

distributed literature during the election, but dissolved when it was over. They have maintained no permanent party machinery; and did not act as a distinct section, even for the purposes of agitation, at the presidential elections of 1888 and 1892.¹ So many of them have since been absorbed (especially in New England and New York) into the Democratic party that they cannot be now described as a section, but rather as a Tendency, or as persons in whom a strong and growing disposition to independence becomes from time to time embodied.

The Mugwumps bear no more resemblance to any British party than does any other of the parties of the United States, for the chief doctrine they advocate is one not in controversy in Britain, the necessity of reforming the civil service by making appointments without reference to party, and a general reform in the methods of politics by selecting men for Federal, State, and municipal offices, with reference rather to personal fitness than to political affiliations. They are most numerous in New England and in the cities of the Eastern States generally, but some few are scattered here and there all over the North and West as far as California. It is, however, only in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut that they seem to have constituted an appreciably potent vote. In the South (save in such border cities as St. Louis and Louisville) there were none, because the Southern men who would, had they lived in the North, have taken to Mugwumpism, are in the South Democrats, and therefore voted for Mr. Cleveland anyhow in 1884, 1888, and 1892. Nor did there seem to be in the Democratic party, either in North or South, as much material for a secession similar to that of the "bolters" of 1884 as was then shown to exist among the Republicans. In 1893, however, an enormous "swing-over" in New York State of votes usually Democratic to the Republican side, provoked by the nomination of a man deemed tainted to an important judicial office, showed that the Mugwump element or tendency was to be reckoned with, at least in the North-eastern States, by both parties alike.

The reader must be reminded of one capital difference be-

¹In 1888 some voted for Mr. Harrison, some, and especially those inclined to free trade, for Mr. Cleveland. In 1892 even those who had not formally joined the Democrats seem to have voted on that side.

tween the Republican and Democratic parties and the minor ones which have just been mentioned. The two former are absolutely co-extensive with the Union. They exist in every State, and in every corner of every State. They exist even in the four Territories, though the inhabitants of Territories have no vote in Federal elections. But the Labour party and the Prohibition party, although each maintains a more or less permanent organization in many States, do not attempt to do so in all States,¹ much less to fight all the elections in those States. The "People's Party," while for the moment strong in the West, has no importance in the Atlantic States, though the "Farmers' Alliance" men developed strength in 1890 in State elections in parts of the South, especially in South Carolina. Where these minor parties are strong, or where some question has arisen which keenly interests them, they will run their man for State governor or mayor, or will put out a ticket for State senators or Assembly men: or they will take the often more profitable course of fusing for the nonce with one of the regular parties, giving it their vote in return for having the party nominations to one or more of the elective offices assigned to their own nominee.² This helps to keep a minor party going, and gives to its vote a practical result otherwise unattainable.

Is there not then, some European may ask, a Free Trade party? Not in the American sense of the word "party." Free trade views are professed by most Democrats, especially in the South and West (though rather in the practical form of the advocacy of a reduced tariff than in that of the general doctrine as it was preached by Cobden) and by some few Republicans whose

¹In the election of 1880, votes were given for the Greenback candidate in all the States but three (308,578 votes in all), and for the Prohibitionist in seventeen States out of the thirty-eight (10,305 votes in all). In 1884 votes were given for the Greenback candidate in twenty-nine States, and for the Prohibitionist in thirty-three States. In 1888 there was some scattering, and the Labour party was divided. In 1892 the "People's Party" candidate received votes in every State, the Prohibitionist in forty-one, the "Socialist Labour" in five States.

²The Labour men have done this pretty frequently, the Prohibitionists scarcely ever. In 1892 the so-called "Populists" and the Democrats "fused" in six States, the latter voting for the Presidential candidate of the former, with the result that the People's Party carried four of these States. In Louisiana a somewhat similar arrangement was made between the "People's Party" and the Republicans; but the Democrats carried the State notwithstanding.

importance is due not to their numbers, but to the influence they exert as writers or teachers. But Republican Free Traders, being largely Mugwumps, have now latterly tended to drift into the Democratic party. There is a society which seeks to educate opinion by publishing books and pamphlets on the subject; but it is no more a political force than the similar society in France or the Cobden Club in England. There is no political organization which agitates for free trade by the usual party methods, much less does any one think of starting candidates either for the Presidency or for Congress upon a pure anti-protectionist platform,¹ although the election of 1888, and still more that of 1892, largely turned upon this particular issue, which the so-called McKinley Tariff Act of 1890 had made prominent.

Why, considering the reluctant hesitancy of the old parties in dealing with new questions, and considering also that in the immense area of the United States, with its endless variety of economic interests and social conditions, we might expect local diversities of aim and view which would crystallize, and so give rise to many local parties — why are not the parties far more numerous? Why, too, are the parties so persistent? In this changeful country one would look for frequent changes in tenets and methods.

One reason is, that there is at present a strong feeling in America against any sentiment or organization which relies on or appeals to one particular region of the country. Such localism or sectionalism is hateful, because, recalling the disunionist spirit of the South which led to the war, it seems anti-national and unpatriotic. By the mere fact of its springing from a local root, and urging a local interest, a party would set all the rest of the country against it. As a separately organized faction seeking to capture the Federal government, it could not succeed against the national parties, because the Union as a whole is so vast that it would be outvoted by one or other of them. But if it is content to remain a mere opinion or demand, not attacking either national party, but willing to bestow the votes it can control on whichever will meet its wishes, it is powerful, because the two great parties

¹ It would be absurd to run candidates for State office or municipal office on such a platform, inasmuch as the tariff is a matter purely for the national legislature.

will bid against one another for its support by flatteries and concessions. For instance, the question which interests the masses on the Pacific coast is that of excluding Chinese immigrants, because they compete for work with the whites and bring down wages. Now if the "anti-Mongolians" of California, Nevada, and Oregon were to create a national party, based on this particular issue, they would be insignificant, for they would have little support over five-sixths of the Union. But by showing that the attitude of the two great parties on this issue will determine their own attitude towards these parties, they control both, for as each desires to secure the vote of California, Nevada, and Oregon, each vies with the other in promising and voting for anti-Chinese legislation. The position of the Irish extremists has been similar, except of course that they are a racial and not a geographical "section." Their power, which Congress has sometimes recognized in a way scarcely compatible with its dignity or with international courtesy, lies in the fact that as the Republicans and Democrats are nearly balanced, the congressional leaders of both desire to "placate" this faction, for which neither has a sincere affection. An Irish party, or a German party, or a Roman Catholic party, which should run its candidates on a sectional platform, would stand self-condemned in American eyes as not being genuinely American. But so long as it is content to seek control over parties and candidates, it exerts an influence out of proportion to its numbers, and checked only by the fear that if it demanded too much native Americans might rebel, as they did in the famous Know-nothing or "American" party of 1853-58. The same fate would befall a party based upon some trade interest, such as protection to a particular sort of manufactures, or the stimulation of cattle-breeding, or on the defence of the claims of the New England fishermen. Such a party might succeed for a time in a State, and might dictate its terms to one or both of the national parties; but when it attempted to be a national party it would become ridiculous and fall.

A second cause of the phenomenon which I am endeavouring to explain may be found in the enormous trouble and expense required to found a new national party. To influence the votes, even to reach the ears of a population of sixty-six

millions of people, is an undertaking to be entered on only when some really great cause fires the national imagination, disposes the people to listen, persuades the wealthy to spend freely of their substance. It took six years of intense work to build up the Republican party, which might not even then have triumphed in the election of 1860, but for the split in the ranks of its opponents. The attempt made in 1872 to form a new independent party out of the discontented Republicans and the Democrats failed lamentably. The Independent Republicans of 1884 did not venture to start a programme or candidate of their own, but were prudently satisfied with helping the Democratic candidate, whom they deemed more likely than the Republican nominee to give effect to the doctrine of civil service reform which they advocate.

The case of these Independents, or Mugwumps, is an illustrative one. For many years past there had been complaints that the two old parties were failing to deal with issues now of capital importance, such as the tariff, the currency, the improvement of methods of business in Congress, the purification of the civil service and extinction of the so-called Spoils system. These complaints, however, came not from the men prominent as practical statesmen or politicians in the parties, but from outsiders, and largely from the men of intellectual cultivation and comparatively high social standing. Very few of these men take an active part in "politics," however interested they may be in public affairs. They are amateurs as regards the practical work of "running" ward meetings and conventions, of framing "tickets," and bringing up voters to the poll, in fact of working as well as organizing that vast and complicated machinery which an American party needs. Besides, it is a costly machinery, and they might be unable to find the money. Hence they recoil from the effort, and aim at creating a sentiment which may take concrete form in a vote, given for whichever of the parties seems at any particular time most likely to adopt, even if insincerely, the principles, and give effect, even if reluctantly, to the measures which the Independents advocate.

Why, however, does it so seldom happen that the professional politicians, who "know the ropes," and know where to get the necessary funds, seek to wreck a party in order to found

a new one more to their mind? Because they are pretty well satisfied with the sphere which existing parties give them, and comprehend from their practical experience how hazardous such an experiment would be.

These considerations may help to explain the remarkable cohesion of parties in America, and the strength of party loyalty, a phenomenon more natural in Europe, where momentous issues inflame men's passions, and where the bulk of the adherents are ignorant men, caught by watchwords and readily attracted to a leader, than in a republic where no party has any benefit to promise to the people which it may not as well get from the other, and where the native voter is a keen-witted man, with little reverence for the authority of any individual. There is however another reason flowing from the character of the American people. They are extremely fond of associating themselves, and prone to cling to any organization they have once joined. They are sensitive to any charge of disloyalty. They are gregarious, each man more disposed to go with the multitude and do as they do than to take a line of his own,¹ and they enjoy "campaigning" for its own sake. These are characteristics which themselves require to be accounted for, but the discussion of them belongs to later chapters. A European is surprised to see prominent politicians supporting, sometimes effusively, a candidate of their own party whom they are known to dislike, merely because he is the party candidate. There is a sort of military discipline about party life which has its good as well as its bad side, for if it sometimes checks the expression of honest disapproval, it also restrains jealousy, abashes self-seeking, prevents recrimination.

Each of the American parties is far less under the control of one or two conspicuous leaders than are European parties. So far as this is due to the absence of men whose power over the people rests on the possession of brilliant oratorical or administrative gifts, it is a part of the question why there are not more such men in American public life, why there are fewer striking figures than in the days of Jefferson and Hamilton, of Webster and Calhoun. It is however also due to the peculiar

¹ That is to say, they respect the authority of the mass, to which they themselves belong, though seldom that of individual leaders. See *post*, Chapter LXXXV. — "The Fatalism of the Multitude."

iarities of the Constitution. The want of concentration of power in the legal government is reflected in the structure of the party system. The separation of the legislative from the executive department lowers the importance of leadership in parties, as it weakens both these departments. The President, who is presumably among the leading men, cannot properly direct the policy of his party, still less speak for it in public, because he represents the whole nation. His ministers cannot speak to the people through Congress. In neither House of Congress is there necessarily any person recognized as the leader on either side. As neither House has the power over legislation and administration possessed by such an assembly as the French or Italian Chamber, or the English House of Commons, speeches delivered or strategy displayed in it do not tell upon the country with equal force and directness. There remains the stump, and it is more by the stump than in any other way that an American statesman speaks to the people. But what distances to be traversed, what fatigues to be encountered before he can be a living and attractive personality to the electing masses! An English statesman leaves London at two o'clock, and speaks in Birmingham, or Leeds, or Manchester, the same evening. In a few years, every great town knows him like its own mayor, while the active local politicians who frequently run up from their homes to London hear him from the galleries of the House of Commons, wait on him in deputations, are invited to the receptions which his wife gives during the season. Even railways and telegraphs cannot make America a compact country in the same sense that Britain is.

Since the Civil War ended, neither Republicans nor Democrats have leaned on and followed any one man as Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield, as before them Lords Derby, John Russell, and Palmerston, as still earlier Sir Robert Peel and Lord Melbourne, were followed in England. No one since Mr. Seward has exercised even so much authority as Mr. Bright did when out of office, or as Gambetta did in France, or Mr. Parnell in Ireland, over the sections of opinion which each of these eminent men represented.

How then are the parties led in Congress and the country? Who directs their policy? Who selects their candidates for the most important posts? These are questions which cannot

be adequately answered till the nature of the party machinery has been described. For the moment I must be content to suggest the following as provisional answers:—

The chief thing is the selection of candidates. This is done in party meetings called conventions. When a party has a policy, it is settled in a convention and declared in a document called a platform. When it has none, the platform is issued none the less. Party tactics in Congress are decided on by meetings of the party in each House of Congress called caucuses. Leaders have of course much to do with all three processes. But they often efface themselves out of respect to the sentiment of equality, and because power concealed excites less envy.

How do the parties affect social life? At present not very much, at least in the northern and middle States, because it is a comparatively slack time in politics. Your dining acquaintances, even your intimate friends, are not necessarily of the same way of voting as yourself, and though of course political views tend to become hereditary, there is nothing to surprise any one in finding sons belonging to different parties from their fathers. Social boycotting on political grounds, such as largely prevails in rural England, is unknown. In the South, where the recollections of the great struggle are kept alive by the presence of a negro voting power which has to be controlled, things are different: and they were different in the North till the passions of civil strife had abated.

So far, I have spoken of the parties only as national organizations, struggling for and acting on or through the Federal government. But it has already been observed (CHAPTER XLVI.) that they exist also as State and city organizations, contending for the places which States and cities have to give, seeking to control State legislatures and municipal councils. Every circumscription of State and local government, from the State of New York with its six millions of inhabitants down to the "city" that has just sprung up round a railway junction in the West, has a regular Republican party organization, confronted by a similar Democratic organization, each running its own ticket (*i.e.* list of candidates) at every election, for any office pertaining to its own circumscription, and each federated, so to speak, to the larger organizations above it, represented in

them and working for them in drilling and "energizing" the party within the area which is the sphere of its action.

What have the tenets of such national parties as the Republicans and Democrats to do with the politics of States and cities? Very little with those of States, because a matter for Federal legislation is seldom also a matter for State legislation. Still less with those of cities or counties. Cities and counties have not strictly speaking any political questions to deal with; their business is to pave and light, to keep the streets clean, maintain an efficient police and well-barred prisons, administer the poor law and charitable institutions with integrity, judgment, and economy. The laws regulating these matters have been already made by the State, and the city or county authority has nothing to do but administer them. Hence at city and county elections the main objects ought to be to choose honest and careful men of business. It need make no difference to the action of a mayor or school trustee in any concrete question whether he holds Democratic or Republican views.

However, the habit of party warfare has been so strong as to draw all elections into its vortex; nor would either party feel safe if it neglected the means of rallying and drilling its supporters, which State and local contests supply. There is this advantage in the system, that it stimulates the political interest of the people, which is kept alive by this perpetual agitation. But the multiplicity of contests has the effect of making politics too absorbing an occupation for the ordinary citizen who has his profession or business to attend to; while the result claimed by those who in England defend the practice of fighting municipal elections on party lines, viz. that good men are induced to stand for local office for the sake of their party, is the last result desired by the politicians, or expected by any one. It is this constant labour which the business of politics involves, this ramification of party into all the nooks and corners of local government, that has produced the class of professional politicians, of whom it is now time to speak.

CHAPTER LVII

THE POLITICIANS

INSTITUTIONS are said to form men, but it is no less true that men give to institutions their colour and tendency. It profits little to know the legal rules and methods and observances of government, unless one also knows something of the human beings who tend and direct this machinery, and who, by the spirit in which they work it, may render it the potent instrument of good or evil to the people. These men are the politicians.

What is one to include under this term? In England it usually denotes those who are actively occupied in administering or legislating, or discussing administration and legislation. That is to say, it includes ministers of the Crown, members of Parliament (though some in the House of Commons and the majority in the House of Lords care little about politics), a few leading journalists, and a small number of miscellaneous persons, writers, lecturers, organizers, agitators, who occupy themselves with trying to influence the public. Sometimes the term is given a wider sweep, being taken to include all who labour for their political party in the constituencies, as *e.g.* the chairmen and secretaries of local party associations, and the more active committee men of the same bodies.¹ The former, whom we may call the Inner Circle men, are professional politicians in this sense, and in this sense only, that politics is the main though seldom the sole business of their lives. But at present extremely few of them make anything by it in the way of money. A handful hope to get some post; a somewhat larger number conceive that a seat in Parliament may enable them to push their financial undertakings or

¹ In America (Canada as well as the United States) people do not say "politicians," but "the politicians," because the word indicates a class with certain defined characteristics.