

OUTLINE.

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OUTLINE.

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Modern Governments and the Politician.

Men have from the beginning congregated together—Man is by nature a gregarious animal— and, since he is endowed with mind and soul, so that he may know what is right and what is an injustice to his fellow man, he has of necessity instituted laws to define his rights and governments to protect them. At first the articles which defended the man of low estate were few and the respect for them small; the strong have ridden rough-shod over the weak; but times have changed, and with them governments. In the modern government, the people rule and kings are told what to do.

The modern government is a creation of the past century; yet not all governments of today are modern, not all civilized governments are modern, not all the governments of Europe are modern. A modern government, in the sense I propose to use it, is one in which the people at large are the prevailing power. In that sense the United States government is modern; so is that of England and France and all the republics; Germany is only partially so, and Russia is not modern.

In a nation ruled by the people, another institution commonly, if not always, becomes a part of its vital workings—that is the political party.. The party must have leaders; hence the politician—"one attached to politics as managed by parties"; "one skilled in political science and administration."

Political parties, naturally, exist only in democratic countries, since it is an organ of public opinion. The nearest approach to a party, in a despotism, is the political faction; it is the forerunner of the party. England's history was made by factions from the time of the Magna Charta up

to the time of the Puritans, about 1640; but these factions did not depend upon the opinion of the people for support; they appealed to the interest or prejudice of class against class rather than the innate right of the people to govern. The war of the Red and White Roses was the struggle of factions contending for power. Throughout the reign of the Tudors, the Protestants and Catholics strove with one another to gain the upper hand. With the accession of the Stuarts came the transition period. Religious liberty became a recognized fact and political issues were set forth. People questioned the divine right of kings and proposed the subjection of the king to the parliament; the Cavaliers fought against the Roundheads. Opposition to the accession of the Catholic ^{James} James II gave rise to the so-called "petitioners" and "abhorers", afterwards known as Whigs and Tories. Yet few citizens had the right to vote, and Whigs and Tories continued to be a hybrid type, part faction and part party.

In England the political leaders have arisen out of the old privy council. Charles I sorted over his council and picked out certain members from this number to run his government; they were derisively called the "cabinet" council. The practice continued, and under William III the cabinet, instead of the privy council, became the recognized ministerial government. William was also responsible for the custom, now long in operation, of taking the cabinet ministers from the Houses of Parliament. He was the first to choose his ministers all from one party, and in this case they were Whigs, since it was necessary for them to influence the Whig House of Commons from whence the money came. This influence was brought about by wholesale and unprincipled bribery of the House members from a fund known as the secret service fund. These men continued by this

means to dominate the government and lead their factions—yet they were but factions—factions contending for power. Thus Walpole carried his measures and by the same means Castlereagh, Canning, Pitt, ^{Fox} ~~See~~ and other prime ministers of lesser note influenced legislation.

The early Georges could not speak English and so allowed the Cabinet to convene without their valued presence, and thereby the ministers gained more power. Pitt and Newcastle added "bluff" to their list of means to an end. There, ^{also} arose, in the House, a class of political leaders of which Burke was a type. ¶ There was in England, however, a class of people who did not relish corruption as a means of legislation. This revulsion of feeling culminated in the Reform Act of 1832. The Whigs, championing this reform, became the Liberal party and the Tories merged into the Conservative party, thus the first two great political parties were formed. The prime minister and his cabinet continued to be the politicians or political leaders of their party. They constituted the party machine that dominated everything. When public opinion went against them and they could no longer by fair debate in the houses of legislation, carry their measures, they resigned together, and a cabinet in sympathy with the majority was chosen. So it continues until today. The politicians of England since that time have been at the same time her statesmen. Beaconsfield, Disraeli and Gladstone are examples of the material Great Britain has used for prime ministers.

Since the Cabinet of England constitutes her coterie of politicians, it is in order to discuss them a little more fully. The Cabinet consists of the First Lord of the Treasury, the Lord Chancellor, Lord President of the Council, Lord Privy Seal, Chancellor of the Exchequer, First Lord of the Admiralty and five Secretaries of State known as Home Secretary,

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Colonial Secretary, Secretary for Foreign affairs, Secretary for India
and Secretary for War, ^{and} sometimes other officers are included in the Cabinet.
The King chooses his Prime Minister, who usually holds the office of First
Lord of the Treasury, from either branch of the legislative body, and the
Prime Minister picks his cabinet also from the Parliament. These men all
retain their seats in parliament, from which vantage point they can urge
with great force the passage of the measures they may deem necessary. The
cabinet always agrees. When they disagree they disband.

The speakers of the Houses of Commons and Lords are mere func-
tionaries; they are moderators and nothing more, elected by their respective
bodies. They give up their rights as members with their elevation to the chair.
We will see later, however, that the speaker in other countries is
not necessarily similar.

In Colonial America the provincial assemblies were presided over
by speakers, but these speakers had other duties than that of the simple
moderator. They were the leaders of the assembly and kept their positions
as private members of that body. They were all united in a struggle
against the encroachments of the crown and the speaker represented his prov-
ince and lead its fights. He was the originator of action.

Toward the period of the Revolution the newspaper editors, such as
Franklin, became influential politicians, and business men of the Samuel
Adams type appeared as demagogues in the strict sense of the word.

During the war, and afterwards, while the states were still under
the Articles of Confederation, the people were largely agreed—or rather
they disagreed by states instead of individuals—and politicians, as we think
of them today, were little known. The Speaker of the Continental Congress

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continued to be the acknowledged leader. Even after the Constitution was adopted, although there arose differences among the people, yet the candidates for President were nominated by caucus of the House of Representatives for lack of any better political machinery. The politicians had developed, however, and the parties were not slow in following. Jefferson and Burr were pitted against John Adams and Hamilton. Jefferson furnished the principles and Burr the organization for the party that soon came into existence—the Republican party. Jefferson was not much of a politician—he was a statesman—but Burr was a genius in that line. It is said of him that he played politics as he would chess and used men for his pawns. He realized that men's actions are governed by their self-interest, and used that fact to advantage. His methods were so secret that he was often accused of trickery and even more serious faults. He was a master organizer, an able general, a suave, cool leader who drew men to him ready to follow his banner. Burr's methods won to such an extent that Hamilton became willing to learn of him. He wrote to a friend; "We must change our tactics. We have relied too much upon the mere excellencies of our measures..... We must be more politic.... Nothing wrong must be done, of course; but we must meet art with art and defeat trick with trick." He tried it and succeeded in putting Burr out of business, politically, although it cost him his life. He became an intriguer, a worker behind the scenes, some say even worse than Burr. At any rate he could not hide his trickery as well. He was too much of a statesman to come up to the high standard of the first-class American politician.

Martin Van Buren managed Andrew Jackson's campaign for him. He did it systematically, and perfected out of the old Republican party and

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the floating vote the organization that remains to this day is the Democratic party. Van Buren seemed to have a genius for politics.

These men, Burr, Hamilton and Van Buren, were the fathers of the present day National Central Committee Chairman, of which the late Senator Marcus A. Hanna was^a a conspicuous example. The central committee chairman is the authorized leader; he wields the party whip and usually he is the actual leader.

The President of the United States and his Cabinet, unlike their prototypes, the British Ministers of State, are not noted as politicians. This is in a large measure due to the fact that they can neither initiate legislation nor prorogue the legislative body, and to the further fact that it is contrary to custom and principle to resign when they disagree with the Congress. Sometimes the President is a politician, as is the case with Mr. Roosevelt, but in such cases it is due to the personality of the man and not to the office he holds. President Jackson was such a man and likewise Martin Van Buren.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives has often been entitled the Premier of the United States. We will consider, briefly, how well he deserves the name. He has inherited from colonial times a sort of leadership, first, of the whole house and, later, of the faction which elected him. He is now the unquestioned leader of his party in the House; his election is the acknowledgement of that fact, but whether he is the leader of his party in the whole country is another matter that admits of serious doubt. If the party chief happens to be in Congress, and if that party ~~party~~ happens to be in power, he becomes the Speaker of the House of Representatives. He is a premier so far as legislation goes; he may be so far

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as party leadership goes; he is not where the executive function comes into play. The Speaker of the House has a remarkable amount of power and it is intended by his supporters that he shall have. If he proves unable to use it, he is speedily "shelved". Even his position in view of every one on the floor gives him a certain advantage. He has the absolute power of recognition of members, he is an arbiter of the House rules, has the appointment of all committees, and is himself chairman of the committee on rules, which is popularly known as the "steering committee" and whose object is to arrange the order of business for the House. This means that under his direction the calendar is made up to ^{serve} ~~use~~ the interests of the ruling party. Besides all this he can exercise his rights as a private member of the House. He can appoint a temporary speaker and leave the chair and, when the House goes into a committee of the whole, can appoint a chairman who will follow out his policy. His power is often feared, and various efforts have been made to break it; but it is charged that whenever popular opinion takes from the speaker one means of control he speedily finds another. One recent speaker was bitterly complained of because he sat in the chair "with his feet on the neck of the Republican party". Yet his power continues to grow.

Senators quite often are powerful political leaders; but when all is said, the real leader of a national political party in the United States is its "boss". I use the word without any slurring intention, merely because it is a popular word that conveys the idea. Not, ^{necessarily} that he is corrupt or without sound political principles, but that he has prestige and influence enough to sway millions.. He may be a president, he may be a candidate for president, he may be speaker of the House of Representatives

he may be chairman of the National Central Committee, United States Senator and editor of a newspaper or a leader of Tammany Hall, but there is some quality about his personality, his ability or his money that makes him the biggest man in the multitude of his persuasion—the boss.

The internal political life of France began with the revolution. Her political system, however, does not develop statesmen; bribery is too prevalent and her people too indifferent to corruption in office. Her politicians and parties are bitter against each other; election campaigns are fierce for the politicians are afraid of the tendency of the people to find a master who will put them out of office, because, as Bodley says, "The French have an ever-latent longing to be governed by a master".

Politicians rise rapidly in France. They are mostly doctors, lawyers, professors and journalists. Even the presidents rise from obscurity in a marvelously short time. Ex-president Faure was a minister of marine unknown to most of France at the time of his election, and eight months previous to his accession to the presidency had never held a cabinet position, although that is comparatively easy of attainment. The President is the most powerful man in the republic after he is president. French politicians, however, never attain the power that Americans do.

Switzerland, by the use of the initiative and referendum, succeeds in getting along very well without either parties or politicians.

The politician of today sustains a permanent and recognized relation to government. He has become almost indispensable in elections, and will continue to be so long as great parties contend together. After he has elected his candidate—or himself—he stands ready to support and advise him in the pursuance of the policy that they both have striven for. If he

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fails to elect, he acts as a check or warning to his opponent in office and, by his watchfulness for openings, serves to ^{keep} ~~keep~~ the office-holder properly mindful of his duty. He becomes the formulator of governmental policy and, if he be in office, is also its executor and, finally and preëminently, he is the man that brings about action.

His methods have differed in the past and present. Formerly bribery and threats brought about the desired results. Now his means are many, although his old ways are not forgotten. Not the least of his implements of war is his willingness to meet another man or party half way—to make mutual concessions for the sake of mutual gains. There are numberless tricks, more or less harmless, and some not so innocent, that politicians use to influence votes and actions. Public heroes furnish excellent material for an energetic politician to work upon and the said politicians have done it time and again in this country.. William H. Harrison, Zachary Taylor, U. S. Grant and Theodors Roosevelt are among the presidents who have been successfully utilized to insure a party's success. If the candidate had no particular views, it is easy to start the cry that " ~~its~~ 'the man we want!" If the candidate is a little questionable, as he not infrequently is, the cry arises from some unknown source that " the principle is the thing: work for the party!" and it is done, while the skillful politician smiles. Election campaigns, well managed, give a good field for the politician. He plays it as he would a war game— makes his treaties or alliances, places his big guns and his bands, and fires his musketry according to schedule. Then when the scores are counted, he abides by the fortunes of war until another opportunity appears.

The newspaper is a powerful tool for the politician. Sometimes

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he owns or edits, sometimes he only influences it, or possibly it influences him, but in some way or other it must be reckoned with.

The most important implement of the politician, however, the tool that he himself has invented, and which he alone can use, is the party machine. Into it he feeds a man—an ordinary man; he turns the crank and produces a candidate for office. He puts the candidate on the machine and hauls him through all difficulties to an election. If the officer does not do the will of the powers that be, the machine becomes an instrument of torture. Or, he takes another man—an extraordinary man—a man he cannot control, a man whom he does not need in his business—he puts him into this party machine and, lo!, he is no more; he is politically dead. Thus the politician of today accomplishes the purposes for which he exists.

The politician is a useful citizen— or can be, though sometimes his faults outweigh his virtues. He stands as the representative of a considerable body of people, having the same opinions as his own, and he is their spokesman. If his party is in the minority then he is doubly necessary. He is useful as an organizer of his party. Party machinery is necessary, to some extent, in this present day. It takes generalship and skill and insight to manage an election campaign or put an important bill through Congress with a small and divided majority. The politician is useful because he attends to these things. The political party must have leaders; the politician furnishes them. Large bodies move slowly and the politician is useful because he can bring them to action. Where a multitude get together, each with his own ideas of what is the best way to proceed, slow progress is made; but when a few energetic, magnetic, forceful men—politicians—get among that body, they can bring order out of

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chaos. That is the duty of the politician; that is what makes him useful.

I have traced the origin of the modern politician from his English home, to the American colonies and thence to the United States. We have seen wherein the politician of England differs from his prototype in America. We have discussed the essentials of the British Prime Minister as compared with the American president, Speaker and party Boss. The methods of the politician have been set forth, and it has been shown what is his relation to government and why he is useful. Now, since he is indispensable under our present system of politics, since he performs duties that no one else can perform, he has a right to exist. We must overlook some of his faults—or, better still, eradicate them. Popular opinion will make the politician what he ought to be. He serves the public or he cannot exist. Let the public say, then, how he shall serve. He is powerful and it is for the public to rightly direct that power. The politician forever! He is a type of man worthy to be cultivated. It is only necessary to cull out the poor and bad in order to bring into existence a profession that is a peer to the ministry and higher than law or medicine.