

The *personnel* of the House of Representatives is only average. The highest talent and the best mental and moral culture do not find their way into the American Parliament. In the United States, as in all countries where the democratic element is largely predominant, the undignified scramble for place disgusts most cultured men and drives them to seek distinction along professional or literary lines. Another influence which tends strongly to mediocrity in Congress, is the shortness of the political life of most Representatives. Half of the members of the Lower House go out at the end of their two year's term, never to return. The democratic spirit which pervades all American institutions, gives rise to a sentiment in favor of passing political honors around, and a man must have an especially strong "pull" in his district to secure re-election; while a third term is so rare as to be exceptional. Of only average ability when they first take their seats in Congress, most members are set aside for new men before they have had time to take on the polish and refinement which parliamentary experience usually gives. They have hardly learned even the routine of congressional business when their political life is snuffed out. Few men of wide culture and varied attainments will enter politics under such conditions, and thus it comes about that congress is composed mainly of men who are not above pandering to the prejudices and passions of the people,—shrewd, commonplace men of business, drawn into politics by the very mediocrity of their talents, by a craving for distinction, or by the salary and mileage and allowance for stationery.

The intellectual and moral average is higher in the Senate than in the House of Representatives. To a certain extent, the Senate constitutes the aristocratic element of Congress, the Natural Aristocracy of a democratic community. The traditional position of a Senator is that of an ambassador from his own Commonwealth State to the Congress of federated Commonwealths: he has therefore received a heritage of dignity from his senatorial ancestors of the days of Washington, Adams, and Jefferson. Yet with all this endowment of traditional dignity, Senators are, for the most part, shrewd, practical, business-like men, who understand both the practice and the making of laws; and the florid declamations that occasionally reach us through