

A MIXED POLITICAL SITUATION.

The Need of Greater Independence of Party.

What an interesting panorama the political situation presents! Never in the history of the country has it been more momentous. Never has it more urgently challenged the study of the intelligent statesman, the patriotic citizen, or the student of social institutions. It seems little more than a warring anarchy of clans. With a presidential campaign in the foreground no great issue challenges the attention of the people. More truly, perhaps, none is presented to their consideration. Issue there is sure enough. Is it not constitutionalism and not anarchy? No sacrifice of life except for self-defence? No taxation except for self-preservation? Government should be for national maintenance, development for the people individually.

The very term "expansion" indicates the pressure of internal necessity, not external attraction or personal ambition. There are rumblings beneath the surface of the political sea indicating an upheaval in the not distant future. Constitutions have been declared antiquated and no longer the law of the land. The declaration of independence is pronounced null and void, or inapplicable to existing conditions. The great political parties offer sharply contrasting pictures. Superficially, at least, the republican party presents a homogeneous solidarity. Its rank and file offer a solid, resistant body in contradistinction to the heterogeneous anarchy presented by the democratic. It is a machine despotism without any visible machine and exclusive engineer or boss. Tammany democracy presents a visible machine and an overpowering boss. Is that democracy? Individuality is a thing not countenanced by the machine, except in the boss. In this there is no choice between the parties. "Mugwumps" are excommunicated as "infidels," though they may be "great chiefs" in intellectual ability and manly independence. Freedom has become antiquated. If not a lost art it is a rare and despised virtue. Freedom of speech is guaranteed in the constitution, but denied by the machine juggernaut. It crushes the free man under its ponderous wheels. "Once a republican always a republican," subserviency to machine dictation is the all-pervading dictum. The *sine qua non* to good standing in either party is intellectual imbecility.

A leading republican says: "I was born a republican I inherited my republicanism from my father. I imbibed it from my mother's breast." He surely could not have been fed on Alger beef or he might have been weaned and have put away such childish infatuation. In speaking of a recently elected congressman, another says: "Mr. — is a straight republican. He never will

assert his opinions in opposition to the will of the party, or against the wishes of his constituency." To what a punch and judy show has statesmanship degenerated:

Oh for a knight like Schurz,
Without reproach or fear.
Freedom's laurels on his brow,
Truth's cause upon his spear.

What a fall from the manly independence of the fathers! Wooden automatons in the seats of congress, connected by wire with the local committee rooms, would do equally well. The chairman could press the button, the automaton could answer "yes," or "nay." Much time could be saved. The salaries could go to the use of the local constituency and thereby save much expensive log-rolling. The issue at stake seems to be food for the machine. Nothing more! There is one striking and favorable characteristic in the republican party which is largely answerable for its unity. It has no party fetish causing anarchistic schisms in its rank. It has no demigod causing disputes as to its characteristics. It has leaders, but no autocratic infallibles to excommunicate as infidels those who disagree with the word of the fetish as interpreted by demagogic authority. The party is infallible in the eyes of its members but not its leaders. Herein lies an open door to freedom to those manly enough to break the chains and assert their constitutional rights.

How different the picture presented by the democracy! There all is anarchy. Is it any wonder that a leading party paper asks in desperation, "What is democracy?" Who can tell? The democracy is a towering Babel of disputing tongues, each claiming to be the only infallible voice of the great fetish, Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson was no democrat, at least in the modern sense. The only true democrat among the fathers was another Thomas, Paine by name. It is singular that the democrats deny their master. Probably he was too free of speech, too much of an "infidel," not subservient enough. Paine was of the people, out of the ranks of the people, for the people. Jefferson was an aristocratic autocrat. Anarchy is not only a characteristic, but the inevitable tendency of the democracy. The demos has invariably had something demon-like in its nature. So intense are the rivalries among the demogogs that they cannot sit down to a feast of brotherly love in honor of their great fetish. They excommunicate one another. One says that to be a true democrat one must be sixteen parts alloy to one part traditional democrat. Another declares that "sterling" silver is only a deceptive and spurious "coin," entirely foreign to the mint of true Jeffersonianism.

Following in the line of straight republicanism, previously noted, a prom-

inent candidate for the suffrage of the people says: "I am a democrat. I was born a democratic son of a democratic father, and if my son lives I shall be the father of a democratic son." That should be enough, but we are informed that the national democratic committee has read "that kind of a democrat out of the party." Just what that august body would do with Thomas Jefferson is hard to say. Certainly he was not the democratic son of a democratic father, nor did he have a democratic son. Probably the Salic law does not rule in the democracy, and the descent was by the female line.

Is it any wonder that democratic sons of democratic fathers are crying in their anguish, "Whither shall I turn in my trouble?" Tammany claims to offer the bread of life to the hungry masses, but they are told to "beware of false prophets," the tiger is but a ravening beast; outwardly he may be fair to look upon, but inwardly he is an "infidel;" sit yet not down to feast with him, for, lo! he invites only to devour you. Come unto us all ye that labor, here shall ye find sixteen deceptive men of silver who have more value than one traditional democrat of purest gold. Verily, crooked is the way and wide is the gate that leadeth to democracy and many innocents there be who go in thereat.

There are two democracies, the ideal and the real. The one is an *ignis fatuus*. It is a "government of the people, for the people, by the people," which implies that each one of the people shall be self-maintaining and self-governing. That condition has been and still is impossible. A representative government is not a democracy. The nearest possible approach to a democracy is a people the majority of which are capable to select an honest representation and powerful enough to enforce a just and constitutional government. Can we look for that in the democracy as it presents itself to consideration? Has the real, the historic, democracy ever offered such a condition? The much touted trust, in which each shareholder votes and benefits in proportion to his stock, is a limited picture of a true democracy. Historic record and existing conditions show the democracy to have been and to be a massing of the irresponsible and discontented by ambitious demogogs for their personal benefit.

The French revolution, the Paris commune, the uprisings in Chicago, are characteristic of the democracy. The democracy changes not! "Democracies," says Aristotle, "will be most subject to revolution from the dishonesty of demogogs for rousing the common people they induce them to join together, informing them against men of property, and this is what one may see in many states." Is not that the characteristic of democracy at present? Strangely familiar that term "common