

does exist, there is reason to fear, in democratic communities. "No observer of American politics," says a very able writer, Mr. E. L. Godkin, "can deny that, with regard to matters that can become the subject of legislation, the American voter listens with extreme impatience to anything which has the air of instruction; but the explanation is to be found not so much in his dislike of instruction as in his dislike, in the political field, of anything which savours of superiority. The truth seems to be," he continues, "that, with regard to all matters within the field of politics, the new democracy is exceedingly sensitive about any doubts of its competency. It will not suffer any question, or sign of question, of its full capacity to deal with any matter which calls for legislation."

Other testimonies can be cited to the same effect. The late James Russell Lowell, in his essay on Abraham Lincoln, written in 1864, expresses surprise that, "in a country which boasts of its intelligence, the theory should be so generally held that the most complicated of human contrivances, and one which every day becomes more complicated, can be worked at sight by any man able to talk for an hour or two without stopping to think." Again, Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts, in an article written only a few months ago, says: "Some people never seem to learn that the task of governing a great people is a serious and difficult task, and that the task of governing itself, by a great people, is more serious and difficult still."

The psychology of the case is not, I think, hard to understand. We are all familiar with the adage, "Every man to his trade." Negatively, it means that nobody should dabble in a trade that is not his and that he does not understand; and, positively, it means that every man is assumed to understand *his own* trade. The expansion of free institutions has thrown the work of government into the hands of the people, therefore government has become *their* trade; therefore they must know all about it; or, if they do not, they must refuse to acknowledge the fact. They must not let any college-bred man, or other superior person, affect to teach them their trade. The average voter does not like to think that there are any technicalities in the art of government or of administration which any plain man is not capable of dealing with. As to the government service, it is filled with *our* clerks, and of course, like other employers, we are all quite capable of telling *our* clerks what to do. A well-disposed village blacksmith in the neighborhood of Ottawa once offered me a "lift" in his buggy. As we drove along we passed the house of a prominent civil servant, when my friend enquired what salary the gentleman in question had. I said I was not sure, but thought about two thousand dollars; whereupon, turning to me, the man of muscle said very earnestly: "No man can earn two thousand dollars a year at a desk." He was himself earning at least that amount in his forge and carriage shop; but he did not think the feat could be honestly performed at a desk. My friend was a man of more than average intelligence and business ability, and his blunt declaration gave me a measure of the importance attached by the people to the work of the public departments.