

able men, a non-partisan list, or so-called "citizens' ticket," may be run by a combination of respectable men of both parties. Sometimes this attempt succeeds. However, though the tenets of Republicans and Democrats have absolutely nothing to do with the conduct of city affairs, though the sole object of the election, say of a city comptroller or auditor, may be to find an honest man of good business habits, four-fifths of the electors in nearly all cities give little thought to the personal qualifications of the candidates, and vote the "straight out ticket."

The functions of city governments may be distributed into three groups — (a) those which are delegated by the State out of its general coercive and administrative powers, including the police power, the granting of licences, the execution of laws relating to adulteration and explosives; (b) those which though done under general laws are properly matters of local charge and subject to local regulation, such as education and the care of the poor; and (c) those which are not so much of a political as of a purely business order, such as the paving and cleansing of streets, the maintenance of proper drains, the provision of water and light. In respect of the first, and to some extent of the second of these groups, the city may be properly deemed a political entity; in respect of the third it is rather to be compared to a business corporation or company, in which the tax-payers are shareholders, doing, through the agency of the city officers, things which each might do for himself, though with more cost and trouble. All three sets of functions are dealt with by American legislation in the same way, and are alike given to officials and a legislature elected by persons of whom a large part pay no direct taxes. Education, however, is usually detached from the general city government and entrusted to a separate authority,<sup>1</sup> while in some cities the control of the police has been withheld or withdrawn from that government, and entrusted to the hands of a separate board.<sup>2</sup> The most remarkable instance is that of Boston, in which city a Massachusetts statute of 1885 entrusts the police

<sup>1</sup> Though sometimes, as in Baltimore, the city legislature appoints a Board of Education. Unhappily, in some cities education is "within politics," and, as may be supposed, with results unfavourable to the independence and even to the quality of the teachers.

<sup>2</sup> So in Baltimore.

department and the power to license, regulate, and restrain the sale of intoxicating liquors, to a special board of three persons, to be appointed for five years by the State governor and council. Both political parties are directed by the statute to be represented on the board. (This is a frequent provision in recent charters.) The city pays on the board's requisition all the expenses of the police department. In New York the police commissioners are appointed by the mayor, but in order to "take the department out of politics" an unwritten understanding was established that he, though himself always a partisan, should appoint two Democratic and two Republican commissioners.<sup>1</sup> The post of policeman is "spoils" of the humbler order, but spoils equally divided between the parties.

Taxes in cities, as in rural districts, are levied upon personal as well as real property; and the city tax is collected along with the county tax and State tax by the same collectors. There are, of course, endless varieties in the practice of different States and cities as to methods of assessment and to the minor imposts subsidiary to the property tax. Both real and personal property are usually assessed far below their true value,<sup>2</sup> the latter because owners are reticent, the former because the city assessors are anxious to take as little as possible of the State and county burden on the shoulders of their own community, though in this patriotic effort they are checked by the county and State Boards of Equalization. Taxes are usually so much higher in the larger cities than in the country districts or smaller municipalities, that there is a strong tendency for rich men to migrate from the city to its suburbs in order to escape the city collector. Perhaps the city overtakes them, extending its limits and incorporating its suburbs; perhaps they fly farther afield by the railway and make the prosperity of country towns twenty or thirty miles away. The unfortunate consequence follows, not only that the taxes are heavier for those who remain in the city, but that the philanthropic and political work of the city loses the participation of those who ought to have shared in it. For a man votes in one place only, the place where he resides and pays taxes on his per-

<sup>1</sup> At present (1892) there are three, two belonging to the dominant party.

<sup>2</sup> In New York the assessors' valuation of real estate is said to be about 60 per cent of its true value. in Chicago between 20 and 30 per cent of that value (*City Government of Philadelphia*, p. 323).

sonalty; and where he has no vote, he is neither eligible for local office nor deemed entitled to take a part in local political agitation.

It may conduce to a better comprehension of the newest frame of city government if I present an outline of the municipal system in two recently reformed cities. In both of them there had been serious maladministration due to causes to be presently explained, and many efforts had been made to apply drastic remedies. In one, St. Louis, a completely new charter has been enacted, embodying, in the main, the views of municipal reformers. In the other, Boston, a number of specific improvements have been effected in a charter dating from 1854. I begin with the latter as the older city.<sup>1</sup>

Boston (population in 1890, 448,477) is divided into twenty-four wards and twelve aldermanic districts, each ward being subdivided into voting precincts with about five hundred voters in each. Municipal elections are held annually early in December.

The mayor is elected for one year by the people of the whole city; receives \$10,000 a year; appoints, subject to confirmation by the board of aldermen, the chief officers and boards (except the police board and street commissioners), and may remove any of them for cause. He summons the heads of departments at least once a month for consultation. Every ordinance, order, resolution, or vote of the city council, and every act of either branch or of the school committee involving the expenditure of money, is presented to him for approval, and if disapproved, falls to the ground, unless reconsidered and passed by a two-thirds vote. He may veto separate items in a general appropriation bill. The departments send their estimates to him, which he submits to the council with his recommendations thereon. All drafts on the city treasury, and all contracts exceeding \$1000, require his written approval.<sup>2</sup> [Note that he is not himself a member of either branch of the city legislature.]

The legislature, called collectively the City Council, consists of two branches, viz. the Board of Aldermen, elected one from each of twelve districts, and the Common Council of seventy-two members, three for each ward. Both are elected annually. They are restricted to purely legislative (including financial) functions.

The executive departments are the following:—

*Elected by popular vote.* — Three street commissioners, one each year for a three years' term, with power to lay out streets and assess damages.

<sup>1</sup> Abstracted from Mr. James M. Bugbee's paper, entitled the "City Government of Boston," in *J. H. U. Studies*, fifth series (Baltimore, 1887).

<sup>2</sup> The mayor has a number of minor duties. "It appears from the latest edition of the Ordinances that no one can climb a tree, or throw stones, or lie on the grass on the Common, without getting a permit from the mayor."

When the estimated cost of a street exceeds \$10,000 the concurrence of the council is required.

*Appointed by mayor and aldermen.* — Superintendent of streets, charged with paving, repairing, and watering the streets.

Fire department — three commissioners serving three years.

Head of department for the survey and inspection of buildings. Term three years.

Health department — three commissioners, with large sanitation powers for preserving public health and abating nuisances. Term three years.

Overseers of the poor — four each year. Term three years.<sup>1</sup> They manage out-door relief and the trust funds which the city holds for that purpose. No salary.

Board of public institutions — three commissioners (substituted in 1889 for nine directors), charged with the care of the alms-houses, houses of correction, of industry, of reformation, house for pauper children, and lunatic hospital. Term three years. No salary. It is in these institutions that in-door relief is given.

City hospital board — five persons. Term five years.

Public library, supported by money voted by the council, five trustees. Term five years. No salary.

Park department — three commissioners. Term three years. No salary.<sup>2</sup>

Water department — board of three which controls the waterworks and fixes price of water. Term three years.

Assessors' department — five chief assessors, to value real and personal property, and assess city, county, and State taxes. Term three years.

City collector, who levies tax bills delivered to him by the assessors. Appointed annually.

The following further officers are appointed by the mayor and aldermen. For five years — five commissioners of Cedar Grove Cemetery (unpaid); for three years — three registrars of voters, six sinking fund commissioners (unpaid); for one year — two record commissioners (unpaid), five directors of ferries (unpaid), five trustees of Mount Hope Cemetery (unpaid), city treasurer, city auditor, corporation counsel, city solicitor, superintendent of public buildings, city architect, superintendent of street lights, superintendent of sewers, superintendent of printing, superintendent of Faneuil Hall Market, superintendent of bridges, city surveyor, water registrar, registrar of births, deaths, and marriages, harbour master and ten assistants, commission for certain bridges, inspector of provisions, inspector of milk and vinegar, sealer (and four deputy sealers) of weights and measures, nine hundred and sixty-eight election officers and their deputies.

<sup>1</sup> Formerly the people, subsequently the council, elected the overseers. As under both plans men sometimes got in who jobbed for their own benefit, the present scheme was adopted in 1885.

<sup>2</sup> This board supervises the suburban parks, the Common, and the Public Garden (together with smaller open spaces), within the city, being under the charge of a superintendent separately appointed.

The above (so far as paid) are paid by salary fixed by the council. The following officers, also appointed annually by mayor and aldermen, are paid by fees:—

Inspector of lime, three inspectors of petroleum, fifteen inspectors of pressed hay, culler of hoops and staves, three fence viewers, ten field drivers and pound keepers, three surveyors of marble, nine superintendents of hay scales, four measurers of upper leather, fifteen measurers of wood and bark, twenty measurers of grain, three weighers of beef, thirty-eight weighers of coal, five weighers of boilers and heavy machinery, four weighers of ballast and lighters, ninety-two undertakers, one hundred and fifty constables.

In addition to these there is a city clerk, city messenger, and clerk of committees elected by concurrent vote of the City Council, a clerk of the common council elected by that body, and many county officers elected by the voters of the county of Suffolk, in which Boston stands, and of which Boston furnishes nearly the whole population. The county judges, however, are not elected, but, like all other judges in Massachusetts, are appointed by the Governor and Council to hold office *quam diu se bene gesserint*. Exclusive of election officers and fee-paid officers, the mayor and aldermen appoint 107 persons, of whom 65 are appointed for one year, 61 receive salaries, and 41 serve gratuitously. In the present city administration there are forty separate departments and offices, most of them with a large number of subordinates and workmen. This "multiplicity of departments and officials not only involves the city in expenses not to be measured merely by the salaries paid to superfluous officials,"<sup>1</sup> but affords a large field for the exercise of party patronage, a patronage partially limited, but as regards subordinates only, by the Massachusetts Civil Service Act of 1884, which is administered by a Civil Service Commission.

Distinct from the rest of the city government is the School Committee of twenty-four members, elected on a general ticket over the whole city, and serving for three years, eight retiring annually.

Also distinct is the Police Department, which, as already observed, has by a statute of 1885 been entrusted to a Board of Police, appointed by the Governor and Council, of three citizens of Boston, with power to "appoint, establish, and organize" the police, and to license, regulate, and restrain the sale of intoxicating liquors.<sup>2</sup> In case of riot, the mayor can take command of the police force.

This amended scheme, although generally held to be an improvement on that which preceded it, has not given entire sat-

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Commission of 1884.

<sup>2</sup> In the cities and towns of Massachusetts the question of granting licences for the sale of intoxicants is annually submitted to popular vote. See note to Chapter LXVI. At present in Boston and most cities the grant has been voted. The annual revenue which the municipality derives from licences is in Boston over \$500,000 (£100,000) per annum.

isfaction. It is thought that too much executive power still remains with the aldermen, and that they unduly control the mayor in appointments. Nor has the control of the police by a State Board worked well. The liquor traffic is no better regulated, while the irresponsibility to the city of the Police Board is found inconvenient.

The city of St. Louis (population in 1890, 451,770) is governed by a charter or scheme of government which, in pursuance of a special provision for that purpose in the last Constitution of Missouri (1875), was prepared by a board of thirteen freeholders elected by the people of the city and county of St. Louis, and was finally adopted and ratified by the people themselves by a vote at the polls, August 22, 1876.<sup>1</sup>

St. Louis is divided into 28 wards and 244 voting precincts. Elections are governed by a strict law, which generally prevents frauds, and are quiet, all drinking saloons being closed till midnight.

The mayor is elected by the people for four years, receives \$5000 salary, is not a member of the city Assembly, with which he communicates by messages. He has the power of returning any bill passed by the Assembly, subject to its power to reconsider and pass by a two-thirds vote. He recommends measures to the Assembly, submits reports from heads of departments, and has a great variety of minor executive duties. He appoints to a number of important offices, but in conjunction with the Council. For the sake of protecting him from the pressure of those to whom he owes his election, these appointments are made by him at the beginning of the third year of his own term, and for a term of four years.

The Assembly is composed of two houses. The Council has thirteen members, elected for four years by "general ticket": one-third go out of office every second year. The House of Delegates has twenty-eight members, one from each ward. Each Assembly man receives \$300 a year, besides his reasonable expenses incurred in the city service. The Assembly has a general legislative power and supervision over all departments, its borrowing and taxing powers being, however, limited.

The administrative departments are the following, viz.:—Thirteen officers elected by the people, viz. comptroller, treasurer, auditor, registrar, collector, marshal, inspector of weights and measures, president of board of assessors, coroner, sheriff, recorder of deeds, public administrator, president of board of public improvements.

Twenty Boards or officers are appointed, most of them for four years, by the mayor with the approval of the Council, viz.:—Board of public improvements, consisting of street commissioner, water do., harbour do.,

<sup>1</sup> I abridge the following account from a valuable paper by Mr. Marshall S. Snow (professor of history in Washington University, St. Louis), on the "City Government of St. Louis," in *J. H. U. Studies*, third series.

park do., sewer do., assessor and collector of water rates, commissioner of public buildings, commissioner of supplies, commissioner of health, inspector of boilers, city counsellor, jury commissioner, recorder of votes, city attorney, two police court judges, jailer, superintendent of workhouse, chief fire engineer, gas inspector, assessors, and several city contractors and minor officers.

The four police commissioners who, along with the mayor, are charged with the public safety of St. Louis, are appointed by the Governor of Missouri, with the view of keeping this department "out of city politics." In 1886 the police force was 593 men strong, besides 200 private watchmen, paid by their employers, but wearing a uniform and sworn in by the police board.

The city School Board consists of 28 members, one from each ward, elected for three years, one-third retiring annually. It is independent of the mayor and Assembly, chooses its staff and all teachers, has charge of the large school funds, and levies a school tax, which, however, the city collector collects.

The strong points of this charter are deemed to be "the length of term of its municipal officers; the careful provisions for honest registration and the party purity of elections; the checks on financial administration and limitations of the debt, and the fact that the important offices to which the mayor appoints are not vacant till the beginning of his third year of office, so that as rewards of political work done during a heated campaign they are too far in the distance to prejudice seriously the merits of an election."<sup>1</sup>

On the whole the charter has worked well. The public works are efficiently managed, and the city credit stands high. Nevertheless the European reader will feel some surprise at the number of elective offices and at the limited terms for which all important offices are held. He will note that even in democratic America the control of the police by city politicians has been deemed too dangerous to be suffered to remain in their unclean hands. And he will contrast what may be called the political character of the whole city constitution with the somewhat simpler and less ambitious, though also less democratic arrangements, which have been found sufficient for the management of European cities.

<sup>1</sup> Snow, *ut supra*.

## CHAPTER LI

### THE WORKING OF CITY GOVERNMENTS

Two tests of practical efficiency may be applied to the government of a city: What does it provide for the people, and what does it cost the people? Space fails me to apply in detail the former of these tests, by showing what each city does or omits to do for its inhabitants; so I must be content with observing that in the United States generally constant complaints are directed against the bad paving and cleansing of the streets, the non-enforcement of the laws forbidding gambling and illicit drinking, and in some places against the sanitary arrangements and management of public buildings and parks. It would appear that in the greatest cities there is far more dissatisfaction than exists with the municipal administration in such cities as Glasgow, Manchester, Dublin, Hamburg, Lyons.

The following indictment of the government of Philadelphia is somewhat exceptional in its severity, and however well founded as to that city, must not be taken to be typical. A memorial presented to the Pennsylvania legislature in 1883 by a number of the leading citizens of the Quaker City contained these words:—

"The affairs of the city of Philadelphia have fallen into a most deplorable condition. The amounts required annually for the payment of interest upon the funded debt and current expenses render it necessary to impose a rate of taxation which is as heavy as can be borne.

"In the meantime the streets of the city have been allowed to fall into such a state as to be a reproach and a disgrace. Philadelphia is now recognized as the worst-paved and worst-cleaned city in the civilized world.

"The water supply is so bad that during many weeks of the last winter it was not only distasteful and unwholesome for drinking, but offensive for bathing purposes.

"The effort to clean the streets was abandoned for months, and no at-