

tices also, and is responsible for their quality. When the act under which the present justices act was under consideration in the legislature, the proviso that all appointees should be lawyers of a certain standing at the bar was stricken out, so that the mayor has a completely free hand in selection, and the result is that most of those appointed recently under the Tammany régime are old 'toughs,' liquor-dealers, gamblers, or simple adventurers, who have lived from the age of twenty by holding small offices, such as doorkeepers or clerks of the minor city courts.

"Now there is in the moral sphere of city government nothing so important as what I may call the administration of petty justice, that is, justice among the poor, ignorant, and friendless, the class who cannot pay lawyers or find bail, and especially that very large class in the cities on our eastern coast, of poor foreigners who know nothing of our laws and constitutions, and to whom the police magistrate or the police captain represent the whole government of the country, Federal, State, and municipal, who accept without a murmur any sentence which may be pronounced on them, or any denial of justice which may overtake them. They get all their notions of the national morality, and really their earliest political training, from their contact with these officers and with the district "leader." Upon their experience with these people it depends very much what kind of citizens they will become, they and their children after them. Well, one of the very first lessons they learn is that they can have no standing in court unless they are members of the Tammany Society, or as simple voters, they have a 'pull,' that is, some sort of occult influence with the magistrate. In default of this their complaints are dismissed, and they are found guilty and sent up to 'the Island,' or held in bail which they cannot procure, or in some manner worsted."¹

With such sources of power it is not surprising that Tammany Hall commands the majority of the lower and the foreign masses of New York, though it has never been shown to hold an absolute majority of all the voters of the city. Its local strength is exactly proportioned to the character of the local population; and though there are plenty of native Americans among the rank and file as well as among the leaders, still it is from the poorer districts, inhabited by Jews, Irish, Germans, Italians, Bohemians, that its heaviest vote comes.² These poor people do not support it because it is vicious. They like it and think it a good thing; it satisfies their instincts of combination and good fellowship; it is often all the government they know. Mr. Merwin puts the attitude of the better sort of

¹ Mr. E. L. Godkin in *Annals of the Amer. Acad. of Polit. Science* for May, 1894, p. 17.

² An instructive examination of the vote by districts which brings this result clearly out is given by Mr. Thompson, pp. 79-91.

Tammany adherents, and particularly of the native Americans, when he writes, —

"The Tammany man dislikes and despises the Anglomania of what is called 'society' in New York; he distrusts the people who compose 'society' and believes them at heart out of sympathy with American principles, whereas Tammany in his view is a concrete protest against monarchy and monarchical arrangements of society. He considers that Tammany is, on the whole, a good body, that it gives New York a good government, that it stands for what is manly and patriotic. It troubles him somewhat that a few of the leaders are said to be acquiring ill-gotten gains; and if the scandal increases he will overthrow those leaders and appoint others in their stead. Meanwhile Tammany is his party, his church, his club, his totem. To be loyal to something is almost a necessity of all incorrupt natures, and especially of the Celtic nature. The Tammany man is loyal to Tammany.

"In truth, there is very little in New York to suggest any higher ideal. What kind of a spectacle does the city present to a man working his way up from poverty to wealth, — to one, for instance, who began as a 'tough,' and ends as a capitalist? The upper class — at least the richer class, the class chiefly talked about in the papers — is, with exceptions, of course, given over to material luxury and to ostentation. It is without high aims, without sympathy, without civic pride or feeling. It has not even the personal dignity of a real aristocracy. Its sense of honour is very crude. And as this class is devoted to the selfish spending, so the business class is devoted to the remorseless getting, of money."¹

To this description of the attitude of the Tammany rank and file it may be added that, as few of them pay any direct taxes, they have no sense of the importance of economy in administration. True it is that they ultimately pay, through their rent and otherwise, for whatever burdens are laid on the city. But they do not perceive this, — and as the lawyers say, *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio*. The government of the rich by the poor is a new phenomenon in the world; and where the rich have little contact with the poor and the poor little respect for the rich, happy results can hardly be expected. Apart from the abuse of the minor criminal justice, apart from the blackmailing of innocent men as well as of offenders, apart from the impunity which the payment of blackmail secures to some forms of vice,² apart from such

¹ *Atlantic Monthly*, *ut supra*.

² Very great credit is due to a courageous clergyman who lately at some personal risk succeeded in exposing this system, and helped thereby to obtain the appointment of the recent Investigating Committee.

lapses from virtue as that of the aldermen who sold the right of laying a railroad in Broadway, — twenty-two out of the twenty-four were indicted for bribery, — the actual administration of the city injures and offends the ordinary citizen less than might have been expected. The police force, often as they are made the engine of extortion or the accomplice in vice, are an efficient force, though too harsh in their methods, and they keep life and property secure.¹ The fire department is well managed; the water supply is copious; the public schools are now usually, though not invariably, kept "out of politics." If the government is not economical, it is not palpably extravagant; and the rulers who grow rich through it do so by indirect methods, and not out of the city treasury. Scandals like those of Tweed's time are unknown. The city debt has been reduced since 1876 to \$104,000,000, though it must be added that the swift increase of the wealth of the city has enabled a rate of taxation moderate for the United States (\$1.85 to \$1.79 on the valuation of property) to produce an immense revenue.² Considering what by origin, by training, by environment, and by tastes and habits, are the persons who rule the city through Tammany — considering the criminal element among them and their close association with the liquor saloons, it may excite surprise that the government, corrupt as it is, is not also more wasteful.³

Those who have grasped the singular condition of New York and its population, will find it less surprising that this government should have proved itself so hard to overthrow. In 1890 a great effort to overthrow it was made. A section of the Democrats leagued itself with the Republicans to bring out what was understood to be "a joint ticket," while the Inde-

¹ The Senate Committee has elicited the fact — already indeed suspected — that an applicant for employment in the police must pay for appointment, and an officer must contribute a large sum either to the Ring or to the Police Commissioners for promotion.

² "The increase in the assessed valuation of property (real and personal) in New York City is annually about \$70,000,000; and in 1893 reached the unprecedented sum of \$105,254,253." — *City Government in the U. S.*, by Mr. Alfred R. Conkling, New York, 1894.

³ "The city is governed to-day by three or four men of foreign birth who are very illiterate, are sprung from the dregs of the foreign population, have never pursued any regular calling, were entirely unknown to the bulk of the residents only five years ago, and now set the criticisms of the intelligent and educated classes at defiance." — *Annals of the Amer. Acad.*, *ut supra*.

pendent Reformers blessed the alliance, and endorsed its candidates.¹ Success had been hoped for; but Tammany routed its adversaries by 23,000 votes. It turned out that about 30,000 Republicans had not voted, — some because their bosses, secretly friendly to Tammany, did not canvass them, some because they did not care to vote for anything but a Republican ticket, some out of sheer indifference and laziness. Strongly entrenched as Tammany is, Tammany could be overthrown if the "good citizens" were to combine for municipal reform, setting aside for local purposes those distinctions of national party which have nothing to do with city issues. The rulers of the wigwam, as Tammany is affectionately called, do not care for national politics, except as a market in which the Tammany vote may be sold. That the good citizens of New York should continue to rivet on their necks the yoke of a club which is almost as much a business concern as one of their own dry-goods stores, by dividing forces which, if united, would break the tyranny of the last forty years, — this indeed seems strange, yet perhaps no stranger than other instances of the power of habit, of laziness, of names and party spirit. In such a policy of union, and in the stimulation of a keener sense of public duty rather than in further changes of the mechanism of government, lies the best hope of reform. After the many failures of the past, it is not safe to be sanguine. But there does appear to be at this moment a more energetic spirit at work among reformers than has ever been seen before, and a stronger sense that the one supreme remedy is to strike at the root of the evil by arousing the conscience of the better classes, both rich and poor, and by holding up to them a higher ideal of civic life.²

¹ Being in New York during the election, I spent some hours in watching the voting in the densely peopled tenement-house districts and thus came to realize better than figures can convey how largely New York is a European city, but a European city of no particular country, with elements of ignorance and squalor from all of them.

² Since the above was put in type (Sept., 1894) Tammany has been smitten with a great slaughter in the election of Nov., 1894. This result, even more striking than the overthrow of the Tweed Ring in Nov., 1871, seems to have been chiefly due to the anger roused by the exposures of police maladministration already adverted to. Such a victory, however, is only a first step to the purification of municipal politics, and will need to be followed up more actively and persistently than was the victory of 1871. If the rowers who have so gallantly breasted the current drop even for a moment their stalwart arms, they will again be swept swiftly downwards.