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CARTOONS AND COMMENTS.

"You retain the forms of freedom; but, so far as I can gather, there has been a considerable loss of the substance." This was said by Mr. Herbert Spencer to a reporter of the *New York Sun*. Mr. Herbert Spencer is an Englishman, a republican in principle, a man who has devoted his life to philosophic research. What he says is the truth. He has seen it clearly, and he has been in the country but a few weeks or months. He is not like the common Cockney tourist who sums up his opinions on the ways and manners of this blooming country after spending two days at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. He is a quiet, sober-minded thinker, a man who never expressed, on any subject, an opinion that was not worth the deep consideration of intelligent men. Now that he has told us the truth, perhaps it would be well for us if we took thought about the matter.

For he is right. We have abolished the plain, old-style King in this country, only to put in his place the Boss, an even more objectionable form of tyrant. For there is some grace of majesty about your King; he is, at the worst, a picturesque object, a national luxury. He throws a certain poetical glamour over the base business of politics. Whatever he may be, in himself—blackguard, idler, incompetent—he is, in some sort, an idol about whom cluster the reverent associations of a foolish, romantic religion. But the Boss has no saving grace whatever. He is a vulgar nuisance, a pot-house hero who, by means of the support of pot-house hero-worshippers of his own kind, is put in a position where he can make a shameful petty trade of what should be a dignified statecraft.

"You think the people have not a sufficient sense of public duty?"

"Well, that is one way of putting it; but there is a more specific way. Probably it will surprise you if I say that the American has not, I think, a sufficiently quick sense of his own claims, and at the same time, as a necessary consequence, not a sufficiently quick sense of the claims of others, for the two traits are organically related.

I observe that you tolerate various small interferences and dictations, which Englishmen are prone to resist. Free institutions can be maintained only by citizens, each of whom is instant to oppose every illegitimate act, every assumption of supremacy, every official excess of power, however trivial it may seem. As *Hamlet* says, there is such a thing as 'greatly to find quarrel in a straw,' when the straw implies a principle. If, as you say of the American, he pauses to consider whether he can afford the time and trouble—whether it will pay—corruption is sure to creep in. All these lapses from higher to lower forms begin in trifling ways; and it is only by incessant watchfulness that they can be prevented. As one of your early statesmen said: 'The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.'—*N. Y. Sun report, Oct. 20th.*

"Eternal Vigilance is the price of Liberty," in very truth. Americans have slumbered for a long time. At last they begin to show some signs of waking. They turn uneasily in their sleep; the burden of political corruption begins to lie heavy upon them. Sooner or later they will awake. And when they do awake, they will find a delectable job on their hands. Sleeping has cost them a "considerable loss" of their liberty. A republic has only to take forty winks to find itself in danger. Our republic has been sleeping for years. The incubus which has settled down upon it is not to be shaken off in an hour. There is a hard fight before us—a fight against "Bossism" and general corruption, and we ought to be grateful to an intelligent foreigner who utters such a note of warning as Mr. Herbert Spencer has favored us with.

Some Citizens are aroused, and indeed it is about time that they were. The thing to be considered is whether the arousing will be of any use. We have heard something of the same kind before, just before election, but it all came to nothing. A Republican or a Democrat who was to save the country from a headlong dash to perdition was elected, then the excitement subsided and the Republican or Democrat immediately set about either stealing, himself or putting his friends and acquaintances in the most favorable position for doing so. Still, knavery, like other things, cannot last forever, and it does seem as if there was some reason to expect a change.

The gentlemen who are always so ready to relieve the busy citizen from anxiety by undertaking to legislate for him, have of late been rather over-doing the business. They have been voting away millions of money for the improvement of duck-ponds and gutters in a most lively manner. Of course they meant well. They did not want the money or any part of it for themselves; they simply wished to show their constituents how devoted they were to their interests. If this River and Harbor steal was the only reprehensible act of which our politicians had been guilty, we should not have so much to complain of; but, unfortunately, the list is so long that we scarcely know where to begin.

We won't begin at all. The politicians themselves have saved us the necessity; besides, Puck has been hammering away at these abuses for years, consequently the whole world knows all about them. A Citizen party has been formed in this city to take the municipal offices out of the hands of partisan politics. It has our sincere sympathy. We want to see it go in and win. It was late in completing its organization, but there is yet time for it to achieve a victory if all sensible tax-payers will just rally round the flag of independence. It may be—who knows?—the beginning of the end.

It may result in burying in the deep, deep sea for ever and ever all the John Kellies, all

the Irving Halls, all the Tammany Halls, and all the abominable Paddy O'Rafferty combinations and organizations that curse the city. This Citizens' movement may break up that sink of iniquity and extortion, the sheriff's office, by putting a man like Colonel Emmons Clark there, who is above reproach, and who will do anything but respect the traditions of the office. He will certainly not allow the friends and rascals attached to the establishment to appropriate to themselves all the property of an unfortunate debtor that, by process of law, they may lay their hands on.

We are also in favor of Mr. Allan Campbell for Mayor, because we believe that he will make a good Mayor, perhaps better even than Mayor Grace, because he has had more experience in municipal affairs, and he knows just where the thieving is going on. It is true that under the present charter the Mayor has comparatively little power, but what power he has we may be quite sure will be exerted to the utmost by Mr. Allan Campbell in an honest way, and for the benefit of all the tax-payers. "Halls," Kellies and County Democracies are not wanted for the government of this city. We don't want them for the police, we don't want them for coroners, we don't want them for anything.

If our irresponsible politicians must have something on which to exercise their intrigues and air their eloquence, national politics offer a field quite large enough. Republicans and Democrats ought to have nothing to do with paving streets, lighting lamps, supplying water and paying police. All these things are for the benefit of citizens regardless of their political faith. We may be considered hopeful, but we would like to think that even for conducting national politics notorious thieves will be no more wanted, and that a new party will smash up bossism and all the undesirable parties who have helped to disgrace us in the eyes of the world. This breaking-up process has already begun in a small way, for the old methods of machine will not do, and the country is beginning to find it out.

The politician is mutable. As the sunshine changes the colors of the ocean, so does the light of fortune vary the aspect and general character of the politician. He looks upon his friends as so many lemons, which, having been squeezed dry, are of no further use, and consequently only eligible for the ash-barrel. One day the politician goes in quest of a perfect stranger in a coach, and treats him to all kinds of refreshments, and pretends to regard him in the sacred light of friendship. But, after election day, he meets the same man on the street, and never condescends to notice him.

The moral of this little bit of history is that a man should never put his trust in political candidates. If he is bent on selling his vote, he should get as high a price as possible for it, and not sell out for a drink or a five-dollar note. He should demand a yacht, a race-horse and a cottage by the sea, and get them before election day, in order to have them at all. At present the candidates are very friendly. They will agree with you in anything. They are humble enough to-day to go through the eye of a needle on all fours, even as the Biblical camels did; but the day after election they will be cold, implacable and haughty. They will not notice the men who elected them; they will glide around in swell clothes, and, like the dandy Indian in "Burdette's Life of William Penn," put on a good deal of dog. That's why we come out and declare that the politician is reeking with mutability.