

stand; en you ain't gwyne to drink a drop — nary single drop; en you ain't gwyne to gamble one single gamble — not one! Dis ain't what you 's gwyne to *try* to do, it 's what you 's gwyne to *do*. En I 'll tell you how I knows it. Dis is how. I 's gwyne to foller along to Sent Louis my own self; en you 's gwyne to come to me every day o' yo' life, en I 'll look you over; en if you fails in one single one o' dem things — just *one* — I take my oath I 'll come straight down to dis town en tell de Jedge

(To be continued.)

you 's a nigger en a slave — en *prove* it!" She paused to let her words sink home. Then she added, "Chambers, does you b'lieve me when I says dat?"

Tom was sober enough now. There was no levity in his voice when he answered:

"Yes, mother. I know, now, that I am reformed — and permanently. Permanently — and beyond the reach of any human temptation."

"Den g' long home en begin!"

Mark Twain.

THE SUPPRESSION OF BRIBERY IN ENGLAND.



ANY practical politicians do not hesitate to say that there will always be much corruption in a country with a widely extended suffrage. So many of the more depraved classes of the population habitually act from low motives, and so many of the ignorant are unable clearly to grasp the issues of the day, that the politicians in seeking votes find themselves unable to appeal successfully to motives of patriotism, or to judgment of governmental policies, and therefore naturally appeal to prejudice and greed. On the other hand, reformers have told us that, since the Corrupt Practices Act of 1883, elections in England have been pure because politicians feared the penalties imposed by that law. An English election agent of wide experience not long since said to me, "Not one political manager in a thousand will fail to buy votes if he is not afraid of detection"; but he also assured me that little vote-buying is done in England, thus practically confirming both views given. It is evident that the solution of the question must be an appeal to experience; and for Americans the experience of England is the most valuable in the world, for, say what we will, we resemble Englishmen, especially in political methods, far more closely than we do any other nation.

With due consciousness, therefore, of the difficulty that one has in seeing and understanding social movements in a foreign country, and with a preliminary apology to Englishmen for any interpretations that may, on account of my foreign training, be unjust, I shall try to give what facts I can regarding English election methods and customs that may be valuable to us in considering the still unsettled question of electoral reform.

CORRUPTION IN EARLY TIMES.

IF England is practically free from bribery now, this condition is due to late law-making. At any rate, from 1571, when (according to Grego, from whom most of the earlier examples are taken) the earliest recorded instance of corruption in electioneering matters took place, down to within ten years, there was much corruption of all kinds. At that early time a member of the House of Commons confessed, on inquiry, "that he gave to Anthony Garland, mayor of the town of Westbury, and one Watts of the same, four pounds for his place in Parliament." Under the Stuarts there was downright intimidation, and threats to "tear the gentlemen to pieces" carried the day. Under William III. and Queen Anne it was found that in some cases the constables and similar officials had been in the habit of selling the seat to the highest bidder, securing its delivery by hoodwinking or bribing all the voters that they could to vote for their candidate, and by keeping others, under various pretexts, away from the polls.

In 1695 was passed a severe act against bribery and treating — the first of the series. How much such an act was needed may be guessed from the fact that the Marquis of Wharton alone managed to return from twenty to thirty members, at an expenditure of thousands of pounds. He was evidently a born politician and "boss." He could call the children of the voters by name, and knew how to take a glass with men of the working-class; and when money was needed he did not hesitate to use it. In 1705 he alone spent £12,000 sterling, and he is calculated to have spent during his active life £80,000 of his own fortune in electioneering.

We hear of violence being used in 1721 to drive away voters of the opposition, of mobs hired to surround voters and to cut them off from the polls. "In some cases voters were carried off forcibly and locked up until the election was over." This plan seems to have been employed fifty years later, when it was not uncommon to get voters locked up on some fictitious pretense—summonses, false writs, debt, etc., until too late to vote.

Of similar nature was the plan, even within this century, of carrying voters out of the country. When candidates paid their electors' traveling expenses,— at high rates, of course,— the opposition at times bribed the man in charge of a squad of valuable voters to deliver them at the wrong place. Thus, when some Berwick freemen living in London "were going down by sea, the skippers to whose tender mercy they were committed used to be bribed, and have been known in consequence to carry them over to Norway." At times men were taken to Holland, to Ostend, and elsewhere. Even in late days it is charged that occasionally a voter of the opposition is made dead drunk to keep him away from the polls.

The amounts expended in some early elections seem almost incredible. In 1807, in the "Austerlitz of electioneering" in Yorkshire, in which the philanthropist Wilberforce was a candidate, it is said that £500,000 were squandered in that one district. In 1768, in Northampton, the patrons of the candidates in the election, and in the ensuing scrutiny before the House, are said to have spent, one £100,000, each of the other two £150,000; so much that "Lord Halifax was ruined; Lord Northampton cut down his trees, sold his furniture at Compton Winyates, went abroad for the rest of his days, and died in Switzerland."

The payment of voters was so common that the evil was hardly recognized. The state of the public conscience on the subject, as well as the influence of custom upon the private conscience, is shown by the fact that even the sensitive Wilberforce, when a young man, in contesting the seat for Hull expended from £8000 to £9000. He pictures himself "entertaining at midnight suppers his constituents, the Hull freemen located in London, to the number of 300, at waterside public-houses round Wapping, and by his addresses to them gaining confidence in public speaking," and gives the nature of his other expenditures as follows: "By long established custom the single vote of a resident elector was rewarded with a donation of two guineas; four were paid for a plumper, and the expenses of a freeman's journey from London averaged ten pounds apiece." It is curious to see him add, "The letter of the law was not broken, because the money was not paid until

the last day on which election petitions could be presented." One would hardly expect such a defense from him.

Some of the devices that have since been employed in the United States to avoid detection were employed; for example, in 1774 a person was placed in a little room, and through a hole in the door delivered to the bribed voters parcels containing twenty guineas—a high price. Then they went to another apartment, and signed notes for that amount, which were made payable to an imaginary character.

The electors of Shoreham, in the latter half of the last century, did better still, for they organized themselves into a joint-stock company, called, with blasphemous irony, the "Christian Society," to get the benefit of their rights as freemen. No one not an elector was allowed to become a member, and the society included a large majority of the voters. "Upon any vacancy in the representation of the borough, the society always appointed a committee to treat with the candidates for the purchase of the seat, and the committees were constantly instructed to get the most money, and make the best bargain, they could." At one meeting "the members declared that they would support the highest bidder."

POCKET BOROUGHS.

SUCH proceedings were of course much easier from the fact that the suffrage was limited, and the voters often few, and so related that they could easily be controlled by one man. When William Pitt first entered Parliament, it was as member for a seat controlled absolutely by Sir James Lowther. He writes to his mother: "Appleby is the place I am to represent, and the election will be made (probably in a week or ten days) without my having any trouble, or even visiting my constituents." Naturally, the proprietors of seats soon learned to traffic in them. Men bought them, and kept them for sale at election times, sure of a market. Chesterfield offered a "borough-jobber," as he called him, £2500 for a seat for his son, but learned that prices had gone up to £3000 at least, and that some seats sold for £5000. Old Sarum is famous. It was reduced to one house, and for a long time to seven voters, who elected two members. The constituency of Helston, where the franchise was originally in a corporation, at length dwindled to one elector, who alone, in 1790, named two representatives. A little earlier, on a petition for another constituency, it was proved that 203 voters out of 210 had been bribed.

Major Cartwright, in his efforts to introduce universal suffrage, gave statistics for 1820 that show that ninety-seven lords practically owned

200 seats in the House of Commons; "ninety wealthy commoners for 102 vile sinks of corruption [pocket-boroughs] brought in the house 137 members." Ministerial patronage furnished 20 more, so that 353 members of the house were "corruptly or tyrannically imposed on the Commons in gross violation of the law, and to the palpable subversion of the Constitution."

REFORM ACTS.

SUCH evils could not, of course, endure. There must be either reform, or complete loss of freedom. The first great step was taken in 1832, when the great reform bill disfranchised 56 of the worst of the rotten boroughs, returning altogether 111 members, lessened the representation of 30 more, and gave votes to new constituencies either by splitting old ones, or by creating new ones that, like Manchester, had grown up with no representative at all. This stopped the sale of boroughs, but it did not stop the venal voting.

In 1854 a corrupt practices act was passed that served to make bribery more dangerous, but which was still regularly evaded. In 1868 a most important act provided that contested elections should be settled by a court, and not by the House, as had been customary heretofore, since it had been found that the majority in the House would strengthen its power rather than do justice. The chief step against bribery, perhaps, was taken in 1872 by the passage of the secret-ballot act, which, in general, is not materially different from our new so-called Australian ballot acts.

These acts, however, were not sufficient, though they were good and necessary as parts of a system. According to Sir Henry James, in a late article in "The Forum," "corrupt practices, certainly bribery and treating, remained in full force" in 1874. It was found that, though the ballot was secret, "where bribery had been resorted to, the votes very generally followed the bribe." In the election of 1880, when the law had been in effect eight years, and politicians had learned to evade it successfully, "it became evident," on trials of petitions, "that corrupt practices had in no way diminished." In that year it was proved by one election agent that he had bribed 1863 voters out of the 2674 that voted for his candidate, and like cases were not rare. Indirect forms of bribery were common. One campaign pole was bought for £25; it took thirty men three days at high wages to erect it; two reliefs of watches of six men each stood sentry by it at £2 each, etc.

In 1874, says a prominent Conservative of London, a man took the trouble to disguise himself as a chimney-sweep, to provide him-

self with a supply of oranges, each of which contained a sovereign, and to crawl up the chimney in an appointed room. The bribed voters were instructed to enter the room, and an orange was dropped to each from the chimney. At Birmingham the practice of giving a voter a glass of beer with a sovereign in the bottom became so common that it was known as the "Birmingham trick."

One need not enumerate such cases, for they are commonly known, and have been often cited; but we must not forget that these things occurred after the secret ballot was thoroughly established. We may be sure that, much as the secret Australian ballot has done for us, it is not enough, but that, if we trust to that alone, we shall soon find that our politicians also can successfully evade it. It is the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act of 1883, a most stringent law, combined with these provisions as to a secret ballot under what is commonly known as the Australian system, that has given the good results seen in England at present. It is these results, chiefly as witnessed in the general election of 1892, and in some of the late by-elections, that I wish to consider.

COERCION.

IN the opinion of many English politicians, coercion of voters, especially of the more ignorant ones in the country districts, is a greater and more wide-spread evil than bribery. The coercion is apt to be brought to bear by the canvassers. The work of canvassing seems to be very completely done by all parties, though the methods are sometimes quite different from ours, and would be unsatisfactory, if taken alone. For example, in one constituency in a former election, the Tory agent sent canvassing-cards to all the voters, asking them to state on the card for whom they intended to vote. It was a rural constituency, and many of the farmers felt the pressure of the landlord a good deal. If they wrote in the Liberal candidate's name, or neglected to fill out the card, it might be taken amiss by the landlord, and they might be questioned about it the next rent-day. Such cards are not now generally employed. Again, though the vote is secret, men often do not wish to make any promises, especially in writing, and then fail to keep them. In that constituency, however, some 200 artisans once thus pledged themselves to the Tory candidate, to lull the agent into a feeling of security. Then, relying on the secret ballot, they voted for the Liberal, upsetting the agent's calculation—unless he had properly discounted their returns beforehand.

Employers of large bodies of men cannot of course openly threaten their employees; but

the belief is wide-spread that they do make their influence felt in spite of the secret ballot, both through the canvasser, as above suggested, and through measures taken after the election, if the result is unfavorable. To guard against this, in some localities the party agents think it necessary to get out special circulars showing the voters how absolutely impossible it is for any one to learn how they have voted except from themselves. In spite of all these precautions, the feeling is general that the landlords in many places still "own the constituency," as in the days of pocket-boroughs, though, of course, not now so absolutely or certainly.

A defeated candidate, speaking to me about the number of pledges that every candidate had to make to workmen, land-restoration societies, temperance societies, and what-not, declared that there is little chance now for a sincere, honest man to succeed. He must pretend to favor many things that he does not favor, must pretend to care for many things that are indifferent to him, or failure is practically certain. He must "toady." "Even Gladstone," he said, "has gone so far as to ask the people what they want, with the intention of granting it, regardless of his own opinions." "The only really independent member," he continued, "is a Conservative from some country district that is practically owned by a lord, where the voters do as they are told." This man did not think that the lord needs to coerce the voters. They are ignorant, know little of the issues of the day, and care less, and are glad to do as the lord wishes, because they trust him. In one case, however, when canvassing, he had met a workman who was a Home Ruler,—or rather a Gladstonian,—and had tried to argue him out of his belief, but was finally silenced by the reply, "You may easily out-argue me; you may even convince me that Home Rule is wrong; but I trust Gladstone, and will vote with him anyway."

When the wife or daughter of the landlord asks a farmer or farm-laborer for his vote, it may sometimes be felt directly as coercion, though no threat is made, of course; but when the daughter of a candidate asks you to vote for her father, and on your refusal bursts into tears, as in one authentic case that came to my knowledge, what are you going to do? "I'm very sorry, miss, but I must vote for the other side; it's a question of conscience," was the reply in this case; but often it would not be so.

NURSING THE CONSTITUENCY.

PROBABLY the most corrupting influence in the long run, though it is not one that can so readily be brought up in court as can coercion

or bribery, is that exerted by the candidate in "nursing the constituency." Owing to the English system of nomination, a man is often an avowed candidate for years before the election; and naturally, during that time, he does what he can to make himself popular. Therein lies the trouble. Not merely does he feel compelled to subscribe freely to benevolent schemes of all kinds, as do candidates with us; but he sometimes goes much further in the way of countenancing entertainments, excursions, etc.; and in this work the wealthy candidate has a great advantage, though of course he must exercise great care to keep within the law. I heard of several candidates who had thus spent large sums that were not to be returned as election expenses, and which could not be prevented by law. They were too remote from the election, and no evil purpose could be proved.

It was proved on the election petition in Stepney after the general election of 1892, however, that the son of the candidate had given out some cards that read as follows: "Stepney Fathers: The little children of Stepney ask your vote for Mr. Isaacson, the children's friend. Country excursions, school treats, free education, technical education, Christmas dinners," etc. The agent had promptly disavowed the cards, and called them all in as soon as possible, so that it did not void the seat; still it shows what Mr. Isaacson had been doing in the years gone by.

On the night of the election, after the result had been declared, I heard a bystander say, "This comes of dinners, and summer excursions, and Christmas gifts." That same day I heard a woman on the street say to others about her: "Isaacson is a good man. Many a poor person has a hundred of coal in her cupboard from him." Such chance expressions are not evidence, of course; but it is doubtless true—in fact, the custom is so common that it has given rise to the political slang phrase, "nursing the constituency"—that many candidates rely more upon what may fairly be considered indirect corruption in the ways indicated than is desirable for the good of the country, and that the evil is of great significance in the long run, when one is discussing the question of democratic government with a widely extended suffrage. Still, it is an evil that cannot easily be touched by the law. We may not wisely impugn the motives of a man who seems charitably disposed, even if he is a candidate. The only remedy seems a wider study of social conditions by all classes, and a raising of the feeling of independence and self-respect among the very poor—a remedy that all will recognize as by no means of ready and prompt application.

A candidate for a London constituency, who has been for five years before his people, says

that his candidacy has cost him, on the average, about £200 a year. Another candidate in a large country constituency acknowledges to £1500 a year, but this includes the pay of an agent whose business it is to look after registration, etc. Some secure seats cost almost nothing besides the returning-officer's fees. Others cost more than the figures mentioned. I should judge that a fair average annual expense was from £200 to £300 in a city, and from £500 to £700 in the country. A London member told me that his total election expenses for five years, with only one election, had been £385. He estimated his opponent's expenses at £4000 in the same period; but of course he did not know them accurately, and the tendency would be to overestimate.

ELECTION DODGES.

SOME of the methods employed by politicians to win voters seem, by their indirectness and uncertainty, almost laughable, and serve perhaps better than anything else to show how really effective the law is against bribery, treating, etc. For example, an agent told me, with a puzzled expression of countenance, that one of the most difficult tricks to meet was what he called the "confidence game." He could think of no remedy except to play the same game. It is worked in this wise: Two Radicals from London, for example, go into one of the country districts and enter a crowd where they are unknown. They get into a political discussion, and, pretending to be Conservatives, praise the Tory candidate and his policy. Meanwhile a confederate, who has come in later and has listened to them, joins in the discussion. He cannot agree as to the character and acts of the candidate; declares that he is "off" on the liquor question, wants to shut up saloons, etc. (or any other popular question will do as well). When the others refuse to believe him, he draws papers from his pockets to prove by votes in the House, or by his speeches, that the candidate is really the bad man politically that he declares him to be. At length, against their wills, the two supposed Conservatives are converted, and presumably with them some of the bystanders, and they go out to play the same game in another place. This was actually done in several places in the same constituency—a constituency that was so close in the last election that when illegal ballots were thrown out the candidates tied, and a second election was necessary. It seems a clumsy device, but even one vote won in such a constituency may be worth while, and politicians assure me that it is really very effective.

Of course, as everywhere, little irregularities of other kinds come up at times.

I was standing near by in the crowd outside the polling-place when the polls closed in Stepney, East London. There had been much shouting and crowding about the doors by the great throng, much rushing up of late voters by the workers of the respective candidates, and much confusion for the last few minutes. Two or three minutes after the door was closed a workingman with a board some four or five feet long came by laughing. "That is a mighty good board," said he; "it headed off two Tories." If he told the truth, he had managed to get himself and his board jammed across the gateway at the last moment, just as two belated Tories were rushing to get in, and the delay of a minute or two that he caused them cost them their votes.

PERSONATION.

BESIDES the coercion and bribery found at times, there is doubtless more or less personation of voters whose names are registered, but who, for any reason whatever, cannot come to vote. For example, in one of the papers during the election of 1892 it was reported that a defeated candidate claimed that ninety fishermen were polled who on the day of election were miles away on the North Sea. Also, he said, ten dead men recorded votes against him. This was probably a campaign-story, for he made no petition to overthrow the election. In fact, though twelve petitions were made, of which one was withdrawn, and five seats were vacated on various charges, no one was unseated on the ground of personation, though personation was proved in one case; but that time it had been done without the knowledge of the candidate or of his agent. Still, almost all politicians seem agreed that not a little of it is still practised in England.

CORRUPT TREATING.

MUCH more common is the practice of "treating" to influence elections. The Conservatives lost two seats after the last election on this ground. In one instance the judges expressed the opinion that they at any rate "suspect" "that corrupt and illegal practices extensively existed at the last election" in that constituency, though only one case was clearly proved. Even in that case they acquitted the candidate of all knowledge of the affair, but unseated him because he had not used due diligence in preventing such practice by his agents. In the other case, though they acquitted the candidate of direct knowledge or intention, his agent was so clearly guilty of several corrupt and illegal practices which he had not taken proper care to prevent that he lost his seat. In this

second case, however, they declared that they have no reason to believe that "corrupt and illegal practices extensively prevailed."

The manner of the treating is of interest. In the case cited it was done by paying for a party given for the benefit of the Conservatives, and especially, of course, of the candidate. At other times barrels of beer, etc., are placed in private houses, and drinks are given free or at very low rates. Nothing need be said about a vote in return; but if the intent is clearly to influence the voters favorably, more is not needed. At times, it is said, certain saloon-keepers sell for a penny all that a man wishes to drink.

Again, to evade the law, one or two friends of a candidate, going into a saloon and arguing at length in his favor, will finally propose a collection for "drinks all round." They begin by throwing in, say, a half-crown. If the others give each a penny or ha'penny, or even nothing, there is enough to pay for the crowd, and the friends hope that the kindly intent will not be lost.

Of course not every treat at election time is "treating" in the sense of the statute. The treating must be for the purpose of influencing the vote, and that is usually difficult to prove. Doubtless much more treating is done than is ever brought into court, and yet the best judges think that, on the whole, not enough is now done to be a very serious evil.

In the last election the Brewers' and Licensed Victuallers' Association worked as a body in favor of the Conservatives, feeling that the Liberals were hostile to their interests. Naturally, their influence over saloon-keepers is very great, and the influence of saloon-keepers over large classes of voters is not slight. No one claims that this influence is all illegitimate; but no doubt this is the class by whom treating is very likely to be done, if it is done at all. Often a saloon-keeper in whose establishment a committee meeting, or on whose premises a trades-union meeting, is held, or one who may be a member of a union, can exert great influence without any action that is more than "moral suasion." It is of interest to know, however, that the Liberals ascribe the loss of about twenty seats in the last general election to the exertions of the Brewers' Association. Their calculations at the Central Office, made before the election, were on the whole justified by the result, except in the districts where this association was most active. There they lost about twenty seats that they had counted upon winning. Naturally, they are inclined to charge the brewers and publicans with corrupt practices, even where they cannot prove them. It is probable that the Liberals go too far in this charge; but the opinion of prominent Conser-

vatives goes far to justify them in their belief that the opposition of the brewers cost them many seats, honestly or otherwise. "The Liberals made a big mistake in their stand on the temperance question," said a Tory to me; "it was a suicidal policy."

The actions of this Brewers' and Licensed Victuallers' Association, and the decisions of the judges thereupon, are very interesting, and in our country would certainly lead to charges of partizanship or of corruption against the judges. These associations held meetings of those persons connected in any way with the trade, and distributed literature upholding the Conservative candidates—all this at great expense, in the interest of their trade, as they said. Such expenditures were not included in the election agents' returns, and one of the judges held that such associations "had a direct and vital interest in the contest on the drink question, and he did not think their action in holding meetings to promote their own interests made them agents of the candidate." Justice Cave, in the Stepney petition, took similar ground, though he acknowledged that "they may have made themselves agents for him, so that any corrupt practices of theirs might have unseated him." Mr. Seager, in commenting on the decisions, seems justified in thinking them hard; for the same view would quite possibly not be taken had a temperance association spent like sums for similar ends. It would have no "vital" interest in the question from the pecuniary point of view. But, again, if you grant the right to such expenditures when the interest is only "sentimental or moral," you open a very wide door to such practices. All sorts of associations may be formed at election times for just those ends.

BRIBERY AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES.

OF direct bribery, all are agreed that there is, relatively speaking, very little left in England. In none of the contested cases at the general election, so far as I am aware, was a single instance of bribery proved to the satisfaction of the judges, though evidence was offered in several cases, and bribery was charged in many more. Indeed, I believe that no one has lost his seat on that ground since the law was passed.

In a petition on the special by-election held in Pontefract (Pomfret), decided in June, 1893, an illegal practice was proved that vacated the seat. The agent had paid the voter ten shillings for his railway expenses in coming to the polls, and this was held to be sufficient. In this case the candidate had no knowledge of the expenditure. This practice is so common with us, and so often thought perfectly innocent by

well-meaning men, that it is valuable to see how the English courts look upon it. Such expenditures are directly forbidden in the act of 1883.

There can be no doubt, I suppose, that bribery, though rare, occurs at times where it is not found out, and is sometimes really known when it cannot be legally proved. One of the leading Conservative agents told me that he had known of one specific case where money was sent to the Liberal agent with which to buy votes. He had his information from the man who carried the money. A Liberal tells me a similar case against the Conservatives where the sum sent, the bearer, and the train on which he went, were known; but direct bribery could not be legally proved. Another story is told by a Liberal agent who charged the Tories with bribery on this ground: The canvass showed some 400 doubtfuls, many of low character. About 250 voted for the Conservative, when normally, without undue influence, a majority would have voted the other way. The candidate was the son of a wealthy peer who took much active interest in the election, and who, in his exultation over the result, said to a confidential friend, slapping his pocket gleefully, "This is the way to get votes."

At least one case has occurred in which the Liberals, feeling that they had evidence of corruption sufficient to unseat the successful Conservative, were about to bring a petition, when the Conservative agent told them to go ahead if they wished to, but that he had evidence against the Liberals also. Finally, he made his point so clear that it was decided to drop the matter entirely.

A form of bribery said to have been practised in some cases in the last election, but, it should be noted, not proved, was this: A voter would be asked to run to the next corner to call a cab, or to perform other trifling service, and half a crown or a sovereign would be given him. If the service were not performed, it was all the same. Nothing would be said about the vote. That was understood.

According to the most careful statements of the men best qualified to know, there are probably twenty constituencies in England where a little bribery—sometimes more than a little—still takes place at nearly every election. They are usually the old boroughs that were formerly notoriously corrupt, and they find it difficult to get over the habit. Some voters will not vote without some such stimulus, and the agents see that they get it in some indirect way. Of course, as the ballot is secret, you cannot know that they vote for your candidate; and the case is rather one, such as often occurs in the United States, of paying men of your own party for the trouble of coming to the polls. For only

twenty constituencies out of more than 500 (I exclude Ireland) to be really tainted to any noteworthy extent with bribery, is surely not serious.

On the whole, I think that the Conservatives are rather more given to corrupt practices than are the Liberals. The petitions seem to show this; and besides, it seems probable *a priori*. They are not worse people. Indeed, there may be ground for believing that there are fewer dishonest men among them; but on the whole they have more money, and the greater number of poor and ignorant voters is to be found in the Radical camp. In consequence, the Tories have the better chance and the greater temptation.

RELIGIOUS COERCION.

I HAVE already spoken of the coercion exerted by landlords and employers. There remains the religious coercion that unseated two candidates in Ireland in the last general election. Here the priests, who were bitterly opposed to the Parnellites, preached in several instances the most violent sermons, in which they practically threatened with damnation all who voted for the Parnellite candidates. Part of the action was probably due to a careless confusion in their own minds of Parnell's political views with the immoral conduct that stained his character during the latter part of his life; part, or most, was purely political in intent. But whatever the purpose, the threats certainly had a powerful coercive effect on many ignorant parishioners. Again, the priests in most instances were at the polls as personation agents, or as presiding officers of elections, which gave them the chance to know how the illiterates voted. Indeed, it is freely charged, and admitted on both sides, that many who could read declared themselves illiterate in order that the priest might see how they voted. At any rate, the two seats for North and South Meath were vacated on the ground of this religious coercion.

FALSE DECLARATIONS OF ILLITERACY.

IT is probably true that the declaration of illiteracy is made at other times to aid in bribery. I rode one evening into Manchester with a man who had been acting that day as presiding officer at an election. He told me that out of 187 voters 27 had declared themselves illiterate, and said that the proportion was altogether too large for that place. He was fully convinced that there had been false swearing for purposes of bribery. "Yet," he said, "I was a stranger to the men, and could not know in specific cases. I could only administer the oath."

AUTHORITIES.

It will be noted, of course, that in several of the instances given above my information regarding the evil practices of one party comes from members of the other party. Such stories are, from that circumstance, doubtful; and yet, from the character of my informants, I have no doubt of their accuracy. In some cases such informants acknowledged that similar practices were found, of course, in their own party, while not a few cases were given regarding the informants' own party.¹

This relative hesitation of English politicians to speak of their own political sins while telling those of their opponents, when compared with the practice of Americans, though, as said, not universal, is very marked.

I do not think that the English are meaner and less manly than the Americans, as might be inferred from their practice in this matter. Certainly my short but very pleasant acquaintance with them showed me no such characteristic in any form, while it showed me manly qualities in the highest degree. The explanation is, I think, this: I saw fewer of the men who are in direct contact with the venal voters than I see at home; so that the information could not at times be as positive. On account of brief acquaintance, they have less confidence in one's discretion; and the risks to reputation through indiscretion are greater there. Again, there is a certain feeling in the United States at times that corrupt practices show ability and shrewdness, and there is little feeling of guilt or shame, though many sincerely regret that such things are done. In England the necessity of employing corrupt practices is not so often recognized, and a man who has employed them, however skilfully, would rather be ashamed of himself for his unfairness toward his opponent, and his violation of the law, than proud of his skill. So, too, he would expect from others contempt rather than admiration.

STRONG AND WEAK POINTS OF THE ENGLISH SYSTEM.

It may be well to point out one or two features in the English system that are of especial value, and one or two weaknesses. The secret ballot is an essential; the corrupt practices act, with its rigid definitions of corrupt and illegal practices, is also essential to purity: but

both of these would be vastly weaker than they are if contested cases were not settled by non-partizan courts instead of by the House of Commons. The courts are liberal enough to the sitting member. One often thinks, in reading the decisions, that they are too loath to unseat an elected member, and that they are too lenient in inflicting penalties, for much is left to their discretion; but on the whole, one feels that they are rarely, if ever, partizan, never wilfully so, though one may suspect prejudice in rare cases. Their main, indeed, their sole, purpose is to promote purity in elections, and thereby to give to their country the best legislators.

England has also a great advantage in other laws that have an indirect bearing on the question. Her Civil Service laws, which practically take all spoils from the hands of the politicians, in themselves lessen the pressure of the lower-grade candidates. The fact that members receive no salary works in the same direction, though it would be neither practicable nor wise to introduce such a system here. Indeed, payment of members will almost certainly soon be introduced in England.

One weak point is certainly found in the English system of registration, which is cumbersome, and, besides, is carried on usually at the expense of the candidate, a grievous fault. A bill to amend and simplify the law is now before the House of Commons; but it seems to me that even this might be improved, though, of course, the complicated conditions of suffrage make the subject a difficult one.

Another point open to criticism is the canvassing, the evils of which are so great that not a few Englishmen advocate its abolition by law. It is, however, very doubtful if it can be abolished, or even materially changed, without doing more harm than good. A somewhat similar criticism, with a like half conclusion, is to be made against the social political clubs that virtually bribe under other forms. We must remember that social union of the various classes is really a good.

It is the opinion of many Englishmen that the penalties of the Corrupt Practices Act are too severe, and that, in consequence, it is much more difficult to get a conviction of the violators of the law. I am inclined to think this true—to a degree, at least; so that, in fact, the risks taken by corrupt politicians are somewhat less than they seem.

¹ In my article in *THE CENTURY* for October, 1892, on "Money in Elections," every instance of corruption or trickery given was on the authority of a member of the political party concerned, and sometimes on that of the chief actor himself. In certain very striking cases independent testimony of different persons concerned was obtained. Moreover, all my informants were either men

whose characters were thoroughly known to me,—often friends of long standing,—or men vouched for by tried friends. This much in reply to the partizan editors who said that I had been "stuffed by the boys," and that I had repeated all the idle rumors of political campaigns without any attempt at verification.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

THE conclusion of the whole matter is a very clear one. Englishmen are very human. The voters there are often ignorant and careless about their votes, as in every country where the suffrage is a broad one. Often the voters are men who have few high aims, but who have low, selfish appetites that they like to satisfy. The candidates and their agents like to win, and for the sake of winning they will do as the voters wish in many cases, if they dare. They appeal to the higher motives first and most strongly; then to prejudice; then, if need be, at times, to the lowest motives of greed and appetite.

The law, however, is most rigid, and, on the whole, public opinion is behind it. The risk from corruption is so great that warnings not to violate the law are put forward most prominently by all parties, and the dangers of so doing are fully explained. Without the risk involved in corruption, there would be much more of it. There are still a very little bribery; a little personation; more, but still not very much, treating; some coercion by employers, some by priests; a good deal of trickery and misrepresentation that is mean but very natural, and which often comes from sincere but narrow prejudice; and a good deal of indirect and, on the whole, I think, very insidious and evil, though not always illegal, corruption committed while "nursing the constituencies." This evil is hardly so much political as social.

From all that I can learn, what corrupt practices exist are to be found mostly in the parliamentary elections. Those for the county councils, and those more strictly local, are, as might be expected perhaps, more free even than the parliamentary from corrupt practices of all kinds. On the whole, speaking broadly and comparatively, the elections of England are pure—probably, on the whole, better than those of France or Germany, far better than those of the United States. I think that one may say that they are purer than in any other of

the great states where the political interest is so powerful. There is probably no more bribery or treating or personation in Germany, no more coercion by employers; but the government sometimes has made its coercive power felt more there, and the same thing holds true, in a somewhat different way, in France and Italy.

England, from a state of the worst corruption, has reached a very enviable condition, and this in good part as the result of her law-making. I have shown, I think, the very worst that can be said, and I have in a great measure left unsaid the good; but the relative weakness of the bad side brings out the strength of the good.

The experience of England seems to point out the next step for us to take, for we must not assume that any legislation on that subject will be final.

There were more petitions to unseat members after the election of 1892 in England than after that of 1885. Presumably the politicians found the law more terrifying when it was new, and were therefore unwilling to take so many risks in evading it. This is often the case with such a law. After a time it can be more or less successfully evaded, and it must then be amended to meet the new tricks. So we shall in the future, perhaps, need much legislation to keep the suffrage pure: civil service reform; some limiting qualifications of the suffrage for immigrants, perhaps, or for the ignorant and corrupt—possibly the proportional system of representation that works so strongly for purity in Switzerland. But, for the immediate future, we can most wisely look to corrupt practices acts, framed in the main on the English model, with, of course, due adaptation to our forms of government and of party organization. Seven of our States have already framed such laws, though most of them will probably need to be made more stringent and detailed. But such laws, with the Australian ballot to aid, and a favoring public opinion to enforce them, can, for the present at least, give us within measurable distance a pure ballot.

Jeremiah W. Jenks.

THE ANTI-CATHOLIC CRUSADE.



THE year of the Parliament of Religions witnessed a most discouraging outbreak of religious rancor in the United States. It is the ancient feud of Protestant and Romanist, and the new form which it has taken is worse than the old Know-nothingism. The animus of that party

was ostensibly its opposition to foreigners; the present movement is directed solely against Roman Catholics.

The time seems inopportune for such an outbreak. The occupant of the papal throne is perhaps the most enlightened and the most progressive pontiff who has ever occupied that