

The oldest and noblest representative Assembly in the world is unable to control its own proceedings; the intentions of the majority of its members, representing the opinions of a majority of the nation, are deliberately and successfully defied; time—invaluable time—is wasted with childlike folly; and measures which the community desires are arrested at the will and pleasure of one or more influential members. Scenes of disorder, which would not be tolerated in any other body of elected Englishmen, have become one of our parliamentary institutions, and the deterioration of the tone and character of debate is rapidly deteriorating the estimation in which our representative government is held. Disloyalty to the House of Commons is treason—high treason—which the constituencies will rightly regard as a capital offence.—*Henry H. Fowler, "Nineteenth Century," 1885.*

It is an essential function of a representative House to control the finances, but the New Zealand House of Representatives has for years past abandoned this duty, and simply voted the sums of money which the Government has asked it to vote, notwithstanding the fact that a wide divergence of opinion existed in the community respecting the wisdom of the financial policy that was being pursued. . . . The utter inability of the Assembly to perform the functions appertaining to a Parliament is further illustrated by the manner in which it worships the Ministry of the day.—*E. W. Purnell, "Political Pamphlets," Vol. xx.*

The party system, whereof the strangeness is concealed from modern Englishmen only by the force of habit, leads, it has been well said, to this result: The sixteen cleverest men in Parliament are set to govern the country, whilst the sixteen next cleverest men are employed in hindering the work of government; the talents which should be enlisted in the service of the nation neutralise each other, and are rendered almost useless.—*Edinburgh Review, 1890.*

Party feeling is probably far more a survival of the primitive combativeness of mankind than a consequence of conscious intellectual differences between man and man. It is essentially the same sentiment which in certain states of society leads to civil, intertribal, or international war; and it is as universal as humanity. It is better studied in its more irrational manifestations than in those to which we are accustomed. It is said that Australian savages will travel half over the Australian continent to take in a fight the side of combatants who wear the same totem as themselves. In Southern India a series of dangerous riots are constantly arising through the rivalry of parties who know no more of one another than that some of them belong to the party of the right hand and others to that of the left hand. . . . It is through this great natural tendency to take sides that the wire-puller works. Without it he would be powerless. His business is to fan its flame; to keep it constantly acting upon the man who has once declared himself a partizan; to make escape from it difficult and distasteful.—*Maine, "Popular Government."*

It is patent to everyone who studies political affairs that the maturity of sound opinion upon all subjects has been materially retarded by the *animus* which is a motive largely actuating both sides in the prosecution of their contests. The primary desire is to get into office—to enjoy power, with its attendant prestige and benefits. Human nature being what it is, no opportunity is lost of the "Outs" discrediting the measures brought forward by the "Ins." However good a Bill may be in itself, and however loud may be the call of the people for its being passed into law, it always has to run the gauntlet of the rival jealousies of the two parties. This, on the surface, may seem to be a very good thing, and in one sense it is; but could not more than the ultimate results achieved be secured if a body of legislators were so constituted as to insure the elimination of those elements which give rise to such continuous personal conflicts and to such bitter party hatred, which at times, and in no times worse than our own, bring the whole system of government into that sort of contempt which is now and again felt for the deliberations of a local vestry? How are the people outside the walls of Parliament to form their opinions of particular measures brought forward if the men in Parliament do their utmost in many cases to misrepresent the intentions of the framers of the Bill, with the object of discrediting the party in power and getting them turned out? This is literally the chief business which the party out of power devotes its energies to.—*Crump, "Formation of Political Opinion."*

An editor, for instance, conceives a violent dislike for a certain Prime Minister who has perhaps criticized his paper in an uncomplimentary way. What is the result? Hardly an issue appears without more or less of abuse being heaped upon his name, and more or less of abuse being hurled at every act of his Cabinet. Such a course of proceeding persisted in, not only month after month, but year after year *ad nauseam*, is wearisome and *ennuyant* in the highest degree, even if spicily done.—*Crump, "Formation of Political Opinion."*

I believe that party, instead of being a machinery necessary to the existence of free government, is its most dangerous foe, and that in order to get anything which really deserves the name of Republican Government we must destroy party altogether.—*Stickney, "A True Republic."*

In John Stuart Mills's "Principles of Political Economy," on the last page of the second volume, we read: "Even in the best stage which society has yet reached, it is lamentable to think how great a proportion of all the efforts and talents in the world are employed in merely neutralising one another. It is the proper end of government to reduce this wretched waste to the smallest possible amount, by taking such measures as shall cause the energies now spent by mankind in injuring one another or in protecting themselves against injury."

One of the great blots upon our system of government is the sustained obstruction practised by those out of office against legislative or other measures proposed by those in office.—*Crump "Formation of Political Opinion."*