

when the news was brought. Defeated aspirants telegraph to their luckier rival their congratulations on his success, promising him support in the campaign. Interviewers fly to prominent politicians, and cross-examine them as to what they think of the nomination. But in two days all is still again, and a lull of exhaustion follows till the real business of the contest begins some while later with the issue of the letter of acceptance, in which the candidate declares his views and outlines his policy.

## CHAPTER LXXI

### THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

A PRESIDENTIAL election in America is something to which Europe can show nothing similar. Though the issues which fall to be decided by the election of a Chamber in France or Italy, or of a House of Commons in England, are often far graver than those involved in the choice of A or B to be executive chief magistrate for four years, the commotion and excitement, the amount of "organization," of speaking, writing, telegraphing, and shouting, is incomparably greater in the United States. It is only the salient features of these contests that I shall attempt to sketch, for the detail is infinite.

The canvass usually lasts about four months. It begins soon after both of the great parties have chosen their candidate, *i.e.* before the middle of July; and it ends early in November, on the day when the presidential electors are chosen simultaneously in and by all the States. The summer heats and the absence of the richer sort of people at the seaside or mountain resorts keep down the excitement during July and August; it rises in September, and boils furiously through October.

The first step is for each nominated candidate to accept his nomination in a letter, sometimes as long as a pamphlet, setting forth his views of the condition of the nation and the policy which the times require. Such a letter is meant to strike the keynote for the whole orchestra of orators. It is, of course, published everywhere, extolled by friendly and dissected by hostile journals. Together with the "platform" adopted at the national party convention, it is the official declaration of party principles, to be referred to as putting the party case, no less than the candidate himself, before the nation.

While the candidate is composing his address, the work of organization goes briskly forward, for in American elections

everything is held to depend on organization. A central or national party committee nominated by the national convention, and consisting of one member from each State, gets its members together and forms a plan for the conduct of the canvass. It raises money by appealing to the wealthy and zealous men of the party for subscriptions, and, of course, presses those above all who have received something in the way of an office or other gratification from the party.<sup>1</sup> It communicates with the leading statesmen and orators of the party, and arranges in what district of the country each shall take the stump. It issues shoals of pamphlets, and forms relations with party newspapers. It allots grants from the "campaign fund" to particular persons and State committees, to be spent by them for "campaign purposes," an elastic term which covers a good deal of illicit expenditure. Enormous sums are gathered and disbursed by this committee, and the accounts submitted do not, as may be supposed, answer all the questions they suggest. The committee directs its speakers and its funds chiefly to the doubtful States, those in which eloquence or expenditure may turn the balance either way. There are seldom more than six or seven such States at any one election, possibly fewer.

The efforts of the national committee are seconded not only by State committees, but by an infinite number of minor organizations over the country, in the rural districts no less than in the cities. Some of these are permanent. Others are created for the election alone; and as they contemplate a short life, they make it a merry one. These "campaign clubs," which usually bear the candidates' names, are formed on every imaginable basis, that of locality, of race, of trade or profession, of university affiliation. There are Irish clubs, Italian clubs, German clubs, Scandinavian clubs, Polish clubs, coloured (*i.e.* negro) clubs, Orange clubs. There are young men's clubs, lawyers' clubs, dry-goods clubs, insurance men's clubs, shoe and leather clubs. There are clubs of the graduates of various colleges. Their work consists in canvassing the voters, making up lists of friends, opponents, and doubtfuls, getting up pro-

<sup>1</sup> As a recent statute forbids the levying of assessments for party purposes on members of the Federal civil service, it is deemed prudent to have no Federal official on the committee, lest in demanding subscriptions from his subordinates he should transgress the law.

cessions and parades, holding meetings, and generally "booming all the time."

This is mostly unpaid labour. But there are also thousands of paid agents at work, canvassing, distributing pamphlets or leaflets, lecturing on behalf of the candidate. It is in America no reproach to a political speaker that he receives a fee or a salary. Even men of eminence are permitted to receive not only their travelling expenses, but a round sum. Whether the candidate himself takes the field depends on his popular gifts. If he is a brilliant speaker, his services are too valuable to be lost; and he is sent on a tour through the doubtful States, where he speaks for weeks together twice or thrice on most days, filling up the intervals with "receptions" at which he has to shake hands with hundreds of male callers, and be presented to ladies scarcely less numerous.<sup>1</sup> The leading men of the party are, of course, pressed into the service. Even if they dislike and have opposed the nomination of the particular candidate, party loyalty and a lively sense of favours to come force them to work for the person whom the party has chosen. An eminent Irishman or an eminent German is especially valuable for a stumping tour, because he influences the vote of his countrymen. Similarly each senator is expected to labour assiduously at his own State, where presumably his influence is greatest, and any refusal to do so is deemed a pointed disapproval of the candidate.

The committees print and distribute great quantities of campaign literature, pamphlets, speeches, letters, leaflets, and one can believe that this printed matter is more serviceable than it would be in England, because a larger part of the voters live in quiet country places, and like something to read in the evening. Even novelettes are composed in the interests of a candidate, wherein lovers talk about tariffs under the moon. Sometimes a less ingenuous use is made of the press. On the very eve of election of 1880, too late for a contradiction to obtain equal publicity, a forged letter, purporting to come from Mr. Garfield, and expressing views on Chinese immigration and labour, distasteful to the Pacific States, was lithographed and scattered broadcast over California, where it told heavily against him.

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes he stumps along a line of railroad, making ten-minute speeches from the end platform of the last car.

Most constant and effective of all is the action of the newspapers. The chief journals have for two or three months a daily leading article recommending their own and assailing the hostile candidate, with a swarm of minor editorial paragraphs bearing on the election. Besides these there are reports of speeches delivered, letters to the editor with the editor's comments at the end, stories about the candidates, statements as to the strength of each party in particular States, counties, and cities. An examination of a few of the chief newspapers during the months of September and October, 1884, showed that their "campaign matter" of all kinds formed between one-half and one-third of the total letterpress of the paper (excluding advertisements), and this, be it remembered, every day during those two months. The most readable part of this matter consists in the reports of the opinion of individual persons, more or less prominent, on the candidate. You find, for instance, a paragraph stating that the Rev. Dr. A., president of such and such a college, or Mr. B., the philanthropist who is head of the Y Z Bank, or ex-Governor C., or Judge D., has said he thinks the candidate a model of chivalric virtue, or fit only for a felon's cell, as the case may be, and that he will vote for or against him accordingly.<sup>1</sup> Occasionally the prominent man is called on by an interviewer and gives a full statement of his views, or he writes to a young friend who has asked his advice in a private letter, which is immediately published. The abundance of these expressions or citations of the opinions of private citizens supplies a curious evidence of the disposition of some sections in a democracy to look up to its intellectual and moral leaders. For the men thus appealed to are nearly all persons eminent by their character, ability, learning, or success in business; the merely rich man is cited but rarely, and as if his opinion did not matter, though of course his subscription may. Judges and lawyers, university

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes a sort of amateur census is taken of the persons occupied in one place in some particular employment, as, for instance, of the professors in a particular college, or even of the clerks in a particular store, these being taken as samples of store-clerks or professors generally; and the party organ triumphantly claims that three-fourths of their votes will be cast for its candidate. Among the "throbs of Connecticut's pulse," I recollect an estimate of the "proclivities" of the workmen in the Willimantic mills in that State.

dignitaries and literary men, are, next to the clergy,<sup>1</sup> the persons most often quoted.

The function of the clergy in elections is very characteristic of the country and the occasion. They used during the period from 1820 to 1856 to give politics a wide berth, for not only would their advocacy of any particular cause have offended a section among their flocks, but the general sentiment condemned the immixture in politics of a clerical element. The struggle against slavery, being a moral issue, brought them into more frequent public activity. Since the close of that struggle they have again tended to retire. However, the excitement of a presidential election suspends all rules; and when questions affecting the moral character of the candidates are involved, clerical intervention is deemed natural. Thus in the contest of 1884, the newspapers were full of the opinions of clergymen. Sermons were reported if they seemed to bear upon the issue. Paragraphs appeared saying that such and such a pastor would carry three-fourths of his congregation with him, whereas the conduct of another in appearing at a meeting on behalf of the opposing candidate was much blamed by his flock. Not many ministers actually took the platform, though there was a general wish to have them as chairmen. But one, the late Mr. Henry Ward Beecher, did great execution by his powerful oratory, artillery all the more formidable because it was turned against the candidate of the party to which he had through his long life belonged. Nor was there any feature in the canvass of that same candidate more remarkable than the assembly of 1018 clergymen of all denominations (including a Jewish rabbi), which gathered at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York, to meet him and assure him of their support on moral grounds immediately before the election day.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An eminent Unitarian clergyman having written a letter condemning a candidate, the leading organ of that candidate in sneering at it, remarked that after all, Dr. Clarke's coachman's vote was as good as Dr. Clarke's; to which it was rejoined that hundreds of voters would follow Dr. Clarke, and hundreds more be offended at this disrespectful reference to him.

<sup>2</sup> One of the clerical speakers spoke of the opposite candidate as receiving the support of "rum, Romanism, and rebellion." This phrase, eagerly caught up, and repeated by hostile newspapers, incensed the Roman Catholics of New York, and was even believed to have turned the election against the candidate in whose interest the alliteration was invented. Nothing so dangerous as a friend.

From a class usually excluded from politics by custom to a class excluded by law, the transition is easy. Women as a rule (setting aside the two woman suffrage Western States) keep as much aloof from electoral contests in America as in continental Europe, and certainly more than in England, for I have never heard of their forming an organization to canvass the voters of a district in America, as the (Conservative) Primrose League and the Women's Liberal Associations do in England. Nor are women appointed delegates from any ward primary,<sup>1</sup> as they have lately been in several places in England. However, the excitement of a close struggle sometimes draws even women into the vortex. Receptions are tendered by the ladies of each party to the candidate, and are reported in the public press as politically significant, while among the letters which appear in the newspapers not a few bear female signatures.

Speaking and writing and canvassing are common to elections all over the world. What is peculiar to America is the amazing development of the "demonstration" as a means for raising enthusiasm. For three months, processions, usually with brass bands, flags, badges, crowds of cheering spectators, are the order of the day and night from end to end of the country. The Young Men's Pioneer Club of a village in the woods of Michigan turns out in the summer evening; the Democrats or Republicans of Chicago or Philadelphia leave their business to march through the streets of these great cities many thousand strong.

When a procession is exceptionally large, it is called a Parade. In New York City, on the 29th of October, 1884, the business men who supported Mr. James Gillespie Blaine held such a demonstration. They were organized by profession or occupation: the lawyers, eight hundred strong, forming one battalion, the dry-goods men another, the Produce Exchange a third, the bankers a fourth, the brokers a fifth, the jewellers a sixth, the Petroleum Exchange a seventh, and so on *ad infinitum*. They started from the Bowling-green near the south end of Manhattan Island, and marched right up the city

<sup>1</sup> Women, however, appear as delegates at the conventions of the Prohibition party; and there have been instances in which they have been admitted as delegates to a Republican State convention in Massachusetts.

along Broadway to Madison Square, where Mr. Blaine reviewed and addressed them. Rain fell incessantly, and the streets were deep with mud, but neither rain above nor mud below dampened the spirits of this great army, which tramped steadily along, chanting various "campaign refrains," such as

"Five, Five, Five Cent Fare;"<sup>1</sup>

but most frequently

"Blaine, Blaine, James G. Blaine,  
We don't care a bit for the rain,  
O—O—O—O—HI—O,"<sup>2</sup>

There were said to have been 25,000 business men in this parade, which was followed soon after by another more miscellaneous Blaine parade of 60,000 Republicans, as well as (of course) by counter parades of Democrats. A European, who stands amazed at the magnitude of these demonstrations, is apt to ask whether the result attained is commensurate with the money, time, and effort given to them. His American friends answer that, as with advertising, it is not to be supposed that shrewd and experienced men would thus spend their money unless convinced that the expenditure was reproductive. The parade and procession business, the crowds, the torches, the badges, the flags, the shouting, all this pleases the participants by making them believe they are effecting something; it impresses the spectators by showing them that other people are in earnest, it strikes the imagination of those who in country hamlets read of the doings in the great city. In short, it keeps up the "boom," and an American election is held to be, truly or falsely, largely a matter of booming.

If the cynical visitor smiles at these displays, he is constrained to admire the good-humour and good order which prevail. Neither party in the Northern, Middle, and Western States dreams of disturbing the parades or meetings of the other. You might believe, from the acclamations which accom-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cleveland had, as Governor of New York State, vetoed as unconstitutional a bill establishing a uniform fare of 5 cents on the New York City elevated railroads. This act was supposed to have alienated the working men and ruined his presidential prospects.

<sup>2</sup> In the State elections held in Ohio shortly beforehand, the Republicans had been victorious, and the omen was gladly caught up.

pany a procession, that the whole population was with it, for if opponents are present, they do not hoot or hiss, and there are always enough sympathizers to cheer. During the hotly contested elections of 1880, 1884, 1888, and 1892, hardly any collisions or disturbances were reported from California to Maine. Even in Virginia, Maryland, Missouri, where the old Southern party is apt to let its angry passions rise against the negroes and their white Republican allies, the breaches of order were neither numerous nor serious. Over four-fifths of the Southern States perfect quiet prevailed. It is true that one party could there count on an overwhelming majority, so that there was no excuse for the one to bully nor any inducement for the other to show fight.

The maxim that nothing succeeds like success is nowhere so cordially and consistently accepted as in America. It is the corner-stone of all election work. The main effort of a candidate's orators and newspapers is to convince the people that their side is the winning one, for there are sure to be plenty of voters anxious to be on that side, not so much from any advantage to be gained for themselves as because reverence for "the People" makes them believe that the majority are right. Hence the exertions to prove that the Germans, or the Irish, or the working men are going for candidate X or candidate Y. Hence the reports of specimen canvasses showing that 70 per cent of the clerks in a particular bank or 80 per cent of the professors in a particular theological college have declared themselves for X. Hence the announcements of the betting odds for a particular candidate, and the assertion that the supporters of the other man who had put large sums on him are now beginning to hedge.<sup>1</sup> But the best evidence to which a party can appeal is its winning minor elections which come off shortly before the great presidential one. In two States the choice of a governor and other State officers took place, till lately, within the month prior to the 8th of November, in two or three it still takes place in September. If the State is a safe one for the Republicans or the Democrats (as the case may be), the votes

<sup>1</sup> There is a great deal of betting on elections, so much that bribery is often alleged to be practised by those who are heavily involved. The constitutions or statutes of some States make it an offence to give or take a bet on an election.

cast are compared with those cast at the last preceding similar election, and the inference drawn that one or other party is gaining. If it is a doubtful State, the interest is still more keen, and every nerve is strained to carry an election whose issue will presage, and by presaging contribute to, success in the presidential struggle. Possibly the candidate or some of his ablest speakers stump this State; probably also it is drenched with money. The inferences from such a contest may be thought uncertain, because State elections are always complicated with local questions, and with the character of the particular candidates for State offices. But it is a maxim among politicians that in a presidential year local issues vanish, the voters being so warmed with party spirit that they go solid for their party in spite of all local or personal obstacles. The truth of this view was illustrated by the fact that Ohio often returns a majority of Democrats to Congress and has a Democratic majority in her own legislature, but has for several elections given a majority for the presidential candidate of the Republican party. The eagerness shown to carry the October elections in this great and often doubtful State used to be scarcely second to that displayed in the presidential contest. She has now (and Indiana likewise) put her fall elections later, and makes them coincide (every second term) with the presidential election, in order to avoid the tremendous strain which they had been forced to bear. Before this change it was often made an argument why the party should select its candidate from Ohio, that this would give a better chance of winning the preliminary canter, and thereby securing the advantage of a presageful victory.<sup>1</sup>

So far I have described the contest as one between two parties and two candidates only. But it is usually complicated by the appearance of other minor parties and minor candidates who, although they have no chance of success, affect the main struggle by drawing off strength from one side or the other.

<sup>1</sup> There is a touch of superstition in the value set in America upon the first indications of the popular sentiment, like that which made the Romans attach such weight to the vote of the century first called up to vote in the *comitia centuriata*. It was selected by lot, perhaps not merely because the advantage of calling first a century which he might know to be favourable to his own view or candidate was too great a one to be left to the presiding magistrate, but also because its declaration was thus deemed to be an indication of the will of the gods who governed the lot.

In the last four elections the Prohibitionist party and the Greenback (now the Labour) party each held a national convention, nominated candidates for presidency and vice-presidency, and obtained at the polls a number of votes far too small to carry any single State, and therefore, of course, too small to choose any presidential electors, but sufficient to affect, perhaps to turn, the balance of strength between Republicans and Democrats in two or three of the doubtful States. The Prohibitionist candidate has drawn most of his votes from the Republican side; the Greenbacker or Labour man from the Democratic: hence there is apt to be a sort of tacit alliance during the campaign between the Republican organs and the Labour party, between the Democratic organs and the Prohibitionist; and conversely much ill blood between Republicans and Prohibitionists, between Democrats and Labour men. Any one can see what an opening for intrigue is given by these complications, recently increased by the appearance on the scene of the "People's Party," and how much they add to the difficulty of predicting the result of the contest. The area of that contest is a continent, and in the various regions of the continent forces different in nature and varying in strength are at work.

## CHAPTER LXXII

## THE ISSUES IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

UPON what does a presidential election turn? The presidential candidate has a double character. He is put forward as being individually qualified for the great place of executive head of the nation, because he is a man of integrity, energy, firmness, intellectual power, experience in affairs. He is also recommended as a prominent member of a great national party, inspired by its traditions, devoted to its principles, and prepared to carry them out not only in his properly executive capacity, but, what is more important, as virtually a third branch of the legislature, armed with a veto on bills passed by Congress. His election may therefore be advocated or opposed either on the ground of his personal qualities or of his political professions and party affiliations. Here we have a marked difference between the American and European systems, because in England, France, Germany, and Italy, elections turn chiefly on the views of the parties, secondarily on the character of individual leaders, seeing that the leaders are not chosen directly by the people, but are persons who have come to the top in the legislatures of those countries, or have been (in Germany) raised to office by the Crown. In America, therefore, we have a source of possible confusion between issues of two wholly distinct kinds — those which affect the personal qualifications of the candidate, and those which regard the programme of his party.

Whether, in any given presidential election, the former or the latter class of issues are the more conspicuous and decisive, depends partly on the political questions which happen to be then before the people, partly on the more or less marked individuality of the rival candidates. From about 1850 down to 1876, questions, first of the extension of slavery, then of its extinction, then of the reconstruction of the Union, had divided