

put himself under obligation to another, whom the business in hand does not in the least concern, and with whom he may, perhaps, strongly object to come into contact? It is for the people to remedy this evil. It is for the people to seize the idea that the present system deprives them of a free suffrage, and that it tends to corrupt the suffrage by giving men all kinds of mercenary motives for supporting one party rather than another. In the jargon of party politics those who vote against the party to which we belong are spoken of as "our enemies." Why "our enemies?" Is it not a hateful thought that we must make an enemy of a man who differs from us on some question of public policy, or in his appreciation of certain public men? Under the present system a Government is supposed to be greatly beholden to its supporters. The understanding is, "Put us in office, or keep us in office, and we will show you special favour. We want office and you want favours; let us do business on that basis." Well, the basis is not a good one, and it says something for human nature and inspires a certain amount of confidence in the larger currents of influence that make for good in the general economy of things, that, upon such a basis, government should be as well carried on as it is.

The fact is that there is a higher public opinion abroad in the country with which politicians have to reckon; and it is this higher opinion which forms the strongest support of the public man who desires to do his duty to the whole country. The machine even feels its force at times, as we see by some of the men it brings forward. A "strong" man is wanted to contest a certain constituency, and the strength of the strong man sometimes—not unfrequently—lies in the fact that he is a good man—a man with a reputation for honesty and fair dealing, for kindness of nature and public spirit. The sense of public duty grows rapidly upon such men; and, when they come into contact with the administrative system of the country, they perceive the iniquity of trying to twist it out of shape in order to serve their own private purposes. They recognize that "business is business" in a sense far different from that in which the phrase has sometimes been used. If patronage is forced upon them—and in a certain position a man cannot escape it—they exercise it with moderation, and, as far as possible, with an eye to the public good. But as to patronage in general, they sympathize with the feeling Sir Robert Peel had on the subject when, in a letter to Cobden, he spoke about "the odious power of patronage." Men of this character are not those whom the machine likes best to deal with. There are meannesses to which they will not stoop; there are vengeance they will not perpetrate; there are enmities they will not recognize. When men of superior character are forced, as they sometimes are, out of public life, it is this that breaks their spirit, the everlasting cropping up in their correspondence of paltry suggestions and impossible, if not iniquitous, demands.

The lesson I draw from these facts is that more trust should be reposed in the people, and that the people should put more trust in themselves.