

AN ETHICAL VIEW OF AMERICAN POLITICS.

Origin of Political Parties.

NO. I.

[The following is the first of a series of articles written especially for THE COURIER by a resident of Washington, D. C., who prefers to write over an assumed name. The second article will appear next week. It will be a consideration of "Localism and Nationalism."]

A WELL known member of congress recently remarked in introducing a public lecturer that the demagogue is a much abused person, and that he is of more use to the community than most people imagine. The philosophy of this statement is not apparent at first impression, but it has prompted an inquiry into what might be termed the ethics of national politics. It is not the purpose of these papers to set forth the political history of the United States, but merely to consider some of our principal political characteristics which have been brought forth prominently in the origin and growth of our political institutions.

The close of the revolution found the American colonies practically bankrupt, each with its own local government, and extremely jealous of its neighbors. In those days, before the advent of the railroad, the telegraph or the steamboat, and, in fact, before the beginning of our modern industrial development, the ways of life were comparatively simple; the business of the new world was confined mostly to farming, store keeping and the practice of the learned professions. The corporation was a novelty, and that distinctively modern institution, the trust, was unknown. The masses of the people seldom traveled far from home, even in the course of a life time.

The whole life of the people was essentially local in character; there was but little commerce among the colonies and the people having just thrown off a foreign yoke which had proven very oppressive, were extremely loth to enter into any new arrangements which would curtail, in the slightest degree, their right to govern themselves, and in their own way. This feeling was so entrenched in the manhood of the new America that it is probable the constitution of the United States would never have been written, had it not been for the fear of foreign entanglements and oppression.

As it was, the opposition was so strong that the colonies were only able to form, in what is known as the articles of confederation, a union or rather an alliance, so weak that it was mistrusted at home and despised abroad. Foreign nations declined to accredit representatives to the embryo republic; the union was without an executive; and the congress, with power to declare war, could not raise an army or build a navy. The federal court of appeals had jurisdiction of certain cases, but had no power to enforce its decrees.

This chaotic condition of affairs, the direct result of local jealousies, could have but one effect, and that to intensify the mistrust with which the government was regarded at home, and force the colonies to form a stronger union—one that would at least command the respect of the civilized world, and have power enough to supervise the relations of the colonies themselves. It was to meet this want that the constitution of the United States was adopted by all the colonies—if reluctantly by some of them.

It is said that "self preservation is the first law of nature," or to put it in a less attractive form it might be said that selfishness is one of the principal characteristics of human nature. Through all the mazes of the world's political development, two contending forces can be detected—both usually find expression in the selfishness of selfinterest of its exponents; one of them has naught else to recommend it, while the other, though its leaders are usually unconscious of the fact, stands for some great principle, civil or religious, which is a necessary factor in the development of civilization. That force which stands for progress would often defeat its own end by over zeal were it not restrained by the opposing force.

Down to the period of the American revolution the world's progress was largely on military lines; the feudalism of the middle ages had finally produced great empires governed by military strength; it was in the American colonies that the germs of modern industrialism first began to grow. It had cost many battles and countless lives even since the Magna Charta, to wrest the principles of civil liberty from the ruling powers, and the colonists intended they should be preserved forever as an heritage unto their descendants.

Under such conditions and surroundings it was the logical consequence of the adoption of the federal constitution, that the people of

the new nation should resolve themselves into two political parties or divisions, one standing for the augmentation of the federal power while the other should follow the standard of localism, meaning the retention of as much power as possible by the states themselves. This party, if such it might be called at this time, had for its battle cry the charge that their opponents were striving to re-establish monarchical institutions in the new world.

Political parties are apt to favor or oppose a given measure purely as a matter of political expediency, and as a general rule, it may be said that just as the party in power is wise in its administration of the nation's affairs so will the party out of power be forced to take an unwise position on questions of the day to preserve the party autonomy.

The shifting sands of political expediency have so affected the development of party politics in the United States, that careful observation of almost any given period will fail to discover a clear alignment upon any known principles of division, except that through all the turmoil of party feeling from the beginning of the government to the present time, one principle of party divisions seems to be localism and nationalism. As a general rule—to which there are many exceptions, one of the parties has favored measures having for their object the strengthening of the local power—known sometimes as "states' rights" while the other favors extending the power of the national government known at this time as federalists.

NIXON.

TENNIS NOTES.

Tennis is once more popular in this city. The state university courts and the "dudes' pasture" are in demand every evening.

The old name "dudes' pasture," used here as a matter of habit, should be renounced unless the boys engage a number of "bloods" to occupy the benches and wear blazers. The boys go there now to play tennis. Let us propose a new name—Capitol courts.

On Wednesday evening there were a number of young ladies at the Capitol court. There will probably soon be a court reserved for the use of ladies, or one evening of each week will be made "ladies evening." Perhaps both of these arrangements will be made.

Among the new members of the Lincoln tennis club are the following: Will Owen Jones, John M. Stewart, Harry A. Reese and Mr. West.

It is said that Miss Pound and Dr. Ward of the university club will be much in evidence in the coming tournament. They played opposite Shepherd and Northam at the Capitol courts on Wednesday evening. The result was in even sets and even games.

Mr. Geisthardt is in his usual good form and plays the "Lawford" with his old-time speed. Fred Shepherd says that "singles" require too much work. Fred always was opposed to violent exertion. He proposes to confine himself to "doubles" this year. He and Hal Northam play a splendid team game. They will be among the leaders in the tournament.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Shepherd will not play "singles," for as a tournament player, he has more nerve and staying qualities than any player in the city.

In order to add interest and to give zest to the city tournament, the business men will be called upon to contribute some appropriate prizes for the contest.

The meeting of the executive committee of the state association will be held at the Grand hotel on May 2nd. The object of the meeting is to arrange the dates and places for the state tournament. It is likely that there will be two tournaments this year, one in singles and one in doubles, at different places.

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Your dollar will do you great service at Herpolsheimer & Co.'s first annual May sale, which begins next Tuesday, May 1, last balance of the week. Great bargains will be offered in every department in the big building in shoes, dry goods, capes, millinery, wash goods, linens, hosiery, corsets, silk mitts, fans and hundreds of other articles.