

TAMMANY HALL.

IN November, 1890, a mayor for the term of two years was to be elected in the city of New York. It was a foregone conclusion that the Democratic candidate, whoever he might be, would be chosen, and naturally, as the time for making nominations approached, there was much speculation, in the newspapers and elsewhere, as to who would receive the office. But, strangely enough, there seemed to be a dearth of nominees; persons were not "prominently mentioned," as is usual under such circumstances; and in fact it was utterly uncertain whom the electors had in mind, until a private citizen of New York opportunely arrived home from Europe. This was Mr. Richard Croker. When Mr. Croker came, New York found out who its chief executive officer was to be. He named the candidate; the delegates to the nominating convention ratified his choice, and in due course the electors confirmed it.

Who is Mr. Croker? What is the history of the man who possesses this extraordinary power over the chief city of a "free" country, — a city having more than two million inhabitants? Mr. Croker emigrated to New York from Ireland about forty years ago, being then a small boy. He remained in New York, growing up on the East Side of the city, and while still in his teens he acquired some reputation as a "tough." He became identified with what was known as the "Fourth Avenue Tunnel Gang;" and subsequently he advanced to having a "gang" of his own. The "tough" recognizes but one virtue, that of courage, and this young Irishman possessed that virtue in a far higher degree than is the case with most "toughs." In 1866 he defeated one Richard Lynch in a fight at Jones's Woods, on a Sunday morning. Afterward, he was matched to fight a well-known professional, Mr.

Owney Geoghegan; but this arrangement fell through. At one time Mr. Croker kept a liquor saloon. Later, he served for a short period as stoker to a fire engine. Then he went into politics, holding a small clerkship under Tweed and "Prince Harry" Genet. Rising a little, he became an alderman, and in that capacity he signed a paper agreeing to take no step and to cast no vote without first obtaining the consent of Genet and several other persons named in the document. From 1874 to 1879 he held the office of county coroner. After that he was an alderman, again, and both Mayor Edson and Mayor Hewitt appointed him a fire commissioner.

Mr. Croker is a man of medium height, heavily built, but not portly. He has a massive jaw, a well-shaped head, and though he wears a full beard it is possible to see that he has a mouth which denotes a will of iron. His face is of the bulldog type, but it lacks the good nature which those who are familiar with the really gentle character of the bulldog are able to detect in that animal's countenance. Mr. Croker is reputed to be a man of very few words; that he is extremely sagacious need not be said; that he has an innate tendency to become respectable is evident from his career. At present he holds no public office whatever, but he governs New York more absolutely than most kings have governed their kingdoms. Though without visible means of support, he is a man of great wealth. He has built, or is building, one palace in Heidelberg, another in New York, and he has invested large sums both in running and in trotting stables. How are these facts accounted for? Why is Mr. Croker an autocrat and a millionaire? The answer can be made in a word, — he succeeded John Kelly as Boss of Tammany Hall.

To explain Mr. Croker, therefore, it is necessary to explain Tammany Hall, and this I shall endeavor to do. In the first place, one must distinguish between the "Tammany Society or Columbian Order" and the political organization called for shortness "Tammany Hall." The Tammany Society or Columbian Order was founded within two weeks after Washington took the oath of office as first President of the United States. Tammany was an Indian chief of legendary fame, and the Tammany Society was a fraternal, benevolent, and patriotic club. It still exists, its principal function being to celebrate the Fourth of July by a banquet and addresses. The Tammany Society owns a large building on Fourteenth Street, near Third Avenue, and it leases rooms in this building to the "Democratic Republican General Committee of the City of New York," otherwise and more commonly known as "Tammany Hall" or "Tammany." Tammany Hall means, therefore, first, the building on Fourteenth Street where the "Democracy" have their headquarters; and secondly, the political body officially known as the Democratic Republican General Committee of the City of New York. I had the curiosity, not long ago, to visit this famous building. Mr. Croker's offices, on the first floor, are accessible to the public. They consist chiefly of a large room, furnished with a few tables and chairs, and hung with pictures of the Braves. In one corner is a closet, where, in safe seclusion, hangs a now historic telephone. The great man emerged from this closet as I entered the room. He wore a high hat, had a stout cane in his hand, and was evidently in a hurry to depart; it was the morning of the day when Directum and Alix had their race at Fleetwood Park, which Mr. Croker attended in company with the Hon. W. C. Whit-

ney. Several Tammany leaders, wearing that jaunty, half-military air which always distinguishes them, were waiting about the room to speak with the Boss; and he permitted them to approach in turn, which they did with deference. Each one had a few moments' whispered conversation with the autocrat, who appeared sometimes to grant, sometimes to refuse, the petitions offered to him. It was plain from his manner, which is very quiet and emphatic, that when he says no, he says it with absolute finality.

Such is the Tammany leader; and now, at the risk of being tedious, I shall state briefly how the Democratic Republican General Committee of the City of New York, and the bodies related to it, are formed. The city of New York is divided by law into thirty "assembly districts;" that is, thirty districts, each of which elects an assemblyman to the state legislature. In each of these assembly districts there is held annually an election of members of the aforesaid Democratic Republican General Committee. This committee is a very large one, consisting of no less than five thousand men; and each assembly district is allotted a certain number of members, based on the number of Democratic votes which it cast in the last preceding presidential election. Thus the number of the General Committeemen elected in each assembly district varies from sixty to two hundred and seventy. There is intended to be one General Committeeman for every fifty Democratic electors in the district. In each assembly district there is also elected a district leader, the head of Tammany Hall for that district. He is always a member of the General Committee, and these thirty men, one leader from each assembly district, form the executive committee of Tammany Hall.¹ "By this committee," says a Tammany official, "all the internal affairs of the

¹ Since this paper was put in type the number of the executive committee has been doubled, at Mr. Croker's suggestion; the design

being to have one "business man" as well as one politician elected from each assembly district.

organization are directed, its candidates for offices are selected, and the plans for every campaign are matured." The General Committee meets every month, five hundred members constituting a quorum; and in October of each year it sits as a county convention, to nominate candidates for the ensuing election. There is also a sub-committee on organization, containing one thousand members, which meets once a month. This committee takes charge of the conduct of elections. There is, besides, a finance committee, appointed by the chairman of the General Committee, and there are several minor committees, unnecessary to mention. The chairman of the finance committee is at present Mr. Richard Croker.

Such are the general committees of Tammany Hall; and I pass now to the local officers and bodies. Each assembly district is divided by law into numerous election districts, or, as they are called in some cities, voting precincts, — each election district containing about four hundred voters. The election districts are looked after as follows: Every assembly district has a district committee, composed of the members of the General Committee elected from that district, and of certain additional members chosen for the purpose. The district committee appoints in each of the election districts included in that particular assembly district a captain. This man is the local boss. He has from ten to twenty-five aids, and he is responsible for the vote of his election district. There are about eleven hundred election districts in New York, and consequently there are about eleven hundred captains, or local bosses, each one being responsible to the (assembly) district committee by which he was appointed. Every captain is held to a strict account. If the Tammany vote in his election district falls off without due cause, he is forthwith removed, and another appointed in his place. Usually, the captain is an actual resident in his district; but

occasionally, being selected from a distant part of the city, he acquires a fictitious residence in the district. Very frequently the captain is a liquor dealer, who has a clientele of customers, dependents, and hangers-on, whom he "swings," or controls. He is paid, of course, for his services; he has some money to distribute, and a little patronage, such as places in the street-cleaning department, or perhaps a minor clerkship. The captain of a district has a personal acquaintance with all its voters; and on the eve of an election he is able to tell how every man in his district is going to vote. He makes his report; and from the eleven hundred reports of the election district captains the Tammany leaders can predict with accuracy what will be the vote of the city.

The Australian ballot law, if enacted in its integral form, might have embarrassed Tammany somewhat; but when this measure was under discussion in the New York legislature, Mr. David B. Hill procured the passage of the "paster ballot amendment." The paster is a ballot of the same size and shape as the official ballot. The voter brings his paster with him, if he chooses, and glues it over the official ballot, thereby wiping the latter out of existence. Probably the ingenuity of Tammany would be able to cope with any form of ballot that could be devised to make voting a secret and independent function. Some time ago, a Tammany leader, known as "Dry Dollar" Sullivan, suspecting treachery in his district, took the precaution to have the genuine Tammany ballot perfumed, so that by giving it a slight wave in the air its identity would be disclosed. Now, the voter does not himself deposit his ballot in the box; that is done by a clerk or inspector who takes the ballot from the voter's hand. In this case, therefore, it was only necessary for the clerk (a Tammany man, of course) to give the ballot a little flourish before dropping it in the slot; and if it failed to breathe forth the expected per-

fume, the name of the man, who presented it was noted, and Dry Dollar Sullivan reckoned with him thereafter.

From this brief survey, it will be seen how thorough and comprehensive is the organization of Tammany Hall. On the one hand, Tammany, by means of its General Committee, enlists an army of men, five thousand strong, which is perpetually in service. On the other hand, by means of the election district captains, with their lieutenants and henchmen, Tammany keeps an eye on every individual voter in the city of New York. Tammany knows no race or creed when it is a question of acquiring or preserving political power. Some of its election district captains are Jews; and although most of the assembly district leaders are Irishmen, there are almost as many Germans as Irish in the rank and file. Tammany, again, is always on the alert to placate and promote men who have influence or ability. If there be, for example, an Italian in the district who shows some independence of character, and has a following, however small, among his countrymen, Tammany will grapple that man to itself with hooks of steel. He will get money or a place; he will get something, or at least the promise of something. Tammany is very hospitable to rising talent, and it bears no grudges. It receives a convert with open arms, and rewards him in proportion to the harm which he did to the organization in his unregenerate days. Young men find that Tammany is ready to advance them as fast as their capabilities will permit.

Then there is the social aspect of the organization. Every assembly district has its headquarters, always kept open, where the district committee meet and consult, and where an *esprit de corps* is developed and maintained. There is also, in almost every assembly district, a Tammany clubhouse, frequented by the well-to-do faithful in that district. They go there to smoke and drink, to talk, to

read the newspapers, and especially to play cards. To understand the cohesive strength of Tammany one must understand how Tammany lies in the mind of an ordinary "average" member of the organization. In the first place, he glories in its history. He is obliged to admit, of course, that Tweed and his gang were the leaders of Tammany in their day; but so is a Catholic forced to admit that some of the popes were bad men, and in neither case is the former existence of corrupt leaders a sufficient reason for giving up the organization. Besides, were not they also Tammany men who, with Tilden at their head, purged the society and overthrew Tweed?

As regards the national government, Tammany's history is a noble one. In the war of 1812, when many hearts were faltering, Tammany strengthened the hands of the administration. In the war of the rebellion, Tammany poured out its blood like water. It would do the same again, should the occasion arise. The Tammany Society was founded as a patriotic body, — to cherish the cause of the people, to defend the Jeffersonian view of our government as against the aristocratic view, which, early in the century, was very strong. The same antagonism that existed then between Tammany and the upper class of New York citizens exists in some degree to-day. The Tammany man dislikes and despises the Anglomania of what is called "society" in New York; he distrusts the people who compose "society," and he believes them to be at heart out of sympathy with American principles; whereas Tammany, in his view, is a concrete protest against monarchy and monarchical arrangements of society. He considers that Tammany is, on the whole, a good body, that it gives New York a good government, that it stands for what is manly and patriotic. It troubles him somewhat that a few of the leaders are said to be acquiring ill-gotten gains; and if the scandal increases, he will overthrow those leaders, and appoint others

in their stead. Meanwhile, Tammany is his party, his church, his club, his totem. To be loyal to something is almost a necessity of all uncorrupt natures, and especially of the Celtic nature. The Tammany man is loyal to Tammany.

In truth, there is very little in New York to suggest any higher ideal. What kind of a spectacle does the city present to a man working his way up from poverty to wealth, — to one, for instance, who began as a "tough," and ends as a capitalist? The upper class — at least the richer class, the class chiefly talked about in the papers — is, with exceptions, of course, given over to material luxury and to ostentation. It is without high aims, without sympathy, without civic pride or feeling. It has not even the personal dignity of a real aristocracy. Its sense of honor is very crude. And as this class is devoted to the selfish spending, so the business class is devoted to the remorseless getting of money. A Wall Street financier would overreach his own father in a business transaction. To get the better of the man with whom he is dealing has become a law of his nature; and it is on that plane that business in general is now done. The tone of Delmonico's, of the Union Club, of the Merchants' Exchange, of the Stockbrokers' Board, is no higher than the tone of Tammany Hall. It may be more refined, but it is probably less honest. A man of Mr. Croker's origin, for example, commonly has an instinct of honesty, just as he has an instinct of pugnacity; but this primeval instinct has almost died out of the trading and speculative class.

When we come to consider the laboring population, we find that they also are looked after by Tammany. They have their "Associations." Thus, in one assembly district there will be the "P. Divver Association," in another the "Michael O'Hara," in another the "Charles Steckler Association." This means that once every year Mr. Divver,

for instance, will give his constituents a vast free picnic; chartering a steamer and barges, hiring at least one brass band, and perhaps providing lager beer gratis. Tammany, therefore, stands not only for politics, but also for society and amusement and fellowship. P. Divver, besides being at the head of an "Association," is district leader in his assembly district, and also a police justice. The result is that Mr. Divver exercises the powers of a feudal chieftain in the Middle Ages. In fact, modern New York presents a very good illustration of feudal government. It is feudalism tempered by newspaper oversight.

We think of New York as one vast town; but in reality it is a conglomeration of villages. This is especially true of the lower part of the city and of the laboring class. Professional men and those of similar standing in New York are less often natives of the town than are the small tradesmen and the mechanics. The people of a ward, as a rule, know one another. Many of them were born where they live; they are acquainted with their alderman, a Tammany man, and with the district captain, and these functionaries are acquainted with them. If they want anything of the city, it is to Tammany that they must go for it. The force of laborers employed by the various departments is, of course, immense, and all this patronage is at the absolute disposal of Tammany. Moreover, those who have contracts with the city do not select their own laborers; they employ such men as Tammany designates. If it is not work that a citizen desires, but immunity from arrest or imprisonment, or from molestation by the police in his business, here again it is to Tammany that he must apply for protection or relief. No wonder, then, that Tammany is strongly entrenched in New York.

As to the power which Tammany has to harass its enemies and to intimidate all neutral persons I shall speak pre-

sently; but first a word or two should be said concerning the kind of government which Tammany provides. If you ask an anti-Tammany man about this, he will most often give you to understand that the city government is administered largely by thieves and murderers. "Tammany," writes Mr. Dorman B. Eaton in the *North American Review*, "is an institution composed of Lilliputs in influence and Broddingnags in rascality, in the hands of savage and venal partisans, on a level with gamblers, thieves, and pirates, who never apologize, and who would be ruined by any attempt at justification."

But if you push your inquiries a step farther, and ask what sort of a government these people give the city, you encounter some strange admissions. It is commonly conceded that in most respects the city is well governed. It is orderly; the criminal class is well kept under; the fire department is exceedingly good; the police are extremely efficient, though often brutal and oppressive in their treatment of persons without money or influence; the streets are well paved, and not very dirty. School-teachers are appointed regardless of politics.¹ Finally, the cost of the city government is not excessive. The tax rate is \$1.85 per hundred, and the valuation is low, being calculated at forty, or possibly fifty per cent. Two million people live in New York, and about two million more do business there. Consequently, there is in the lower part of the city, the business part, an immense accumulation of wealth, and the real estate in that quarter is of almost fabulous value. For this reason, a tax rate and valuation comparatively low produce a great return, so that in reality more money is raised by taxation than would appear to be the case at first sight. It is true, also, that

a controversy exists as to whether the city government is economically administered. The subject is too vast and too complicated to be discussed here; but, on the whole, I think it may be assumed that the bill which Tammany sends in every year to the citizens of New York for carrying on their government is not unduly exorbitant. Furthermore, so far as is known, no frauds are committed upon the taxpayers outright, such as were perpetrated in the days of Tweed. Tammany raises immense sums, but they are raised by contribution and by blackmail, not by theft. In short, the results are astonishingly good, considering the character of the persons who are now at the head of Tammany Hall; and the inference is that the rank and file of Tammany Hall, including most of the office holders, are sound, honest men. As was remarked to me recently by a prominent lawyer, familiar with city politics, "If a reform movement should be made successfully here in New York, and an anti-Tammany machine be organized, the rank and file would remain substantially the same; the leaders only would be changed." Such is the result of my own observations; and, as I have said, the good government which the city enjoys can be explained upon no other hypothesis.

But there are many respects in which the government is not good; it is growing worse every year in those respects; and, above all, it is not a government of the people, by the people, or for the people. It is a government of Mr. Richard Croker, by means of Tammany Hall, for Mr. Croker primarily, for Tammany Hall secondarily, and for the people in the third place. It is a literal fact that a despotism has got itself established in New York. There has been a transfer of political power as complete as that

¹ This rule has doubtless been broken in some instances, but not, perhaps, with Mr. Croker's knowledge or consent. In one case, a school trustee, being directed by a district

leader to appoint a certain teacher, appealed to Mr. Croker himself, and the Boss told him, in presence of the district leader, to make such appointments regardless of politics.

which, in the eighth century, made the mayors of the palace, instead of the reigning king, the real rulers of France.

No one who has not lived in New York can imagine the despotic power which Tammany Hall exercises there. No citizen is too humble to be beneath its notice; no citizen is too rich or too powerful to be safe from its interference. There is not a man living in New York, however independent his character, who would not think twice before doing an act likely to offend Tammany, — or the city government, for they are one and the same thing. People outside of New York would be astonished if they knew what eminent citizens of that town, Republican as well as Democratic, what respectable and wealthy corporations, curry favor with Tammany by keeping their hands off in city politics, by downright contributions of money, and in various other ways. In many assembly districts the Republican party organization is a sort of annex to Tammany; many of the Republican inspectors of election are in the pay of Tammany. Rich and respectable Republicans in the city refrain from vigorous warfare against Tammany, because they do not want to be harassed in respect to their real estate, their shops, their railroads, their factories, their tax returns.

What power Tammany has in this direction I shall show presently; but first I ought to state some of the ways in which Tammany misgoverns New York, the good features of its government having already been mentioned. Many of its appointments, especially during the last year or two, have been very bad. Few men in the city have more power for good or for evil than the police justices. They ought to be lawyers of high character, trained to sift evidence. Mayor Hewitt said, in one of his special messages, in 1888, "I do not assert too much when I declare that the function of a police justice is of more importance to the community than that of a judge of

the Court of Appeals. The latter finally settles the law, but the former applies it in the first instance in nearly all cases affecting the life, liberty, and property of the citizen. . . . The divorce between party politics and the bench should be made so complete that when a man becomes a judge he should cease to be a politician."

As a matter of fact, the present police justices were all active politicians when they were appointed, and most of them are now Tammany "leaders" in their respective assembly districts. Few, if any, of them are lawyers. Mayor Grant appointed, among others, Patrick Divver, keeper of a sailors' boarding-house and a liquor dealer. He also appointed Thomas F. Grady, a former state senator, whose character was indicated in a letter (which made much stir at the time) written by Mr. Cleveland, then governor of New York, to John Kelly, then Boss of Tammany Hall. In this letter Mr. Cleveland requested that Mr. Grady should not again be sent to Albany as a legislator. He wrote: "I do not wish to conceal the fact that my personal comfort and satisfaction are involved in this matter. But I know that good legislation, based upon a pure desire to promote the interests of the people, and the improvement of legislative methods are also deeply involved."

Among Mayor Grant's other selections for the bench were an undertaker and two clerks taken out of city offices. A police justice recently appointed by Mayor Gilroy is one Koch, a man who made a discreditable record as excise commissioner. The appointment was condemned by a committee of investigation reporting to the City Reform Club.

Tammany's representatives in the state legislature are mostly mere agents, and some of them are corrupt men. Some interesting particulars concerning them are given in the Eighth Annual Record of Assemblymen and Senators from the City of New York, compiled and published by the club just mentioned. From this pam-

phlet we learn that one assemblyman "was born in Cork, Ireland, . . . and immigrated to this country when about seven years of age. He attended public schools. When about twenty-four years old he became a bar-tender in a saloon which he soon owned. He now has a saloon at 442 Washington Street. He is illiterate, shameless, and utterly unfit to represent the important district from which he comes. His record for the past session is bad. . . . Apparently, all the bills which he introduced were strikes." (A "strike" is a measure brought forward simply for purposes of blackmail; as, for example, a bill, introduced last year, reducing fares on the New York surface railways from five to three cents.)

Of another assemblyman we have the following account: "He received six or seven years' schooling in the public schools of this city. His early associations were not good. He was employed in various newspaper delivery offices for several years. He afterwards became a liquor dealer, then an undertaker, then a liquor dealer again. Last year he called himself a lawyer, and this year a plumber. As a matter of fact, he has recently opened a new saloon at 35 Marion Street. He does not use tobacco nor drink intoxicating liquors. . . . He belongs to the worst class of bar-room politicians. He has engaged in street brawls, poses as a fighter, and is a typical New York 'tough.' As a legislator, he is preposterous. He is dishonest, and has been accused upon the floor of the House of using money to defeat certain bills."

One assemblyman "was born in New York city, of American parents. He was educated in the public schools, and was admitted to the bar. . . . He has no conception of his duties, and seems lacking in ordinary intelligence. . . . He associated with and followed the lead of the most corrupt element in the legislature. The story of his unsuccessful journey to an interior town, at much personal discomfort, for the purpose of demand-

ing a sum of money for his vote in favor of a bill making a small appropriation for a charitable institution is public property. It is supposed that his simple-minded attempts to strike various interests will prevent his return to the assembly."

A better kind of legislator is described as follows: "He was born in New York city, of Irish parents. He was educated in parochial and public schools and the College of the City of New York. He worked as a school-teacher, and studied law at the same time. . . . He now has a law office. . . . He is an honest man, of considerable ability. His associates at Albany are good. *He is Richard Croker's pet assemblyman.* . . . His record for the past session was bad so far as he was controlled by Tammany Hall. He voted for all its bills, whether of a political or private nature, and showed activity only when Tammany needed his services; when Tammany interests were not involved, he was usually upon the right side."

This description of Mr. Croker's "pet assemblyman" is, I think, highly significant. It will be observed that the pet assemblyman is just as honest and reputable a man as it is possible for him to be without neglecting the selfish interests of Tammany Hall and Mr. Croker. And such is the character of the whole government of the city of New York. It is as good, as effective, as honest a government as Mr. Croker can afford to give the citizens without doing what he would doubtless consider injustice to himself and to his political constituents. Probably he thinks that any inhabitant of New York who fails to be satisfied with it is very ungrateful. Certainly it is as good as the citizens deserve. The Croker régime is far removed from the clumsy, thieving system of Tweed. An analysis of the City Reform Club's report, from which I have just quoted, shows that Tammany, on the whole, prefers men of the pet assemblyman type rather than of the type represented, for

instance, by the second character described above. Of the thirty assemblymen elected from the city of New York last year, twenty-nine were classed as Tammany Democrats. There was but one Independent Democrat, and not a single Republican. Of the twenty-nine Tammany Democrats, three were good men and good legislators; fifteen were mere Tammany machines, not "personally dishonest;" whereas only eleven are set down as inherently corrupt. The reason why Tammany Hall needs to be well represented at Albany is doubtless familiar to most of my readers. The city of New York is controlled very largely by the state legislature. For the past fifty years the city has been Democratic, excepting, I believe, one year only; for the same period, with the exception of a year or two, the legislature has been Republican. The consequence of this state of things is stated by Mr. Godkin, Tammany's acute and courageous opponent: "In order to protect themselves against the gross consequences of Democratic ignorance and corruption, Republicans have been compelled to fly to Albany and ask for some sort of temporary relief in the shape of special legislation." And Mr. Godkin adds: "The strain on integrity which the situation creates on both sides is, in fact, greater than human nature can bear, even when it has not been trained in city politics. Nothing can well be more demoralizing for the country members of the legislature than the power to regulate the affairs of a wealthy community to which they do not belong, and whose interests they do not understand. Nothing, too, is more demoralizing for a minority, in any community, than the discovery that it need not try persuasion on the majority in order to accomplish its ends; that there is a power outside to which it can appeal to enable it to have its way when elections go against it."

The state legislature, then, and not the aldermen, constitutes the real legislative

body of the city. There are no common councilmen, and the aldermen have very little power; their business is chiefly to regulate the use of highways and sidewalks, to make ordinances about awnings, etc. Even for the laying out of a new street recourse must be had to Albany. The "boodles" aldermen, whose trials created so much excitement a few years ago, were aldermen who had been bribed to give a charter to a surface railway; but such rights are now required by law to be sold at public auction. Since 1884, the aldermen have not even had the power of confirming or rejecting the mayor's appointments.

Last year, however, Tammany had a majority both in the assembly and in the senate, and this very much simplified Mr. Croker's task in directing legislation. He was able to pass or reject bills by telephone. The Capitol at Albany still continued in service, the City Hall at New York was also occupied by its customary tenants, but the real seat of municipal legislation was the wigwam on Fourteenth Street.

I have spoken of the laws affecting New York which are passed at the capital; and there is another way, also, in which Tammany, or rather the state "ring," of which Tammany forms the chief part, is interested in Albany legislation. For many years the "striking" of individuals, and more especially of corporations, has been a recognized industry at Albany, as indeed it has been, though to a less extent, in most state capitals. A legislator "strikes" a corporation, as I have indicated, when he introduces some bill calculated to injure it directly or indirectly; his purpose being, not to have the bill pass, but to compel the corporation to buy him off. Sometimes, also, corporations are forced to pay large sums for particular legislation which they desire, which may be, and often is, perfectly proper, and which a legislature not venal would grant without difficulty. It is generally believed that enormous sums

pass into the ring's hands in this way. I know of one case where twenty-five hundred dollars were paid by a corporation for a small piece of legislation. I know of another case where fifteen thousand dollars were demanded for a similar but more important service. After much deliberation, and under the advice of able counsel, it was concluded to pay this sum, and nothing remained to be done except to send the cheque; but at that stage of the negotiations the election of last November occurred. Tammany lost its majority in the legislature, and I presume, though I do not know, that the cheque was not sent. In still another case, Tammany demanded of a corporation doing an immense business in the State sixty thousand dollars for some entirely proper legislation at Albany. The company was advised by its counsel, an eminent member of the bar, to hand over the money. But here, again, the election of last November intervened, and caused, I believe, a hitch in the proceedings. These large payments are not made by shady individuals, or companies doing a doubtful business and advised by slyster attorneys; they are made by the chief corporations in the State, acting under advice of the chief lawyers in the State. Last year, Tammany being in full possession of the legislature, this blackmailing business was thrown directly into the hands of the ring, and the result was described by the president of a great insurance company doing business in New York. "Formerly," he said, "we had to keep a man at Albany to buy off the 'strikers' one by one, but this year we simply paid over a lump sum to the ring, and they looked after our interests."

It should be said, moreover, that Tammany deals very honestly in these transactions. It protects its clients from the raids of the Black Horse Cavalry (as the strikers are called) as faithfully as Rob Roy protected his clients from cattle-lifters on the Border. Such is one source

of Tammany's income, and the money derived from it is said to exceed a million dollars per annum. How much of it goes into the treasury of Tammany Hall, and how much into the pockets of the leaders, is not known. Neither the ring nor Tammany renders accounts.

Tammany's legitimate revenue consists chiefly of assessments levied upon candidates for office and upon office holders. Every one of the five thousand members of the General Committee pays an assessment, varying from five dollars to fifty dollars. Every candidate for an elective office pays a sum proportioned to the salary and length of term attached to the office. The city employees above the grade of laborer make annual contributions to Tammany. Another source of revenue is the contributions of liquor dealers. There are about thirty thousand men in New York engaged as principals or assistants in selling liquor over a bar. The saloons number about eight thousand; and almost all of them help support Tammany Hall. Still another, and perhaps even greater source of revenue is found in the criminal classes. Every gambling house, every house of prostitution, pays hush money through the police, and, it may be added, to the police.¹

It remains to state what power Tammany has to harass its enemies and to punish rebellious followers; and this power is perhaps more valuable to it than any other. Certainly, without this power Tammany never could have acquired the firm grip which it now has upon the city. I have already reminded the reader of the fact that New York is governed chiefly through laws passed at Albany. In 1882 these laws were codified in one great act, called the Consolidation Act. An annotated edition of this act, with the subsequent additions and amendments, published in 1891,

¹ Even this abuse has its advantage. The system tends to reduce the number of criminal resorts, and to make them orderly.

makes a very bulky volume of over nine hundred pages. The minor ordinances passed by the aldermen make another large volume. Now, a citizen of New York, especially if he own any real estate, or if he be a builder or contractor, a tradesman, a stable keeper, a liquor dealer, or an inn keeper, does not know what his rights and duties are unless he has mastered these extensive works. Of course, as a matter of fact he has never seen them. But if he falls under the ban of Tammany, the police will soon begin to give him object lessons in city government. A few concrete instances, for the truth of which I can vouch, will suffice to show how this is done. Last spring there was employed in a certain livery stable a young man who had made himself somewhat conspicuous as an "anti-snapper," — an opponent, for the time being at least, of Tammany. It was not long before the police began to drop in at that stable almost daily with various complaints and charges. The manure pit was an illegal nuisance, and its use must be discontinued immediately; there were, it appeared, numerous sanitary regulations which the stable keeper had not complied with; his plumbing was defective; he must stop putting wagons in the street (he had been doing this for years, to be sure, but still it was contrary to a city ordinance). In short, it soon became plain that the stable keeper must either go out of business, or dismiss the anti-snapper. He took the latter course, and the police troubled him no more.

In another case, a Broadway hotel keeper, who refused a contribution to Tammany, suffered severely in a similar way. He became a prey to inspectors, who were continually requiring him to make this or that change in his building, at the same time suggesting that So-and-So would be a good man to do the job. His plumbing was always out of order, from a Tammany point of view; his fire escapes were insufficient, etc.

If the offender be a merchant, he is vulnerable not only as regards plumbing, fire escapes, and the like, but also in respect to signs, awnings, obstruction of the sidewalk, obstruction of the street by wagons standing in front of his shop, and in various other ways. There was a junk dealer who owned several shops in different parts of the city. For some years it had been his practice to take out a single license, upon the theory that he was licensed as a dealer who might have one or more places of business. Tammany acquiesced in this interpretation of the law; but when the junk dealer became recalcitrant politically, then indeed Tammany's conscience was aroused, and thereafter that particular junk dealer was required to take out as many licenses as he had shops. An undertaker, to whom the city officials had been accustomed to direct a good deal of business, fell under suspicion, and Tammany gave him only one funeral in the course of a whole month. A lawyer was employed to collect a bill against the city, his client being the owner of a patented machine which the city had been using. There was no doubt as to the justice of the claim, but various difficulties were thrown in the way, and it seemed impossible to get the city authorities to act upon it. Finally, the lawyer was given a hint that if he joined Tammany Hall the claim would be paid. A large manufacturing concern, still more a railroad company doing business in New York, must touch the city government at a hundred points, and correspondingly firm will be Tammany's hold upon its president and directors.

As to the liquor dealers, Tammany's power over them is almost absolute. The excise law is complicated and extensive, and it can be held over the dealers like a whip. For example, it is illegal to sell liquor on Sunday, but in many, perhaps in most cases, the saloons have a back door open on that day. This is

done by connivance of the police, who can permit Sunday selling as a privilege, or prevent it as a punishment, according to the political or financial necessities of the case. Even when some fraction of public opinion or a regard for appearances compels them to make an arrest, they can nullify it, if they desire, by the weakness of their testimony against the offender. This is illustrated by the following paragraph, which appeared last November in the city papers :

“ Five saloon keepers were arraigned before Justice Voorhis in Essex Market Court yesterday, but the evidence was so slight in each case that the justice said: ‘ These arrests are a farce. An officer makes an arrest, and does his utmost to have the case dismissed. I get no evidence on which to hold a defendant. They are all discharged.’ ”

There are many small extortions which Tammany can inflict for the benefit of its friends. Thus, it was formerly the practice in New York, as it is today in Boston, for the owners of private stables to sell the accumulated manure to some farmer, for so much a load. Tammany made a law that stable owners should not sell the manure, but, on the contrary, should pay for having it carted off ; and further, that they should employ for this purpose only such person or persons as were licensed by the city. Tammany went so far, in one case, as to send in a bill for removing manure from a stable which had been closed during the whole period covered by the bill. The owner protested against being forced to pay for the fictitious carting of imaginary manure ; but Tammany replied that if he did not use the stable it was his own fault. Tammany’s licensee was ready at all times to do his duty.

Such, roughly sketched, is Tammany Hall. To show it in all its ramifications would require the pen of a Balzac. There is scarcely a passion or a weakness of human nature that does not qualify its operations. Even the intrigues

and jealousies of its women, their “ social ambitions,” play a part in the politics of the city. Tammany includes the good and the bad ; it reaches the high and the low. There is probably not a peanut-vender pushing his illegal cart in the streets of New York whose comfort and prosperity do not depend upon its favor. On the other hand, it has determined, and may determine again, the presidency of the United States. Tammany is almost as old as a political club in this country could be. It is enriched by traditions of patriotism and good fellowship ; it touches its members and adherents upon many sides. It is wonderfully organized and disciplined. Its rank and file are mainly honest men. Tammany has great resources : it has the patronage of the city offices, and of all the laborers employed by the city, directly or indirectly ; it collects enormous sums by assessment of candidates and office holders, by blackmail of corporations and individuals, by tolls laid upon liquor dealers and criminals. It sits in the police courts. It has an immense power of harassing opponents and of disciplining rebellious followers, through the application of the city ordinances, of the excise laws, of sanitary, building, plumbing, and numberless other acts. This vast club, now practically synonymous with the city government, is ruled despotically by a few men, — nay, by one man, — answerable to nobody. And yet he gives the city a fairly good, though tyrannical government.

But even if it were extremely good, even if it did not involve blackmail and oppression, it is not the sort of government which we are supposed to tolerate in this country. Did we rebel against England, have we declared constitutions, made laws, organized a nation, in order that Mr. Richard Croker, or his successor in the office of Tammany Boss, might put his foot on our necks and keep it there ? That is the question which confronts the citizens of New York.

Henry Childs Merwin.