

the wealthiest with the poorest class are not uncommon; and there are classes of political subjects, such as foreign policy, with which wealth and poverty have little to do. At all events, a division of the community into the party of the rich and the party of the poor is what nobody would propose as the permanent basis of good government.

While people are telling us that party is a necessity of human nature and must endure forever, party is everywhere showing the most decisive symptoms of its mortality. It is everywhere in a state of apparently hopeless disintegration. Hardly in one of the parliamentary countries do we any longer find that clean division into two parties which is essential to the system, since without it no basis can be found for government. Sectionalism has everywhere set in. There are nine sections in the German Parliament; there are nobody knows how many in the French; and the same state of things prevails in Italy and Spain. In the British Parliament there are now six sections—the Conservatives, the Liberal Unionists, the Radical Unionists, the Gladstonians, the Radical Home Rulers, and the Parnellites; and of these sections not one is strong enough in itself to sustain a Government. In the United States not only have we a beginning of disintegration, with semi-secession of the Independents from the Republicans, but other disintegrating sections are being formed by the Labour Reformers, the Anti-poverty men, and the Prohibitionists. Machine managers who are possessed with the belief that the machine is the ordinance of nature, look upon all this as fractious eccentricity, and think that with the aid of some soothing appliances it will all subside, and the game of political poker will go on happily as before. But they will find themselves mistaken. They will find that with the growth of mental activity and independence their troubles will increase.

The only bond which party has other than corruption, when there is no organic question to divide the community, seems to me to be the sporting love of faction fights, which, no doubt, if it is not ineradicable, has deep roots in human nature. My friend, Mr. Bryce, sees something majestic in a presidential election. He is impressed by the spectacle of so many millions of freemen all in one day going to the polls to choose their chief. I have seen several of these spectacles, and I confess there is something in them which strongly reminds me of the Derby. There is the same amount of betting, and an excitement, as it appears to me, very much of the same kind, while the corruption which in the case of the Derby is confined to the jockeys, extends in the case of the presidential election over a wider field. Unhappily the two cases differ in gravity. It seems impossible that the texture of any commonwealth should be firm enough to withstand forever the tension and the laceration inflicted on it by presidential elections.

Setting aside the faction-fights of the middle ages, such as those between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, which were not parliamentary, party government has its origin in English history. England was the cradle of the system, and if her affairs continue in their present course, is not unlikely to be its grave. It arose out of the struggle for supreme power between the Stuart kings and the Parliament, which gave birth to the parties of Whigs and Tories. Coincident with its development was the change from the old Privy Council, which once was the government but is now a venerable shadow, to the Cabinet which is a committee of the dominant party. While civil war was raging or impending, parties held themselves together with a vengeance; there could be no difficulty about submitting your own judgment to that of the general on a field of battle, no conscientious hesitation about wheeling to the right or the left when the word of command was given. But as soon as the fighting was over, the leaders of parties found that cohesion and discipline could be secured only by corruption. The Restoration Parliament, the Revolution Parliament after the final defeat of James II., and the Hanoverian Parliament, were all managed systematically and almost avowedly in that way. Walpole had no natural love of corruption; though coarse and cynical, he was honest and patriotic; but it was only by bribes that he could hold together a majority without which government and the dynasty must have fallen. The French Revolution changed the scene; it welded together the Tory Party by the influence of a great fear, and the Whig Party by revolutionary sympathy and intense antagonism to its opponents. Corruption still went on, and there was a perpetual scramble among the followers of the government for the mess of spoils, both political and ecclesiastical, in its gift, as well as for peerages and baronetcies; but Pitt could probably have led and governed, without patronage or bribery, by mere appeal to party interest or passion. The reform of 1832 was, in fact, a revolution; it transferred supreme power from the aristocracy, which had reigned through its command of the close boroughs, to the people; and it did this after a struggle so violent as to border very closely on civil war. While that struggle was raging, or the passion which it had kindled continued to glow, party once more held itself together by its own force. But the division of that day belongs to the past. The Reform Club, which is its movement, and which formed the chief organization of what was then deemed the revolutionary party, is now in truth a Conservative Association.

The Reform Bill of 1832 did not, in England, close the list of organic questions or terminate the protracted and intermittent revolution by which it seems England is to be finally made democratic; and these have continued to be foundations for what may be termed substantially an aristocratic and a democratic party, besides the question of the established church and that of Ireland. Still patronage and the expenditure of money have been powerful agencies

in holding the parties together. If the Government has given up nomination to clerkships in the public offices and commissions in the army, it has not given up its nominations to peerages, to baronetcies, to the orders of knighthood, to the judiciary, to the viceroyalty of India and governorship of colonies, to the military and naval commands, to the bishoprics and deaneries, canonries and benefices, in the gift of the crown. It has not given up the social influence which it wields through the rank of its own members and its connection with the court. Nor are offices of forty or fifty thousand dollars a year themselves slight inducements to any but very wealthy politicians. It is the belief, sad to say, of those who are well qualified to judge, and who would not speak lightly, that even at the present perilous crisis of the country's destiny men are bartering their convictions for the prospect of place. The severity of the British election law, inflexibly administered by the judges, has probably killed bribery at elections, or at least reduced it to inconsiderable dimensions. But corruption is Protean in its forms, and the suppression of bribery at elections does not prevent the money from being employed in organization, in canvassing, and in what is called "nursing boroughs," that is, spending money in capturing them with a view to elections.

In Canada we have a permanent civil service, and the possibilities of corruption by patronage are limited. But the consequence is that corruption throws itself into other forms, especially that of government appropriations for local works. It seems to me that corruption of this kind is more destructive of public spirit than corruption by patronage or by personal bribery. In England during the last century, side by side with the most terrible corruption by patronage and personal bribery, there was a good deal of public spirit, such as showed itself in the Middlesex election and gave birth to Chatham and Burke. Corruption by public expenditure is hardly recognized as criminal, and it extends to the whole body of electors.

Supposing that all corruption, whether by patronage, by personal bribery, or by government expenditure, could be completely abolished, the party system of government remaining, might not party, in the absence of any natural and moral bond, find means of holding itself together even worse than corruption itself? Might it not regularly sell the policy of the country for votes? A British minister going into a general election puts forth an address, holding out to the class by which the income tax is paid a remission of the tax as an inducement to vote for him. Impartial criticism naturally asks whether this is a great improvement, otherwise than in refinement of form, on the public morality of the last century. Look at what has been going on and is now going on in England. The two parties have been bidding against each other in blind extensions of the suffrage, without any attempt to review and strengthen the upper work of the Constitution, till the country and the empire are completely in the hands of masses of passion-swept ignorance, whose action at any general election no human being can pretend to forecast. At this moment a party leader, rendered desperate by exclusion from power, is labouring to blow into a flame the all-but extinct embers of provincial hatred in the different sections of the United Kingdom, and at the same time to propagate social war by stirring up the "masses" against the "classes," and persuading the people that education, to which he himself owes everything, has always been the enemy of justice. The same man, having been through life the foremost, not to say the most extravagant, of the lay champions of church establishment, is now holding out the hope of disestablishment as an inducement to the nonconformists to support his Irish policy and carry him back into power.

One can imagine a cynic saying that of all the modes of keeping its followers together and perpetuating its existence, to which a political party, in the absence of great and all-controlling issues, will resort, the coarsest after all is the least dangerous. It is limited in its range, and its criminality being palpable it is the less seductive; while the man who takes a bribe, whether in the shape of money or of patronage, is usually one whose vote, if freely given, would be at least as likely as not to be given on the wrong side.

But if party, in ordinary times, cannot do without corruption of some kind, or something not less noxious to the state than corruption, can universal suffrage or representative government do without the organization of party? What else can collect a sufficient number of the particles of sovereign power vested in each of the citizens of a democracy to form a foundation for a government? What else can designate candidates for election, seeing that the members of a numerous constituency are unknown to each other and have an opportunity or power of laying their heads together, as the theory assumes them to do, for the purpose of nomination? How is government of the people, by the people and for the people, to be carried on without becoming government of the boss, by the boss and for the boss? Popular government is supposed to be the last birth of Time, but Time has devoured a good many of his children. This was what we meant when we said that if the civil-service reformers would follow out the inquiry opened by their reform, it would lead them far.—*Goldwin Smith, in The Forum.*

A NAVAL and military exhibition is to be held this summer in the Royal Scottish Academy National Galleries, Edinburgh. The most distinguished names in Scotland are convinced that plenty of material exists in the country wherewith to complete the sections of the proposed exhibition.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE EVILS OF INDEPENDENCE.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—I noticed with very much regret an article in the last number of your paper advocating the separation of Canada from the rest of the British empire and the establishment of an independent government (Republic or Monarchy you do not state which) in this country.

I have recently had occasion to study the future destiny of Canada very carefully and in detail and this study has firmly convinced me of the fact that of all the schemes now before this country independence is the one most calculated to ruin her best interests and retard her progress. And, further, I believe that the secession of Canada from Britain would do an injury to the civilized world by leading to the disintegration of the grandest empire the world has ever known.

I utterly fail to see how you can support your statement that if Canada were independent she would not require a large fleet or army to maintain her independence. To the south of us is a nation of twelve times our population with whom we are continually engaged in such disputes as must inevitably arise between two countries in such close proximity and having such conflicting interests as Canada and the United States. The United States is at present spending many millions of dollars in building a powerful fleet which, in case of a war, would ravage our coasts and ruin our commerce did we not have an equally powerful fleet to oppose it. The United States can call into action at any moment 2,000,000 trained volunteers. The action of the American Senate in rejecting the recent fisheries treaty, their stubborn maintenance of their absurd claims in Behring Sea, their prevention of Canadians living on the border from working in American cities, all very clearly show that the feeling of that nation towards us is anything but a friendly one and there is little doubt that were the United States not afraid of becoming involved in a war with Great Britain she would long before now either have wrested her so-called claims from Canada or enforced them by arms. How much respect would our claims win from any country if we did not have a strong army and fleet to support them if necessary. I think it will be admitted when these things are considered, that it would be absolutely necessary for Canada, if independent, to maintain a powerful standing army and a strong fleet.

With regard to treaty making there can surely be no disputing the fact that Canada, with an immense empire at her back, is likely to obtain much better terms than she would without it.

One of the strongest arguments against the secession of Canada from Britain is that this would create a third great division in the Anglo-Saxon race for whose unity it should be the object of every man speaking the English tongue to strive. When Rome was divided she fell.

The establishment and maintenance of an army and fleet, the maintenance of a diplomatic and consular service, the salary of our sovereign or presidents and vice-presidents as the case might be would involve the expenditure of an immense sum of money, and to a country very heavily in debt would mean almost inevitable ruin.

For the establishment of this fleet, army, etc., the people would require to be heavily taxed and the misery of the poorer classes of this country would be greatly increased.

The separation of Canada from Britain would destroy our credit abroad, for which the latter was always a surety, and would prevent us raising any more loans in the money markets of the world.

You state that the tie that binds us to Britain is very slight. Yet you argue that if that tie were removed, or if Canada became independent, we would become a great nation. Now, the only constitutional tie that binds us to Britain is the office of Governor-General. And your argument, therefore, is that if we remove our Governor-General and place a Canadian as our ruler we will become a great nation. Now, sir, how can this be, since the Governor-General does not exercise the slightest power for good or evil in the country? What is there to prevent us becoming as great under one ruler as the other?

The whole and sole reason which the advocates of Independence and Secession seem to have for supporting that measure is some dim and misty idea that if Canada were separated from Britain she would, for some unknown cause, become a powerful nation. Now, sir, I would remind those gentlemen that in order for a country to become a great nation two things are absolutely essential: (1) Population, (2) Money. I have showed you that owing to our national expenses and the loss of our credit abroad, we will lose and not gain the latter. I need hardly tell you with regard to the former that the immigration from Europe to America is, according to the latest statistics, decreasing. Even were it not, Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotchmen would not be in any greater hurry to flock to this country if the good old Union Jack were hauled down than if it still floated above us. I have given you a few of the arguments against independence and separation. I will not occupy any more of your space at present by enumerating them all.

One word more. You claim that sentiment is on your side. Is it a noble sentiment, I would ask, to incite Canadians to rise in rebellion, without the slightest provocation, against the country whose gallant sons have so often stood between us and destruction, and who, throughout the long