

made of thinking we are great and rich enough to stand anything. No nation has ever lived, or will ever live, great and rich enough to be foolish, foolhardy, or dishonest without suffering the consequences.

The Civic Revival.

THE wide-spread interest in the improvement of local government is the most conspicuous sign of the times. Students of the religious history of our own country tell us that every period of financial depression has been accompanied by a great revival of religion. It is the civic conscience which seems at this time to have experienced an awakening. The evangelistic impulse has not gone astray. Whoever comes preaching repentance can find no more wide-branching iniquity at the root of which to lay the ax of his denunciations than our civic misgovernment. More of the selfishness, the infidelity, the cowardice, the perfidy of our best citizens finds expression in our city governments than in almost any other social aggregation. Our city governments furnish the mirror into which American citizens must look if they wish to know what manner of men they are. The governments are strictly representative. If the superior city officials are utterly neglectful of duty, if they are wont to put all the labor and care of their offices upon their subordinates, that is practically what the average voter has taught them to do. The efficient deputy in an important city office was asked the other day how much would be added to his labor if the work of his chief should all be put upon him. He replied that one hour a week would suffice for its performance. This is the common practice in city offices. The heads of departments do the honors and draw the salaries; the work does not greatly interfere with their outside cares and recreations. Why should it? Does not the sentiment of the community warrant them in judging that public duty is a matter of small consequence? If the average voter possesses but a rudimentary political conscience, why should we expect the average officeholder to have a keen sense of responsibility? If the average voter habitually sacrifices the welfare of the state to his covetousness or his ambition, why should we look for any other rule of conduct in the average official?

The truth is that the source of all this bad city government is in the hearts of the people who live in the best residence quarters, and do business in the tall buildings, and sit in the best seats of our churches. A great many of them are directly interested in the perpetuation of bad city governments; assessors who could not be bribed, and city councils that would not give away franchises, are precisely what they do not covet. But those who are not so directly implicated are either so busy with their own affairs that they wholly neglect their most solemn obligations, or else so sordid and so cowardly that they are unwilling to risk gain or popularity by openly opposing the evil. It is not so much by what these "best citizens" have done as by what they have failed to do that our cities are humiliated. There is a terrific parable of the judgment in which the damned are consigned to the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. What had they done? Nothing. "*Inasmuch as ye did it not*" was the ground of their condemnation.

There is good reason, therefore, why John the Bap-

tist should lift up his voice in every city, preaching a baptism of repentance; good reason why multitudes, in a new Pentecost, should be pricked in their hearts, and should be crying one to another, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The first answer to this question is very clear. The men of the city must attend to their political duties. They must give to the business of governing the city the time and thought and care that are necessary. It is, far and away, the most difficult business intrusted to them; they cannot transact it in the few minutes which they give once a year to the marking of a ticket in an election booth. It will take a great deal of labor—unrewarded labor—and sacrifice from every intelligent citizen. For there is a great multitude of voters who are not intelligent, and who need to be educated and guided. The failure to control these elements means bribery, corruption, malfeasance, and final anarchy. These elements can be controlled by intelligence and genuine patriotism. But it will take time and patience, and courage and tact, and faith in democracy. Whether the men who live in our cities are willing to pay this price for good government yet remains to be seen. They will get it at no cheaper rate.

It is evident, then, that what is called for in the present municipal agitations is something very like a genuine religious revival. If it means anything permanent, this movement means a less selfish and a more consecrated spirit on the part of the average citizen. It means the subordination of personal and private aims to the common welfare. If the command to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness were translated into the language of this generation, would it not include, as one of its first implications, the diligent and conscientious discharge of our civic duties? It must not be believed that motives adequate to the thorough reformation of municipal abuses can be drawn from the inspection of tax bills, or from the figures which show the increase of municipal indebtedness. There must be some conception of the sacredness of the interests which are involved in good city government, some comprehension of the ideal aims which inspire a genuine civic patriotism. We do not state the case fully when we say that the government of a great city is a purely "business" matter. It ought not to be suffered to fall below the standards of good business management; but unless it is lifted above them it will fall below them. It is a matter of sentiment, as well as of business—nay, in the truest sense of the word, it is a matter of religion. In London, where no suspicion of jobbery attaches to the municipal legislature, and where there has been, within the last few years, a remarkable awakening of civic consciousness, one of the newspapers, in a recent campaign, lifted the battle-cry, "For a Nobler London." Not until such sentiments begin to stir the hearts of the dwellers in American cities—and there are multitudes who are ready to work for the welfare of the city with the zeal and enthusiasm which are born of lofty civic ideals—shall we witness any permanent gain in the struggle for municipal reform.

Bicycle Problems and Benefits.

As a revolutionary force in the social world the bicycle has had no equal in modern times. What it is doing is, in fact, to put the human race on wheels for the first time in its history. The proportion of people

who are riding bicycles in nearly every community is astonishingly large. In many instances it may be said that nearly every able-bodied man, woman, and child has a wheel, and is a regular rider. When we consider the increase in rapidity of locomotion which is attained, and the fact that it is self-supplied with such ease, it is not surprising that the changes required to meet the demands of the new order of things are so many and so radical as to amount virtually to making the world over again, so far as traveling is concerned.

This is peculiarly the case in the great cities. In and about New York, for example, there are at present something like half a million bicycle-riders. In the city itself, on pleasant holidays, they swarm like flies upon all the parkways and other thoroughfares having asphalt or macadam pavement. It is very clear that sooner or later they or the vehicles must give way, for both cannot find room to remain with safety. Indeed, there have been many fatal accidents already, some of them shocking in the extreme. The dangers increase as the number of wheelmen multiplies. In a collision with any kind of vehicle drawn by a horse the bicycle-rider is certain to get the worst of it. His vehicle, instead of being in any way a protection to him, is a menace to his welfare the moment it comes in contact with any other moving body. The fact that he cannot stand still for a moment is also an element of additional danger. These conditions make it an absolute necessity that in all communities in which there are large numbers of wheelmen there should be separate roadways set apart for their especial use. No city park should be laid out in future without its bicycle pathway, nor is it likely to be. The need of a separate roadway for horseback-riders has been recognized in all our great parks, yet in a roadway filled with carriages an equestrian is much safer from harm than a bicycle-rider. At present the wheelmen outnumber the horsemen a hundred or more to one, and the need of separate provision for them is consequently too obvious to be questioned.

But it is not in the parks alone that such accommodation is necessary. There has been much discussion in the New York press for some months past about providing a suitable roadway for bicycles from one end of the city to the other, so that riders may pass to and from their business on their wheels. It has been urged that the covering with asphalt of a continuous or connected line of streets would supply this; but this is doubtful. The chances would be that heavy wagons and carriages of all kinds would seek the same line of travel because of the superior road-bed, and that it would become too crowded to be either a safe or a speedy thoroughfare for bicycles. It is not impossible that in time we may see in all our great cities lines of streets reserved for bicycles. This might be done were all the streets of the city paved equally well, and it is one of the most beneficent effects of the bicycle that it is making the advent of this condition of our city streets certain in the near future. There are enthusiasts also who predict that in New York it will not be many years before a lightly built elevated structure will be run through the streets on the water-front for the exclusive use of wheelmen.

If separate thoroughfares of any kind are set apart for this use, the result will be a considerable loss of income to the street transit companies. It is a fact that many trolley lines running between Western cities and their suburbs have suffered serious financial loss through the use of the bicycle, since thousands of persons travel to and fro between their offices and their homes on wheels. But while the transit companies have been injured in this way, the whole country has been the gainer by means of the wide-spread demand for good roads which the advent of the bicycle has aroused. Many States, led by Massachusetts and New Jersey, have taken up the subject seriously and systematically, and the next few years are certain to see great progress in this direction. Massachusetts, in 1893, appropriated \$300,000 to be expended by a highway commission in scientific road-building, and about forty sections of such roads are now under construction. New Jersey has spent many thousands of dollars in the same way, and its number of good roads is increasing year by year, each new one being the most persuasive kind of argument for others. The recent legislature of New York State recognized the needs of wheelmen more specifically by passing a bill authorizing the construction of a bicycle roadway upon the top of the Croton aqueduct, running for forty miles through a beautiful part of the country north of the city.

An interesting effect of the new order of things is the revival which has been started in the old wayside tavern business. Within the next few years we are certain to see comfortable inns spring up along all the roads which are suitable for bicycle-riding. The wheelman cannot carry much luggage, and is especially unable to find accommodation for food. His ability to travel easily fifty or seventy-five miles a day makes comfortable lodging-places at night and comfortable eating-places by day great desiderata along his pathway. There are old inns within a radius of fifty miles of New York city that have known scarcely more than a customer a week for years which are now overrun with wheelmen, and are adapting themselves rapidly to the new situation. Good inns, like good roads, will add immeasurably to the attractiveness of the country, and will spread a love for country life among the dwellers in cities which will be in all ways a benefit to us as a people.

The bicycle is, in fact, the agent of health and of a wider civilization. It will give stronger bodies to the rising generation than their fathers have had, and it will bring the city and the country into closer relations than have existed since the days of the stage-coach. What the summer boarder has been doing for the abandoned farms and deserted villages of New England, the wheelman is doing for the regions surrounding our great cities. He is distributing through them modern ideas and modern ways of living, and is fructifying them with gentle distillations of city wealth. Above all, he is teaching their people that a sure way to prosperity lies before them in the beautifying of the country in which they live, and in the preservation of all its attractive natural features.