

vacancies, in order that the leas of party might be thoroughly worked off. Personal fitness for the particular office might, under such a system, be expected to assert its claims, instead of the promiscuous pitch-forking entailed by the necessity of providing each of the leaders of a party with a seat in the cabinet. There would be an end at all events of that everlasting struggle for the offices of government between two organized factions, the source of the evils which all good citizens daily deplore, though they have hitherto been unwilling to consider the remedy or even to believe that a remedy was possible. The writer of this goes further. He is persuaded that it would be better for us all, if the Central institutions were based upon the Local, and the Central legislature were elected not by the people directly, but by local councils elected by the people. The people are practically unable, themselves, to exercise the direct vote; it is always confiscated by wire pullers, who get the nominations into their hands, and the utmost which is left to the people is the liberty of choosing between the nominees of two wirepulling organizations. A vote for a local council on the other hand the people can really exercise, as they know and are able to choose among their immediate neighbours, while the members of a local council can really exercise their vote for the central legislature. The members of the local council are sure to be men of a higher grade of political intelligence, and men who pay more attention to public affairs than the constituencies at large. Thus there would be a sifting process at each step of the ascending scale, and it might be reasonably hoped that the central legislature and the executive council elected by it would fairly represent the intelligence of the community. The only clearly successful part of the American constitution, as has been said before, is the Senate, elected by the State Legislatures. A vote on constitutional amendments would more than make up to the people at large for anything which they would lose by surrendering the direct vote. The question between direct and indirect election to the central legislature, however, stands apart from that respecting the relations between the central legislature and the executive. It is not likely that either question will be practically considered till the world has had more bitter experience of the fruits of the present system and we have all been taught to reflect that political ambition is entirely out of the range of the great mass of us, and that all we want is to have our political, like our commercial affairs, managed by competent and trustworthy men, with proper securities for responsibility and for a change in case of breach of duty, while we go about our work and enjoy the general benefits of advancing civilization. But let it not be said again that no substitute for party government has ever been proposed, because here is the obvious substitute, not propounded now for the first time.

EARL GREY, the son of that Earl Grey who carried the Reform Bill in 1832, though now in his eighty-second year, preserves his intellectual power unimpaired. He was long a member of Whig Cabinets and a conspicuous figure in English politics. He has always studied the suffrage question with hereditary interest, and has almost alone protested against blind and demagogic extension of the franchise without previous enquiry into the political fitness of the classes to be enfranchised and the probable effect of the change on the character of government. In parliamentary government by party, however, he has hitherto been a firm believer. But his article on "The House of Commons" in the *Nineteenth Century* shows that misgiving has at last found its way into his mind. No wonder; for the inability of a mob of 650 men, broken up into factions, and with no organization but the authority of party chiefs, to govern the country, is becoming every day more fatally apparent. "The most cherished traditions of Parliamentary procedure," says the *Times*, "are dissolving in the fierce heat of partisan conflict." In an article headed "The Anarchy in the Commons," the *Spectator* says: "A great political institution like the House of Commons can hardly fall into such anarchy as now prevails there without such a falling-off of patriotic spirit on both sides of the House as ought to cause the English people serious alarm." "There can be no doubt," it adds "but the nation has now reason for serious misgiving; that the very first of all questions is the Condition of the House of Commons question, and that is one with which every politician of character on either side ought to make a great effort to deal from some higher point of view than that of mere party feeling. It is a question of national morality and one of the most urgent kind. Without some effort to raise the level of political morality out of the bitter and dishonouring spirit of faction into which we are now falling, we may soon see English representative institutions in a condition worse than that which we have so often deplored in countries without our great constitutional traditions." Remarks only too well founded, yet, as coming from an advocate of party government, somewhat illogical. When your system is based on faction what can you

expect but factiousness, and factiousness ever increasing in ascendancy, as is the nature of that and every other bad passion? What can the "morality" of party be but partizanship? How, when partizanship produces its inevitable fruits, can you hope that those who are thoroughly imbued with it and completely enthralled by it, will in a moment lay aside their nature, rise above themselves and deal with the public interests "from a higher point of view." Such an effort involves self-abnegation, and which of the two parties will begin? The party-man has no "higher point of view." Mr. Gladstone's new rules render it possible in the last extremity to cut short a debate which might otherwise be interminable; but this is not enough to restore order in a political chaos. All the social restraints which used to be owned by the members of the House of Commons as gentlemen have been broken through, and on one side Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. Ashmead Bartlett and the Baron de Worms, on the other, the Irish members, give not only courtesy but decency to the winds. On Mr. Gladstone's side of the House the only support of order is his personal authority; on Sir Stafford Northcote's side of the House there is no order at all. As the *Spectator* says, the system in England is in a bad way; and if it is in a bad way in England, the parent and cynosure of Parliamentary government, its prospects are not good elsewhere.

TEMPERANCE men have the satisfaction at all events of knowing that their question is a burning one, since it comes before us day after day in different forms, even to satiety. Perhaps all of us have reason to rejoice that a battle cry which is, at any rate, moral, has for a moment drowned the common battle cries of party war. The Senate has rejected the amendment requiring a majority of three-fifths for the application of the Scott Act, and at the same time that exempting from its operation the sale of beer and light wine. Yet both amendments in the eyes of those who are not filled with the new wine of platform oratory are reasonable, and ought to have been adopted. It is notorious that sumptuary laws depend for their effective operation on the public feeling in their favour, and that unless the arm of those who are charged with their execution is upheld by the sentiment of a great majority they become a dead letter and worse than a dead letter, inasmuch as connivance at their violation breeds a general disrespect for law. In the cities of Maine, popular feeling not being on the side of Blue Laws, the consequence of rigorous legislation has been the addition of all the evils of contrabandism to all the evils of drinking. In Toronto at this moment if an extreme measure of prohibition were passed it could not be executed; even the Crooks Act has resulted in the multiplication of illicit grog-shops. The other amendment is conducive to the real object of the Temperance movement if, as may be presumed, that object is not ascetic but sanitary and moral. People deceive themselves if they think that because they are virtuous the world in general will consent that there shall be no more cakes and ale. A glass of wine or beer with the meal is an indulgence on which, as on the meal itself, an anchorite may frown; but it does no more harm to him who drinks it, or to his neighbour, than a cup of tea or coffee, which are also stimulants, and even intoxicants in their way. That it is compatible with perfect sobriety the example of the wine-growing countries affords conclusive proof. If it is true that a man cannot venture on his glass of wine without "toppling over" into the abyss of intemperance, how comes it to pass that drunkenness is so rare and has always been held so disgraceful in Spain? Whiskey, once more, is the real poison, and the higher the license for selling it is made, the worse poison it becomes, because the greater is the inducement to adulteration. The substitution of a lighter and more wholesome beverage is as much as can be reasonably hoped or desired; it is as much as is compatible with liberty. Let extreme Prohibitionists note that one of the concomitants of their legislation in the United States has been a fourfold increase in the importation of opium.

It is rather startling to find a writer in the *Contemporary Review* coolly debating the questions "whether dynamite will ever be naturalized in Europe as a political agent," and "whether terrorism has a future there." "Stepniak," the author of the paper, is inclined to answer both questions in the negative, but his decision is by no means confident. Of moral indignation or horror at the idea of a general domination of murder, there is not the faintest expression. On the contrary, there is a disposition to enlist sympathy for the persons and objects of the Terrorists. "That," we are told, "which surprises and perplexes all who interest themselves in the so-called Nihilists, is the incomprehensible contrast between their terrible and sanguinary methods, and their humane and enlightened ideas of social progress; a contrast that is suggested most forcibly by their personal qualities." The apparent contrast cannot surprise or perplex anyone who is moderately acquainted with the history of the French Revolution. From