

ment of a Cathedral services, and somehow, as such, criticism passes by. It passes to the picture of one W. Szymanowski (I believe that is the way you spell it) a picture you don't mind standing before with your hat on, till finally the cleverness of it makes you take your hat off. It is only some peasants, men and women, sitting by the window of a beer-house, but there is such anger over the men who have had a discussion and are going to fly at each other's throats, such fear over the women, such light over it all, that it is a thing to dream about. It is more. It is a definite thought truthfully expressed in a form at once unconventional and complete. The artist has employed French methods, but this genuineness and naïve fierceness are of another nationality.

After the prudent work of Belgium and Holland, the coldly clever pictures of the Northern countries, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, the bric-a-bracish art of Greece, Servia, and Roumania, there remain only two collections—the Swiss, almost French, and the Russian. Towards the Russian one turns naturally with more curiosity, more interest, than towards any to find peradventure a Tourguéniéff or a Tolstoi of the palette, but there is no Tourguéniéff or Tolstoi. There is the work of a girl of twenty-four, of Maris Bashkirtseff, who had not only talent and truth but wonderful ideas. The little time she lived she painted things where the Slav begins to tell you his fascinating thoughts, his dreamy melancholy, his naïve grief, and then she died, so Russia must wait.

Paris, August 19th, 1889.

LOUIS LLOYD.

DRIFTING.

How I love to lie in my pulsing boat,
And drowsily drift and dream!
Where the sheen of the lilies like stars afloat
Is mirrored in the stream;
And the clouds that rest in the golden west
Have the woof of a poet's dream.

How softly the shadows creep out and apart!
Like ghosts of the dying day,
While a breath from an upland meadow's heart
Is sweet with the new-mown hay,
Till it turns to a breeze 'mid the rustling trees,
And shudders and dies away

Then little by little the stars peep out
Till their splendour fills the sky;
And the hurrying swallows all about
Like wraiths go flitting by,
Through the purple night with wings as light
As a tired baby's sigh.

EMILY McMANUS.

THE SPOILS OF OFFICE.

AMONG the questions the progress of which it has fallen to the lot of a bystander to watch in the United States during the last quarter of a century, not the least interesting is civil-service reform. Apart from its intrinsic importance, it is one of the questions on which public opinion has acted independently of the machines. The prime movers were not in Congress. The reform did not emanate from either of the parties, nor did either of them cordially embrace it. It was wrested from them at a juncture when one of them, being on the point of laying down power, was very willing to diminish the prospective spoils of its successor, while the other, with its foot upon the steps of office, did not dare to show itself indisposed to reform.

In the United States the introduction of the examination system was a concession wrung from the politicians by a public demand for reform; and it had two objects—the improvement of the administration, and the reduction of a patronage which served as the means of corruption. Curiously enough, in England, from which the idea apparently was immediately imported, and which formed the special field of preliminary inquiry, neither of the two objects can be said to have prevailed, while the measure, instead of being forced upon the politicians, emanated from them. There was not much fault to be found with the English civil service. The permanent under-secretaries of state, who are the real heads of the departments, were first-class administrators, entirely independent of party; and it mattered little more to the public whose son or son-in-law a clerk in the public office was, than whose son or son-in-law was a clerk in a bank, provided he was capable in doing his office work and was made to do it. Nor was the petty patronage a serious instrument of corruption in a country where the supporters of government were men of wealth, whose objects, if they had any, outside politics, were not pecuniary but social. There was no loud outcry, so far as we remember, on either ground. The politicians themselves wished to be rid of a patronage on which they set little value, and which exposed them to the annoyance of perpetual solicitations and to the constant danger of making ten malcontents and one ingrate.

On the advantages of a permanent and skilled administration it is needless to dilate. They increase with the scientific character of the administrative function. Of this, if any proof were needed, German success would be a tremendous proof. In our municipal governments the evil probably now is not so much stealing, or even jobbery, as the want of permanence and skill, which would be more ruinous if their effects were not in some degree tempered by the employment of experts, such as city engineers.

To say that a permanent and skilled civil service will be an aristocracy, seems nonsense. How can there be an

aristocracy without hereditary succession, family connection, or preference of birth? Aristocracy is as much the bugbear of our democracies as tyranny was of the democracy of Athens. Their alarmed fancy sees it in every thing that rises above the dead level or endures beyond the day.

The fear of bureaucracy, if not so palpably absurd, is really little better founded. An official class with an autocrat at its back, may, no doubt, be a serious menace to liberty. But an official class in the United States would have no autocrat at its back. Supreme power would still be in the hands of the people, who, instead of protecting the official class in tyrannical excesses, would be apt to regard it with jealousy and confine its regular action within the narrowest bounds.

Anything permanent is of course to that extent a restraint upon the will of the people; but it is a restraint imposed by the people itself and removable at the people's discretion. A man who placed no restraint upon his will, and on whose will no restraint was imposed, would be a lunatic or a fiend. If democracy is to live, its government must be the organ, not of anybody's will, but of public reason. Nor is the majesty of the people exalted any more than their interest is promoted by making the public service the sport of electoral change.

In commending a beneficial change it is not necessary to exaggerate the evil. American intelligence and versatility have to a remarkable extent made up for the want of regular training. To European ears rotation in postmasterhips sounds like postal chaos; yet in the twenty-five years during which the present writer has been from time to time a resident or a sojourner in the United States, he has never, so far as he is aware, missed a letter through the fault of the post-office, not even when it was addressed to him at "Cornell University, America." Nor in advocating a change of system ought we to forget that every system has its liabilities. A professional civil service is undeniably liable to red tape. The writer has even heard an experienced administrator in another country express a leaning to the unreformed American system on that ground. Much, however, depends on the medium in which the machine acts. The Chinese machine, so often satirically cited by the opponents of civil-service reform, acts in the midst of an intensely stationary society—a society of which immobility is almost the religion. As the American machine will act in the midst of a highly inventive and progressive people, the danger of red tape is likely to be reduced to the lowest point.

The question of appointment by competitive examination is distinct from that of a trained and permanent service. For competitive examination the writer has no passionate predilection. On the other hand, fantastic objections are sometimes raised to it. The examiner must be incompetent if mere cram prevails over genuine knowledge; while as to the moral effect, it is difficult to see why competition in an examination, if there is fair play, should be more demoralizing than competition in life.

The real danger is rather that these prizes may act as traps for youthful ambition, and tempt it into a service which, as routine work in a government office differs not from routine in other offices, while pay is small and promotion slow, may prove a disappointment and lead to the failure of a career.

It was natural to fear that competitive examination would produce men who might be good scholars but would be wanting in business qualities. This fear seemed particularly well-founded in the case of the civil service of British India, which demands not only business qualities, but powers of action; a handful of men having to hold and administer an empire with a population of two hundred and fifty millions. Perhaps even now it is not certain that the "competition wallahs," as they were nicknamed, are perfectly equal in all respects to the men of the old system, who after their nomination underwent a high course of training, and being taken usually from the circle of a special connection, were animated by a corporate spirit useful where great emergencies had to be faced. But the present writer once asked Lord Lawrence, the prince of men of action, his opinion on this point, and Lord Lawrence pronounced decidedly in favour of the competitive system.

It is, however, the second object of civil-service reform—the abolition of the spoils system and of corruption—that is most before the writer's mind at present. He was the other day at Washington. There he saw the President beset from morning to night with office-seekers, of whom there were said to be five thousand in the city, and some of whom brought deputations to back their claims; while beyond these five thousand again, he was told, there were two hundred and fifty thousand at work over the country. This implies, not only the influence on politics and public life of a vast amount of the lowest motive and the most pestilent activity, but the existence on the largest scale of the most objectionable of trades. When it is considered how small the salaries are, and how brief and precarious is the tenure, such a scramble for the offices seems to prove that myriads must have been drawn away from honest industries, and must be almost in a state of vagabondage, depending on perpetual place-hunting for their bread. These men are of necessity trained in electioneering arts, devoted to the service of faction, and steeped in its sinister morality. What republic can endure such a parasite as this corps of office-seekers in its vitals?

But now we come to the point. It can hardly be doubted that President Cleveland was a sincere friend of civil-service reform. The whole tenor of his public life seemed to show that he was an enemy of abuses, and that

his heart was true to the public service. He did his best, as it seemed to impartial onlookers, to carry the act into effect. Yet his apparent swervings and backslidings often called forth the pensive reflections of his reforming supporters. He was the head of a party. He owed his position to a party nomination, and, in the main, to party votes, though it was currently said that the Independents had elected him, because their votes had turned the scale. Had his party disbanded, or thrown him over, he would have been reduced to impotence—an impotence more complete than even that of Andrew Johnson, to say nothing of his nomination pledges, and the effect on his public character. But how was his party to be held together without patronage? How is any party to be held together without patronage? That is the question which the zealous advocates of civil-service reform and the Independents have to answer, and which, if they try to answer it, may lead them far.

Not only is party at present established; it is practically the Constitution. The legal distribution of power and the other regulations are forms; party is the force which governs under these forms. When one party has the majority in the Senate and the other in the House, legislation is suspended. When the President is a Democrat and the Senate is Republican, the treaty-making power is practically in abeyance; and it is almost futile for foreign governments to open negotiations, because whatever treaties the President frames will be rejected by the Senate. The Independents themselves hold, or at least profess, the common creed. They style themselves still members of the Republican Party, though in suspended communion. One of the most eminent of them not long ago described the operation of the Constitution as "the action of the people divided into parties." We must suppose, then, that they have considered and are prepared to answer the question how a party under ordinary circumstances is to be held together without spoils, or some sort of corruption not less potent than spoils, and to which they would equally, or still more strongly, object.

Under certain circumstances parties are natural, and hold themselves together without the aid of machines, or of bribery of any kind. When an issue of overwhelming importance is before a community, the citizens will spontaneously range themselves with reference to that issue; nor will a good citizen find it repugnant to his morality, for the sake of the paramount object of the hour, to submit his individual conscience and judgment within reasonable limits to party leadership and discipline. The issue between free labour and slavery was one of this kind; though even in that supreme crisis, if the oft-repeated story about Lincoln may be trusted, "the public councils," to repeat Washington's words, "were distracted and the public administration was enfeebled" by difficulties about the postmastership of Pedlington. But issues of overwhelming importance are not the daily bread of nations. The time comes when slavery is dead and buried; when all the organic questions, whatever they may be, are settled; when it becomes very difficult, if not impossible, to say on what distinctive principles the parties are based, and when there is no longer anything to absolve a good citizen from the obligation of following his own reason and conscience upon any question that may present itself. Under these circumstances, what is there to keep a community divided politically into two hostile camps; to bind the soldier in each camp to his standard, and induce him to obey the orders of the politician in command rather than the promptings of his own breast?

Burke has a famous passage to which the advocates of party government always appeal, and in which party is defined as "a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed." But what is "a particular principle"? What can it be but an opinion held in common on some organic question or some question of paramount importance? Such questions, as has been already been said, do not present themselves every day, and therefore cannot form the normal basis of government. If they do not present themselves, in course of time they are settled, and what then remains to justify and sustain party?

The answer given by some is, that party is an eternal ordinance of nature, all men being born, as the comic opera says, little Conservatives or little Liberals. Some temperaments, we are told, are active and sanguine; others are quiet and cautious. The active and sanguine are the Liberals; the quiet and cautious are the Conservatives. A singular illustration of the *idolon specus*! As though party were co-extensive with human nature, instead of being, as it is, a special phenomenon of parliamentary governments, and not universal even in these; for there have been cases, such as the parliamentary dictatorship of Chatham, in which party has for a time ceased to exist. The varieties of temperament are infinite, and instead of dividing mankind into two parties and two only, as the party system requires, divide them into groups without number, or rather run through the whole mass without forming any distinct line of cleavage; the same being often Liberal on one class of questions and Conservative on another, as Hume, Gibbon, Strauss, and Hegel were Liberals in theology and Conservative in politics. As a rule, youth is hopeful and fond of innovation; age is timid and reactionary; yet there are no reactionists so violent as the youthful members of an aristocratic party. Wealth and poverty unfortunately form a much stronger and more definite basis of permanent division; but the wealth of the United States probably is pretty equally distributed between the Democrats and the Republicans; junctions in the same party of