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GOING TO RUIN.

Some thirty or forty years ago, when Europe knew very little, practically speaking, of American affairs, and when frequent intercourse and intercommunication had not yet dispelled gross errors and grosser prejudices, nothing was more customary than for the British press to indulge in confident predictions of the speedy downfall of our republican institutions. Our government was considered that of a mob; popular misgovernment, and, it was thought that we should soon sicken of so democratic a system, and fly for refuge and safety to monarchical institutions. The gradual spread of fuller information respecting our country, the abundant opportunities offered for correcting mistaken impressions, and the substantial evidence of our growth, prosperity and power, all contributed to dissipate false views, and for some time John English journalism ceased to put forth its bold vaticinations respecting the decline of American republicanism. The subject might indeed have slumbered indefinitely but for the recent publication of Lord MACAULAY'S letter to Mr RANDALL, in which massive but brilliant but by no means impartial writer assumes the ground that we shall all break to pieces when our population becomes so dense that the lower classes will have to contend themselves with half a breakfast, and will have no idea where to get half a dinner. We need not pause to demonstrate the fallacy of this view, or even to show that as the particular contingency referred to can hardly occur in less than several centuries, we of the present generation, and our children after us, need not quake with any particular apprehension of peril. The topic is alluded to simply because it has revived and stimulated the flagging prejudices of sheets such as the London *Times*, and induced them once again to recur to the question of the durability of our form of government.

The *Times*, however, attaches the point upon more plausible data than those assumed by Lord MACAULAY. It thinks our troubles much nearer at hand, and specifies among their chief causes the frightfully increasing corruption and venality of the Executive, and Legislatures of the different States, and the consequent loss which in the judicial office has fallen upon the people. The reasoning of the *Times* is not devoid of specciousness, and it proceeds as no lovers of our country, to examine it closely, and see whether it does not repose on a solid substratum. We cannot doubt that among the causes which by degrees are impairing the tone of democratic institutions, and abating the respect and reverence in which they were wont to be held, are those cited by the London paper. No government can long withstand the pernicious influence of corruption, and of all others the democratic form, which is based upon the assumption of public virtue and intelligence, is the least likely to withstand the withering power of this political canker. It must extend far more rapidly under a system like ours, and must destroy one by one the supports of the Constitution and the laws. In proportion to the progress of corruption is the indifference of the people. As the govern ment waxes profligate and dishonest the recitancy grows callous and reckless, and unless the evil be stayed in its course in comparatively short period suffices to change the real character of the government, even while the name and forms continue to exist. If for the recuperative energies of our people, and the hope of a reaction, we should consider despair of the permanence of our institutions.

That the evil of an elective judiciary is not such exaggerated by the *Times* will be pretty generally acknowledged. Already amongst us is a feeling prevalent that we have been carried too far by our notions of popular sovereignty; that we have labored to convert a representative into an actual democracy, and have not sufficiently guarded the powers which should have been reserved either to the Executive or the Legislature. We think we can discern signs of a healthful change in this respect, although it is one of the most difficult of problems to withdraw authority once vested in the masses. The latter are little disposed voluntarily to submit to the curtailment of their privileges. The great argument of many of our statesmen has been the theory that all power may be safely given to the people. If the people, or a vast majority of them, were wise and virtuous there would be small peril in such an investiture, but so long as our voting population is largely recruited by ignorant emigrants from the Old World, and so long as intriguers and demagogues are ready to construct them into faithful adherents, at a cheap rate, the Judiciary cannot be restricted within narrow bounds. We are exposed to the frightful evil of an incompetent and a slavish judiciary under the existing system, and the sooner it is reformed, the better for the administration of justice and for the preservation of our government.

One of the most immediate and pressing sources of danger to the republic is hardly touched by the *Times*, we mean its sectionalism. The direct and inevitable tendency of the disputes which have arisen on the slavery question is to create a settled antagonism between the North and South, and to array them in hostile attitudes towards each other. Feelings of alienation are the consequence, and it requires no great stretch of imagination to see in the unanimous and extreme views now avowed by Northern men on the one hand, and Southern men on the other, the elements of a settled antagonism between the North and the South, and to conceive the possibility of such an estrangement as would engage the one section towards the other in hostile conflict. Should such a contingency arise, the Union even on the part of many conservative citizens now nearly follows while the ardent and the hot-headed are ready to dismember the Confederacy at once. This state of things is eminently hurtful, and is doing more towards the destruction of our government and the bringing of republicanism into disrepute than all the causes of political decay adduced by the *Times*. Here is the prominent mischief to be combatted, and there is not a sober minded and reflecting American who does not clearly perceive that unless wiser counsels prevail than those which have of late swayed the nation, both the patriotism and the sagacious mute teachers of equal autonomy and restore both subjects to a more healthy and more fraternal feeling to a more healthy and more fraternal feeling to a more healthy and more fraternal feeling