

could make himself felt so powerfully all over the country as to smash old habits and old loyalties. The task is a gigantic one; physically and financially it demands sacrifices and efforts which it is almost impossible to induce large numbers of men to make for a period of years.

The two-party system has received strong support from the tariff issue. Unlike most issues, this has never been settled. There is no public opinion on the matter. As Lowell would say, there is no large majority in favor of it and a minority which acquiesces. Both parties have constantly fought vigorously on it. While other countries have definitely adopted one position or the other, we are still debating it. Until it is decided, it gives the two parties their starting point. The rest of the platforms, on preparedness, on labor, on business, on conservation, on woman suffrage, may be the same—as essentially they are; old issues—such as states' rights, opposition to centralization, may be discarded in practice, if not in the platforms. There still remains the tariff as the *raison d'être*.

Not that the difference even on the tariff is very great. In their platform of 1916, the Democrats have "cuddled" very close to protection. But it does give them a different peg to hang their hats on; and it leaves them free to swallow other issues as rapidly as they can digest them. They will not swallow prohibition or socialism, but many intermediate questions can be appropriated in part or in whole, in the platform or in practice. Although this power of expansion is not great, still it is sufficient, when aided by the prospects of victory or defeat, to make the huge machinery respond. Many of the Progressive planks of 1912 have been adopted and more will be in the future. It is this latent power of expansion when the pressure is sufficient which enables the old parties to remain masters of the field. They can kill off any new competitor by agreeing with him.

Further security for the two-party system is found in the South. The situation makes inevitable the maintenance of one strong party. Regardless of issues, the white men will support one party. It happens to be the Democratic. That for practical reasons drives the opposition to compromise and union. If you know that your opponent is united and will remain united and that nothing can disrupt him, then harmony is bound to be the keynote of your policy.

Undoubtedly, there are other factors. But the important ones, I believe, are the force of habit, geographical extent of country, one unsettled issue and the Solid South.

F. R. SERRI.

Montessori for Presidents

ON my desk there lies the first bulletin of "The Montessori School for Political Education," which is to be opened in Washington this fall. It defines the new project as "an attempt to inculcate scientifically into young minds the spirit of American statesmanship, with the aim of effecting political maturity at an earlier age than has hitherto been possible."

Coming at this time, when the educational world is in a transition period, and the Montessori plan itself is a subject of discussion, this new school of politics has an especial significance. From the Montessori plan we have learned that the development of the child is not stimulated by repression or by insistence upon passive obedience, that growth is retarded if the will of the teacher is superimposed on the individuality of the child. These principles, recognized as so essential to the Montessori method, are incorporated in the proposed school for political education. By permitting spontaneous activities to have their development and by working solely with children of an especially adapted make-up, the Washington school aims at the production of a trained class that will constitute a national asset.

The plans outlined in the bulletin call for regular instruction in all branches of political learning. The child is to be introduced into the school at the age of six, and thrust ahead as rapidly as his natural ability warrants. The development of those exceptional children whom we know as "prodigies" is evidence of the advantages to be gained from such an early start. The one difficulty would appear to be this: To be efficient the school must not be cluttered with a lot of non-political minds, and it would seem difficult to judge, at the age of six years, which children have political minds and which have not. This objection, however, is answered by a paragraph from the school bulletin, which states that "Only children who seem capable of developing into presidential candidates will be considered. The child must show a satisfactory vagueness in elocution and at least an inceptive dislike for constructive policies before he will be admitted."

Under the Washington plan the first two years of training are to be devoted chiefly to the cultivation of these qualities. If the child is to be developed into a candidate for the Presidency, the virtue of vagueness and the indispensability of non-constructiveness must be thoroughly drilled into him. When sufficiently aware of their importance, and adept in their manipulation, the child proceeds to experimental instruction. He is given a set of blocks with which to play. At first he merely ar-

ranges them in squares and circles. Then he is informed that they represent the wealth of his country, and that they must be protected. He is not informed from what direction the danger threatens, nor permitted to speculate as to the best means of preparing against it. Such speculation would retard action. Instead, he is supplied with short spikes which may be attached to the blocks by heavy straps. Through this performance the child learns the principle of American preparedness. There is now no danger of his blocks being bitten by a shark.

This enthusiasm for preparedness, free from any irrelevant consideration of what he is preparing for, is a distinct step forward for the child. From it he proceeds to instruction in the tariff. Under the old régime the methods of arriving at a conclusion on this subject could scarcely be called scientific. Fate played too significant a part. If the child's father was a Republican with a loud voice, the child was apt to develop into a protectionist. If his father was a Republican with a weak voice, and he had a Democratic uncle with a louder one, the principles of the tariff were altered, and he became gradually conscious that protection was a fallacy. Under the Washington plan such chicanery is done away with, and more logical standards are introduced. Every odd-numbered child admitted to the school automatically becomes a Democrat and an advocate of a tariff for revenue only; every even-numbered child, a Republican and a protectionist. The Democratic boy is trained until he thoroughly masters the economic principle of the problem: "A revenue tariff is the only one that is justified in the eyes of God. I believe in the tariff of Cleveland." The Republican child receives the same scientific instruction: "A protective tariff is the only one that is justified in the eyes of God. I believe in the tariff of McKinley." Work—study—play is the modern method, and this theoretical training in the tariff is supplemented by blindfold games in a darkened room.

When the child can declare, with convincingness satisfactory to his tutor, that an upward or downward revision in the tariff will dissipate the agrarian problems of the state, he is permitted to proceed to a study of the labor laws. Here, perhaps, more than in any other particular field, there must be a thorough understanding on the part of the boy who is being trained for a presidential candidacy. He must learn, first of all, to distinguish between capital and labor—capital being "a stock of accumulated wealth" and labor, "intellectual or physical exertion." Nor is this enough. He must understand that dinner pails are full or empty by mathematical periods of four years, and that there is only one logical solution for the conflict

between the two classes: "The age-old strife between labor and capital must stop. In Europe there are serfs and potentates. In America there are only fellow-citizens." Effectively pronounced, this tends to obliterate those time-worn economic discrepancies which have prevented an earlier reconciliation.

Similarly, there must be no dodging the issue of the pork-barrel. At the end of five years' instruction the child should have accumulated numerous striking instances of malappropriation on the part of the opposite party. These he should be able to repeat with conviction, when speaking from the steps of a two hundred thousand dollar post-office which his own party has had the foresight to erect for a community of two thousand people. From this vantage point he should be able to make a strong case against the opposition, while reaffirming the principles of broad nationality which have ever been the keynote of his own party.

Proficient in the matter of pork-barrels, tariff, and preparedness, the schoolboy is ready to take up Americanism. It seems odd that this phase of preparation for presidential candidacy is placed last in the Washington curriculum. Being a good American citizen would surely seem an elemental virtue. In this country we may not be interested in politics, social economy or a national policy, but at least we are all thoroughly good Americans. Nevertheless, that is the arrangement, and the Washington plan provides three accepted ways for the prospective candidate to meet the issue. The first is: "Americanism means loyalty to America and all it stands for." Equally unequivocal is the second: "I do not envy the American whose heart is not set aglow with the great thought of Americanism." And the third is: "The word 'America' warms our hearts and thrills our blood and makes our nerves tingle as they have never tingled before." With a grasp on these three precepts the prospective candidate may be deemed fit to interpret to the world the policy of Americanism. Provided he does not exhibit an interest in the less idealistic phases of the country's foreign problems he is considered a satisfactory product by his tutors. At the Washington school there is a good test for the student's grasp of Americanism. He is made to repeat the three doctrines before a sample audience, with certain variations; for example: "Americanism means loyalty to America, and all that British East Guinea stands for." His aim, of course, should be to pronounce the first part of the sentence so impressively that his audience will recognize it without waiting to hear the conclusion.

It may seem, with large classes of students, all so near an age and all striving for a presidential

candidacy, that there is apt to be a waste of good material in the eventually unsuccessful ones. But for this criticism the bulletin on my desk has an answer. "Though it is obviously impossible for all those who strive for a candidacy to be successful, this does not impair the value of the school. In this country there is always a demand for patriotic song-writers."

CHARLES MERZ.

Making One's Contribution

MY friend Thomas seemed rather annoyed last night because some one had been criticizing his manners unfavorably. He had fallen into the habit of dining at a little restaurant, half-public, half-private, where the women challenged one with their economic independence and the men with their air of being about some business that was for the amelioration of society. He went there because there was usually an interesting person or two, and he liked a little tonic of talk before he returned to his lonely room. They all sat around a big table, but Thomas had not realized the subtle spiritual coalition which this propinquity created. He would walk unthinkingly among them, say what interested him, listen amusedly to the bridling rattle of feminists and pacifists, and then withdraw cleanly when it pleased him. He always had a feeling of being accepted, and he accepted in kind. He had had all along an invincible feeling of being a free individual in a group of free individuals.

How deluded that feeling had been Thomas was just finding out. It seems he had just had a talk with a friend who had dined at the same place, and had observed his social orientation there all winter with some concern. His suspicion about Thomas had been verified by many of the women, and the matter had become serious enough to expose to my unconscious friend himself. Thomas's manners had in fact torn the delicate web of many a social occasion at that table. Keen observers had noticed his habit of coming in, selecting one person whom he monopolized—some of the observers even braved the charge of triteness by asserting that he chose the youngest and most attractive—repulsing the advances of his fellow-guests, devoting himself to his monopoly, and ignoring all the amenities of group discourse.

This was not the sum of his offense. His technique was even more malevolent. He would be in the habit of continuing his monopoly for a week or two, only to switch suddenly to another person and consign his friend to the limbo of the unappreciated around him. There might be persons of distinction at the table. Thomas's interest was irrational. It

would callously ignore them in favor of the person to whom he happened to wish to talk. The critics were even able to trace the line and length of reigns of these persons whom Thomas's social rage had seized upon, and for whom authors and even artists of importance had been ignored.

Thomas at first had wanted to feel flattered that the loss of his conversation to the group could have been so lamented. But his friend assured him that this was not the point. It was a question of principle. He had, it is true, kept a succession of charming persons out of the group conversational current. But this was a minor stain. His real offense was one against social etiquette. He had come into a group and refused to make his contribution. He had put himself in a situation where anticipations were aroused, and he had refused either to recognize those anticipations or satisfy them.

Thomas's response to this exposure, he told me, was a feeling of bewilderment. He had no memories of these monopolies. He could not recall having repulsed any collective wooing of his interest. He had, of course, talked to the person who interested him most, and he had probably taken some effort to be seated next to his interest. As for the group, his heart had always been filled with the utmost good-will. He had said nothing when he had nothing to say. But subjectively he had been warm and hospitable.

My poor friend was all the more annoyed because his stern critic had contrasted him unfavorably with a reformed friend of his. This youth, it seemed, had also lacked a sense of social obligation. He considered women foolish chatterers, he sought his companionship in his books and in the woods. His ideal was the solitaire. He learned to cook so that some day he could go off in the wilderness and live the unencumbered life like Thoreau. He was fond of long tramps in unpatched mountains. He read Nietzsche and Whitman, and thrilled to their brave self-sufficingness. He frowned on idle social dinners or social groupings, and sat among the others, on these unavoidable occasions, with an air of noble grouching. He not only made no contribution, but he seemed sullenly to deny that there was any contribution to be made.

Thomas's critic had gone on to tell how this youth was redeemed from the self-contained life. He had married with cataclysmic suddenness a woman whose life had been spent on the firing-line of masculine tyranny. She had formed an alliance with other aggressive feminists, and it was into their dinner-club that this Nietzschean youth was introduced. He was usually the only man at the long table, and it was during these bright feminist dinners and the hours spent every evening around