

It is not in the main thoroughfares of our national life that this rottenness is doing its deadly work, but in the by-lanes and dark places, among the "lower orders" so to speak of the party flotsam that we find the moral leprosy that every one, it seems, knows about but is afraid to talk about except to his own intimates and then with the implied caution that it must not be passed on.

That party heebers have fattened and are still putting on flesh at the public expense every one seems to know, but few men have the courage and no man seems disposed to prove a case for the simple reason that the rascality is so astute, it is able to cover its tracks so carefully and to make legal procedure so difficult that a straightforward attack offers no hope of success to any single-minded effort.

The State Wants Men

But this state of things cannot last. The present dramatic upheaval in our international relations is in all probability the incident in the hands of Providence that will ultimately shake the rottenness out of our system. It isn't a "new party" or a "change of government" that is needed but men who will assert and use their boasted heritage of intellectual freedom and consecrate it to the service of the only party they have a right to serve—the State.

"The people are often wrong in their opinions—in their sentiments they are never mistaken," said Junius. The people if left to themselves will not make many grave errors in pinning their faith to a man or an institution that seeks their good opinion. There's a wonderful sub-conscious instinct in the hearts of "the people" that protects them from the specious humbug of a lot of our political jugglery—a sort of mother-wit that will not only save them from disaster but may in time develop into an intelligence equal at least, to that of the trick performer who has so long made his living by fooling them.

This party "system" of ours is one of the biggest farces in human history. It had its beginning in a perfectly legitimate classification of different types of mind which were honestly represented but never separated by such an uncompromising line of cleavage as keeps them apart to-day. That very circumstance proclaimed their sincerity. The birth of the party system in our political life might be dated exactly from the first day on which the long parliament met.

A Genuine Party Distinction

"In one sense," as Macaulay says, "the distinction which then became obvious had always existed and always must exist. For it has its origin in diversities of temper, of understanding, and of

interest, which are found in all societies and which will be found till the human mind ceases to be drawn in opposite directions by the charm of habit and by the charm of novelty. Not only in politics but in literature, in art, in every department of industry we find this distinction. Everywhere there is a class of men who cling with fondness to whatever is ancient, and who, even when convinced by overpowering reasons that innovation would be beneficial, consent to it with many misgivings and forebodings.

We find also everywhere another class of men, sanguine in hope, bold in speculation, always pressing forward, quick to discern the imperfections of whatever exists, disposed to think lightly of the risks and inconveniences which attend improvements, and disposed to give every change credit for being an improvement. In the sentiments of both classes there is something to approve.

But of both, the best specimens will be found not far from the common frontier. The extreme section of one class consists of bigoted dotards; the extreme section of the other consists of shallow and reckless empirics.

That is an eminently satisfactory description of those two inbred elements in human thought the bias of the one to conserve or hold on, the disposition on the part of the other to experiment, to reach out. It would not be correct to say that they are conservative or progressive because in actual experience the conservative has often proved more progressive than the declared "progressive" mind.

Born and bred amid associations in which the habitual drift of the public mind was towards progress, towards that state of betterment which is the natural effect of more knowledge, of the unveiling of new facts, the writer was nevertheless taught by universal example to respect and even to reverence those whose more conservative judgments compelled them to sit tight and hold on to institutions which had been proved and to their minds presented no valid reasons why

they should be superseded.

It might almost be said of old Scotland in those days—it may still be said of her as Macaulay said of ancient Rome that:

"No man was for party,
But all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great."

In British politics men differ as they do everywhere, but there is a wholesome respect accorded to a political opponent that is general in Great Britain just as it is exceptional in Canadian political life. If this isn't an absolutely correct comparison it matters not. That party bitterness exists to a frightful degree in our Western life every school boy knows, and that the most unblushing jobbery and corruption is rampant is also within the knowledge of every man who has moved from his easy chair at an election time.

Is it in line with our pretensions that "a man o' independent mind" cannot get anything or anywhere

if he is seeking employment or a square hearing on any business consideration that is at the disposal of a government official unless he is an accredited member of the party or is "recommended" by some influential party-boss?

The disgusting lengths to which this

system has been allowed to drift is seen in every city, town and hamlet. When a "pointer" on our refined sense of justice that again and again we meet the case of a worthy man who has conspicuously demonstrated his character and ability and fitness in every respect for some government position, turned out of it for no earthly reason than to find a job for some party nominee—a man very often who has not the slightest claim either in experience, character or natural parts, absolutely nothing to "recommend" him other than that he has made himself conspicuous in suborning voters at an election crisis.

In point of character—in the church or out of it does not matter—we are three centuries worse off than we were when that great "country party" made its armed appeal to an Almighty Justice

against the corruption of the Princes of the House of Stuart and those elect scoundrels who were its splendidly paid parasites.

John Hampden

How many men in Canada's public life to-day are really trusted and beloved as was that simple country gentleman John Hampden, whose courage, sagacity and single-minded initiative captured the hearts of his countrymen and showed them and succeeding generations by what means an entrenched opposition and the worst that MIGHT could do was still at the mercy of the RIGHT?

Not what the party organs print about our political leaders nor what their cohorts proclaim them to be on the platform, but just what the keenly discriminating man in the street or in the church pew actually thinks of these men would be an interesting "exhibit" if it could be held up to the public gaze.

We do not allege that there are fewer noble souls in the world to-day than there were in the times of Hampden, but we are speaking specifically of the arena of politics. In politics we have astute men in abundance, clever men, highly polished and splendidly informed intellects but to what extent are they trusted? How many of them command the unstinted homage of their fellows, even of their political opponents—that was freely given to Hampden by such declared antagonists as Clarendon?

Says Macaulay: "Almost every part of his virtuous and blameless life that is not hidden from us in modest privacy is a precious and splendid portion of our national history. Had the private conduct of Hampden afforded the slightest pretext for censure, he would have been assailed by the same blind malevolence that in defiance of the clearest proofs called his friend Sir John Eliot an assassin."

His single-minded devotion to the service of his immediate neighbors and to the whole cause of his country left no loop hole for the polished steel and the fencing of the most unscrupulous, brow-beating lawyer of his day.

"His strength was as the strength of ten
Because his heart was pure."

And yet this celebrated Englishman was nothing more than a simple country gentleman. He was never "written up" in a single line of type as a "clever" man but we have the ungrudging testimony of those who were his declared political foes to the fact that he was "an almost solitary instance of a great man who neither sought nor shunned greatness—who found glory only because glory lay in the plain path of duty. Known to his country neighbors as a gentleman of high



ROBERT BURNS

"God knows I am no saint; I have a whole lot of sins and follies to answer for. But if I could (and I believe I do as far as I can) I would wipe away all tears from all eyes."—Robert Burns.