

## A BARREN "ARRAIGNMENT."

MR. HENRY C. LEA of Philadelphia, a faithful and devoted friend of civil-service reform, but also a faithful, devoted friend of our present tariff, has a scathing article in the *last Independent* on Mr. Cleveland's record as a civil-service reformer. He sums up his charges as follows:

"Mr. Cleveland was elected under the pledge that he would carry out the reform. In place of that he has dealt it a blow which, though not mortal, will require years of earnest effort to recover from; for the prostitution of patronage in return for Congressional and other support has taken fresh root and more sturdy life than ever. His reelection would signify the public acquiescence in this. It would mean that the people at large care nothing for reform; that they are satisfied to have political bosses foist their henchmen into office; that patronage is still, as of old, to be wrangled for between Congressional office-brokers; that office is still to be the coin in which to pay political debts and gain the service of political *condottieri*; that the conduct of public business is a secondary consideration, and that the Civil-Service Commission may remain as a convenient toy to amuse infantile reformers."

If the question which Mr. Lea is presenting to the voters were, "Shall we reflect Mr. Cleveland, or go without a President for a few years, until we find one whom we can trust with the distribution of the patronage?" or if the voters were a great debating club, and the question for the day was whether Cleveland had fulfilled his pledges, or whether he had reformed the civil service, or whether he was a truly good or only a moderately good man, we confess Mr. Lea's arguments, or rather his "arraignment," would make considerable impression on us.

But the business before the voters is not academical discussion. It is political action. They are not called on to decide simply whether Mr. Cleveland has been all they expected him to be, but whether he is a better man, all things considered, for the place of President of the United States than Mr. Harrison. Consequently, nobody who sets before us, as Mr. Lea does, Cleveland's shortcomings, without telling us what he expects of Harrison, can be said to have contributed anything useful to the present controversy. Not one allusion to Harrison's record as a civil-service reformer does he make. Not one particle of information does he offer the wretched Mugwumps as to what use Harrison and his followers will make of the offices in case they get into power. Mr. Lea's diatribe, in fact, reminds us of a man who, finding a friend "in a hole," should stand on the edge, minutely describing to him the hole itself and all the horrors of his situation, but should carefully refrain from telling him how to escape, or offering him any aid in doing so.

It is our painful duty—we hate to be in the attitude of setting right before the public a man whom we respect so much as we respect Mr. Lea—to supply some of that information to civil-service reformers about the choice they have to make on the 6th of November which Mr. Lea has thought fit to withhold.

This choice lies between Cleveland and Harrison. Not to elect Cleveland is to elect Harrison. To "make an example of Cleveland" is to elect Harrison. Mr. Lea's simile—"When a farmer nails a chicken-hawk to

his barn-door, he not only gets rid of a plunderer, but he gives a wholesome warning to its fellows"—is not apposite, because in the present case it is proposed to give another chicken-hawk the run of the barnyard. What kind of chicken-hawk is this other? That is the question. Let us have some light on it. We must remember, in the first place, that Gen. Harrison is not a new man in public life. He has been in the Senate six years, and during that period it is a matter of notoriety that the Capitol contained no more gluttonous office-seeker. One of the Cabinet jokes during Garfield's short term was that Blaine said "Harrison had asked for thirteen more first-class missions than there were." What Harrison's views were as to the use and abuse of the civil service were indeed sufficiently set forth by him in his letter of April 3, 1883, to Mr. N. Filbeck, touching the appointment of a revenue collector in Indiana. He said, in answer to the assertion that the appointment of a certain Carter had been made to oblige a certain Pierce, "I desire to say to you, this is not true. The appointment is made by me alone upon what seems to be the weight of [Republican] influence in the district." In other words, he has been an avowed spoilsman, pure and simple. In his letter of acceptance he approves of the Civil-Service Law, which we believe Cleveland has, on the whole, faithfully executed, and makes exactly the kind of promises Cleveland made as to appointments not covered by the law, but adds significantly: "I know the practical difficulties attending the attempt to apply the spirit of the civil-service rules to all appointments and removals. It will, however, be my sincere purpose, if elected, to advance the reform." We believe he does know these practical difficulties much better than Cleveland did when he took office, for he has been one of the difficulties himself; but there is in neither his career nor his character the smallest reason for supposing that he would make half the battle against them that Cleveland has done.

Nor is there anything in the attitude of his party in this canvass to warrant the belief that he, a weaker man than Cleveland, would have even as much help in meeting these difficulties as Cleveland has had. There is not in the Republican party a single prominent politician in good standing who can be called a warm advocate of the reform. More than this, there is not among the Republican newspapers a single journal of weight or prominence whose tone towards the reform is not one of more or less veiled derision, or which ever seeks to make it a pressing or important question. The contrast between what Cleveland's experience in these particulars has been and what Harrison's would be, is, indeed, very great. In this canvass, on the Republican side civil-service reform plays no part whatever, and no reference is ever made to it except for the purpose of illustrating what is said to be Cleveland's perfidy and hypocrisy. In the report on the civil-service abuses made by Senator Hale's Committee, there is no condemnation of

these abuses on behalf of the public service. They are denounced simply as evidences of the President's bad faith. In fact, one finds nowhere, in looking over the field, the trace of a belief among leading Republicans that his delinquencies would be in the least degree culpable if he had not promised to abstain from them. This position was boldly taken by leading Republican Senators, at the beginning of his term, in the debate over "the papers," and has never been receded from. Moreover, the openly manifested contempt for the reform has even been carried so far as to cover the numerous Republicans who, contrary to all precedent since Jackson's day, have remained in office under the present Administration. They are actually spoken of as black sheep for retaining their places.

For all these reasons, and a great many others which we cannot for want of space produce here, we do not hesitate to express our belief, while admitting to the fullest extent the President's shortcomings, that his defeat by Gen. Harrison would be the signal for a "clean sweep" which, for promptness, completeness, and ruthlessness, has not been equalled since the outbreak of the war; that even the "painful inch" which we have gained during the past four years would be totally lost, and that the victory would be taken as a license to put the reform of the civil service out of sight during the present generation, and as a triumph over the reformers even more than over the Democrats.

## SAVING TRUTHS FOR YOUNG POLITICIANS.

MR. MOORFIELD STOREY of Boston has an interesting article in the *Harvard Monthly*, on politics as a career and as a duty. Mr. Storey is abundantly competent to speak to young men on this question, because he has been a faithful observer of politics and politicians, and a faithful participator in political controversies, ever since he got his first taste of politics thirty years ago as the private secretary of Charles Sumner. He is now a leading member of the Boston bar, and has, from an uncompromising Radical Republican, become, by a process now very familiar, an uncompromising Mugwump; consequently he may safely be said to speak with knowledge on the question now presenting itself to so many educated young Americans, In what manner can I best promote the purity and efficiency of the American Government?

To many young men, with a taste for politics, and with a fair facility with the tongue or pen, the answer to this will seem simple enough. Nine out of ten of them will say that if they wish to make their abilities useful to the country in legislation or administration, they must seek to get themselves elected to office; that it is only in office that a man can make himself directly felt in the work of government; and that, as office can only be obtained through party service, they must, above all things, cultivate fidelity to party. This class, however, Mr. Storey puts through a terrible sifting process, for he tells all young men

who wish to call their souls their own, and give the country honest work, that they must not think of taking an elective office if they are obliged to depend on the salary for a livelihood. The temptations to which mere love of popularity and mere love of place and power expose the politician in a country of universal suffrage, are great enough in all conscience. It is not every character which is capable of resisting them; in fact, most men in public life, in a greater or less degree, yield to them. But from the man whose bread and butter, and those of his wife and children, are dependent on his getting a renomination, and whose renomination depends on his pleasing his local managers, independence and honesty are not to be expected. The strain is too great for ordinary virtue. There is hardly anything which even good men will not, in the last resort, surrender for a support. Therefore Mr. Storey excludes from his audience all young men who go into politics for revenue only. Concerning them, as the poet says, he argues not, but makes a note of them and passes them by.

After they are gone, there remains a certain number, which of late years has been increasing, of young men of inherited private fortunes, greater or less in amount, who, finding themselves relieved from the necessity of daily toil, and having a strong taste for public life, and being animated by more or less patriotic fervor, seek in politics a field for their ability and energy. These, largely we believe under the influence of the English tradition, can rarely persuade themselves that they are really "in politics" or really exerting an influence on the Government of their country, unless they are in possession of some sort of elective office, and especially a seat in some legislative body. That they are correct in this view, all practical politicians whom they consult are sure to impress on them. They accordingly take at once, as the first step in their career, to cultivating party loyalty and rendering party service by close attention to the nominating process, beginning with the primaries and ending with the conventions, by sinking individual views and preferences, and by the elimination from their mental habits of everything which makes concession to other people hard or distasteful. After the requisite amount of such training and service, and the payment of a certain sum of money, a nomination is pretty sure to come to a well-to-do young man in either of our great parties; and if he has connected himself, as he is pretty sure to have done, with the one which is the stronger in his locality, the election follows as a matter of course. There have been several conspicuous instances among us of late years of political careers begun in this way, and of the conversion of promising political young philosophers into very unpromising political partisans, through the belief that to make a creditable political career in this country you must, no matter what your talents or acquirements may be, hold office; and that without office, no matter what your talents or acquirements may be, you can have no influence on the march of public affairs.

It is to the victims of this which we may in some cases call soul-destroying delusion, that Mr. Storey mainly addresses himself. They are lured to their moral and political ruin by inattention to the most striking and in some ways most important political phenomenon of our time, the gradual decline of legislators in real power and influence, and the gradual withdrawal from them of all discretion in dealing with legislative problems, and of all share in moulding the opinions which are finally embodied in laws. We are far from saying that an educated young man does wrong in seeking a seat in Congress or the Legislature, or may not render the State good service while there. What we say is, that an educated young man who believes he will increase the weight or influence in affairs which his talents and character give him by getting an office, and makes the smallest sacrifice of conviction or independence in order to get it and keep it, commits a great mistake. On the contrary, in order to get the office, he in nine cases out of ten sacrifices everything which prevents the office from being a very degraded form of slavery.

Only very exceptional men, even in our day, stay in office through a party nomination without being ready, whenever called on, to defend all party doctrines and party acts. The more a party nominee plumes himself on his character, his culture, or his independence, the more eager will the managers be to put him on the stump as an apologist; and the first time he opens his mouth in obedience to their demands his moral value vanishes. Not only does his peculiar influence perish in the public eye the minute he proclaims himself a partisan, but his future becomes as insecure as that of the Christian gentleman who has paid his first instalment to a blackmailer. To the plain people whom he dazzled with his "culture" he becomes simply a useful charlatan, while to the class in which he was bred, and which he has deserted, he is simply a man who has sold himself without the wretched plea of necessity. It is to the unfortunates who feel tempted to tread this path of shame and failure that Mr. Storey addresses himself. May his remarks be blest to them! They are but an expression of the great saving truth, that "A man's a man for a' that."

#### THE EVOLUTION OF THE WAGES ARGUMENT.

The most amusing thing about the present campaign has been to watch the protectionists storm one another's positions. Without a leader, and marching under heterogeneous banners, hardly a battery has been planted but that it has presently been found to be sending its shells into some section of the allied forces. It has now come to be recognized that the only munition that can safely be used is the pauper-labor bomb, which serves to fill the air with dust and scare such laborers as still believe that American wages are not really earned, but are charitably increased by a slice from capital's share of the product of our industries.

Yet this wages argument, though endorsed

by the united intellect of living protectionist leaders, appears almost ludicrously strange when contrasted with the utterances of the protectionist fathers. During the first fifty years of our national history such an argument was never thought of. Then it was said: "We must have protection in spite of our high wages." Only within the last generation was the claim put forth that "We must have protection because of high wages." And not until the infant-industry cry had degenerated into a senile absurdity did misrepresentation take the place of argument, and protectionists begin their present clamor, that "We have high wages because we have protection." The evolution is so remarkable that it is worth while to examine more closely the process.

Before the Declaration of Independence the chief industrial grievance of the colonists was the refusal of Great Britain to grant them free trade. Our young manufactures, except those of iron, were repressed by law in order that we might be the customers of the British factories, and our trade with other nations was hampered and forbidden in order that British merchants might retain a profitable monopoly. The colonists protested against these restrictions because they prevented them from buying goods cheap, and there were at that time no powerful interests which would applaud the absurdity that it is a blessing to have goods dear. When, therefore, independence had been won, and the demand arose for a moderate temporary protection for infant manufactures, nothing would have been more absurd than for protectionists to have claimed that past protection was the cause of the difference between American and European wages. Yet the difference then was even more marked than it is to-day. Adam Smith, the ablest English champion of the Americans in their protest against monopolistic restrictions, writing in 1773, described American wages as follows (Book I., chapter viii.):

"England is certainly in the present time a much richer country than any part of North America. The wages of labor, however, are much higher in North America than in any part of England. In the province of New York, common laborers earn three shillings and sixpence currency, equal to two shillings sterling a day. Ship carpenters ten shillings and sixpence currency, with a pint of rum worth sixpence sterling, equal in all to six shillings and sixpence sterling. . . . The price of provisions is everywhere in North America much lower than in England. . . . If the money price of labor be higher, therefore, than it is anywhere in the mother country, the real command of the necessities and conveniences of life which it conveys to the laborers must be higher in a still greater proportion."

Those who have doubted the correctness of Adam Smith's conclusions have never doubted the correctness of his observations.

This great contrast in wages being everywhere admitted, it was naturally used by the free-traders as one of the arguments against prematurely forcing American labor into less productive channels. The protectionist reply to this received its best statement in Henry Clay's great tariff speech of 1824. Mr. Clay said (Speeches, vol. i., p. 266):

"The fundamental error of the gentleman from Virginia, and of the school to which he belongs, in deducing from our sparse population our unfitness for the introduction of the arts,