

dates or delegates settled beforehand. And for the reasons already given, the more numerous the offices and the delegates, and the less interesting the duties they have to discharge, so much the more necessary is it to have such lists settled; and so much the more likely to be accepted by those present is the list proposed.

The reasons have already been stated which make the list of candidates put forth by a primary or by a nominating convention carry great weight with the voters. They are the chosen standard-bearers of the party. A European may remark that the citizens are not bound by the nomination; they may still vote for whom they will. If a bad candidate is nominated, he may be passed over. That is easy enough where, as in England, there are only one or two offices to be filled at an election, where these few offices are important enough to excite general interest, and where therefore the candidates are likely to be men of mark. But in America the offices are numerous, they are mostly unimportant, and the candidates are usually obscure. Accordingly guidance is welcome, and the party as a whole votes for the person who receives the party nomination from the organization authorized to express the party view. Hence the high importance attached to "getting the nomination"; hence the care bestowed on constructing the nominating machinery; hence the need for prearranging the lists of delegates to be submitted to the primary, and of candidates to come before the convention.

I have sought in these chapters firstly to state how the nominating machine is constituted, and what work it has to do, then to suggest some of the consequences which the quantity and nature of that work may be expected to entail. We may now go on to see how in practice the work turns out to be done.

CHAPTER LXII

HOW THE MACHINE WORKS

NOTHING seems fairer or more conformable to the genius of democratic institutions than the system I have described, whereby the choice of party candidates for office is vested in the mass of the party itself. A plan which selects the candidate likely to command the greatest support is calculated to prevent the dissension and consequent waste of strength which the appearance of rival candidates of the same party involves; while the popular character of that method excludes the dictation of a clique, and recognizes the sovereignty of the people. It is a method simple, uniform, and agreeable throughout to its leading principle.

To understand how it actually works one must distinguish between two kinds of constituencies or voting areas. One kind is to be found in the great cities — places whose population exceeds, speaking roughly, 100,000 souls, of which there are more than thirty in the Union. The other kind includes constituencies in small cities and rural districts. What I have to say will refer chiefly to the Northern States — *i.e.* the former Free States, because the phenomena of the Southern States are still exceptional, owing to the vast population of ignorant negroes, among whom the whites, or rather the better sort of whites, still stand as an aristocracy.

The tests by which one may try the results of the system of selecting candidates are two. Is the choice of candidates for office really free — *i.e.* does it represent the unbiassed wish and mind of the voters generally? Are the offices filled by men of probity and capacity sufficient for the duties?

In the country generally, *i.e.* in the rural districts and small cities, both these tests are tolerably well satisfied. It is true that many of the voters do not attend the primaries.

The selection of delegates and candidates is left to be made by that section of the population which chiefly interests itself in politics; and in this section local attorneys and office-seekers have much influence. The persons who seek the post of delegate, as well as those who seek office, are seldom the most energetic and intelligent citizens; but that is because such men have something better to do. An observer from Europe who looks to see men of rank and culture holding the same place in State and local government as they do in England, especially rural England, or in Italy, or even in parts of rural France and Switzerland, will be disappointed. But democracies must be democratic. Equality will have its perfect work; and you cannot expect citizens pervaded by its spirit to go cap in hand to their richer neighbours begging them to act as delegates, or city or county officials, or congressmen. This much may be said, that although there is in America no difference of rank in the European sense, superior wealth or intelligence does not prejudice a man's candidature, and in most places improves its chance. If such men are not commonly chosen it is for the same reason which makes them comparatively scarce among the town-councillors of English municipalities.

In these primaries and conventions the business is always prearranged — that is to say, the local party committee come prepared with their list of delegates or candidates. This list is usually, but not invariably, accepted: or if serious opposition appears, alterations may be made to disarm it, and preserve the unity of the party. The delegates and candidates chosen are generally the members of the local committee, their friends or creatures. Except in very small places, they are rarely the best men. But neither are they the worst. In moderately-sized communities men's characters are known and the presence of a bad man in office brings on his fellow-citizens evils which they are not too numerous to feel individually. Hence tolerable nominations are made, the general sentiment of the locality is not outraged; and although the nominating machinery is worked rather in the name of the people than by the people, the people are willing to have it so, knowing that they can interfere if necessary to prevent serious harm.

In large cities the results are different because the circumstances are different. We find there, besides the conditions

previously enumerated, viz. numerous offices, frequent elections, universal suffrage, an absence of stimulating issues, three others of great moment —

A vast population of ignorant immigrants.

The leading men all intensely occupied with business.

Communities so large that people know little of one another, and that the interest of each individual in good government is comparatively small.

Any one can see how these conditions affect the problem. The immigrants vote, that is, they obtain votes after three or four years' residence at most (often less), but they are not fit for the suffrage.¹ They know nothing of the institutions of the country, of its statesmen, of its political issues. Neither from Central Europe nor from Ireland do they bring much knowledge of the methods of free government, and from Ireland they bring a suspicion of all government. Incompetent to give an intelligent vote, but soon finding that their vote has a value, they fall into the hands of the party organizations, whose officers enrol them in their lists, and undertake to fetch them to the polls. I was taken to watch the process of citizen-making in New York. Drove of squalid men, who looked as if they had just emerged from an emigrant ship, and had perhaps done so only a few weeks before, for the law prescribing a certain term of residence is frequently violated, were brought up to a magistrate by the ward agent of the party which had captured them, declared their allegiance to the United States, and were forthwith placed on the roll.² Such a sacrifice of common sense to abstract principles has seldom been made by any country. Nobody pretends that such persons are fit for civic duty, or will be dangerous if kept for a time in pupilage, but neither party will incur the odium of pro-

¹ Federal law prescribes a residence of five years as the prerequisite for naturalization, but the laws of not a few Western States enable a vote to be acquired in a shorter term by one who is not a United States citizen. See Chapter XXVIII. *ante*. And in some States, persons who have not completed their five years are often fraudulently naturalized.

² It is even alleged that many of the immigrants (especially Italians) brought over to be employed on railroad making and other similar works come under what are virtually contracts to cast their votes in a particular way, and do so cast them, possibly returning to Europe after some months or years, richer by the payment they have received for their votes as well as for their labour.

posing to exclude them. The real reason for admitting them, besides democratic theory, was that the party which ruled New York expected to gain their votes.¹ It is an afterthought to argue that they will sooner become good citizens by being immediately made full citizens. A stranger must not presume to say that the Americans have been imprudent, but he may doubt whether the possible ultimate gain compensates the direct and unquestionable mischief.

In these great transatlantic cities, population is far less settled and permanent than in the cities of Europe. In New York, Brooklyn, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, a very small part of the inhabitants are natives of the city, or have resided in it for twenty years. Hence they know but little of one another, or even of those who would in Europe be called the leading men. There are scarcely any old families, families associated with the city,² whose name recommends one of their scions to the confidence of his fellow-citizens. There are few persons who have had any chance of becoming generally known, except through their wealth; and the wealthy have neither time nor taste for political work. Political work is a bigger and heavier affair than in small communities: hence ordinary citizens cannot attend to it in addition to their regular business. Moreover, the population is so large that an individual citizen feels himself a drop in the ocean. His power of affecting public affairs by his own intervention seems insignificant. His pecuniary loss through over-taxation, or jobbery, or malversation, is trivial in comparison with the trouble of trying to prevent such evils.

As party machinery is in great cities most easily perverted, so the temptation to pervert it is there strongest, because the prizes are great. The offices are well paid, the patronage is large, the opportunities for jobs, commissions on contracts, pickings, and even stealings, are enormous. Hence it is well worth the while of unscrupulous men to gain control of the machinery by which these prizes may be won.³

¹ At one time a speedy admission to citizenship was adopted as an inducement to immigrants; but this motive has ceased to have force in most States.

² In New York and Boston a few such families still exist, but their members do not often enter "politics."

³ Although what is here stated is generally true of Machines in large cities, there may be, even in such cities, districts inhabited by well-to-do people, in

Such men, the professional politicians of the great cities, have two objects in view. One is to seize the local city and county offices. A great city of course controls the county in which it is situate. The other is so to command the local party vote as to make good terms with the party managers of the State, and get from them a share in State offices, together with such legislation as is desired from the State legislature, and similarly to make good terms with the Federal party managers, thus securing a share in Federal offices, and the means of influencing legislation in Congress. How do the city professionals move towards these objects?

There are two stages in an election campaign. The first is to nominate the candidates you desire: the second to carry them at the polls. The first of these is often the more important, because in many cities the party majority inclines so decidedly one way or the other (*e.g.* New York City is steadily Democratic, Philadelphia Republican), that nomination is in the case of the dominant party equivalent to election. Now to nominate your candidates you must, above all things, secure the primaries. They require and deserve unsparing exertion, for everything turns upon them.

The first thing is to have the kind of primary you want. Now the composition of a primary is determined by the roll or "check list," as it is called, of ward voters entitled to appear in it. This is prepared by the managing committee of the ward, who are naturally desirous to have on it only such men as they can trust or control. They are aided in securing this by the rules requiring members to be admitted by the votes of those already on the list, and exacting from persons admitted a pledge to obey the committee, and abide by the party nominations.¹ Men of independent temper often refuse this pledge,

which the political organizations, being composed of men of good character and standing, are honestly worked. The so-called "brown-stone districts" in New York City have, I believe, good Machines.

¹ The rules of the Tammany Hall (Democratic) organization in New York City have, for many years past, made the consent of a majority of the members of each primary necessary to the admission of a new member. A similar system seems to have been adopted by the Republican party in that city. "The organization of the twenty-four Republican primaries (one for each Assembly district) is as complicated, and the access to membership as difficult, as that of any private club. The name of the applicant must be quoted on a bulletin, and there stand until the next monthly meeting before it can even go to

and are excluded. Many of the ward voters do not apply for admission. Of those who do apply and take the pledge, some can be plausibly rejected by the primary on the ground that they have on some recent occasion failed to vote the party ticket. Thus it is easy for an active committee to obtain a subservient primary, composed of persons in sympathy with it or obedient to it. In point of fact the rolls of membership of many primaries are largely bogus rolls. Names of former members are kept on when these men have left the district or died: names are put on of men who do not belong to the district at all, and both sets of names are so much "voting stock," applicable at the will and needs of the local party managers, who can admit the latter to vote, and "recognize men" personating the former. In fact, their control of the lists enables them to have practically whatever primary they desire.¹

the committee on admissions. If favourably reported, it must yet gain a majority of those present at a monthly meeting of the primary; a result quite problematical, if the pliant obedience of the candidate is not made clear, or if he is not a member of the faction, or the follower of the boss dominant in his primary; and his application must be to the primary of his district. If he secures a majority he must yet not only take in substance the old Tammany pledge, 'to obey all orders of the general committee' (whose action is secret), and 'to support all nominations approved by that committee,' but he must also bind himself not to join any organization which does not recognize the authority of the primary association he seeks to join! This is of course intended to prevent all movements for reform. If elected, he may at any time be expelled by a majority of the members at any meeting of the association, if he is held to have violated any of those pledges. After an expulsion he can get back only by a vote of the primary." Mr. D. B. Eaton, in *Amer. Cyclop. of Polit. Science*, art. "Primary Elections." The Republicans have, however, within the last eight years reformed their system.

¹ In 1880 it was computed that out of 58,000 Republican voters in New York City not more than 6000, or 8000 at the most, were members of the Republican organization, and entitled to vote in a primary.

The numbers present in a primary are sometimes very small. "At the last Republican primaries in New York City only 8 per cent of the Republican electors took part. In only eight out of twenty-four districts did the percentage exceed 10, in some it was as low as 2 per cent. In the Twenty-first Assembly District Tammany Primary, 116 delegates, to choose an Assembly candidate, were elected by less than fifty voters. In the Sixth Assembly District County Democracy Primary, less than 7 per cent of the Democratic voters took part, and of those who did, sixty-nine in number, nearly one-fourth were election officers. The primary was held in a careless way in a saloon while card-playing was going on."—Mr. A. C. Bernheim, in *Pol. Science Quarterly* for March 1888.

A trustworthy correspondent writes to me from Philadelphia (1894), "There is probably an average of 150 Republican voters to an election district. The

The next thing is to get the delegates chosen whom you wish for. The committee when it summons the primary settles in secret conclave the names of the delegates to be proposed, of course selecting men it can trust, particularly office-holders bound to the party which has put them in, and "workers" whom the prospect of office will keep faithful. When the meeting assembles a chairman is suggested by the committee and usually accepted. Then the list of delegates, which the committee has brought down cut and dry, is put forward. If the meeting is entirely composed of professionals, office-holders, and their friends, it is accepted without debate. If opponents are present, they may propose other names, but the official majority is almost always sufficient to carry the official list, and the chairman is prepared to exert, in favour of his friends, his power of ruling points of order. In extreme cases a disturbance will be got up, in the midst of which the chairman may plausibly declare the official list carried, or the meeting is adjourned in the hope that the opposition will not be at the trouble of coming next time, a hope likely to be realized, if the opposition consists of respectable citizens who dislike spending an evening in such company. Sometimes the professionals will bring in roughs from other districts to shout down such opponents, and if necessary threaten them. One way or another the "regular" list of delegates is almost invariably carried against the "good citizens." When however there are two hostile factions of professionals, each anxious to secure nominations for its friends, the struggle is sharper and its issue more doubtful. Fraud is likely to be used on both sides; and fraud often provokes violence.¹ It is a significant illustration of the difference between the party average attendance at primaries is said to be about 12, which is approximately the number of party servants necessary to manage the meeting under party rules."

¹ For a remarkable recent instance in Baltimore see the report of United States Civil Service Commissioner Roosevelt to the President, May 1, 1891. "Padding ballots" (composed of six or seven ballots folded together as if one) were profusely used at these primary elections in the various wards of Baltimore. One of the witnesses examined, an employé of the Custom House, testified as follows: "Each side cheats as much as it can in the primaries. Whoever gets two judges wins. I do just the same as they do. They had two judges." . . . Q. "How do you do your cheating?" A. "Well, we do our cheating honourably. If they catch us at it, it's all right: it's fair. I even carried the box home with me on one occasion . . . I have broken up more than one election."

system in America and Europe that in the former foul play is quite as likely, and violence more likely, to occur at party nominating meetings than in the actual elections where two opposing parties are confronted.

The scene now shifts to the Nominating Convention, which is also summoned by the appropriate committee. When it is "called to order" a temporary chairman is installed, the importance of whose position consists in his having (usually) the naming of a committee on credentials, or contested seats, which examines the titles of the delegates from the various primaries to vote in the convention. Being himself in the interest of the professionals, he names a committee in their interest, and this committee does what it can to exclude delegates who are suspected of an intention to oppose the candidates whom the professionals have prearranged. The primaries have almost always been so carefully packed, and so skilfully "run," that a majority of trusty delegates has been secured; but some times a few primaries have sent delegates belonging to another faction of the party, or to some independent section of the party, and then there may be trouble. Occasionally two sets of delegates appear, each claiming to represent their primary. The dispute generally ends by the exclusion of the Independents or of the hostile faction, the committee discovering a flaw in their credentials, but sometimes, though rarely, the case is so clear that they must be admitted. In doubtful cases a partisan chairman is valuable, for, as it is expressed, "he is a solid 8 to 7 man all the time." When the credentials have been examined the convention is deemed to be duly organized, a permanent chairman is appointed, and the business of nominating candidates proceeds. A spokesman of the professionals proposes A. B. in a speech, dwelling on his services to the party. If the convention has been properly packed, he is nominated by acclamation. If there be a rival faction represented, or if independent citizens who dislike him have been sent up by some primary which the professionals have failed to secure, another candidate is proposed and a vote taken. Here also there is often room for a partial chairman to influence the result; here, as in the primary, a tumult or a hocus pocus may in extreme cases be got up to enable the chairman to decide in favour of his allies.

Americans are, however, so well versed in the rules which govern public meetings, and so prepared to encounter all sorts of tricks, that the managers do not consider success certain unless they have a majority behind them. This they almost certainly have; at least it reflects discredit on their handling of the primaries if they have not. The chief hope of an opposition therefore is not to carry its own candidate but so to frighten the professionals as to make them abandon theirs, and substitute some less objectionable name. The candidate chosen, who, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, is the person predetermined by the managers, becomes the party nominee, entitled to the support of the whole party. He has received "the regular nomination." If there are other offices whereto nominations have to be made, the convention goes on to these, which being despatched, it adjourns and disappears for ever.

I once witnessed such a convention, a State convention, held at Rochester, N.Y., by the Democrats of New York State, at that time under the control of the Tammany Ring of New York City. The most prominent figure was the famous Mr. William M. Tweed, then in the zenith of his power. There was, however, little or nothing in the public proceedings from which an observer could learn anything of the subterranean forces at work. During the morning, a tremendous coming and going and chattering and clattering of crowds of men who looked at once sordid and flashy, faces shrewd but mean and sometimes brutal, vulgar figures in good coats forming into small groups and talking eagerly, and then dissolving to form fresh groups, a universal *camaraderie*, with no touch of friendship about it; something between a betting-ring and the flags outside the Liverpool Exchange. It reminded one of the swarming of bees in tree boughs, a ceaseless humming and buzzing which betokens immense excitement over proceedings which the bystander does not comprehend. After some hours all this settled down; the meeting was duly organized; speeches were made, all dull and thinly declamatory, except one by an eloquent Irishman; the candidates for State offices were proposed and carried by acclamation; and the business ended. Everything had evidently been prearranged; and the discontented, if any there were, had been talked over during the swarming hours.

After each of the greater conventions it is usual to hold one or more public gatherings, at which the candidates chosen are solemnly adopted by the crowd present, and rousing speeches are delivered. Such a gathering, called a "ratification" meeting, has no practical importance, being attended only by those prepared to support the nominations made. The candidate is now launched, and what remains is to win the election.

The above may be thought, as it is thought by many Americans, a travesty of popular choice. Observing the form of consulting the voters, it substantially ignores them, and forces on them persons whom they do not know, and would dislike if they knew them. It substitutes for the party voters generally a small number of professionals and their creatures, extracts prearranged nominations from packed meetings, and calls this consulting the pleasure of the sovereign people.

Yet every feature of the Machine is the result of patent causes. The elective offices are so numerous that ordinary citizens cannot watch them, and cease to care who gets them. The conventions come so often that busy men cannot serve in them. The minor offices are so unattractive that able men do not stand for them. The primary lists are so contrived that only a fraction of the party get on them; and of this fraction many are too lazy or too busy or too careless to attend. The mass of the voters are ignorant; knowing nothing about the personal merits of the candidates, they are ready to follow their leaders like sheep. Even the better class, however they may grumble, are swayed by the inveterate habit of party loyalty, and prefer a bad candidate of their own party to a (probably no better) candidate of the other party. It is less trouble to put up with impure officials, costly city government, a jobbing State legislature, an inferior sort of congressman, than to sacrifice one's own business in the effort to set things right. Thus the Machine works on, and grinds out places, power, and opportunities for illicit gain to those who manage it.

CHAPTER LXIII

RINGS AND BOSSES

THIS is the external aspect of the Machine; these the phenomena which a visitor taken round to see a number of Primaries and Nominating Conventions would record. But the reader will ask, How is the Machine run? What are the inner springs that move it? What is the source of the power the committees wield? What force of cohesion keeps leaders and followers together? What kind of government prevails among this army of professional politicians?

The source of power and the cohesive force is the desire for office, and for office as a means of gain. This one cause is sufficient to account for everything, when it acts, as it does in these cities, under the condition of the suffrage of a host of ignorant and pliable voters.

Those who in great cities form the committees and work the Machine are persons whose chief aim in life is to make their living by office. Such a man generally begins by acquiring influence among a knot of voters who live in his neighbourhood, or work under the same employer, or frequent the same grog-shop or beer saloon, which perhaps he keeps himself. He becomes a member of his primary, attends regularly, attaches himself to some leader in that body, and is forward to render service by voting as his leader wishes, and by doing duty at elections. He has entered the large and active class called, technically, "workers," or more affectionately, "the Boys." Soon he becomes conspicuous in the primary, being recognized as controlling the votes of others—"owning them" is the technical term—and is chosen delegate to a convention. Loyalty to the party there and continued service at elections mark him out for further promotion. He is appointed to some