

President Wilson's Mistake.

Every day adds to the magnitude of the President's mistake in his treatment of the women who called upon him in behalf of the suffrage movement. It was not in keeping with his high ideals, nor in harmony with the political wisdom he has shown, to dodge or evade so plain an issue. We can accept his action as a frailty that marks him as human, but it is strangely inconsistent with the great achievements that have signalized his course. Woman's right to the ballot has long ceased to be a debatable question. It is now merely a question of how long it will take the conservative mind to grasp an axiomatic truth. That the President's declaration that the suffrage is a state issue does not mean that he is opposed to the suffrage itself, may be taken for granted; but he should have declared himself in no equivocal terms. It has taken some of the Democratic statesmen an unconscionable time to arrive at the simple truth that their wives are entitled to the same rights as themselves. Time passes; the world moves forward. It is no longer a question of whether the women will have votes, but which party will get them.

S. C.

Cincinnati's Charter Fight.

Cincinnati has just voted down a new charter containing many excellent provisions, the need of which in the city's government has long been felt. At first glance it would thus seem that the voters made a mistake. But closer investigation will make matters appear differently, for in the one thing that made the charter chiefly desirable it was defective, and was deliberately made so by the charter framers. It was so drawn that it would have given the city all the superficial reforms that good government advocates usually demand, while provisions regarding more important matters—such as municipal ownership—were so drawn as to make unavoidable the conclusion that deception was intended.

The new charter movement was the outcome of the fight led by Herbert S. Bigelow for municipal ownership. But when it came to electing a charter commission the successful candidates were the favored ones of local monopolistic interests. These candidates in order to draw support from their opponents, on what was known as the Bigelow ticket, had claimed to be also in favor of municipal ownership. They kept their pledge by putting in the charter a municipal ownership provision, and

then made it unworkable by tacking on a requirement for a two-thirds vote to put it in effect. The tricky nature of this paragraph did not only consist in the blocking of municipal ownership, but in a chance it gave to the traction company to escape an awkward provision of its franchise. This franchise allows a revision of street railway fares in 1916, and until that year has been safely passed the company's position will be a somewhat uncomfortable one. The unworkable municipal ownership provision would have offered a good opportunity to divert the voters until the danger of a radical downward revision of fares had passed. In rejecting the charter this trick was blocked.

There is a lesson in this for other cities than Cincinnati which suffer from inefficient government. In this case the original mistake was made in electing as charter commissioners the choice of monopolistic corporations. The pledges of such candidates in favor of municipal ownership should not be considered. Had the so-called Bigelow ticket been elected, the candidates on which stood sincerely for municipal ownership, as well as for minor reforms—a charter would have been framed free from jokers and other suspicious features. Such a charter would probably have been bitterly opposed by predatory interests, but it would have received more than half hearted support from fundamental reformers, and this would probably have carried it to victory. But even defeat under such circumstances would have been honorable. As it is, the rejection of the charter means only condemnation of a disgraceful attempt at deception.

S. D.

Sweet Reasonableness.

Before the editorial on letters to the editor, in last week's issue could reach its readers, two letters were received that offer too good a contrast to be overlooked. The first was written on the shores of the Pacific, where freedom and liberality are supposed to have achieved their greatest triumphs. The writer peremptorily orders his Public stopped, without waiting for the date of expiration of the subscription. And to make the emphasis still stronger he announces that he has been a reader of *The Public* since its first issue. "On page 578," says the writer, "Woman's Emancipation, second paragraph, you mention priestcraft. This is not the first time in a roundabout way, *The Public* has tried to insult every Catholic reader of the paper." The objectionable word occurred in the sentence: "Emancipation is the everlasting cry of the soul