

is appreciated by all men of fairness and good will. In some parts of our country, perhaps, the misconception as to both man and motive has been so deep-rooted that with thousands of the present generation it may never be corrected. In answer to accusations of neglect of the claims of friendly obligation, it may be of no avail to point to numerous instances where the opportunity of reconciling public duty with private inclination has been eagerly seized. Those who charge sympathy with the «moneyed classes» rather than with the «masses» deny the necessity of promptly upholding the national credit, in the manner adopted, in behalf of all the people. Many who accuse the President of obstinacy may not acknowledge that a strong man's firm adherence to principle would be a more charitable, and in this case reasonable, explanation of conduct; and so on through the long list of animadversions.

The most extreme partizan opponent of the retiring President must acknowledge, if he knows the history of the man and if he has any fairness in him, that through Mr. Cleveland's entire public career he has taken and firmly held one position after another believing it to be right, and in total disregard of the effect of his action upon his own political fortunes. Surely no American statesman has ever more conspicuously exhibited the rare and saving virtue of civic courage.

But, as already intimated, it is not intended here carefully to weigh achievement, but rather to express those kindly sentiments which all but the most intense partizans must feel at the retirement to private life of a distinguished American, after a disinterested public service in which, often against tremendous odds, he has accomplished some things which will be «writ large» in the history of these United States.

And at such a time even an opponent should not refuse, at the very least, the meed of honest intention, and the greeting of good wishes. It was of the President who is now leaving the White House that Lowell wrote:

Let who has felt compute the strain
Of struggle with abuses strong,
The doubtful course, the helpless pain
Of seeing best intents go wrong.
We who look on with critic eyes,
Exempt from action's crucial test,
Human ourselves, at least are wise
In honoring one who did his best.

The Incoming President.

ASIDE from partizan questions and those relating to the tariff, it is gratifying to find in the record of Mr. McKinley's service in the House of Representatives, and in certain utterances of his during the recent campaign, abundant basis for the expectation that he is likely to rise above that dead level of provincialism which increasingly in Congress has been the constant foe of progress. After all, only a small part of the questions to which a President is compelled to address his attention are related to the antecedent division of opinion which we call partizanship, and it is greatly to be desired that a chief executive should be open to the influence of that body of expert and cultivated citizens which in the last resort must shape and order events in a democracy, if they are to be shaped and ordered for the public good. The intelligence of the few is the safeguard of the many, and the chief necessity, as well as the chief difficulty, of a

President is to know upon whom he may rely for such intelligence. But it is much to feel that an incoming President is animated not only by high motives, but by respect for learning and experience—a quality which, humiliating as it may be to confess, has been conspicuously wanting in recent Congresses, due partly to our machine system of nomination, and partly to the poor legislative timber brought down in recent years by unexpected and overwhelming freshets of public opinion.

Examples of Mr. McKinley's support of measures of progress are found in his votes upon the questions of civil-service reform, free art, and international copyright. On the last-named measure he voted constantly with those who took the side of civilization as against that of barbarism. With his coöperation, free art was incorporated in the original McKinley Bill as it left the Committee of the House of which he was chairman, though it was not enacted until the passage of the Wilson Bill. On the fundamental question of the merit system against the spoils system he has been aggressively right. In every platform of his party since 1872 there has been a declaration in favor of the reform, and in several national conventions he has been chairman of the Committee on Resolutions. In his letter of acceptance he said:

The pledge of the Republican National Convention that our civil-service laws shall be sustained and «thoroughly and honestly enforced and extended wherever practicable» is in keeping with the position of the party for the past twenty-four years, and will be faithfully observed. . . . The Republican party will take no backward step upon the question. It will seek to improve, but never degrade, the public service.

This course was foreshadowed by his speech of April 24, 1890, in the House of Representatives, in which he said in part:

Mr. Chairman: In the single moment that I have I desire to say that I am opposed to the amendment of the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. Houk], to strike from this bill the appropriation for the execution of the civil-service law. My only regret is that the Committee on Appropriations did not give to the commission all the appropriation that was asked for for the improvement and extension of the system. If the Republican party of this country is pledged to any one thing more than another, it is to the maintenance of the civil-service law and its efficient execution; not only that, but to its enlargement and its further application to the public service.

The law that stands upon our statute-books to-day was put there by Republican votes. It was a Republican measure. Every national platform of the Republican party since its enactment has declared not only in favor of its continuance in full vigor, but in favor of its enlargement so as to apply more generally to the public service. And this, Mr. Chairman, is not alone the declaration and purpose of the Republican party, but it is in accordance with its highest and best sentiment—ay, more, it is sustained by the best sentiment of the whole country, Republican and Democratic alike. And there is not a man on this floor who does not know that no party in this country, Democratic or Republican, will have the courage to wipe it from the statute-book or amend it save in the direction of its improvement.

Look at our situation to-day. When this party of ours has control of all the branches of the Government it is proposed to annul this law by withholding appropriations for its execution, when for four years under a Democratic Administration nobody on this side of the house had the temerity to rise in his place and make a motion similar to the one now pending for the nullification of this law. We thought it was good then, good

enough for a Democratic Administration; and I say to my Republican associates it is good enough for a Republican Administration; it is good and wholesome for the whole country. If the law is not administered in letter and spirit impartially, the President can and will supply the remedy. Mr. Chairman, the Republican party must take no backward step. *The merit system is here, and it is here to stay*, and we may just as well understand and accept it now, and give our attention to correcting the abuses, if any exist, and improving the law wherever it can be done to the advantage of the public service.

This quotation reveals, in one who has not been wanting in stanch devotion to party measures, an underlying and statesmanlike perception of the broader ground of good citizenship upon which appeal for the merit system may be made. The same largeness of view—into which others besides Mr. McKinley have had to grow—characterized his references during the campaign to the necessity of extinguishing sectionalism, whether between North and South in its last embers, or between East and West in its first kindling. In this he has risen, if not to the measure, at least to the style of Webster, and under his administration we may look for the steady promotion of a wise, forbearing, patriotic national spirit.

Of the items upon which we may here touch without offense, there remains Mr. McKinley's uncompromising committal of himself to the gold standard. While he has shown evidences of a strong regard for party pledges, and, no doubt, feels obliged to take measures to give a fighting chance to the bimetalists in accordance with the St. Louis platform, it may be that he sees the advantage to a sound financial system of demonstrating to the country at an early day the impossibility of reaching an understanding with European countries on that delusive basis. However this may be, his personal responsibility for the practical administration of treasury affairs will doubtless force him to follow his inclination to cut loose from the present insecure system of national finance, and to do what he can to aid in the construction of a sound, firm, and stable currency in keeping with the experience of the world.

On the Public Wearing of Political "Collars."

SEVERAL of the chief States of the Union have recently surprised the good people of the country by conspicuous proofs of their humiliating domination by absolutely conscienceless and corrupt political machines. It would almost seem as if the great advances made of late in civil-service reform had stirred up the spoilsmen to an attack all along the line; at any rate, the notable triumphs of the merit system in the National, State, and municipal governments are contemporaneous with the manipulation of the machinery of party nominations by party «bosses» with such success as has seldom been witnessed.

But there are some consolations to be derived from the spectacle. In distributing the prizes of public office the machines have shown such baseness in their selection

of many of their beneficiaries as to betray their own true natures before the eyes of the entire community. The clearest sort of object-lessons have now made the dullest comprehend the fact that this sort of «machine politics» is not politics at all, but simple corruption. The deals are made in private, but the conspirators have to come out into the open to distribute or receive their payments from the trust funds of public office. The legislators who are bought by the payment of campaign expenses, derived ultimately from the cowardly guardians of corporate interests; the «respectable» citizens who are silenced or made allies of by the distribution of honors, salaries, or «opportunities»—all are rewarded in public; all wear their collars, inscribed with the owner's name, in the light of day.

Well, either this sort of thing will not last, or the country will not last. But if vulgar and defiant corruption is not permanently to take the place of government in our States and cities, every citizen who contemplates the disgraceful travesty of free institutions, shown in so many American communities, must do his or her individual part in bringing about the better state of things that is surely coming. There is nothing that cannot be accomplished by a righteous public opinion, and there is not a man or woman in the nation who cannot help to bring that instrument into play upon the backs of public recreants and despoilers.

A Good Example in Government Building.

THE articles devoted in this number of THE CENTURY to the new Congressional Library in Washington will give a good idea of a very notable and unusually successful example of construction under government control. Artistically, there is so much that is good that at the outset it seems ungracious to indulge in specific dispraise; and yet we may say, in passing, that some small portion of the painting now in place we hope to see removed from the walls in the interest of good taste and good art. The reproductions which we are able to give at the time of going to press by no means show forth all the excellent work of the many artists employed. There is some good work in sculpture, but on the whole the sculptors, perhaps for lack of equal opportunity, hardly seem so far to have done as well as the painters in connection with the library building.

In the matter of construction, it is to the credit of all concerned that the building, which was begun in the spring of 1889, is completed within the time limit; and, moreover, with a saving of about \$140,000 on the total appropriation. It is interesting to note, by way of comparison, that the gigantic municipal building in Philadelphia, begun in 1872, is only just now being finished, and that, while the Philadelphia building has already cost not less than \$1.60 per cubic foot, the library has cost but 63 cents per cubic foot, including decorations and everything else.

