

CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM: A REVIEW OF TWO ADMINISTRATIONS.

THERE is no radical evil in American government, municipal, State or national, except a wide-spread desire to "make something" out of its operations. There is bred in large classes an appetite for rendering party service solely in the hope of receiving therefor a comfortable place, or the privilege of the ground-floor of the contract system, or some other pecuniary profit. These interest themselves in politics to the extent that they control the action of the machinery of parties. That this is avoidable is true, because England is practically free from it, and yet with a government made by the method of appointments and by its limitations upon the career of any administration more democratic than our own. Our real rulers are in politics for the plunder there is in it. Any measure, like civil-service reform, which takes away the possibility of plunder reduces the evil. In our Federal Government the offices comprise the plunder; the amount at present divided is probably over sixty million dollars a year. The real object of party machines is to control this plunder. The members say little for the public ear, but among themselves this object is never absent from their thoughts and talk; and this desire acts constantly as an irresistible undertow in Federal affairs, tripping progress toward any other object when such progress endangers its realization.

This well-established reputation of the spoils system makes civil-service reform the question which should be uppermost in the American mind. Indeed, all other present questions are but routine matters of government, although occasionally a routine matter, like a question of the currency, may become of transcendent importance, for the consideration of which everything else, for the time, must be laid aside. If there were no spoils there would be party machines, but parties would be held together by other motives. There would be nothing to distract attention from the public question in hand. The full blow of a party could be delivered for or against the principle discussed. The possession of the administration would be of no use to a party except to work out its principles. The management of the

civil service is the one peculiar field of the President. Every other duty is comparatively of minor importance; to him we must look for the cessation of the carnivals of spoil which now disgrace us.

When Mr. Cleveland became President, he seemed to hold the view that the burden of a President's work should be directed to the destruction of the spoils system. It was this that attracted particular attention to him, and his party machine nominated him because it appeared that his views in relation to administrative reform would enable him to draw more Republican votes than any other Democrat. There can be no question about this. There was dissatisfaction with Mr. Blaine among a large class of Republicans, who were at the same time, almost to a man, civil-service reformers. The Democrats took advantage of this by nominating their most pronounced civil-service reformer. In accepting the nomination for President Mr. Cleveland said:

"The selection and retention of subordinates in government employment should depend upon their ascertained *fitness and the value of their work.*"

And as if to leave no possible ground for misunderstanding in that campaign, he said in a speech at Bridgeport:

"There should be no mistake about this contest. It is an attempt to break down the barriers of the people of the United States and of those that rule them. The people are bound down by a class of office-holders."

Mr. Cleveland's party organization distinctly maintained him in his view of the real work which was before him. In its national campaign book of 1884 it printed from the New York "*Staats-Zeitung*":

"Let there be an opportunity offered to the people for a change of parties of such a kind that the victors must give up all idea of a general distribution of offices among their adherents, and the people will joyfully agree to it."

There are good authorities, which for lack of space cannot be quoted, particularly the well-known passage in his first annual message doubting if the Government could long survive the onslaught made for a change of officers with every change of administration, that made it clear that President Cleveland expected to overthrow the spoils system in the Federal service. His repeatedly expressed views against that system were honestly held. His first fault was in entering upon a gigantic undertaking without plan. It is to be charged against him that he did not select his Cabinet officers with reference to this particular undertaking, nor did he see to it that heads of important divisions should be in sympathy with his views. Things began to take their course. One of the first encounters was when his assistant postmaster-

general told congressmen that they did not control the offices and that their wishes would have no special weight. Ill health, unfortunately, made room for Mr. Stevenson, the present candidate for Vice-President, who eagerly became a powerful instrument in the defeat of Mr. Cleveland's purpose. That the administration had no fundamental plans for reform, but was simply drifting, soon became apparent; the pressure of which so much has been heard began, and its power from that time was made to cloak a multitude of sins.

There was an attempt at resistance. The Vilas circular providing for the removal of postmasters for offensive partisanship was curious evidence of an endeavor to divide spoil and to stick to reform. It was conclusive evidence of barrenness of resources. It was the entering wedge. An affidavit or newspaper clippings secured the removal of any fourth-class postmaster, and his place was at once given to a partisan as offensive as the displaced official. Congressmen were made superintendents of the operation, and their henchmen were the beneficiaries. By tacit consent the plan spread to other branches of the service, and under it removals got an irresistible headway, and the easy step was soon taken of making them without charges and upon the simple fact that incumbents were Republicans. This did not differ from the ordinary prostitution of the service.

Another imperfect attempt at reform was made by the rule that incumbents should serve a term of four years, and this was widely adhered to. When the terms expired, however, the places were filled on the principle of reward for party service, and the new appointees vacated and distributed the places under them on the same principle. Mr. Pearson was retained as postmaster at New York, Colonel Burt was made naval officer at the same place, and Mr. Graves was put at the head of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The four-years rule, together with these and many other appointments, were instances of improved administration. But they were not fundamental and unshakable foundations for reform. The immense army of claimants for office referred to by Mr. Cleveland in his first annual message laid siege to the patronage of the Government, and Mr. Cleveland slowly yielded to them. He did not invite his partisans to come and receive spoil; he gave it grudgingly. Nevertheless, he gave it, and by the end of his term a clean sweep had very nearly taken place, and it had the usual unhappy accompaniments.

The system of charges led to a greater evil. Naturally the accused wanted to know what the charge was and who made it. To tell him

would put the principle that everything is fair in politics to a violent test in thousands of neighborhoods. The knowledge was refused, and yet the accused was removed. This was one of the most cowardly and disgraceful practices ever introduced into the operations of our Government. Secretary Whitney issued an order that politics should have nothing to do with the navy-yards, but it may be said, on the unimpeachable authority of the "Civil Service Record," edited by Mr. R. H. Dana, that Mr. Whitney, with the true Machiavellian touch, sent an agent to say that the order was not to be taken seriously—and it was not.

When Mr. Cleveland was inaugurated the management of the classified service deserved the utmost care. The civil-service law had never had a real test. Passed by Republicans when in possession of all the offices, it had gone into easy operation, and not enough Democrats to attract attention had obtained places under it. In appointing Democrats as heads of classified offices, it was inexcusable that no attention was paid to the views of the appointees regarding the reform system; and when they found out what it was, many of them became its bitter enemies and nearly all were indifferent to its success. The law was in a few offices faithfully observed, but elsewhere trickery of the law became general, of which Baltimore, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and the Patent Office afford notorious instances. Mr. Cleveland's Civil-Service Commission acted upon the principle that it could not have contests with politicians, and no aggressive stand for the law was taken. Mr. Roosevelt has since shown what could have been done. In the light of the public discussion which took place and the special complaints which were laid before Mr. Cleveland, he must be held to have been aware that the civil-service law was not being fairly enforced. Its methods were practicable and its enforcement was as easy as the enforcement of the customs law; a few sharp measures would have given the former the same enforcement as the latter. Mr. Cleveland appears to have ignored the matter. During his term he improved the rules of the classified service and added to it nineteen hundred and thirty-one places. After his defeat the railway mail service, comprising something over four thousand places, was transferred to the classified service, to take effect eleven days after the inauguration of his successor.

The bosses did not like Mr. Cleveland, but the difference was not because he wanted to distribute spoil contrary to their wishes, which was the cause of quarrel later between President Harrison and a part of his bosses, but because he all the time made them feel that he

regarded them as engaged in a reprehensible business. Nevertheless he yielded, and the boss system under congressmen and others almost universally prevailed. It has never been carried to a more dangerous extent than it was under Gorman in Maryland. By the use of the Federal and State patronage, he practically deprived his State of free government. No amount of criminality or ignorance was a disqualification for appointment. The best Democrats in Maryland protested; and once Mr. Cleveland answered that if he opposed Mr. Gorman the latter would defeat his nominations in the Senate; and once he suggested that they get up a mass-meeting to protest against nominations which he had made at the request of Gorman. It has been customary for Mr. Cleveland's excusers to confine his shortcomings to Maryland and Indiana. There is no ground for such a stand. The prevalence of the spoils system in all its phases was general throughout the country. The civil service was used in Pennsylvania by Scott to defeat Randall, under such circumstances that it was in effect used by the President himself; and every place had its local boss through whom favors were granted. The species of blackmail by which money is wrung from government employees, either indirectly or in open violation of the law, was nearly universal. The Indianapolis Pension Agency was levied upon for six hundred dollars for the campaign of 1888, in violation of the law.

The railway mail service, which was highly efficient and, in retention but not in appointment of its employees, free from the spoils system, was attacked, and in the four years fully three-fourths of the employees were supplanted by mere party workers; and although with experience they improved, they never brought the service back to the same efficiency. The Patent Office, under a man ignorant of his duties, went the same road; then a new head was put in who checked the headlong course. The Indian service, by the efforts of the Indian Rights Association, had come to have a body of government agents and other efficient employees. There are two hundred and forty thousand wards, including forty thousand children of school age. All but half a dozen of the agents were changed for party workers; and some idea of the general saturnalia which took place may be gained from the fact that in 1887 in five hundred and sixty positions there were eleven hundred and eighty-two incumbents. After repeated protests by the Indian Rights Association, the President finally asked why they did not come to him with something practical, why they did not show him good men who would take the positions at the small sal-

aries, or go themselves and fill them. They replied that they had shown him good men already in those positions, and that he had removed them. Later Mr. Oberly was appointed commissioner, and another check in a headlong course took place.

Mr. Cleveland's orders that office-holders should abstain from interference in politics was a radical stand for reform, but he did not enforce them. The celebrated case of his removal of two district attorneys for this cause, his reinstatement of the Democrat, and his refusal to reinstate the Republican needs no comment. He had no personal interest in the political diligence of his office-holders. Their efforts were exerted almost exclusively for their congressmen. But no use of the influence of office-holders in primaries, conventions, and elections has ever been greater or more effectual than that made by congressmen in Indiana in 1886. When it came to Mr. Cleveland's renomination, the apparent influence of office-holders was not appreciable. It should be said, however, that it is commonly reported by his friends that toward the end of his term he gave to his party a large number of offices not yet taken from Republicans, through fear that unless he did so it would not renominate him. There can be no dispute that from the time of his first tariff message he appeared indifferent toward the undertaking upon which he had voluntarily proposed to enter.

When Mr. Harrison was nominated, the agitation which had taken place under Mr. Cleveland's presidency made all points of contention relating to the civil service well marked. His nomination was accompanied in his party platform by a bold defiance of the spoils system and by a charge of treachery to civil-service reform against those reformers who should refuse to return and stand upon it. The platform promised to destroy the spoils system. The words were as follows:

"The men who abandoned the Republican party in 1884 and continue to adhere to the Democratic party have deserted not only the cause of honest government, of sound finance, of freedom or purity of the ballot, but especially have deserted the cause of reform in the civil service. We will not fail to keep our pledges because they have broken theirs or because their candidate has broken his. We therefore repeat our declaration of 1884, to wit: The reform of the civil service, auspiciously begun under Republican administration, should be completed by the further extension of the reform system already established by law to all the grades of the service to which it is applicable. The spirit and purpose of the reform should be observed in all executive appointments; and all laws at variance with the object of existing reform legislation should be repealed, to the end that the dangers to free institutions which lurk in the power of official patronage may be wisely and effectively avoided."

In his letter of acceptance the candidate approved and accepted this platform, and he otherwise emphasized his position by saying, in answer to a question relating to the management of the civil service, that he would live up to the platform.

By the rules of reasonable expectation, the new administration was bound to enter upon the explicitly promised undertaking. It could have begun by adding all mail-carriers in free-delivery cities, all permanent post-office clerks, the internal-revenue service, the rest of the customs service, the Indian service, the weather service, and all other analogous classes of employees to the classified service. This needed but the party making these promises to give the Civil-Service Commission a few additional clerks. This start could have been followed by the complete establishment under the Civil-Service Commission of the Boston labor-service system, a system at once one of the simplest and one of the most beneficent discoveries in civil government. Postmasters of high grades could have been deprived of their functions as pernicious political centres by putting them upon the plane of officers in the railway mail service and filling vacancies by promotion. The fourth-class postmasters, by some such simple method as is set forth in Mr. Andrew's bill, should have ceased to be watch-dogs for congressmen. Every principle involved in these suggestions is in some form in successful application in Massachusetts or in the Federal service. That President Harrison understands the field of civil-service reform is shown by what he says and by what he does not say. From all that is now known, it is clear that he had the comprehension, the capacity, and the nerve to undertake the performance of his promises in relation to it. The other duties of the platform were peculiar to Congress; but from his powers under the Constitution this duty was peculiarly laid upon the President, and the enforcement of the civil-service law, which by his oath he is bound to enforce, is no performance of it.

That law gives the President power to transfer employees from the unclassified to the classified service. The order made by President Cleveland transferring the railway mail service fixed March 15, 1889, as the date. If the law was to be treated as other laws, this exhausted the presidential power as to those transferred, no matter who recommended otherwise. Mr. Lyman, then the only Civil-Service Commissioner, could not get the eligible lists ready, and recommended that the date be postponed, and President Harrison postponed it to May 1. In the six weeks which elapsed there were more than

twenty-one hundred dismissals from this service without regard to efficiency, and the places were filled as Republican patronage. Various excuses have been given for this lawless treachery, but the god of spoil always appears grinning in the background. The real object of the changes appears in the fact that at the moment when the use of the eligible lists was to begin, and when, under any motive but that which inspires a loot, changes would have ceased, they were made so rapidly that there was not time to deliver the notices. During these six weeks the Civil-Service Commission was not filled up, but the President made hundreds of other appointments.

The "Indianapolis Journal" has doubtless reflected the President's views more correctly than any other paper. There is a close connection in the gift of the London consulship, the President's greatest pecuniary gift, to the "Journal's" chief owner, and in the transfer of its former editor to be his private secretary. The "Journal" at the time stated, in effect, that the appointment of Mr. Clarkson as first assistant postmaster-general was made because he was deemed the fittest man to divide the fourth-class postmasterships among the Republicans. The appointee completely justified the expectation and has permanently earned the title of "Headsman." Working at the rate of one every three minutes, he changed thirty thousand in a single year. He did it exultingly and in the face of public denunciation. During his first months he is said to have answered over one hundred thousand letters and to have had fifteen thousand personal interviews relating to office-seeking. Out of about sixty thousand fourth-class postmasters, nearly all have been changed whose places were desired by Republican office-seekers. In five months there were thirteen thousand changes, while during the same period under President Cleveland there were four thousand. No one has attempted to reconcile this action with the platform or to make any excuse, probably for the reason that the impossible is not expected.

In the mean time, in other directions the President was in the full tide of a clean sweep with all of the unmanly and vicious accompaniments. Presidential postmasters, collectors, marshals, the foreign service, and all other departments received his indefatigable attention. Cabinet officers were so busy making removals and appointments that they had no time to attend to other business. The four-years rule of Mr. Cleveland was swept away. The President's eagerness made him descend to littleness. He wrote to General Manson, an Indiana collector and an efficient and highly esteemed officer, whose

term had not expired, a certain gentleman "informed me that you had said to him that you would address me a letter relieving me of a possible embarrassment connected with a change in the collector's office held by you," and in this manner forced him out of office. His removals of Naval Officer Burt and Collector Saltonstall are only emphatic instances of a multitude of cases in which he mocked at his words that only the interests of the public service should suggest removals. His refusal to retain Pearson, Graves, and General Corse, and his appointment in their places of Republican partisans, were an equally emphatic mockery of his words that fitness and not party service should be the essential and discriminating test of appointments. Although in the Senate he had fitly denounced Mr. Cleveland's system of removals upon secret charges, yet he has the same system in open operation. He divided a valuable block of offices among his relatives by blood or marriage, commencing with his brother as a marshal in Tennessee, an appointment of which the fruit was gathered in the management by this appointee of the Tennessee delegation at the Minneapolis convention. A striking fact is the number and the value of the places given to the delegates who worked for the President's first nomination. The consulship at London, the United States treasuryship, the Belgium mission, and the offices of marshal and district attorney of Indiana are instances. It is notorious that Senators Cullom and Farwell, who opposed the nomination, were refused the patronage of Illinois. The subordinates found in office by the appointees of the administration were ruthlessly displaced. The motive was exactly stated by the New Albany postmaster, who said, when dismissing his carriers: "You have done your work well. You are gentlemen, but you know, boys, you are Democrats."

The President appears to have had a carefully planned boss system, and to have been ready to turn the full power of the civil service to accomplish objects desirable to him. The first notorious example was Mahone. In June, 1889, the struggle between Mahone and his opponents for the Virginia patronage was won by Mahone, and its unlimited use was turned over to him, to enable his Republican faction to carry the coming State election, and for that purpose he used it to the fullest extent. In Pennsylvania there was at first a struggle between Quay and certain other congressmen, which resulted in the complete triumph of Quay, Wanamaker declaring for him against Dalzell as early as 1889, and no patronage was granted except through him. Quay's power was shown in the appointment of David Martin;

the President could descend no further. The use for which the patronage was granted Quay is illustrated by his remark that "the Pittsburg post-office embraces about three hundred appointments, which, to put it mildly, I decline to have placed in the hands of my adversaries." Quay is also credited with having discovered Mr. Wanamaker. Cabinet officers have usually been chosen because they were party leaders. Wanamaker was not a party leader. In his case we have the first instance of the gift of a Cabinet office because the donee had raised a large campaign fund; for there is no other way of accounting for this appointment. In that campaign large amounts of money were used to purchase votes, from twenty to thirty thousand being for sale in Indiana alone. The power of Platt as a boss in New York culminated when Mr. Erhardt was forced out of the collector's office, which was rendered untenable by him for refusing to appoint Platt's men.

The Census Bureau was to have some fifty thousand employees, including twelve hundred clerks. The faithfulness required in the work needs no statement; to be accurate, it must be absolutely free from the horde that live upon party spoil. It was practicable to make the appointments competitive and to keep them free from partisan influence; yet the President refused to allow the Civil-Service Commission to apply the merit system to even the twelve hundred clerks, and the whole fifty thousand places were in general distributed according to the worst methods of the spoils system, Superintendent Porter describing himself as "waist-deep in congressmen," with a resulting census in which the confidence of the country is shaken. In these and other ways President Harrison, instead of being a leader in the fulfilment of the promises upon which he was elected, became a leader of the worst elements of his party in a prostitution of the civil service in a manner which has greatly increased instead of diminishing the dangers to free institutions which lurk in the power of official patronage. He did not wait for "pressure." There is nowhere in his career a sign that he has acted with reluctance; but, on the other hand, the evidence is conclusive that he has been a willing leader with a purpose to use the full power of the Federal patronage to accomplish, first, personal, and, secondly, party ends.

One of the first steps in this calculation was the distribution of offices among newspapers. To the "New York Tribune," the "Cincinnati Commercial Gazette," the "Indianapolis Journal," the "New

York Press," the "North American Review," the "Utica Herald," the "Worcester Spy," the "Iowa State Register," the "Detroit Tribune," and a host of other papers, great and small, throughout the country, the President gave a large share of the vast bounty he was distributing, and it was accepted. That it does not take away their independence and bind them to Benjamin Harrison personally can be argued, but no conviction will result. Other Presidents have given offices to newspapers, but never before has a large number of the great journals of the country been in effect subsidized. With this and other like measures, such as the appointment of Elkins to be Secretary of War, with the undoubted object of detaching him from Mr. Blaine, the presidential course is thickly marked.

It cannot be said of President Harrison that he was the sole cause of the last Indian war, but it can be said that with his eyes wide open he laid on the last straw. In the Indian Rights Association he was offered and could have had a safe and disinterested adviser, but he rejected the offer. It urged with all its force that for the sake of the Indians the merit system should be established, and that officials who had learned their duties and were faithful to them should not be removed. The President disregarded the association. He set up the doctrine of home rule, which required the employees to be taken, not from Republican favorites throughout the country, but from Republican favorites in the sparsely settled territory in which a reservation happened to be located, and these appointees turned out to be the most conscienceless type of henchmen. Their real business is briefly shown in the fact that at one agency the agent and all of the employees were at one time absent doing political work for the senator who had secured them their places. And at the Yankton agency, having eighteen hundred persons, in 1891, men, women, and children were lying sick everywhere. For three weeks they were without medical attendance. The wife of a missionary writes: "During this time the medical man sent here by the department has been in Pierre engaged in political work." When the outbreak took place a number of agents at once had to be supplanted by army officers. In one encounter we succeeded in killing eighty-five men, women, and children who had firm ground of complaint against us. Then President Harrison transferred some seven hundred places in the Indian service to the classified service. This did not include clerks and other employees, among whom the peculiar viciousness of the spoils system in this service is most concentrated.

At Mr. Harrison's inauguration the classified service embraced thirty-two thousand places, and the Civil-Service Commission was composed of but one member. The seizure of the twenty-one hundred places in the railway mail service took place as already described, and on May 6, 1889, six days after that was over, he filled up the Civil-Service Commission by the appointment of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Thompson. This commission has at all times thoroughly understood its duty and has performed it with a fearlessness that deserves the admiration of the country. The President paid no attention to securing heads of the classified offices who were friendly to the law, and the first struggle of the commission was to convince appointees that the law must be obeyed. It many times publicly gave notice that the examinations would be impartial, and invited members of all parties to compete. It established confidence in the law in the South, and so far as examinations and appointments are concerned the law is enforced. The dismissals for political reasons have not been widespread, but the law is open to the same trickery that occurred under President Cleveland, and with a weaker commission those who know some of the heads of the classified offices would look in those cases for a repetition of that trickery. The action of Secretary Tracy in applying the Boston labor-service system to the navy-yards is an extensive degree of improved administration of the same nature as the appointment of Mr. Graves by President Cleveland, but it is not fundamental reform. It is reform with a string tied to it. Treatment as spoil may be resumed at any moment. The President, as though he could not bear to put it beyond his reach, has neither taken nor recommended any steps to make this reform permanent.

The enforcement of the law relating to the collection of money from public employees has obviously not had the sympathy of the President. Indirect blackmailing by campaign committees goes on steadily and too publicly not to be known by him. He has not by any expression relieved public employees from fear of the consequences of refusal. He has shown no interest in the punishment of detected offenders. Mahone's committee clearly violated the law. The President knows this, although a jury acquitted them; yet he keeps them in the public employ. One has but to read the testimony taken by Mr. Roosevelt in Baltimore to see that his recommendation that twenty-five employees be dismissed for raising money unlawfully or for other stated reasons was mild. Yet no one was dismissed or punished. Mr. Wanamaker sent a couple of his inspectors, who made a

new investigation and reported that the accused had not told the truth in their answers to Mr. Roosevelt, and therefore were not guilty. Mr. Wanamaker is distinguished from the rest of the world by being satisfied with this report. Federal employees in Kentucky, indicted but not tried for unlawful solicitation of money, have since, it is said, been promoted. A resolution unanimously adopted last April by the Alabama Republican State Convention denounced "the wilful, open, and flagrant violation of the civil-service law and rules by office-holders of this State in the levying of assessments upon mail clerks, mail carriers, route agents, deputies, and employees under the civil-service rules for political and corrupt purposes, in the bribery and attempting to bribe the Republican electors of this State in primaries and conventions, in the forcing and driving of those under them into the support of Dr. Moseley for the chairmanship of the State committee by threats of removal from office." No one has been punished. The Moseleyites afterward appeared at Minneapolis with a Harrison delegation containing twelve Federal office-holders.

For more than two years after his inauguration no additions were made by President Harrison to the classified service; then upon the heels of an Indian war, and after an amount of urging, the necessity of which seems incredible, considering the direct promise to make such extensions, he caused, as stated above, seven hundred places in the Indian service to be classified. Later he caused the employees of the Fish Commission, one hundred and thirty-two in number, to be classified. He has caused an efficiency record to be kept in classified offices, and made the rule that promotions therein shall be based upon merit. The contemptible size of this contribution to the extension of the reform system established by law becomes apparent when it is compared with the many thousands of carriers, clerks, and other employees to whom that system is applicable and whom it does not embrace. The service has many more employees capable of classification, but unclassified, than it had when the President was inaugurated.

No check has been placed by President Harrison upon Federal office-holders making their influence felt in primaries, conventions, and elections. His distribution of the hundred odd thousand places bears all the marks of being directed to the utmost extent to the formation of an army of feudatories, and this army has responded to the President's evident expectation with such efforts as it never under any President put forth before. The marshal of the District of Columbia is an interesting example. He is an intimate friend of the

President, and his appearance at any given point at a critical time in party matters is but the appearance of the President himself.

When, some months before the Minneapolis convention, Mr. Blaine gave notice that he did not desire the nomination, the candidacy of the President was unopposed by any competitor of prominence. There had been, however, all along a smouldering opposition to it, which he watched with care. In Indiana there were places where it was impossible for him to obtain delegates without incessant effort by his official feudatories, and this effort was put forth, beginning with the earliest primaries. It was felt in every party gathering that could possibly have an influence upon the selection of Harrison delegates. To this end forty leading Federal office-holders, to say nothing of the smaller, helped to manage the Indiana State convention in 1890. Paid officials with leisure to gather in their friends can, with rare exceptions, control the action of primaries and conventions. It was so in this case. By unremitted effort kept up through a long series of party meetings of every kind, the Indiana office-holders with some outside help, which in part has already been rewarded with office, secured every delegate for the President.

The same care, but not always with the same final result, was exercised throughout a great part of the United States. In the Republican State convention in Iowa in 1891 more than sixty-two Federal office-holders were delegates. From various causes arising over the division of spoil, Quay, Clarkson, Platt, and a large number of smaller bosses became dissatisfied with the President and determined to defeat his renomination. They induced Mr. Blaine to allow, after all, the use of his name. The Federal office-holding machine had been too carefully constructed, and with the President at the head it proved irresistible. The consul-general at London crossed the ocean to take command in the field. After conferring with the President, members of the Cabinet, and other chief office-holders at Washington, he went to Minneapolis to lead the President's forces there. The land commissioner was his most efficient aid. The President had one hundred and forty-two office-holders voting as delegates in the convention. Several thousand other office-holders were at hand, bearing down opposition. He had two wires connecting him with his managers, and through these he personally directed operations. He was not nominated by the States giving Republican majorities, but by the States whose delegates, in some cases, were in charge of men like the President's brother, the Tennessee marshal, or under the roughly asserted

control of some other Federal office-holder. In the Georgia delegation twenty-two out of the twenty-six were reported to be office-holders. It was a desperate struggle, and the result proved the skill of the President in the effort which he appears to have steadily made since his inauguration to secure renomination by a judicious distribution of spoil. His consummate skill is evident when it is considered that he succeeded in spite of a gigantic rebellion of bosses. The result is also a startling proof of the reasonableness of the fear expressed in the Republican platform of the dangers to free institutions arising from the power of official patronage.

I have endeavored in this investigation not to mitigate the facts, and I believe that from the facts as given the two administrations may be correctly judged. As to the motives controlling the action of the Presidents, the judgment of most readers will be heavily in favor of Mr. Cleveland. Excuses are offered in certain quarters that if Mr. Cleveland had taken a different course he would have disrupted his party. A party that has to be held together by patronage had better be disrupted. I have never heard of any excuse offered for President Harrison. These are not, however, matters for excuse. It was a just and fortunate result of the election of 1888 that punishment followed swiftly upon the heels of unnecessary failure. Whatever may be said to the contrary, by no shaping of issues in that election could a ratification of the management of the civil service, which constituted that failure, have been secured. A like duty to secure the defeat of the re-election of President Harrison is now at hand. The country cannot afford to ratify the acts of those who wilfully bring upon it the dangers to its free institutions which lurk in the power of official patronage. Parties and Presidents should understand that sure defeat is in store for such. Mr. Cleveland should not be elected because he is less censurable than President Harrison, but for the reason that the course here indicated is the way to crush the patronage system.

LUCIUS B. SWIFT.

CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM: A DECADE OF THE MERIT SYSTEM.

It is said that the average American citizen has one month's earnings out of the year taken from him by force for the support of the state. Upon him falls the heaviest burden of waste and misrule. Pure and honest government can be secured only by an efficient and economical public service. The new system for this purpose has been applied within a decade broadly enough, in the State, Federal, and municipal service, fairly to test its merits. In the Federal service there are 175,884 places, and the annual appropriation has exceeded five hundred millions. The municipal service has, probably, as many places as the Federal, and besides there is the service of forty-four States. What constructive and educational utility has the merit system developed? Is it destined ultimately to regulate this entire service?

As early as 1853 and 1855 the patronage system of appointments based on the recommendations of politicians and members of Congress was found to engender intolerable abuses, and examinations which only partisan favorites could take were established for admission into the public service in the departments at Washington. While useful to a degree, they failed to remedy the evils at which they were aimed, as they had before failed in Great Britain. Hon. Thomas A. Jenckes, of Rhode Island, put the reform sentiment into a bill which he introduced into the House of Representatives in 1868. It failed, probably because public sentiment had not been sufficiently awakened for such a measure, and because its provisions were radical and sweeping in their details. In his annual message of 1870, President Grant recommended legislation, and a commission was established in 1871, of which Mr. George William Curtis was chairman. He was shortly succeeded by Mr. Dorman B. Eaton, who continued in that capacity until the establishment of the present commission, in 1883. An appropriation was made by Congress during two years for carrying the law into effect. Competitive examinations were enforced under rules applying to promotions as well as to original admissions. President Grant said, in a