

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### THE SPOILS SYSTEM.

Richard Croker is at the head of Tammany, and is the most conspicuous political boss in America. Were he not an adroit politician he could not hold his place, and it is frequently said of him that he is as unscrupulous as he is adroit. W. T. Stead, the famous English journalist, lately had an interview with him, which was published in the New York World, and as the great boss speaks of principles that are issues in Greater New York and this city in common, some of his observations will be read with interest here. They embrace some of the chief arguments used in New York to justify partisanship in municipal politics.

Tammany is popularly understood to be one of the most corrupt political organizations on earth, and this general impression was more than justified by the evidence adduced at the famous Lexow investigation, which resulted in the crushing defeat of Tammany and the triumph of the non-partisan ticket four years ago. Yet Croker defends Tammany in the following fashion:

"Tammany is honest. Tammany is not corrupt. Tammany is the best, the only permanent hope of real reformed administration. Therefore Tammany will win. They will tell you that Tammany has ruled New York nearly all the time. And they will tell you true. Do you think we could have done it if we had been the thieves and rogues they pretend we are? I have been in office nearly all my life; do you think the citizens would have been such fools as to elect me and re-elect me if I had been the bad man that some people say I am? Things that are rotten do not last. They go to pieces. Thieves are not trusted by their fellow-thieves, let alone by their fellow-citizens. It is not by the bad in them that institutions and parties last, but by what is good. If Tammany has lasted and triumphed, it is the best proof that what its enemies say is false. And when it carries this next election, with all the newspapers against it, and all the mugwumps, then you will have our vindication."

No cause is so bad that it is not susceptible of some sort of defense, and no cause in politics is so corrupt that it cannot win support if it is able to pay for it. Nearly all the leading papers of New York and Brooklyn are opposed to Tammany, yet it has a good chance to win, and the reason why is because its workers know that if they are successful rich spoils and rewards will be distributed among them. Here is Croker's justification of the spoils system:

"Politics are impossible without the spoils. It is all very well to argue that it ought not to be so. But we have to deal with men as they are and with things as they are. Consider the problem which every democratic system has to solve. Government, we say, of the people, by the people, and for the people. The aim is to interest as many of the citizens as possible in the work—which is not an easy work, and has many difficulties and disappointments—of governing the state or the city. Of course in an ideal world every citizen would be so dominated by patriotic or civic motives that from sheer unselfish love of his fellow men he would spend nights and days in laboring for their good. If you lived in such a world inhabited by such men I admit that there could be no question but that we could

and would dispense with the spoils system. But where is that world to be found? Certainly not in the United States, and most certainly not in New York."

He severely criticises the "cultured classes" and "silk stockings" because they refuse to take any part in politics, and argues that if they will not interest themselves in good government, the masses cannot be expected to. He then proceeds:

"And so we need to bribe them with spoils. Call it so if you like. Spoils vary in different countries. Here they take the shape of offices. But you must have an incentive to interest men in the hard daily work of politics, and when you have our crowd you have got to do it one way, the only way that appeals to them. I admit it is not the best way. But it is for practical purposes the only way."

In New York the chief complaint of the politicians, and the principal ground upon which they justify the spoils system, is the fact that the better classes and business men do not take an active part in politics; but here the cry is the reverse, our local politicians complaining that bankers and "silk stockings" are taking too active a part in the campaign. Politicians will take any position and reverse it as often as may be necessary, in order to achieve power and its perquisites.

Is Croker's reasoning sound? Are the premises upon which it is based correct? Must citizens be bribed with spoils to take an interest in good government? Is bribery to be the controlling force in municipal politics? Is Croker's declaration true that "it is for practical purposes the only way?"

So far as the capital of Utah is concerned the "News" confidently answers every one of these questions in the negative, and predicts that the people of this city will find a better way to govern it than by bribery, either in the form of spoils, or any other shape. The people of this city possess and will assert a moral sense that will revolt against and refuse to tolerate a system of municipal control that is inseparable from such corruption and debauchery of the public conscience.

### THE SITUATION IN FARMINGTON.

Some eighteen miles north of Utah's capital lies the town of Farmington, the county seat of Davis county, hitherto noted for its beautiful situation and the good sense of its inhabitants. It has been an incorporated city for many years, and always has been well governed. Its streets are kept in good repair and the public peace is reasonably well protected and preserved, yet an old resident of the town informs the "News" that he cannot remember that there was ever a city tax assessed.

In other words, the city has been governed, the streets kept in repair and all necessary public improvements have been made absolutely without a tax levy for such purposes. The town receives from licenses about a hundred dollars a year; and what is required for street repairs, etc., in excess of this amount is donated by citizens. This year, for example, some 250 loads of gravel have been hauled upon the streets by donation.

It is scarcely necessary to add to these pleasant facts the further one that the control of the municipality has hitherto been non-partisan. It is hardly possible for such results as have been produced there to flow from a

partisan administration. Had there been political debts to pay, the people would not have been so lightly taxed, and those debts are almost inseparable from partisanship.

But a serpent entered the garden of Eden, and the spirit of partisan politics has crept into Farmington. A short time ago "some of the boys" got up and launched a partisan ticket. A little later another meeting of voters was held at which it was determined to perpetuate non-partisan control, and a ticket to this end was prepared. The time allowed by law for the measures necessary to be taken to prepare and nominate a non-partisan ticket had expired, and for this reason it was agreed that, though the second ticket was really non-partisan, and contained six Democrats to four Republicans, it should be called a Republican ticket.

With one or two exceptions, the candidates on this ticket are the same persons who have been holding office, and under whose administration the town has been governed without a tax, and the understanding is that if re-elected they will continue the same policy. The "News" is assured that the overwhelming sentiment in the town favors the re-election of the old officers, who comprise nearly the entire non-partisan ticket, but that there is danger of the other ticket winning through the apathy of the voters.

It seldom pays to swap old friends for new ones; and to exchange a non-partisan government, such as Farmington has been having, for a political one such, for example, as this city has been having, is still more likely to prove unprofitable. Should politicians once get a grip on the treasury and tax power of our neighbor on the north, the people there would be likely to learn the value of vigilance; it is the price of safety. The voters of Farmington should head off the politicians!

### A CATHOLIC ON METHODISM.

The Monitor, a Catholic publication of San Francisco, has recently been holding an animated controversy with the California Christian Advocate, and one of the subjects discussed has been the treatment Mormons have received at the hands of the Methodists; the latter being the sect more particularly represented by the Advocate. The Monitor trounces its adversary in vigorous style and tells a good deal of truth in terse and forcible language.

It is seldom that we come across a statement of the views of Catholics relative to the treatment the Mormons have received from various Protestant sects, and partly for that reason a degree of interest attaches to the remarks of the Monitor, which are subjoined. In reproducing them here the "News" takes occasion to observe that there is a wide difference between Methodists; and that, while a small portion of that sect have shown by their bigotry and cruelty towards the Mormons that they deserve all the Monitor says of them, the great mass of the members of the denomination do not. Here in Utah many warm friendships exist between Methodists and Mormons, and it not infrequently happens that a Mormon missionary, traveling without purse or scrip, is kindly entertained by Methodists. These facts should not be forgotten, even when considering such scenes as have recently been enacted in Kershaw county, South Carolina.

Here are the remarks of the Monitor:

"Did the Christian Advocate ever