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THE AMERICAN CAUCUS SYSTEM

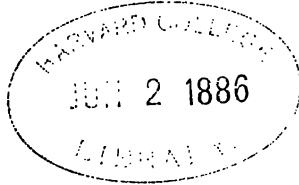
ITS ORIGIN, PURPOSE AND UTILITY

BY

GEORGE W. LAWTON

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THE
American Caucus System.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN AND ADOPTION OF THE WORD "CAUCUS."

CHARLES SUMNER states he was asked by Brougham in the presence of Lord Lyndhurst, the origin and meaning of 'caucus,' and replied, "It is difficult to assign any elementary to the word, but the most approved one referred its origin to the very town, and about the time (1772), of his lordship's birth."

It is a tradition of the 'town' of Boston that 'caucus' was a common word there before the Revolutionary War broke out, and that it originated in a feud between the British troops on the one side and the rope-walkers and calkers on the other. Bloody collisions, it is said, occurred between them. The latter held meetings in the calkers' hall in the lower part of the city, at which resolutions were adopted and speeches made denouncing the soldiers, who on their part deriding

the wordy war offered, sneeringly dubbed the opponents 'The Calkers,' which by an easy corruption became 'the caucus,' and finally a term denote the meetings.

But the word was in use prior to 1770, the time to which the tradition refers, as may be seen in a passage from the diary of John Adams, bearing date February, 1764, and reading as follows: "This day learned that the Caucus Club meets certain times in the garret of Tom Dawes, the adjutant of the Boston regiment. He has a large house and he has a movable partition in his garret which he takes down and the whole club meets in one room. There they smoke tobacco till you cannot see from one end of the garret to the other. There they drink flip, I suppose, and there they choose a moderator, who puts questions to be voted regularly. And selectmen, assessors, collectors, wardens of fire-wards and representative officers chosen before they are chosen at the town. Fairfield, Story, Ruddock, Adams, Cooper, and others are members. They send committees to wait on the Mercantile Club, and propose and join in the choice of officers and measures. Captain Cunningham has solicited him to these caucuses. They assured him benefit to his business."

Also the historian Gordon, who possesses an opportunity for investigation, in giving the

ings of the General Court of Massachusetts in June, 1774, says: "Mr. Sam'l Adams observed that some of the committee were for mild measures which he judged no ways suited to the present emergency. He conferred with Mr. Warren, of Plymouth, upon the necessity of going into spirited measures and then said: 'Do you keep the committee in play and I will go and make a caucus against the evening and do you meet me.'"

In a note upon the passage the historian says: "The word caucus and its derivative, caucusing, are often used in Boston. The last answers much to what we (English) style parlementeering. All my repeated applications to different gentlemen have not furnished me with a satisfactory account of the origin of caucus. It seems to mean a number of persons, whether more or less, met together to consult upon adopting and prosecuting some scheme of policy for carrying a favorite point. The word is not a novel invention. More than fifty years ago Mr. Sam'l Adams' father and twenty others, one or two from the north side of town where all the ship business is carried on, used to meet and make a caucus and lay plans for introducing certain persons into places of trust and power. When they had settled it they separated and used each their particular influence within his own circle. He and his friends would furnish themselves with ballots including the names of

the parties fixed upon, which they distributed upon the day of election. By acting in concert together with a careful and extensive distribution of ballots they generally carried the elections to their own minds. In like manner it was that Samuel Adams first became a representative for Boston."

This was written in 1778. No further information as to the origin of the word seems to be attainable. The diary of Mr. John Adams above quoted from is the oldest writing in which it is found. But Mr. Adams does not use it as a new or strange word but as one with which he was familiar. Possibly it was devised by some one of the Adams family, a people fruitful in ways and means to attain their ends. Gordon's statement, it may be observed, agrees very nearly with the expression of Senator Barbour, of Virginia, made during the famous caucus debate in the Senate of the United States, to which fuller reference will be made, who said: "It [caucus] was first suggested by the venerable Samuel Adams, or his father, and had its origin in the spirit that gave birth to this nation."

But while the origin of the word is uncertain, it is clear it was not adopted into the English language without opposition, protests and apologies. Mr. Niles says of a notice entitled 'Caucus,' inserted in the *Register* in 1820 by the Chairman of the Republican Committee of the congress, "We

are sorry to see this awkward word naturalized by a semi-official publication by a member of Congress."

In 1823 the Legislature of Tennessee passed a series of resolutions and sent them to the governors of the several states, to bring about concert of action in opposition to the practice that had held from Jefferson's day, of members of Congress meeting in caucus and nominating a candidate for the presidency. The scholarly and critical governor of Georgia, Throop, whose literary tastes were doubtless formed by Addison and his *Spectator*, was offended at this intrusion of the word *caucus* into a legislative act by Tennessee, and improved the occasion in his message transmitting the resolutions to the Legislature of his own state to condemn its use. "The paper purports," he says, "to be a formal act of the Legislature of Tennessee, and its object the denunciation of what it pleases to call a 'caucus' which may possibly be held at the city of Washington by members of Congress for election purposes. What precise and definite meaning the Legislature of Tennessee designs to attach to the word 'caucus' I cannot conceive. It is not an English word. It is not to be found in our dictionary, and being an uncouth word and of harsh sound I hope it never may. It is not to be found in the constitution and laws of Tennessee,

and being a mere abstract conception cannot become a subject of legislation at all."

During the agitation in the country over the matter referred to by the Tennessee Legislature, the Senate of the United States were drawn into a discussion of the word upon a remark made by Senator King, of New York, who is reported to have said, "My attention has been most powerfully attracted by a power which has risen up, which appears to me so terrific that I dare hardly to contemplate the effect it may produce: I mean the power which members of Congress have assumed of nominating a president of the United States." Upon this the discussion was taken up by other senators and it soon became general and finally not a little heated, during which some one let fall the word which was in every senator's mind but which was scrupulously tabooed their lips. Without doubt the word falling on the ears of the fervent debators was thrown about as a dead cat is hurled by reckless schoolboys around their playground, until some one, more mindful of proprieties than of the rough sport, points out the offensiveness of the thing, when all cease, and wiping their fingers affect not to have touched it. So here upon the suggestion of a senator all at once thoughtful of the dignity of the body he honored, the main debate was interrupted and the inquiry turned upon the question who first uttered 'caucus' in

their presence. Mr. Holmes charged the breach directly upon Mr. King, saying, "The first use of the word came from the senator from New York." Mr. King promptly denied this with some warmth. Finally, after various exculpations Mr. Haynes of South Carolina brought it home to the veteran senator Mr. Smith, of Maryland, who replied: "I am unwilling that the discussion of a subject so unprofitable that I am mortified at its being introduced, and so little comporting with the dignity of the Senate, should be attributed to me. I regret that the honorable senator from New York should have deemed it proper to introduce it. It is true he qualified it by a new name, 'central power.' However, either my ear deceived me or I heard him use the word caucus, and one member opposite took it down. But whether he did or not his meaning was perfectly understood, and if I used it I used it because I wished to give it the known name. I wished to call a spade a spade."

But all opposition to or delicacy in the use of the word has with time disappeared in the United States and it has found its way to foreign lands. Even the walls of Parliament have echoed it. But occasionally an ear can be found that it offends. A writer recently in the *London Times*, referring to what had been called a caucus of politicians held at the house of Mr. Gladstone, objected to its being called a caucus, and remarks, "Caucus is by

their home, restrained if at all in their enjoyment of life only by laws exactly adapted to their welfare and existence. Nevertheless they were discontented and desired to choose for themselves, and asked for a king.

Jupiter throws them a log. At first there is the excitement of fear. The frogs diving out of sight scatter from its presence, but soon reappearing swim about the log, and finally mount and sit contemptuously upon it. Again their voices go up to Jupiter for a king, a real king. Jupiter listens to the prayer, and to punish them for their folly sends them a stork, which ate many of them.

This fable indicates the tendency of men and warns against its development.

The elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel, saying, "Now make us a king to judge us like all nations." The enormity of this request, coming from Israel, the freest nation—a nation of republics, indeed—in existence, was inconceivably great. The God of Samuel had fashioned them a peculiar people, had directed all their steps, from Bethel in Canaan to their abode in the fat pastures of Goshen, had sustained them through all their tribulations in Egypt, and had ultimately brought them up out of a bondage so dark and helpless, that their sons therein, as they came into the world, were strangled by their masters' midwives, to prevent an increase, with no re-

lief for Israel, unless found in cunning or evasion, and no mercy, unless found in sedgy waters and sheltering bulrushes, to be again a free people in ancient Canaan, possessed of spirit to stand for their offspring sword in hand if need be. The prophet was grieved at the request, but yielded to the express command of Jehovah, who said to him—

“They have not rejected ‘thee’ but ‘me’ that ‘I’ should not rule over them. Now show them the manner of the king that shall rule over them.”

“He will take your sons to be his horsemen; he will take your daughters to be his cooks; he will take your fields, your vineyards and olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his eunuchs. He will take the tenth of your sheep and ye shall be his servants.” Nevertheless the people insisted, and said: “But we will have a king over us,” and gathering together at Mizpah they cast lots and Saul was chosen. Thus deliberately was their freedom bartered for the rule of a king. The act made a deadly change in the polity of Israel never retrieved.

Since Mizpah what contest have men waged with greater persistency than this, ‘to establish a government for themselves, of themselves, by themselves,’ free from the tyranny Mizpah warns them shall be the manner of it? A continuous struggle, the best minds, the bravest hearts and a long suc-

cession of prophets and Samuels have fallen martyrs in it. The people shout and lift the yoke to their shoulders, but immediately commence the struggle to throw it off again. Their blood is shed, their sons and daughters, their vineyards and olive-yards are demanded and given up, the power they have installed exhausts them either to maintain or to overthrow. So history reads from Mizpah to this day. It is the government established and the exactions and sacrifices demanded by it and fought against that makes the history. Every nation as it grows towards freedom repeats the sad refrain. In the freest it is the cause of their political contests though never so bloodless.

Turn now from the exemplifying history of a race made unancestral by its law of circumcision to that of an ancestral people whose blood flows in English veins—athletic barbarians, whose yellow hair and flaming blue eyes were the admiration of the swarthy black-eyed soldiery of Italy. Tacitus says they inhabited Germany, a country so inhospitable in climate, aspect and soil that few visited it, and no one would desert benignant Italy to dwell therein unless it was his native land. These barbarians had their political customs, among which was, at stated periods, chosen in the full of the moon, to get together and elect rulers for themselves and debate the weightier matters of common concern. The historian says they acquired the

vice, growing out of their excessive freedom, of consuming several days in going to these assemblies, and going not as men obeying a summons thither, but as men who go of their own will. They also went armed, and sat in convention with their weapons in hand. The debates were opened by the chief and most noted warriors and continued by those having a reputation for sagacity and others skilful in debate. The audience listened with great frankness, not to say impressiveness. If the sentiments of the speaker pleased, they clashed their arms together or beat upon their shields. If displeasing they spurned them by uttering a "short and broken roar," and that their voices might swell fuller and harsher by the repercussion they placed their shields above their faces—practices that have descended with their blood to their children, the English and American law-making yeomanry; somewhat modified perhaps, but bearing those ancestral marks.

The times of King Alfred might be drawn upon for illustrations of this subject, but other records will prove of greater pertinence.

Mild Roger Williams, in 1636, fled from the persecuting power of the government of Massachusetts's Bay and found refuge on an island in the Narragansett. Yet the men who appointed that persecuting power were themselves fugitives from tyranny. But now the banished Roger and his co-

sojourners on the islands and mainland of the ~~is~~^{ir} secluded retreat, likewise set up a state and install a ruler among them, as the following entry in the earliest records of Rhode Island discloses :

“ *April 3rd, 1636.*—We whose names are under written doe acknowledge ourselves the loyal subjects of his Majesty, King Charles, and in his name doe hereby binde ourselves into a body politick unto his laws according to matters of justice.” (Signed) Wm. Hutchinson, George Lawton, and twenty odd others, men who preferred the unbroken wilderness of America to the manner of the kingdom Charles the First ruled and wherein they were born. But they have scarcely erected shelters, much needed for their travel-worn bodies, when they face about and solemnly acknowledge themselves “loyal subjects to his Majesty,” and bind themselves unto his laws, the British Constitution, and the customs of his realm, with the reservation, however, “according to matters of justice.”

Had not these men learned from boyhood that perfect security for their sons and daughters, their fields and vineyards, rested beneath the British Constitution, and that the common law was wonderfully and subtly adapted to give the very right to high and low, and that next to the Lord's Prayer the best was the prayer of the pleading suitor in “his Majesty's High Court of Chancery”? Had

But this been dinned into their ears from the cradle? And yet must they, when about to affirm an allegiance nearly severed, feel it should be done with the qualification "according to matters of justice"? Did the place, the primeval forest, the smiling waters of the bay, the wild men, wondering spectators of the scene, and whose freedom they spurned, suggest the limitation?

And further, the record discloses, "According to the true intent of the foregoing instrument, we whose names are particularly recorded do agree, jointly or by the major voice, to govern ourselves by the ruler or judge amongst us in all transactions for the space of one year, he behaving himself according to the tenor of the same." Thus, while submitting themselves to a judge or ruler, to be chosen jointly or by the major voice, they have thoughtfully included a check upon his conduct and powers. The prophecy of Mizpah, visible in the history of every nation, lies before them, and they would circumvent it. Their ruler shall not take their sons and daughters, their olive-yards and vineyards, but shall behave himself "according to matters of justice." A very human invention and carefully inaugurated, and in latter times developed throughout the United States with greater particularity in written constitutions, more or less exhaustive and code-like, and by experimental legislation.

in motion; and it was all-important, in order to get the full benefit of the meeting, that the attendance of the citizen should be secured.

It was a political exaction. The body "politic" demanded it, and determined, without pausing to accommodate the convenience of the citizen, that it should be observed or punishment follow. It may not have worked great grievance to assert this power against a man who had elected to be one of the body politic, and who in harmony with it should accept his portion of the accompanying exactions, even to the yielding up his liberty. But the infant state exercised other exacting powers, as is further disclosed from the records of Providence township. "It was agreed that Joshua Verein, upon a breach of covenant for restraining of liberty of conscience, shall be withheld from the libertie of voting till he shall declare the contrary." Here a member of the community is disfranchised, one who, public policy requires, shall actually attend and not be wanting at the town-meeting above fifteen minutes after the time set, or be depleted in basket and store.

Ah, then, Joshua, who fled from England to Salem and from Salem to the Narragansett wilderness for "conscience' sake," has for infringing upon it, himself become an object of civil discipline! But what was his offence? The record says he forbid his wife going so often as she

wished, to hear Roger Williams preach. Indeed, this Joshua, after all his fleeings and sufferings, passes into history a tyrant over conscience. No matter if he honestly thought, and could have shown his good wife neglected the mending and the dairy to sit under the soul-instructive monition of the zealous Roger, he grievously misjudged "libertie of conscience" in forbidding her to hear as many of the great preacher's sermons as she hungered for, and now he feels the heavy arm of the body politic for his error!!

But it is not necessary to detain the reader further on this point. What has been noticed, clearly illustrates the tendency of men to submit themselves voluntarily to political rule with all the exactions attendant upon it. It is said they do so, partly from distrust of themselves and for the benefits derived within the rules established and enforced by the body politic for its own maintenance and for the sake of good order. The fact is, it is the return, the groping for the ruler rejected at Mizpah.

The organization of the plantations of Rhode Island, being peculiar and of a spontaneous nature, seems to illustrate the law referred to very clearly. As a general rule the American Colonies were founded under charters granted by the King of Great Britain, with a government organized in advance of actual settlement, and there was no direct

break in authority in their cases. Even the Plymouth Colony cannot properly be said to be in all respects an exception to the rule. Besides, it was composed of a body of co-religionists with a system of church government in force among them, and when they touched the bleak shores of Plymouth Bay, and before debarking from the Mayflower, they executed a written compact, "for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith," and "the better ordering, preservation and furtherance of the ends thereof," in which we may also read, "we do covenant and combine ourselves together into a body politic," and "by virtue hereof enact, constitute and frame just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices from time to time as shall be thought most convenient for the general good of the colony, unto which we promise all submission and obedience." And they chose John Carver their governor for one year.

These people constituted a homogeneous body, and may be said to have merely drawn over themselves again the covering of civil authority slipped off in their migrations about the continents. Their last act while within the discipline of a British ship was to enter into and subscribe the compact above quoted from, and therefore it may not be said with as much truth that all civil government had in their case been broken away from as in that of the settlers of Rhode Island. As to them, no

common bond, not even that of a common religious belief, brought them together. They were fugitives and stragglers from other, to them, oppressive governments, seeking by the peaceful waters of the Narragansett the freedom they prized above all hardships. Quakers hated and persecuted, Immersionists openly reviled, Roman Catholics and churchmen stigmatized as followers of the scarlet woman, men of no fixed religious belief, all found their way thither unattended or in small groups, because they were not tolerated or were unhappy in the settled portions of the Old and New World, and helped to form a new state. And the settlements planted in the wilderness no sooner numbered a score or two of inhabitants each, when, lo! they are moved, to form a body politic and to govern themselves by the ruler or judge chosen from their number. The government these people instituted was not modelled after any known government existing, or in history. No allusion is made to the Bible, since they disagree among themselves as to its interpretation, and even as to its sacredness; but its cardinal teaching is the corner-stone they select to build upon. The ruler they choose must behave himself according to matters of justice. With this as their rock they erect a state and declare themselves—weak as they are in numbers, wealth and experience in affairs—a body politic, and maintain that position through all the vicissitudes of their stirring history.

CHAPTER III.

THE DIRECTION OF POLITICAL POWER IS WITH THE CAUCUS.

THE towns mentioned so frequently in the early history of New England were in the main portions of the great wilderness occupied by venturesome individuals, who asserted title thereto of, perhaps, an illusory character, but which generally, if not sustained by purchase or gift from the Indians, had at least the might of the stronger arm for its protection. But whatever the title to the soil may have been, these settlements rapidly increased in numbers, and each speedily organized itself into a body politic, the better to manage its internal affairs, which, as already noted, was through a general assembly of the residents of the territory embraced, and over which was exercised an entire dominion, as the following further entry in the Rhode Island records illustrate :

“It was agreed that William Carpenter and Mary Sweet should pay, in consideration of ground at present granted unto them, two shillings and sixpence apiece. And also Edward Cope, five shillings and sixpence. Item, that all future

comers, upon the grant of like portion of ground unto them for their home, each shall pay one shilling and sixpence. It was agreed that two men should be deputed to view the lumber on the common, and that such as have occasion to use lumber should repair unto them for their advice and counsel to fell timber for their use."

These gatherings of the people early took the name of "town-meetings," and have been the theme of constant eulogy by their own and other historians, and especially by the ever recurring theoretical writer. Grave judges also in American courts of last resort, probing for a solid bottom on which to rest their decrees against threatened political concentration or aggressive corporate claims, made on the strength of legislative grants, have found here the desired rock. And without doubt about all there is left to the people of pure democracy in the United States—a kind of government inherited from the tribal condition, traces of which may yet be shown in Old England—exists in the town-meeting.

But governments simple as town-meetings could serve only on limited territory, and with no external matters of moment pressing upon their attention. They gave rise speedily to the more effective representative form of government, which is indeed the necessary outgrowth of, but not original with, communities of a homogeneous democratic na-

ture. All nations have resorted to representation in their affairs, and these colonists were by history and some knowledge of its practice in the British Islands informed about it. The famous Amphyctionic council in the Doric states of Greece, as is known, was composed of deputies or representatives sent from each of the cities and tribes composing the league, and among the powers possessed by these deputies was that of voting decrees and regulations applicable to the league generally.

But the oldest representative governmental assembly known in history, the incomparable statesman, Moses, hiding his face before the burning bush, was directed to summon in Egypt. Much has been said and written in defence of the divine right of kings, drawn from the anointing of Saul prior to his election by the people at Mizpah. But the record of the summoning together a representative political body to constitute the civil authority of the several tribes and families that made up Israel, long antedates the choice of Saul. It also possesses the distinguishing feature of having originated with Jehovah, and is a form of government powerless to steal the hearts of the people away from him and commit them to idolatry, as too often the other forms proved capable of doing. Nor is the command to Moses coupled with the announcement that a flood of evils would

accompany a compliance therewith, as was the acquiescence of Jehovah in the election of a king at Mizpah, but on the contrary, blessings and a great future are given it, a feature too important to have been undesigned. "Go and gather," is the command, "the elders of Israel together, and say to them I will bring you out of the affliction of Egypt into a land flowing with milk and honey." "And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel, and Aaron laid before them the message the Lord had spoken unto Moses."

That this was purely a representative assembly admits of no doubt. The Jews at that time numbered over two millions. They had sprung centuries before from the loins of twelve brothers. They were not a nation; they were a people divided into twelve parts, each part or tribe choosing, by some regulation of a democratic nature, men to look after their affairs, who were called elders. These men, by the efforts of Moses and Aaron, were assembled together to determine whether the twelve tribes should break away from Egypt,—the land that had been the home of their race for generations and where they all were born,—and to go to distant Canaan and expel by force of arms the nations inhabiting it, according to the message laid before them. Certainly that was a remarkable duty, and cast upon no prince or king,

but upon the representatives of millions of men. They met and considered the message and gave their consent. Moses sought Pharaoh and permission from him to depart into the desert. Subsequently, in the wilderness, the Jews were more perfectly organized into a nation preserving the representative form of government, which was made still more perfect upon the allotment of Canaan to the different tribes under Joshua.

A representative government not being new nor strange to American colonists, they adopt it and form a General Court by representatives chosen from the several towns, who confined themselves to such matters as concerned the communities at large.

But with the election of persons to office came the necessity of making choice of the man, and with that came also the need of concentration prior to balloting for the one selected.

Mr. Hildreth, in his history of the United States, mentions that, at the May election in the Plymouth Colony in 1635, the deputies from the several towns came together the day before and agreed upon Haynes for governor, who was duly chosen. This, the historian says, is the first instance of the caucus system on record, and adds, that the proceeding offended Ludlow, who, on account of it, called the validity of the election in question. Whereupon the citizens retaliated

by electing Billingham instead of Ludlow for deputy governor. But the historian is in error in assuming that was the first instance of the caucus system on record, for we have only to turn to the ancient record already freely drawn upon—which, as it is the oldest and ablest history of human affairs, is both an interesting and instructive study—to find an instance of the use of the caucus system as it is now called, and a political campaign directed by it, with all the accessories so well known and used in modern times by politicians to a successful conclusion, and which also offended the defeated aspirant, who protested by an aptly illustrative allegory.

Abimelech, one of the many sons of Gideon, desired the judgeship vacated by the death of his father. He had no special fitness for the place, or reason to expect the office. But, determined to possess it, he applied himself to that end with all the arts of a modern demagogue and self-seeker. He was one of the tribe of Manasseh, and it was necessary for him to secure a following among the Shechemites. Whereupon, taking advantage of the kinship of his mother, who was a Shechemite, he went to Shechem, and “communed,” made a caucus, with her brethren and all the family of his mother’s father, to induce them to solicit votes for him in that city.

An instance of a powerful family meeting in

caucus is related by Hammond in his political history of New York. Speaking of the Livingstons, who were originally zealous Federalists, but who opposed General Hamilton, he says : " The family, one evening in 1790, had a meeting for the purpose of deliberating on the subject, and the result was that the next morning every one of them took his stand as a Republican."

Abimelech was not less successful with the family of his mother, and of his " mother's father." Their jealousy of others, and the promise of place and power under his administration, were then as now effective. The Scripture represents Abimelech clinching his proposals with, " Remember, I am of your bone and flesh"—the stock argument of promise and division used from his day to this by all such aspirants. Suffice that Abimelech secured an advantageous following, men who not only solicited, button-holed the Shechemites and " inclined " them unto him, but who also secured a campaign fund by an assessment of three hundred shekels, with which he hired " vain and light persons"—secured the floating vote—to follow him. A very thoroughly worked canvass from bottom up, a modern politician would say ; and when the people assembled by the pillar that was in Shechem, Abimelech received their suffrages and was elected. But a protest went up from Jotham, who laid bare the real nature of all such political

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work by the fable of the trees that went forth to anoint a king over them. They appealed in turn to the olive, the fig and the vine to become their king, but each refused. And then they went to the bramble, which consented on the condition the trees would put their trust in its shadow, or fire should go out of its branches and consume the best of them, even the cedars of Lebanon.

In the exigencies of political affairs how frequently it happens that some person, a very Abimelech among men, obtains over others as much better than himself as the olive and fig are better than the bramble, place and power which he cannot long retain against the better sense of the community, except it be possible for him to debase them to the level of a trust in his shadow, or for his destructive jealousy to go forth as fire from the branches and overwhelm those whose worth threatens his position.

It would be very difficult indeed to assign a date, even approximately, to the birth of the caucus system. But that it has long been in the past as it is now an instrument, potent for good and evil, indeed, "king" in political matters, is apparent.

If the family is the basis of all civil government, as many publicists insist, the multiplication of families necessitated a union among them under a common head, and a choice of the common head

introduced the practice of selecting one individual to fill that office from among a number, a necessity constantly recurring in the progress of events. And with it came the need of consultation or caucusing to bring about unity of action by those who favored the selection of some one individual in preference to another. The policy or direction to be given to the affairs of a community by the chieftain so chosen would also come before these conferences, especially if full freedom of choice existed; and where it did not exist, not unfrequently there would arise caucusing "of honorable dangerous consequences" in connection with the individual holding, or with the one to be elevated to the chief power. Political writers of the past uniformly recognize the early existence of the caucus in affairs, among whom and not least in very able company is the ex-president John Adams, who writes: "Caucuses of patricians, caucuses of plebeians always prevailed at Rome, and in all other free countries." And with no less truth he writes in reference to the service of the caucus in the United States: "Our revolution was effected by caucus, the Federal constitution was formed by caucus, and the Federal administration was sustained by it." And in a letter to Roger Sherman upon the method of choosing the president by electors appointed for the purpose by the people or by the Legislature of the states, he says: "All

these complications of machinery, these wheels within wheels—imperia within imperia—have not been sufficient to satisfy the people. They have invented a balance to all balances in their caucuses: state caucuses, district caucuses, town caucuses, parish caucuses and Sunday caucuses at church doors; and in these aristocratical caucuses elections are determined.”

This so general application and development of the caucus is as yet peculiar to the United States. Here it took its name “caucus,” a word, as we have seen, of American origin, and deemed here a fit, but since its adoption a much abused term, to designate a meeting for conference of citizens engaged upon party work, to further the measures they advocate by the choice of a public officer who will carry them into effect, or to bring support to a political measure which they favor.

IV.

WHAT GIVES THE CAUCUS ITS AUTHORITY.

THE first glimpse we have in history of the caucus, as before noted, shows a self-seeker in possession using it to secure for himself an office within the gift of the people of Shechem. And the description given of the Boston Caucus Club shows its members engaged in filling the city offices with selections from their own number. Also Hildreth's reference to the caucus leaves it uncertain that it was not a combination of men, made for the purpose of securing the election of a favorite to the governorship of a colony.

From these and many other instances of its like employment, that might be drawn from past and recent times, and which it would be affectation to cite, an odious reputation for want of disinterestedness in its objects and impartiality in its methods has attached to the caucus, which gives occasion for fair-dealing men to entertain an ill opinion of it. But a careful examination of the source of its power discloses this odious selfishness and partiality to be the weakness of the caucus and not its strength, and should be avoided.

It was a cardinal rule of one of the most sagacious of American politicians, to go into caucus in the support of measures, primarily and secondarily, in behalf of men. For, when there is no principle at stake, the contest sinks to the canvass of individual benefits, and unavoidably to intrigue and importunate appeal, accompanied by backbiting, slander and deception. To use his own words: "Every old politician knows a caucus is always provocative of animosities, confusion and disgrace, when got up for the support of persons instead of things. To this rule not an exception has come within my knowledge since 1797, when I first had a right to assume and take upon myself the part of a politician, and I was always one of the most zealous adherents to the proceedings adopted, when measures are regarded, but never so acted in favor of persons alone, nor will I until I shall fix a price on my vote."

The position of this political sage will be better understood upon a brief consideration of the influence principles have in the formation and conduct of parties, which finds its apposite illustration in American colonial and federal history.

Prior to the Revolutionary War, the policy of the Crown of England was designed to establish its power and prerogatives, and to repress all growth of democracy in the colonies; hence the colonists were divided into two main parties, to

which were given the names Whig and Tory—names borrowed from England, but distinguishing there advocates of political principles and measures not entirely applicable to the colonists. This division into parties was further aided by conditions that lay below Parliamentary decrees and imperial rescripts. The colonists were Bible-reading, and thinking people. They saw that the doctrine of the divine right of kings was not the freedom of the masses, and intensely realized that fact. To secure liberty was to them a duty and their mission. And this provoked a contest with the bonds and withes that king-craft cunningly in its own behalf casts about the subject, and which custom, moss-grown, and education, perverted by superstition, had sanctioned.

Necessarily, men who have been drawn together to plant a society in a wilderness, that should live and supplant the wilderness, and be destined to become a great and free nation, would resist all checks upon their freedom attempted by interests so entirely at war with it. The colonists may not have foreseen the great republic that now stands upon the foundations they so wisely and so persistently labored to lay; and may not have built in view of such an edifice, but, in the sense that those who adhere to a great truth and struggle in its behalf, guard it from overgrowing parasites, until all men come to hail it as vital in human

affairs, may be said to have foreseen the blessings, however glorious and abundant in after days in its full fruition showering from it, so those pioneers of the republic may be justly honored as the prophets of the day that saw it a fixed fact, and taking its place among the nations of the earth the freest, because the truthfulest of them all.

It is probable the colonists drew some inspiration from the freedom possessed by the savages in the forests about them, and were further animated by it to preserve on the soil on which it had existed for unnumbered ages, somewhat of its blessings for the future. They constantly complained to the Crown of laws that infringed upon liberty, and petitioned for laws that would secure its enjoyment to all alike. They stoutly repudiated that theory of society and government, which makes both creatures of human devising, the gift of some exalted donor having a treasury out of which he may select and grant to men, as privileges, their rights.

Such was the contest maintained on the one part by the Whigs and opposed by those who believed on the contrary, in the divine right of kings, and gave ready support to all the measures of the Crown, including those which subverted freedom and imposed servitude.

These views, so radically different, affected every individual colonist. Every colonial act, every

choice of a public officer was determined by them. Majorities were gathered and minorities overridden at the caucus, hustings and ballot-box, because of them; and when the contest could no longer be kept within the limits of public discussion, the ballot-box and legislative halls, war broke forth and armies were formed, and men offered their lives to make those principles the policy of the colonial government. The doctrine, the government is not a fountain of blessings, but is the concentrated might of the people, to be directed to resist and defeat every infringement of the God-given blessings freedom possesses for them, became the battle-cry of a nation.

With the war came the death of the Tory party. The name itself became a word of reproach, nor was there room given to neutrals. The contest was vital and whoever was not for the patriotic Whigs was against them, and was waged until the stipulation of the Crown of Great Britain, forever renouncing all further claim of dominion over the colonies, concluded it. This to the Whigs was a joyful establishment of their principles, and for England a wise recognition of their validity, fruitful in good results. Always applicable is the truth, that both the oppressor and the oppressed are, by the cessation of oppression, again placed in right relation to each other, as a bent bow when relieved returns to the line of its grain. The war ended, the argument

of blood gave place to peaceable discussion among the colonists, of measures of freedom which their sacrifices had secured for them. They sat about uniting and formulating with greater completeness their powers, groping their way to that end in the light of such knowledge and experience in statecraft as the world possessed. But these proceedings broke up the Whig party of the war. The union of the people, fusing together, as it were, the citizens of the colonies into one homogeneous nation to supplant the existing confederation of sovereign states, was advocated by a portion of the Whigs, who took the name of Federalists, and all others who opposed that policy, in whole or in part, were called Anti-Federalists, names borne throughout the contest that evolved and established the Federal Constitution, and until its growing popularity caused the opposition to take the name "Republicans." But all parties worked for the same result and earnestly considered ways and means that would best secure individual and national rights, free from infringement not only through foreign injustice, but domestic perverseness as well. How far and yet how imperfectly they succeeded the Federal Constitution and its several amendments, the unnumbered state papers promulgated in regard to it, the interminable legislative debates over its provisions, the volumes of judicial interpretations of its terms, the never-

ending discussion through a free press active in gathering to itself all mooted matters, and a series of wars the longest and most lamentable, a civil war, sufficiently answer. Men find the causes of infringement upon their rights so numerous and deftly improved upon, that any expectation of a final end to them and of party spirit and party measures engendered by them, must be postponed to the indefinite.

If one thinks otherwise, let him consider, among many that might be suggested, these questions, now before the public or soon to arise for settlement. These of foreign concern: "Are open naturally navigable waters free ways to the ships of all nations? Are sea fisheries common to all comers to take from, cure and market? Are Isthmean canals connecting open seas, highways for all the world or only for the nation constructing them?" And these of domestic concern: "Should interstate lines of railroads and telegraphs be under public control? Should Congress provide all the currency of the country, metallic and paper? Should customs upon imports be abolished? Should a free and compulsory education of all the people be required and enforced by Congress? Should the sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, be prohibited by Congress?" If the reader takes, as he probably would, the affirmative or negative of such questions he will naturally wish to see the govern-

ment act in accordance with his views. To accomplish this he must be able to select men for governmental places who agree with him in that respect. When the question "whether at all or at any time the freedom of the negro could be infringed upon—even altogether taken away from him," was before the people, the anti-slavery men could not consistently go into caucus and advocate the nomination of men for public office, even of a minor character, who held pro-slavery views. So it must necessarily be with the advocates and opponents of every political measure, if it be of sufficient importance to rally parties about it. From the foregoing the force of the rule of conduct laid down by the venerable mentor before quoted, becomes apparent. Indeed it is vital for the success or defeat of a measure that no one should go into a caucus but in reference to it, and abide by the caucus proceedings only, when the party measures are regarded; but never, when to elevate men to office alone is considered, unless he is prepared to "fix a price upon his vote." For in the latter case the very essentials of party organization are surrendered up, and instead of a party man interested in the policy of his country, he sinks to be a follower of the fortunes of an individual. Public interests are forgotten in the selfishness and partiality developed in the interests of his candidate's success. On the other hand, when measures are re-



garded, and men are selected for office solely with regard to the welfare of the measure, there is a hearty and earnest union of all of like convictions as to those measures, with a very charitable consideration of the personal characteristics of the men nominated, public sentiment, that seldom errs aiding the selection of fit men to whom the care of the measure, to make it, the governmental policy, may be entrusted. But to return.

The Federalists having overcome all opposition and put the national government in operation, dominated, during Washington's and John Adams' administrations, its entire policy. But they were criticized with unmerited severity by their opponents, who finally succeeded in supplanting them through the medium of the caucus. Senator Smith, in the course of the historical debate before referred to, reminded the opponents of the caucus of the fact and gave a chapter of its history. "I am surprised," he said, "at the course taken by the member from South Carolina, Mr. Hayne. He was too young to know the extreme difficulty the Republican party had to encounter, and the danger it has been exposed to by attempts calculated to create schism, that might, by dividing, have exposed it to great dangers, which in my humble opinion have been mainly obviated by the caucus system. Nor am I surprised at the opposition of the gentleman from New York, Mr. King. That

gentleman was a leading chief of the Federal party, and no doubt thinks what I know, that owing to the caucus system his party was prostrated and the Republican party brought into power. I adhere to the system which rendered such essential service. Upon this I act as a party man, and have no hesitation in saying that I wish to keep my party in power ; and I believe the caucus system the most efficient means therefor. A caucus was held in Philadelphia and nominated Jefferson (1796) against Adams, but Adams won. The next time the caucus won and Jefferson was elected ; so with Madison, so with Monroe, only the Federalists opposed it because it broke them up and defeated them."

No one questioned the senator's statement, and it may be accepted as historically correct, and as proof of the power of the caucus in directing party measures and securing their success.

The overthrow of the Federal party referred to was so complete that it never recovered, but struggling, passed reluctantly to the keeping of history. It carried with it a long roll of the "fathers," men who early saw the wrongs of all the colonies in the wrongs of one of them, who gave the work of their lives to unite the colonies into one independent nation ; and who laid down the political power so long entrusted to them, with a foreign policy so firmly established for peacefulness, candor and

fair dealing, that subsequent perverseness has not destroyed it; and an internal policy so universal, far-reaching and beneficial in its effects that blind opposition has not choked it. Thus they earned for themselves the paternal appellation, "Fathers of the Republic," given and honored throughout the land, and beyond the seas even. Indeed, so well adapted to the young nation was the Federal policy, that looking back over the years gone since their expulsion from power, it may not be denied that their opponents and successors erred most when departing from it, and succeeded best when making that policy their own. Take a few examples, which show also the influence and longevity of political principles, of real worth.

The Federalists insisted upon a navy and a school of marine. The Republicans, led by Jefferson, opposed it even to the extent of paying tribute to the Algerine pirates in default of a navy. "Millions," the Federalists urged, "for defence, but not one cent for tribute;" but Jefferson, as president, sent the small fleet of frigates and sloops of war built through the persistence of the Federalists, to the Mediterranean, which exterminated the pirates and established the glory of the American flag and the assurance that it was the symbol of a nation, upon the sea. Again the Federalists saw, notwithstanding the passions that had been engendered by the War of Independence

and the bull-dog diplomacy of England, that it was best for Americans to come to a fair understanding with the mother country, and to entirely avoid all alliances with the French Directory and the usurping Bonaparte. This policy, however, was made unpopular by the attacks of the Anti-Federalists, and contributed the main argument for the overthrow of that great and all but invincible party. But the outcome was, that the Republicans, not fitted by their party's creed to emulate the firmness of the Federals, and unable to change their policy, submitted to the most humiliating insults from Bonaparte, even to the confiscation of American ships and the execution of American seamen, on the ground they were British subjects employed on American vessels, and finally to a war with England and the sacrifice of thirty thousand lives and a hundred millions of money for no additional gain to the nation beyond that already secured by the treaty of 1783.

Also the Federalists established a national bank that aided in funding the national debt and in giving the young nation credit abroad, and secured over an immense country at home, ill provided with means of intercommunication, an uniform exchange and currency. Upon this bank the Anti-Federalists made unconditional war and ultimately overthrew it, and let in a system of state banks, ill-regulated exchange and depreciated currency, that

went by various names, some odd but doubtless characteristic, as "red-dog," "wild-cat," "alligator hide," etc., evils that did not entirely disappear until the exigencies of the late Civil War reinstated a national currency. The Federalists insisted upon the self-preservative nature of the Constitution, and that the nation was indivisible: a policy that Jefferson antagonized, insisting, the nation was a union of states, severable at the will of any one of them. But Jackson had to maintain the Federal doctrine against the schism of South Carolina in 1832-33, and Lincoln also in the war of 1861-65. The Federalists insisted upon an interpretation of the Constitution which admitted of remedial measures; their opponents insisted upon a strict construction and found slight warrant for a donation from the national treasury of \$15,000, in aid to some refugees from the West India Islands, cast helpless and destitute upon the charity of Baltimore. But Jefferson purchased Louisiana, the mouths of the Mississippi and the immense territory beyond, inaugurating the policy of annexation of contiguous territory until the national domain has reached the Pacific.

But neither the wisdom nor the inconsistencies of parties is here for discussion; it is the influence of principles in the formation of parties and in giving caucus its powers. Enough apparently has been said to show that parties as opposed to

clans or chieftainships are organized upon measures that survive, though party is overthrown and leadership fails. Men believing the principles of their party to be best for the country, cannot surrender them up to selfish interests in the success of an individual without stultification or crime. They must be governed by their principles in all their political actions, and more especially when seeking to unite with others of like conviction through the medium of the caucus.

Still a party, like an army, must have leaders, selected, however, not with a view to the amount of plunder they are capable of looting from the public for themselves and their followers, but to preserve the organization and carry into effect, when the opportunity occurs, the measures of the party. It is not always the leaders, it may be observed, who are elected to public office. Many a "Warwick" in American politics has lived rejoicing in his influence and power "behind the throne" without ever having held office. But whether the leaders are candidates for office or not, they cease to be leaders when failing to advocate party measures at the caucus with a view to impress them upon the policy of the nation.

CHAPTER V.

CAUCUS NOMINATIONS COMPARED WITH SELF-NOMINATIONS.

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, wending his way a traveller among the hills and valleys of the Blue Ridge region of Virginia, reflects, "The caucus barely received by her politicians will in the end abolish her glorious system of self-nominations—the true secret of Virginia's political independence and power." The philosophic statesman and politician here contrasts the caucus system for appointing party candidates for elective offices, as conducted, especially in New York, under his own observation, with the practice of self-nominations in those states where the wealth, the leisure and the political training was with the large landowners, generally slaveholders, from among whom appeared, as elections drew near, gentlemen offering themselves as candidates for the office to be filled.

The sentiment in those communities was such as to invite men to come forward and solicit, personally, votes. Indeed the gentry encouraged members of their caste to seek, to the exclusion of all others, office as an employment. The caucus an-

tagonized such a system and opened the door to the electors to select the candidate from the laboring as well as from the capital-owning class; while under the system of self-nominations the choice of the person was practically the concern of slaveholders only. These, although divided into parties in common with their brethren elsewhere, managed, in the interest of their caste, to confine the candidates for public office to themselves, and to men holding rarely if ever other than local views. They cultivated "stump" oratory of the most brilliant and effective kind, which with social manners to match, made them in the periodical election contests all but irresistible with the masses. The "parliamentearing" practices, brought over with the settlement of the country from Old England, were in those sections in many respects maintained, particularly in regard to exclusiveness in the selection of candidates for office and the methods of preserving it. A glance at English practices will best illustrate this.

The English borough system admitted in many cases of seating in the House of Commons by a great landholder, a friend or retainer, without consulting in the slightest respect the views of the residents of the borough. In others, where there was considerable population and some wealth, the gentry determined the matter among themselves; while still other boroughs were sharply and indus-

triously canvassed. But in all of them the gentry held the commanding position, securing to their own class or retainers almost exclusively the representation in the House. If talent in other classes was regarded, it was owing to the patronage of the great. Thus, Edmund Burke owed to the patronage of a large landholder his advent in the House of Commons, as did also the historian Macaulay, and in present times, William E. Gladstone. They were originally "pocket borough" members, that is, they were returned to represent boroughs carved out of the lands of their patrons, who gave them their seats through friendship, or for the benefit they or their party would receive from their talents. In cases where a borough was of that size and importance that admitted of a canvass of the electors, ambitious men came forward, or were invited by friends "to stand,"—the raw edge being taken off, sometimes, by the pre-arranged invitation,—and solicit votes as candidates for the office.

Edmund Burke, after attracting attention as the representative, by the friendship of Lord Verney, of the pocket borough of Wendover, went to Bristol, certain gentlemen advising him to do so, and entered the canvass in his own behalf as a candidate to represent them in the House of Commons. This was in October, 1774. Being an accomplished orator, and having well known sympa-

thies for the American colonies, they believed he might carry with him the shippers and merchants of that port. He reached Bristol after the polls had been open for five days, but going directly to work he addressed the electors: "Gentlemen, I am come hither to solicit in person that favor which my friends have hitherto endeavored to procure for me," and continuing so eloquently and effectively that great enthusiasm was aroused in his favor. Indeed his colleague (Bristol was entitled to two members), who, by the way, was a native of New York, could only say when called upon to address the electors in his turn, "Gentlemen, I say ditto to Mr. Burke, again I say ditto," earning for himself from that moment the life-long soubriquet "Ditto Cruger," and becoming the hero of a political anecdote; but the same gentleman, after the polls were closed and he and Mr. Burke had been declared elected, returned thanks by saying, "his rule of conduct as a member of the House of Commons should be their will, and that in all things he should vote as they directed." This caused Mr. Burke to say in his closing address, "Parliament was not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation with one interest, that

of the whole, where, not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good resulting from the general reason of the whole ;” and while the opinions of his constituents a “representative ought always rejoice to hear and ought always most seriously consider,” yet, “authoritative instructions, mandates issued which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest convictions of his judgment and conscience, these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution ”—principles which have been more or less discussed in the United States. In the first Congress a resolution was introduced to amend the Constitution so as to require members of the congress to obey the instructions of their constituents, but it failed of much support. The mere self-nominee, however, is through the nature of his offer a local representative, depending upon local views for his popularity and votes ; a truth that Mr. Burke became witness to in after days.

John Q. Adams, when United States senator, finding himself at variance with the Legislature that appointed him to that office resigned it, that the people of Massachusetts might have an opportunity of electing a man to his seat who would carry out their will. And there are instances of

tempt for a general massacre of suffrages, an attempt by a promiscuous carnage of friends and foes to exterminate above two thousand votes, inclusive of seven hundred polled for the gentleman himself, who now complains, and who would destroy the friends whom he has obtained, only because he cannot obtain as many of them as he wishes. . . . I do not pretend to lay down any rules of decorum for other gentlemen; . . . but how should I appear to the voters themselves? If I had gone round to the citizens entitled to freedom and seized them by the hand, 'Sir, I humbly beg your vote; I shall be eternally thankful; may I hope for the honor of your support? Well, come, we shall see you at the Council House.' If I were then to deliver them to my managers, pack them into tallies, vote them off in court, and when I heard from the bar, 'Such an one only,' and 'Such an one forever,' 'He is my man,' 'Thank you, sir, that's an honest fellow—how is your good family?' whilst these words were hardly out of my mouth, if I had wheeled around at once and said, 'Get you gone, you pack of worthless fellows, you have no votes; you ought never to have been produced at this election' . . . gentlemen, I should make a strange figure if my conduct had been of that sort."

But Mr. Burke's adroit turning the popular sentiment against his opponent, and his valuable ser-

vices in behalf of the general welfare of Britain in the House of Commons, did not sufficiently commend him to the Bristol voters and make good his re-election in 1780.

In 1774 he entered the canvass after the polls were opened and solicited votes and won the election. In 1780 he was in the canvass before the polls were opened and solicited votes, and notwithstanding an eloquent plea, far more able than the one Cruger dittoed, he was forced to withdraw to save himself from a greater humiliation, a foreshadowed defeat. Local issues were too strong for him, and he entered the House again as the representative of a pocket borough, belonging to his powerful friend the Marquis of Rockingham.

Somewhat similar was the course and experience of the historian Macaulay in 1839. After obtaining considerable reputation as the representative of the "pocket borough" of Calne, owned by Lord Lansdowne, he stood for Edinburgh. His speech soliciting votes in that critical town was well received. It is said one of the electors commended it, this wise: "Oh, it was a wise-like speech, an' no defeshunt in airgement: but eh! man, I'm thinking I could ha' said the hail o' it myself." His appeal won at that time their votes. But his advocacy of fair dealing with Roman Catholics and some local disturbing issues gave occasion to his opponents for stirring up the bitterest opposition

to him and to his re-election. He labored with them in a powerful speech, but met with interruptions and insults. Justifying his course he exclaimed, "If your representative be an honest man—" "Ay, but he's no' that," came back to him from the crowd. He struggled manfully to the end but was beaten by a man of little note, a Mr. Cowan, and retired from political life until, five years after, Edinburgh, of its own motion, without request or effort on his part, again elected him her representative. A poem written shortly after his defeat contains the often-quoted stanza :

"Amidst the din of all things fell and vile—
Hate's yell and Envy's hiss and Folly's bray—
Remember me ! and with an unforced smile
See riches, baubles, flatterers pass away."

From these and numerous other examples that might be cited it can be seen, when men with ability to serve their country, like Burke and Macaulay, possessing world-wide reputation, are by the "glorious system" of self-nomination driven to such humiliating practices, what may be expected of men of lesser note when aiming at political honors. Dickens, in his description of the Eatanswill contest, has only cleverly outlined the salient features of such canvassing. The Hon. Slumkeys and Fitzkins run for office in all elective governments. A personal contest for votes by self-nomi-

nated candidates exposes in the baldest manner the nominee to the caprice of the selfish and vulgar. A coarse man at the polls can insult and refuse to vote for such a candidate with greater effect than in the limits of a caucus, the humiliation of great men affording pleasure to base.

The humor of Dickens' caricature of the average hustling contest in England scarcely relieves the rough vulgarity manifested. The Hon. Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, courting the crowd by shaking hands with twenty workmen washed and placed for the purpose, and kissing six babies in arms all prepared in advance, drowning the voice of his opponent, the Hon. Horatio Fitzkin, of Fitzkin Lodge, with a brass band, and the absurd acting before a gin- and beer-filled crowd, is sufficiently realistic to be accepted as a picture of an actual contest.

Take a scene described in a late issue of the *Edinburgh Statesman* as having occurred at the New Harbor, Dunbar, which would be impossible in those places where the contest is between parties primarily, and only secondarily between men. The Hon. Sir James Grant Suttie presents himself before his constituents at Dunbar and solicits their votes. Provost Brand introduces him, and the Hon. Sir James says: "Ladies and gentlemen, I am here because it is threatened by Lord William Hay to pull down the auld kirk." "Nae fear of it

being pulled down," exclaimed Mary, a great middle-aged woman in blue print with a red-and-blue rosette on her breast. "If you send me to Parliament," continued Sir James, "I shall oppose that with all my might; I am sure every one here will vote for me and show Lord William—" "Hooray," shouted Mary, "it will never be pulled down." Cheers from the crowd. Here Sir James crossed over to Mary and shook hands with her. Mary, encouraged, put her arm about Sir James and patted him on the back, amidst great laughter, saying, "Ay, you're a nice man—bless you, I hope you'll win." Provost Brand addressed the crowd, saying, "I am perfectly sure, fellow townsmen, if Sir James is elected you will not be disappointed. I am sure what he has promised he will perform. His heart is with us and he will do his best for Dunbar." Again the crowd cheered. "Look here," said Sir James, "I propose a vote of thanks for the Provost, for the nice way he has spoken. He is a great friend of mine." "Hear! hear!" shouted the crowd, giving cheers. "Thank you," said the Provost, bowing low. "I have one more duty to perform. I have got permission to do it from my Lady Susan. I have a commission to do it. Now I am going to execute it," said Sir James, and turning to Mary he kissed her cheek—somewhat gingerly, the reporter adds—at which the crowd

laughed immensely, and cheering with the utmost enthusiasm the meeting broke up.

Can a caucus scene be produced where indecency and ignorance more completely ruled the hour?

In the United States also self nominations are very far from being free from objectionable features. Note a few mild instances. Every one is familiar with "Davy" Crockett's trick of drawing the attention of the audience from his opponent's speech, and at the same time winning votes for himself by going around in the crowd with a bottle of whiskey in one side-pocket and a plug of tobacco with a clasp-knife stuck in it in the other, allowing each one, as his taste was, to take a drink or a chew of his tobacco. Crockett was not of the gentry class, as were his opponents, and he had to draw the common people to him to make a successful fight. His opponents did not always treat him with due consideration. They affected to ignore him. Occasions were not wanting that enabled him to more than retaliate on them. Once, while an opponent was speaking, a flock of Guinea hens set up a persistent and noisy cry, and the speaker paused and requested that some one would oblige him by dispersing the fowls, which was done, when he continued his speech to the end without so much as mentioning Crockett's name. This discourtesy did not escape Crockett's attention, and he was not slow to avail himself of it. When

it came his turn to speak he remarked, "Though my opponent did not see fit to mention my name during his speech once, yet my little feathered friends did not forget me; but when they came up to remind the gentleman of his omission, by crying with all their strength, 'Crockett, Crockett, Crockett,' he was so offended that instead of taking the hint and saying something mean of me, he had them stoned off." The hit carried the day for the witty backwoodsman.

In a more dignified way Henry Clay turned the frontiersmen back into the ranks of his followers, after they had been prejudiced and induced to desert him for some fancied oversight of their local matters. Meeting them on their own ground he won the confidence of one of their leaders so far as to be allowed by him to inspect his rifle, which he bore with him, as his Teutonic ancestors were wont to do to their assemblages. Examining the gun Clay inquired, "Is it true to its aim?" "Yes, sir," emphatically replied the owner. "But did it never miss fire?" inquired he. "Oh, yes, sir." "What did you do?" asked Clay—"throw it away?" "Why, no," replied the hunter, "I picked the flint and tried her again." "Ah, I see," said Clay, as with his blandest smile and most gracious manner he pressed the weapon back into the hunter's hands, "and will you throw me away because I missed fire once—wont you pick the flint and try

me again?" The smile and sophistry won; and all the frontiersmen returned to the following of the marvellous "Harry of the West."

Abraham Lincoln entered political life by self-nomination, seeking an election to the Legislature of Illinois from Sangamon County. His opening speech is preserved by his biographer as follows:

"Gentlemen and fellow-citizens, I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by many friends to become a candidate for the Legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favor of a national bank; I am in favor of the internal-improvement system and a high protective tariff. Those are my sentiments and political principles. If elected I shall be thankful; if not, it will be all the same." The national bank meant sound currency for his prairie friends, and internal improvement meant appropriations for the benefit of Sangamon River, the immediate water communication, when high enough, of his neighbors with the navigable Mississippi. But he was defeated. At the next election he canvassed more successfully. A gentleman relates: "He came to my house near Island Green during harvest. There were some thirty men in the field. He got his dinner and went out in the field where the men were at work. I gave him an introduction, and the boys said they could not vote for a man unless he

could work a 'hand.' 'Well, boys,' said he, 'if that is all, I am sure of your votes.' He took hold of a cradle and led all the way around the field with perfect ease. The boys were satisfied," and, the gentleman adds, "I don't think he lost one of their votes. He was this time elected."

Mr. Lincoln's subsequent political career was that of a regular nominee of a party through its caucuses, and his speeches from the stump became exponents of party measures and principles, and were not only effective at the time for party success, but have tended greatly to fix the views of the people and the policy of the nation. You see in them no attempt to accommodate himself to the local views of the voters, but you learn of measures that pertain to all alike. On national questions he advocated principles that behooved the nation at large to accept. But we may not altogether measure successful men by the methods through which they gained success in political life. If Edmund Burke could ask a man to honor him with his vote and graciously descend from the hustings to thank him for giving it to him, he was careful enough of his fame as a statesman to let no such subserviency appear in his conduct in the House of Commons. And Macaulay could sustain his rank in politics as a statesman, in literature as a historian, notwithstanding the brutal contest in Edinburgh. Yet it

is not so with the Samuel Slumkeys. As to them we may with little risk of disappointment never expect them to rise above a canvass which will witness the Sir Jameses kissing rude women in public and awakening sentiments for "auld kirks" that neither Parliament nor a general public will ever hear anything about, to win an election. A man like Crockett, fighting an aristocratical element opposed to him, would gain doubtless some cultivation in manners and some direction to his native shrewdness, and possibly prove of some service to his country. But the fact is, Mr. Clay and Mr. Lincoln neither attained to the full measure of their powers and usefulness, and the free use of their great abilities, until they were past hunting out votes and compassing the prejudices and clanishnesses of their supporters. The history of self-nominees shows them to be, as a class, inclined to yield to local opinions that have the least unpopularity about them, and to avoid controversy, or, as Burke put it, "to keep silence from the beginning to the end of the election in all matters of discussion," and to feel their way and move in and out with the tide. In the United States, while, down to the anti-slavery victory, the self-nominees of the South monopolized the state offices, the caucus nominees advanced the leading and most abiding measures of the country, so strong and assured in his position is the man who speaks for

and advocates measures of party. In such work the organized strength of the party sustains him, and he is not embarrassed by fears of offence given to his constituents. It is not expected here to abate in the least the just condemnation of the action of a caucus when the interests of an individual only are regarded. In such cases it is only another form of self-nomination with the advantage of not appearing to be so, but appearing as the regular candidate. The effort here is to show, though never so weakly, that course to be the bane of the caucus. And when there is self-seeking under the cloak of devotion to party measures in order to secure the party nomination, which not unfrequently occurs, the action of the voter is rightly guided if he makes the nomination an empty honor. Nor can it be claimed that suitable men will always be nominated when measures are scrupulously kept in view and govern the caucus action. The old saying, that a stream will not rise higher than its source, is fully applicable to politics. In an unenlightened neighborhood a caucus will be necessarily ruled by unenlightened men, and its representatives will come from that class to a very great extent, if not entirely. While in cultivated neighborhoods the representatives will be of their stamp, if cultivated men attend the caucus. But the advantage to party is the same in either case. Both classes will,

if not self-seekers, support party measures and be faithful to party principles; while the advantage to the nominee of such a caucus is, that he will have the party support. He need not demean himself to obtain votes. Indeed, it will be better for him if he does not disgust his party friends by sinking his manliness in unnecessary eagerness to secure his own election.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GROWTH OF THE CAUCUS.

MR. SEWARD further reflected, that the caucus barely received by the Virginians would in the end abolish their glorious system of self-nominations. And in truth the caucus has grown with the nation: for like it, its origin is with the people who speak through the caucus and their representatives chosen at it. Spread as the nation is over thousands of miles of territory, there manifestly is no opportunity for the citizens to confer together except through representatives chosen by a system so organized as to embrace all the people and express authoritatively the sentiment of every locality. The public press serves the very useful purpose of making known what transpires—scattering the account of it everywhere—and of the local sentiment, so far as obtainable from public meetings, resolutions and addresses. But the press does not represent the people, which can be done, only, by that organization of the simplest form, the caucus. The sentiments of people who compose a caucus are usually formed in advance, and they meet with those holding similar views to

publicly advocate them—to bring out still greater action and union in their behalf. If this may best be done by choosing representatives to meet with the representatives of the caucuses of other localities, such will be the course pursued, especially when a wide field is aimed at, as the union of men of like sentiment in different counties and states, and the concentration of the political sentiment of the whole nation.

Since also caucuses and conventions make nominations for the offices of the territory embraced within their jurisdiction, it will be the fault of those who should attend them if the very best men are not nominated.

When the colonies cast off, politically, the moorings of the old country they saved themselves from drifting by acting upon the advice of the General Congress, to forthwith set up provisional governments for themselves, severally. In some instances they continued to act under the colonial charter, dropping the royal name and title from their proceedings and using instead the name and authority of the commonwealth. In other cases a constitution was formed and adopted, and an executive officer, to serve in lieu of the royal appointee, provided for. One of the most important questions that came immediately to the front for settlement was *the manner* in which the person to be invested with the executive office should be

selected. They sought the most worthy and discreet. This problem was attempted to be solved in various ways. There were legislative assemblies in each of the colonies under the old régime, chosen by the yeomanry: and as a general rule local officers, elected by townships and parishes. There was also a governor appointed by the crown. The state of Connecticut adopted the plan of choosing in the first instance twenty men, from which number, by another ballot, twelve were chosen, who organized themselves into a council of affairs with a chairman or chief executive of the council. This scheme was advocated in New York, but it was determined there to give the election of the governor directly to the votes of the people. In other respects most of the officers in New York belonging to the executive department of government, civil and military, were appointive, as also were the judiciary from the humblest justice of the peace to the supreme chancellor. These appointees were so numerous in New York that they brought the appointing power directly in contact with the people of every hamlet of the state. Among them were the sheriffs, coroners, clerks, treasurers, and many others, provided for, by charters of towns and cities. And as all the able-bodied men of the state were enrolled in the militia and were officered by the governor and his appointing council, it left very few people not im-

mediately reached by the appointing power that had its centre in the governor's office. The sentiment of the state was thus substantially controlled by the governor, George Clinton. He was an ardent Whig, a native of the state, and its first elected governor. He had served with considerable distinction in an expedition against the French, had been a member of the Continental Congress, and was commissioned by it brigadier-general. He boldly contested, and successfully, the sovereignty of the state with the royal governor, Tryon; and the appointing power in his hands was used by him very effectively to that end. Clinton's love for liberty and his native state grew with his service in its behalf, and at the close of the war he opposed the yielding up to a general government by the commonwealth any of the advantages growing out of its position, extensive territory, magnificent harbor and water ways, which gave it superiority over its sister states. He preferred disunion to a more permanent union of the states, and was led to oppose a convention that should frame the Federal Constitution. Although governor of the state, he was also made president of the state convention, called to ratify that instrument, and his influence, aided by his position, came near defeating it. At first he seemed to lead the majority, but the outcome being in favor of the adoption of the Constitution,

the Federalists were encouraged by that, and in 1788 entered the field and opposed his re-election to the governorship. They commenced by making caucuses of the people, and in Feb., 1789, put Chief Justice Yates in nomination. He also was originally opposed to the Federal Constitution, but upon its adoption he promptly charged the grand jury that it was the supreme law of the land and must be obeyed. Here was rare, if not new experience for Governor Clinton, and indeed for the yeomanry of the state, and the election came near ousting him from his seat. In 1792 the Federalists renewed the contest. A caucus was called in the City of New York, of which Peter Van Ness was chairman. John Jay was by it nominated for governor, with Stephen Van Rensselaer for lieutenant-governor. A few days after a general meeting was held, with General Ten Broeck for chairman, at which Jay's nomination was ratified enthusiastically. Other meetings followed over the state, at all of which Jay's nomination was heartily endorsed. In the mean while Clinton was not idle. With officers appointed by him in every township making devoted partisans everywhere, meetings were held in his behalf, also, and the contest became animated. Perhaps for the first time the power and influence of local meetings were seen and felt in political affairs in New York. Clinton endeavored to make his position in the

executive office impregnable, and used the appointing power with great effect to render it so. The large vote cast for Justice Yates three years before warned him that he must maintain his control over the freemen of the state or lose his office, and he was assuredly loth to lose it.

By the law then in force in New York all the ballots of the state were taken to the secretary of state to be deposited for counting, and the result to be determined by a committee of the Legislature. The majority of this committee were Clinton's adherents, and, as it was well known that Jay had a decided majority of all the votes cast, this board of canvassers became exceedingly anxious that all the forms of proceedings tending to secure regularity should be observed; and finding defects in the case of three counties in which Jay had received large majorities they determined by a strict party vote not to count the ballots cast by those counties. The grounds of their decision appear to have been, that the ballots were not brought to the secretary of state by the officer designated in the statute to bring them. Their reasoning ran thus: "The person who brought the ballot-boxes to the secretary was not such an officer as the statute designates to bring them to the secretary of state; that he could not bring them legally; that the secretary could not legally receive them from him; and therefore the secretary had nothing from those

counties that the committee could canvass." And what appears most strange in this remarkable transaction,—for the error of transmission of the ballot-boxes from the counties to the state office worked of itself no corruption of the ballots sealed up in them, and there was no dispute over their identity, nor was it charged the ballots had been tampered with,—is the fact, the board did receive the boxes from the secretary not to order them to be returned to the counties for re-transmission if that act was vital, but to decree the ballots in them should be destroyed by burning! And burned by them they were.

This proceeding roused intense excitement, not only in the three counties disfranchised, but throughout the state. Meetings were held to "canvass the canvassers," as the cry was, but which threatened more serious matters to the public peace. Jay was absent at the time the canvassers declared Clinton elected, and in answer to the many inflammatory addresses and appeals to him he counselled acquiescence, saying in his reply, "Every consideration of propriety forbids that difference of opinion respecting candidates should suspend or interrupt the national good humor which harmonizes society and softens the asperities incident to human life." And to his wife he wrote: "A few years will put us all in the dust, and then it will be of more importance to me to

have governed myself than to have governed the state." Recall the political situation in New York and the nation. Washington had not as yet served his first term as president. There was still a great deal of friction, not only in the public mind but in the machinery of government slowly working its way into public confidence. If the result of elections could not be promptly acquiesced in from the start the whole fabric would go by the board, and a condition of chronic anarchy inaugurated, as was afterwards developed in Mexico and South America. Had Jay been a self-seeker, a self-nominee, a chieftain leading his forces through a hard-won political campaign, would he have been permitted to pour oil on the waters and surrender up the fruits of the victory to his discomfited opponents? Many instances of self-control and denial are recorded, but it will be a distant and persevering search that will find a parallel to the entire disinterestedness of this eminent man.

The whole vote of the three counties, including those cast for Clinton as well as for Jay, were burned, thus exposing Clinton to the charge made by Burke, against his opponent—that he was willing to slaughter his friends to destroy his enemy, for the reason that he did not have friends enough. Why a man who had reached the high position held by Clinton, through valuable services to his country, should have countenanced, much less ac-

cepted the fruits of this high-handed proceeding can hardly be answered now. Political morality has grown since then and we may congratulate ourselves upon that fact. It would seem that a long and uninterrupted lease of power had caused Clinton to think it necessary that he should continue to be the governor of the state. He had seen it emerge from a colonial, to a condition promising imperial power, and under his governorship, and a feeling that harm would come to his beloved commonwealth if the baton of power should fall from his hands, doubtless possessed him, and seemed to him to justify extraordinary strictness in construing the statute in case of the succession. His confidence in his co-patriots was thus disturbed by his intense partisanship. In the next recurring election Jay was triumphantly elected, and the obstinate Clinton, after eighteen years of office, went for a period into private life. That the state did not crush itself upon hidden rocks he doubtless attributed to an overseeing and forbearing Providence. Jay succeeded himself. But Clinton succeeded Jay, and again, after an interval of six years, became Governor of New York. In 1804 he was elected Vice-President of the United States, and being re-elected in 1808, died in office. His most important act while vice-president was his casting vote that defeated the re-chartering the national bank. Clinton served under the Fed-

eral Constitution, but he never swerved from his original animosity to it. He hated it because it diminished the glory of New York; and he died without abating his hatred. The defeat of the charter of the bank brought in its train untold misery. All over the United States failures ensued, business was brought to a standstill, and poverty and distress took the place of competency and wealth even. The distress of the country finally forced from its reluctant foes, in 1816, a second charter, which aided to restore confidence and resulting prosperity. The opposition to the bank maintained that it was not warranted by the Constitution. It did not occur to the fiscal department of the Government then that the defects, if any, in the powers of the bank might be obviated, and the system of national banking, so necessary to the country, be preserved. That problem was to be solved later.

Jay on retiring from the gubernatorial chair was appointed Chief Justice of the United States, but being in his sixtieth year, and concurring in the wisdom of the limitation in the constitution of the state of New York of judges to 60 years of age, and as he was one of the framers of that instrument, he declined the office and retired permanently to private life. He passed 29 years in rural life on his estate in a secluded part of Westchester County, New York, devoting his remaining days

to acts of charity, reform and moral improvements, never failing to attend elections, even the minor ones, casting his vote, and rejoicing in the rapid growth of his country and its evident prosperity, in spite of crude measures and the political blindness of partisan leaders. In his address in 1795, when assuming the duties of governor, he said he was determined to regard his fellow-citizens with an equal eye and to cherish and advance merit wherever found. He refused to remove from office political opponents for that reason only. On being asked to remove a Federalist who was an indifferent partisan and give the office to a Clinton man who would work for his, Jay's, interests, he replied, "Do you, sir, advise me to sell a friend to buy an enemy?" Hammond says Jay's sentiments were noble, but "it is to be regretted that neither Jay nor any other person holding the appointing power could, if sincerely disposed, carry them out without sacrifice of himself and party." And such seems to have been the result. As before noted, Clinton regained power in 1801, and in the triennial renewal of commissions to the army of appointees throughout the state, reaching the remotest settlements,—rapidly made by the streaming emigration westward,—he sought out friends and rejected the indifferent and inimical. Once more, he concentrated the public power in his own hands, and so thoroughly was it done that

a long lease of almost absolute political control of the state remained with him and survived to his party. Indeed, in spite of disasters, failures of many party measures, of many signal local defeats at the polls, and bitter division among its own members—now beginning to be called Democrats—hold upon the executive office was impregnable. A long line of Democratic governors followed Clinton. At length in 1824 the opposition rallied under the name of the People's Party, and inaugurated a series of caucuses and conventions of the people throughout the state, which sent to the city of Utica on the 21st of September an influential body of men, many of whom were widely known as men of talent, and who put De Witt Clinton in nomination for governor. He was triumphantly elected, and was also made his own successor. In October, 1826, the Democrats, to oppose Clinton, likewise called a convention of delegates from local caucuses and conventions to meet at Herkimer. From this period the primary caucus and state and local conventions have supplanted all other methods of nominating candidates by that party in New York. In national politics, owing to the system of electors for choosing a president, an insurmountable barrier has been interposed to self-nomination for the presidency, and the country has been spared the infliction of doubtless thousands of such candidates seeking it.

With the exception of Washington and John Adams, who were the free choice of the electors themselves, no president has been chosen without having been first designated for the office by representatives of the party whose nominee he was. Some members of Congress in 1796 for the first time ventured to make such a designation. The need of concentrating all the opposition to Adams was the moving cause of the act. Jefferson was by them nominated, but failed of election. The scheme was renewed in 1800, and prospered so well that its nominee, Jefferson, was successful, and from that time it was continued until the tentative people's conventions of representatives from primary caucuses and conventions became popular and strong enough to drive congressional nominees from the field. The Democrats summoned a general or national convention in 1832 and endorsed Jackson's second nomination for the presidency. William Wirt had been nominated early in 1831 for president by a convention of persons opposed to secret societies, especially to Freemasonry. This opposition to social secret societies soon run its course, proving utterly insufficient to bind together for any considerable time a political party. Indeed, the folly of attempting to build up a national party upon a mere prejudice is now very apparent, however it may have appeared to the politicians of '32. But the movement threw

up into public life several distinguished men, who proved to be wiser than the feeling of alarm, on account of the spread of Masonry, that gave them their votes.

Since 1832 the regular nominations of parties, having more than a momentary existence, have uniformly been made through caucuses and conventions.

That the caucus through which the people can speak would supplant the "glorious system of self-nominations," limited as we have seen them to be, and humiliating as it necessarily is to a worthy man, and fruitful of the lowest practices in winning votes, Mr. Seward had, as the history shows, good reason to foretell.

CHAPTER VII.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CAUCUS.

AN eminent American publicist* has said, reflecting upon the nature of the caucus, "Theoretically it may be defined as a deliberative meeting of citizens for consultation with a view to determine the course of public action." And he adds, "To suppose calm deliberation by men who manage the caucus is to suppose that which to them would be an absurdity; their task is simple enough, is management and artifice, under the maxim, all is fair to obtain a majority of the votes that on a certain occasion shall be put in a box or hat. It is not important that the voting shall represent intelligence or morality, or be those of rightful voters, it is enough that they count and give direction to the political machinery that turns out here a constable or a justice, there a sheriff or a recorder of deeds, and a little further on a member of Congress."

But it must not be overlooked, that the management and artifice referred to are to a certain extent the result of earnest consultation and not im-

* Hon. T. M. Cooley, Ch. Justice of Michigan.

possibly of calm deliberation, had before the caucus meets, that the men who attend the caucus thus prepared, necessarily give direction to the political machinery as against the undecided and unprepared. Now all electors, good and bad, *can think* about politics and the direction to be given to the political machinery before the caucus meets, wherefore there appears to be no practical difficulty in obtaining the best results, except it be to rally a majority of the voters at the caucus to support the best.

Practically more reliance is placed upon the better sentiment of the community to so influence the direction of the caucus that the worse will not always happen than is placed upon the votes of those who complain. But if free course is given to the political striker, why complain that he is turning out things to his own liking, that he does not nominate the best men, but himself for office? If what those complaining say of the caucus is wholly true, is it not a matter of great surprise that its results are not worse than they actually are? The better sentiment of the community must certainly be felt within its doors or the average politician is not as unpatriotic as he is charged with being. This critic further says: "In short, the caucus as a practical fact is often as far as possible from those famous town-meetings of New England which a century ago were accustomed to

gather at the town-hall or the town-common and discuss with freedom and intelligence public questions in which Otis, Warren and Samuel Adams made themselves immortal."

But public discussion at town-meetings is not yet altogether a lost habit, as any one may testify, who is familiar with the proceedings from actual attendance upon them. The change that has taken place since a century ago, has relegated the discussion of public questions in a great measure to the press and the "stump." Still, such questions are yet discussed, indeed critically considered in respect to their bearing upon the home and rights of individuals, commencing at the fireside and in the family circle.

"In the long nights
When at my father's house the chief people
Came. . . . And of the land's weal
Considered in understanding speech
Oft marking, heard I many words of wisdom
Which the wise thought and the good wished,
And in my heart have treasured."

And there is little danger of an elector being found without an opinion at a caucus, if he chooses to attend and exercise it. And when occasion calls for discussion there is not wanting those who have an opinion to express if opportunity is given. Oftentimes, too, the discussion is conducted on a high and intelligent plane. Consider the follow-

ing extract from a verbatim report of a modern caucus speech. It was called out by the refusal of certain resident electors to participate in the caucus because they held government appointments and were under the orders of the President forbidding all government employees from participating in political caucusing.

“While we are compelled,” the speaker said, “to admit the great force of all that can be said in favor of civil service reform, yet we see in its operation a great danger to the Republican party. . . . It would be a melancholy collapse of the new system if we, weakened by its working, should fail in retaining the administration in our hands and should find the rules of the civil service reform swept away through the success of the Democrats, and the old order of things restored, and we laughed at for wearing the rope with which to hang ourselves. Our hope must be in bringing in others to take the place of those we lose: and yet I confess I have not much faith in interesting those personally who now only nominally do so, to take a more active part with us, and share our labors. Let every citizen who believes in the attempt to establish civil service reform, look to it that he gives us his aid and assistance to compensate for our loss.”

It is apparent, the alarm felt by the speaker for the success of his party and its possession of the

administration of the government, arose not only from the workings of the President's order, excluding those in the service of the nation from all participation in the caucus, but also from the indifference of others to the service they could render their party by attendance upon the caucus, and who profess to believe in civil service reform, and that it should become the practice of the nation through the efforts of the Republican party. His argument is not against the civil service system, but is a call upon those who claim to be its friend and the friend of pure politics to do their duty and accomplish all they advocate by attendance on the party caucus, and not imperil success by their neglect to attend. Certainly he discusses a governmental matter. Samuel Adams in his day discussed "no taxation without representation," and urged those who believed in that policy to come forward and join him in his efforts to enforce it, and not jeopardize his work by withholding their aid. Undoubtedly Americans were more disposed to public discussion of measures at their meetings in Adams' time, when the press was less serviceable, than they now are.

Furthermore, the mass of political questions which arise are of a temporary nature, though some of them seem to act as forerunners of still greater ones that at intervals come up for action. But it will be recollected as a matter of history

that the caucus which met in Tom Dawes' garret in 1772 smoked, drank flip, discussed public affairs and made choice of men for office before they were voted for at the polls, put Samuel Adams in nomination and secured his election as representative from Boston.

The critic of the caucus before quoted also remarks that the deliberations of the caucus "are often of a sort in which trained muscle is of more importance than trained intellect." Doubtless when men go into caucus with their minds made up they are more impatient at discussion and opposition than when unsettled and meditating. This occurs everywhere in life. A caucus scene is sketched by a New York reporter as follows :

"Last night the factions mustered in force, and truth to say, there seemed to be very little choice between them either as to their appearance or methods. Long before seven o'clock there was a great crowd in line outside the door of the hall, and the moment the doors were thrown open the hall was filled. At one end was a table on which the ballot-box was placed, and across the room about a foot in front of this a strong wooden partition about four feet high had been fixed. In front of this was a line of police who had hard work to keep the rough crowd from flying at each other's throats. The row commenced the instant the meeting opened in the contest in the election

of officers. This was accomplished and the polls were opened, and from that moment until past eleven there was nothing but howling, shouting, cheering, and every species of noise that leather-bound throats were capable of. Both sides seemed ready to run in all the men they could, and each challenged the other the whole evening through. Twice the police charged through the room and somewhat thinned the dense crowd and let in some fresh air. There were two tickets in the field. The voting continued until ten fifty-five, when the polls were declared closed amid loud shouting and cheering. The next thing was the counting the ballots, and the quiet of expectancy reigned through the room. It was found that the result of nearly three hours' voting was just seventy-four votes cast. At least two hundred men had been around the polls all the evening. The chairman of the meeting announced the result, which he did amid frantic cheering by the winning party. Then followed an example of that most satisfactory phase of our politics. The very men who for two hours had been glaring at each other and quarrelling like tigers, all fell to shaking hands, the outside crowd cheered the successful, and then the beaten candidate with equal heartiness, and good humor appeared to prevail all around." Another life-sketch made by the corre-

spondent of a Chicago daily of a scene ~~which~~ ~~transpired~~ in the city of London :

“ Last evening we witnessed what an American would call a caucus to promote the election of three candidates for membership of the Board of Education for the Marylebone division or West End of London. A large hall was completely filled with well-dressed and intelligent gentlemen and ladies. The candidates were each men of high standing, one belonging to a noble family but of liberal principles, and another the president of the college in Regent’s Park. The chair was occupied by a clergyman of considerable repute in London. Everything would lead us to anticipate a quiet evening of instruction on political issues. But no sooner had the speaking commenced than there ensued a scene of noise and confusion which beggars description. Every sentence of the speakers was followed or interrupted by outcries of approval or disapproval or by volunteered remarks from the floor which sounded more like boys disputing over base-ball than like an adult ‘audience.’ Occasionally these outcries were hushed by a simultaneous hiss when the speaker uttered something which the crowd particularly desired to hear, and again they were drowned by a thundering of canes and boot-heels on the floor of the hall. This hubbub reached its climax when at the end of the speech-making the

'audience' were invited to question the candidates. You must know that the assembly was composed almost entirely of friends of the candidates and of the advanced policy which they represented. And yet the first man who got up to ask questions threw a fire-brand into the crowd by declaring that a report was current that one of the candidates was an avowed atheist, and demanding that he then and there define his position upon that point. The candidate refused to be catechized, and the uproar which followed from the bellowing forth conflicting opinions can find no parallel in America unless it be in the New York gold-room on a black Friday."

In these scenes we recognize the wild Teutons who were wont to assemble at the full moon in ancient Germany to discharge their political duties and enliven the proceedings by pounding on their shields when approving, and groaning under them when disapproving. Their descendants in England and America, whether in broadcloth or in work-clothes, whether with their wives or without, obey the ancestral habit and preserve the right to enjoy themselves by making a noise. It is needless to remark, however, that men *can* be quiet in public as well as in private, though it may require some greater exercise of self-denial to do so. But if they will not they cannot in all fairness make their dereliction in that respect an ex-

cuse for not attending the caucus. It is also objected that the "caucus is likely to meet in places into which the best men in the community never enter." To this comes the ready answer that the best men can select their own place of meeting if it be but the public common. Indeed it ought to be definitely understood by "the best men," certainly, that only criminals seek to avoid the light, and that as a general rule men choose to be in good company and in good places: and the perpetrators of censurable political acts always cast about for the support of these "best men" to help them through with the people. They challenge this support on the ground of "regularity," and their success in obtaining it is the fault of the "best men," who too frequently, it must be admitted, are found supporting political evils by supporting those who concoct them. A marked illustration of that fact is found in the history of American slavery.

All through the North were men, who, though trained in the light and benefits of universal freedom, yet, for party success, gave their vote and influence in behalf of pro-slavery candidates for office: and so strong is party bias that we still see men who are favored for public positions on the ground of their devotion to that evil now happily removed; and that monuments are erected to the memory of those whose zeal in behalf of slavery in

council and war was pre-eminent. But we may add, that such is the innate love of mankind for justice and freedom, in due time such devotion will take its place among things regarded only with horror. The sword that was drawn and made wet with blood in behalf of slavery is to hang, side by side, with the whip that scarred the slave's back. The monument that is erected over the grave of the slave dealer's champion will awaken pain and sorrow in the breast of those through whose veins his blood descends. We now apologize for our fathers, who in the days of the Puritans laid the whip upon the Quakers' backs: and those coming after us will apologize no less earnestly for them who took life that slavery might be perpetuated. History does not honor that citizen who overlooks grave evils that his party may carry an election.

If the "best men" stay away from the caucus, they should be as ready to withhold their support from the work of the caucus which they have reason to condemn. All mingle in common citizenship, and there is imposed upon all alike the same duties to the country. Upon the best citizens are imposed the greater burden, as their talents, wealth and opportunities permit of political duty not the least of which is to give the right direction to political machinery by due attendance upon the assembly that controls it.

It is further objected that citizens alone do not

compose the caucus. "Jew and Gentile, the citizen who is, and the patriot who in advance is fitting himself to be a citizen by voting as opportunity offers, are all likely to be welcomed if known to be sound and safe." This is so where the best men fail to be present and to exercise the corrective right of challenge: a wearisome labor may be; but it is only the ease with which such votes may be polled that causes them to be offered. To guard against this as well as other wrongs is simply the plain duty of every citizen: the knowledge of its existence calls upon them to remove it by preventing its exercise.

It has also been said the caucus is a "great political power in the land, but unknown to the Constitution and the laws, and this ought to render it an object of suspicion, for extra constitutional powers are always dangerous." Since the fathers of the republic have left recorded, that we owe our separation from Great Britain to the caucus which always has and will exist in a free country, we cannot expect to dismiss it from public use. And it clearly appearing that the danger pointed out exists only when the caucus is given over to the control of the unpatriotic and its work supported by the patriotic for party purposes, it assuredly can be obviated by the presence there of the best men who have no excuse to be derelict in that duty. True, it may prove disagreeable to contend

against the turbulent element of a community for that which is best for all, yet it is highly useful, and can be regarded only as very honorable, to do so: and it is about the only way good laws and good rulers can be secured. An eminent clergyman of a large and flourishing society in Chicago* has published these golden words: "There is no better place for ministers, elders, deacons, class-leaders and vestrymen to make proof of their moral value in the community than in those places where the determinating steps are taken as to who shall be our rulers," and, "the better class of citizens must take their characters and persons and apparel down to those places, and with unflinching courage cast in the disinfecteds. One need not be a partisan, selfish or vulgar, because his surroundings are tainted." Also a very keen observer of long experience and a worker in the primaries of New York City being asked, "Is it not possible for the rougher class often to get control of the caucus and prevent reputable people from voting?" answered, "Certainly, when they are in the majority." He had seen it done, but, he added, when the better class saw their duty in the right light and took part for the right principles the attempts of the rougher class uniformly failed. A rowdy never expects to carry a caucus for himself merely—at least, only in a limited field, for he knows he

* Rev. Dr. Wishard.

would fail of popular support. But he labors for some one who has a reputable standing before the world and who will accept his support and reward him for it. Such alliances are dangerous to the public welfare, and the fault lies here, as in many other cases, with the persons who can if they choose correct it.

But, if the archaic element cannot be restrained by wholesome respect for public opinion at the caucus, the police can be called in, and the general statute, making it a misdemeanor to disturb a lawful assembly of the people, invoked.

Attempts have been made and schemes are in operation in some localities to regulate the calling and holding of caucuses by statute. A well known politician of Michigan,* in an interesting communication to the public, suggests that political bodies should be treated in law "after the manner of corporations, recognize the party as a political subdivision or quasi corporation and make provision for the manner of selecting its candidates as the law provides for the number and manner of selecting county and city officers." For, he urges, "it is just as competent for the law to divide the people by party as by geographical lines, by lines of sentiment and opinion as by lines of the compass," and he would have "the state, by proper constitutional provisions and statutory en-

* Hon. Chas. S. May.

actments, provide for all primary meetings of any party; *e.g.* (1) That the proper committee shall give due notice of the time and place of the caucus and the business to be transacted. (2) That ballot-boxes be furnished and a register kept. (3) That in case of challenge the voter shall make oath that he voted the party ticket at the last election: and that perjury may be predicated on his oath. (4) That the person having a majority of the vote at the caucus shall be declared duly elected. (5) That a committee act as judges and inspectors of the voting and make certified statements thereof."

Other systems have been devised and some are in use, among which is one that requires a list of all the legal electors affiliating with the party within a given district to be made, and on the day of the caucus for choosing delegates or for nominating local officers, polls are opened and kept open for the day, at which any of the so listed electors may vote. Also, in large cities especially, members of the party of each assembly district or other division of the city, club together or associate themselves into a partisan club, thus creating a permanent organization for party purposes. New members are affiliated after proposal and favorable report from a committee appointed upon their application. If a member is faithless to the party he is expelled or stricken from the club roll.

The officers of the club are chosen periodically, and the proceedings are kept after the manner of regularly organized bodies. These clubs do all the work of caucuses, choose and send delegates to party conventions and make nominations for local office ; but without specifying further, it will be seen that these systems lose sight of the voluntary democratic nature of a distinctive caucus assembly. This peculiarity of the caucus is easily sunk in regulations or lost sight of in formularies that may protect the associaters from imposition, as an army is protected from traitors by the rules of war. These regulations tend inevitably to an exclusive working in the interest of the active and aspiring members, while the real caucus is the freest and most democratic of all popular institutions, a quality without which, the caucus ceases forthwith to be that "imperia within an imperia," noted by the experienced Adams, and becomes a machine.

Possibly at such ultimate democratic assemblies, "one must make up his mind to hear a large amount of senseless talk, to witness a considerable quantity of attempted trickery, to hear some things profane and vulgar, to have his clothes and person saturated with tobacco-smoke, to inhale an atmosphere reeking with almost everything unchristian," to quote the description given by the clergyman above referred to ; yet as a successful general cannot stand aloof and fight his raw levies, and win

victories, so cannot the best citizen win an election, and refuse political affiliation with his crude neighbor and would-be fellow-partisan.

There seems to be, however, a practical way of reducing all these annoyances and miscarriages of the caucus to the minimum. It is this: *avoid large assemblies*. Do not bring the electors of a large and populous district into one caucus. Increase the number of caucuses by assigning so small a territory to its jurisdiction that the number of all the electors within it will not be too great for every resident to be known by sight to his fellows. This may be easily effected in the country, as a caucus there can be assigned for each small political division, as, for example, a school district. The members of the party within such limited territory can easily get together at the schoolhouse or at a neighbor's house, and elect one or more delegates to a township or county convention, as the requirement may be. This will work without much friction, and the best men of the district can always and easily meet with their next-door neighbors, and consult with them very near home. In the cities and large towns, where it is not possible, owing to the density of the population, for each man to well know all his neighbors as it is in the country, yet many of the evils complained of there can be obviated by the small caucus district. Let the districts be as small as the situation admits of

for gathering together the resident electors. If it is necessary to invoke the law-making power to effect it let it be done, and the chances are, less complaint will arise from such action than from regulations established by statute for opening a caucus, and which may involve an election in litigation on the ground that they have not been properly complied with. Give a caucus to every one, two or three blocks of the city, requiring one for one hundred, two hundred or three hundred of people—three hundred should be the maximum number ; some hall, or common, or street corner to be the place of meeting. Then with a list of the legal electors of the caucus district the opportunities for fraud will be reduced, as well as all other evil work. The duty of such a caucus will be simply to choose delegates to represent the electors in a ward or city convention, which can speedily be disposed of and men of character selected. If the present statutes are not sufficient to prevent disturbance one could be enacted giving to the officers of the caucus power to arrest offenders and bring them before a justice or other official for punishment. Poll lists can be kept and all illegal votes offered be challenged and excluded. The administration of an oath can be provided for, sanctioned by the pains or penalties of perjury. With such small caucus districts and confinement of each elector to his own, the best men of the worst cities and

of the worst portions of any city or large town can, if they so elect, make the surroundings of their caucus uniformly tolerable, and secure practical fairness in the results. Indeed the presence itself of decent men in a small crowd will check turbulence, and a courageous stand made for good order by them will rarely fail to win. But if turbulence and fraud do destroy the fair expression of a caucus, then a refusal to abide by its results, and the moral certainty that such a refusal will be persevered in, will act powerfully as a preventive of that evil. But factions and rivalries cause in the main turbulent and fraudulent caucuses. They, however, must have the aid of the respectable members of the party to make headway. And if the best men, who complain they cannot attend a caucus because of turbulence and fraud, themselves form factions or support them when formed, there seems to be little remedy for the evils so constantly denounced. That all men may attend a caucus without loss of self-respect is certainly clear, but it is not clear that the best may, if they promote faction, and push its fortunes. And if "good" men would maintain "self-respect" by properly performing their share of political work, at the time and place the "bad" perform theirs, and which they perform so effectively as to cause the former to complain of them, the dawn of the political millennium would soon appear above the horizon.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONDUCTING A CAUCUS.

A CAUCUS in session should be conducted according to the rules that usually govern all deliberative bodies, otherwise it would be impossible to obtain much satisfactory work out of it. As it is a primary body called into being by the voluntary act of those present, there is no one authorized to act as chairman or presiding officer, and some one should be selected to perform that duty. This may easily be done, and in a methodical manner. At the hour appointed for the assembling the caucus and electors being present, a member, usually one of the local committee, if there is one, otherwise, some well known resident of the district, rises and may say:—

“Gentlemen, it is the hour for organizing the caucus; you will please be seated and come to order.”

Upon which all present will cease other business and give their attention to the speaker, who may further say:—

“Gentlemen, it is necessary a chairman should be chosen; will some one nominate one of our number for that position?”

One or more names will be announced, and the speaker will proceed: "I first heard the name of Mr. — and will put his nomination to vote; are you ready for the question?" No dissent being heard he proceeds: "All who are in favor of Mr. — serving as chairman will please say aye." The ayes having voted he will then say, "All opposed will say no." The noes having voted he will declare the result. But if the vote is so close he cannot well decide it, he will so state, and ask all present to be seated, and then say, "All in favor of the nominee will rise and stand to be counted." Which done, he will state the result and request all again to be seated, and then ask those opposed to rise and stand and be counted; and will also declare the result. If there is a tie he will so state, and then vote himself in favor and declare the nominee elected or will not vote and declare it lost, and then take the next name in order of those he heard nominated and proceed with it as before, and so on until a chairman is selected. Upon the announcement of the vote that decides the choice of chairman the speaker may then say, "Gentlemen, Mr. — has been chosen chairman of this caucus. He will please come forward and take the chair." The gentleman so elected will directly comply, and the person so far acting will take his seat among the electors.

The chairman will now conduct the business

and may say, "Gentlemen, it will be well to elect a secretary. If this is your pleasure some one will nominate a person to act." Nominations being made the chairman will proceed with them as before was done in choosing the chairman. The secretary being chosen, the chairman, or some one he shall call upon to do so, will state the business that the caucus is to perform. If this is well enough known the chair may simply state, "Gentlemen, the caucus is fully organized. What is your further pleasure?" He will now entertain all such motions as are made germane to the business to be done and put them to vote, declare the result of each vote, and generally direct and expedite the business of the session.

If delegates are to be chosen by ballot or nominations made for local offices, tellers to assist the secretary are generally selected by the chair, though the caucus may vote to have tellers and also select them; but if the caucus does not direct otherwise the chair selects suitable persons to perform that duty. He may do so by simply saying, "Mr. E—— and Mr. F——, will you please act as tellers." If they decline he may select others. Tellers being selected the chair may state, "Gentlemen, you are to choose delegates to attend the (township or ward, as the case may be) convention." Or if to nominate candidates for local office he will so announce, and then state,

“Gentlemen, you will please nominate your candidates.” Time being given for this purpose, which may be improved to advantage by those desirous of choosing fit men, the chair will then further say, “Gentlemen, this is an informal ballot. You will please come to the secretary’s table and deposit your ballots for ——” (stating what). The tellers will receive the ballots and the secretary will take down the name of each voter. A right of challenge always exists and may be exercised now. When made, it is to be determined by the tellers and secretary, from whose decision an appeal lies to the caucus. The chair takes note of the appeal, states the grounds of the challenge, and submits it to the vote of the electors as he would any other matter. If a statute directs an oath to be administered in such cases, that being tendered to the challenged voter and taken by him closes out the challenge, and his ballot is received and counted. But in absence of a statutory oath the challenge is received and determined as before stated. While the challenge is pending the voting ceases, to be renewed on its being disposed of.

All the electors appearing to have voted, as a cautionary matter the chair will say, “Have all voted?” A brief pause to observe whether there are any more votes to be cast, he will continue, “You will please count the ballots.” Upon which the tellers will proceed to make the count, which

will be recorded by the secretary, and on the direction of the chair read to the house. If the number of the ballots cast fails to agree with the list made by the secretary it is usual to take another ballot; and to prevent mistake the secretary may call the list and the voter deposit his vote as his name is called. If any name has been omitted it may now be added. When the roll is called through, the ballots are counted and the result declared. If no one has a majority another ballot is taken, and so on until a majority of the votes are given to the same man.

After the secretary has made one list of those voting at the caucus he is not required to make another, only noting on the one already made the depositing of the ballot by the elector listed. Another way is sometimes practised in localities where every one is known by sight. It is for the secretary to pronounce aloud, for all to hear, the name of the person voting as he offers his ballot, the tellers not depositing the ballots so rapidly but a challenge may be interposed if intended to be. But a written list is preferable. This can be retained for future reference, and the secretary may so preserve the vote that it may show not only the number of ballots taken but each man voting at each ballot. When all the delegates are chosen or all the candidates nominated, as the case may be, the secretary will make up a report or record of

the proceedings, briefly setting forth, but preserving accuracy and clearness, the business that has been done, to be signed by himself and the chairman.

This report he will give to the chairman of the delegation or to a delegate chosen, to be by them presented to the Committee on Credentials of the convention to which they are elected. It is the certificate of their election and their authority to appear at the convention as representatives of the caucus. In case of nominees for office the record is given to one of them and is their authority for appearing on the party ticket.

The following forms may serve for calling and reporting the proceedings of the caucus :

A CAUCUS.

A caucus of the _____ electors of the
 _____ will be held at _____ on
 _____ instant for the purpose of selecting delegates
 to attend a _____ to be held on the
 _____ at _____ .

A general attendance of the electors is expected.
 Dated, _____ A. B., *Committee.*

In case the caucus is called to nominate candidates for office, that should be inserted in the notice in place of the words "selecting delegates to attend," etc.

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

At a caucus held at
 on the A. B. was chosen chairman,
 and C. D. was chosen secretary. There were
 electors present. Upon balloting
 for delegates to attend the conven-
 tion to be held at on
 the following named gentlemen received a major-
 ity of all the votes cast and were duly elected, *viz.*:
 Messrs. T. D., G. H., etc.

C. D., *Secretary.*

A. B., *Chairman.*

The foregoing directions are brief and will serve the purposes of a small body of men, for which they are intended. Large caucuses are not desirable, and should, where practicable, be avoided. Our country is getting too populous to gather all the electors of a very considerable extent of territory into one caucus. Densely packed rooms, with little opportunity to see and hear what ought to be seen and heard, cause much of the unfairness complained of. Relief must be sought in that direction which best accords with the nature of the institution itself; wherefore make the caucus to accommodate the number of electors and resort to representation in conventions for large territory or dense population, the watch-word being, "Every

elector to unite in caucus with his neighbor, to be represented in a convention ; to nominate men for public office—the legislator to make the laws, the executive to execute them, the judge to point out their application.”

INDEX.

ABIMELECH, 26.

Adams, John, 2, 4, 40.

Adams, John Q., 49.

Adams, Samuel, 3, 4, 82.

Advice of an old politician, 32.

Anecdotes of—

- “ Buchanan, Jas., 50.
- “ Crocket, David, 57.
- “ Cruger, “Ditto,” 48.
- “ Livingston Family, 27.
- “ Throop, Gov. of Ga., 5.

BALLOTS, Burning of, 70, 71.

Burke, Edmund 47, 50, 60.

CASS, LEWIS, 50.

Caucus—

- “ Adoption of the word, 4-8.
- “ Attendance upon, a duty, 79, 81, 87, 90, 96.
- “ Calling of, 102.
- “ Control of, by statute, 91.
- “ Conducting one, 97-103.
- “ Debate upon, in the U. S. Senate, 6, 39.
- “ Discussion at, 81.
- “ Early use of, 25, 26, 29.
- “ Growth of the system, 64-77.
- “ Limitation of, as to numbers, 94, 103.
- “ Measures, not men, 32.
- “ Origin of the word, 1-4, 9, 30.
- “ Proceedings in, 75, 96.
- “ Scenes at, 2, 83.
- “ Turbulence at, suggestions on, 94.
- “ Voluntary nature of, 93.

- Citizens, Duty of, 88, 90.
 Clay, Henry 58, 61.
 Clergymen, etc., Duty of, 90.
 Clinton, George, control of N. Y., 67, 74.
 Colonies, American, 18, 65.
 Connecticut, The plan of choosing an executive, 66.
 Conventions, Political, 75, 76.
 Cooley, Thomas M., Views of, 78.
 "Counting out" Jay, 69.
- DEMOCRAT PARTY, 75.
 Dickens, Sketch from, 54.
- EDINBURGH STATESMAN, Sketch from, 55.
 English System, 46.
- FABLE OF THE FROGS, 9.
 Federalists, Federals, 36, 39, 40.
- GERMANS, ancient customs, 12.
 Gladstone, William E., 47.
 Government, Oldest representative, 23.
- ISRAEL, Tribes of, 10.
- JAY, JOHN, 68, 70, 73.
 Jotham, Allegory by, 27
- KINGS, Divine right of, 23.
- LINCOLN, A., 59, 61.
 Listing the electors, 95, 100, 101.
 London *Times*, Extract from, 7.
- MACAULAY, THOMAS B., 47, 53, 60.
 May, Charles S., Views of, 91.
 Mizpah, Election at, 11.
- NEW YORK caucus and conventions, 68, 75.
 Nominations, self, and caucus compared, 45-63.
 Nominees, Presidential, 75-6.
 " Self-discussed, 45, 61.
 " Scenes on, 50, 55, 57, 59.

- PARLIAMENT, Nature of, 48.
Parties, Cause for, 32, 41-3.
Political power, how directed, 21-44.
 " Clubs, 92.
Plymouth Colony, 19.
Principles, Longevity of, 41.
- REPRESENTATIVES, Instructions to, 48.
Republican party, 36.
Rhode Island plantations, 18, 19, 21.
- TENNESSEE, Resolutions of, 5.
Tory party, 33.
Town-meetings, 16, 22, 80.
- WILLIAMS, ROGER, 13.
Wishard, Rev. Dr., Views of, 90.
Whig party, 33.

