

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

TAKING THE OATH.

A correspondent in one of the southern counties inquires how a citizen who has served a term for unlawful cohabitation and has not been pardoned can take the registration oath, which provides that he must swear he has not been convicted of the offense named. So far as the NEWS can see, he cannot take the general registration oath. To subscribe to it under the circumstances stated would be to commit perjury. Those who have served as the inquirer suggests, and who have not received executive clemency, are not entitled to register for general elections, as the law now stands.

From this, however, it must not be understood that a citizen in the situation described cannot register for the election of delegates to the constitutional convention. By the enabling act, passed in July last, it is provided that "all male citizens of the United States over the age of twenty-one years, who have resided in the Territory for the year next prior to such election, are hereby authorized to vote for and choose delegates to form a convention in said Territory. Such delegates shall possess the qualifications of such electors." This enactment, having been passed subsequent to any other statute on the subject of the qualifications of an elector or an official, supercedes all previous enactments as far as it goes. It fixes the qualifications of delegates to the constitutional convention and of those who shall elect them. And whether a person has been convicted of the offense named or not, he may vote for or be a delegate to the constitutional convention. Those persons who possess the qualifications prescribed for voters for delegates, also may vote on the ratification or rejection of the constitution which may be framed. With a thorough understanding of these conditions, the Utah Commission provided for an extra registration, formulating the oath which should be taken, and which covers every requirement of upholding the Constitution and laws, citizenship, age and residence. But for the general registration of electors in this Territory, and the qualifications of voters and officeholders outside of the special constitutional affairs, the law is unchanged, and the Edmunds-Tucker oath remains in full force as before. The Utah Commission has made no ruling or order conflicting with this statement of the case.

WHERE REFORM SHOULD BEGIN.

The NEWS at one time noticed the scheme of the Vienna philanthropist, Dr. Hertzka, to found a colony in Africa on communistic principles. Theoretically the plan seemed to be perfect, but when tested it proved to be a signal failure, as so many similar attempts have been, and the collapse of this Free Land colony gives the European press a text for various comments. The London Times says:

Spiteful fiction has never presented more moving tales of sordid strife and

tyrannical greed than may be found in the history of some of these well-meant fraternities. It is sad, but it is true, that the perfect commonwealth has never existed anywhere save in the pages of speculative romance. Emotional craving, however sincere, has never yet stood the test of the daily buffets of conjoint existence. Competition, the instinct of aggrandizement and acquisition—these may be very painful to those who dream dreams of human perfectibility, but as yet no one has invented any substitute for them as a source of social energy. Somehow or other the altruistic sentiment flourishes most when it has to play a part in diminishing the friction of individualist struggle. When virtue is placed in an atmosphere of its own, it sickens and becomes corrupted into frailties. Atlantis and Arcadia are delightful places in books, but they are not apparently habitable by ordinary human beings.

Other papers comment in a similar vein.

The subject is important enough to demand serious attention. No one can very well help noticing the fact that among the human family many are suffering from want and destitution, notwithstanding all their efforts to make life endurable; while others, some even without toiling, far surpass Solomon in some respects. The question is this: Is such a condition normal? Is it in accordance with the plans of the Creator, and consequently beyond remedy, as far as human devices go, or is it not rather a consequence of deviation from the original plan of God—something in itself wrong, and calling for a remedy? Dr. Hertzka, as so many of his predecessors, evidently takes the latter view, and if they all have failed, so far, in finding the right remedy, that fact does not warrant the conclusion that the evil must always remain. Some time the true cause will be understood and the proper treatment found.

When contemplating the wrongs and ills to which mankind are subject, the supposition is near at hand that they are all due to existing laws and customs. It would follow that with society reconstructed and governed by different legal codes the earth would be made a paradise. Thus reason not only anarchists and communists, but the various schools of socialists, and many other modern reformers. That the view taken is most superficial should need no argument. The fact is that the laws themselves are but an indication of the moral planes which mankind, in its various groups and families, have reached. Their defects have their cause in the very moral nature of man. Here, then, all effective reforms must commence. If mankind can be educated so as to make a Utopian state possible, the laws necessary to regulate such a state will follow naturally. But to commence the reform by changing the laws, and leaving all the instincts of the lower nature as they are, is a vain labor. It is tearing the tops of the weeds off and leaving the roots in the ground, and the result will be very much the same. The garden may look well for a short time, but soon the same weeds will be seen more flourishing than ever.

As in the construction of a building the quality of the material is as essential as the correctness of the architectural plan, so the excellence of the moral qualities of the citizens in a Utopia is a factor more important even than the laws thereof. Any reformer who neglects to consider this fact is doomed to disappointment beforehand.

The greatest Reformer who ever lived on earth recognized this important principle. The teachings of the great Nazarene, when carried out to their consequences—as they are destined to be—necessarily lead to a universal brotherhood, governed by love, that mighty force, of which the Almighty Creator is said to be the source. Yet He formed no political state, gave no social laws. Taking mankind as it was, He taught and exemplified in His life those doctrines by which individual "regeneration" is to be effected, well knowing that without that, social reconstruction is impossible. His followers did the same—and in so far as they succeeded in "dying from the world," as the phrase was, living a "new life," consecrated to the cause of man and of God, they proved that the possibilities of a Millennium are within the human nature.

They never dreamed of a condition, however, in which everybody should be in every respect equal to everybody else. Differences there are and must always be. What they aimed at was that while each one had to "bear his own burden," yet the "strong" should assist the "weak," thus equalizing the work under which now so many suffer and perish. In other words, Christianity as taught by Christ and as understood by His immediate followers as well by His Church in this age, aims at a condition among men in which every individual lives no longer for his own selfish interests and purposes, but for the benefit of his fellowmen, so that whatever may be his intellectual powers, acquirements, gifts and graces they will be exercised for the good of all, and it seeks to gain this great end by that regenerating process—to use the theological term—by which man is made, as it were, a new creature.

In the meantime, the many attempts by philanthropists to reach the same goal prove the need of just this. Even the failures are necessary to give a true understanding of the vastness of the undertaking, and there is reason for the hope that mankind will at last realize that only in the Gospel is to be found the effectual remedy for all its sufferings.

NOT THE MORMONS' FAULT.

The Free Methodists have been holding a convention in Denver this week, and reporting their year's labors in the West. The gentleman representing Utah is Mr. Wheelon, and the denomination has two churches in this Territory, one in Salt Lake and the other in Ogden. His report to his conference is thus given in the Denver News:

One unassuming young man, G. W. Wheelon, told a quiet but impressive tale of a year's work in Utah. He and his wife had gone there strangers, and had found just thirteen Free Methodists in