



DO you realise, as you read these calm and even commonplace lines, that the proportion of insanity in this country is very considerably higher at this moment than it has been for years, or than it will be again until the next general elections? In fact, the entire North American continent contains more unbalanced minds—more determined lunatics—to-day than it did four weeks ago, or than it will four weeks hence. The truth is that there are very few of us who are not a little “touched.” Between elections, we can all discuss political questions with a fair amount of “sweet reasonableness” and a moderately straight quality of thinking. But, as a campaign warms up, many people become steadily more and more insane. There is no other word for it. They cease to see things as they are; and that is the supreme test of sanity. They cannot hear anything against one of their own party without feeling a sense of exasperation; and they cannot hear of a discovery to the discredit of a public man of the “other party” without a positive accession of glee.

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PARTY feeling is one of the most deeply rooted of the passions. It is immensely older than what we call “the party system.” Only the other day, comparatively speaking, did we begin to have Parliamentary parties; but party passion reddened the battlefields of the Wars of the Roses, raised its clamour in the circus of Christian Constantinople and the forum of Pagan Rome, surged about the temple of Jerusalem, rang through the streets of Memphis and was doubtless heard by the very bricks which the pick of the archaeologist is now digging from the most ancient mound of pre-historic ruins in the valley of the Euphrates. Ever since government began, there have been parties; though it is only of late that they have been willing to settle their difficulties without bloodshed. Now in a ruder age, it made a very great difference to the member of a party whether his “side” was in or out. If it were in, he lorded it over the members of the other party, probably took their property away from them, possibly their wives, in some cases their lives. This was “the spoils system” with a vengeance.

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THUS the party passion has very deep roots in our nature. They are at least as deep as those which feed our love of law and order. And we therefore need not be surprised when a party struggle awakes in our breasts an unreasoning desire to see our party win, right or wrong. What did the partisans of a time when “elections” were held with spear and sword in the clamorous streets, whose gutters ran with blood, care whether their party was right or wrong? They wanted to win so that they might govern; and in that day government meant tyranny, oppression of the fallen and plunder of the weak. They expected to be “wrong” in our sense as soon as they got into power, no matter what fair promises they might have previously made to attract the populace to their side. This lust for personal power is the parent of party feeling; and yet we wonder that it does not nicely weigh the ethical worthiness of its own side.

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OF course, party passion is all very stupid to-day. It is as useless and dangerous a survival of another condition as is the vermiform appendix. Inflammation of it, and it may cost the life of the nation. To-day the party that wins does not enslave and plunder the party that loses. It may pick up a few pennies—relatively—from the pockets of the country, and it may find a few soft berths for its battle-scarred soldiers; but if we want to know how much better this old world is than it used to be, all we need do is to contrast these “fruits of victory” with the plundered palaces, the ravished wives, the enslaved prisoners of war, the butchered rivals which constituted the “fruits of victory” in those earlier “general elections.” Thus there is no reward for blind party passion to-day. It costs its victims more than it brings them. The men who really are moved by party passion seldom get any nearer to the “fruits of victory” than a hand-shake

with the successful candidate or a “franked” blue-book from their worthy member.

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THE men who lead the parties and who get what “fruits” there are, are seldom victims of passion. They are the beneficiaries of cool calculation. They stir this ancient evil in others; but they do not feel it themselves. The methods which they employ to awake it in their followers are for them food for laughter or the cause of “ennui.” They have had their operation for this form of “appendicitis.” They have had their eyes opened. But party passion is very useful to them; and they hate to see the old flame die down. If the people once got it into their heads that politics was nothing more nor less than the discussion of the business of the country—about as wise a place to permit partisanship or any other intoxication to get hold of one as a meeting of a board of directors—they would cease to regard an election as a party struggle of the old kind, and approach it as the consideration by the stock-holders of two rival tickets for the Directorate. They would then all be independents and none of them partisans; and party passion would become as obsolete as the custom of sending members of the defeated party to prison or to the block.

Nidmporte

A MUSICAL DELEGATION

THE approaching visit of the Sheffield Choir to Canada is a musical event of importance beyond even the choral circles of the Dominion. There are about three hundred in the British party, of whom fifty are journalistic or business friends of the members of the great musical organisation. Two years ago, when this body of singers visited the German cities of Dusseldorf, Frankfurt and Cologne, the Teuton laid aside his stolidity and gave enthusiastic civic welcome and honour to the Yorkshire choir. The councils in the Canadian cities to be visited are already preparing to show the guests from the “North Countree” that the musical and industrial importance of this visit of the greatest English choir is appreciated in a young country whose lungs have already proved equal to effective “attack.”

THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS

ONE of the least known corners of Canada comprises the Magdalen Islands, thirteen in number, with their connecting sandbars that lie in the very centre of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, receiving the angry surf and tidal currents of the Atlantic from every side. Fifty miles to the west lies Prince Edward Island; ninety miles to the east, King Edward’s oldest colony, Newfoundland.

One is apt to forget the existence of the Magdalens, with their six thousand souls, in reckoning the territorial assets of the Dominion; indeed, it almost requires a magnifying glass to discern the spots that represent them on the map, and few Canadians could probably pass a satisfactory examination as to their location.—Canadian Magazine.



ELECTION OF LORD MAYOR OF LONDON, ENGLAND.

Sir William Truscott Lord Mayor elect of London, is leading the procession. He is in Official Robes, bearing a Bouquet of Flowers. He was elected according to the old-time ceremonies on the hustings strewn with sweet herbs in the Guildhall.