tinction in them opens the door to a fame and power extending over the country, able men will seek to enter and to shine in the legislatures of the States. This is the same argument as is used by those who defend the practice, now general in England, of fighting municipal and other local elections on party lines. Better men, it is said, are glad to enter the town councils than could otherwise be induced to do so, because in doing so they serve the party, and establish a claim on it, they commend themselves to their fellow-citizens as fit candidates for Parliament. The possible loss of not getting a good set of town councillors irrespective of party lines is thought to be more than compensated by the certain gain of men whose ambition would overlook a town council, were it not thus made a stage in their political career. This case is the more like that of America because these English municipal bodies have rarely anything to do with the issues which divide the two great English parties. Men are elected to them as Tories or Liberals whose Toryism or Liberalism is utterly indifferent so far as the business of the council goes.

Whether or no this reasoning be sound as regards England, I doubt if the American legislatures gain in efficiency by having only party men in them, and whether the elections would be any worse cared for if party was a secondary idea in the voters' minds. Already these elections are entirely in the hands of party managers, to whom intellect and knowledge do not commend an aspirant, any more than does character. Experience in a State legislature certainly gives a politician good chances of seeing behind the scenes, and makes him familiar with the methods employed by professionals. But it affords few opportunities for distinction in the higher walks of public life, and it is as likely to lower as to raise his aptitude for them. However, a good many men find their way into Congress through the State legislatures — though it is no longer the rule that persons chosen Federal senators by those bodies must have served in them — and perhaps the average capacity of members is kept up by the presence of persons who seek to use the State legislature as a stepping-stone to something further. The question is purely speculative. Party has dominated and will dominate all State elections. Under existing conditions the thing cannot be otherwise.

It is, however, obviously impossible to treat as party matters many of the questions that come before the legislatures. Local and personal bills, which, it will be remembered, occupy by far the larger part of the time and labours of these bodies, do not fall within party lines at all. The only difference the party system makes to them is that a party leader who takes up such a bill has exceptional facilities for putting it through, and that a district which returns a member belonging to the majority has some advantage when trying to secure a benefit for itself. It is the same with appropriations of State funds to any local purpose. Members use their party influence and party affiliations; but the advocacy of such schemes and opposition to them have comparatively little to do with party divisions, and it constantly happens that men of both parties are found combining to carry some project by which they or their constituents will gain. Of course the less reputable a member is, the more apt will he be to enter into "rings" which have nothing to do with politics in their proper sense, the more ready to scheme with any trickster, to whichever party he adheres. Of measures belonging to what may be called genuine legislation, *i.e.* measures for improving the general law and administration of the State, some are so remote from any party issue, and so unlikely to enure to the credit of either party, that they are considered on their merits. A bill, for instance, for improving the State lunatic asylums, or forbidding lotteries, or restricting the freedom of divorce, would have nothing either to hope or to fear from party action. It would be introduced by some member who desired reform for its own sake, and would be passed if this member, having convinced the more enlightened among his colleagues that it would do good, or his colleagues generally that the people wished it, could overcome the difficulties which the pressure of a crowd of competing bills is sure to place in its way. Other public measures, however, may excite popular feeling, may be demanded by one class or section of opinion and resisted by another. Bills dealing with the sale of intoxicants, or regulating the hours of labour, or attacking railway companies, or prohibiting the sale of oleomargarine as butter, are matters of such keen interest to some one section of the population, that a party will gain support from many citizens

by espousing them, and may possibly estrange others. Hence, though such bills have rarely any connection with the tenets of either party, it is worth the while of a party to win votes by throwing its weight for or against them, according as it judges that there is more to gain by taking the one course or the other. In the case of oleomargarine, for instance, there was clearly more to be gained by supporting than by opposing, because the farmers, especially in the agricultural North-West, constitute a much stronger vote than any persons who could suffer by restricting the sale of the substance. We should accordingly expect to find, and observers did in fact find, both parties competing for the honour of passing such a bill. There was a race between a number of members, anxious to gain credit for themselves and their friends. Intoxicants open up a more difficult problem. Strong as the Prohibitionists and local option men are in all the northern and western, as well as in some of the southern States, the Germans, not to speak of the Irish and the liquor dealers, are in many States also so strong, and so fond of their beer, that it is a hazardous thing for a party to hoist the anti-liquor flag. Accordingly both parties are apt to fence with this question. Speaking broadly, therefore, these questions of general State legislation are not party questions, though liable at any moment to become so, if one or other party takes them up.

Is there then no such thing as a real State party, agitating or working solely within State limits, and inscribing on its banner a principle or project which State legislation can advance?

Such a party does sometimes arise. In California, for instance, there has long been strong feeling against the Chinese, and a desire to exclude them. Both Republicans and Democrats were affected by the feeling, and fell in with it. But there sprang up fifteen years ago a third party, which claimed to be specially "anti-Mongolian," while also attacking capitalists and railways; and it lasted for some time, confusing the politics of the State. Questions affecting the canals of the State became at one time a powerful factor in the parties of New York. In Virginia the question of repudiating the State debt gave birth a few years ago to a party which called itself the "Readjusters," and by the help of negro votes carried the State at several elections. In some of the North-Western

States the farmers associated themselves in societies called "Granges," purporting to be formed for the promotion of agriculture, and created a Granger party, which secured drastic legislation against the railroad companies and other so-called monopolists. The same forces acting over a still wider area have lately produced the so-called Farmers' Alliance, which figured so prominently in the congressional elections of 1890, and under the name of the People's Party, in those of 1892. And in most States there now exists an active Prohibitionist party, which agitates for the strengthening and better enforcement of laws restricting or forbidding the sale of intoxicants. It deems itself also a national party, since it has an organization which covers a great part of the Union. But its operations are far more active in the States, because the liquor traffic belongs to State legislation.[1] Since, however, it can rarely secure many members in a State legislature, it acts chiefly by influencing the existing parties, and frightening them into pretending to meet its wishes.

All these groups or factions were or are associated on the basis of some doctrine or practical proposal which they put forward. But it sometimes also happens that, without any such basis, a party is formed in a State inside one of the regular national parties; or, in other words, that the national party in the State splits up into two factions, probably more embittered against each other than against the other regular party. Such State factions, for they hardly deserve to be called parties, generally arise from, or soon become coloured by, the rivalries of leaders, each of whom draws a certain number of politicians with him. New York is the State that has seen most of them; and in it they have tended of late years to grow more distinctly personal. The Hunkers and Barnburners who divided the Democratic party some forty years ago, and subsequently passed into the "Hards" and the "Softs," began in genuine differences of opinion about canal management and other State questions.[2] The "Stalwart" and

[1] Congress has of course power to impose, and has imposed, an excise upon liquor, but this is far from meeting the demands of the temperance party.

[2] The names of these factions, the changes they pass through, and the way in which they immediately get involved with the ambitions and antipathies of particular leaders, recall the factions in the Italian cities of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, such as the White and Black Guelfs of Florence in the time of Dante.

"Half-breed" sections of the Republican party in the same State, whose bitter feuds amused the country a few years ago, were mere factions, each attached to a leader, or group of leaders, but without distinctive principles.

It will be seen from this fact, as well as from others given in the preceding chapter, that the dignity and magnitude of State politics have declined. They have become more pacific in methods, but less serious and more personal in their aims. In old days the State had real political struggles, in which men sometimes took up arms. There was a rebellion in Massachusetts in 1786–87, which it needed some smart fighting to put down, and another in Rhode Island in 1842, due to the discontent of the masses with the then existing Constitution.[1] The battles of this generation are fought at the polling-booths, though sometimes won in the rooms where the votes are counted by partisan officials. That heads are counted instead of being broken is no doubt an improvement. But these struggles do not always stir the blood of the people as those of the old time did: they seem to evoke less patriotic interest in the State, less public spirit for securing her good government.

This change does not necessarily indicate a feebler sense of political duty. It is due to that shrivelling up of the State to which I referred in last chapter. A century ago the State was a commonwealth comparable to an Italian republic like Bologna or Siena, or one of the German free imperial cities of the middle ages, to Lübeck, for instance, or to Nürnberg, which, though it formed part of the Empire, had a genuine and vigorous political life of its own, in which the faiths, hopes, passions of the citizens were involved. Nowadays the facilities of communication, the movements of trade, the unprecedented diffusion of literature, and, perhaps not least, the dominance of the great national parties, whose full tide swells all the creeks and

[1] In these miniature civil wars there was a tendency for the city folk to be on one side and the agriculturists on the other, a phenomenon which was observed long ago in Greece, where the aristocratic party lived in the city and the poor in the fields. In the sixth century B.C. the oligarchic poet Theognis mourned over the degradation of political life which had followed the intrusion of the country churls. The hostility of the urban and rural population sometimes recurs in Switzerland. The country people of the canton of Basil fought a bloody battle some years ago with the people of the city, and the little commonwealth had to be subdivided into two, Basil City and Basil Country.

inlets of a State no less than the mid channel of national politics at Washington, have drawn the minds of the masses as well as of the more enlightened citizens away from the State legislatures, whose functions have come to seem trivial and their strifes petty.[1]

In saying this I do not mean to withdraw or modify what was said, in an earlier chapter, of the greatness of an American State, and the attachment of its inhabitants to it. Those propositions are, I believe, true of a State as compared to any local division of any European country, the cantons of Switzerland excepted. I am here speaking of a State as compared with the nation, and of men's feelings towards their State to-day as compared with the feelings of a century ago. I am, moreover, speaking not so much of sentimental loyalty to the State, considered as a whole, for this is still strong, but of the practical interest taken in its government. Even in Great Britain many a man is proud of his city, of Edinburgh say, or of Manchester, who takes only the slenderest interest in the management of its current business.

There is indeed some resemblance between the attitude of the inhabitants of a great English town towards their municipal government and that of the people of a State to their State government. The proceedings of English town councils are little followed or regarded either by the wealthier or the poorer residents. The humble voter does not know or care who is mayor. The head of a great mercantile house never thinks of offering himself for such a post. In London the Metropolitan Board of Works raised and spent a vast revenue; but its discussions were commented on in the newspapers only four or five times a year, and very few persons of good social standing were to be found among its members. Allowing for the contrast between the English bodies, with their strictly limited powers, and the immense competence of an American State legislature, this English phenomenon is sufficiently like those of America to be worth taking as an illustration.

[1] Similar feelings made the three last surviving Hanseatic free cities willingly resign their independence to become members of the new German Empire, because the sentiment of pan-Germanic patriotism had so overborne the old fondness for local independence, that no regret was felt in resigning part of the latter in order to secure a share in fuller national life of the great German State.

We may accordingly say that the average American voter, belonging to the labouring or farming or shopkeeping class, troubles himself little about the conduct of State business. He votes the party ticket at elections as a good party man, and is pleased when his party wins. When a question comes up which interests him, like that of canal management, or the regulation of railway rates, or a limitation of the hours of labour, he is eager to use his vote, and watches what passes in the legislature. He is sometimes excited over a contest for the governorship, and if the candidate of the other party is a stronger and more honest man, may possibly desert his party on that one issue. But in ordinary times he follows the proceedings of the legislature so little that an American humourist, describing the initial stages of dotage, observes that the poor old man took to filing the reports of the debates in his State legislature. The politics which the voter reads by preference are national politics; and especially whatever touches the next presidential election. In State contests that which chiefly fixes his attention is the influence of a State victory on an approaching national contest.

The more educated and thoughtful citizen, especially in great States, like New York and Pennsylvania, is apt to be disgusted by the sordidness of many State politicians and the pettiness of most. He regards Albany and Harrisburg much as he regards a wasps' nest in one of the trees of his suburban garden. The insects eat his fruit, and may sting his children; but it is too much trouble to set up a ladder and try to reach them. Some public-spirited young men have, however, occasionally thrown themselves into the muddy whirlpool of the New York legislature, chiefly for the sake of carrying Acts for the better government of cities. When the tenacity of such men proves equal to their courage, they gain in time the active support of those who have hitherto stood aloof, regarding State politics as a squabble over offices and jobs. By the help of the press they are sometimes able to carry measures such as an improved Ballot Act, or an Act for checking expenditure at elections which is not only valuable in their own State but sets an example which other States are apt to follow. But the prevalence of the rule that a man can be elected only in the district where he lives, renders it difficult permanently to maintain a reforming party in a legislature, so those who, instead of shrugging their shoulders put them to the wheel, generally prefer to carry their energies into the field of national politics, thinking that larger and swifter results are to be obtained there, because victories achieved in and through the National government have an immediate moral influence upon the country at large.

A European observer, sympathetic with the aims of the reformers, is inclined to think that the battle for honest government ought to be fought everywhere, in State legislatures and city councils as well as in the national elections and in the press, and is at first surprised that so much effort should be needed to secure what all good citizens, to whichever party they belong, might be expected to work for. But he would be indeed a self-confident European who should fancy he had discovered anything which had not already occurred to his shrewd American friends; and the longer such an observer studies the problem, the better does he learn to appreciate the difficulties which the system of party organization, which I must presently proceed to describe, throws in the way of all reforming efforts.