrought such serious ills as to make it questionable whether self-government has not more difficult problems and more serious obstacles yet to overcome than those it has already encountered. From this point of view, the revival of interest in political

thought which has recently characterized the college life and general culture of the East has been, in many instances, exceedingly harmful. It has strengthened two false impressions; the first, that politics is a distinct calling, instead of a universal duty; and the second, that the educated man, so called, is by that very fact entitled to leadership. It is of the utmost importance that the very opposite of both these ideas should be inculcated in the minds of the young men of to-day. It is the duty of every citizen, no matter what his station, rank, intelligence, or calling, to "go into politics." It is the duty of the "educated man" to lead or to follow—just as he may be able—just as the will of his co-ordinate sovereigns may determine.

In a republic the political leader is rarely formed by education, especially such false and faulty education as is given in our schools and colleges to-day. In fact, it is a curious truth, but one which you will find abundantly sustained by the course of history, that progress in government very rarely, if ever, springs from the upper classes, or those known as the best people. It is not the rich, the wise, the refined and cultured elements of the world's life who have pushed forward the cause of humanity and right, and established the principles of justice and equality. The governmental shoe has always pinched the poor man's foot worse than that of the rich, and it has been the hopeless agony of the weak, or the despera-

tion it inspired, that has loosened the clutch of tyranny and opened the door of opportunity. It is the need of the *common* people that calls forth leaders and prepares men to become exponents of political thought, not the study of specific theories. It is the man who feels the popular want, understands the aspiration and voices the demands of the popular heart, who becomes the political leader in a republic. He may do it rudely and ungracefully. He may not be absolutely faultless in the use of the auxiliary verbs, nor addicted to classical quotations; but he has an instinctive knowledge of the most pressing evil of his time, and a more or less practicable remedy therefor; and these things make him the true exponent of the sovereign will.

It is this fact that has made the common life of the world the matrix in which its great leaders have been shaped, and constituted instinctive sympathy with the people the prime prerequisite of political preferment in a republic. That culture which teaches us to wisely note the general need, and adapt the forms, conditions, and character of our institutions thereto—that is true political education, and its very fundamental principle is the universality of the duty and the unavoidable character of the responsibility that rests on the citizen-king.

As I have said, you can not abdicate. You can not cease to govern, either for good or ill. Self government—a republic in our modern sense of the word,

which is most properly defined "a government by the people"—is based upon certain distinct postulates, to wit:

1. The equal power of each one of the governing class—the citizen, in the restricted sense of that term.

2. That a majority of the citizenship will always be wise enough to understand what is for the general good—the greatest good of the greatest number.

3. That a majority will always be honest and patriotic enough to demand what is for the general good.

4. That a majority will always be vigilant and brave enough to prevent any material subversion of the popular will.

These are the four great principles on which the fabric of our government rests—the mudsills of the Republic. Whenever any one of them shall prove for any considerable period to be an incorrect hypothesis, the experiment of self-government in the United States will have proved a failure. Our forefathers built upon this rock. Our fathers extended and deepened the foundation. It is perhaps, as much the result of unconscious development as design, but it has been a development working logically and naturally along the lines our forefathers doubtfully and hesitantly marked out in the new field of governmental science in which they were the first explorers.

What do these principles demand of the individual citizen?

“Equality of right.” This, fortunately, is already theoretically attained. It is the result of almost a century of sharp conflict. In but two of the States of the Union is there now any legal distinction in the power or the privilege of the citizen. In some the legal limitations are somewhat more restricted than in others. In one or two the right to vote depends on ability to read and write; in several the privileges of citizenship are conditioned upon the payment of taxes; and in one there is a requirement, long since obsolete, that the individual be of good character. The absurdity of making the right to rule depend on such fortuitous conditions is now so generally recognized, and the legalized exceptions are so insignificant in number that it may be said that every native-born or naturalized male of twenty-one years old and upward has *legally* an equal right with every other in the direction and control of the government, both State and national. To the decision of a majority of these legal sovereigns all political questions are ultimately referred. If, by any means, a portion of this constituent sovereignty is debarred from the free expression of its will, the result becomes, to that extent, not the *popular* will nor a government *by the people*, but by some force or power which thwarts or corrupts the popular will. It is needful, therefore, that every man should steadily and actively assert his equal right, in order to secure the equal rights of every other.

It is also necessary for the success of republican institutions that the majority should be generally, and in the long run, right in their decision of public questions. This can only be secured by the careful anxiety of each individual to be himself right. There is no luck nor necromancy about it. Ignorance or passion or greed or negligence may corrupt the verdict of the masses, just as well as the judgment of the individual. It is only when men honestly seek to know the right, to understand their individual political duty, that there is any reason to suppose that the majority will be wise enough to determine what constitutes the highest good of the greatest number, and so be fitted to promote the public weal by their political action. Individual action becomes, therefore, the sole guarantee of the second fundamental postulate on which our government is based.

But even equal opportunity and abundant knowledge are not enough, of themselves, to secure the public welfare. *Right is valueless if not exercised, and knowledge useless if it does not crystallize into action.* It is not enough, therefore, that every citizen should be legally *entitled* to equal privilege with every other; but he must faithfully exercise the same, or the popular verdict, made up without his assent, will be to that extent defective, and for that very reason may be wrong. It is his duty to see to it, not only that he is qualified and *prepared* for the intelligent exercise of his kingly prerogative, but that no harm befall the

commonwealth from his *neglect* of duty. It is better that he should be wrong than fail to act, as an error of judgment is always less heinous than gross and inexcusable neglect. Apathy is the worst of all evils. A torrent may be easily turned, but a mere dripping rill offers no opportunity for guidance.

But equality, right, knowledge, and zeal in the performance of individual duty, all combined, are not enough to secure the popular will from error and guarantee the safety of the republic. A *majority* of the people, at least, must be vigilant and brave enough to prevent any extended or continued suppression, distortion, or corruption of the popular will. It is just here that the crowning duty and responsibility of the citizen arises. He is responsible not only for his own action, but also for his fellow's opportunity. He must not only stubbornly assert and maintain his *own* privilege, earnestly strive to know his *own* duty, and faithfully endeavor to give effect to his *own* conviction, but he must see to it that neither fraud, violence, bribery, terror, nor any other malign influence, shall be allowed to neutralize the conviction, bias the judgment, or thwart the will of his fellows.

If all this is required of every citizen in order to secure good government in a republic, you will probably declare such a result to be hopeless. Do not be over-hasty in your conclusions, my young friend. All this is indeed necessary to insure good govern-

ment "by the people." Yet what is it? Not so very much after all. Only equal opportunity, vigilance, and zeal—the very things of which we boast as the chiefest glory of our land. Where else does the gate of opportunity stand open to all? Who so intelligent, so alert, so keen as the American? What does it demand of *you*? Only that you should know your own duty, assert your own privilege, use your own judgment, and see that *I* am permitted to do likewise. It is only what is required under every form of government—of every constituent unit of the sovereignty. Whether the king be one or a million, he is responsible for the same attributes. Justice, wisdom, and honesty; courage, zeal, and vigilance, are required, not only of every one who aspires to rule his fellows, but of every one on whom rests the right and privilege of rulership. A king may abdicate his throne; but there is no method by which the citizen can relieve himself from responsibility for the character of the government he has it in his power to control or modify.

Our government is but a partnership in which there are twelve millions of co-partners, each having equal privilege, equal power, and equal responsibility. Of each is demanded intelligence, honesty, faithfulness, and courage. If any fail in either respect, it endangers the rights, liberties, and prosperity, not only of himself, but of each and every one of his fellows, and of all who may come after them. "Gov-

ernment *by the people*” is a universal pact, a perpetual covenant, by which every citizen is bound to every other citizen for the faithful performance of his part of the common duty. No one can invalidate this covenant or avoid its penalty. He can not abdicate his right, alienate his privilege, shift his burden to other shoulders, or evade the penalty of this joint and several bond. You are in duty bound not only to see to it that the republic receives no detriment from your own inability or neglect, but also to prevent its being imperiled by the activity of any one else.

I may be a bad man and you a very good one; I may be a weak man and you a very strong one; I may be a foolish man and you a very wise one; I may be a timid man and you a brave one. If, now, you take away your courage, your wisdom, your strength, and your integrity, and leave the burden of government—the weight of sovereignty, the act of legislation, the task of administration, and the duty of protecting and maintaining the national life—to my weakness, my folly, my cowardice, or my greed, and evil result, as of course it must, on whom will the responsibility rest?

Who will be called to answer in the last great day for the injustice, oppression, anarchy, and woe that may ensue? Surely not I alone who did the wrong, but you who weakly permitted. It is your duty to save *me* from *myself*—my children from *my*

harmful assault. If you fail to do so, your rights must suffer, and your children will feel the scath of my wrong-doing as well as mine.

“But,” you ask, “how shall I perform this task? How shall I learn my duty? How discharge my responsibility? Are there not some millions of my fellow-sovereigns who are ignorant of their duties? Are there not many thousands who are neglectful of them? Are not votes bought and sold, like meat in the shambles? Do not bribery and intimidation vitiate the public verdict, and paralyze individual effort? Do not ‘practical politics’ and party spirit and the ‘machine’ render it impossible for an honest and patriotic man to act up to his convictions, and exercise the power vested in him for the public welfare? Surely,” you say, “I can not be held responsible for failing to do what so many of our wisest and best men declare it is impossible to effect.”

In public affairs as in private morals, there falls to each one a modicum of duty. One can not do all, and is not required or expected to do all, that is to be done. Neither will all that needs to be done be accomplished at once. But it is only by the unremitting performance of individual duty that any public evil will be remedied, or any public good accomplished. It is true there are many obstacles to be overcome. They are, however, by no means insuperable. Ignorance and vice are enemies that must be met and vanquished. “The machine” is a gnome

which serves many good people as an excuse for inaction. Party spirit is, perhaps, as often a wholesome as a harmful force. The greatest of all obstacles you will have to encounter is that public sentiment which depreciates the citizen's privileges, makes light of individual responsibility, winks at the employment of evil methods, and generally seeks to divorce political conduct from moral responsibility. "Practical politics" may be either of a good or a bad sort. The most "practical" of all is that which carries Christian principle into political action, and drives out evil methods and evil influences. Practical politics is not that which snivels and sneaks, and seeks for some specific by which ignorance may be temporarily disarmed and fraud for a time circumvented. Practical politics is that which achieves practical results. If directed to a good purpose and controlled by wise men, it confronts ignorance with intelligence, fraud with honest vigilance, crime with courage, zeal with zeal.

The struggle for good government is not an easy nor an intermittent one. You must not expect, my young friend, that the duties of the citizen will be always light and pleasant. The head that wears a crown must be always burdened with anxiety. The political "machine" is not one that can be set right and then left to run itself. Your duties are not many nor of especial difficulty, but they require close, careful, and unremitting attention. You can not hire a

substitute to do service for you in the conflict for liberty, nor leave what should be done to-day until to-morrow. In the performance of the duties of the citizen the first and most important step is to determine your relations to party, and your rights, privileges, and responsibilities as a partisan. This subject will, therefore, next claim our attention.

VII.

A CHOICE OF WEAPONS.

It is customary to speak of party as a political evil, and to bewail the fact that such a thing as party spirit exists. No little ingenuity has been wasted by closet politicians in devising some sort of mechanical substitute whereby the advantages of party organization may be retained, and the evils of party management avoided. Thus far no successful substitute has been found, and the paper reformers who seek for one have proved themselves of no more value to the country than the mourners who pathetically whine about the "good old days" when party was unknown. The truth is, that like every other mere instrumentality, party is potent either for good or ill. It may not be the best agency that can be devised for the control of popular government, but it is the only one that has ever proved itself effective; and we may be sure that if a better is ever found it will still be liable to abuse, and only better because of increased potency. The country is ruled by party government, and is likely to be so ruled for many generations. The part of the wise man and good citizen, therefore,

is not to stand off and scold about what he is powerless to remedy simply because he fancies it is not absolutely perfect. One might as well attempt to batter down the rock of Gibraltar with green peas as to cure a political evil by mere fault-finding. Power yields only to force, and the true reformer is not he who merely points out a hypothetically better plan, but he who also develops a practical means for its accomplishment. The part of the patriotic citizen is not merely to bewail the ills that beset him, but stoutly to face them, and to study earnestly how to amend them. Especially is this true of men who are the first-born of heroes, like the thousands who will this year step for the first time into the arena of American citizenship. The prime duty of such is to study the nature of party government, and ascertain its true relation to the citizen, to the government, and to Christian civilization.

Party, in our American sense of the term, is the most remarkable governmental agency ever devised. It is not the invention of any man, or set of men, but a natural outgrowth of our free institutions, or rather of the spirit from which they sprung. The term is said to mean "a number of persons united in opinion as opposed to the rest of the community;" and this has been generally accepted as a sufficient definition. It fails, however, to draw the line between party and faction, to which it equally well applies, but from which party is clearly distinguished by American

usage. The truth is, that the marked distinctiveness of the American people—a distinctiveness stoutly denied by Anglomaniacs and other superficial observers of our life, and by nothing more clearly proved than by the frequent need of new definitions for old words—has impressed upon the term *party* a meaning not merely new, but thus far apparently impossible of comprehension by the political thinkers of the Old World. This distinction, so far as I am aware, has never been fairly set forth, so that even by ourselves the idea of party is rather instinctively apprehended than clearly understood. We shall, perhaps, best arrive at a just comprehension of this singular institution by a brief consideration of its history.

At the organization of our government, the only parties of which its founders had any conception, the only voluntary organizations which they supposed would ever develop into political forces, were what we would now term factions. It was believed that men prominent in public affairs would have adherents who would perhaps band themselves together to secure the advancement of their respective favorites. This was the view on which the electoral system of the Federal Constitution was based, and which it was designed to utilize and regulate. It was supposed that men of prominence in the several States would be competitors for the honor of determining the choice of President and Vice-President, and that the followers of these local celebrities would be pitted

against each other in each State, not as mere representatives of some general interest, but as individuals whose action would be a matter of personal discretion with each. It was believed, also, that the same theory of a personal following and individual popularity would prevail in the action of the several "Electoral Colleges," as the people soon named the undefined bodies provided for by the Constitution, the members of which it was supposed would act according to their individual preferences, and being men of eminent character, would look more closely and discriminatingly to the personal qualities of the men they might name than the body of the voters were believed to be capable of doing. In other words, it was intended to interpose between the popular will and the national Executive, the wisdom and discretion of a specially selected body, who should determine, not who was the popular choice, but whom *they* deemed best fitted for the place.

This idyllic theory was doomed to early and complete eradication. The pre-eminent regard in which Washington was held by all, and the apparent necessity that the man of most commanding influence in the newly organized republic should be at the head of its affairs, at least until the governmental machinery was in running order, made the successful application of a principle, which would now be regarded as absurd, for a time, not only possible, but almost unavoidable. The Electors chosen at the first

election in the various States were men of the highest distinction, and the result was undoubtedly a fair expression of the first and second choice of a vast majority of the individual voters. You will recollect that at that time, and until 1804, the Electors did not vote for President and Vice-President, but each Elector voted for two persons, the one having the highest number of votes being declared President, and the next highest Vice-President, making those selected really the first and second choice of a majority of the Electors, for President.

At the first election, in 1788, there was no trace of a national party. Before the second election, in 1792, however, the seed had been sown and the transformation from faction to party had begun. The re-election of Washington and Adams partook in a great degree of the character of a party victory. The abstract theories of the framers of the Constitution had come in collision with the instincts of the people. They did not rebel against the *forms* imposed, but simply nullified them by making them mere empty forms. From that hour the Elector began to lose the character of a discretionary official, and became more and more the mouth-piece of popular preference, until he has at length ceased to be an official of any importance whatever—the place being now accounted merely a training-school for the unpracticed politician, or a solace for the superannuated one. The work of the various Electoral

Colleges to-day is simply a puerile farce, of no more real importance than the payment of a barley-corn rental.

The seed of our present party system was, however, hidden in the Constitution itself. With its adoption, and even before its adoption, there sprang up a wonderful difference of opinion as to the relation of the new government to the constituent States, those advocating enlarged powers for the national government being termed Federalists, and those insisting upon the most extended view of the sovereignty of the respective States, Republicans. These terms from time to time varied somewhat in their respective significations until 1816, when the former disappeared from our political annals and has never been revived. The term Democrat was popularly applied almost interchangeably with Republican to the opponents of Federalism, until 1824, when the Republican party divided, the Jackson wing taking the name of Democrat, while the anti-Jackson Republicans merged with the remnant of the Federalists under the name National Republicans. It was a shrewd attempt by a dissatisfied minority to deprive the party they were deserting of the prestige of the party name. The stroke was promptly met by those at which it was aimed, by the renunciation of the old name and the adoption of a more radical and popular designation. The attempt has more than once been made to repeat this

strategy, and capture a favorite party name for a seceding faction, but it has never been successful. Prefixes and suffixes have never proved attractive lures to the American voter.

In 1836 the Whig party first appeared in our national politics, and continued the chief opponent of the Democratic party until 1852. In 1840 the Liberty party first offered a national candidate, and under various aliases, such as Free-soil and Free-Democrat, continued until after the election of 1852. United with the great body of the Whig party, and a considerable contingent of Northern Democratic leaders, they formed in 1856 the Republican party, which has been the chief opponent of the Democratic party ever since. There have been Anti-mason, American, Temperance, Greenback, and other so-called parties from time to time, but those we have considered are the only ones that have ever controlled the national Administration.

It will be well for you to keep in mind this brief *résumé* of party names and their succession, not that the names themselves are of much significance, but they will enable you to fix with certainty the various steps in the development of the American idea of party. It may be interesting, however, to note one or two facts in relation to them. The Federal party, to which Washington belonged, became at an early day so odious to the people that no party has dared to assume its name since its final

collapse in 1796. Republican, which succeeded it in popular favor after twenty years of undisputed sway, was adopted by a faction, with the prefix "National," and thereafter abandoned by the most ultra branch, who adopted the term Democrat, which had been derisively applied to the Republicans by their opponents, the Federalists, for many years. The name Whig was borrowed from English politics, both because of its association with our Revolutionary days and the triumphs which just at that time were being won by English Whigs, as well as the fact that it implied opposition to autocratic power, being aimed in this sense at the personal government inaugurated by Jackson. The Liberty, Free-soil, and Free Democrat appellations of the anti-slavery party are each expressive of some peculiar phase of the struggle out of which it sprung.

Throughout the entire century of constitutional government of which this year marks the close, however, there has been a general harmony of relation between the two leading parties that is very striking, and which it is essential for him who would understand American politics to keep steadily in view. From first to last, the chief difference has been in regard to the extension or limitation of federal power. The distinction has not always been apparent, frequently seeming to have been supplanted by some more obvious issue; but careful analysis will show that in some form it has constantly underlain

the issue which, for the time being, seemed to be the sole cause of difference. The Republicans at the first, and since 1824 the Democrats, have been the avowed champions of the rights and privileges of the individual States as sovereign communities, in contradistinction to the national or confederated power of the whole. Not only the exclusive control of their internal affairs, but also the absolute autonomy of the States—the right to withdraw from the Union, into which they had entered as sovereign States by federal compact, a mere formal treaty which *ex vi termini* might be rescinded by the power that made it—was for three-quarters of a century a distinctive principle of this party.

Its opponent, under various appellations, has more or less rigorously upheld the theory of national predominance, the insolubility and individual rather than statal character of the federal pact. They have insisted that the Constitution was a pact between “we, the people,” as constituent atoms, rather than between the States as political corporations. This contest has been varied in name and form by specific tendencies at various epochs. Under the impulse derived in no small degree from the term Whig, it advocated the employment of national power for the collective economic advantage of the people, and was characterized by the advocacy of internal improvements and the taxation of imports, with the view of increasing domestic manufacture.

These questions were not then dependent merely upon conflicting views as to the policy or impolicy of free trade or internal improvement, but, to a far greater extent than your training and experience will enable you to realize, upon the right of the federal government to exercise its power in such directions and for such purposes. The federalistic idea underlying the economic doctrines of the Whig party inclined it to uphold almost any exercise of the national authority that would promote the prosperity of the people—whatever seemed to make for the general aggregate advantage.

This idea, instead of being merged, as so many have supposed, in the new questions raised by the anti-slavery agitation at the time of the organization of the present Republican party, was in fact emphasized and extended by it. The real issue between the parties at that time was not, as you may have supposed, my young friend, so much a difference of opinion as to the right or wrong, policy or impolicy, of slavery as a social institution or an economic agency, but almost entirely a disagreement as to the power of the federal government to restrain its extension. The Democrats, in brief, held that this question, being within the domain of stataal authority, and subject entirely to State regulation and control, the general government could not limit or restrict the privileges of a citizen of any particular State in regard to any specific form of

property, nor permit it to be done by any other State. This was the philosophic basis on which rested the Fugitive-Slave Law, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and the opposition to the prohibition of slavery in the District of Columbia. This, too, was the theoretical basis of the Rebellion, among the most important results of which has been the development of issues apparently new, yet based, in fact, upon the old familiar controversy as to the character of the federal compact, and the limitation of federal power. These questions involve chiefly the definition of federal citizenship, and must ultimately lead to further consideration and determination of the limits of State control over the exercise of civic privilege by citizens of the United States.

You will perceive, therefore, that for a hundred years the great fundamental distinction between the parties which have controlled the national destiny has been a difference, not merely as to the correct construction of the Federal Constitution, but as to the true principles which should control the exercise of the federal power. The one has held with more or less latitude that the national power can only be exercised to sustain the national authority, provide for the national defense, and raise money for the current expenses of the government. The other has maintained, under various names and with various immediate purposes in view, that the real scope of national power is the general good of the whole

people, limited only by the express restrictions of the Constitution. They have consequently advocated the use of the public lands and the public credit in promoting works of internal improvement; have opened the public lands to the actual settler without purchase, or at a nominal value; defined the limits of national citizenship, and maintained the principle of a restrictive and discriminating tax on imports, not only as a means of obtaining revenue, but also as a method of encouraging domestic manufacture, and promoting the general welfare of the people.

The real question at issue between the two parties which in turn dominate our destiny has changed in this hundred years of experience and under unconscious modifying influences, chiefly in one aspect. At first, it was almost solely a matter of construction. What did the Constitution mean—what was the purpose of the fathers? This was the question uppermost in political discussion during the first half century of our national life. Gradually it became complicated with questions of policy—of necessity even. Yet still it entered into and colored all political controversy. It drew from Webster the argument, made necessary by the strength of his opponent's position, that the federal Union was a permanent pact between individuals, rather than a terminable treaty between sovereign communities, giving thereby of necessity the right to consider and promote the general

advantage in all methods not expressly prohibited by the fundamental law.

From the enunciation of this doctrine until the present time the color of our political discussion has been constantly changing. The question of intent on the part of the framers of the Constitution has gradually given way to the question of public policy and general interest. This is not only true of political theories and legislative action, but the tendency of judicial construction has also been in the same direction. Rivers and harbors, national highways, education and the agricultural interests of the country, have been subjects of especial national care, while the courts have asserted its power not only to control and regulate citizenship and the exercise of its privileges, but also to see that the power of the State is not exercised to the detriment of individual interests, the impairment of domestic commerce, or to imperil the general prosperity. So that national policy, rather than constitutional power, has at length become the chief ingredient of political disquisition; and the question now is, not so much how far the national prerogative may be extended, but rather how far it ought to be carried.

This fundamental difference between the leading parties of the country will no doubt continue. It takes the place, to a considerable degree, of the distinction between the government and the opposition

which prevails in other parliamentary governments, and is the key to the peculiar significance of the term party in our political thought. Of course a thousand considerations, aside from the two great tendencies we have considered, may incline the individual to affiliate with the one or the other of these great parties. Indeed, it is quite possible that the mass of adherents of both are unconscious of the great underlying principles that divide them, and but dimly know why they incline to the one and not to the other.

While it is important that you should make no mistake in determining what shall be your party affiliations, it is of infinitely more importance that you should clearly understand what are your rights, privileges, and responsibilities as a member of *any* party. We are accustomed to speak of the ballot as the great instrument of political power. It is a mistake. The ballot-box only registers the triumph of one party over another. It is *as a partisan alone* that the citizen exercises power, and the party organization is the *only* weapon by which political good may be accomplished or political evil averted. This weapon you must learn to test, to shape, to temper, and to wield, if you would wisely rule or effectually serve your country.

VIII.

“KING CAUCUS.”

I DO not doubt that if you have carefully followed the preceding papers of this series, you will note with especial pleasure the caption of the present number. We have been so accustomed to attribute all our political ills to malign abstractions rather than to individual deficiencies, that it is not at all strange that you should be somewhat tired of being addressed in the second person singular and held accountable for public evils just the same as for other personal sins of omission and commission. You will no doubt rejoice, therefore, in the thought that instead of applying the rod still farther to the back of the individual citizen, I am about to turn my attention to the much belabored abstraction whose name appears at the head of this article. I am aware that “party” and the “caucus” are regarded as the twin devils of our political life, on whose devoted heads the professional reformer—the man to whom whatever is, is always wrong—bestows his most vigorous whacks and choicest maledictions. You will perceive that I have inclosed the caption in quotation marks. This

is not done for the purpose of implying doubt as to its existence or the propriety of the cognomen, but as you will perceive before you reach the close of this letter, to suggest whether the evil thing we so lustily curse is really entitled to bear the name we use to barb our anathemas. Having already briefly sketched the succession of parties, the various changes of name and curious identity of character which have characterized our leading political agencies from the foundation of our government until the present time, the purpose of this letter is to trace the evolution of the organic form and note the distinctive elements of the modern party. We must perforce go over much of the same ground, and pass the same political events in a like hasty review, but we shall regard them now in an entirely different aspect. Our inquiry is no longer under what *name*, or for what *purpose*, but in what *form* and by what *methods*, political results have been achieved.

In considering this question, we should keep steadily in mind the fact that party is *only an agency*. The American party organization is simply the instrumentality, by which the American people have chosen to govern themselves. As an instrument, it is not to be held accountable for the results of its use, any more than any piece of mechanism for the consequences of its application. The workman, not the chisel, is to be judged by the chips. The question is whether a party, as at present organized and

administered in this country, is an effective method for accomplishing the ends which those who move the springs and levers have in view; whether it is an efficient instrument for accomplishing good in the hands of good men, and bad in the hands of bad men; and whether it lends itself with equal facility to the aims of each. If so, it is a good political agency; if not, it is a bad one. There has not yet been invented any substitute for honesty, patriotism, and intelligence, on the part of the ruler; nor is any political mechanism likely to be devised that in the hands of bad men will yield good results, or enable good men to circumvent evil without exertion.

For forty years after the organization of the federal government, parties partook very largely of the character of parties and factions in other countries. Especially did they resemble in constitution and operation the political forces bearing the same designation, which had grown up under that curiously indefinite force known as the British Constitution. The English party has always closely resembled the fundamental law of which it is a result. Certainty and uncertainty are strangely combined in its character. Of late, it has taken something of form from our political system. At that time, however, it was too vague to deserve the name of party. Harmony of action was curiously blended with freedom of opinion in its ranks. The line that separated the conflicting forces was so vague as to be almost indefinable.

The bond that united allied factions was very often one of contrast rather than of accord. Each individual leader formulated his own dogmas and negotiated his own alliances. The English party of that day was merely a confederation of cliques—a group of mobs rather than an organization. There was nothing representative, fixed, or determinate in its form or character. It had a head but no body, and even its head was of indeterminate form and uncertain composition. It might be a club or only a cabal. It might be constituted, destroyed, or recreated, without reference to, or consent of, the electors—the suffragans on whom its strength depended. Its leaders were merely allies, who fought together under a common flag as long as they saw fit, or as long as they could command the support of their constituencies by so doing, and no longer.

Except in the choice of members of the House of Commons, the English constituencies had, until very recently no voice in the constitution of the party, or the formulation of its distinctive ideas. The mass-meeting and the self-constituted cabal were its only organic features, if these can be called organic. A few men, representing no one, and accountable to no one, met and agreed vaguely upon a certain line of conduct. It was rarely if ever formulated into abstract propositions binding upon all. There was none of the careful study of phraseology and delicate balancing of words, which characterize the American

platform. "Certainty to a common intent in general," was all that was required even of the parties to the conference themselves. Smith might state the common purpose with emphatic precision, and Jones clothe it in the most dubious hypothesis; while another might cover the whole ground of variance from doubt to certainty, and add to the same an infinite variety of individual notions, without being thought to exceed the privilege of the partisan. This was precisely the character of the Federal and Republican parties in the early period of our history; and such our statesmen of that day, no doubt, expected them to continue. Indeed, it is not unusual to find political teachers at the present time who have quite overlooked the fact of organic changes in our political agencies, as well as the causes from which they have arisen.

No doubt one of the chief influences in effecting such changes was the adoption of written constitutions, together with the judicial rule of strict construction of the same, except in regard to individual rights. The grant of powers was viewed with the utmost jealousy; the guarantee of rights construed with the utmost liberality. This cultivated a habit of certainty and precision in the statement of political questions, which is quite unknown in other countries, except those whose political habit has been largely molded by our experience. The conventions which framed these constitutions were,

in a sense, representative, though by no means strictly and impartially so. The doctrine of equal power and privilege in the control of government had made but little progress at that time, and it is a curious fact that representative government preceded by nearly half a century the institution of representative party organizations. Little groups of prominent men in each State were, at first, the shaping forces of the respective parties. They devised and formulated the party policy, and performed the functions of the English party club or conference of leaders. The only method in which the rank and file of the party could give expression to their views was by public meetings and the adoption of prepared resolutions. These mass conventions continued to grow in importance, and the voluntary cabals to be looked upon with increasing suspicion and distrust, as the new government came to be more fully apprehended by the people.

Before the second decade of our constitutional history had elapsed, such mass conventions in the several States had become the real law-makers of the respective parties. They formulated with the utmost precision the tenets to which their adherents were required to accede as a condition of party recognition and support. They rarely touched, however, the field of party administration and control and it was nearly half a century before the two functions were united in the same body.

From the voluntary or mass convention, marked by State limits, to the delegated convention with prescribed constituencies, seems to us now but a step, yet it was at least a quarter of a century before it was fully taken. Like almost all the successive steps in the evolution of our governmental forms and agencies, this was not the result of the political sagacity or philosophical foresight of any man or set of men, but of the popular jealousy of self-constituted leaders. It would seem that in a few of the States the delegate party convention had been established as early as 1820. Its powers and functions, however, were very loosely defined. The representation, except in some of the New England States, was by counties, and in them by towns. The delegates were chosen by public mass conventions. Even this skeleton party organization was only half complete, in most of the States, and as yet there had been no attempt to extend its operation to the domain of national politics.

The exercise of delegated authority in party councils had, however, become familiar to the popular mind through the action of congressional and legislative caucuses. These were the first successors of the vicious system of voluntary cabals. Their right to act for their respective parties was based solely on the fact that they had been chosen by them to perform other political functions. The hostility to Federalism which developed even during Wash-

ington's first term, was no doubt a popular rebellion against the idea of a central controlling power, in the party as well as in the nation. The self-constituted Federal caucuses of Virginia, New York, and Massachusetts were exact equivalents of their English model. They were composed of the ablest, most patriotic and cultivated of the supporters of the Presidential policy. They represented, however, an idea inherently obnoxious to the American spirit; they assumed to rule rather than to serve; they dictated the party policy without having been authorized by the voters of the party to speak for them.

The first formal rebellion against the authority of these unauthorized cabals was the legislative caucus. When or where the first of these remarkable gatherings was held it is impossible now to determine; nor, indeed, is it important. The association of members of a legislative body having a general political affinity, to secure harmony of action in matters of general interest, is not only natural but absolutely essential. It was, perhaps, equally natural that these chosen representatives of the people should look with jealousy upon the self-constituted cliques which assumed to direct the course of national affairs. Almost from the first, therefore, we find the legislative caucuses performing the organic functions of the State conventions of the present time, and assuming to speak for their constituents, not only in regard to State, but also upon national

affairs. Of these, the legislative caucuses of Virginia and New York became especially notable.

The congressional caucus was the natural outgrowth of the legislative organizations already existing. It was instituted under the direct supervision of Mr. Jefferson, who was the discoverer of most of the popular forces of the new government. He alone seems to have understood something of the meaning of government *by* the people, while the bulk of his compeers thought only of a government *for* the people, *by* their leaders. The first congressional caucus—that is, the first organized meeting of the members of a political party who were also members of the two houses of Congress, assuming to act on behalf of their party, in the selection of a Presidential candidate—was held toward the close of Mr. Jefferson's second term, in 1808. It will be well for you to note the character of this caucus with some care, in order to distinguish it from the joint caucus of each party in the two houses of Congress, which still exists, but confines its attention to matters of legislation. The two bodies are entirely dissimilar in function, though designated by the same terms.

From this time until 1824 the congressional caucuses assumed to nominate the national candidates, and their action was in every instance confirmed by the popular acquiescence and approval of their respective parties. This result was not secured, however, with-

out certain indications of ultimate revolt. The jealousy of the various legislative caucuses, whose action was really open to the very same objection, fostered the idea already prevalent among the people, that such course on the part of members of Congress was a dangerous usurpation—an unauthorized extension of the powers delegated to them by their constituents. The term which became the slogan of the famous scrub-race of 1824 showed how ineradicable is the antipathy of the American people to the exercise of any political power which is not clearly and unmistakably conferred by express popular authorization. It was, in fact, a rebellion against the action of the congressional caucus, which was stigmatized as “King Caucus!”

The attempt has been made to perpetuate the odium attaching to this name by an indiscriminate application of the term to all forms of voluntary political organization. Even yet the English political writers, and some careless observers among our own political theorists, labor under the impression that the “caucus” is the most reprehensible feature of our party organization. Within a very brief period a distinguished novelist, whose ideas of American politics, when not purely fanciful, are derived by infiltration from English authorities, has represented the United States as still under the dominion and control of that terrible tyrant, old “King Caucus!”

The truth is, that the "caucus" in the sense in which the word had been used up to that time, received its death-blow in 1824. Almost, if not the sole instances of its survival, are to be found in the political organizations of the city of New York, which despite its arrogant claim to teach political purity, remains, as it always has been, the Gibraltar of political depravity. At that time the legislative caucuses of the several States, as if by mutual understanding, attempted to revive their lapsed privilege of nominating the national candidates, and four aspirants, all belonging to the same party, were thus brought into the field, with the result that there was no choice of President or Vice-President by the electoral colleges of that year.

This fact and the controversies resulting therefrom made a profound impression on the public mind, and prepared the way for the institution, in 1830, of the delegate national convention, which is the keystone of the American theory of party government. The result has been the establishment of a system of voluntary republics within the boundaries, and adapting themselves to the civil divisions, of the federal Union. These voluntary republics we call parties. They are composed of (1) primaries, or voluntary meetings of the members of the party in the smallest subdivisions of the various States, and (2) delegate conventions, composed of representatives from the primaries or subordinate delegate conventions. Thus

the city, district, county, State, and national conventions are duly constituted, all dependent on the will of the individual members of the party as expressed at the primaries, or, as they are sometimes termed, caucuses.

This magnificent system is a gradual but nat-outgrowth of the genius of the American people for self government. It is the natural enemy of the "caucus" and all forms of individual usurpation or assumption. It is the freeman's chosen weapon for the achievement of individual equality, which only fails to accomplish its purpose when the hand of the citizen relaxes its grasp and the freeman yields its control to the hireling. In detail and organization it is by no means perfect. It is fair to presume that neither its merits nor its imperfections are yet fully apprehended. Fifty years of trial can hardly be expected to develop more than the most apparent excellencies, or reveal the most evident defects of a system at once so pliant, so potent, and so unique.

Thus far the evils which have developed under it have generally, if not always, been the result, not of the system itself, but of the survival of some of the vicious and undemocratic elements of the systems it superseded.

These in many cases have distorted its character and greatly impaired its efficiency; but reviewing its entire history, judging its efficiency by its aggregated

results, it is not too much to say that the American party system is the simplest, surest, and, all things considered, the most effectual method of ascertaining the popular will and carrying into effect the common purpose, that has ever been devised. Being a natural evolution, it adapts itself with readiness to the most diverse conditions, not serving to render the bad good, nor the good bad, but registering with the utmost exactitude the intelligence, virtue, strength, and manhood of every community to which it is applied. If it points to "deals" in New York and "bull-dozing" in the South, it is not the fault of the system, but only a natural result of the predominance of corruptibility and weakness in the respective localities. A reliable barometer will not point to "fair" in the face of a storm, nor has any plan been yet devised that will enable a people to gather the grapes of good government from the thorns of neglect, venality, and ignorance. Our party system does not guarantee protection against usurpative intelligence; it affords no safeguard against intimidation or corruption; it only provides, and only professes to provide, a way by which virtue and intelligence, united with courage and zeal, may secure prosperity and good government in a republic.

The creation of this magnificent instrumentality is due to the instinct of self-control that characterizes our people. It is this which especially distinguishes the American Republic from all other attempts in the

direction of self-government, and is the most unique and valuable of all our political institutions. Instead of regarding it with apprehension or contempt, every good citizen should look upon it with peculiar reverence. You can not possibly, my young friend, devote your time to a more profitable study than the constitution and character, the capabilities and defects, of this most remarkable political agency which the history of the world has developed.

IX.

SETTING THE KEY-STONE.

I HAD intended in this number to call your attention to the organic character and distinctive elements of our party system as it at present exists, pointing out some of its excellencies and considering its proved defects. Upon carefully reviewing the ground already covered, however, it has seemed to me desirable that you should first consider with some care the events immediately leading to the adoption—perhaps I ought to say the discovery—by the people of the United States of the national convention, composed of a specific number of delegates from the various political subdivisions apportioned according to a fixed rule, chosen by a regularly ascertained majority in the party primaries, representing the collective will, and constituting the supreme legislative, judicial, and administrative head of a voluntary political organization, which every member has—or is supposed to have—equal power and privilege in shaping and controlling. This body is the key-stone of the American party system, and you can not properly appreciate its character and importance

without giving special attention to the circumstances attending its adoption. If our political history up to that point showed a tendency to popularize party management, the setting of this key-stone was so unmistakable an assertion of the public will as to leave no doubt that our party system, instead of being a carefully planned instrumentality for depriving the citizen of his equal share in the government, as some would have us believe, is in reality the very weapon which the people forged to secure parity of power and privilege to all.

We have already seen that the history of party organization in the United States reveals four successive stages, each marked by its own distinctive method of ascertaining and directing popular sentiment, in order to secure effective co-operation among those of similar political views. To each of these may be assigned the following respective periods: (1) That of the individual faction, or irresponsible voluntary cabal, from the foundation of the government until 1796; (2) The State Legislative Caucus period, from 1792 until 1812; (3) The Congressional Caucus era, from 1808 until 1824; (4) The Delegate Convention period, from 1830 until the present time. We have seen that each one of these successive changes was a natural outgrowth of the irrepressible tendency of the American people towards self-government, acting through existing agencies, and moved by specific

popular impulses. You will note that the periods assigned to each are not exclusive. Like all popular movements, it can not be said that these changes of form were instantaneous, or that the one at a precise moment superseded the other. Each may be said to have been the prevailing or dominant force during the period assigned to it. Each marked a revolution more or less distinct in public thought, by which it was brought about, and, like all such changes, was more or less gradual in character. The Legislative Caucus continued, even after the organization of the Congressional Caucus, as the determinative body, only losing something of its independent and conclusive character; while between the downfall of the Congressional Caucus and the adoption of the Representative Convention, a considerable period elapsed, during which parties were without any recognized or authoritative headship. This was the germinal period of the present system.

It is most essential that you keep the facts of the growth and evolution of our party forms constantly in mind. As a result of popular progress, party becomes not only an interesting study, but a governmental agency worthy of serious and even reverent consideration. It has been too much the custom to regard all party organizations as necessarily malign and dangerous influences. The philosophic ideal of the perfect citizen is no doubt builded on the model of a political Cincinnatus, following peacefully the

plow until a public exigency arises; then going quietly to the ballot-box, and, without previous consultation or any concert of action with others, expressing by his simple ballot, his judgment as to the fittest man to be assigned to any specific duty. Perhaps, to make it entirely harmonious with our latest Anglo-American ideal, this modern Cincinnatus ought to be endowed with a vigorous Catonian inclination to find fault, and thoroughly convinced that he is one of the few honest and patriotic citizens of the Republic, if not, indeed, the only one, on whose integrity and disinterestedness absolute reliance can always be placed.

Very fortunately this ideal is no longer capable of realization. The changes of party form have always been indicative of far more important changes in public thought—a constant emphasizing of the tendency towards popular government. At first it was supposed that the people would be content merely to choose those whom they preferred, in whose probity and wisdom they had the highest confidence, and that these men would be, for the time being, their rulers. Under these earlier conditions the persons chosen to executive or legislative offices were regarded as having been vested with discretionary power, rather than charged with specific obligations by the popular preference. The fact that they were the candidates of any particular party carried with it little, if any, restriction of this discretion.

While party lines—that is, the sentiment which separates one party from another—were, no doubt, drawn as sharply then as now, the limits of party doctrine were very indistinct. There existed no such clear and positive guides to the specific principles which the different factions of those early days professed, as the party platforms of the past fifty years. Not that these are always intended to speak the truth, or meant wholly to reveal the party preference, but read with the gloss of current events, they constitute an infallible index to the party purpose.

As party forms developed, popular government became a more and more distinct and tangible fact. The candidate of a party to-day, within the limits of his party's principles and declarations, is bound as firmly as if sworn upon the altar. His claim to support is based solely upon a pledge of loyalty to the instructions of his party followers. So far as their declared will and purpose extends he is the servant, the agent of the party which nominates him. Every vote that is cast for him is given under the express or implied pledge on his part, that in the position he is chosen to fill, he will act according to their instructions and preferences, *so far as the same shall have been expressed previous to his election.*

In other words, the official of to-day is the legislative or executive representative of the will of his party, and takes the office to which he is chosen

under the most solemn pledges to act according to the known, established, and formulated principles of those by whom he is chosen. He is their attorney, governing in their name, by their authority, and according to their direction. Outside of their pre-expressed will, however, he is not bound to consider or consult their preferences. Upon a new question he may properly and honorably take his own course, even though it should be in direct hostility to the will of those by whom he is chosen, *expressed subsequently to his election.*

This is government *by the people.* It is the enforcement of the express will of a majority, by their pledged and chosen representatives—the exponents of their beliefs and the agents of their predetermined purposes. This may not be so good a plan of government as that which simply selects the wisest and best—or those whom the majority may deem the wisest and best—leaving them to act as they may judge the public good to require. It is the result, however, of an irresistible tendency of our people toward self-government—to the determination of all important questions, not by arbitrators chosen to decide the same, but by the people themselves acting individually and directly upon the subject. Our party organization of the present is calculated and intended to give expression to this impulse, and is impregably intrenched in the popular preference because of its actual or supposed efficiency in secur-

ing that result. It was this tendency on the part of the American people that thrust aside first the individual cabals, then the separate State Legislative Caucus, and finally the Congressional Caucus itself—each because it was not sufficiently representative of the popular will—substituting each time a broader, more perfect and harmonious system in place of the one thus discarded; making these successive changes, not instantaneously and simultaneously in all parts of the country, but gradually and at different times in different States, as the necessity for them forced itself upon the public conviction. It was this same impulse, too, that finally threw them all aside and adopted the present party organization in order to secure a better expression of the popular will and more certain accomplishment of its purposes.

The history of the first national delegate convention and the circumstances out of which it grew, affords a singular confirmation of the view we have taken. As we have seen, there was but one party in the nation from 1816 until 1824. Even then, the so-called National Republican party did not formulate any express declaration of principles, but merely separated from the other wing of the party, claiming to be its true exponent instead of the more radical faction which they opposed. Practically, the same conditions, slightly emphasized, continued in 1828. That contest was purely factional. It was a fight between the personal followers of men who did not

even claim any material difference of political faith. At this time, however, one of the most remarkable and instructive movements of our political history was begun, which eventually became one of the most romantic episodes in the progress of self-government.

It is doubtful if such important results ever before sprung from apparently so insignificant a cause, as those which followed the disappearance of William Morgan, of Batavia, N. Y., in 1826. Indeed, the political history of that time reads to-day like a page out of some highly colored romance. It is almost impossible to believe that the actors in that curious extravaganza were our fathers, sober, earnest, God-fearing men. Yet your own grandfather was snatched from obscurity and raised to fame by the intensity of his patriotic anger at the crime done to one citizen, and the peril which he thought it indicated to the rights of all. Even after her eightieth year I remember to have heard my grandmother tell, in tones tremulous with excitement, the story of what she still believed to be a conspiracy of unparalleled atrocity against the liberty of the citizen and the safety of the Republic. She only represented the sentiment of hundreds of thousands to whose minds even the fame of Washington was, for a time, clouded with doubt because of his relations with a mystic, oath-bound body, whom they believed to be inimical to a government based on equality of right.

What was the cause of this popular ferment? **It**

has almost been forgotten. Perhaps you will hardly find the name I have cited in your encyclopedia. There is more than one such work that does not deem it worthy of preservation even for the student of American politics. I doubt if you have ever given the movement inseparably connected with it an hour's thought. Yet I have seen your grandfather's eyes flash under his white knotted brows, and heard his voice tremble with emotion, as, even amid the excitement of our great Civil War, he told the story of that wonderful popular uprising. Even your father, until the last hour of his life, acknowledged its influence upon his own political preferences.

William Morgan was a Freemason. He was reported to have written an exposition of the mysteries of that ancient fraternity for publication. This report awakened great consternation among the members of that organization throughout the country. Pending its publication, Morgan was imprisoned at Canandaigua, New York, on a charge of debt; taken out of the jail at night, placed in a carriage, and driven away in the direction of Niagara Falls. He was never seen afterwards. The popular belief was that he was murdered and his body thrown into the river, and that this was done by Freemasons to prevent the revelation he was about to make. It is probable that both suppositions were correct. Yet why should such a crime be of special moment to the people of the United States? What was William Morgan that

they should take any interest in his death? Nothing. As a man he was utterly insignificant, and, by his own confession, dishonored and forsworn. The disclosures he professed to be about to make seem to have been intended simply to raise money. It is more than probable that instead of desiring to reveal the secrets of Freemasonry, his purpose was merely to blackmail its initiates through fear of exposure. He does not seem to have had any valid claim to the name of patriot or reformer, and certainly was in no sense a man fit to be made a popular idol in his life, or likely to be revered as a martyr after his death.

Nor was he so revered. The people cared nothing for William Morgan as a man, alive or dead. It was only the idea that a society, extending throughout the whole country, and embracing among its members a vast majority of the most wealthy, cultured, and refined citizens, including nearly all the prominent political leaders, had a hold upon its members which they regarded as paramount to the sanction of the law of the land, that made his death a matter of general concern. It was the apprehension of peril to popular liberty, free government, and equal rights, that roused the masses of the people to a frenzy of fanaticism that has never been equaled in our history. It was not so much the apprehension of crime, or the fear that justice would be corrupted, but the idea that there existed in the Republic an oath-bound body of men, who were pledged to aid and favor

each other in all things. It was against them as a privileged class—as unduly favored citizens—that the public wrath burned hot.

The fiercest of popular frenzies was that Antimasonic movement which followed hard upon the disappearance of Morgan in 1826. I wish I could give you some idea of its lurid intensity as I have gathered it from the study of the public prints of that day, as well as from the lips of ancient craftsmen and their most active opponents. It was a political difference that impugned the personal character of every man who ventured to uphold one side of the controversy. To the Antimason every Mason was, of necessity, a criminal. If not actually a murderer, he was solemnly pledged to commit murder, should the interests of the craft or the peril of a fellow-craftsman demand it. He was unfit to be a freeman, because he was a member of a great conspiracy to destroy equality of right and privilege. The Churches took cognizance of membership of the lodge as an act of immorality, and expelled all who did not publicly renounce their obligations. To be a Mason was everywhere held an act requiring excuse. Thousands of members publicly withdrew, or rather, as withdrawal from the order is a thing unknown and impossible, formally renounced Masonry. Lodges were disbanded and charters surrendered, until there remained in some States hardly a skeleton of the organization. Members were often afraid to acknowl-

edge themselves such from actual fear of personal violence. Men even refused to recognize the hailing signs of the craft from fear of betrayal. A century before—perhaps at any previous time—such fierce fanaticism could only have been allayed by the shedding of blood.

Thanks to the freedom and flexibility of our political system, it found a peaceful outlet. In 1828 four States elected Antimasonic governors. In every State the charge of Masonic affiliation was a serious imputation against any public man. At least two candidates for the Presidency publicly disavowed all active relation with the institution, or personal recognition of its obligations. Whether another had or had not been initiated is perhaps hardly yet determined. Few men were chosen to any office for a decade who did not openly declare their non-affiliation or publicly renounce their vows, such was the fierceness of the popular clamor.

Aside from its peculiar character and purpose, this was a notable uprising of the people—an assertion of the public will that took no account of party lines, trampled popular leaders in the dust, and mocked at existing political methods. It was a revolt against self-constituted leaders and self-declared representation. It may have been right or it may have been wrong in its estimate of the peril that threatened. That is a matter of little moment now. Probably it was not entirely right nor altogether

wrong. Certainly very few believe that there is any danger now to be apprehended from the institution then so greatly dreaded. What remains to us of value from this lurid conflict of half a century ago is the fact that it marks the first institution of a plan of organization expressly designed to impress upon the government the convictions, of a distinct body of the American people. Out of Antimasonry was born our present party system. Throwing aside as insufficient the existing political agencies, the Antimasons held the first national delegate convention, formulated a platform, prescribed a ratio of representation, and subordinated every part of the new organization, from the lowest to the highest, to popular control. From this first delegate national convention in 1830, until the present time, no party has dared take any important step except in the name of, and with the claim of express authority from, the individuals of which it is composed.

Thus it will be seen that every step in the evolution of our party system has been but a natural result of the impulse of self-government which is inherent in the American people. At first non-representative control was discarded; then pseudo-representation was set aside; and, finally, the simple yet effective system which has now become so familiar to us, that we find it hard to realize that it has not always existed, was inaugurated. From first to last, the movement has been a persistent, at times even a

passionate, revolt against what we should now term "ring-rule" and "bossism."

To say that it has not always served the purpose for which it was designed, is simply to assert its human origin. That it has more nearly accomplished this purpose than any other known instrumentality is an incontestable fact. It is only when organized ambition coexists with general and culpable neglect, on the part of its members, however, that the American system of party organization can be made to lend itself to any other purpose than the due enforcement of the popular will. How this is sometimes done, and how it may be prevented, we shall presently inquire.

X.

A SHEAF OF FIRST-FRUITS.

WE have seen that our present party system is an outgrowth of the popular tendency towards the direct control of public affairs by the people themselves. It may be interesting to note the fact that simultaneous with this movement there has been a remarkable popularization of our government itself, showing a constant and irresistible tendency of power to the hands of the people, and a growing disapproval of those methods which interpose an intermediary between the source of power and its application. Of this tendency there are two very notable evidences.

We have already seen how the Presidential Electors were transformed from independent self-directing entities into mere passive instruments of the majority by which they are chosen. The framers of the Constitution no doubt intended that the Electors should choose a President and a Vice-President in the manner prescribed, and according to their own convictions of fitness and capacity. Before the third Presidential election, however, the Electors had become

mere agents of the popular will ; that is, they were expected to vote only for those whom the popular majority preferred. This was at first accomplished without changing the method of choosing these officials. The Federal Constitution directs that "each State shall *appoint*" Electors "in such manner as the Legislatures thereof shall direct." It was no doubt intended that the several Legislatures *themselves* should "appoint" the Electors, the qualifying phrase, "in such manner as they shall direct," being designed to apply merely to the method of procedure, whether *viva voce*, by joint ballot, or the two houses acting separately. In accordance with this idea, the Electors were appointed by the Legislatures of all the States until 1812, by all but two in 1816, and even in 1824 they were still chosen by the Legislatures of Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, New York, South Carolina, and Vermont.

As the people began to break away from the idea of personal leadership and individual followings and learn the real significance of popular power, they began to clamor for a more direct control of what had already been popularly named the "Electoral College." It is a curious fact that for nearly a score of years, this meeting of the official Electors had no name or specified form of organization under our laws, but was popularly known almost from the first as the "Electoral College." It was insisted when the popular demand for specific control of this

peculiar feature of our national government began to assume positive shape, that, as the Legislature had the power to "direct" how the "State" should "appoint" Electors, they had the discretion to remit that duty to the people. Another view of the subject was that since the people constituted the "State," the power to appoint Electors inhered in them, and the Legislature were only clothed with power to regulate the method of appointment. This was no doubt a strained construction of the constitutional intent; but the people so willed it, and it was done—done, too, in many instances, without serious opposition, so natural and almost insensible was the transition of power from the few to the many, from the center to the circumference. Almost contemporaneously with the birth of the modern party, therefore, the people assumed direct control of the choice of Electors in all the States except South Carolina, where they continued to be appointed by the Legislature until 1868.

Another notable indication of the popularization of our government, attendant upon or resulting from, the evolution of our present party system, is the increase in the number of elective offices—especially at the North. Previous to 1820, by far the greater part of the administrative and judicial officers of the States were appointed, either by the executive alone or by the executive acting in conjunction with one or both branches of the Legislature. Coincident with the

assertion of popular power in the direction and control of the party came the demand for popular control of these offices. So that at the present time the county offices in all the Northern States, all township officers except justices of the peace in three of them, municipal officers in all except one, all judges of courts of record, except the judges of the Supreme Court in two, and of the inferior courts in one, are elective. In short, it may be said that all the legislative, executive, judicial, and administrative functionaries of the Northern States are now chosen directly by the people. The same system of complete local self-government was generally introduced into the States of the South by the constitutions of 1868, which were formed on Northern models and represented Northern ideas. With the overthrow of these governments in 1876, there came, however, a return to the appointive system that had prevailed before the War of Rebellion. So that the governor of a single Southern State now appoints more officials than those of half a dozen of the more populous States of the North. Thus it will be seen that the popular control of the party—the voluntary republic which exists within the national organism—has always been indicative of a tendency to direct popular control of the functions of government.

Another indication of the tendency which has grown up under the present party system is the inclination to what is termed “centralization” in our national government. Curiously enough, in an indi-

vidual sense, it is not centralization at all, but simply an inclination to transfer power from the States, acting *as such*, to the people of *all* the States, acting *individually*. This has manifested itself in the assertion of the rights of citizens of the United States to equality before the law in all the States; the national supervision of elections for members of Congress and Presidential Electors; the extension of the jurisdiction of the United States courts; the regulation of interstate commerce; the assertion of congressional control over the electoral count and in many other ways, which, though they may not seem significant to the casual observer, to the student of our political history are indicative of a most remarkable change in the character and tendency of our institutions. It is a singular fact, and one that should not be lost sight of, in estimating the value of our present party system, that every modification of our governmental organism which has resulted from its adoption, has been an extension of individual right—an enhancement of individual power as contradistinguished from the claim of power by artificial groups. The domain of *national* citizenship has been greatly enlarged and that of *statal* citizenship correspondingly restricted by its operation.

This change to direct from indirect control of affairs, is looked upon with apprehension by many who regard as peculiarly sacred the ideas of those who are reverently referred to as “the founders of our

government;" meaning, by that phrase, the men who devised our constitutional system. Such are apt to consider what are often termed the "safeguards" of the Federal Constitution with peculiar veneration. They look upon our national prosperity in all its phases, as chiefly the result of constitutional restrictions, forgetful of the fact that its greatest peril, the "War of Rebellion," was a direct and unmistakable result of the existence of two of these vaunted "safeguards." To such, the "intention of the fathers" and the wisdom "of the founders of our government" are far more important than the popular tendencies which inspired their conduct or have since so greatly modified its results. They regard the glory of the American republic as due rather to the "checks and balances of the Constitution" than to the inherent character of our people.

On the other hand, there are those who look upon the restriction of State authority to local and municipal affairs alone, and the extension of direct popular control of the national government, as a healthful and desirable tendency. These regard our government as not so much an invention as a growth, an evolution—the result of antecedent conditions and continuing forces. The American Republic seems to their apprehension indebted for strength, prosperity, and freedom, less to the *form* of its written Constitution than to the instinct for self government, the intelligence, the moderation, and self-control of its people.

It is not the wise devices of the fathers, but the inborn kingliness of her sons, making them always ready to accept responsibility and ever cautious in the exercise of power, which has saved the nation from the ills that have overborne other democracies. The fathers were fearful of the extension of individual power. They dreaded the popular will. Even the Capital City, named after the "Father of his Country," was laid out under his immediate supervision with the express purpose of being easily defensible in the event of popular uprisings which he feared. With little clamor, and almost without stain of blood, the people whom the fathers of the Republic distrusted, have seized the power that was so carefully guarded against their expected assaults, and have made the restrictive forms that were intended to baffle their dangerous inclinations, mere instruments for carrying into effect their imperial will. To the voluntary instrumentalities devised and shaped to enable the popular will to be more readily, clearly, and certainly ascertained and enforced, we no doubt owe our national integrity and the sense of imperial grandeur that is beginning to attach to our national renown.

Our party system has lifted the will of the majority to a place of more than royal dignity. The sovereign will of the Republic has become something more than a mere fanciful hypothesis. The right to rule depends no longer on exploded theories or dubious speculation. The will of the majority fully expressed, care-

fully ascertained, and faithfully recorded,—*this* is the sovereign power of the Republic. Every life is pledged to the maintenance of its supremacy, not merely by the formal obligation of allegiance, but by the instinct of justice and the impulse of self-interest. The people are kings, and the concurrent will of the majority is “the lord paramount” of the realm. Party is simply a method which the people have devised and elaborated for ascertaining what this concurrent will may be, and for carrying it into effect when ascertained. With this instrumentality the civic triumphs of our past have been won, and to it more than to any other influence, the peace, prosperity, and glory of the Republic are due. It has not always worked without friction, nor have its results been always of an unobjectionable character. It is sometimes foolishly claimed to have been the cause of war, while it is unquestionably entitled to credit for inculcating that reverence for the popular will which enabled the nation to surmount every obstacle and defend the citadel of liberty from every assault.

It is very well, my young friend, that you should be always awake to perils that may impend from a too blind devotion to party, but do not ever forget that to this wonderful outgrowth of the popular instinct for self-direction, which the conditions of our American life alone seem able to have generated, we owe our deliverance from the perils of that half-chaotic epoch when factional strife and

individual ambition had not yet been wholly subordinated to the popular will. Other republics have been overthrown by the conflict of leaders and the clash of personal ambitions. Thanks to our American party system, we have thoroughly learned two great lessons,—that no man is so wise, so great, or so reliable as a party, and that no party has any claim to supremacy save by the express will and approval of a majority of its members. By the invention of this simple yet mighty mechanism, the people of the United States have shown themselves wiser than those wise and patriotic men who sought to control their action and protect them even from themselves. They have dethroned and disarmed the popular leader, and taken from the struggle for supremacy the supremely dangerous factor of personal ambition. The political leader has become the mere agent and creature of his party. He can be an aspirant for favor only by its permission; he triumphs only through its indorsement, and is cast aside at its pleasure. It pulls down the proudest and lifts up the lowliest. It is only when its power is weakened that rebellion occurs; and only when it shall be destroyed that usurpation will become possible. Thus far it remains the most valuable element of America's contribution to the science of human government.

Whatever may be the tendency of power in the future, whether towards the extension of federal control and the enhancement of the privilege of national

citizenship or not, you will readily perceive how essential it becomes to the future safety of the Republic that this strange agency which has grown up within its limits should be fully apprehended and wisely administered by the people, whose chosen weapon it is. As it has been designed and forged by the popular will of the past, so it must be polished and tempered by the patience, steadfastness, and patriotism of the present and the future.

XI.

THE INVISIBLE REPUBLIC.

I HAVE called our modern party a voluntary republic. Did you ever think how perfect and complete a democracy it is in theory, and how simple and effective in its unrestricted operation? Let us resolve it into its elements, and see what they are. Let us examine the laws by which its action is regulated, and see how little machinery is necessary to control such mighty combinations. Let us consider its legislative methods, its administrative mechanism, and determine, if we can, where and how and why it has proved itself deficient or harmful, how the various evils may be remedied, and what duty is incumbent upon you as a citizen of the Republic, in connection with its operation and amendment.

First, then, you will keep in mind that each of the great parties of to-day is composed of more than twenty thousand primitive democracies, which are properly termed primaries. They are sometimes, but improperly, designated caucuses. As we have already seen, the term caucus is properly applied only to a self-constituted and unauthorized body. The term,

probably, had its origin in the clandestine meetings of patriots just before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. So far as known, the word is of Boston origin, and meant, at the outset, a secret meeting for the purpose of determining upon a common course of action in regard to some public matter. Afterwards it was applied to any sort of secret political consultation. As we have already seen, the Legislative Caucus was a secret consultation of all the members of a specific party in the State Legislature as the self-constituted organ of that party. At one time it assumed to prescribe rules and make nominations for the party. The same was true, as we have seen, of the Congressional Caucus. Both of these were secret, or rather exclusive, meetings of members of a party belonging to such legislative bodies.

Such organizations as these still remain, and bear the same designation; but they no longer assume to perform any such function. The Legislative or Congressional Caucus of to-day is simply a meeting of the members of a party, who are also members of a legislative body, to determine what action shall be taken in regard to measures pending or to be introduced before the body to which they belong. The careless use of this term is probably responsible for more political nonsense than any other one thing connected with our politics. The voluntary cabal, the legislative party council, and the party primary,—all

these are bunched together and held up to public opprobrium as "caucuses," and we are then treated to long and labored disquisitions on the terrible enormities of that mysteriously compounded monster "King Caucus!"

The truth is, that there never was a political movement among the people of any country in which there were not secret consultations among the leaders. Concert of action is a necessity, and effective concert demands secrecy. Before a public meeting can be held, there must always be private consultation. This is a "caucus," in its primary sense—nothing more and nothing less. In every legislative body, of whatever sort or character since the world began, there has always been the legislative caucus or some equivalent of it. In the British Parliament the "whip" and the "conference of leaders" take the place of the vote of the caucus. These forms, or their equivalents, are essential to popular government and parliamentary legislation. But the primary—so often misnamed the "caucus"—is peculiar to the American party system, and is the first distinctive feature that demands your attention. It consists—except in the case of a few great cities, which exception will be considered at length hereafter—of a public meeting, open to all who are in effective sympathy with the party it represents, regularly organized with a duly elected president and secretaries, governed by regular parliamentary rules, in which all the voters

of the township or precinct in which it is held, who belong to a specific political party, have an equal right to participate—to speak and to vote.

This miniature republic has three specific functions: 1. To legislate for itself; that is, to prescribe rules for the government of the party within that precinct, which, however, must not be inconsistent with the general laws governing the party at large and prescribed by its higher tribunals. 2. To choose its own leaders; that is, to elect its own officers, to nominate candidates for local offices and to appoint an executive committee to organize and direct party action in the precinct. 3. To exercise its due share of influence in the government and control of the whole party; that is, to elect delegates to represent it in the next higher council of the party, according to a previously prescribed ratio of representation, which is usually determined by the number of votes cast for the party's candidate at the last preceding general election.

The county convention, which is the second step in the nice gradation of party government, exercises in like manner legislative, executive, and judicial power. Composed entirely of regularly elected delegates from the various primaries within its jurisdiction, it determines the ratio of representation by which the number from each is to be ascertained; prescribes rules for the government of the party in the county; nominates county candidates; names a county execu-

tive committee, and chooses delegates to the State and congressional district conventions.

The congressional district convention prescribes the ratio of representation from the various counties of which the district is composed, and the time and manner of their selection; nominates the congressional candidate of the party for that district, and quadrennially selects delegates to the national convention and names a candidate for Presidential elector.

The State convention, made up of delegates from the various counties, legislates for the party in the State; prescribes the ratio of representation from the counties; nominates candidates for State offices; names a State executive committee; selects delegates from the State at large to the national convention; names candidates for Presidential electors for the State at large, and defines the party policy as regards State affairs.

The national convention is made up of delegates (1) from the various congressional districts of the country, and (2) from the several States, the whole being based upon, and following very closely, the model of the federal government, the delegates from the districts being the equivalent of the members of the House of Representatives, and the delegates at large representing the senatorial power of the State. It prescribes the ratio of representation; decides contests from the different States and districts; nominates candidates for President and Vice-President;

names a National Executive Committee; formulates the party policy on national questions, and authoritatively defines its purpose and traditions.

I have not recapitulated these things, my young friend, because of any doubt that you are already familiar with each of them as independent facts, but lest you might not have noted their mutual interdependence, and the chain of relation that extends from the lowest to the highest, and so have failed to appreciate the harmony between the various parts of the voluntary republics that have grown up within the nation, and are at constant warfare with each other for its political control—a warfare that is in itself the evidence of peace and stability, as well as the guarantee of liberty and progress.

No doubt it would seem to an observer not familiar with the spirit of our institutions that this voluntary republic was but a servile imitation of the political forms and institutions with which it is connected. A glance will assure you that it is a far simpler system than that embodied in the Federal Constitution. The reason of this is, no doubt, that the *government* was framed by speculative statesmen, versed in the accepted tenets of political philosophy, while the *party* is the product of popular instinct, and is yet almost entirely unmodified by legal enactment.

The first difference you will note between these voluntary republics and the conventional ones to

whose subdivisions and convolutions they have so readily adapted themselves, is the absence of restrictive or corrective agencies. If the individual member of a party is denied his right, or debarred of his privilege as a citizen of the voluntary republic, he has before him two remedies, exile or retaliation; that is, he may either abandon his party and deprive it of his support, or actively seek to compass its defeat and overthrow. Which of these courses it is his duty to adopt depends on circumstances we shall consider hereafter.

It will be noted, also, that the balance between national and statal power—or rather between popular and statal control—which is so carefully maintained in the Federal Constitution, is almost discarded in the voluntary republic or party. Though there is a double representation in the national convention—from the States as well as from the districts—this is always a joint, instead of a separate representation. The delegates from the States and districts sit together in the same body, voting and acting conjointly, so that the one can hardly be termed a check upon the other. By this means the State representation becomes merely an added increment of the popular power. The analogy of two houses constituting one legislative body, which prevails not only in the federal government, but in each one of the States, is discarded in the party.

This has been regarded by some of the most careful

students of our political history as a serious defect. There is no doubt but the tendency of all popular assemblies is to be carried away by the feeling of the moment. Whether this is a defect in an organization of this character, however, may well be questioned.

One thing is certain, that the tendency has been from the first decidedly against restriction. This has been especially notable in the Republican party, which, as we have seen, is in a modified sense the representative of the federalistic idea; that is, it represents and maintains the idea of the supremacy of the nation as against the paramount sovereignty of the individual States. This view is, however, modified by an express inclination to the popularization of the federal government itself, which has been manifested not less in its party organization than in the legislation it has inspired. Previous to the convention of 1880, State representation was secured in that party by allowing a majority of delegates from each State to control the entire number of its votes. This rule was at that time discarded, and the majority required to control its action is now made up by the votes of delegates irrespective of State majorities. The two-thirds rule which obtains in Democratic national conventions is a notable instance of a self-restricting provision, enforced with the most rigorous and inflexible faithfulness. Its results in 1844 and 1860, however, have led many to doubt

its wisdom. A shrewd political observer has said that the War of Rebellion was the direct result of its enforcement.

Another difference that will strike the thoughtful observer is, that in the voluntary republic all the functions of government are united in one body. You may, perhaps, think that this attribution of legislative, judicial, and executive functions to these bodies is somewhat fanciful, but you will soon learn that the control of a party requires not less, but rather more, skill and sagacity than the government of a nation. You will no doubt be surprised on your first admission to the councils of a party to learn how largely the judicial function is developed, and what a mass of common law peculiar to each party has grown up in our fifty years of government under this system. In one of our late national conventions a delegate cited in support of a position he had assumed the action of a national convention of 1844, of whose proceedings there is no detailed record, he having received his information from his father, who was a prominent member of that body. No one thought of questioning it, and there is no doubt but the action of the convention was sensibly influenced by this precedent. So, too, the legislative function—the formulation of new principles and effective enunciation of accepted doctrines and traditions—is a work requiring the very highest statesmanship, the ripest experience, and broadest knowledge both of

political history and the popular tendency, as well as the highest literary skill.

To these voluntary republics of ours, you will see that the individual may sustain four distinct relations, to wit: (1) That of the private citizen—the simple voter in the primary; (2) that of the delegate—the representative exponent of the collective will and purpose of a group of citizens in an assembly made up of representatives from constituent bodies; (3) that of a candidate or leader selected to represent the principles and carry the standard of his party; and (4) that of the executive agent or committee, having in charge its financial matters and generally vested with the judicial and executive functions necessary to the administration of its affairs.

The duties of the citizen in a government by parties in the American sense come, therefore, naturally to be considered under these heads: (1) The primary—its organization, conduct, and the rights, privileges, and duties of its members; (2) the delegate—his duties and obligations; (3) the candidate—his duties and relations; and (4) the executive committee—their functions and privileges. You will find the discussion of these, I trust, not only interesting and profitable, but touching perhaps some questions more vital to our liberties than you have hitherto supposed to be dependent on this phase of our political life.

XII.

THE RANK AND FILE.

It has been demonstrated over and over again, in the history of warfare, that success depends not so much upon a knowledge of grand strategy, tactical skill, excellence of organization or perfectness of equipment, as on the personal qualities of the individuals of whom an army is composed. While leadership and strategy can by no means be dispensed with, it is the fortitude, courage, and resolution of the individual soldier on which the hope of victory must ultimately rest. The raw levies which your father led to victory in the early days of our great conflict were, no doubt, inspired to the performance of immortal deeds by the force of his heroic example; but of far more consequence, as affecting the grand result, than the skill or even the example of their leaders, was the earnest conviction shared by every one of the rank and file of the importance of the conflict in which they were engaged, and the sacredness of the cause for which they fought.

A soldier, after all that has been said about the

value of subordination in an army, is not a mere machine. Simple obedience to the command of a superior does not make a man a hero. The German battalion who set their backs against the wall of a cemetery in the Franco-Prussian war and held their position until every man had fallen, were kept in place not so much by the habit of obedience as by the sentiment of "Fatherland" that animated them. It was not the discipline on board of Nelson's ships, nor the gallantry and skill of the stern old sea-dogs who commanded under him, that made the French admiral exclaim to those who stood about him on his quarter-deck, "Now all is lost;" but the shouts that went up from the lips of the British sailors when they saw flying from the flag-ship that stern challenge to individual patriotism and devotion, "England expects every man to do his duty." Discipline may, indeed, do much to secure the soldier's efficiency. A thorough knowledge of all that may be required of him, and an established habit of prompt obedience to the directing will of his superior, are unquestionably essential to his very highest effectiveness, but these are comparatively valueless without that readiness to do and dare which springs only from an intelligent conviction—a pressing individual sense of duty or necessity.

In a party—which is only an army by which the bloodless, but very often more important, victories of peace are won in a republic—the same principle

holds good and even applies with far greater force, because to the rank and file of a party is intrusted, not merely the task of maintaining a united front against the assaults of the enemy, but also, the duty of naming the leaders who must direct the conflict, and of marking out the strategical lines on which the battle must be fought. In fact, the American citizen serving in the ranks of a party, instead of being a mere insignificant atom, whose only duty is to stand up and be counted at each November Ides, is like the Greek soldier of the olden time, leader at once and servitor, since, as was eloquently said of his prototype, "In one day he may be called upon to stand in the council of the chiefs and serve in the front rank of the squadron." As a citizen, he rules through the ascendancy of the party he helps both to shape and direct; as a partisan, he serves with ready but intelligent subordination under the leaders he has helped to name, and who control and direct only by virtue of his authorization. What are the duties, rights, and privileges attaching to a citizen as a member of a political party? This is among the most important questions which one standing on the verge of active manhood can possibly ask himself, and one which he should by all means seek intelligently and properly to answer.

The relations which the citizen may sustain to the party to which he belongs are of a threefold character, each of which brings with it peculiar obli-

gations and entails peculiar duties. Each confers certain rights and is affected by specific limitations. These three relations may be defined as follows:

1. That of a voter who believes in the party's principles, accepts its policy, and votes for its candidates—the simple private in the ranks of the great army which fights for the supremacy of a specific principle, policy, or purpose.

2. That of a delegate—the representative of the will and power of a subordinate body of the party by virtue of which he becomes a member of another body of higher power or more extended jurisdiction.

3. That of a candidate seeking the favor of his party in the form of a nomination, and its support in order to secure his election.

In these several relations the obligations resting on the party and the individual are mutual, performance on the part of the one constituting the sole basis of obligation on the part of the other.

The rights attaching to mere individual membership in a party are based, not on the favor of other individuals, but on the fact of mutual interest. They rest upon the common obligation which devolves upon every member of such a body to treat with equal consideration and to offer equal opportunity to each and every one who supports its policy, maintains its power, and promotes its aims. It is a basis of mutual, voluntary, and natural obligation. The party, as a whole, is indebted to the individual

for maintaining its policy ; the individual is beholden to the party for carrying into effect the views he entertains. The relations of the individual to his party are, therefore, those naturally growing out of an equal partnership among many, intended to secure a common purpose for the equal advantage of all. The *rights* of the individual thus become *obligations* of the party, and the *duties* of the individual *rights* of the party. The rights of the individual member of any party may be classed as follows :

1. Every voter who supports a party's policy and votes for its nominees, is of right entitled to a voice and vote in the party primary of the precinct in which he resides.

2. He is entitled to receive due and ample notice of each and every meeting of the same.

3. He is entitled to an equal voice with every other member, in the organization and control of the primary ; and also,

4. To demand that there shall always be a fair vote, fairly counted and made effectual in the election of its officers, the choice of delegates, and the selection of candidates.

These rights, though of the utmost importance to the country as a whole and to the citizen as an individual, are none of them guaranteed by law, except in some States, or parts of States, a specific statutory notice of the holding of a caucus or primary is required, and in a very few there are statutory

provisions regulating the election of delegates. The definition and protection of these rights is as yet a fresh field for legislation, but one in which the necessity for intelligent regulation has become apparent and which requires only a more general appreciation of its feasibility and advantage in order to secure the attention it deserves. Just as long as our people regard "practical politics" as synonymous with fraud and trickery, and Christian men who would scorn to lie or steal or bribe for profit, insist that the good of the country demands that men should lie and steal and bribe in order to secure political supremacy—so long as it is deemed respectable to buy votes or buy delegates, it will not be thought necessary or desirable to define or protect the rights of a citizen as a member of a party. Until that time arrives, these rights can only be secured by unremitting vigilance and rugged determination on the part of every one entitled to the benefits thereby secured.

The duties which the individual member owes to his party are :

1. A faithful attendance upon the meetings of the primary.
2. An earnest and candid consideration of all subjects coming before it for determination.
3. The faithful and upright performance of all duties imposed upon him by it.

If these duties were faithfully performed by the

honest and reliable members of all parties, the need of statutory regulation of the primary would be very greatly reduced; for, after all, *the neglect of political duty by good men is the chief source of all suffering from misgovernment by bad men!*

The duties of a delegate, chosen to represent the power of a constituent body, are those of an ordinary agent vested with more or less of discretion, according to the peculiar circumstances attending his selection. He is bound in honor to act for those he represents, and not for himself, and to act as his judgment may decide would be for the interest of those he represents, or of the associated body of which they are a part. These duties are simple and easily defined. They are:

1. Faithfully and honestly to use the authority vested in him for the purposes for which it was intended, according to the best of his ability.

2. Faithfully to perform the duties of any position to which he may be chosen in the convention of which he is a member by virtue of the authority delegated to him.

Bribery and "log-rolling" are the besetting sins of delegates. It has become customary for men to seek these positions for the sake of direct or indirect advantage to themselves, and to use the power conferred upon them, not with any regard for the wishes of their constituents, but for their own personal emolument or advancement. It is a form of dishonesty

that is neither punished by law nor frowned upon by good society. A man who would not dream of committing a crime will betray the trust reposed in him by his neighbors, "swap" a vote which he holds by reason of their confidence, for his own advantage, and go home and address the Sunday-school on the duty of honesty, without a blush. You will help to form public opinion on this subject, especially in your own party. If you wish to be esteemed an honest man, and be fairly dealt with by your fellows, you will see to it that your influence and example are given always in favor of honest delegates. To betray such a trust ought to be a sin so infamous as forever to exclude the man committing it from respectable society.

It may seem to you absurd to speak of the rights and duties of a candidate seeking nomination at the hands of his party, especially in view of two conflicting theories in regard to this relation, one or the other of which may be said to prevail almost universally. One of these theories is, that a man has no right to make a canvass or seek preferment at all; the other, that he may do any thing not expressly interdicted by the law, in furtherance of such a design. The former doctrine is utterly untenable as a proposition of political ethics; because, however commendable it may be thought as a rule of individual action to refrain from seeking preferment,

it can not be regarded as at all improper to seek political support, since the maintenance of important political principles may render such a course absolutely necessary. If done in a proper manner, the canvass for a nomination or an election must be considered an honorable thing to be done, however repugnant to the feelings of the individual it may sometimes be. The rights and duties reciprocally attaching to this relation are :

1. Such aspirant has a right to receive due notice of the meeting of the nominating body and of all bodies sending delegates thereto ; that the same shall be fairly organized, and due opportunity be given for all to be heard ; that the vote be honestly taken and truly canvassed.

2. His duty is to refrain from the use of dishonest methods to advance his own interests, such as appeals to the self-interest of delegates rather than the general interest they were chosen to represent.

I do not wish to weary you with unnecessary detail, my young friend, nor ask you to speculate in regard to a state of affairs not likely to be realized or even approximated while human nature remains what it is. A glance at the category of rights and duties above given will enable you to perceive at once the defects in our present party system, where it is liable to abuse and how its deficiencies may be remedied. You will observe that it is possible for the will of the majority

to be subverted and the party machinery employed to defeat rather than to express the will of the party by any of the following acts :

1. By failure to admit and recognize all members of the party as members of the primaries or caucuses, or by wrongfully admitting those not entitled, so as to overwhelm the honest majority, thereby giving effect to the will of a minority instead.

2. By failing to give due and sufficient notice of the time and place of meeting of primaries or other constituent bodies.

3. By the neglect of individual members to attend the party primaries, assert their rights, and make effective their convictions.

4. By the bribery of persons entitled to vote at the primaries.

5. By false canvass or return of the votes cast.

6. By the betrayal of the trust reposed in them by delegates to representative conventions.

It is believed that this classification embraces all the methods by which the legitimate functions of party organizations have hitherto been perverted to the detriment of the public welfare. It will be seen that all but three of them imply actual, intended, and deliberate fraud on the part of the perpetrators. No man can take part in or be privy to one of them and claim thereafter to be an honest or an honorable man. One of them is the result of a negligence hardly less criminal than premeditated fraud, and one only

may sometimes be accounted the result of faulty organization.

This latter is the case alluded to in a former letter in which the original plan and idea of our system of party organization had been departed from in some great cities—notably in New York. This departure briefly stated, consists in packing the primaries by excluding from them all who are not regularly elected and approved by certain organizations existing in each ward and precinct, and claiming to be the party, within the limits to which their organization extends. By this means one-half and in some instances three-fourths of the rightful members of a party have been not only disfranchised in the party councils, but their votes and strength have been used to give weight to the plans of the usurpers in delegate conventions, affecting the action of a party in State, and sometimes even in national affairs.

This is a fault of organization for which the parties in the States, where it exists, are directly and unmistakably responsible. That it justifies open and effective revolt there is no question, and that it will be amended just so soon as that revolt is made persistent and effectual, there can be no doubt. Such a system is in itself a suggestion of evil, and a standing temptation to the perpetration of fraud. It destroys confidence in all political agencies, and is a fruitful cause of that state of society in which the citizen ceases to be a governing factor, and

becomes the mere tool of the "boss." Except in these instances, the fundamental right of the voter to a voice and a vote in the primary of the party to which he belongs has never been openly denied in theory, however often it may have been defeated in fact.

The power of the individual voter as a member of a party—which is really the key-stone of all political power in the Republic—has often been rendered nugatory by the neglect of the voter to assert and exercise this right, and by the use of fraudulent methods to control the action of the primaries. The former evil is curable only by increased diligence and faithfulness on the part of the voters themselves. The others, too, while they may be restricted somewhat by statute, must look for a permanent cure to the forum of public opinion and the vigilance of awakened political conscience.

The prevalence of neglect in political duties of this sort is usually as little realized as its danger is rarely understood. A careful comparison of the opinions of a large number of men having the best of opportunities to make reliable estimates upon the subject, shows that in the States of the North at least, *not more than one-fifth of the voters of any party habitually attend its primaries!* This neglect not only affords opportunity for fraud, but is in itself an actual fraud of the gravest character upon every other voter, who has an express right to demand that such mem-

ber of the voluntary republic to which he belongs shall do his full duty.

Another branch of this subject, the prevalence and extent of *intended* fraud in party councils, or in other words, dishonesty as an element of party politics—its extent, causes, and curability, will be the subject of our next letter.

XIII.

“THE HONOR OF THY LORDLINESS!”

I APPROACH the subject of personal dishonesty as an element of political action with a peculiar feeling of diffidence, almost I may say, of irritation. It is a subject in regard to which more has been said and less has been done than any other phase of political life. Perhaps I may also say that its relation to the individual citizen seems to be less clearly understood than almost any other phase of his duty. To suggest such a thing as honor or honesty in the exercise of the kingly power devolved upon the citizen, is generally deemed an absurdity so great as to insure the man who ventures to do so, the opprobrious epithet of “crank.” Upon no other subject has there been so much impractical, absurd, and consequently useless speculation and so little practical effort for amendment or reform. Let us see, even at the risk of being termed a “crank,” if a little sharp analysis will not help us to a clearer understanding of the subject—whether it is really essential that the citizen king should be a liar and a rogue, in order to be a patriot.

In the first place it may be well to inquire what constitutes personal dishonesty in politics. In order to institute such an inquiry upon a fair and comprehensive basis, let us consider first what would constitute an absolute, fair, and honest political status. Reverting to the analysis already given of our political system, we shall see that the following specific elements are indispensably necessary to such a condition of affairs :

1. That every member of each party should have due and ample notice of the meeting of the party primaries.

2. That he should have an indefeasible right to an equal voice in the management and control of the same.

3. That he should act freely and without the bias of corrupt intent, compulsion, or deception in all his party relations.

4. That he have ample opportunity to give expression to his wishes at the ballot-box ; that neither deception, force, nor the desire for personal advantage be allowed to overpower his conviction as to the public interest ; and that the result of his action be in all cases rendered effectual by due and proper returns.

5. That the agents selected to represent the will of the majority, both in the constituent councils of the party and at the polls, shall honestly and faithfully perform their duties as such.

Whatever is done, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of preventing any of these results is an act of personal dishonesty in politics.

If you will turn back a few pages, my young friend, and read again the category of individual rights and duties, you may find it to include acts you never dreamed of reprobating. You will see that whoever, by force or fraud, by false representation, or by corrupt procurement, obstructs, hinders, or misleads a voter in the exercise of his rights or privileges as a member of a party or as a part of the collective sovereignty, or renders such action inoperative by the corrupt exercise of power conferred on him by the favor of others, is guilty of an act of personal dishonesty, and is an enemy of good government.

This may seem to you a very sweeping accusation, yet it is true in all its parts. The man who corrupts, diverts, or renders inoperative any portion of the collective intelligence, which we call the will of the majority, and which constitutes the sovereign power of the nation, is better only in degree than the foulest traitor that ever organized rebellion, and is morally on the level of the thief and the liar, it matters not how good a motive he may profess, or how exalted a sense of patriotism he may claim to have inspired his action. The man who buys votes at a primary is no whit better than the man who corrupts a judge of election or falsifies a return. The man who knowingly deceives a voter is precisely on a par

with the man who deters one from the performance of his duty by threats of bodily harm. The briber and the "bull-dozer" are precisely equal in moral delinquency. The former is somewhat more despicable because his act has not even the semblance of boldness, or the flavor of courage about it. The man who, by any sort of trick, by any form of force or fraud, by bribery or "bull-whacking," by misdirection of the ignorant or by the proscription of the timid—any man who, by any of these acts, debases the ballatorial power of a single citizen, endangers the fabric of free government and adds just so much to the mass of personal dishonesty in our politics. Morally he is just as nefarious, and personally he ought to become just as infamous, because of such an act, as if he had stolen your money, assailed your life, or conspired to overthrow the Republic by force of arms.

"Well," I hear you say, with the air of one whose wisdom settles in a breath the whole question, "the time will never come when these things will be unknown in politics."

In this you are undoubtedly correct, my young friend; yet upon no other subject would you ever think of advancing an argument so absurd as an excuse for inaction or a reason for failure to condemn an admitted wrong. It is, however, the stock argument, the excuse apparently deemed unanswerable by many who treat of this evil. One might say with equal

verity, that the time will not come, at least in any calculable period, when murder and rape and robbery and larceny will be unknown in any community; but you would never think of alleging that fact as an excuse for failure to reprobate or even a failure to punish these crimes. Why the distinction? Simply because the time has already come when such crimes are accounted despicable, opprobrious, and dangerous to community. A murderer is regarded with horror; a thief is branded with infamy; even a liar, whom the law can not touch, is looked upon with aversion and shut out of society by his offense. But to lie and steal and bribe at a primary; to corrupt the ballot; to falsify the popular verdict; to mislead the ignorant or deter the timid,—these things are not regarded, even by the respectable and moral element of our society, as in any appreciable sense derogatory to the character or standing of the person engaged in them.

These very things it is believed and expected that every candidate and every party manager will do or furnish the means for doing; and the fact that one has openly confessed or is universally believed to have done so, does not injuriously affect his standing in his party, in society, or even to any considerable extent, in the Church. If politics be, as has been said, “a traffic in putrid things,” it is simply because the public shows itself not offended by the stench. The politician is an exact index of

the moral sentiment and sense of public duty of his constituents. If you take the moral average of any community, throwing in the idlers and evaders of political duty, who are the greatest of all political offenders, you will find that it exactly reaches the moral altitude of the local "boss."

An indubitable proof of this is found in the fact that men boast of such exploits in good society, and people laugh at the shrewdness displayed but never dream of showing anger or disgust at the wrong committed. Men may commit murder, burglary, or rape; but they do not go into refined Christian society to boast of it! We cultivate and encourage the political trickster, and then scold at his exploits!

"How did I make the raffle?" said a congressman, referring to his election in a district confessedly opposed to him in political sentiment. "Well, I found out just what sort of paper and type were being used for printing my opponent's tickets, and got a few thousand out with my own name on them, and had them put in the hands of voters who could not read, or did not stop to see what they were doing. Before the thing was found out, there were enough of them in the boxes to settle the matter."

"What was said when it was discovered?"

"Every body thought it was a pretty sharp trick. Of course the fellow who got left tore around some, and cut up a good deal of turf; but what could

he do? I had a right to print my tickets just as I chose, and they could not show that the voters did not mean to vote them."

The man who made this declaration stands high in the councils of his party, is well received in society, is an eminent member of a Christian Church, and was recently cited by name in a leading Church paper as a notable example of political morality!

“Our opponents sent about three hundred coal-burners into my district three months before the election, and we hired five hundred wood-choppers to help them!” said another in explanation of a like success.

“I was offered ten thousand dollars to help A—— in that contest,” said a man who prides himself on representing a high ideal of political purity; “but *being a personal friend of B——*, of course I could not take it!”

Both the matter-of-fact tone and the reason given were very suggestive. The inference was unavoidable, that he would have taken the bribe if he had not been a personal friend of the other candidate. This conversation was held in the public sitting-room of a hotel, and was a part of a reminiscent soliloquy addressed to the delegates to a State convention.

“That was a lively time,” said a party worker in a country county, referring to a recent election.

"Our candidate was a *little squeamish* about such things, but he gave me a thousand dollars and said: '*I do n't want to know what you do with it!*' Of course," said the narrator, with a suave accent of unneeded explanation—"of course, I put every cent of it where it would *do the most good.*" Just where that was he did not explain.

"Do you know how A—— was defeated for senator?" asked one public man of another in the smoking compartment of a railway-train. "You see we knew a messenger was on the way from the governor, announcing a vacancy. If a vote was taken then, we knew A—— would be elected. The presiding officer was on our side, but timid, you know—had n't nerve. We wanted him to declare an adjournment before the messenger arrived. He said he would if a majority voted for it. We knew they would n't, but Senator B—— said: 'Just put me in the chair and I will adjourn the thing, no matter how they vote.' No sooner said than done. B—— took the chair; I made the motion, and in two minutes we were adjourned. That's what saved us. B—— received a great deal of praise from the 'reform' papers for his promptness and courage."

So blunted has become our public sense that this was done in the much-abused name of "reform," and commended by recognized professional "reformers," because it rid them of a man they feared.

The end may have been good ; but alas for the path by which it was reached, and the sentiment that justifies wrong-doing for the sake of a desired result !

“ I paid more for the votes of the delegates from the town of N——, for three years in succession, than the whole State and county tax of the town during that time,” said a local politician, boastfully, to a group of his admirers. The town he referred to is one of the most moral and intelligent communities in the State of New York, and the delegates who systematically sold themselves and their fellows were among its most honored and respected citizens.

“ I find it the best plan to do my own work, and do it between midnight and morning, too. A man will take money when you see him *alone after midnight* who would not touch it before that time ; and every man will take from thirty to fifty per cent less than earlier in the day.” Such was the candid confession of an active country politician to a group who were giving similar experiences on the crowded porch of a hotel at one of our great summer resorts.

It is a well-known and universally admitted fact that many men who claim to be too high-minded to corrupt voters or buy delegates, do not hesitate to employ strikers or middlemen—brokers in political dishonor and corruption—to do their work for them.

The result of this state of affairs and its open

indorsement or covert approval, is an almost universal belief in the corrupt character of all political transactions.

"Tell you what," said an enthusiastic supporter of a candidate for one of the highest offices in a State, "I've been in politics a long time, and seen a deal of sharp management, but B—— (his favorite) will make a little money go further, and do more good, than any man I ever saw."

"I will tell you what I think," said an intelligent, moral young man at a town primary not long since, as he scrutinized the printed ticket for delegates to a county convention, "this thing is n't fair. There are A and B and C," pointing to names on the ticket; "they go to the convention every year and make from *one hundred to three hundred dollars apiece out of it!* Now, I think there ought to be a change. They ought to stand aside—and *give some of the rest of us a chance!*"

He may have been mistaken in the amount of the profits, but there can be no doubt that he wanted a change.

A few years ago I rode from the depot into a country village with an omnibus-load of delegates to a party convention. They talked freely, and made hardly any concealment of their intention to dispose of their votes for their individual advantage.

"I don't care what they say about it," said one of them. "I think that the men who get good fat offices ought to share with us who give them such places, and, so far as I am concerned, *I am in favor of a divvy!*"

I learned afterwards that this man was not only politically prominent, but was a business man of high standing, and an active member of the Church in his town. It is a common rumor in the county where he lives, that no man has been nominated to an office by the dominant party in a score of years without paying the "bosses" and their henchmen.

An intelligent farmer, worth several thousand dollars, said to a candidate, in my hearing, a few years since on election-day:

"Of course, I and my sons calculate to vote right, but *we think we ought to be paid for our day's work!*"

Three dollars was raised and three votes secured. This man would feel seriously affronted to learn that any one regarded his action as at all reprehensible. He simply has the general impression that it is perfectly legitimate to make money by politics.

Two years ago a man sent a communication to a reputable newspaper in one of our Eastern cities, asserting that he had sold his vote at a recent elect

tion for a certain sum, showing what he had done with the money, and advocating the right and duty of every poor man to do likewise. I was impressed with the tone of the letter, and, getting the man's address, took occasion soon afterwards to hunt him up, and ascertain his condition and character. I found him to be a shoemaker, earning fair wages, of temperate habits, having a good common-school education, and of exemplary life. The right to vote he considered simply a man's stock in trade—a privilege that it was entirely proper to make the subject of traffic.

Such things are not unusual enough to require verification, though day and place can be given for every one of the incidents above related. The belief that political success is a mere matter of bargain and sale, trickery and corruption, is all but universal among all classes throughout the North. At the South, *this* form of corruption of the popular will is probably less frequent. The debasement of the ballot is there more generally effected by other methods more obnoxious to Northern ideas, but not by any means more obnoxious to morality or hardly more dangerous to popular government. It is no worse to corrupt a voter through his fear than through his greed; with a pistol than with a pocket-book.

What is the reason of this prevalence of corrupt practices of politicians of all parties?

Simply the fact that it is not considered immoral or reprehensible to lie or cheat, to steal a ballot, buy a vote, or corrupt a delegate, in order to secure political success!

We have so thoroughly divorced religion from politics that we do not regard ethical principles as applying to political action. The very bulwark of political jobbery and corruption is this public sentiment that holds such conduct excusable, and in a majority of cases honorable. Now and then we hold officials responsible for maladministration. In the city of New York, men are sometimes tried for official corruption. Yet the nominations to the offices of the city are put up for sale almost as openly as grain or stocks, and the very judges who are to try men for official malfeasance are as candidates required to furnish enormous sums for the express purpose of corrupting party agencies or electoral power. It is because men believe it to be necessary to buy the favor of others in order to insure success; because respectable men are willing to buy, and respectable men are willing to sell, the political power they hold, either by virtue of their inherent kingship, or by the favor of their fellows, that we hear so often the excuse that "in politics it is necessary to fight the devil with fire." As a moral principle this assertion is on a par with the idea that trickery is business, and that fraud is essential to financial success. If honest men

will carry their honor into politics, and Christian men will carry their religion into their partisan relations, and both will hold personal dishonesty as reprehensible in politics as in private business, the charge will soon cease to be made, because it will soon cease to be true.

XIV.

THE WILL, AND THE WAY.

THE remedy for the universal distrust of political methods and aims, discussed in our last, consists of two elements, each of which is dependent to some extent upon the other for its own efficacy.

The one is that general sense of responsibility and rectitude of purpose on the part of the majority of voters which has already been so frequently alluded to in these letters. A willingness to perform the voluntary duties of the citizen, and a determination to do their duty thoroughly and efficiently, on the part of all right-minded citizens, is the prime prerequisite and the only solid basis of any real reform in political methods.

The man of education, means, culture, and Christian character must, first of all things, care enough about his duty as a citizen, esteem sufficiently his own privileges, the rights of his fellows, and the perpetuity of republican institutions, to take the trouble to learn when the caucus of his party meets, where it meets, and arrange his business so as to attend its meeting; and when there he must be brave enough

to take an active and interested part in its proceedings. Until this is done no real reform is possible. If the Christian sentiment and Christian conscience of the land are awake to this duty, any needful reform is not only feasible but certain to be achieved. It is the units that must first be vivified, however, and individual minds and consciences that must first be stirred up to the performance of duty. You must act for yourself—for me—for all whose rights, privileges, prosperity, every form of temporal good and no small chance of eternal salvation, are dependent in a greater or less degree on your conduct as a citizen.

The Church itself is feeling the need of this very awakening of personal conscience. You can not draw the temper from one edge of the sword and leave the other as keen and true as before. If you dull one side of a man's conscience the rest is easily broken down. If individual Christians adopt, approve, or even tolerate, political methods based on falsehood, corruption, the violation of private right and perversion of public trusts, they must of necessity lose, to some extent, the power to distinguish between right and wrong in other respects, and the Church suffers contamination thereby. Bad politics tend to make weak Churches. The disregard of public rights leads to laxity of private morals. As the sense of individual responsibility for the public welfare is relaxed, care for the welfare of common

souls grows dull. The contribution-box takes the place of the prayer-meeting; the Churches go up-town, and missionaries and the devil go down-town. A few learn the way to heaven in gorgeous temples; the many travel the road to hell, the descent to which is made easy by misgovernment and oppression, until the editor of a great religious journal was recently able to say with bitter verity: "Protestantism is the religion of respectable people, and rather glories in it. In all civilized lands it is getting further and further from the poorest and worst classes every year. It courts the rich and powerful, and does little for the rabble. We are led to believe, indeed, that it has little pity for those whose possessions are only rags and grime, and that its feeling towards them is rather one of scorn or censure than of commiseration."

A man can not be a good Christian in a republic unless he performs faithfully his public duties, for these, even *more* than his private acts, may be made effectual for the fulfillment of the Christian idea of universal beneficence.

The poorest Christian is able to do more good to humanity by faithfully performing the duties of the citizen than the alms of the richest can accomplish. One who neglects such opportunities for doing good is a most unprofitable servant of the Master whose livery he wears. In a republic, bad government is the unfailing index of a low moral development—a

rotten State points to a debased Christian sentiment. When the Church courts the rich and shuns the poor, the State becomes debauched, the poor despised, and the rich "consume the land." First of all things, therefore, if we would remedy these evils and cure the public demoralization which has resulted from them, we must magnify the duty of the citizen-king, and cultivate a sentiment which will regard the neglect of public duty as a disgrace, and corrupt political methods not as mere venial offenses against an impracticable code of ethics, but as crimes of the most dangerous character. As long as political offenses are respectable, they will be frequent; when they become infamous, they will be rare. When Christians cease to wink at them, scoundrels will be careful how they commit them.

Whenever the necessity of personal attention to the duties of the citizen is recognized, the day of "strikers" and "heelers" will be at an end. Then, instead of the caucus or primary being a den of pollution, and the ballot-box a nest of infamy, the former will become a dignified and reputable assembly, and the latter, watched by keen eyes and guarded by honest hearts and strong hands, will be indeed the sacred ark in which the fiat of the people, which is to us the will of God, shall be reverently deposited and safely kept. It is not enough to boast of this institution as the palladium of our liberties while we leave the approaches to it unguarded, and invite

thieves to break in and steal the kingly power it represents.

The State of New York has an unfinished capital building which has cost nearly a score of millions of dollars. It exceeds in tawdry inconvenience, and magnificent unfitness for its professed purposes, any building ever erected. It is an architectural deformity of incredible weakness and unimpressive ugliness. Already it is tottering, crumbling, threatening to fall, as if some blinded Samson in his wrath at the enormous depravity it represents, had "bowed himself between the pillars." One of the grandest works of American genius—about the only honest thing about the whole structure—is cracked and seamed and blurred by the dripping, shrinking insincerity of its surroundings. It is a fit temple for the orgies of political depravity—a fair type of what is done within its confines in "the much-abused name of liberty." It is an index of the tendency which has become almost universal in our land. What is the cause? The honest, reputable, moral people of the State, either believe in political dishonesty and corruption as an essential prerequisite of partisan success or regard it as an unavoidable concomitant of free government. They not only excuse the corruption of the popular will and misuse of sovereign power, but count it a thing altogether necessary, if not commendable. While this sentiment exists, what change is possible?

But you say we must have laws to prevent such

things! It is one of the fallacies of our day that every thing may be done by law; that a bare "thus it is written" is enough to cure any evil. Whatever wrong is called to our attention, we say at once, "Let us have a law to cure it!" We are constantly setting traps for the devil, then going to sleep and wondering why he is not caught in them. We shirk in every conceivable way individual responsibility and the personal performance of public duty. A man will howl himself hoarse by the year at a time, to secure the enactment of a statute, and then sit down and see it violated every day without making complaint. It is not his business, he says. He declares that he helps to pay men to enforce the law, and by that means has shifted responsibility from his own shoulders to theirs. The very best citizens will gleefully relate the shrewd devices by which they have evaded the performance of public duty. They avoid the jury-box as studiously as they neglect the caucus and ignore the ballot-box. They leave to unoccupied loungers and irresponsible officials the performance of the most important corrective functions of government, and then wonder that crime grows so enormously, that the prison population of the country is equal to the entire population of the thirtieth city in the land, while our actual criminal population is estimated to be equal to that of the city which stands fifth in rank. A sovereign without law is bad enough, but infinitely better than mere law without a sovereign.

The lesson that meets us at every step is, that the work of government in a republic can not safely be done by proxy. The citizen may be a king if he will; he is a king *de jure*; and the moment he ceases to be a king *de facto*, he ceases to be a good citizen—becomes in very truth a criminal.

That "the hireling fleeth because he is a hireling," has never been more forcibly illustrated than by the results of our attempts to shift the responsibility of government upon our officials, or pack the burdens of our neglect upon the shoulders of political buccaneers. Side by side with the general belief in universal political corruptibility has grown up a want of confidence in the administration of the law until justice is as often spoken of as an article of merchandise as otherwise. It is no doubt a fact that the courts of the United States have been freer from venality than those of any other nation known to history. After more than a hundred years, hardly a single case of provable corruption has been found in the hundred and forty odd judges of the various State courts of final jurisdiction, not one in the Supreme Court of the United States, and *but one* in the inferior national tribunals. Actual crime of this sort has attached in very few instances to the judges of the higher State courts, and the instances of probable venality are hardly more numerous. Unfortunately, the same can not be said of municipal and inferior tribunals. Though there have been few cases

of impeachment for malfeasance, the general estimate of the integrity of such officers of the law is very low indeed. But however low the general opinion of even the most suspected class of judicial officers may be, it is infinitely above the popular estimate of the average juror. It is not so much the idea that he is purchasable—though in some of our cities it is claimed that jury-fixing has become not only an art, but a profession, and in very many there is a popular idea that jury duty is only a somewhat “shady” method of obtaining a rather precarious livelihood—as it is belief in a general lack of moral fiber in the performance of public duty, that destroys confidence in the jury, and has resulted, during the last few years, in an astonishing increase of mob violence. Lynching, which was formerly confined to the States of the South and the unsettled society of the frontier, is now almost as frequent at the North and East. But very few of these States have of late been free from mob violence, springing from a conviction, well or ill founded, of the unreliability of the popular branch of our judicial system. Indeed, it is not seldom true that men who would assiduously seek to avoid the performance of the duty of the juror, at the demand of the State, are the readiest to assume the rôle of Judge Lynch, and, under cover of night and disguise, administer a justice they would not trust themselves to mete out in open day, and under the sanction of an oath in the jury-box.

These facts, taken in connection with a hundred

others equally significant, show that in our country it is not enough to have laws to protect the ballot-box and the primary. A statute without an earnest, active, vital public sentiment behind it, is worse than a dead letter. Law, indeed, is but the weapon with which the faithful and earnest citizen is armed, not merely for the enforcement of his own rights, but for the security of the public. The remedy you suggest, therefore, is a good and effectual one, only when you have courage and manliness and zeal enough to stand behind the law, and render its behests effective. Will the American citizen-king stand this test? That is the question.

Legal enactments, it is true, would be very helpful. Indeed, they are in some instances absolutely necessary, to enable the citizen fully and certainly to perform his political duty, and guard against the perversion of the public will. In most of the States the ballot-box is already guarded by adequate enactments, and the national government has provided machinery of a very clear and practical character for the regulation of elections for members of Congress and Presidential Electors. It has but one serious defect, but that is well-nigh fatal—it is not compulsory nor universal in its application. The party primary—which is the key to the ballot-box—the decisions of which the election merely affirms or denies, is practically unregulated by statute. In a few cities an attempt has been made to do so, but not always with success;

and never has such legislation been of a thorough or exhaustive character. The time has come when such legal regulation can not be long delayed. The elements of such legislation are not many, and its provisions need not be intricate or difficult of application. It should contain the following provisions:

1. It should define party membership and make participation in the caucus or primary a recognized and enforceable legal right.

2. It should regulate the method by which meetings of the primary should be called, and provide for due advertisement of time and place. It would be in the interests of honest methods if the time itself was fixed by statute, and was made the same throughout the State.

3. The officers of the primary should be made public officials, charged with defined functions, and made amenable to punishment in case of malfeasance.

4. Provision should be made for the organization of new parties, whose officials should be liable to the same penalties.

This is not the place to discuss the details of such legislation; but the citizen-king who desires to perform his duty as such will see how simple are the elements of such legislation, and will not fail to give his influence in favor of such enactments. Armed with such laws, backed by a healthy public opinion, political jobbery and corruption become just as manageable offenses as highway robbery. The question

comes home, then, to every one of our twelve millions of co-ordinate sovereigns, Do *you* want honest politics?

This question, my young friend, you will have to answer for yourself. It is the general belief that you do not; and on this opinion of your patriotism, morality, and manhood, the "boss" and the political manipulator expressly base their chances of future domination and control. By the success or failure of their designs the world will learn the nature of your decision.

XV.

PARTY FEALTY.

A WELL-KNOWN politician, who is courteously designated "an eminent political manager," though he ought more properly to be termed a notorious political trickster, whose name is associated with many a notable "deal" by which unexpected miracles have been wrought at the ballot-box—a man who regards the voter as a subject of legitimate merchandise, the legislator as simply an instrument on which the lobbyist may display his skill, and the party as a mere agency by which this sort of traffic may be more easily carried on—such a man said to me the other day, alluding to the letters I have addressed to you:

"It is all bosh! When a man goes into politics he must leave his religion at home! A politician's business is to win, and if he stops to look too carefully at the means employed he never will win; that is all there is of it. Your letters will have just this effect: they will weaken party discipline, promote strife in the ranks, and complicate party organization. In short," he added, with a tone of supreme disgust,

“they will encourage bolts, multiply ‘independents,’ and swell the ranks of the ‘mugwumps!’”

You may well imagine that my blood ran cold at this terrible arraignment. My friend—for he has proved himself my friend on more than one occasion—is a man whose opinion upon any political matter is not lightly to be called in question. He has devoted the major part of a life, now verging to the shady slope, in winning political conflicts. In detecting the plans of the enemy, and in “laying pipes” to forestall them, he is almost unequaled in a State notable for the boldness and success of its political buccaneers. More than once he has snatched victory from the jaws of defeat by some scheme, fair or questionable, by which the results of an election have been determined. Every one knows that he is not at all scrupulous about the means he employs; in fact, he does not claim to be. If he has ever gone beyond the limits of legal right in these contests, he has never been detected; or, at least, the fact has never been ascertained by a jury charged to inquire into such violations, beyond a reasonable doubt. In private life he is regarded as reputable and trustworthy. He is a man of ample fortune, of which he is the undoubted architect, though his professional income has never been enough to meet his apparent expenses. He does not deny that he has “taken advantage of his opportunities,” and he counts every man a fool who does not. It is well known that he

would not hesitate to buy a voter, a delegate, or a legislator, if he could not get him otherwise. It is universally believed that he has done all these things over and over again; yet he is deemed an honorable man. His standing in the Church and society is not at all affected by this prevailing belief. He is merely a successful politician, and in the popular eye is excused for all the sins which he may have deemed necessary to insure success.

This man intended that his words should fall upon me with crushing effect. There is none who understands quite as well as one of this class the value of contempt. More than once we have been associated in momentous conflicts, and I have often noted his tact and subtlety with no little admiration. No one knows better than he the power of skillfully applied epithets, and he no doubt supposed my heart would quail before the scornful emphasis he threw into the terms "independents" and "mugwumps;" for he knows full well that to my mind the one is the unfailing symptom of "structural weakness," and the other an evidence of unconscious arrogance. He knows that I believe as strongly as he, that party—party organization, party discipline, and party success—are absolutely essential to good government and healthy progress in a republic, and that, as a rule, I do not believe any more than he in the right, duty, or manliness of alliance with an enemy because one can not altogether agree with the course adopted—

by his friends. But with this our concord ends. Thenceforth we differ radically as to every phase of party relations.

To the one, a party is a means for the accomplishment of worthy ends. When it fails to attempt that, it is worthy neither of allegiance nor honor. It is fit only to be cast aside like a broken tool. To the other, party is merely a means of power. Its policy, methods, and the character of the men whom it intrusts with power—all these are nothing in the game of politics which he plays with the votes, the interests, the moral sentiments, and the dearest rights of the masses, as the pawns by which the more important pieces on the board are to be supported and advanced. To the one, party is an instrument of public good—a means by which popular opinion may be more easily and certainly expressed. To the other, party is only a means by which certain individuals are to be foisted into positions of power and emolument for the joint personal benefit of themselves and their most active supporters. To the one, party is an instrument to be used *by* the people for the good *of* the people; to the other, an instrument by which the people are made to contribute to the personal interests of a few active, zealous, and able manipulators, who manage the game of politics for the careless and neglectful masses. Standing on such different planes, agreement was impossible, because words meant different things to

each. So I could only say to him that if such as he had not left their scruples at home when they went into politics, as he averred that all men must, "independents" would be rare and "mugwumps" unheard of. Without disregarding the opinions of such men, without being deterred by their assumed contempt or troubled about the epithets they may bestow, let us proceed, my young friend, to examine the much mooted question of party allegiance in the light of what has already been ascertained as regards our party system and individual obligation.

And first let me assure you that party allegiance is no myth; neither is it merely a shrewd device of the party leader intended to secure the fealty of lukewarm followers. On the contrary, it is a very worthy sentiment, based on the most scrupulous regard for individual conviction, and controlled by the most delicate sense of personal honor. As we have seen, a party is a voluntary association—an equal partnership of individuals—banded together to attain a common political end, to establish certain specific principles, or maintain a particular form or method of administration. It may differ from another in general spirit and intent, in prevailing tone and underlying tendency, or only in matters of detail and in regard to specific questions. Such is the nature of humanity that there must always be at least two great parties in a republic organized as ours is, with a constitution of definite and restricted powers. The

one will always be composed of strict or limited constructionists, while the other will be composed of broad or liberal interpreters of the constitutional limitations. Underlying all other distinctions, these two fundamental ideas will ever remain in our government, and parties will divide along the line that separates them as long as the Constitution remains and the nation is made up of constituent but independent States.

Of course the germ of party allegiance lies in the duty one owes to himself and his fellows faithfully to voice his own convictions as to public policy, and do all that he reasonably may to secure the adoption and maintenance of the principles he believes to be essential to the general good. As it is the bounden duty of the citizen to affiliate with that party organization which in spirit, in principles, and in practice, most nearly approaches his own personal view of what constitutes sound policy, so it is likewise his duty actively and loyally to support that party in the promulgation of such views and the carrying into effect of such policy.

Loyalty to party rests also on the basis of personal honor. A party being an equal voluntary association or partnership intended to effect a common purpose, it is the plain duty of every one interested in such common aim to support and maintain the measures that may be decided upon by a majority of the members as likely to promote the common

purpose, *so far as it is possible to do so without the sacrifice of convictions, which he deems of paramount importance to those his party represents.*

This obligation, however, is subject to certain important modifications. The relation between the individual citizen and the party to which he belongs, out of which the obligation of party allegiance arises, though not expressly formulated in all cases, is by necessary implication both a mutual and a conditional one. The party and the individual are both pledged to active and faithful exertion for a common end. In becoming a member of such organization the individual tacitly engages to forego his private judgment as to the best method of effecting the common purpose, and accept instead the decision of the majority, in order that unity of aim and harmony of method may unite for the promotion of the common design; and the party in like manner contracts that the will of the majority shall be fairly ascertained. This reciprocal obligation, like the republic itself, is based on the presumption that the will of the majority represents the highest good of the greatest number; that the common purpose is more likely to be obtained by submission to the general will than by stubborn insistence on individual judgment as to men and methods. As in all reciprocal obligations, however, a strict performance of the duty assumed by the one is an essential prerequisite to any claim of default on the part of the other.

In becoming a member of a political party, a citizen does not surrender his right of private judgment, except to a certain degree and under plain conditions. To claim that he does otherwise is to make him an enforced conspirator, who, by reason of the relations he has assumed in order to promote a certain end, may be compelled to remain an unwilling instrument of the overthrow of the very purpose he sought to accomplish thereby.

The reciprocal obligation from which the bond of party allegiance derives its force, if fairly analyzed, will be found to be a contract which imposes these conditions on the respective parties thereto:

1. The party, collectively considered, tacitly engages with each individual that the will of a majority of its members upon all questions affecting the common purpose, shall be fairly taken and honestly carried into effect.

2. The party, in like manner, engages to promote the common purpose which constitutes the moving cause or consideration that induced the individual to give it his support, and not give preference to any other aim to the prejudice of this dominant design. A change of purpose, therefore, without his express assent thereto, releases the citizen from any implied claim of support.

3. The party also tacitly engages that the measures it adopts to secure success shall be lawful and proper ones.

4. It is also implied in this mutual contract that the individuals chosen to represent the party as candidates shall be (1) capable of filling worthily the positions for which they are named, (2) of good character, and (3) loyal to the principles of the party.

These conditions being complied with, the party has a right to require of every individual member that his personal preference be subordinated, and the will of the majority be heartily accepted and loyally maintained.

Upon these grounds alone can the claim of any thing worthy the name of party allegiance be maintained without debasement of the voter's manhood and demoralization of the public conscience. Unlawful or unfair methods of organization or procedure, incapable or unworthy nominees—either of these things releases the individual from any claim based upon his previous support or affiliation. By either of these acts a party loses the right to demand the support of its followers, and of those professedly favorable to its organic principles. To acknowledge any party allegiance not based on these grounds is to give up the right of private judgment, and surrender the kingship of the citizen for the subserviency of the slave—to bid for the domination of the "boss" and invite the demoralization of corrupt methods.

It is just here that we encounter the fallacy which underlies the most specious claim of the professional party manipulator. "The man who enters a party

caucus or convention," he says, "engages in its discussions, and seeks to influence its actions, is in honor bound by its decisions." So far as personal preferences or the mere comparative merits of candidates are concerned, this is true. If the methods are fair, so as to make the decision a real expression of the will of the majority, and the candidates selected are worthy and capable, no personal preference for another aspirant, no conviction of his superior fitness, should stand in the way of a hearty support of a nominee of the party to which you belong. The party has fulfilled its obligations, and has a right to require you in all honor and sincerity to indorse and maintain its action. Your judgment as to which of two aspirants it is best for the party to name as a candidate out of several of admitted worth and ability should always yield to the voice of the majority.

A chief purpose of party organization is to take beforehand the judgment of a majority upon such questions of policy. No man can have any *right* to an office or a nomination. The interest of the country and the advancement of the common purpose of the organization should always control the action of any party in the selection of candidates, and it is the duty of the individual to bow to the decision of the majority upon such questions when fairly made. The fact that the so-called "claims" of a favorite have been ignored, can never give an honorable man reasonable excuse for withholding the support tacitly

pledged to the party's nominee, *if the decision is honestly made, and the nominee a man of fair moral character and reasonable capacity.* Thus far the claim of party allegiance may fairly extend. Beyond that limit it can never rightfully go. The fact that a man fights within a party against improper methods or improper men, does not bind him in reason and honor to their support, even though a majority may decide in their favor. The party, by its own action, has released him from obedience to its behests. It has abrogated one of the fundamental and essential conditions on which his allegiance was originally based.

Of what constitutes improper methods, or incapacity, or unworthiness on the part of a candidate, every man must of necessity be his own judge. He can not, as a good citizen, depute another, or many others, to determine these questions for him. Neither can he smother his own convictions, or act contrary to them, and be held blameless of resulting evil. The king must judge; the king must rule; and the king must bear the blame of his own weakness and error, as well as expect commendation for his justice and wisdom.

That this is not the ordinary view of the relations of the individual to the party is freely admitted. It is the only one, however, consistent with the honor, intelligence, and integrity of the citizen-king. It is the only theory of party allegiance consistent with either morality or patriotism, and when the Christian

citizen ceases to "leave his religion at home when he goes into politics," it will be accounted neither strained nor unusual. To say that its practical adoption is a matter of difficulty is merely to assert that the performance of duty is not always easy. That such freedom of individual action is entirely consistent with party loyalty, we shall see hereafter.

XVI.

THE "INDEPENDENT VOTER."

THE one hundred and eleventh anniversary of our national birth has occurred since I last addressed you. This fact of itself makes it peculiarly fitting that the subject of independent political action should occupy our attention at this time. Government, as the act and duty of the many rather than the privilege of the few, is so new a thing in the world's history that no incident connected with its development can properly be passed over without notice. Our Declaration of Independence, to which I hope you listened reverently on the anniversary of its promulgation, is remarkable, not so much for the nationality of which it was the index and precursor, as for the epoch of individualism which it inaugurated. It is the gospel of equality of right, founded on that other gospel in whose ideal the great apostle tells us "there is neither barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free."

Self-government, which was then an experiment, has been growing constantly in the direction of greater independence of individual action. Then a few leaders shaped and controlled all political action.

They were independent of each other, it is true, but their adherents followed their individual lead with almost servile faithfulness. What were termed parties were little more than factions—mere personal followings. Men were for or against a particular man, or a particular idea which some man or set of men had enunciated. Now the people make the platforms and name the leaders. Our history shows that a fuller knowledge of the principles of self-government, has been especially favorable to independence of thought and freedom of political action. Under the early system the individual was compelled to elect between opposing factions. Rival chiefs drummed the country for recruits.

Under the banner of some one of these the patriot was required to serve, or become himself a leader and undertake the task of overthrowing all competitors, in order to attain a desired result. Under the party system the individual is not only enabled, but is constantly invited, to impress his thought upon the policy of the party to which he belongs. An idea that promises success is always welcomed. It may be difficult to demonstrate its importance and effectiveness or availability; but as soon as they are clearly shown, the new thought has at once the aid of all the established agencies of party organization to promote its triumph. To the political thinker, the advocate of new ideas and champion of untried measures, this system offers

opportunities which he would rarely be able to create for himself.

The result is that political recreancy is becoming a familiar thing. A few years ago it was a serious matter for a public man to disagree with his party upon any question of policy. Few dared to defy the power of those tyrannic organizations which the half-developed party system permitted and encouraged. For more than a decade Jackson wielded as absolute and despotic power within the Democratic party as a sultan exercises in his harem. To doubt was death. He was the last and greatest of our political despots. Greater men than he have often tried to enact the rôle of party dictator since that time, but none have so successfully wielded the scepter of absolute authority, because the enginery which the party leader then controlled has since become available to all. The man who attempts to control its action now is morally sure of being "hoist with his own petard." Such is the fate that has overtaken every imitator of "Old Hickory" who has forgotten that the conditions of successful leadership have radically changed since his day. The question is not now who can most effectually coerce popular endurance and approval, but who can most readily note the trend of public sentiment, and most certainly foretell the course it is likely to assume.

When Buchanan, in 1858, told Stephen A. Douglas that "no Democrat had differed from an adminis-

tration of his own choice without being crushed," the "Little Giant" was only half right in his sneering reply: "I wish you to remember, Mr. President, that General Jackson is dead!" His great rival, the shadow of whose destiny already overhung his fame, understood much better the tendency of his time when he laid the foundations of his own success broad and deep in the convictions of the people. He realized the fact to which all his contemporaries were blind, and which to-day so many are trying to ignore, that the recently perfected enginery of our party system had taken the ultimate power from the leader and the caucus and placed it in the hands of the rank and file. Thenceforward he perceived that the popular chief would not be the man who could most successfully rule, but he who should most faithfully serve.

"Do not do it," said the venerable Thad Stevens, in his last days, to an enthusiastic young man who talked of rebelling against his party's behest. "No man can afford to put himself outside the pale of the party with which he is in substantial accord on most questions, because of difference with it in one."

"Yet you once did it," was the reply.

"Yes—once; and it took me ten years to regain the position I lost thereby, and the power to be useful to the country which it gave."

"But that was forty years ago," persisted the rebellious spirit.

"So it was—so it was," assented the veteran politician, thoughtfully; "and the conditions of party service have materially changed since then. The force which moves a party now is centripetal; then it was centrifugal. Then a party was judged by its leaders; now the leaders are to be judged by the party. The politician of to-day is an exponent rather than a force. He is an exact reflex of the morality and patriotism of those he represents."

It was a bold and notable statement, which no man could better afford to make, and to which no name could give greater weight. The system of party politics has magnified the rank and file—the individual—and relatively reduced in the same proportion the leader's consequence.

The general observance of the national birthday this year, being as it is in striking contrast in this respect with the years that have recently elapsed, shows that a new epoch of national sentiment is at hand. The sons of those who saved the nation from dissolution are awakening to the fact that all that is to be achieved by the Republic—her ultimate destiny—was not accomplished when the national domain was preserved intact, and the stain of slavery wiped from her soil. The glory of the past has ceased to overpower the activities of the present, while year by year its achievements shine the brighter as the nationality it redeemed grows more and more distinctive and pronounced in character. Hitherto our political

thought has been chiefly concerned with the legal definition of the rights of man in relation to the sovereign power. Hereafter it will, for a season at least, be largely occupied with the problems arising out of the relations of the individual to the mass—of the unit to the segregation of units which we call society. We have ceased to invite the world to unload its failures, its poverty, and its crime upon our shores, and have begun to ask ourselves in all seriousness, even upon the Fourth of July, what is needful to be done to render our civilization all that it should be—in what way the general betterment of the American citizen may be best accomplished. The question is a myriad-sided one, which is likely to develop many new and startling phases; but its feet are at the threshold, and because of this, our American life is waking to an interest in political questions and methods altogether unprecedented. On the eve of such an awakening it is well to pause and consider what the true theory of independent political action is.

In order that we may make no mistake through the use of terms that mean one thing to one mind and quite a different thing to another, it will be necessary to define the phrase "independent political action" with some care. In its broadest sense it means, of course, that the individual acts according to his own inclination in political affairs, without coercion or compulsion on the part of any man or set of men. In this sense, the strongest partisan in the land may

well claim to be an "independent voter." Indeed, he unquestionably is such, in a vast majority of cases. He does the very thing he most earnestly wishes to do. He is entirely free from any conscious bias or unwelcome restraint. His action is a deliberate exercise of the power vested in him as a part of the multitudinous sovereignty. He is independent, although he obeys the behest of a party, because he has confidence in the collective wisdom and patriotism of the organization to which he belongs. To speak of one who thus freely exercises his own volition as any thing else than an "independent voter" is thoroughly absurd; yet, as the phrase has come to be used in our politics, this class of active, earnest political thinkers and workers is excluded, and those only denominated "independents" who, to a greater or less extent, ignore the duty of the partisan, and content themselves with drifting back and forth in the eddies of the great political current.

The form of political action which is ordinarily intended by the term "independent," is that of the man who recognizes no political affiliation or party obligation whatever; who votes first with this party, and then with that, as the whim of the moment may incline. This class is the great uncertain element in politics. In all its forms it is purchasable, and always in the market—waiting to be bid for. It is usually known as the "floating vote"—an unstable element, the support of which is to be secured by one party

or another, either through favor or subserviency. Sometimes a mere notion, sometimes a preference for a particular candidate, sometimes an indefinite yearning which is mistaken for patriotism, and not unfrequently the most base and mercenary motives, control the movements of the shifting tide of so-called "independent voters."

It is customary for self-styled "independents" to arrogate to themselves and others unaffiliated with any party, and consequently ready to coquette with all, a virtue not to be found in the simple citizen who seeks to do his duty as a sovereign by faithfully performing his duty as a partisan. As a whole, however, they are distinguished neither for courage, sincerity, devotion to principle, fidelity to pledges, nor worthy achievement of any sort. Malcontents, intractables, weak and vacillating natures, form a large portion of this class. They are most frequently useful as a spur to partisan activity. Of themselves they accomplish nothing and mean nothing, save as the dust of the balance which barely inclines the wavering scale this way or that when it is trembling on the poise. They represent collectively the element of luck in the game of politics.

Do not be deceived, my young friend, by any clamorous pretense of fairness and virtue which may be made for this state of political incertitude. It is merely the coward's plea to escape the responsibility a *man* is always willing to share. The man who

has not positiveness of character enough to have party affiliations, strong and earnest—who is half the time on one side of the political fence and half on the other—may be a good enough man in some respects, and may think himself the very climax of perfection in all, but he will never be of much value to the Republic, and is likely to do it positive injury. Even the good he does will be so nearly a matter of chance that he will deserve little credit for it. It is better to be wrong with earnest men who do not shrink from the dust and heat of conflict, than be right with such happy-go-lucky weaklings, whose ideal of supreme wisdom is an inexhaustible capacity for finding fault.

But, you will say, Is my political action to be always controlled and directed by the will of my fellows—the decision of my party? By no means. There is a political independence not of the tepid sort we have been considering, but having its basis in the most positive and manly conviction. The very sense of duty to the country which requires the citizen-king to use his influence to prevent the adoption of false doctrine, the indorsement of unwise policy, the practice of dishonest methods, or the putting forward of unfit candidates by his party,—this same sense of patriotic duty requires him to oppose more or less vigorously, any such action of the party with which he is otherwise in substantial accord. *This is real political independence.* It is the assertion of the fundamental truth that party is merely an agency designed

for the use and advantage of the citizen, and that the citizen is not a mere appanage of the party. In a sense, the political axiom that "no man is as wise or as strong as the party to which he belongs," is true; in another false. But it is *never* true when the *party* is in the wrong and the *individual* in the right; for every man's right is worth more than any party's success.

This conflict between the action of a party and the individual conscience most frequently arises under some of the following conditions: (1) When a party puts forward an unfit candidate, or (2) a deserving candidate is nominated by improper means. This is in express violation of the contract between the citizen and the party. By such course he is in honor and morals released from all obligation to support its candidates or defend its policy. Of course this may involve the defeat of the party, to the principles, policy, and traditions of which he may be devotedly attached; but if he has done his duty beforehand, and warned his associates of the result of their conduct, the responsibility will not rest with him. It is better that *any party* should suffer defeat than that *any man* should smother his scruples or drown the voice of his conscience. The king may delegate his power, but he can not evade responsibility; and the man who supports a candidate he believes to have been nominated by fraud, or whom he deems morally or intellectually unfit for the place

for which he is named, commits a crime against the sovereignty of which he is a part, which is infinitely more injurious to the nation than the defeat of his party can possibly be.

This is genuine political independence; not the weak, unmanly, sniveling thing that passes by that name. It is entirely consistent with the duty of the citizen and a proper allegiance to party. It may not always be a pleasant task to assert such independence; but if it were the *rule* of personal conduct and not the exception, there would be little need for its exercise. The lesson that is taught by this branch of our subject is the same to which every other phase has steadily pointed—the absolute necessity that every man should do his duty as a partisan in order that his duty as a citizen may be the more easily and certainly performed. In a republic all ethical disquisition but emphasizes the injunction to individual duty on the part of the citizen, just as in a monarchy policy and philosophy enjoin virtue and assiduity upon the ruler.

The right and duty of the citizen to protest against unwise or improper action of his party does not admit of question, and can not be met by any argument worthy of the consideration of an honest man or conscientious citizen. Only the code of honor which prevails among thieves makes it the duty of a man to defend what he believes to be wrong because it is done by those to whom he is bound by the tie of a

common purpose. *Honor binds no one to uphold dishonor.* This is the prime distinction between lawful and commendable association and unlawful conspiracy. How this protest shall be made, and to what limit dissent from your party's action shall be carried, you will find among the most difficult questions you will be called upon, as a citizen and a patriot, to decide. Whether you shall merely protest against a specific action of your party, withhold your support entirely from it because of the one fault, engage in organizing a specific opposition, or join with its traditional opponents to compass its defeat,—these are questions depending in a great degree upon the circumstances of each particular case, yet affected by certain fundamental principles, which will be the subject of further consideration.

XVII.

THE PERILS OF REVOLT.

TWENTY-THREE years ago an army lay encamped among the hills of Northern Georgia. A year before, it had seized the gateway of the Confederacy, and now the Queen City of the South was in its hands. It only waited for another conflict to be decided, to start upon that "march to the sea" which was to result in finally bringing the combined power of the nation to bear upon the forces of the Rebellion, who had thus far been indebted for escape from overthrow, not less to the mountains in their rear than to their own splendid courage and amazing fortitude. All through the sultry summer months, while Sherman had fought his way from Chattanooga to Atlanta, and Grant had held the wily commander of the Army of Virginia within his works in front of Petersburg, awaiting the blow he was powerless to avert, and probably did not fully foresee, a conflict not less important to the destiny of the Republic had been going on in the cities and towns, the fields and factories of the North.

The question to be decided by that conflict embraced all that was at issue between the contending

forces. Whether there should be peace or war, one country or two, slavery or freedom,—all these things were to be determined by the tenor of a people's instructions to their executive head, as gathered from the ballot-boxes on the Ides of November, then near at hand. These questions were all embraced in the one simple inquiry, which, thanks to our intelligible and effective American party system, every voter was called upon to answer by his ballot—whether Abraham Lincoln and the party under whose auspices the war had thus far been carried on, should be re-elected, or the administration of the government be intrusted to the weakness and indecision of that young soldier whose inability to forget himself had already prevented him from writing his name in the highest place upon the roll of fame, backed by a party whose battle-cry declared that the war was already a failure. It was an anxious moment. The Confederates consoled themselves for the misfortunes of the battle-field by predicting the success of their allies at the polls. They recognized the fact that the election of General McClellan as President was worth more to them than the defeat of General Sherman. Just as great interests are no doubt really at stake in every Presidential contest, but they are rarely so sharply defined and clearly perceptible to all.

The anxiety which was felt by those who were in the army was much greater than that of those at home. The soldiers saw and felt the importance of the

decision which was to be made, and naturally feared that the absence of some hundreds of thousands of voters who had volunteered to fight the country's battles might be a greater drain upon the patriotism of the North than it would be able to bear. It is true that provision was made by most of the States for holding an election in the army, but it was apprehended that many would be unable to comply with the requirements of the acts passed for the occasion, and they knew that hopelessness and discontent prevailed to a greater or less extent throughout the North. This was the subject of conversation between two officers, whose quarters overlooked the captured city.

One of them was a grave, earnest man, who did not need the emblems of authority to mark the habit and the right to command. The other, younger and slighter, was yet a bronzed veteran, and his flashing eye and quivering nostril showed the intensity of his feelings.

"So you wish to be assigned to out-post duty on election-day instead of acting as a commissioner to hold the election for the troops from your State?" said the superior, evidently in response to a request of the subordinate.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"May I ask why you wish to avoid this duty, Colonel?" asked the other, gravely.

The younger man hesitated a moment, and then

said: "The fact is, General, I do not wish to vote, and would like to take some one's place who is not scrupulous about such things."

"What do you mean by not being scrupulous?"

"Well," said the younger, with some signs of confusion, "I have adopted it as an inflexible rule, that I will never vote for a man for any position whom I have reason to believe to be addicted to the excessive use of spirituous liquors."

"And in this case?" asked the other, inquiringly.

"I spent the winter of 1862-3 in Nashville, you know, and saw the candidate for Vice-President on the Republican ticket very often."

"Yes," said the elder man thoughtfully; "and because Mr. Johnson is sometimes intoxicated, you will not vote for Mr. Lincoln and the prosecution of the war. I am not much of a politician, as you know, but this seems to me a curious sort of reasoning."

"Perhaps it may be," said the younger man, and his lips shut close as he spoke, "but I am not going to be a party, directly or indirectly, to making a drunken man a possible President."

"I do not like that idea any more than you do," responded the other, "but I can not help looking at the alternative. If I do not vote for Abraham Lincoln, I give at least half a vote for George B. McClellan. Now I think that the most important question ever asked of an American citizen is, 'Shall this war continue?' I believe the only way to insure

its continuance and success is to vote for Mr. Lincoln, and the best way to secure its failure is to vote for General McClellan. I have the same objection to the nominee for Vice-President that you urge, and I am very sorry the nomination was made; but, being made, I do not see how I can better serve the country than by accepting it."

"If a party wants my support," interjected the younger man hotly, "it must nominate men whose moral tone and character I can approve—men, in short, whom I can trust."

"That is no doubt the duty of a party, but will a failure of duty on its part also excuse a like failure on the part of the voter? This is not a question between you and your party, but between you and your country. You and I had a right to have prevented the nomination. It was perhaps our duty to have done so. I said nothing—probably you did not. In that we, no doubt, failed of doing our duty. The nomination having been made, the question is not what ought to have been done *at the convention*, but what ought to be done *at the ballot-box*. You would not think of voting for the other candidate, I suppose?"

"No, indeed," said the younger man with emphasis.

"You believe, no doubt, that General McClellan's success would be detrimental to the country."

"Not merely to the country," was the reply, "but to the world."

“If that is your opinion, can you afford to neglect any thing you can honestly and lawfully do to prevent such a result?”

“That is a hard way to put it, General,” said the subordinate with a shrug; “but it is only one vote, which is not likely to make any difference with the result, and I would like to tell my children, if I ever have any, that I never helped to elevate a drunkard to office.”

“I am only a soldier, as you know,” said the elder man gravely, “and have never been accused of what is termed ‘meddling in politics;’ but, as I understand it, the country gives one aliquot part of the power of choosing our rulers and legislators—in other words, of governing—to every citizen, and requires him to use that power, not for his own gratification, for any man’s advantage, or any party’s success, considered as an end, but for the common good of the whole people of the country, according to his best judgment. While it may be a bad thing to have an intemperate nominee for Vice-President, which is the better, a possibly drunken official, or the certain failure of this war? The fact that it is but one vote makes no difference with the question of duty. I have heard the story told among politicians of the one vote which elected a governor, a member of the Legislature, and a congressman; I have heard how the Legislature, at that session, had a majority of one only on joint ballot, and that there was a tie

in the House of Representatives at the next session of Congress ; so that this one vote also chose a United States senator, and at least prevented the election of a party favorite as the speaker of the House. That was of course an accident ; but if others thought as little of the right of suffrage as you seem to, it might happen very often. To my mind, sir, it is an act of cowardice to refuse to exercise the discretion vested in you as a citizen for the public good. Because you can not do all that you wish, in the precise way that you prefer, you have no right to refuse to do all the good you can, in any way that is open to you. You might just as reasonably refuse to bring your command into action because you did not approve the plan of battle adopted by the general commanding. After the battle is joined, there is no chance for protest. When one of two things is certain to occur, the part of prudence and discretion always is to make sure that the least harmful happens. I shall not modify the order, Colonel, because I will not be a party to any avoidance of duty by so good a soldier. Good-night."

He rose and gave his hand to the younger man, who thought very seriously of what he had heard from the wise and patriotic leader, whose name is among the brightest of our hero-dead, as he rode off in the twilight. On the day of election he voted for the Republican candidates. Afterwards, when the assassin's bullet had taken from us all but the fame of the greatest of Americans, casting the burthen of

responsibility on the Vice President, whereby his worst fears were realized, he told me of this conversation, and added:

“I have never regretted the vote I gave, *because it was the best I could do for the country under the circumstances in which I was placed.*”

Your father was a conscientious citizen, as well as a Christian soldier, my young friend, and the reason he gave for refusing to act upon one of his most cherished convictions contains the true philosophy of all political action. The question to be answered by the individual is always, “What is the best that I can do for the country, *under the circumstances in which I am placed?*”

You will find that independent political action—that is, refusal to act with your party—is always a matter for serious consideration. Your conduct can not safely be determined upon beforehand, but must always be decided according to the exigencies of the occasion—the circumstances by which you are surrounded.

Such independent political action may be classified under three heads:

1. A mere refusal to support the candidates of the party with which you are in substantial accord, because of the unfitness of the candidates themselves or improper methods used in their selection.

This is the mildest form of protest—the simplest form of revolt. It has one advantage over the others

which we shall consider, in that it is not usually held to debar the individual adopting it from future co-operation with the party. This is of material consequence, since, as we have seen, party is the instrumentality which the citizen must use in order to impress his thought or conviction upon the community, or, in other words, in order to be of service to the country as a factor in its government. Of course a partisan loses somewhat of influence even by non-conformity. Activity and zeal are essential elements of success, and a party naturally prefers the man who is always zealous in its behalf, to the one who chooses to exercise his right of non-compliance with its behests when its action does not in all respects meet his approval. This fact should restrain you from mere factional or whimsical revolt, since every prudent patriot should always carefully conserve his influence, in order that he may accomplish the greatest possible modicum of good. In testifying disapproval in this manner, you in effect simply withdraw one vote from the number which your party normally ought to poll, and the extent of dissatisfaction is measured by the number of votes thus withdrawn. This form of protest against wrongful party action is no less positive and decided in character, though less obnoxious to those with whom you are forced to disagree, than the methods we have yet to consider.

2. The second form of independent political action

is the organization of a specific opposition—the establishment of another party, or the setting up of a candidate in opposition to one whose nomination or character is deemed objectionable.

This course becomes an unavoidable one to the conscientious voter, who finds himself irreconcilably at variance with his party upon a question of paramount importance. In that case, supposing always that no organization especially advocating his views exists, it becomes the duty of the voter to join with others in organizing a new party *whenever there is a reasonable hope of thereby advancing the cause he has at heart*. The question of organizing a new party or remaining with the old one is always one of policy only. The real question for the voter to decide is still, How can I best serve the country? If satisfied that the best interests of the country demand the adoption of a specific idea as the basis of public policy, the question becomes, How can I best promote the general adoption of this idea? Of course this line of action presupposes an intense conviction of the paramount importance of the specific idea, and a clear belief that its adoption can best be promoted thereby.

It sometimes becomes desirable, also, to organize a specific opposition out of the elements of the party itself, in order definitely to measure the extent of the dissatisfaction with the course adopted by a majority. This is a bold and manly method of protest

against improper methods, which, in most cases, where it has been well-founded, has proved successful. It is a drastic measure, which requires courage and vigor on the part of its promoters, is perilous in the extreme to the party standing of those engaging in it, and, in case of failure, usually leaves its originators stranded high and dry, without prospect or influence in any party. If successful, it brings the party up to the ground occupied by the protesting party or faction. Because of its bold and defiant character, this form of protest has received the specific name of "bolt." It is a two-edged sword, but one which a brave man need not fear to take, and by which it is no dishonor to be slain.

3. The third form of what is termed "independent" political action, consists in going over to the opposition in order to secure the defeat of the party, with which the voter still claims to be in substantial harmony in principle.

In England, where parties are of a more personal nature and not self-organizing and self-controlling, deliberative as well as administrative in character, a frequent change from one extreme of political association to another is far more frequent than with us. It is there looked upon as hardly reprehensible; and a leader of one party to day is not unfrequently a leader of the other to morrow. In our country this has rarely been the case. The actual severance of relations with one of the great established represent-

atives of public thought and active alliance with its traditional opponent is rarely followed, either by leadership in the latter or recognized and unimpugned restoration to the former. Of course this does not apply to the formative period of a new party, and exceptional epochs like that of the War of Rebellion give exceptional results. Outside of these limits there are very few instances in our political history of such changes unattended with loss of prestige and influence.

When there is a change of political belief on the part of a voter, an abandonment of accepted doctrine by the party, or a new departure by the traditional opponent, practically changing their relations, such change is in no sense reprehensible. When, however, the established relations between two great parties are undisturbed, while the traditional characteristics and tendencies of each remain, a man can not swing back and forth between them without incurring the opprobrious name of "turncoat." Politics is, and ought to be, a matter of conviction, and a man who believes in the principles of one party—its traditional policy and tendency as exemplified in its history and constitution—can not give his support to one antipodally opposed to it without doing violence to all accepted notions of consistency. A man may change his convictions and go to the hostile camp with the full respect of his former associates, but he can not go over to the enemy on the day of battle and

expect to return afterwards and be recognized and treated as a friend. The American intellect is not subtle enough to recognize the "Democratic voter with Republican principles," or the converse—if such a thing should ever be developed—as a consistent fact. One who attempts this rôle must naturally expect to lose whatever influence he has acquired with his party associates. He may possibly regain it, but the struggle will be a long one, and in most instances the individual who attempts it becomes a mere shuttlecock, vibrating between the two extremes of political thought, of little moment or significance to either, and of doubtful value to the country. Of course, if a man's political views are chameleonic in character, if he is by nature a mere political "bummer," this is a matter of no consequence. If, however, he regards the exercise of the power vested in him as a citizen, not as a mere personal privilege, but a duty of the highest and most sacred character, it behooves him to use such discretion as will enable him to retain the confidence of his associates, in order that his influence for good in the councils of the government may not be needlessly destroyed.

In considering these various forms of independent political activity, my young friend, you will perceive that, while the ties of party should not, and never need, restrict the conscientious action of the voter, yet no one who desires to do his whole duty as a citizen-king should take a course calculated to weaken

or destroy his own influence as a recognized member of an established party, without the most serious consideration, and under the unavoidable compulsion of an honest reply to this inquiry: "How can I best serve the cause of good government under the conditions in which I am placed?"

Of course there must be martyrs, political and otherwise; but the demand for them is not half as great as some chronic malcontents would have us believe; and many a self-applauding patriot, who advertises by political defection for an immortalizing crown of thorns, obtains instead only the shreds and tatters of general contempt, or a self-conviction of his own folly that afterwards clings and stings like the shirt of Nessus. When all is said, the fact remains, that those who have accomplished most for the country have done it by faithful, patient, earnest service in the ranks of that party most nearly in accord with their personal convictions; and what is so clearly true of our past is most likely to be true of our future.

XVIII.

THE TRUSTEE OF AUTHORITY.

“THE position of a delegate to a party convention is the most difficult and important that an American citizen can hold, and no honest man will undertake to discharge its duties with a fettered discretion.”

These words fell from the lips of a venerable man who had long been prominent in the councils of his party and the nation, and against whose patriotism and integrity no word of detraction had ever been uttered. He was at once a partisan leader and a patriotic citizen. Living in a period of the fiercest political conflict, a man of the most pronounced and unflinching convictions, he had the respect even of his bitterest opponents. When he uttered these words he had just been selected as a delegate to a national convention by the State convention of his party to whom they were addressed, and it was proposed to instruct these delegates to support a certain aspirant, “first, last, and all the time.” This the veteran politician refused to submit to, declaring that if the resolution was adopted he would decline to serve as a delegate.

This seemed at first incomprehensible to many of his listeners, all the more so as the candidate named was his especial choice—the one for whom he had been earnestly at work from the very opening of the canvass. He proceeded, however, with such a lucid explanation of the responsibilities and duties of the delegate that the resolution was withdrawn and the delegates sent unhampered to exercise the power of the constituent body in the supreme council of the party. His words made such an impression upon my mind that, though he has long since passed from sight, I have chosen them for the text on which to base some reflections upon the position and duties of the delegate.

The delegate to a political convention is a trustee who gives no bond for the faithful performance of the trust imposed, except his personal honor. Usually he is chosen to express the preference of his associates, who thereby become his constituents, for some particular candidate. His preference is generally well known, and he is selected because of it. Sometimes, however, it is deemed advisable, in order to secure his adhesion to the favorite, to adopt more or less vigorously phrased instructions as to the exercise of the power vested in him. The relation of the delegate to the body he represents, and the obligation created by the instructions given, are matters of such grave import as to demand the serious atten-

tion of every citizen who would faithfully discharge his political duty.

The delegate is the creature of one deliberative assembly and a member of another. To the former he owes consideration and respect; to the latter, allegiance and sincerity of purpose. It is no light thing to have your fellow-citizens put in your hands, without any guarantee save confidence in your honor and integrity, their collective civic power, and ask you to act for them in rendering effective their political predilections. If it were a trust of almost any other sort—if it affected the disbursement or control of a single cent—the law would take notice of its existence and enforce its execution. As, however, it concerns only human rights, the law is silent as to its scope, and appends no sanction to its non-performance or penalty to its betrayal, being far more anxious about purses than prerogatives. Any right-minded man will see, however, that the principles of equity which govern the administration of a pecuniary trust, apply in morals with tenfold stringency to the discharge of the delegate's duty.

The most important and self-evident of these principles is that the trust shall be diligently and faithfully performed, according to the sound discretion of the trustee, and with an eye single to the interests of the *cestui que trust*. It is not to be exercised for the benefit or advantage of the trustee, nor neglected to enhance a stranger's interest. It is a

debt of honor laid upon one clothed with the confidence of his fellows. By their selection he is charged to speak for them as to the interests of the party, which, to their apprehension, means also the interest of the country. So far as their preferences are known he is bound by them as the express will of his trustor, unless he finds them at variance with his conviction of policy and duty for the party at large. Not unfrequently it becomes a most troublesome question to determine when he shall act according to instructions, and when upon his own discretion.

If the delegate were a mere agent this question would be easily decided. The will of his principal would be always supreme. The trouble is, that he is vested with a discretion which underlies and sometimes overrides even explicit instructions. It not unfrequently happens that the very thing he is directed to do becomes futile and absurd. By a strict construction of his orders he is forbidden to do any thing else. But he owes a duty to the country and the party as well as to the constituency whose power he exercises. These obligations he must reconcile according to the circumstances of each particular case. Having accepted the trust, he must carry out the wishes of the trustor, unless satisfied that the interest of the beneficiary is likely to be impaired thereby. He is not required to imperil the success of the party by stubborn and unreasonable observance of the instructions of a section of it. The whole is more important

than a part, and the welfare of the whole should properly override the will of the part.

It is not with the honest and capable delegate, however, that the trouble usually arises. It is with the weak, infirm of purpose, dull of intellect, and corrupt of heart, that the professional manipulator works. For it is with the delegate that most of the so-called "fine work" of the political "striker" is done. The first effort of the professional politician, as we have seen, is to get men chosen as delegates who are pledged to do the work required of them, by controlling the action of the primaries. Should this be impossible, the next move is to secure men who will be likely to leave the matter to well-disposed alternates or proxies; and, in case this also should fail, to secure the selection of delegates who are susceptible of being influenced, either by flattery, favor, or direct purchase. Such delegates constitute a very considerable proportion of almost all conventions, those who are not actually purchasable often regarding their trust as a personal or factional perquisite, rather than a public obligation, and seeking it rather to gain advantage for themselves or their friends than in order to serve the interests of the party to which they belong, or the constituency by which they are chosen.

Because of this fact, the delegate feature undoubtedly constitutes the weakest point in the American party system. The objection to it is of the same

character with that which obtains against the jury; to wit, the difficulty of making proper selections, and of impressing upon the people the importance and gravity of this peculiar civic function. English criticism of the American party is almost always directed to this element as one of very objectionable character, and a defect which it seems almost impossible to rectify. A recent writer points out very forcibly the analogies between the delegated organization and those peculiar associations which became such potent factors in hastening the downfall of the Roman republic, and there can be no doubt that his strictures are in a sense just. It is the one link in our system that seems incapable of protection by legal enactment. The evils of the primaries are in the main curable by statute, and it is possible to conceive that laws providing for the regulation of conventions may yet be found feasible and necessary, but the only possible remedy for the choice of improper and untrustworthy delegates is the cultivation of a sense of individual responsibility and general diligence in the discharge of political duty by the masses of the respective parties.

It is difficult to realize the extent of this evil. Men of the keenest honor in other respects readily consent to become the recipients of doubtful favors in the capacity of delegates. Candidates, or their organized adherents, pay the expenses of delegates and provide them with necessaries and luxuries until

political conventions have come to be looked upon as periods of almost unlimited indulgence on the part of delegates, at the expense of aspirants or their friends. As a rule, perhaps, such favors do not consciously affect the action of the recipients, but their universal acceptance tends to inculcate the idea that the delegate has some sort of right to mulct the aspirant and make the test of fitness, not unfrequently, not the capacity to discharge the duties of the position to which a candidate aspires, but his ability and willingness to meet the pecuniary demands of his supporters. In the case of the highest offices of the nation, this has rarely constituted an ingredient of the choice of nominees. Usually the candidates for President and Vice-President have been men of moderate means. Since Washington, not one of our Presidents could properly be called a wealthy man according to the standards of his time. With two exceptions, no man of unusual means, so far as I can recall, has been nominated for either place. In one case it was openly charged, and almost universally believed, that "the bar'l"—a term that will long be associated with his memory—was relied upon to secure both the nomination and election of a candidate. In some instances the ability to control the support of great corporations and immense moneyed combinations has been counted as an element in favor of even a Presidential nominee.

In the case of inferior national officials, senators

and representatives in Congress, and the higher officers of the various States, it is the rule rather than the exception, that the aspirant must be able and willing to furnish a liberal allowance for such expenditures. It has lately been publicly asserted that no man can receive a nomination for any important office in the city of New York without paying a sum which would constitute a fortune to most of his constituents. The result of this system is that the Senate of the United States is probably a richer body of men than that of patrician Rome. It is not susceptible of reasonable claim that this may be the result of accident. It is not possible that the two men best fitted to legislate should, in almost every State of the North, happen to be among the wealthiest of her citizens. In fact the presumption is, that a man who has devoted his energies to the acquisition of a great estate must have been so absorbed in the pursuit of wealth as to unfit him to a certain extent for the deliberative duties and representative functions of the legislator. So, too, with the gubernatorial office. No one supposes that the man in any party best fitted for the place is always, or even generally, a man of great wealth. Yet in four cases out of five throughout the North the man selected as a gubernatorial candidate is pretty sure to be of large fortune. It is tacitly conceded that he *must* be, and openly declared that it is *very desirable* that he should be.

At the South this evil is far less generally prevalent than at the North. It is greatly to the credit of that section that it still sends poor men to our national legislature. One of the reasons why it has always exercised a predominating influence in national affairs is that its people have preferred that their servants should be endowed with brains rather than possessed of unlimited bank accounts. Only a small proportion of its present representatives can be accounted wealthy men. It has been laughingly said of the senators from one of these States that nothing could make the note of either less valuable, unless it were the indorsement of the other. Yet both have the firmest hold upon the people of their State, and no amount of wealth would be of any considerable advantage to a competitor seeking to oust either from his place.

Throughout the North, however, the ability and the inclination to purchase favor, directly or indirectly, by the use of money, has become an almost universal element in the choice of candidates. Public office, in the general apprehension, has become a sort of perquisite of wealth—a luxury in which the rich man indulges as naturally and properly, it would almost seem, as he does in a yacht or a racing-stable. Of course, there are exceptions, but they prove the rule to be otherwise by their rarity. It is a fact beyond question that no man can reasonably look forward to a successful political career in the North who has not

at the outset an ample fortune, or the inclination to acquire it by questionable methods while in the public service.

One of the most specious forms of this evil is denominated "log-rolling," or "trading," which consists in exchanging votes or influence in a nominating convention, by which the nomination of one man to a certain office is yielded, in order to secure the nomination of another man to another office or at another time. This species of bargaining so generally prevails that it will no doubt affect you with some surprise to learn that it is, or could by any one be, considered at all reprehensible. In some States it is even customary to allow a candidate for a specific office to name the delegates from his township or precinct to several conventions—as a candidate for a county office is allowed to name delegates to a district convention—in order to facilitate transactions of this character. The inevitable result is to encourage the belief that the power which the delegate exercises is a legitimate matter of bargain and sale—a stock in trade, which he is expected profitably to invest on his own account or another's. It induces men to become professional candidates, standing delegates, and political brokers, with the specific purpose of making gain thereby. Men are encouraged to secure the control of delegates in order to hold the balance of power so as to command a price for their support.

“The delegates from Concord are always purchasable,” said a veteran politician recently, looking over the list of members of a convention. “See Jones,” he continued, mentioning one whose name was not on the list of delegates; “he always has the delegation from that town in his pocket; find out what he wants, and if we can not get along without Concord, we shall have to trade with him. The infernal scoundrel,” he continued with hot indignation, “has made his living for twenty years by buying and selling votes and voters. The Republicans of his township, and very frequently of the whole county, are just as much his slaves as if he had bought them in market overt. He has an organized clique of strikers, with whom he divides the profits of his ventures. Men stand in awe of his influence, and pay him for his silence as well as for his support. He levies blackmail upon friends and foes alike. For years there has not been a man elected to office in the county who has not paid tribute to this infamous buccaneer. There was Smith, the clerk, who paid him a regular commission on all the receipts of his office, and settled with him regularly once a quarter. There was Haynes, the sheriff, who gave him the appointment of every one of his deputies in return for his influence to secure the nomination, and he sold the appointments at from one to three thousand dollars apiece! Probably he divided one-third of this with his strikers and pocketed the rest himself! The people of the

county are just as much his property as if he held bills of sale for their bodies and souls. He literally sells to them the privilege of going through the form of an election. While the rest of us were fighting to free the slave he was forging fetters for us; so that to this day there is not a free man in the county. I have fought for years to overthrow his power, but there is no use in kicking so long as the people are willing to be bought and sold, and are proud of the facilities they offer for such transactions!"

The man thus referred to is a notorious "Boss," whose unblushing infamies have made the name of the county in which he lives synonymous with political corruption and ballatorial debasement throughout the whole country. For such evil there is absolutely no remedy but active, unremitting effort on the part of the individual voter, until a public sentiment shall be created that will esteem the barter of delegated power just as reprehensible as the breach of a pecuniary trust—until the citizen-king realizes that the right to rule is even more sacred than the right to possess.

XIX.

THE CAPTIVE KING.

THE declaration that the voters of the country are the slaves of "bosses" and "rings" is so often made with little comprehension of the grounds on which it rests, and such faulty analysis of the causes from which it proceeds, that it has come to be regarded as a sort of poetic license,—a figure of speech not literally consistent with fact, but especially designed to express chagrin or dissatisfaction. Yet the first lesson you will learn upon entering political life will probably be the utter helplessness of the individual citizen. He is like the untrained child, cast into the water which he has not yet learned to make the instrument of safety and delight. The element which should be a servant to buoy him safely up, becomes, instead, an enemy to strangle and overwhelm.

The citizen-king is not an autocrat. He can not rule alone. Though the sovereignty vested in him is absolute, it must be exercised jointly with that inhering in his fellows; though the right is several, the possession is joint. One aliquot part of the aggregated sovereignty is yours, to be exercised and

enjoyed as you may see fit; but you can not make it effective so as to shape the common destiny except by co-operation with your fellow-citizens. Whatever hinders, restricts, or prevents this mutual co-operation, and therefore in effect deprives you of your inherent right to rule, takes away from you what really distinguishes the freeman from the slave.

You will soon learn, perhaps you have already learned, that though by right a king, you were practically born to an estate of slavery. It matters not how wise, how brave, how strong, how noble, and patriotic you may be, unless enough of your fellows act with you to make your thought effective, you will be as helpless as a babe, as powerless as a slave. This is sometimes mistakenly termed the tyranny of the majority. Men of intense and imperious character, finding themselves unable to make effective their patriotic desires, are apt to assume that the right is of necessity with them, and that popular power and party spirit are at fault for thwarting their good intentions.

Because of this misconception of the true relation, you will find a considerable proportion of the most intelligent and patriotic of our people bitterly hostile to that universal suffrage which has become the rule of our government. They assert that it fosters political corruption; that ignorance and vice are the natural enemies of good government; that parties and States are controlled by manipulation of the

ignorant and debased, who run party caucuses, and compel the well-disposed citizen to accept the results of their action. We have already given some consideration to this question; but as it concerns the fundamental principle of republican government, and is the invariable excuse for negligence, and the basis of all morbid denunciation of our party system, it may not be amiss to recur to it again. As an excuse for political inaction, the claim that the "ignorant and the depraved masses" neutralize the power, paralyze the beneficent energies, and thwart the patriotic purposes of the wise and virtuous among our people, and that they ought not therefore to be allowed to exercise the power of the ballot, is not only absurd, but cowardly and unjust in the extreme.

Vice and ignorance are in the minority with us. In the States of the North the average of illiteracy is less than *five* in a hundred, and in any one of them the proportion of ignorance is so small that even a coward should be ashamed to make it an excuse for evil, being at the worst less than *twelve* in a hundred. In the South the proportion is much greater, averaging *thirty-six* per cent, and in South Carolina climbing up to *fifty-five* per cent. This, however, is of little moment, as in several of those States only about one in ten of the population, or about half of the usual percentage of voters, wield the elective franchise, even in a Presidential year, and an inspection of the vote shows that it is the more ignorant

portion of the population who thus neglect the exercise of their ballatorial right. This, therefore, eliminates ignorance as a political factor in those States. They are all controlled by the class which boasts of its "wealth and intelligence," which is, consequently, directly and admittedly responsible for their political condition.

To include the illiteracy of the South in estimates designed to justify the growing sentiment in favor of the disfranchisement of ignorance, lest it should overwhelm the power of intelligence, is a proposition too absurd to be soberly considered. A people of seven millions, who in two States greatly outnumber the whites, and in two others are at least equal to them in number, yet are able to choose in all hardly seventy of their fellows to any office whatever, and *not one to a position of any importance*, however great the proportion of ignorance among them, can not reasonably be held to exert any appreciable influence upon the political situation.

It is folly, therefore, to speak of the detrimental power of the ignorant masses in the United States, or in any State of the Union. In fact, there are no "ignorant masses." The ruling masses are intelligent. Even if it were otherwise, intelligence ought to be ashamed to prate about the power of ignorance. If "knowledge is power," intelligence should be stronger, man for man, than ignorance; and if it does not strengthen, we ought at least to stop boasting of

its possession. It is not the strength of the "ignorant masses," nor the viciousness of an ignorant minority, that shrouds the future of the Republic with apprehension, and makes the citizen-king a helpless captive from the first, but the general neglect of the more important political functions by the *intelligent masses*, and an almost universally debauched conscience in regard to political affairs. We talk and act as if there were no such thing as an obligation to do right, nor any reason why we should not do wrong, in matters affecting the public welfare.

But even if this bugbear of "the ignorant and vicious masses" were a veritable fact, their exclusion from the rights of the citizen would be an act of such gross injustice as to be unfit to be considered as a remedy. The whole theory of republican government is based on the idea that the distribution of the sovereign power enables every man to do something toward securing his own rights and remedying his own wrongs, or what he conceives to be his rights or believes to be his wrongs. It is a piece of protective armor, intended to equalize the weak with the strong. It is always the poor, the weak, and the ignorant who are the victims of oppression. To such the ballot is at once a sword and a shield. The untrained soldier may injure his friend as often as his foe, or even hurt himself oftener still, with this weapon of celestial temper, but he will at least be able to defend himself from attack therewith. "She

hath given more than they all" was said of the widow's mite, and the ballot is the only weapon with which poverty and ignorance may even blindly defend themselves. It is their only hope. Unfortunately, intelligence does not always imply righteousness or justice; and even against the best, the lowest and meanest of every land need always to stand upon their guard.

In avoidance of the self-evident absurdity of this claim that ignorance and poverty are responsible for misgovernment, it is usually alleged that our political ills are chiefly confined to the great centers of population, where ignorance, vice, and an unassimilated foreign element chiefly abound. Even here the reason does not hold good. In our greatest commercial metropolis the proportion of native to foreign is as three to two, and the ratio of illiteracy is less than prevails among the whites of the most intelligent Southern States. If her best citizens were as active in the support of good government and the right, as her bad ones are in promoting evil, the city of New York would be well enough governed. Ignorance and vice are weak before intelligence and virtue in a republic, if intelligence and virtue are awake and will do the work that confronts them instead of intrusting it to hired proxies.

It is true that the results of the corruption of the sovereign power are usually most notable in the great cities. This is simply because in them is found the

best opportunity for peculation; and the wrong which touches the purse is always felt much more keenly than that which affects only the person. The "boss" may be more notorious in the city and his achievements more startling, but political demoralization is by no means confined to the haunts of trade. The "boss," who is only a leader wielding the power of a greater or less body of subservient citizens for personal advantage, and the "ring," which is only a body of subordinate leaders who co-operate with him in the exercise of this power, flourish equally well in rural or suburban regions. It requires neither poverty nor vice for their support, since intelligence and morality are not unfrequently their most subservient instruments.

An incident which has come under my observation since my last letter was written, most forcibly illustrates this fact. The following paragraph in a newspaper, the other day, attracted no attention and provoked no comment, being a mere record of an event not at all extraordinary or unusual:

"At the Republican caucus in the town of J——, it was voted that Mr. L—— should be allowed to *name all the delegates to all the conventions in which the town is entitled to representation.*"

The italics are mine. I was interested in this item, because the town referred to is situated in a county noted for its prosperity and the high average of intelligence and morality among its people. Its

population is almost solidly American, there being no city of ten thousand inhabitants within its limits, and no special segregation of what is sometimes called "the laboring classes" among its people. In all respects it must be ranked very high as a representative agricultural American community. Yet for a score of years its name has been synonymous with political corruption. It has had its "bosses" and its "rings." It is usually referred to, even in the councils of the party, to which it gives a remarkably steady and reliable majority, with a sneer. The party orator, when he boasts of purity and reform, not only passes by it on the other side, but holds his nose with a knowing leer as he does so. It has not many very rich men, and few that are very poor.

There the "boss" flourishes; the office-seeker plies his trade successfully, and the professional delegate pieces out an honest income by the favor of anxious candidates, or a thrifty sharing of the profits of the "boss." The "boss" himself is sometimes an office-broker, and sometimes an aspirant for office. It is said that he makes politics his "profession." It *ought* to be said that he makes office-mongering a business. Between times he turns an honest penny in the lobby. He is not lavish with his money, but pays the good men who serve him as pawns in his various games, precisely what he agrees, if it be cash, and as little as he can, if it be favor. He is a kindly man who knows exactly when to "stand treat," and

has been known to give something to public enterprises. He is not a member of the Church, but gives liberally to the support of the preached Word, and is esteemed as a generous patron by the congregation. As an aspirant for office, he has not always been successful; but as an "office-broker" it is believed that he seldom "gets left."

It is said that in a score of years there has never been a contest for a nomination in the county or district in which this man lives, that one aspirant or another has not paid roundly for his support. A hundred times he has thwarted the will and defied the wrath of a majority of his party. Indeed, the majority have reached a point where they no longer expect to control. Politics has become to them a game which they are interested in watching, but in which they do not feel that they really have any important part to play. In every town there is a little group of experienced manipulators, who call themselves "the boys." They are usually past middle age, and embrace a large proportion of successful professional loafers. They meet and fix up the "slate," arrange who shall be chosen as delegates, and prepare the tickets for the caucus or primary. The people come together at the appointed time without previous consultation or preparation, unaccustomed, it may be, to parliamentary forms and procedure. There are a few motions; some quick tactical maneuvers, and what seemed likely to be a drawn

battle is decided. There were perhaps a dozen contestants; two or three withdrew; there was a motion to make unanimous, and perhaps that set of delegates who had the least support—the preference of hardly a respectable minority—are declared chosen by acclamation; or, perhaps a few really good men—honest, honorable, and true—are put on the ticket, with others to neutralize their action. Whatever the result, it has been done decently and in order. The people have delegated their authority and chosen men to choose or “trade” for them, as the case may be.

To understand how little significance is attached to such forms of barter, let us return for a moment to the excerpt already given. What does it mean? The Republicans of the town of J—— authorize Mr. L—— to name delegates to represent them in the county, senatorial, and Assembly district conventions. These delegates will constitute one-eleventh of a majority in the county convention, one-twentieth of a majority in the senatorial district, and one-seventh of a majority in the Assembly district convention. Truly Mr. L—— must be a very good man, that he thus is given by his neighbors *carte blanche* to exercise the governing function vested by the law in more than a thousand voters! If he manages well he will be able to make *one-seventh* of an assemblyman, *one-twentieth* of a senator, and *one-eleventh* of a judge and other county officers! Even the “boss” himself, notorious as are his moral infirmities, has more than

once been nominated by just such methods, and may choose to be again. In that case he will be triumphantly returned, though not one out of five in his party would openly favor his selection for any office!

What makes such debasement of our party system possible? Simply the fact that there are too many cases in which men abrogate their rights in a similar manner, and for the same purpose as the Republicans of the town of J—— gave to Mr. L—— the power to name delegates who would wield their authority.

Why did they give Mr. L—— this power? He is a rising young politician, and his neighbors sympathize with his aspiration, and desire to promote his success. So they give him their power as a sort of capital to set him up in business. He thinks he would like to go to the Assembly, but hardly expects the nomination. He stands ready, however, to trade one-eleventh of a county judge, one-eleventh of a treasurer, and one-twentieth of a senator, for six-sevenths of a majority in the Assembly district convention. Should he succeed, he may nominate each of these officers and himself too. If so, you and I will confirm these trades at the ballot-box next November; not because the candidates are our choice; not because a majority of the party prefer them; but simply because we are *slaves*—the slaves of a shrewd, unscrupulous trickster, who makes even our sincerity and honesty of purpose an element of his success!

There is no more intelligent, earnest, or patriotic

community in the land than the town of J—, or the county of which it is a part. The people are passionate lovers of liberty, and their political convictions are a sort of religion. They believe in their party as the chosen agency for the amelioration of evil and the elevation of humanity. They are patriots of a most fervid and noble character. Out of this very town went forth a larger proportion of its sons to do battle for the country and for liberty than from any other community in the State—perhaps any in the entire country. While they struck the shackles from the slave's limbs, the fetters were forged for their own, which they have worn ever since. Their very devotion to principle has constituted the chief instrument of their enslavement. They do not neglect what they *deem* their political duty. They attend the primaries of their party with religious faithfulness. They are enslaved in the sacred name of liberty, and serve all the more submissively, because they believe that by ignoring themselves and surrendering their own preferences they are serving the cause of humanity and promoting the general welfare. They have a kindly feeling for their young townsman, and do not at all realize that, by putting up their prerogatives for sale for his benefit, they are selling themselves into bondage and furnishing the price with which their liberties are to be bought.

This is the saddest of all our political ills, and one against which individual protest is powerless except

through co-operation of the very ones whose misguided zeal has produced this result. To offer opposition to what is thus done is to lay unhallowed hands upon the sacred ark—the principles and traditions they so devoutly revere, and which, indeed, are altogether worthy of their reverence. What has thus been done, if not well done, has at least been with their consent and approval; and they unquestionably acted from the best of motives.

What is the remedy? There is but one—the conscience and intelligence of the universal king must be so awakened and informed that he will not himself make merchandise of his prerogatives, nor permit others to do so. Do not furnish opportunity or temptation to the office-monger. Your party organization is the sword and scepter of liberty, only so long as the king wields it *himself*. He can not give it to another and remain unharmed by its edge. Like Excalibar, only the master's hand can safely hold it. Select always the best men as delegates; change them often; never send one man to two conventions the same year; and if there is even a hint of bargain and sale about the result of his work, put on him the brand of Cain, and never trust him again. But above all things, the simplest and most effective remedies are:

1. Let every primary and every convention which sends a delegate to another, express a preference for some aspirant for every office for which the constituent body is to name a candidate; and let this preference

be certified in the credentials of every delegate to that body.

2. Insist always upon the election of delegates, not as a group or upon a ticket, but man for man, and let nominations be openly made for the place of first delegate, second delegate, and so on, each being chosen separately.

3. Insist upon the *ballot* in the primary, and the *viva voce* vote upon a call of the roll in all *delegated* conventions. This method takes rather more time, but makes it difficult for the "boss" to "get in his work," and for the purchasable delegate to "deliver the goods."

Of course, there will always be fraud and chicanery in government of any kind, because government is a human institution; but if you and I are to be made its victims—if our liberties are to be bought and sold—let us at least make the transaction as difficult and undesirable as possible. So shall we save ourselves from ignominy, and the cause of human liberty from disaster; so shall the citizen-king wisely rule.

XX.

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE.

I AM reminded that our pleasant intercourse is drawing to a close. I have not touched upon many of those public duties which you no doubt deem most important, for the reason that, although they are by no means to be neglected, they shrink into comparative insignificance beside the political functions we have considered. It is true that the king is an administrator as well as a lawgiver, and the citizen-king can by no means be excused from the discharge of this function of government. Before administration, however, comes law-making; and it happens, under our system, that the office of the citizen-king as law-maker and administrator are in the main united. When you have done your duty in the making of law, you have usually provided also for its enforcement. In other words, we choose our law-making agents and our administrative officials by the same method, and usually at the same time. Both are selected through the operation of party mechanism; and faithfulness in the selection of the one implies faithfulness in the choice of the other. You will perceive, therefore,

that the subjects discussed embrace the fundamental principles of the safe and effectual exercise of sovereign power by the vast body of co-ordinate rulers.

In these letters I have purposely avoided the consideration of what are termed political questions. Free trade, State rights, the limitation or extension of national authority,—all these have had no place in our discussion, because their determination one way or the other is a mere result of the exercise of the power we have been considering. There are, however, two matters outside the field of political action which I wish to call to your attention before closing this series. The first of these is the fact that the prime object of government is not economy, nor is cheapness of administration its highest excellence. Money is not the mainspring of national life, and the citizen-king, whether acting in an individual or official capacity, is not fulfilling his highest function when he acts as a mere accumulator of treasure.

Economy or acquisition, as the adjunct of a noble purpose, is a most worthy attribute; as an end, either in individuals or nations, it is most despicable. The so-called science of political economy is responsible for not a little foolish and criminal neglect of duty on the part of our people. I say so-called science, because political economy can never become a science in the ordinary and true sense of the term; that is, it can never offer specific formulæ by which particular results may be invariably attained.

It is at best merely a collection of analogies more or less perfect—studies in the lives of nations—experiments, only part of the conditions of which are known, and only a few of which can ever be reproduced. Self-confident sciolists have sought to advance this most interesting and useful study of ever-varying conditions, to the rank of a positive science,—the science of government. Such a science is manifestly impossible. It would be like a science of life; for government is, after all, only the regulation of segregated lives. The conditions of such segregated life vary as infinitely as the conditions of individual success. In the first place, peoples differ in their motives, characters, and sentiments just as greatly as individuals. What might be a sound and effective method of organization, administration, or revenue with one people would be absolutely ruinous to another; just as in private life one man acts upon one principle, and another upon its converse, and yet both succeed.

“I owe my success,” says one man, “to the fact that I never borrowed a dollar.” Another declares, “I should never have been worth a pinch of salt had I not begun by getting hopelessly in debt.” “No man succeeds,” said one of the richest of Americans, “who does not take chances which would wipe him out if his calculation should happen to fail.” “I should have been cleaned out a dozen times,” said a great speculator, “if those who were

playing against me had known the weakness of my hand."

So, one political economist arrives at the conclusion that a nation should never emit bills of credit; another, that it should levy duties on imports in order to encourage domestic manufacture; another, that the collective good demands that the individual be allowed to buy his wares in the cheapest market. One instances England with her five millions of paupers, and the Irish land question impending, as an example of unquestionable prosperity. Another cites France, with her infinite subdivision of land as exemplifying the true philosophy of national wealth. One proceeds upon one hypothesis, and another upon its converse.

"It is an undeniable fact," says a great authority on political economy, "that the richest portions of all new countries are first settled." This assertion he makes an important postulate in his speculations in regard to land, on which his economic theory is mainly based. The simple fact is, that the assumption is not true. The land which is first settled may be either that which is most easily tilled; that which is most easily defended; that which is supposed to be the most healthful; that which is most easily accessible from the sea, or even that which has no merit at all except mere contiguity to the land of origin. A similar uncertainty pervades all the deductions of political economists, and, indeed, of all

scientists whose theories are dependent on the action of men or masses for their exemplification.

The identity of human nature is a principle so little understood and of so subtle a character, that its application almost as often leads to error as to correct results. Theoretically, it may be true that human nature is always the same—that is, that under like conditions every one would do the same thing—but in order to make this assertion true, the antecedent conditions, and even the heritable attributes of the individual or communities we desire to compare, must be identical. The course that one man or people would adopt, another, under like conditions, merely because of inherited differences, would spurn. What would impel one to fight to the bitter end, would induce another to surrender unconditionally. What would inspire one people to superhuman exertion would overwhelm another with hopeless despair. The same is true of all sciences or pretended sciences in which human attributes constitute a chief element on which deductions are based.

It is evident to every one that there can be no such thing as a science of trade; that is, a system of fixed and invariable rules, the observance of which will insure financial success, and the violation of which will insure failure. So, too, there can never be a science of war. The curious attempts that have been made to prescribe rules to control the movements of armies and the conduct of warfare, which compose

the science of strategy, are simply obvious truths, applying only to specific conditions known to both contestants. If its assumptions were ever true, war would be merely a game of chess, instead of being, as it always is, a game of chance, in which one man's audacity and genius, or one army's confidence or fortitude, may change defeat into victory, and reverse the most imperative rules. The movement of Jackson to the rear of the Federal right at Chancellorsville was in defiance of the most positive precepts of strategic science; but he knew his men, guessed the *morale* of his army, and, but for the misfortune of death, would no doubt have destroyed the army he so effectually repulsed. So, too, with Grant's marvelous campaign below Vicksburg. Take Sheridan out of Winchester, and you have a Federal rout. The battles of the world, in short, have rarely been won by science, but generally by a correct estimate of the qualities of masses and individuals. Sometimes the general wins by brilliant combinations, but more frequently by an instinctive appreciation of the spirit and capacity of his soldiery. When Fabius had accustomed his men to success he could afford to fight, and not till then.

It is this principle that makes the spirit, character, and sentiment of a people, the most important element of all political movements and economic theories. That economic system which is the best for one people may be ruinous to another, and that

administrative method which the experience of one people approves, may be destructive to the prosperity of another. Institutions must be adapted to the genius of the people who are to be affected by them, and the sentiment of national pride—the *esprit* of a distinctive nationality—is, especially in a republic, by far the most important of all the attributes of the citizen. This sentiment is sometimes ludicrous in its manifestations, but the lack of it is of all things most dangerous to national harmony and strength. The glory of France was the chief element of Napoleon's military success. His genius consisted not merely in the power to make brilliant and successful military combinations, but in the ability to intoxicate the soldiers and people of the republic and the empire with a self-forgetful frenzy for the glory of *la belle France*. The power and prosperity of England depend more than all things else upon the unalterable conviction in the mind of every Englishman of the superior excellence of her laws, her institutions, and her people. The idea of the *Vaterland* lies at the root of German power, and the patriots of Italy effected nothing until they had created a universal longing among her people for an Italy redeemed and free. This principle has found a curious exemplification in China, ancient and modern. The impregnable belief in the super-excellence of all things Chinese has kept a weak people from dissolution and absorption. The Tartar could overcome their armies, but

was in turn subjugated by their institutions. Modern civilization, with all its insidious agencies, has never been able to get a secure foothold in the Celestial Empire. Yet, in all things except the supreme satisfaction with which they regard their own institutions, they are perhaps the weakest people on the globe.

The root of national strength, therefore, is to be found in the sentiment of devotion and regard for the national idea. With this spirit strongly developed, a nation small in numbers and insignificant in material resources may be enduring and invincible; while without it a people of unlimited resources and numbering many millions will necessarily be weak. Of this last proposition, India is the most perfect example that could be desired. From the earliest dawn of history she has been the victim of lesser but compacted nationalities. The barbarous khans of Central Asia, for ages ravaged her plains; Greece sent compact little phalanxes to plunder her temples; France and Portugal conquered with a few hundred soldiers realms more populous and extensive than the entire empires whose power their captains represented; and now a handful of Englishmen—less than threescore thousand—hold in check the aspiration and power of two hundred and twenty millions! Why is it? Simply because India has never had a central thought—an Indian nationality.

“Our country, right or wrong,” may be, as it has been often declared, a despicable sentiment; but the

belief that one country, however wrong, is better than any other, however right, united with a determination to make her better still, not on borrowed models, but along her own lines, and in harmony with her own precedents, lies at the foundation of all governmental stability and excellence. A government that looks abroad for its models, and seeks to conform its civilization to the lines of other developments, is, and of necessity must always be, weak. A soldier can never fight successfully in another man's armor. David was wise when he refused the king's armament, and used his own sling and the smooth pebbles from the brook. The American people never manifested such incontrovertible evidence of "structural weakness" as when their secretary of the navy advertised abroad for designs for our ships of war. God grant that the borrowed bastards may never leave the ways of our navy-yards! Better a thousand times that we should fight on rafts and canal-boats than rely upon another people's brain for the models of our ships of war! It was not such subserviency to foreign nations, nor even the excellence of her ships, that made England "the mistress of the sea," but the spirit that underlay Nelson's famous order, "England expects every man to do his duty."

As a people, especially at the North, we are sadly deficient in this spirit. Self-depreciation is our forte, shrewdness our especial pride, and money our chief reliance. In the War of the Rebellion we

Imported Belgian muskets for our soldiers, and it was not until the summer of 1863 that the American repeating rifle was used in battle. Even at the close of the war many of our troops were using the worst arms in the world, while our factories were supplying other nations with the best. Instead of evolving a system of civil service adapted to our institutions, and suited to the genius of our people, we borrowed one from England, which England herself had but recently borrowed from China. Our modern literature consists chiefly in deprecatory comparison of American life with the "sweetness and light" that surrounds the beatitudes of English social and political existence. Our clothes, our intonations, and our aspirations we seek to form on English models as well as our ships of war!

If we boast of our nation at all, it is almost certain to be of its wealth. Our Goulds, our Vanderbilts, and the aggregates of the columns of exports and production in the census,—these are the chief things in which we presume to compare ourselves proudly and exultantly with other nations. As a concomitant, if not a result of this spirit, we have little, if any, pride in personally serving the country. We incline to regard politics as a game; and our interest in it is too often of the same sort we have in a boat-race or a game of base-ball. Our children are not consecrated to the service of the country, nor taught to do and dare—to attempt and achieve

for her sake. Nothing is sacred to our eyes because it is American, except our aggregated dividends and "the surplus in the treasury." Public office is neither "a public trust," to be administered for the public good, nor a privilege which is prized as a public honor or an opportunity to serve the nation. On the contrary, we generally look upon official position as merely an opportunity for personal advancement or enrichment, and a public duty is regarded as desirable only when it offers opportunity for display or emolument.

It is for this reason that the duties of official positions which do not pay well are seldom well performed among us. I need but instance in this connection the duty of the juror. No one who will sit in a court in any Northern State and listen to the miserable subterfuges that are offered to enable the best citizens to evade this important but unpleasant duty will wonder at the demoralization of our jury system, and the scorn of law and inclination to unlawful forms of public violence which are coming to degrade our civilization. No man is glad to perform such a public service, but, on the contrary, seeks to evade it, or at the least hire a substitute. The same is true of all unpleasant public duties, and the act of evading them, even by falsehood or substitution, is considered honorable. Twenty-five years ago the country called her sons to its defense. It was a service honorable but difficult, and could not, in the

majority of cases, bring advantage or preferment. When they did not respond readily, the country appealed to conscription, and the conscript was allowed to put in a substitute or go himself. So creditable was it deemed to avoid personal service, that twenty years afterwards (in 1884), two out of the four candidates for the Presidency were men who refused to serve the country when drafted, one of whom was elected!

In this respect it must be admitted that the people of the South are greatly our superiors. They are first of all things *Southern* men, proud of the fact, and believing in the excellence and superiority of all things Southern. They are, consequently, anxious to serve the public, by whose confidence they are honored. After fifteen years' residence at the South, six of which were spent in judicial duty, offering unusual opportunity for observation, I feel justified in saying that the Southern man rarely seeks release from civic duty on the plea of personal advantage. Public duty is, in his eyes, always the most important that can devolve upon him. As a result, hardly an instance can be found of the preferment by the people of that section of one who refused or neglected to support with might and main the Confederate cause—the cause which they regarded as *their* cause, to uphold which was in itself an unmatched honor. It is this attribute which has made the people of the South revere their soldiers as heroes, and the lack of it

which has made the people of the North contemn their defenders as paupers.

No more striking illustration of this could be conceived than a series of articles which have appeared in one of the journals in which these letters have been printed, simultaneously with them. They have been an unexampled laudation of the motives, character, and attributes of the Confederate soldier and a constant glorification of the Confederate cause. The comparison which is instituted with the Federal soldier is always, and in every respect, one of sweeping and contemptuous disparagement. The Southern soldiers, we are shown, were altogether the grandest, bravest, holiest men that ever rallied to the support of a glorious idea. They were "champions of liberty," "Christian heroes," "the most devoted and accomplished of knights." On the other hand, the Federals—the people of the North—were "mercenaries," "cruel," "barbarous," the "instigators of an unholy war," "fanatics," and "dupes of ambitious and unscrupulous politicians!"

I do not refer to these papers to refute their ideas or deprecate their publication. Personally, I dissent from their conclusions and question their premises. I do not believe the Southern soldier was any more addicted to piety than his Northern compeer; that the Southern general was any better gentleman or any purer Christian than the Northern leader; that there was any more profanity or vice of any sort in

the Northern than in the Southern camps; or that intemperance was any less frequent among men or officers, unless the difficulty of obtaining intoxicants may have produced such result; though any one who ever tasted the "persimmon whisky," to be found in that region in those days, may well wonder that it did not prove an effective antidote for intemperance. The muster-rolls of the two armies show that the average of intelligence, as attested by the power to sign their names, was many times greater with the Northern than with the Southern soldier, and the spectacle of a ghastly slaughter of men executed for adhesion to the Government of the United States, brings to mind the fact that notwithstanding the Southern soldiers were such paragons, there were at least a hundred times more desertions to the enemy and many times as many executed for cowardice and desertion, as of the abandoned and depraved creatures found in the Northern camps. I remember, too—and there are many who were my companions in a Southern military prison of ill-repute, who will recall the fact—that the most brutal and cruel among the subordinate keepers was the devoted leader of a notable revival that took place among the guards!

I think that the soldiers of both armies averaged better than the people they represented, "each after his kind;" and I merely cite these papers to show the difference in national or collective *esprit* of the two sections. I suppose the circulation of the journal

in which the papers referred to appear, is at least three-fourths at the North; I should not be surprised if even a greater proportion of its readers were found there. Now, if any Southern paper should publish a series of articles contrasting in a like manner the Northern and Southern soldier, it would have to go out of business in less than a month. Its subscribers would put it in the fire with the tongs. What is the reason? Because, on one side of the line, public spirit means an exalted ideal of Southern worth and excellence. On the other—well, *we* court depreciation and invite contemptuous disregard. We happen to be Americans; but seemingly we would almost as soon, if not a little rather, have been anything else. I do not blame, but rather honor, the Southern man for his devotion to the Confederate hero. I only regret that a similar regard for the public welfare does not inspire the Northern man to count the performance of public duty, whether civil or military, pleasant or unpleasant, profitable or unprofitable, an honor; and I sincerely trust that the time may soon come when he who performs such duty faithfully, will be honored as the true American ideal.

When that time shall come, the contrast between the Northern and the Southern city upon election day will not be so striking as it now is. At present, to their honor be it said, you will meet at the South the most prominent citizens at the polls, using their influence for the cause and party they believe to be

right. In a Northern city you will find the voter's booth surrounded with paid "strikers" and hired "manipulators;" but the "good citizens" are too busy to more than put in a "substitute" to do their duty for them. Southern sentiment is in many respects reprehensible and dangerous, but in public spirit and that faithfulness to an ideal which commands respect, even from one who disapproves, they may well give a needed lesson to the American who desires to see his country prosperous, peaceable, and strong.

"For the sake of France," murmured the hero, who had fought her battles, as he gave the signal for his own death which the usurper had decreed. "For the sake of my country," should be the watchword of the citizen-king as he does his duty, whether pleasant or unpleasant, profitable or unprofitable, as one of the myriad controlling atoms of the Republic, "without fear, favor, or affection, reward or the hope of reward," as the ancient law defines his duty, in the most thankless post it ever calls him to occupy.

XXI.

THE AMENDMENT OF PARTY AGENCIES.

THERE remain to be considered some of the substitutes which have been devised for the party agencies which we have discussed. One of the most singular of these, and one which is the most delusive in its specious pretense of fairness, is what is known as the cumulative method of voting. It was intended primarily to secure to a minority a "talking representation" in legislative bodies. It has generally been accepted as especially favoring individual action, and giving expression to individual preference without the intervention of party agencies. There could not be a greater mistake. Without party agencies and systemized co-operation among the electors, the cumulative method would merely magnify the power of the working politician. It might possibly limit the power of the individual "bosses," but it would materially increase their number, and almost certainly preclude the assertion of the will of the majority, except in cases where there was a practical unanimity of sentiment. Under its operation the cabal

would become the real and almost impregnable source of power.

This method consists merely in dividing the constituency into groups, which elect a certain number of representatives each, the system being especially adapted for the choice of members of legislative bodies. Every elector is allowed as many votes as there are representatives to be chosen by the group of which he is a part; and he may cast them all for one, or one each for the whole number. As, if there are three representatives to be chosen from a district, the voter may cast one vote for three candidates, two votes for one, and one for another, or three for one; so that a minority numbering one-third of the electors can always secure one representative. This is the theory. In practice it yields no such results. By splitting up the vote, individual aspirants may succeed in securing their own election with only an insignificant minority of the votes cast; as, if there be twelve candidates in the district referred to, and those having the highest number of votes are chosen, it is quite possible that none of those chosen may represent more than a tenth of the votes. This is neither popular representation, nor independent action. It is simply a bid for trickery.

This method may also be taken advantage of where organized parties exist, to give the whole power of a legislative body into the hands of a minority. This is well illustrated by a plan which was recently

proposed by a minority, to obtain control of a constitutional convention in the State of New York. A bill which was before the Legislature to authorize such a convention, provided for cumulative voting, was warmly supported by the organized "reformers" of the State, and was expected to become a law. A party so small as not to have a majority in any county of the State, proposed under this system to control the action of the convention. The plan was this: in every Republican district they were to ally themselves with the Democrats, and secure a majority of the delegates chosen by the combination. This would be no loss to the Democrats, and in some cases a gain, besides weakening their strongest opponent. In Democratic districts this was to be reversed by alliance with the Republicans. Had the bill become a law and this programme been carried out, it seems probable that a minority, comprising less than one fifth of the voters of the State would have had a clear majority in a convention having power to revise the fundamental law.

Another plan which has met with a good deal of favor from political reformers is one intended to do away with delegate conventions, by having nominations made directly by the constituents. This idea has two forms: the one known as the "subscription-paper" plan, and the other the "primary-election" plan. Both are open to serious objections.

The plan of nomination by "subscription papers,"

has not been very widely adopted in this country. It has the merit of an English flavor, and beyond this has absolutely nothing to commend it, as a substitute for the party convention. Whenever it becomes necessary to run an independent candidate, as a rebuke to improper methods or to prevent the election of an unfit candidate, however, this method is not only a very proper one, but is almost the only one that can safely be adopted. When a reasonable number of his fellow-citizens in this manner call upon a man to assume the burdens and responsibilities of candidacy, it becomes not only an honorable thing, but well-nigh an imperative duty for him to comply.

As a substitute for party nomination, however, this plan is open to the most serious objection. If generally adopted, it would result not only in an infinite multiplication of candidates, but would also afford one of the most convenient and effective methods for self-promotion and improper manipulation. There is nothing easier than to get a man to sign a paper, unless it be to sign it for him. The nomination by "subscription-paper" is open to both these methods of abuse. Men would be induced to sign such papers thoughtlessly, in ignorance of their character or by corrupt procurement; and in case of failure of these methods, wholesale counterfeiting of signatures would be, and often is, resorted to. As a method of nomination it is not only faulty, but is the most unreliable and unsatisfactory ever devised.

The method of nomination by "primary election," which at first sight seems to be entirely fair, and certain if properly conducted to give satisfaction, is nevertheless open to serious objection. It has come to be common knowledge in American politics that a man may be the prime favorite of a majority of his party, and yet be the worst candidate it can nominate. While ninety per cent of a party might prefer a candidate, the hostility of the remaining ten per cent might be so bitter as to make his defeat a certainty in case he should be nominated. The work of a convention is not merely to ascertain the party preference, but to determine the force of any hostile feeling which might secure his defeat, despite the fact that a majority heartily approved his candidacy. The first element of a fit nomination is that it shall not only meet the approval of a portion of a party, but shall also be not unacceptable to the rest of them. In nominations by primary election, this combination of essential qualities is dropped from sight: the favorite of a majority is named, and the party not unfrequently suffers defeat thereby. This fact is so apparent, that despite the seeming fairness and desirability of this method it has never been generally adopted. This has often been attributed by the class known as "professional reformers" to the machinations of politicians. It might much more reasonably be credited to the instinctive sagacity of the American people. The masses may not be able to give reasons for

their conduct, but as a rule the popular management of parties as political instrumentalities has been marked by the most sagacious regard for success. It is usually when the power of the politician has usurped the functions of the people that a party has met with disaster.

Nothing, indeed, proves the fitness of our population for self government, more clearly than the fact that we have so generally avoided the cumbrous, impracticable methods which mere sciolists have advanced, and which the great class who are always on the lookout for a specific remedy for all political ills have so generally approved and advocated. It is said that the love of quackery is inherent in human nature. Every one would rather be cured by a sort of miracle than in the good, old-fashioned, every-day method by which others are healed. Whether this be true or not, it is absolutely certain that in the political world there is always a demand for quack nostrums—specifics for all political diseases. In no other branch of human thought, perhaps, do we meet with so many “crank notions,” and in none, certainly, is the tendency to their adoption so strong, especially with what are known as cultivated and intelligent people. As a rule, it would seem that our so-called political philosophers are the most ignorant of what government is, and what changes are practicable as well as desirable. That our government has been peculiarly free from absurd experiments, but has steadily

and faithfully adhered to the old ways, adopting only those simple and approved changes, which have led towards stability and prosperity, is the strongest argument the world has ever known, in favor of popular institutions. The fact which our history abundantly proves, that the popular heart is much less liable to go astray in such matters than the trained and aristocratic judgment, shows conclusively that the citizen-king—the whole body of the people—is the safest depository of national power.

This truth is especially demonstrated in the result of a popular attempt to combine the advantages of the delegate convention with the certainty of popular preference secured by the system of primary election. This plan seems not to have been the invention of any mere theorist in government, but a practical attempt to combine the advantages of two methods. It has been adopted as a part of the organic law of one party at least, in parts of several States, and an attempt to make it statutory has been made in Illinois. Who is entitled to the credit of its invention I am unable to learn, but it is usually known by the name of the county in Pennsylvania where it was first applied, as the "Crawford County Plan."

This "Plan" has several features; but the really valuable one, and the one in which the invention really consists, is the combination of the delegate and elective methods of nomination. Briefly stated,

this is its essential feature: At every primary or caucus called for the election of delegates to nominate a candidate for an office, or to select delegates a part of whose duty shall be to name delegates to another convention, a poll is opened, under charge of the officers of the primary, at which every one voting for delegates names also, if he desires, his own personal preference for a nominee for each office for which one is to be chosen.

Thus when primaries choose delegates to a State convention or district convention, which is to name delegates to a national convention, a poll is opened at each primary, showing the popular preference of the party in the various towns for Presidential nominee. The ballot may indicate a first and second choice, if desired. By this means the delegates are informed with exactitude of the preference of their own particular constituents. If there is good reason for declining to act in accordance with this instruction, on account of violent opposition to the one preferred on the part of others, or if for any other reason he becomes unavailable as a candidate, the delegate is still at liberty to act upon his individual judgment. With some amplification as to certifying the result of the poll, this system would seem to offer the only practicable method of making the voice of the majority of a party effective without fatally crippling that elastic discretion which has made the delegate party convention the most admi-

able instrumentality ever devised by a free people for the assertion of their political views.

There are other more intricate and apparently more scientific methods for limiting or abolishing either the caucus or the delegate elements of our party system. They compare with this simple device very much as the constitution prepared for one of our American colonies, by the philosopher Locke, did with the simple plans of political organization adopted by the various States after the separation from Great Britain. The one looked well on paper; the others have worked splendidly in practice. The one was the invention of a man; the others were the outcome of many men's experience and sagacity. So far as my knowledge of these devices goes, the "Crawford County Plan" is the only one that seems easily adaptable to our present system, accomplishes a most desirable result, and puts a truss upon the delegate at the very point at which he most needs trussing, without interfering with a due, proper, and necessary discretion vested in him for the benefit of the whole party. It commends itself to every thoughtful mind and is opposed only by those who desire to make use of party organization for personal rather than public ends. That it will eventually become a universal attachment of our party system, no one who studies the indications of the present and the needs of the future can for a moment doubt. To that end, especially, the influence of

young men who are desirous of maintaining good government through the extension of popular power should be steadily directed. The "Crawford County Plan," or its equivalent, should become a part of the organic law of every party, and be regulated and made enforceable by statute in every State.

XXII.

THE PROMULGATION OF THE EDICT.

It will naturally be expected that a work of this kind should say something about the ballot, and the safeguards of this palladium of our liberty. Indeed, it is probable that you have been surprised that it has not been given a more prominent place in these monitory letters. Without any desire to detract from the reverence in which I trust you hold this visible instrument of the citizen's power, you will permit me to say, that in comparison with the subjects we have treated, it is not of first importance. If the citizen has learned to do his duty, has been heedful of his privileges, jealous of his rights, and earnest in his desire to promote good government as a member of a party, there is little danger of his going astray at the ballot-box, or permitting the enginery of an election to be used to thwart the will of the majority. To the citizen-king the ballot-box is merely the means of promulgating the edict of which the mechanism of party is the shaping of the substance. It compares in importance and difficulty with the duties we have been considering as the

form of expression does with the elimination of an idea—as the phrasing of the king's command does with the determination of its import.

Yet the formal expression of your will as a citizen is a matter worthy of most careful consideration. In this, as in the matters already considered, the supreme aptitude of the American citizen for self-government is readily discernible. In the Grecian republics, in whose citizenship something of the same inborn talent for government appears, the ballot seems to have prevailed as the only reliable method of taking the will of a majority, which, you must keep clearly in mind, is the one immutable safeguard of popular government. As a political instrumentality, however, the ballot had well-nigh disappeared from the earth until it was revived by the American Colonies. The mother country, to which we are apt to give credit for every thing that is good in our political institutions, can claim no merit in this instance. The ballot is not a British institution. Indeed, Great Britain and her colonies have been very slow in adopting that instrumentality which was the shield and cover of national aspiration in her American possessions.

In most of the American Colonies the ballot had been adopted before the Revolution. It is probable that the instinct of safety impelled those who were already planning resistance to the oppressive acts of Great Britain to adopt this as a means of individual

self-protection. On the organization of the Union the use of the ballot became universal except in certain States of the South, and in all but one of these the *viva voce* method was long since discarded. The experience of more than a hundred years has fully justified the wisdom of the fathers in selecting the secret ballot as the means by which the freeman should exercise his power. The question has long ceased to be debatable whether this instrumentality is better than another; and the experience of the world has confirmed the sagacity of the American people. England herself, after a hundred years of struggle, yielded to the irresistible demand of her suffragans, and in 1872 placed in their hands the same instrument which secured our liberties. It was a tardy but undeniable recognition of the political capacity of the American people.

The questions which are at the present time attracting public attention in connection with this subject are those looking to the improvement of the ballatorial system, and the means by which its exercise shall be protected from debasement and corruption. The greater portion of these are mechanical, and pertain either to the form and character of the ticket used, or to the method of identifying the elector and preventing unauthorized voting. Of the latter character is the now very general method requiring an antecedent registration of the voter, by which opportunity is given to inquire into his resi-

dence and antecedents. This power, intended for the purification of the ballot-box, in some instances, however, has been made tributary to its debasement. In some of the Southern States an almost unlimited discretion has been vested in the registrar of voters, for the express purpose, it would seem, of being used to debar duly qualified voters from the exercise of the elective franchise. It is a power that needs to be carefully guarded. Publicity is the great cure for crimes of this sort, and the publication of full lists of voters in each ward and precinct a sufficient time before the election would be the most effective means that could be devised for preventing this kind of fraud.

As regards the ballot itself the change has been chiefly in form, with some recent movements in the direction of supplying the same at public expense and in a particular manner. The ballot as originally adopted among us was of the most primitive character. It might be of any form or size, written or printed on any kind of paper, and needed only to contain enough to express the voter's purpose. Little by little all this has been changed. Almost every State now prescribes the form of the ballot and the precise words that must be printed or written on it. If printed, the character of the ink and paper also is made obligatory. These changes have in the main been healthful. Legislative bodies, and even courts, have sometimes made mere technical non-

compliance the means of defeating the evident purpose of the voter ; but, on the whole, there can be no doubt that fraud has been greatly checked thereby.

Some of the proposed reforms have not, however, commanded public approval, and have either fallen into disuse or remained altogether local in application ; such as the laws enacted in some States requiring the ballot to be inclosed in an envelope. Somehow it has never become popular, though it would seem to be a most effective method of preventing ballot-box stuffing and other kindred abuses.

Of late an attempt has been made in several States to introduce what is known as the English or Australian method. Despite the fact that the British government only adopted the ballot in the election of members of Parliament as late as 1872, that they have experience with it only in connection with an untrained class of suffragans, instead of electors who have been accustomed for generations to the conduct of elections, such is the force of the Anglican craze among the self-styled "better elements" of our life, that a perfect *furor* has been created among the class of "professional reformers" for the adoption of the English improvements on the ballatorial system. Aside from the fact that the very brief experience of the English government with the ballot is not favorable to the hypothesis that they have greatly improved upon methods founded on an experience of more than a hundred

years, there is also the fact that the ballot in England is applied under vastly different conditions.

In the first place it should be noted that the holding of an election in England is the act of the government; with us it is the act of the people. In all but a few great cities in this country the people really administer the election laws. The poll-holders are officers of their own choice; the clerks, challengers, and all the machinery of the election are designated by the voters, are sworn and installed in their presence, and at no time are allowed to forget that they are their servants. In the great cities, perhaps from necessity, this principle has been somewhat relaxed, but all election officials must still be residents and electors in the precinct in which they are to act. It is not the abstraction known as "the government" that takes a poll of the electors here, but the citizens who hold a poll themselves. In fact, in most States there is either an express provision, or else it is held as an unavoidable inference, that in case any or all of the designated officials fail to appear or refuse to qualify, the assembled electors may designate some of their own number, who, having been duly qualified, may proceed to hold the election and certify the results.

Thus far in our history, departure from this simple and efficient plan does not seem to have been generally attended with markedly beneficial results. Almost all the glaring frauds upon the ballot, in

the States of the North at least, have occurred in the great cities, where the so-called election machinery is supposed to be most perfect, and the means for preventing fraud most complete. It is, in fact, another proof that self-government can not be effectually carried on by paid substitutes and a centrally organized municipal power so far removed from the people as to constitute it, in seeming at least, a foreign control. The voluntary co-operation of citizens in the administration and enforcement of the law is the highest and most efficient protection of the ballot-box, the only real security for the freedom and purity of elections in this country.

Again, it should be remembered that not only are a far greater proportion of the English suffragans dependent and illiterate than of our own electors, but they are also demoralized by the long-established methods of intimidation and corruption which flourished under the *viva voce* system. The English restrictions upon the ballot are, of course, designed to meet these conditions and relieve the voter from the restraint of either intimidation or corruption. After a careful inspection of elections in many States and a thorough study of the facts established by contested elections and other reliable data, I am fully satisfied that these two forms of debasement of ballatorial power are very greatly magnified in the general apprehension. Very few people at the North vote knowingly against their own desires. I

presume this statement will seem a startling one to you, but it is the result of careful examination and deliberate conviction. I do not doubt that a very considerable number, in the aggregate, receive money or favor of some sort, in connection with the exercise of this right; but they are generally men who would either have voted just as they did, or have refrained from voting at all but for the gratuity received. So too, there are some instances in which the employer may coerce his dependents; but, in my opinion, these are fully counterbalanced by the cases of employés who are coerced or intimidated by their associates. On the whole, I think there are few men at the North who do not know how they wish to vote, and who do not vote according to their wishes.

At the South the conditions, so far as the illiteracy and dependency of the voter are concerned, are far more nearly analogous with those of the English suffragan. There, however, certain other conditions prevail which affect the exercise of the right of suffrage unfavorably. These are entirely local and peculiar. If the fact of color were obliterated, the problem of a free ballot at the South would soon be solved. It is intelligence rather than ignorance, wealth rather than poverty, that falsifies the popular verdict in those States, distorting the forms of law to the suppression of the popular will, and giving the power of the whole people into the hands of a minority.

The so-called English system consists of the following elements: (*a*) The printing and distribution of the ballots at the public expense; (*b*) Printing the names of all candidates upon one ticket and requiring the voter to check those for whom he desires to vote; (*c*) Giving the voter a ticket only on his arrival at the polls and isolating him from observation while preparing the same; (*d*) Preventing him from receiving advice or dictation from any except the officers of election, who may assist him in preparing his ballot.

The first of these provisions is undoubtedly wise; so, too, some of the others may be. The isolation of the voter from observation while casting his ballot, it may be well to remember, was borrowed by the Australians from a California law, adopted in England, and reimported here with a great flourish of trumpets as the last result of British political wisdom. It is a matter of grave doubt whether the other provisions are adapted to our American methods and necessities. The experiment now being tried in Massachusetts will be watched with anxiety by the friends of good government, who will ask more than one trial before accepting the verdict of its promoters as conclusive. There is no testimony more unreliable than that of the "reformer" who thinks he has invented or adapted a method for outwitting the political tactician without requiring the citizen to concern himself about the conduct of the election.

The apparent objections to the remaining provisions so far as their general application to our conditions is concerned, are :

1. Their cumbrous character. The American intellect is the great simplifier. In mechanics, in education, and in politics, we have attained pre-eminence chiefly by simplifying the methods of other peoples. Simplicity is the key-note of adaptedness in our political methods. Our American system is the perfection of simplicity. A voter secures his ticket; goes to the poll; makes known his identity; deposits his ballot. Except in case of a challenge, it is all over in thirty seconds. In England, where there are never more than three or four candidates, from which one or two must be selected, and only a small number of suffragans, as well as a profound veneration for "the government," as represented by the officials, this objection may not be a serious one. But where, as in a Presidential election in this country, every voter may have to select and mark his choice for a dozen offices, among a hundred, or, as in New York there would be, two hundred candidates, the imported system would seem to be altogether impracticable. It is doubtful if a man of ordinary intelligence could correctly check off those he desired to vote for on such a ticket and compare it with one he knew to be correct, in less than ten minutes. This would limit the capacity of a polling-

place to less than one hundred voters and treble the cost of an election.

2. The most frequent form of fraud with us is falsification of the returns. The English system offers peculiar opportunities for this. A pencil and an eraser would very soon make the ballots correspond with the return, be it what it might. Next to the immediate destruction of the ballot provided for by law in some of the Southern States, this would seem to be the best method yet devised for covering up a false return.

There are other less important objections which we have not time now to consider. So far as an *a priori* estimate of the character of the system can be relied on, however, it would seem altogether certain that this so-called "improvement" would prove to be almost any thing rather than a genuine reform. Mechanical devices to relieve the citizen from obligation and duty have proved, and are likely to prove, no more satisfactory in connection with the election than with the party. *The interested, voluntary watchfulness of the citizen is the best and cheapest, if not indeed the only, reliable safeguard of the ballot-box; and as in the party, so at the polls, we shall find that the neglect of the intelligent, refined, and self approving citizen, is far more dangerous than the weakness of the ignorant or the viciousness of the depraved.*

XXIII.

THE PENALTIES OF MALFEASANCE.

IT would seem unnecessary to dwell upon this subject after what has been written already, but there are some details of a punitory character which it is well, my young friend, that you should consider. Of course, the great universal penalty for political sin of every kind is bad government; but the law attaches specific punishments to particular acts. These laws, so far as they extend, are sufficiently severe to prevent most of the acts so prohibited, were it not for the fact that they are very rarely enforced. This is chiefly due to two causes: (1.) The disinclination of the average citizen to investigate such frauds and carry on prosecutions for such offenses—in other words, the lack of a public sentiment which condemns such acts and demands their punishment; (2.) The difficulty, in some cases, of securing convictions, both on account of the prevailing sentiment and sometimes on account of the character of the laws themselves.

Of these we need consider here but few instances: *The laws against the making of false returns are*

usually severe enough; but the proof is sometimes difficult and convictions rare. One of the most fruitful causes of this is the counting of the ballots in private. Each party should have a right to a representative, who should be allowed to object to the counting of any defective ballot; a record should be required to be kept of all proceedings during the count, and these representatives should be entitled to a copy of the same as well as have a right to be present until the ballots are all counted and the returns made up. They should also have a right to put their own seals on both ballots and returns.

The bribery of electors has usually a sufficient penalty attached, generally the same for the briber and the voter who accepts a bribe. The same penalty should be extended to bribery at a primary or at a convention. The person bribed should also be relieved from punishment, if within three months he gives full and complete information of the matter to the proper officers of the law so as to secure the prosecution of the briber.

The English plan of voiding the election and making the candidate in whose favor bribery is done ineligible for public office for a specified time, whether he has actual knowledge of the bribery or not, is no doubt the wisest and most effective method of preventing the corruption of voters ever devised. It makes both candidates and parties alert to prevent the

very offense which the same self-interest now inclines them to allow, if they do not commit. It is a drastic measure, however, and for fear of unforeseen results should first be applied to limited constituencies, municipal and township officers, and members of State Legislatures. After experience with these it might be extended, should there be need, in such form as experience might dictate, to other offices. There is no doubt that the *decrease in corrupt practices in England is due more to this provision than to all the other features of their election laws.*

The punishment for illegal voting is usually too severe, its very rigor tending to prevent both prosecution and conviction. In this case, as in some others, a disagreeable publicity is perhaps one of the most effective corrective instrumentalities. It has been suggested that a fine, with limited disfranchisement and publication in an authorized black-list, would prove most efficient in preventing this class of crimes. In all such cases, large discretion as to the punishment should be vested in the judge who tries the case. The same penalties should be extended to illegal voting at the primary.

There is in no State any penalty for non-feasance of political duty. In many, a man is liable to punishment who neglects other civil duties. In some, a failure to list property for taxation, a refusal to serve in the militia, a neglect to work on the public roads, and in a few instances the refusal or neglect to qualify

and act in certain cases as public officers, after election or appointment, is punishable as an offense against the law. Yet the most important and harmful act of non-feasance of public duty of which the citizen can be guilty—the failure to exercise the governing power vested in him as one of the co-ordinate kings who are responsible for the good government, safety, and prosperity of the country—is nowhere regarded as an offense against the State.

It has recently been suggested—and the suggestion is well worthy of consideration, though I am now unable to give the credit that is due to its author—that the registration of voters should be made universal and that the poll-holders in each precinct be required, within a specified time after any election, to compare the tally-sheet with the list of legal voters in the precinct, and certify to the county clerk a list of all those who failed to vote at said election; that the clerk be required to mail notices to said delinquents, and if within a specified time they fail to present a sufficient excuse, their names, be published subject to a statutory fine of one dollar, and they be disfranchised until such fine is paid. The plan is simple, cheap, and would no doubt prove effectual. One thing is certain, some means must be found to protect the country from the neglect, as well as the malfeasance, of the elector. The evilly disposed are sure to exercise this privilege, and make their power felt in the government. *It is only the intelligent and*

highly moral citizen who stabs his country by treasonable neglect. It is far more reasonable and important that a man be punished for neglect to exercise his civil power than for avoiding service as a juror, exercise in the militia, or the payment of any tax.

XXIV.

“GOOD-BYE, JOHN.”

WITH this letter our pleasant intercourse reaches its end. To me it has been especially agreeable. The spirit of the past has been about me as I have written — fragrant memories of the days of your father's prime—and I have urged you to emulate, not his achievements, but the spirit that prompted him to do and dare. War is the theater where brave men suffer for the acts of fools. In a republic, if the citizen is wise enough and brave enough and true enough to do his duty, there will never be any need for civil war. Do not flatter yourself that such a thing as physical strife will never come again, simply because slavery is extinct, or because we are Americans. The fact that we live in a new world, under new forms and untried conditions, instead of being a guarantee against internecine strife, is in truth a most significant admonition of its probability. It is because Americans are what they are that in your father's day two hostile forces stood arrayed against each other, hundreds of thousands were slain, millions of lives shattered, the choicest spirits

of a generation wrecked, and billions of treasure destroyed. There were fools then who declared war to be impossible, even while the smoke of battle was darkening the horizon; and there are fools yet alive who think that it was merely a political trick, and the soldiers only the dupes of wily politicians. This much-abused term has had to answer for many sins that really rest upon the shoulders of the people. If the citizen were oftener a king, and always a politician, there would be fewer "bosses," and never such costly mistakes as that of our great war. If the citizen-king does his duty, the citizen-soldier will have to fight few battles.

What was the war, which we call Rebellion, and for which our brethren of the South have half a dozen milder names? Simply a conflict of opinion between two great peoples, occupying distinct portions of our territory. In a true and literal sense, it was not a civil war at all. North of a definite line, the Confederate cause had few outspoken allies or real friends. There were some—alas! too many—who were willing to have the South triumph rather than see their old political opponents succeed, but there were very few who believed in the righteousness of the Southern cause, or desired that the end it sought should be accomplished. South of that line there were even fewer—very many times fewer in proportion—who believed that the nation had the right to compel the States to remain in the Federal Union. For

seventy years American thought had divided along that line. At each election the battle of words and wits had been renewed. Thirty years before—just the life of a generation, you will observe—this very question had reached the verge of bloody arbitrament. Why, when we had so narrowly escaped from war, did we allow the peril to continue? Simply because the American people lacked wisdom. Had the generation to which your father's life belonged been as wise as it was brave, both at the North and at the South, the need of conflict and the sin of slaughter would have been unknown to them.

But these facts existed; both sides thought they were right; each believed with a passionate earnestness in the rights their flags represented. Each believed so strenuously that they could not think it possible that the other was equally sincere. Each, in his own mind, fought, not for right merely, but against intentional and deliberate injustice on the part of the other. When these things coexist, and any considerable body of American people divide on a given question, with the idea firmly fixed in their minds that they are being wronged by another class or section, then there is likely to be civil war; and this is all the more likely because we have already had one great domestic strife.

It is a foolish notion that the fact that there has been a war precludes the probability of another, even between the same parties. The law of human nature

is, that a feud grows more and more bitter until one party or the other becomes practically extinct or shows itself possessed of overwhelming strength, coupled with apparent readiness to fight. This is true of nations and factions as well as of families and tribes.

We are wont to say that slavery was the cause, and slavery is dead. Ergo, there can never be civil war again in America. Slavery was not the cause, but the opportunity. The cause was a contrast of beliefs as to the rights of the people in the two parts of the Republic. Slavery was merely the thing which these contrasted beliefs affected. The golden apple was not the real cause of discord between the rival goddesses, but the claim of superior beauty, which each preferred, and which was decided by the dazzled shepherd's award. So slavery was only the thing about which the difference of opinion arose, and war followed, simply because the American will fight for what he deems himself entitled to possess, if he thinks it willfully and arrogantly withheld by another. Then the difference was sectional—along a dividing line; to-morrow it may be truly civil, and run through every city in the land.

The War of Rebellion came because the citizen-kings of a generation ago did not know, or, knowing, did not wisely perform their duties. The holocaust which was then offered to the folly of the American ruler, and which the blood and courage of such men

as your father was, alone redeemed us from, and under God "preserved us a nation," should teach the new-born citizen whom to-day greets with acclaim, not to vaunt himself of the absence of peril, but to prepare himself to avoid it wisely if he may, and meet it bravely if he must. This is the message which yesterday brings, and which I have sought faithfully to interpret to your understanding.

We have examined the character of the weapon the citizen-king of the past not only used, but forged for the work he had to perform. We have tried its temper, noted the causes which led to its adoption and modification, called attention to its excellencies, and have not spared its defects. Government, like all human institutions, is affected very largely by the character of the instrumentalities it employs. A good king may be the victim of bad agencies, and the first work—the most important work, indeed—of the citizen-king is to see to it that the machinery by which his governing power is to be exerted is of the most perfect character.

You would never think of throwing away, or denouncing as worthless, the chronometer that hangs at your fob, if you found that by your neglect its bearings had become rusty and its pinions clogged with dust. Neither would you refuse to carry a stem-winder because your grandfather used a key. On the contrary you would at once declare that it was your duty to see that the machinery was kept clean, and

that whatever would make your time-piece more complete and reliable should be added to it. The great, distinctive feature of this age is its wonderful improvement of the agencies by which its labors are accomplished—the instrumentalities by which results are more easily, cheaply, and surely effected. This is true in mechanics, in art, in commerce, in war, in science, in morals, and in politics. Peaceful measures are taking the place of the sword. Brain and electricity are doing what only physical force was once relied upon to accomplish. Compare Ireland under the leadership of Parnell with the same country in its great struggle of ninety years ago, if you would learn what progress has been made in political methods and the exercise of popular power.

Shall Americans, then, insist upon destroying the great instrument our fathers' hearts conceived, which their wisdom shaped, and their hands wielded in so many notable conflicts, and with which they won so many triumphs for liberty—shall we discard our present party system as not only useless, but harmful? Would it not be better to remedy its defects, fit it to serve our present purposes and express more perfectly the will of our people, on the general correctness and wisdom of which our government is founded? It is possible that some more perfect mechanism than the American party system—one less liable to get out of repair, more easily amended, and more certain in its results—may

some time be devised as the instrumentality by which popular government may be carried on; but it is certain that hitherto no such system has been discovered.

Let us recapitulate, then, in this last letter, what may be done to make this agency more effectual, and what must be done to render any form of popular government in which party organization is possible, safe and effective.

We have seen that the caucus or primary meeting of the members of the party, from which the power and authority of its conventions are derived, is liable to be corrupted, (*a*) by the exclusion of members entitled to participate therein; (*b*) by the admission of those not qualified so to act; (*c*) by improper exercise of power by its officers in presiding over its deliberations; (*d*) by falsification of its records; (*e*) by calling it at an obscure place; (*f*) by insufficient notice to the electors; (*g*) by choosing delegates by groups, instead of one at a time; (*h*) by allowing a contested vote to be decided by general acclaim. No doubt there are many others, but these have been clearly developed.

All of these defects may in a great degree be remedied by statute. The time for holding caucuses or primaries should be fixed either like an election, on a specific day or within specific limits, previous to the holding of the convention to which it is to send delegates, or to the election for which it is to name

candidates. In the same way, the time for holding conventions to make nominations should be fixed within narrow limits.

The right to act as members of a party primary or caucus should be clearly defined by law. The officers should be made public officials, with prescribed duties, and a specific punishment for malfeasance. They should be required to keep tally-sheets of all voters, be empowered to administer oaths like judges of election, and required to make proper returns. Bribery, intimidation, and disturbance of such meetings should be made punishable, as at an election. The right to challenge a vote at the primary should be secured, and false swearing to secure a ballot should be punishable as perjury. In all respects this meeting should be protected with as much care as the election which follows, being in fact a far more important governmental agency. What is the use of guarding the front approaches to the ballot-box and leaving open the side door?

We have seen that the will of the people is liable to be thwarted by the failure of delegates to perform faithfully and honestly their duty; in other words, to do the will of their constituents. This may be guarded against, partially at least, in three ways:

1. By making bribery of a delegate a crime, as well as bribery of an elector. Where is the sense of punishing an officer for receiving a bribe, who has

openly obtained his place by bribing the delegates of a convention, or the members of a caucus?

2. By making any candidate who offers bribe of money or favor for a vote in caucus or convention, ineligible for office upon conviction.

3. By abolishing the secret ballot in all delegated nominating conventions. Observe here the distinction between a delegate convention and a primary caucus. In the latter it is essential that the secret ballot be preserved, in order to secure the individual in the free exercise of his right; while in the delegate convention it is equally important that it should be discarded, in order that the constituencies may have full opportunity to note how their agents discharge the trust reposed in them.

The officers of all political conventions should also be made *quasi* public officials, be required, under specific penalty, to preserve full records of the proceedings, with tally-sheets showing the votes of all the delegates, open to inspection, and compelled to furnish copies thereof on demand and tender of reasonable fees.

That greatest of all witty proverbialists, "Josh Billings," aptly said: "Sech is the frailty of human natur, that it 'll bear watchin'."

There is no place where human nature will bear more watching, or gets less of it, than in a political convention. As a people we have simply invited

our agents to become venal, and our aspiring leaders to become corrupt and corrupting "bosses." It is a principle in mechanics, especially in bridge-building, that a truss placed at a point of special strain greatly increases the strength of the material. No matter how good the material may be, therefore, it is a matter of common prudence that it be trussed at proper intervals. In our political life, the strain upon honesty, integrity, and patriotism occurs especially at two points. The places specified are the weakest points in our party system. They are the places, therefore, at which trusses should be applied, and these trusses are of two sorts, moral and legal.

The moral truss is that wise stay and strong support of good intentions that arises from unavoidable publicity and an imperishable record. It is the watching which human nature always needs and common prudence dictates. The legal truss is that which attaches the shame of conviction and the peril of punishment to the man who betrays his trust or tempts another to misuse his power. This will not only reduce the power of the "boss" and the "ring" to a minimum, by making their trade nefarious and perilous rather than honorable and profitable, but will promote honesty and faithfulness in public officers by discouraging dishonesty and corruption in aspirants. Who can expect honesty or impartiality in a judge who buys his nomination to the bench? of a legislator, who pays for the votes of the constit-

uency he represents? of a speaker, who secures his election by promising chairmanships and patronage? of any man, indeed, who is permitted or required to buy place with gold or favor?

“What have the people of S—— got to do with my conduct?” said an irate legislator, who had been charged with improper use of the power he held. “They should have nothing to say; I bought their votes and paid for them, and I guess I’ve a right to do what I choose with my own property.”

The newspapers printed this as a keen retort, the people of S—— took it as a good joke, and the man’s political stock gained a decidedly upward tendency by this bold defiance of public decency. Such men—the men who buy, the men who sell, the men who boast, and the men who laugh at such displays of corrupting craft—all these need trussing, trussing with the fear of punishment, trussing with the certainty of a speedy public indignation, scorn, and dishonor.

Under these circumstances, my young friend, what is the duty of the citizen-king who has just received his crown?

First of all things, it is your duty neither to despise your father’s example, depreciate his work, nor under-estimate your responsibility or opportunity. What he was yesterday, you must be tomorrow, or the near future will record retrogression rather than progress, and the far future incurable

and unavoidable decay. Remember that the character of a government, especially a popular government, never rises above the level of the people, and never falls very far below it. When cowards and tricksters and thieves abound, it is always because the people are cowardly, weak, or corrupt. In a democracy the politician is always the exact and infallible measure of the morality, courage, and patriotism of the people. If he is tricky and corrupt, they are either ignorant and weak, or base, cowardly, and mercenary. Not more surely does seed or spore reproduce its kind, than do the people reproduce their own character in their public representatives.

“To my mind,” said the greatest general of our day, “Thermopylæ was the most wonderful battle in the world’s history. There was no strategy about it that a child would not be sure to perceive; nor any tactics save what were instinctive with the individual soldiers. The wonderful thing about it is that a country about as large as one of our counties, and hardly half as populous, should have had in it at one time three hundred such men as stood there to meet certain death with Leonidas. It is not alone the leader and the soldiers who are on trial when the battle is joined, but the people who have made them what they are.”

But if you are brave and strong and willing; if you believe that the things I have indicated should

be done, and ask how you shall do your part, I can only answer that the soldier marches instinctively towards the sound of the guns. There is and always must be in the battle of liberty—the conflict of self-government—a never-ending struggle, a constant advance along the whole line. One wing may carry with a shout the seemingly impregnable works upon the mountain-side; the other may be routed in the open plain, while injustice or corruption holds the doubly intrenched works in the center against many an assault; but at all events and under all circumstances, the duty of the citizen-king is to fight the battle nearest him. Let his hand and helm be always seen in the thickest of the fight. Let no defeat dishearten or discourage! Be at every caucus, if you have to hire a detective to find where it is held. Suffer no wrong to be done to yourself or another without protest. Insist on the ballot in the caucus and the *viva voce* vote in the convention of delegates. Make the way of the transgressor hard and the bed of the “boss” thorny. One determined man can make a deal of trouble to the shrewdest “gang” that ever lied or stole. A hundred brave men fighting prudently for the right are equal to a thousand determined rascals who have to cover up their tracks and fight in the dark. Above all things, organize for opposition and protest.

“I will never vote for A. B.,” said a brave man in a State senatorial district, “whoever may nomi-

nate him, because I believe him to be unworthy and corrupt."

He signed his name to the statement ; presented it to one of his neighbors, and then to another, until one hundred and seventy-six good men and true of his party had signed it. Then he sent a copy of it to every delegate to the convention that was to nominate. The majority in the district was more than a thousand ; the proposed candidate was an all powerful "boss" of his party and had two-thirds of the delegates pledged to his support ; but neither he nor they had the nerve to face a hundred and seventy-six common men brave enough to sign such a protest.

Insist always on putting a moral and legal truss on every weak joint in your party, and keep on insisting until it is done. The American party is not only founded on, but shaped and ruled from, the hearthstone. If the good men and true, who claim to be Christian patriots, as well as law-abiding citizens, will but do their duty, they will be actual as well as potential kings. They will not be content with the shadow of power but will insist upon having the substance also. They will control and perfect the machinery of their respective parties, and shape with certainty the destiny of the country. They will not, indeed, make either party or government faultless, because they will not be themselves without fault ; but they will assuredly keep both steadily

moving toward that perfection which is the constant aim of manly aspiration and the noblest Christian endeavor. Do your duty, O newly crowned citizen-king, as it comes to your hand and reveals itself to your heart and brain, and you will thereby honor the past and serve the present, and make the future your debtor forever.

Yesterday is putting off its armor ; to-day is putting on its crown. "The king is dead ! Long live the king !" The history of liberty is not one of battles and sieges, of victories and defeats alone, but one of men wise enough to do, brave enough to die, and patient enough to wait. Trusting that you may ever be worthy to be counted one of her chosen sons, I bid you "Hail and farewell !"

THE END.



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