

THE MUGWUMP.

POLITICAL organization is necessary for the advancement of political truth, particularly in enlightened and Democratic governments.

The history of our own country affords many examples of this. But the efforts of such organizations are frequently toward *wrong ends* rather than right. Our history affords many examples of this also. The rank and file of a party may not see the drift towards evil—they generally do *not* see it. Party prejudices in such cases obscure their vision.

A Political party that inaugurates a great truth, cradles it, fosters its manhood; and finally secures its practical triumph by its incorporation in State Constitutions and laws, is prone thereafter to rely upon its past achievements, to idolize the men who were conspicuous in its early struggles, and to revere their opinions as the essence of all political wisdom.

Those composing such a party are not apt to learn that "new occasions teach new duties." Their political opinions are moulded upon the traditions of their fathers; they "inherit the ancestral virtues inscribed upon their father's graves." If they were then satisfied to be "fossils" merely, petrifications of the past, no great harm would ensue; but they usually persist in masquerading as a living body in the habiliments of the "dead past," and obstruct any progress towards new ideas and duties. It is then that such a party may become dangerous. Devoid of any living vital principles of its own, it becomes the prey of demagogues, who are able to use it despotically for selfish and corrupt purposes, by appealing to its "glorious past." Wisely has DeTocqueville, said: "The weakness of a Democracy is that, unless guarded, it merges into despotism." A number of times in the history of this country have the most sacred principles been betrayed upon the tyrannical and arbitrary demands of party leaders. There are many still living who

remember how the Whigs in 1850, faltered in their fidelity to freedom, disgracefully compromised with slavery, and "took lessons in smothering discussion, and in slave hunting." There are still more who remember how the Democratic party in 1860, attempted to open the free Northwest to the blight of slavery, and even dallied with the spirit of disunion. Party rule was strong enough in each of these cases to rally the bulk of its supporters to favor the commission of such crimes, but in both instances there were enough of good strong-willed believing men, who abandoned their party associations, interests and hopes, who sounded the alarm, aroused the people from their lethargy, overthrew the Whig party entirely, and for a quarter of a century abolished the supremacy of the hitherto invincible Democratic organization. But these men were assailed with malignant ferocity, the mob howled after them as traitors; newspapers and orators lost no opportunity to asperse their motives; yet they were the men who prevented the betrayal of freedom in America, and saved this nation from destruction. They were the MUGWUMPS of their generation, the men of transcendent conviction and courage, of a "purpose so generous and sincere that they could not be tempted aside by any prospects of promotion, wealth, or other private advantage." We now recognize the detested Mugwumps of thirty and forty years ago as the Prophets of their time, and,

"The hooting mob of yesterday in silent
awe return

To glean up the scattered ashes in
History's golden urn."

The present political questions are not so momentous as those of the generation just passing away, yet there are many things which make it necessary to "hold the present management of State affairs up to the tests of conscience."

Among the most honored of political leaders in the land are those who either conceived or