

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE SCIENCE OF GOVERNMENT.

Last Friday evening, Representative S. A. Kenner, by invitation of the faculty of the Brigham Young College, of Provo, delivered a lecture upon the above subject in the spacious lecture room of that building which was well filled. The exercises opened by a well-executed piano solo by a young lady from Mt. Pleasant, after which the lecturer was introduced by Professor McKendrick of the college, who acted as chairman. After a few introductory remarks, Mr. Kenner came to his subject, and spoke as follows:—

Mr. Chairman:

The science of government is a question which has appealed to the best minds in all the ages of the world. Even before the foundation of society, when man was wholly barbaric, some forms of supremacy obtained, which through the slow moving process of the ages, crystalized into recognized rule.

At this time, in the very hey-day of civilization and progress, we still find ourselves not wholly divested of every relic of the primeval condition; for might is still an abundant factor in the affairs of mankind; indeed, philosophically considered, it is a question whether or not might is not the only finally controlling factor in the proposition.

It is well understood that the power in man is delegated to a few who have been constituted rulers, governors, law-makers, or some such special distinction, and the real power, in this delegation, abnegates itself in favor of the chosen few. This, paradoxical as it may seem, constitutes government. It is well known of all men who read and think that no government that exists on the earth today could exist for a period of twenty-four hours if the actual ruling power exerted itself in the opposite direction, and how it is that this power, delegating something of itself to but a few is so completely controlled, subdued, overcome and led by that few, is a question worthy of consideration.

Take the example of Russia with its teeming millions of people—hardy, courageous, capable and enduring, if not enlightened and progressive—which is more completely dominated by the governing power than any other nation having even a semblance of civilization and progress on the globe, and those who control are fewer in number than those of any similar power in existence, because there is no representation for the masses whatever, and but little for the classes—a great white Czar constituting the central authority, an absolute despot, with a few satellites obedient to his will, making up the personnel of the government. From this handful of men emanates all authority in that grand empire, and strangely enough instead of realizing how frail would be their tenure should the masses arise in their might and assail them, as the masses have been so many times sorely tempted to do, they treat it with slighter concern than if they were entrenched in the hearts of the people, and everything that is necessary to the maintenance of government were at their beck and call. A more tyrannical, despotic, unprincipled

sway cannot be found, and that, too, in a land where one hundred men rule one hundred million. Is this not a subject which incites the profoundest thought? Is it not, indeed, something that statesmen of the day should give more attention to than they have done?

History is replete with incidents showing that the elements of fear, of superstition and of ignorance in too many cases, lie at the foundation of the sway which is exercised over the people. The mention of the name of ruler, potentate, prince, president, or even a governor among a certain class, and it the greater class, evokes a sort of reverential regard, which in our country is more than otherwise the result of education, and a consideration for duly constituted authority; but in the case of the lands beyond the sea, and more particularly in the Orient, they are principally made up of the elements first spoken of, to wit, superstition, fear, and traditional homage.

The Chinese government is by common consent, as well as by the records of the day, the oldest of the governments at present exercising dominion. It enjoys the peculiar distinction of having forgotten nothing, and learned nothing. It is claimed that it had newspapers a long while before Christ, and it doubtless has the same kind of newspapers today. It also has the customs prevalent at that time in measurably subdued form, while the attire of the people, their demeanor, their methods and their habits have not changed one iota. Their emperor is, as they understand it, a son of the sun. He is above and beyond the reach of ordinary or even extraordinary mankind. To even penetrate the outer wall surrounding his palace is a capital crime—not only capital, but punishable with instant death without trial, and yet a small and leaden missile coming from one of our modern fire arms within range would put an end to his career, sacred and profane, as certainly as it would in the case of the meanest loafer that crawls about the streets. Why is this? By reason of the inbred superstition and fear which is possible because of the emasculated condition of the race in which it prevails.

The condition prevailing in Persia is only different in degree, and because of lesser antiquity. As a matter of fact, weighed entirely in the scales of intellectual development and material advancement, Persia is even behind China, both being ruled by those who are superstitiously regarded as being possessed of the divine right to rule, and neither amounts in the intellectual scale to as much as many of our common laborers.

It was not until the American colonists rebelled against Great Britain that the first real instance of the people asserting their power as against duly constituted authority, and maintaining it by the force of intellectual as well as physical power, took place. It was a desperate undertaking. It required absolute self-denial, nerves of steel, and intellects surcharged with genuine inspiration to carry it through. Even at that time, and in an enlightened, progressive nation like Great Britain, the uprising was looked upon merely as a revolt of the

rabble whom, those bearing aloft the royal standard would soon subdue. The struggle lasted for eight years, and resulted in the overthrow of the established government. Then began the experiment; for the first time, among civilized, enlightened and Christian people, of such people divesting themselves of all forms of alleged God-given authority in secular government, and establishing by themselves among the nations of the earth a separate maintenance to which they conceived the laws of nature and of natures God entitled them. The results of the experiment are before us. We have a strong, popular, representative government—strong in the source of authority, which is the people—strong where that authority concentrates at the seat of government, and yet not oppressive or weak, or offensive in any point. The laws are so light that we need not realize that there are any laws until we violate them. So that with 120 years experience through which we have passed, we may say at this time that ours is such a government as constitutes the beacon light to all the others, showing the way out of the wilderness, out of barbaric rule, despotic sway and unprincipled oppression.

It is not to be inferred, from all this, that every nation under the sun, that all peoples in existence, having a like degree of education, intelligence, patriotism and determination, have reached like conditions. France, for instance, is one of the civilized and enlightened nations of the earth; but its history, even in modern times, is replete with epochs going to show that different results, with the same object in view, have been attained to those which awaited the efforts of the American revolutionists! In the infancy of this century, the controlling power in that nation was known as the Tribune, and was presumably the choice of the people. For a time, perhaps, it met with the views and fulfilled the objects of the people; but, as in other lands where schools are infrequent, where Sunday schools are almost unknown, and where evangelists, whether preaching correct doctrine or not, are treated like outcasts, and in some cases like felons; there was no restraining power, no intellectual pressure environment, the triumvirate, and under such circumstances it became just as despotic and much bloodier than the reign of any of the titled, absolute monarchs of history had been, and yet the men who composed the governing power were themselves accomplished, mild-mannered, experienced and able. It is recorded of one of them—Robespierre—that so sensitive, so human-like was he before attaining to power, that the spectacle of a person's nose bleeding, threw him into convulsions. How easily he overcame this is a matter which simply illustrates the adage, "that to embrace vice, we only need to become familiar with it." It was not long before the affairs of state, as presented to him, required a victim from among the populace; and, for the welfare of the state, he consented to the guillotine being put to use in order that the state might be preserved. It was shown that the ice once broken, the rest became easy; it was not so much a task to send the second victim to the guillotine; the third required very little effort, the fourth still less, and, perchance, we might say, the fifth none at all. This condition grew as any other vice does by what it