

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### INCONVENIENT POLLING PLACES.

The action of the school board in selecting locations for polling places is being severely criticised, on the ground that the locations, or some of them at least, are not anywhere near the center of the municipal ward, and consequently are not of convenient access to the voters. The First and Fourth wards are complaining a good deal on this score. The polling place of the First is located in the Ricketts block, near the corner of State and Third South streets, and just about as far distant from the geographical center of the ward as it would be possible to get. In order to vote, some of the residents of that ward will be obliged to travel about three miles or more.

The Fourth ward has not so flagrant a cause of complaint as this, but certainly no amount of talk can put Taggart's hall anywhere near its geographical center; and if the center of population is to be considered, the selection of that building as a polling place is still more open to criticism. It would hardly do to hint that the school board has arranged with some shoe house for a "rake off" in consideration of the shoe leather that is to be worn out on election day; nor is it a tenable theory that any arrangement has been made with the street railways or livery stables, for "divvy" of fares; but the existing facts suggest a motive of some sort, and there is some curiosity to fathom it. Perhaps it was economy. Maybe the Ricketts block could be rented cheaper than a building farther out from the business center, say in the Ninth or Tenth Bishop's ward. Possibly a similar desire to save the people's money led to the selection of Taggart's hall. But this economy, if it is such, is accompanied by the fact that a very large percentage of the vote will not be cast. This is particularly true of the woman vote. Hence the location of the polling places will keep away from them a great many voters.

Any arrangement connected with an election which is calculated to prevent voters in considerable numbers from coming to the polls, or from casting their ballots, ought always to be avoided. It has a suspicious look, is certain to be criticised, and is an injustice to the people which they are very likely to resent; for they are entitled to have their reasonable convenience consulted in the matter of locating polling places and all similar features of an election. Probably no improper motive influenced the selection of polling places in this instance, but that some of them are very inconvenient cannot be denied.

### GROSS MISREPRESENTATION.

Let us suppose A. to be a citizen of most exemplary traits and character; B. is a person who owes him a grudge and does not scruple at any means of venting his spite, while C. is an acquaintance of both who is looking for A. on a matter of business. C. meets B. and asks: "Have you seen A. today?" "Yes," answers B., "I saw him a short time ago, walking on the street by the side of a thief." What B. says is true, but he omits to explain that A. and the thief merely happened to come together on the street, and

that they were total strangers to each other. By this omission he leaves the impression that an honorable man is an associate of thieves, yet utters no word that is not literally true.

It is by telling the truth in this way that the grossest misrepresentations and vilest slanders are perpetrated; for falsehoods which are such literally and technically, are far less difficult to refute than are those which embrace an element of truth viciously perverted.

Yesterday morning, under a scare head, "Elders are at Work," the Democratic organ has an account of an occurrence, said to have taken place last Sunday evening, and in the narrative there is a strained effort to make it appear that home missionaries of the Salt Lake Stake of Zion are working in their ecclesiastical capacity to secure the appointment of Arthur Pratt as chief of police of this city. It is stated that a "councilman," evidently meaning a councilman-elect, attended the usual Sabbath evening service in his ward "and that the sermon was such that he derived considerable consolation therefrom. But after the meeting one of the speakers (a home missionary) came down from the stand and chased him away off into the vacant lots and proceeded to deliver another discourse to him on the perversity of voting against the confirmation of Mr. Pratt, declaring that Arthur was just the man for the place, etc."

The councilman-elect is represented as having stated to the home missionary "that his politics and his religion were not mixed to any great extent and that he would vote for whom he pleased as a candidate for chief of police," etc. The Democratic organ states that the facts comprising the incident were related by the official concerned, and adds the following portentous statement:

"It comes to the Herald that this is not the only case of this kind; that there are others, and that several high officials of the dominant church are interesting themselves in the confirmation of Mr. Pratt for the place."

And what of all this? Supposing it to be true that an American citizen residing in this city happens to be a home missionary of the Mormon church, and at the same time to be interested in the candidacy of a certain man for a certain position; and suppose that this American citizen, after service on a Sunday evening speaks to a member-elect of the City Council in regard to the matter; what of it? Has any law been violated? Have any man's rights been infringed? Is there any law, human or divine, statutory or common, religious, moral or ethical, that forbids a home missionary of the Mormon Church, or of any other church, to privately converse with an official elected by all the people. In regard to an appointment to office? Is the Democratic organ in favor of the establishment of a law or rule under which home missionaries will not be permitted to do such a thing as this? Would not such a law or rule be fatal to the personal liberty that is the dearest heritage of an American citizen? If the workers in the churches are to be barred from the privileges of citizenship, and from exerting an influence in politics, will not the best elements in society be eliminated from government? Is it not the cry in every city and state in the Union that church workers and similar classes of society do not take enough interest in politics?

The Democratic organ's own statement of the home missionary incident, when closely read apart from its headlines, shows that no "Church influence" was used. The matter of appointment to office was not referred to during the services, but in a private, personal interview which took place after the service was over; and the significance and character sought to be given to that interview amount to gross misrepresentation, which admits of neither palliation nor excuse.

The Democratic organ's fling at the "high officials of the Church," conveys the distinct impression that if that paper could have its way those "high officials" would be stripped of the dearest rights of American citizenship, and prohibited from exercising any voice or influence in the government of the city and commonwealth they helped to found and have done so much to build up. When the tyranny and bigotry of some of the political organs in this State are compared with the system of rule prevailing in the Ottoman empire, credit is reflected on the Turk.

The Democratic organ has a habit of speaking of any participation in political matters by prominent members of the Mormon Church in a slurring way, which is intended to convey the impression that they are doing something very wrong if not downright criminal. Sometimes its statements are technically true in letter while being untrue and vicious in spirit, and sometimes downright misstatements of fact are resorted to for the purpose of heightening the effect. It remains to be seen whether its policy in this regard and in favor of the practical disfranchisement of honest, able and intelligent citizens because they hold ecclesiastical positions, will redound to the permanent benefit of the cause in which such efforts are put forth.

### IF HE IS INNOCENT.

It would be a lesson to the country should it finally turn out that Theodore Durrant is innocent of the murder for which he has been condemned to death, and if that were proven beyond a doubt. The written confession of Forbes, or Blather, before he committed suicide, to the effect that he, Forbes, was the murderer of Blanche Lamont and Minnie Williams is corroborated by the statement of Mrs. Forbes that she often heard her husband mention the Emanuel church horror in such a way as to lead her to suppose he knew more of it than anybody else. And then at least one of the prison wardens is said to believe in the innocence of Durrant, a fact not insignificant, since those who are often brought in contact with criminals sometimes acquire the ability of intuitively knowing one when they see him. Besides, the manner in which the condemned man received the notice that the execution of the death sentence had been again postponed indicated that he is either a man full of faith and confidence in God, a veritable hero, or else the greatest hypocrite of the present century. His seemingly saintly bearing under the ordeal can be explained on no other supposition.

Of course, those who have tried the case are slow to admit even the possibility of his innocence. The evidence against him, although purely circumstantial, seemed to be conclusive. But a change in the public opinion as to Durrant appears to be coming, and probably this opinion will demand a thorough investigation of Blather's alleged confession. And in case that should be deemed authentic, Durrant's history may effectually silence the