

Reform in Municipal Government.

THE passage by Congress early in 1883 of the Pendleton bill, applying the competitive principle to the minor places in the Washington Departments and in the chief custom-houses and post-offices of the country, was the corner-stone of a system which it is already certain will ultimately be developed throughout the Federal government. The contemptible failure of the feeble attempts in the Forty-ninth Congress to repeal the Pendleton law and to starve out the civil-service commission show that the reform "has come to stay." The public is far ahead of Congress in this matter. The changed tone of those newspapers which have always ridiculed the new system shows that they recognize their defeat. Experience has spoiled all their old arguments. There was the "college graduate" bogey, for instance. If we were to have examinations for admission to the service, it was declared "only college graduates would stand any show," and the young man who had never been beyond the common school "would be nowhere." Statistics showing that more than four-fifths of the successful contestants were men who had received only a common-school education have effectually disposed of this *ad captandum* plea, and the other clap-trap appeals to prejudice have fared no better. The old-time champions of the spoils system in the Federal government virtually confess their defeat, and the success of the competitive system in the State governments and chief cities of New York and Massachusetts assures its ultimate adoption by other States and municipalities.

Another reform no less important is now to be achieved. What is commonly called civil-service reform, so far as it has hitherto been carried in Federal, State and city governments, is chiefly a system for procuring good clerks, whose competency has been established by a competitive test. This is a matter of great importance, because it is fundamental. With the entrance to the service properly arranged, it is only a question of time when the whole service will be conducted upon sound principles. But this is only one phase of the great undertaking involved in a thorough-going reform of governmental methods. In a popular government the health of the body politic depends upon pure elections. The theory of the fathers was that when an office, like that of congressman, was to be filled, the people of a district would look about to see who was the fittest man to represent them, and elect him without the necessity of his doing anything in the matter. Cases are still known where the theory is carried into practice. A dozen years ago certain citizens of a Western Massachusetts district, disgusted with the ring which dictated the course of the dominant party, nominated President Seelye of Amherst College as an independent candidate for Congress, and elected him. His only connection with the canvass was to write a letter in reply to the notification of his nomination, consenting to be voted for. It was in the days when postage stamps were a cent higher than now, and Mr. Seelye used to say that his campaign expenses were only three cents—the cost of the stamp which he placed upon his letter of acceptance.

In New York City now, it costs a man from \$5000 to \$10,000 to run for Congress. In other words, he must pay out beforehand the salary for one, if not both, of

the years of the term. If he aspires to a position on the bench, he must expend in advance of the election \$10,000 or \$15,000 for one of the lower courts; perhaps \$20,000 for a place in the Supreme Court. If he is ambitious to become mayor, he must be willing to contribute as large a sum as \$24,000. These are only samples of the astonishing facts as to "assessments" which Mr. William M. Ivens, who has enjoyed exceptional opportunities for learning the truth, made public in his speech to the Commonwealth Club not long ago. Mr. Ivens showed exactly how the system works; how the "machines" which have been built up control on election day a well-disciplined force of 45,000 men, or one-fifth of the entire voting population, all of whom are under pay and have a pecuniary interest in the result. Mr. Joseph B. Bishop, in a speech at the succeeding meeting of the same club, presented the remedies, which he found in removing the necessity for assessments, by having the ballots printed and distributed by the city and at the city's expense, thus doing away with the army of machine workers at the polls; in limiting by law the expenditures of candidates; and in enacting a statute similar to the English "Corrupt Practices Act," forbidding bribery and undue influences of all kinds and fixing penalties.

The speeches of Mr. Ivens and Mr. Bishop, which were printed in full, attracted the notice not merely of the New York public, but of intelligent people throughout the country. The press of other cities appreciated that they must anticipate, where they have not already begun to suffer, the same evils unless a halt were called in New York; the rural press realized that the country cannot escape the introduction of similar abuses if they are allowed to remain permanently in the cities.

College Expenses.

THE commencement season brings its usual supply of newspaper articles on the inordinate expense of education in our modern colleges. In this case, as in so many others, the supply of articles meets a general demand. It is not easy for a father to foot enormous bills for his son at college with any patience, when he remembers the narrow fund which carried him through college, or for want of which he was compelled to give up the idea of going to college altogether. The newspaper article not only states his feeling in vigorous English, but gives him a tangible foundation for his feeling. It meets his case, and the case of countless others, too exactly not to find favor in their eyes. And so the newspapers brim with notes of the "average cost" of going through this college and that, and with reflections on the extravagance which is encouraged by the methods of the modern college life. There are, however, certain correctives which should go with the annual statistics.

An average may be mathematically true, and yet altogether delusive. "I make a statement that the average age of my friends is 20 years. If my friends are 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 years of age, the average 20 is a useful and true expression. If, however, they are 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30, it is less useful; and if they are 4 of them 10 years old and 1 of them 60, the average 20 is still numerically correct, but it is absurd and untruthful in the impression it gives." The last case is quite parallel with the "averages" of the expenses of

classes at the various American colleges, as they are annually published in the newspapers. The few extravagant students are able to do so much more effective work at their end than the great body of the students can do at theirs, that the "average" goes up to a figure which is quite misleading. Meantime, in the teeth of all the averages, the great body of the students go on as their fathers did, and, even at those colleges which are selected as the most expensive of all, there is always a smaller body of students who are working their way through college and showing that the "average" has no real relation to the question. There is not a college in America from which poverty alone need debar a student; there is not one from which he may not graduate, provided he has that amount of ability which will make a college education a benefit, and provided, also, he is willing to work before and through his course, and deny himself, as was the custom in our fathers' days.

It is this last custom which is going out of existence; and that is enough to show that the root of the evil does not lie in the college, but in the home. The very parents who speak so bitterly of the encouragement given to young men's extravagance by the modern college life have carefully trained their sons for just the life which they have found. Usually men in moderate circumstances, they have never compelled their sons to earn a dollar in their lives, or to know the cost or value of money, or to deny themselves anything within their reach, or to do anything except spend money when a favorable opportunity offered. The sons, passing for the first time beyond the father's eye, and able to plead circumstances which parents cannot deny from personal knowledge, are in a fair position to deplete the paternal pocket-book, and have never been trained to refrain from improving such an opportunity. It is not for his own selfish gratification that the son joins this or that college society, or takes all the college papers, or "goes with the nine" to watch an inter-collegiate game in another college town, or does any of the other things for which his father has to pay,—not at all; it is only because he would be ostracized in college if he refrained from such indulgences. Such are the statements which accompany the periodical petitions for checks; and the father, finding it easier to curse college extravagance than to take the trouble of ascertaining the true state of the case, continues his mis-training of the boy by paying his bills until, at the end of the college course, the son is turned loose upon the world, to find at last what a dollar really means.

In nine cases out of ten, the student's self-control, if it led to a refusal to be enticed into unnecessary expenditures, would be simply ignored by the other students of his college. There are always cliques which would ignore himself as well; and, to this extent, the dreaded "taboo" might be endured. But this difficulty is purely subjective; it is in the student himself, and its roots are in his home-training. If he has come to college to cultivate or value the society of such cliques, the penalty has an effective force; if he has been trained to undervalue or ignore the penalty, it has no power over him. When he yields to it and writes home that he "must have" money for this, that, or the other purpose, the father who supplies this demand is cultivating further the son's vanity, and

further preparing vexation of spirit for himself. For him to pay the money and thus increase the evil, while he considers it the unperformed duty of the college authorities to suppress all the societies, expel the editors of all the college papers, and abolish the inter-collegiate games, is merely another example of the decadence of American home-life and discipline. The father expects the college to do for the son what the home no longer does for him; he sends the college flabby material, and expects the material to be turned into such strong, self-poised, self-controlled manhood as the American home once furnished to the college. If the children's teeth are set on edge, it is largely because the fathers have eaten sour grapes.

There can be little doubt that two-thirds of the material now sent to college would be bettered by being put into a workshop of some kind for two years between the ages of twelve and sixteen. The spread of comfort among the people has been steadily increasing the number of those who can spare their sons the necessity of work even through their years of early manhood; and we have not yet come to understand the full measure of the injury which is thus done to the character of the boy. At the same time, the colleges have been developing in a direction which gives greater and still greater freedom to the student, and thus brings into constantly greater prominence the evils resulting from the modern American system of home-training. To check the college in its natural course of development, to demand that it shall cease its proper work and attend to wrapping the student in cotton-wool and keeping him from the temptations incident to every really manly life, would be merely to make permanent and irreparable the damage which is being done to young American manhood. Things must be worse before they can be better. American parents must learn that education is not an affair of books alone; that it is not complete when so many books have been finished and so many term-bills paid; that a true education consists even more largely in the training of the character and of the will than in book-knowledge. When American homes send to American colleges boys who have been trained to discriminate between the accidents of life and its essentials, the complaints of college extravagance will disappear, and a good many other evils will go with them.

The Metropolitan Spirit.

THE current year has been remarkable for its conspicuous proofs that matters æsthetic and scholarly are taking a wider and deeper hold upon the people of the leading American city. New York is becoming metropolitan not merely in intention, but in fact. The metropolitan spirit is abroad in society, and the year 1887 will be memorable for the long step then taken in advancing our gigantic community in the right direction. The city has never been behind in religious and charitable exertion; of late years its politics have been not a little improved, and the work of purification was never more active than now, nor ever was urged more strongly and directly toward fundamental reforms. But the artistic revival of a dozen or fifteen years ago has had a sudden fruition within the last year or two that goes along with a revival in all