

the people were gradually becoming educated by the growth of democratic ideas. They once had the idea that the few should rule. They were with difficulty convinced that a somewhat larger number should rule, or should have some say in the manner in which they should be governed. They are not yet aware of the fact that they are only servants of the people and that the phrase "sovereign people" is one of real significance. The so-called governing classes are to some extent under the influence of the idea which in recent years we have been condemning as Prussian—the idea of State-worship. In this kind of worship they regard themselves as high-priests of the temple.

Until very recent years women were excluded from the franchise. When Parliament gives them the franchise, it does not bestow a favor, nor does it merely acknowledge that women have prepared themselves for the franchise and are now capable of exercising it, of doing what they were not qualified to do ten years ago. What the Parliament of today does, is to confess that its predecessors were wrong. It is not that women have improved and become educated and qualified for the exercise of the franchise. It is that Parliament itself has become educated, and has perceived and confessed that the exclusion of women from the franchise was wrong.

The great principle underlying the present franchise law is that all men and women shall vote—that the basis of the franchise shall be humanity. Still there are members and members of Parliament who cling to the notion that they are dispensing a sort of charity when they allow men and women to vote—that they are political almsgivers—that they have the right to pick and choose and say who is to vote and who is not to vote. The pretension is all the more ridiculous when it is remembered that the present Government and the members of Parliament upon whose support it relies are mere usurpers, who in a fair and democratic election would be shorn of their power by the voice of the people.

The franchise law contains a lot of pedantic rubbish about "aliens," which the Liberals and other progressive members of the House have tried to clear away. The House of Commons, not as a despotic ruler, but as a trustee for the people, may have a right to associate good citizenship with the franchise. Good citizenship is not a matter of race or birth. It is a matter of conduct. It is a