

# Municipal Government

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**B**EFORE any intelligent effort can be adopted in any city in the country to carry on the work of municipal regeneration where it is needed the cause of the municipal disorders must be well understood. In our opinion that cause consists simply in this: The domination of municipal affairs by partisan or boss government, for the two are names for one and the same thing. The cause, the principal, the remote, the ultimate cause is the circumstance that the people choose to surrender the domination and the government of their municipal affairs to one or the other (it makes no matter which) of the great national political parties of the day.

Now, in saying that we have come to a conclusion that that is the cause have we made any new discovery? No. Any thoughtful man who at any time will look into the municipal situation, and into its essential nature, must see that such a surrender by the people of the control of their municipal affairs must necessarily be followed by the mischievous effects to which I have alluded, and yet but few, comparatively, are really persuaded of this. Many people have thought that the trouble was in republican government. They say: "Republican government is inadequate to the proper government of our cities, and we are powerless, therefore, to relieve it unless we abandon republican government and adopt some other." Others have said that it was the enormous influx of ignorant foreigners into the country—ignorant of our institutions, not understanding our language nor our customs, naturally the tools and instrumentalities of the politicians; as soon as that element became amalgamated with the general population of the country we should have a better state of things. Others, again, have said that it was in consequence of imperfect municipal charters—that our laws were insufficient; that we must have better laws—laws to punish offenses in reference to the transaction of municipal affairs—and that our remedy was to go to the legislature and have a lot of new laws enacted.

Now there is more or less truth in all these views. That is to say, there is this much truth in them: Our municipal disorders are aggravated; the ability of machine politicians to control municipal affairs is increased in consequence of the great number of foreigners—ignorant foreigners—who have come into the country; in consequence of the ignorance among those of our own community of the proper administration of municipal affairs; in consequence of the indifference of those who are more intelligent, but who wish to take no part. There is some truth in all of this, but we think that the main cause, which must be removed before any considerable improvement can be reached, is the surrender by the citizens of the several cities of the control of their affairs to the dominance of a partisan or boss machine.

I want to say a few words in explanation of this, and to show how it is brought about. Just look, for instance, at what the condition is. The cities of the country at the present time control an enormous amount of money. There is annually collected by taxation in the city of New York for municipal purposes \$100,000,000; \$30,000,000 in Philadelphia. I do not know how many in the city of Boston, but all over the country some \$800,000,000 or \$700,000,000 are annually collected by taxation for municipal purposes, and the control and management of that vast sum constitute means by which those who may be able to gain control of it may enrich themselves, enrich their associates, advance themselves on the road to political fortune and in a multitude of ways, mostly corrupt and improper, pervert those funds from their true and proper purpose. Now that is the great prize constantly offered at every election to the people of this country—a prize, which, of course, has approached its present magnitude only within recent years, which in the early history of the country did not exist at all or not exist to such an extent as to tempt persons seriously. Now, however, the temptation is enormous; it is prodigious; the force of it we can hardly measure; and this is the price which is dangled before the politician at every municipal election.

On the other hand, what are the inducements to honest men to take office? They must abandon their business; they must give up their regular pursuit, and they must devote themselves disinterestedly to the public good for little or no compensation. I need not say, that constituted as human nature is, here is a very great danger always present. Knowing, as we do, the weakness of human nature, is it a wonder that in the struggle for municipal office the men who want the possession of these glittering pecuniary prizes, and who know they can be obtained by the practice of unscrupulous means, will get the better of men who do not care to have the possession of them, and who under no circumstances will resort to unscrupulous means?

The republican and democratic parties, the two great national parties, have no concern with municipal politics. They never deal with them. You never see in their platforms anything about them. They know nothing about them; they care nothing about them; and, in reality, they have no proper concern with them. And yet they assume a concern. What do they want? They want the votes, all they can get, the one side or the other, and therefore they want some agency operating in these great cities which will act on their side and secure to them by one means or another (and they do not care what—at all events they do not exhibit much care about it) the greatest number of votes.

What can they offer in return? This: They have the control of the general party organization of the country. They can organize whichever local organization they

please and the one they choose to recognize is the only one that can exist. All the others must go out of existence. Now the leaders of the great political parties practically say to the politicians of the cities: "You bring us all the votes you can, and the man who is able to bring us the greatest number of votes (which is evidenced, of course, by the extent to which he carries municipal elections for the party)—the man who brings us the greatest number of votes, the organization that brings it, that man and that organization shall be pronounced regular;" and that declaration of course enables this municipal organization in the cities where it can carry an election to obtain entire control of the business of the municipality and of all its proceedings.

I remember a story of a gentleman who had been a member of congress, and after twenty years was elected again. When he went back he had occasion to go into one of the department offices, and he found there a gentleman, an official, who had been there when he was in congress twenty years before, and he congratulated him on it. He said, "How is it that you have remained here through so many changes of administrations?" There had been a half a dozen Republicans had come and gone and democrats had come and gone. "Well," says he, "if they can change their administration quicker than I can change my politics they are pretty smart." Now, these corrupt politicians of the municipal stripe do not care under what banner they fight—one is just as good as the other; and if you did attempt to put them out and did succeed in the attempt in one party, they would go over into the other and make that party successful by the same means.

The only remedy is to conquer the evil in its cause—this alliance, this control of municipal affairs by the political parties—to attack the control of the political parties over municipal affairs, to say to the political parties: "You have no business or concern with them. You must not nominate candidates; if you do they are to be beaten."

Now you ask, What does this mean? Does it mean that we are to organize, to have an organization in the various wards and districts of the city, a municipal party formed for the purpose of securing better government, and to put up candidates for mayor, for aldermen and other municipal offices and to endeavor to elect them? Yes, it means just that. Well, they say, you cannot do it. Perhaps you can't, but if you don't do it you will suffer. You will suffer and in the end you will be obliged to do it; and when it becomes necessary to do it, as it will, why then you will do it, because whatever is necessary to be done will be done as a matter of course, and the time will come when it will be necessary.

Well, is it not possible? Why, yes, it is possible if you will think so. If all the individuals or half of the well disposed

members of the community who have no pecuniary interest in politics would say, "we will adopt this policy," the thing would be done. A party would at once be formed, which, put in the field, would have the majority or would so endanger the election of candidates of either of the other two that it would quickly become superior and control the destinies of the city. Why, it is done repeatedly, is it not? We have done it two or three times in New York. It has been done in fifty of the cities of the country occasionally, sporadically indeed, but what has been done once or twice or three times, can it not be done always? Why, of course it can. If you can do it once, you can always do it.

I am a party man myself, and I like to see the great national policies which are presented by the two opposing parties presented to the people of the country, and their assent to this or that measure sought by discussion, by argument, by every fair influence upon the mind. The national political campaigns, with all their accompaniments, or most of them—there are some of them I would leave out—are interesting and valuable experiences, instructive to the citizen, necessary to freedom, and they are not to be given up by any manner of means. It is only when national politics undertake to encroach upon a domain with which they have no concern that the mischief arises, and it is at that point that our efforts ought to be directed.

If I should compare, however, the importance of national politics with municipal politics, if I may so call them, the importance of a proper control of national affairs with that of municipal affairs, I should say that the former were less important, almost like dust in the balance compared with the latter. In national affairs the moment degeneracy begins it is felt in every corner of your civil and political life. The moment unscrupulous men get possession of your municipal offices and turn them to their own purposes, your schools begin to suffer degradation, the pavement of your streets is affected, the cleanness of your city is gone, your police comes into alliance with crime and you are threatened with every sort of danger, and there is no form of social or political life in which you do not instantly feel the result. It is for this reason that I cannot help thinking that the attention to municipal affairs is vastly more important in immediate results than any attention to national politics, although I would by no means disparage the latter.

I look forward to a time when these views in reference to our municipal affairs will be better understood and will be generally accepted and acted upon, and the methods which now seem to some visionary will be fully employed and become thoroughly effective, and our cities, great and small, be made to be what they ought to be, the magnificent temples of our modern civilization.

New York City.

## When the First Stomach Was Formed

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**A**T SOME early time, in a manner that we do not understand clearly today, despite all our study, certain single, living cell-beings appeared in the world.

These creatures, in consisting of only one cell each, resembled the bacteria, amoebae and similar "infusoria" of today in this characteristic.

Each of these cell-beings carried out all the undertakings of simple life by itself. It moved, multiplied (through primitive fission), betrayed certain sensations and took nourishment.

The methods of this nourishment were different. In one case inorganic, mineral matter was taken in as we see it done today among the plants; in the other case, organic stuffs, already dissolved, were taken in the shape of other cell-beings, as we see feeding done today among the true animals. Both methods are to be seen today among the bacteria.

Let us remain with those single-cells that already had reached the point of nourishing themselves as "animals," by conquering other animals and weaker single-cells and devouring them.

This process of devouring and the entire process of nutrition in such a simple being proceeded without any organ—entirely without stomach or intestine. Just as no single cell in our stomachs has a stomach of its own, so did that single-cell of the dim past lack a stomach. It surrounded its food with its whole jelly-like cell-body, took it in whole and digested it whole, something as a drop of water will swallow a tiny bit of red color and become permeated with it till it is red through and through. We can still see this primitive mode of feeding in living single-cells of our time.

Then there came the first great advance. The primordial beings, hitherto strictly solitary, came together here and there and formed themselves into the very simplest forms of communities.

Let us assume that about 100 of each of them previously had moved itself forward in the water by lengthening its soft body into a pointed, thin thread, whose flammer-

ing motions whirled the tiny thing ahead. The newly formed clump of communitic cell-creatures also needed such motion. So, as the cells combine, each protruded its little filament end freely and before long the first mutual act of the clump was to achieve a certain measure of motion by which all the filaments were swung in even tempo. Thus at last the whole clump began to move in a forward direction.

It was a simple and natural result of this mutual act for the clump to acquire the shape of a bladder. Each single-cell had to remain in touch with the outer world for its own preservation. Therefore all of them crowded to the surface of the sphere; the inner portion remained empty and hollow and the bladder or hollow sphere was created.

A cell-community of this kind, forming a hollow sphere and moving merrily in the water through the rhythmic motion of each single-cell, is not a hypothetical thing invented for the purpose of illustration. Such communities live today in fresh as well as salt waters.

The single-cell individuals of this little, fast-moving, social bladder did not cling so hard to its outer edge merely for the sake of motion. The need for nourishment made it mandatory. Despite the now and close communion, each cell still fed for itself. Each had to fish for its own nourishment and digest it for itself. If a cell had fallen out of the outer circle into the inner part of the sphere it would have died miserably from hunger.

And now we begin to see how the food problem reaped the greatest benefit from this social community.

It lay not only in the fact that the sphere could reach new feeding places more quickly, propelled as it was by united powers. The chief gain lay in a spontaneous division of labor.

Before that, whenever a single-cell arch-being obtained a choice bit of food, it would become torpid for a while. It drew its filament-end in and lay still. In the new community, too, whenever a single-cell ate, it would fall into this digestive torpor. But now it was fast in the mass that moved as a whole. Even if it was

inactive itself, the sphere dragged it along.

So, even during its digestive sleep, it rolled toward new food supply, avoided dangers in brief, enjoyed all the advantages of motion.

In exchange the torpid single-cell paid a certain tribute to the contiguous cells in return for their work. Through the close crowding of the soft cell-bodies it became inevitable that some of the digested juices from the fed cell should flow into the neighboring cells.

Without its being "willed" by any of them, there began a compulsory co-operation. If four cells moved another cell around while it was torpid, they got some of the food absorbed by it in return.

For a time this, the most simple of all forms of mutual labor, took place, now here, now there, wherever and whenever a cell happened to seize food. But gradually this co-operation became practically inevitable. The bladder or sphere bored its way through the water in a straight line—one pole in front, one pole behind—to meet the floating of food. Now, what happened?

The cells in the forward end of the sphere obtained the most food.

So, in this part of the sphere, there developed a certain number of cells that fed, digested and became torpid continuously, until at last they did nothing else, ceasing entirely to furnish motive power to the ball. But to balance this, a constant stream of juices flowed from these over-fed cells into the rest of the sphere. The division of labor into feeding cells and motor cells began to develop according to rule.

So one day there appeared a sphere whose forward pole consisted entirely of feeding cells pure and simple, while the opposite end consisted of motor cells alone.

With this change, the necessity became even greater that the forward cells should eat enough to supply all the others. But their power was limited by their number and there was no room for more at the forward pole. What happened?

Suppose that it were desired to crowd an immense number of persons together on one of the poles of this earth to catch something falling from the sky. How

could the greatest number be accommodated with room?

Simply by digging a deep pit whose bottom and sides could be lined with people. This is just what the cells did. First they formed a shallow pit. At last they formed a concave hollow toward the inner part of the sphere; that is, the sphere collapsed toward the inward, like a rubber ball from which the air has been squeezed. It was a cup, wide open in front.

The outer surface of this cup consisted of the motor cells. The inner surface consisted of feeding cells. Now, when the cup glided forward, the food that met it swam straight into the open cup. And, since the entire inner side of that cup consisted of feeding cells, the food went directly to the right place.

And this adjustment of cells brought other advantages with it. The feeding and digesting cells were protected much better now against enemies and accidents than they had been when they were on the exposed surface of a sphere. And the connection between them and with the motor cells was immeasurably better. Their supply of nourishment could be given to them constantly.

Now, suppose a person who knows nothing at all of cells and cell communities were to capture such a cup-formed mass. What sort of an animal would he imagine it to be?

It would be clear to him that he had before him a very simply constructed creature, which possesses only two organs. On the outside is a skin, clothed, after the manner of many animals, with fine points—hairs. The animal swims in a straight line, propelled by the shimmering impulse of these hairs.

Inside the animal has a stomach, with which it eats and digests. This combination of only two organs—stomach and skin—gives the thing a primitive appearance. One perceives that it stands low in the scale of animal development. But at any rate it has organs—most important a stomach. So the beholder would say, "Yes; it is a real animal." And he would be

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