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## NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

### III.

ON taking a near view of the contemporaries of Dante and Michael Angelo, we find that they differ from us more in character than in intellect. With us, three hundred years of police and of courts of justice, of social discipline and peaceful habits, of hereditary civilization, have diminished the force and violence of the passions natural to man; in Italy, in the Renaissance epoch, they were still intact; human emotions at that time were keener and more profound than at the present day; the appetites were more ardent and more unbridled; man's will was more impetuous and more tenacious; whatever motive inspired him, whether pride, ambition, jealousy, hatred, love, envy, or sensuality, the inward spring strained with an energy and relaxed with a violence that has now disappeared. All these energies reappear in this great survivor of the fifteenth century; in him the play of the nervous machine is the same as with his Italian ancestors; never was there, even with the Malatestas and the Borgias, a more sensitive and more impulsive brain, one capable of such electric shocks and explosions, in which the roar and flashes of the tempest lasted longer and of which the effects were more irresistible. One day, at Paris, toward the epoch of the Concordat, he says to Senator Volney, "France wants a religion." Volney replies in a frank, sententious way, "France wants the Bourbons." Whereupon he gives Volney such a kick in the stomach that he falls unconscious; on being conveyed to a friend's house, he

## THE USES OF POLITICAL PARTIES.

IN attempting to point out some of the uses of political parties, we shall make no comparison as to their relative merits, nor shall we trace their origin, nor the various changes which they have undergone; it being our object not to vindicate any party or party measure, but rather to meet the common objection that the influence of party politics is demoralizing both to the Government and the masses.

Admitting that the very terms, rings, caucuses, and political conventions, have an unpleasant flavor, suggestive of trickery, rascality, the buying and selling of votes, and the misleading of honest men into the support of demagogues, we claim that all these evils are attributable to the abuse and not the proper use of the political party, which, so far from meriting condemnation, must be recognized as furnishing important wheels in the machinery of our Government which the fathers of the republic failed to provide, and through whose agency alone the most obscure citizen can make his influence so felt as to become a potent factor in the Government.

And here, in the opening of this discussion, we cannot fail to be impressed with its importance when we consider the magnitude of these parties. We think of them as filling the land; with not a township, a school district, or a hamlet but contains their ardent admirers and firm supporters. These parties, as they stand confronting each other face to face, far outnumber any armies which were ever marshalled on the field of battle; each is composed of its millions of free voters, while each represents still other millions of women and children who feel hardly less interest in their success. But these parties are not less marvellous for their extent and the diffused power which permeates the masses, than for those agencies by which that power is concentrated and rendered effective. For these are organized bodies, and in their organizations they recognize the principle of civil liberty, which is simply the right of every man to his share and no more than his share in the Government; he is to bow to the will of the majority, and is to respect those rules and processes by which that will is ascertained. Here, then, in the

party drill which is so common, are to be found the training-schools in which men are fitted either to stand in the ranks as the uncompromising defenders of good government, or to execute the high and responsible duties of office if called to the same by their fellows. It is in these training-schools that men are taught how to work together and how to combine their influence; they are taught that submission is the first duty of the citizen, and that only those who, in obedience to rules and regulations, work in harmony with others can ever be safely intrusted with the exercise of power. And certainly the drill of these great parties, by which the millions of their adherents are brought into line and made to keep step, is a fact that challenges our admiration, and all the more so when we reflect that it is accomplished without the slightest compulsion. Think for a moment of the interest which culminates in those quadrennial nominating conventions in which these parties, through their representatives from every part of the nation, select their candidates for the highest honors in the gift of the people; think of the zeal of the various factions, which rises to a white heat as they urge the claims of their favorites—a zeal so intense in its antagonisms as to threaten the very disruption of the party; and yet, as the culminating point is reached and the one successful name is announced, how suddenly does this turbulent sea become calm, how quickly do these discordant notes change into one grand chorus of harmony. And shall we give no credit to agencies which, without coercion, exert such power to hold the selfish aspirations of men in check, and so concentrate their influence as to render it most effective?

Just at this point, however, we cannot leave unnoticed the agency of the political press, with its postal and telegraphic facilities, in promoting and securing this unity of action to which allusion has been made. We yield our preferences in order to work in unison, just because we have been counselling together through these marvellous agencies by which mind is brought in contact with mind, though widely separated all over these States and Territories. Our Congress, our State Legislatures, and even our political conventions, are not the only deliberative bodies which we have; the people themselves, with the daily newspaper in hand, constitute the great and controlling deliberative body of this country. At every fireside, through means of the press, questions as to governmental policy are thought out, discussed, and settled. Thus it is that public opinion is wrought out into a definite and reliable form. No man can un-

derstand American politics without recognizing the leadership of the press. These editorial chairs have come to be thrones of power and centres of influence such as the fathers of the republic could never have dreamed of. They have far more to do in moulding public opinion and shaping the policy of the Government than all the debates of Congress and other legislative bodies. But while they are acknowledged leaders, it is a gratifying fact that they cannot lead the people arbitrarily, but are themselves controlled by the public opinion which crystallizes under their influence.

And the surprising tenacity with which people cling to the party of their choice very naturally directs attention to the historical character of these parties. They are like large trees which cannot be blown over, because of the years during which their roots have been striking deeply into the earth. To become acquainted with either of the great political parties of our land, you must trace its roots all through those agitations which have followed each other ever since the birth of the nation, and, especially, through that great conflict which almost accomplished its disruption. These parties are what they are to-day because they are not a fabrication, but a growth, and therefore they cannot be taken apart and built up at will. When we look at our mighty rivers and discover the large tributaries which flow into them, we say that they are where they are and their channels are broad and deep just because they have been obliged to dispose of the waters which have come to them through these tributaries; in like manner do we account for the deep channels which these political parties have cut for themselves, and for the direction of the current which flows through the same, by tracing them back to those tributaries of influence in the past which have served to define their policy and impart to them the character which they now possess. We cannot forget that, in the years gone by, men who have held high positions in our national councils, and who have been respected for their disinterested patriotism, have counted it an honor to enroll their names as members of these parties. The men of to-day are not a little indebted to those worthy names as furnishing a constant incentive to high-minded patriotism, and as constant a rebuke to everything that is narrow, selfish, and base. It is thus that the best elements of any one age contribute more to the stream of party influence than those of the opposite character. The former live because they are cherished, while the latter die, being ignored.

Added to this we must not fail to notice how largely this party zeal is the fruit of an ancestral spirit, and as such is worthy of being cherished. We are accustomed to honor the children when we see them following in the footsteps of their fathers and glorying in their party banner because their fathers once carried the same. Instead of calling this a blind enthusiasm we rather commend it as a noble sentiment, and discover in it a conservative power for good.

And this leads to the more general remark that the free institutions with which we, as a nation, have been blessed for more than a century have furnished the very soil out of which these political parties have sprung, and by which they have been nourished. To conclude, therefore, that they are corrupt and demoralizing, would be a very sad reflection upon the life of this republic. If, in the political history of our land, we discover only a deteriorating tendency, then are we forced to the conclusion that the spirit of liberty has fallen in her own home, and is being destroyed by her own children. For the masses who compose these political parties, with all their virtues and with all their faults, are the product of the mighty and prolonged effort which has been made to establish upon these shores a republic which shall be a model to the world. In all our criticisms of these parties, and they deserve very severe criticism, let us never forget that they are composed of none other than those who, with not less pride than the ancient Roman, can each exclaim: "I am an American citizen!"

We now invite attention to the relation which these parties sustain to the Government; and we do this not with the design of engaging in a general discussion of the subject, but, rather, that we may point out our indebtedness to these parties for the protection which they afford us as the bulwarks of civil liberty. Not that either party is so pure that it could be trusted alone, but our safety is to be traced to the attitude of antagonism in which we find them always arrayed toward each other. And if to any it seems impossible that this party hostility can be any other than an unmixed evil, if to any the organizing of clubs, wearing of uniforms, and marching with torch-lights to the beat of the drum shall seem like a menace to our liberties, let it be borne in mind that all this is but the arousing of two giants to watch each other. Each is saying to the other, "Thus far mayest thou come, but no farther." Each is ready to take advantage of the other's mistakes, and each is promising a better Government than the other has afforded. Neither could be

trusted without the other to watch it; and to suppose a collusion between the two would be to suppose ourselves at the mercy of an oligarchy. For there are bad men enough in either party to wreck the Government if they could; but they are powerless to accomplish their purposes outside of party lines, and they are almost as powerless within party lines, by reason of the check which these parties hold upon each other. We know that the accuracy with which the planets move in their orbits is the result of counteracting forces; we know also, in mechanism, that the great strength of the arch is the result of the opposition of its two sides. These two facts may serve to illustrate how the reliability and accuracy of the great departments of our Government, which, like the planets, move in separate orbits, are secured by counteracting political forces; or, to change the figure, how the amazing strength of our free institutions is seen when we think of our Government as an arch composed of these two political parties which fill the land, each leaning against the other. And if these illustrations have force, then the importance of keeping these parties as nearly equal as possible must be obvious; for the whole arch is weakened just in proportion as you weaken either side. Those, therefore, who call for the destruction of either or both of our present parties expose their ignorance as to the important service they are rendering. If it be said that they are corrupt, it is quite obvious that they are not more corrupt than are the people who compose them. And should they be abandoned, and other parties organized in their places, unworthy and unscrupulous men could not be kept out—they would be sure to push themselves to the front, if possible. In other words, the vicious element of society cannot be eliminated by any manœuvring. But an arch may be reconstructed, section by section, without demolishing the structure; and so a party may be readjusted to meet new issues, while all the time it does better work in sustaining the interests of the Government. The lessons of history are proof that parties themselves do change, and, indeed, are very quick to conform to a popular demand. The sudden abandonment of a political party is analogous to revolution in a Government, warrantable only in extreme emergencies.

This view of the case is also very suggestive as to the value of an opposition party when thrown out of power. We often think of it as laid aside until it shall again be invited to assume control. But this is far from the proper measure of its value. It is needed

incessantly as a check to undue legislation, which is one of our greatest dangers; while often, in positive work, and in shaping the future policy of the Government, it exerts hardly less influence than the dominant party.

But, interesting as is this view of the relation of the political party to the Government, we claim for it even a still higher value, when we consider its direct relation to the masses of the people as an educational power. We have already directed attention to the fact of its furnishing training-schools for those who are called to the exercise of power, and also that it is itself the outgrowth of our free institutions; the additional point which we now adduce is that it stimulates the masses to think and study, and educates them to a better appreciation of their privileges.

When we deplore existing corruptions, and question the expediency of permitting foreigners so soon to vote, and regard it as a mistake that the freedmen were endowed with the right of suffrage, we do not consider how difficult a problem has been given our nation to solve; which is nothing less than the assimilating of these heterogeneous peoples to American usages and American ideas. The question before us is not how the descendants of the Puritans, holding similar views respecting religion and government, shall furnish for themselves the pleasantest homes, and live with the least annoyance, but the far greater question is, What shall we do with these people who worship other gods, and have every variety of opinion as to morals and government? And the only reply to this question is, We must either Americanize them, or they will destroy us. We cannot afford to repel them, and thus throw them into a class by themselves; but we must welcome them, we must win them; and this we must do by introducing them to the same rights and privileges which we ourselves enjoy. And this is just what the political party, compelled by self-interest, has ever been forward to do; and, in so doing, has reached clear down to the very bottom of society and brought up the lower classes, which have been neglected, oppressed, and abused; brought them up into the light and pure air of our free institutions—a kind of sub-soiling process, which is not less important in the interests of civilization than in successful agriculture. With our fastidious notions we have given but little credit for this kind of work, and have called it demagogism, just because too largely it has been inspired by unworthy motives. And yet the fact remains, that our great political parties have laid right hold of

these heterogeneous masses, and have done more in this work of assimilation than any other one agency that can be named. Nor should we underrate this as an educational work because it recognizes neither text-book nor class-room; any influence that awakens a man to new life, so that he respects his own manhood, and feels that no man, not even a king, has a right to tread upon him, is in the best sense educational. And we know that this is just the influence that the political party exerts in securing recruits. Indeed, it goes further than this; it impresses each man with a sense of personal responsibility, and seeks to make him feel that there is a place in the party which no one can fill but himself.

There is an educational influence, also, in those party agencies which bring men together; mind is brought in contact with mind. Men are called upon to think, to discriminate, to answer objections, and to invent means for the attainment of given ends; and, when brought thus closely together, each feels the magnetic current which runs through the entire party. An additional point, showing its educational power, is the sense of proprietorship which is fostered by this party spirit, making the man to feel that he not only belongs to the party, but that the party belongs to him—a proprietorship which renders him solicitous that his party shall fulfil its pledges in the matter of honest legislation; and no man can exercise this care and feel this solicitude without being more of a man than he otherwise would be.

The danger of giving the right of suffrage to the illiterate classes is usually exaggerated; first, for the reason that even among the educated only a portion are to be found who have so comprehended the questions at issue, in any given election, as to vote independently; all others simply follow what they regard as the better judgment of those who have studied these questions; and this is precisely what the illiterate voter does. But, again, the illiterate, as a class, are impotent for harm to the Government, except through the agency of political parties, and we have already seen the powerlessness of parties to do us harm by reason of the check which they have upon each other. We concede that illiteracy is a serious obstacle to good government, and therefore rejoice in the power of the ballot, when placed in the hand of an ignorant man, to wake him up to a new life and nobler aspirations, while it is his passport to the political party which immediately helps him in securing his rights. A man who was asked whether he did not think the playing of children upon his lawn injured the grass, replied that he did,



but that he failed to see that it injured the children; a reply not inapplicable to the question before us.

But the powerlessness of the illiterate, as a class, to harm us, so long as we are protected by these political parties, at once suggests the still wider application of this same principle, as furnishing a corrective for all those combinations which may threaten the perpetuity of our free institutions. We are not fearing that a Cæsar or a Napoleon will capture the Government by the sword, and establish a military despotism, for the reason that the tastes of the people are agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing, rather than military; but fears are entertained lest our vast moneyed corporations shall come to be a power greater than the Government itself. The fathers of the republic very carefully guarded the rights of the smaller against encroachments by the larger States; but we have lost sight of that danger in the far greater one that threatens us, from our railroad, telegraphic, manufacturing, and other corporations, which, unrestricted even by State boundaries, have become truly national, both in extent and influence. But, while the power of these corporations is incalculable, and their heartlessness proverbial, we must not forget that their self-interest holds them largely in restraint. First, for the reason that capital is very sensitive to any governmental disturbance, it can ill afford to invite anarchy; and second, it is the true ally of the laboring classes; those classes must be conciliated in order to its own promotion and highest prosperity. Still, after making all these allowances, it cannot be denied that capitalists have tampered with our legislation, that money has corrupted the ballot-box, and that these monopolies are a constant menace to our liberties. A true self-interest does not always control these corporations, for the reason that they are blinded by their greed. And the point which we wish to make is that our large and thoroughly organized political parties are needed to protect us from these abuses; they alone are competent for this work. Were we divided into a dozen political factions, these moneyed interests would rule us with a rod of iron. But, it may be objected, do not these moneyed interests even now corrupt our present political parties? We answer, yes; but they cannot control them, for the reason that neither party can afford the reputation of being the special friend of the capitalist. Both alike offer the largest facilities for the laboring classes to organize a successful resistance to all such encroachments of power.

Again, the different nations of the Old World represented on these shores might give us untold trouble by making this their battle-ground. We might find clan meeting clan, were it not for the power of these political parties to neutralize these antagonisms by dividing the clans. Happily for us, neither party takes all of any one nationality, and therefore old issues and old feuds must be forsaken.

The same is true of sectional interests and those divisions which spring from the same. Our territory is very broad, and different classes of people live in different sections, representing civilizations so diverse that what is esteemed noble and honorable in one section is sometimes regarded as mean and degrading in another. Our true policy, as a nation, is not to permit such interests to crystallize by themselves and squarely to clash; and therefore we discover the serviceableness of these parties whose platforms are broad enough to invite men from every section, and thus prevent section from being arrayed against section, as was the case in our civil war, which was itself the result of the disruption of the parties of that day.

For a similar reason we may rejoice that our parties are large enough to prevent our cities, which are attaining marvellous dimensions, from exercising such control over the rural populations as has characterized the cities of the Old World. We want no such centres of power, with the corrupt influences which usually gather in the same.

But of all the combinations which may endanger the republic those of a religious character are the most to be dreaded. No student of history can contemplate the possibility of a religious war without a shudder. No tongue can describe the amount or degree of human suffering which has resulted from the attempt to propagate religion by coercion. The relation which these political parties sustain, therefore, to the great religious and moral movements which agitate the public mind is suggestive of questions replete with interest, and demanding patient study and nice discrimination. Happily for us, our Constitution and laws proclaim religious liberty, which is in perfect harmony with the spirit of a pure Christianity. Both alike warn us against using this liberty as a cloak of maliciousness—it being a liberty to think as we please but not always to act as we please—a liberty which is so restricted as to prevent one man from making his religion to interfere with that of another man. Our policy as a nation is, therefore, at war with every religion which does

not recognize this cardinal principle. Again, the spirit of Christianity and the spirit of our institutions agree in recognizing a complete separation between Church and State. These are coördinate institutions—both have been ordained of God, and each is amenable to him directly, while neither is amenable to him through the other. Whatever of religious restraint is imposed by the Government upon its subjects is done for its own sake, and not for the sake of the Church; its own health and prosperity being conditioned upon its adherence to the principles of the Decalogue promulgated from Sinai. Because the Government is non-sectarian it is not godless. The State, however, has no right to interfere with the Church, nor the Church with the State. The two, in their relation to the same God, have separate functions, and are clothed with very different powers. To the one, God has handed the sword, with the instruction that the magistrate shall not bear it in vain; while to the other he has said, "Put up again thy sword into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." The one compels, while the other persuades—the one applies its force outwardly, while the other sets up its kingdom in the heart, and thus purifies the very fountain of moral action. With such very obvious distinctions, it must be equally obvious that our true policy, as a people, will be found in a very strict observance of these lines of demarcation. The Church should never attempt to wage its battles upon ground belonging to the civil power. All it can ask of the Government is simple protection. In its own department it wields a power incomparably greater than that of the sword. In view of these distinctions we may greatly rejoice, as we study the composition of our political parties, to find that they so largely disregard all Church lines, and that men belonging to these various denominations, with equally good standing in the same Church, are intensely at variance in their political views. This is as it should be. We want no Protestant party as opposed to a Romish party; we want no one religious denomination to mass itself in either party for the purpose of seizing the reins of Government in its own interests; and should it accomplish such an end, it would only be to its own injury. All our interests, both religious and civil, are best subserved by having the churches themselves divided in politics. When a Protestant and Romanist find themselves standing shoulder to shoulder in the same political party and working zealously for its advancement, they will become better acquainted with each other, and as a result will lose

much of that bitterness which is the fruit of ignorance and bigotry. Thus it is that the very churches themselves are compelled to give credit to the political parties for having fostered that spirit of catholicity which has become so prevalent in our land, and which is the pride of every true American. Similar considerations should restrain us from inviting those extreme moral issues upon the arena of politics which will tend to drive all the dissipated and lawless classes into a party by themselves. Our true policy is to divide their forces. They are capable of inflicting incalculable harm. As with the increase of wealth and luxury these criminal classes are on the increase, they suggest some of the most difficult problems for our statesmen to solve. The virtuous portion of society must restrain them, and this can be accomplished far better through party affiliations than through party antagonisms.

It is the narrow view of politics which disgusts us; while it is only by these broader views that we rise to a comprehension of the importance of the political party as an indispensable factor in the administration of our Government, and discover in the honorable partisan the qualities of the true patriot.