

but now that the village has grown to a populous city with its factories and workshops, its acres of tenement houses, and thousands and tens of thousands of restless workmen, foreigners for the most part, to whom liberty means license, and politics mean plunder, to whom the public good is nothing and their own most trivial interests everything, who love the country for what they can get out of it, and whose ears are open to the promptings of every rascally agitator, the case is completely changed, and universal suffrage becomes a questionable blessing.

A questionable blessing to himself and an unquestionable curse or burden to the nation it surely is to give a vote to a man who is both ignorant and the first principles of good government and by nature and education disloyal to all government. We have them here in our beloved country, thousands of them, tens of thousands—against all government, and we call them citizens and clothe them with power, and theirs is the dominion. It truly seems as though our people had made a fetish of universal suffrage.

During the entire history of our nation the tendency has been towards extension of the franchise, with hardly a single exception in the way of limiting it. Most of the States, and I think every one of the original thirteen, began with several limitations, among which was a property qualification. One by one these laws have been repealed, until in only six States is there any restriction of the franchise, except as to youth and sex, and time of residence in the country, State and precinct. The six exceptional States are Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Mississippi, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. In Delaware the qualifications of a voter are that he must have paid a poll tax and passed the age of twenty two years, in addition to being a citizen of the United States. In Florida one must have paid the tax for two years before he can vote. Connecticut and Massachusetts have an educational qualification. In Connecticut it is simply that the voter shall be able to read the Constitution of the United States, in Massachusetts he must do this and also be able to write, and must have paid the capitation tax for two years. In Mississippi the requirement is rather amusing; it is that the citizen proposing to vote shall be able to read or understand the Constitution. I have heard of a hunter who said that he so aimed his gun "to hit if it was a deer and to miss if it was a cow." The last clause of the Mississippi qualification is evidently intended to admit the citizen if he is our friend and to exclude him if he is our enemy. Rhode Island has a property qualification, the same that has been in her Constitution for more than a hundred years, and many thousands of her citizens are thereby disfranchised. The requirement is that one must own real estate to the value of \$134, or an annual rental value of \$7, before he can be allowed to vote. Very strenuous efforts have recently been made to repeal this law, but the smallest State in the Union, that begun by being the most radical and progressive, proves now to be the most conservative. Conservative, however, in this case with very good rea-

son the thoughtful man is apt to believe. With her limited area and great manufacturing cities, the land owners would be in a hopeless minority if all the factory workers were allowed to vote. The best citizens, those most interested in good government, are undoubtedly the native born, the agriculturists, and the owners of the factories and homes and house lots in the city. The government is in their hands; as things are why should they give into the hands of demagogues and ward politicians as they would do to repeal the law or amend the constitution so as to remove the property qualification, as to voting? In this matter of extending the privilege of the franchise the work is done once for all. There is no going backward, for no one will willingly relinquish a privilege and a power that he has once exercised. The constant widening of this privilege toward universal suffrage that has gone on during the entire history of our country, and not only here, but in most nations of the Old World as well, seems to have produced an almost universal conviction that the right to vote is one of man's natural and inalienable rights. This conviction, however, is one of these popular feelings that do not rest upon any solid basis of fact or philosophy. Equal rights for all is an excellent general idea, but in making any just application of it in a State, where men differ so profoundly as they do here, some regard should be had to character and condition. In the matter of the franchise, this principle has always been recognized. Paupers are usually forbidden to vote, and criminals in prison, children and imbecile and insane persons, and until recently and still in general, women. To recognize the ineligibility of any one of these classes is really to abandon the plea that the right to vote is a natural right.

The right of suffrage belongs with those upon whom rests the responsibility of upholding and maintaining the government. To make this clear think of some institution, corporation or society. Those who belong to the society, the members are the voters. If some members take more interest than others, put in more money, it is common to give them more power in the way of voting, to balance their greater interest and responsibility, and this is universally conceded to be just. A vote is an exercise of authority, and a right to it is derivable only from a measure of responsibility and interest. Now, our government is a society in which, while each citizen has a certain interest, some have naturally much more than others, and naturally must bear a greater responsibility. Where a man has no interest in the welfare of the nation, and feels none, he will feel no responsibility, and if a vote is allowed him he is apt to use it in some trivial and selfish way—apt to sell it, or give it as some friend shall dictate. There should be no hesitation in refusing the elective franchise to such as far as we can describe and distinguish them as a class.

But the greatest danger of all probably is the ignorant class. Good government in our day depends upon many other things besides good intentions. Commercial and economic

questions, that seem at first to have no morality or justice in them, are yet fraught with disaster and misery if not met and decided with adequate knowledge and wisdom. And yet in our way of voting the totally illiterate man exercises the same power as the college professor. There may be sound reason in giving every citizen a vote upon some questions, as, for example, for President of the United States or for governor, but that one who cannot read shall vote concerning all questions, or for men for all offices, seems an absurdity that ought to be remedied. But, as was said a little while ago, it will be difficult to apply the remedy in the way of disfranchising any man or class of men who have been accustomed to vote. The lower in the scale of humanity they are the more efficient would be their resistance to any such attempt, for purchasable votes belong to demagogues and lobbyists and unscrupulous politicians by a natural law, and these men wield influences than which none are more potent. It would seem that the only hope for the present is in the enfranchisement of women, not universally because they are women, nor because of their natural right to the ballot, but, as we are doing it, piecemeal, giving certain women the right to vote upon certain questions or in certain elections.

BOX ELDER STAKE CONFERENCE.

The quarterly conference of the 25th and 26th inst. was held in the Tabernacle, Brigham City. There were present on the stand Presidents W. Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, Lorenzo Snow, Seymour B. Young and the Presidency and High Council of the Stake. Three exceedingly crowded meetings were held.

In the forenoon meeting of the 25th, President R. Clawson reported the condition of the Stake. As a rule the Saints attended their meetings and endeavored to live their religion. They were prompt to respond to calls made upon them by their Bishops and Stake officers. But few causes of difficulty ever reached the High Council. These were met with a feeling of charity and love and settled in the true spirit of the Gospel.

President George Q. Cannon gave much fatherly counsel concerning the Teachers of the wards and the care of the poor. Employment should be furnished those who have none and words of encouragement and advice should be given to the weak. There is nothing on earth so profitable as to do good and serve God.

President Woodruff made the following remarks on Sunday afternoon: Referring to the Lesser Priesthood, he said that Presidents of Stakes and Bishops of wards should see to it that Teachers do their duty.

He often thought of the Scripture which says, among other things, "One is taken and the other is left." Here is your President, Brother Clawson, who was with Elder Standing in the midst of death—they were in the hands of wicked men, men who were full of the devil and of murder. Elder Standing was taken and Brother Clawson was left. He was preserved and today is your President. The hand of the Lord was in all this.

He spoke in reference to difficulties