Be a Politician.

An election was recently held in one of our large cities. Voters, as usual, were scattered about discussing the candidates and the general situation. Presently one of them was approached by a very pleasant looking man, who leisurely sauntered up to our voter, shook hands, chatted a few moments, and gave him a cigar, which was of course put to use. Then after some more chatting he produced a ticket having on it the names of some special friends—good, straightforward men—for whom he'd like the voter to cast his ballot; indeed, he would give him a dollar to do so. And to complete the little episode, the voter presently dropped the ticket into the ballot box and the dollar into his pocket. Thus our gentle friend wandered on to fresh pastures.

That man was a politician, as we generally consider the term; but not the politician I have in mind. The one to whom I would ask your indulgence is not he whose livelihood depends upon his success at bribery among the voters; but he is the voter himself—the voter not led by unprincipled demagogues who would
keep him in ignorance of the good qualities of an opposing platform or candidate and fire him with passion against the other party, but the voter who investigates for himself, thinks for himself, and acts for himself, — the voter who reads both parties' papers, hears both parties' speakers, and studies the question under dispute from the lofty standpoint of a truth seeker — not that of an office seeker — and the voter who then applies the knowledge thus acquired with the laudable intention of benefiting as much as possible the public. Such is the politician I would have you be — seldom met, it is true; so is the ideal philanthropist or patriot or Christian: but all the more need of being them.

All the more need, from their very scarcity, of being more Christians and philanthropists and patriots and true politicians. The world wants them.

Our nation wants them. And while we are supplying the first three, while not all do the last — true politicians? Surely we have no higher earthly duty than that of caring for our country, of giving it our most earnest endeavor to do good by correcting the many evils under which it staggers. We admire the philanthropist who cares for the wants of
individuals near about him. But what of the man who extends his efforts, not simply to a few, but to the sixty million people in America? Au, too often we fail to see the hero in this work; but God in Heaven smiles his benediction on the man—our politician—who spirit swells to public good for his many fellows. And when, as students, we go forth to take our part in the work before us of determining our nation's career, let us not think it beneath us to be in this—the highest—sense loyal to our country. We cannot perhaps fight her battles mid the smoke and carnage of war. But we can study the political questions as they arise, and duty calls us to the task. We can work for principles sake and vote intelligently for principles sake with the hope and assurance that the right will prevail.

If we do this and others do it, there need be no apprehension about our nation's future. Then public questions appear for disposal we can then know that ignorance and prejudice and passion will be cast aside by the voter—by the politician—and that candid and intelligent consideration will reveal the proper solution to the problem. And when such matters as that of subsidizing steamship lines arise, and the newspapers and party
leaders seek to influence the people to a blind support of their side of the dispute; then, with our voters intelligently informed into the subject with the honest intention of treating it to the best end, we shall have no fear but that the best policy will be followed.

Likewise will this be happily true in the great question of our currency, when gold men and silver men and paper men seek by every pretense to excite the voters' support.

Or when the noble Indian problem seems insoluble; when the governmental policy is superseded by the newspapers for its publicity, and the noble Red Man yields not to the presumptions of education, religion, or Marchesters, but persists in remaining a worthless pauper and a menace to his industrious neighbors. Thus perhaps and not till then, will our voters see the way to a definite settlement of the matter and succeed in relieving themselves of that desecrated they are now obliged to support and carry.

Or when Protection and Freetrade continue in their historic struggle that has from the beginning engrossed so largely the public attention, and the latter is flooded with multitudinous tales of tariff rates, corresponding prices, and its general
contemporaneous condition of the country as proof, positive and unquestionable, of the necessity of
high duties — or low duties.

Or when the "better half" stirs up
the country for an extension of the right of
suffrage, and the voter is button-holed by an
agitator who pours at him a relentless stream of
argument, vituperation, and entreaty till an
opposing advocate comes along and likewise un-
loads himself upon the bewildered voter and
the poor fellow is persuaded into the illusion
that both are right — that woman ought always
to vote and that she ought never to vote.

If in these emergencies the voter acts
candidly and thoughtfully we shall have no fear
when steambag after steambag gies up to the
wharf at New York City, runs out the gang-
plank, and opens the way for an influx
of European immigrants till the very support
of the American laborer seems threatened.

Or when the conflict between the
capitalist and the workman grows finer,
and strikes and lock-outs but add fuel to
the flame.

Or when want and misery in our
cities becomes deeper (the luxury and extravagant
of some only making the shadow darker. When
vice and trickery are employed to widen the
chasm between the rich and the poor and our
most cherished institutions better be apprehen-
sion of a revolution such as a century ago
whipped France with a deluge of blood.

When these conditions arise our only
hope must lie in the intelligence, integrity,
and independence of the voter. Party magnates
will continue in their efforts to whip the
voters into line to elect men to rich offices
regardless of the evil effect upon the country
at large. Circulars and public speakers will
continue in their endeavors to promote party
interests. Impostors and schemes will con-
tinue to pose as the friends of the people
and champion of all that is holy. These
agencies are now at work and are redoubling
their efforts. We as citizens of the greatest
republic that ever existed, redg the benefits
of its great, best government with which a
people were ever blessed, should recognize our
responsibility to this government and our duty
to promote its interests. Upon our generation
will soon devolve the task of guiding our
country in its onward march. The world
is looking anxiously at this attempt for
self-government. Do not let it fail. Give
us true politicians — leaders of intelligence
and honesty, and voters to support them
in the right. Then shall we know
that all is well. Then shall we know
that our Revolutionary fathers' faith was
not a fond dream; that their bright
hope for Columbia can to be realized;
that the monument of free government they
erected is still to tower through the years
to come — an immortal tribute to their
wisdom and love for the right.