

American Citizenship.

As the United States has just opened to the world the Columbian Exposition in honor of the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus, it seems fitting that something might be said at this time about the state of American citizenship as it exists in the United States.

The fourteenth amendment to the constitution of the United States declares: that "All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States, and of the states wherein they reside," and taking this as a basis Judge T. M. Cooley says: "A citizen in the full acceptation of that term may be said to be a member of the civil State, entitled to all its privileges." Just what these privileges are, no one has ever attempted to decide; but Justice Washington, however, designated about fifteen as general heads under which he thought all might be grouped. The most important of which are "Protection by the government; the right to enjoy life and liberty with the right to acquire, possess, and dispose of property of every

kind; the right to pass through or reside in another state for purposes of trade, agriculture, or professional pursuits or otherwise; the right to institute and maintain legal actions of every kind, and to claim the writ of habeas corpus."

American citizenship has lost some of that honesty and purity that pre-eminently marked it one hundred years ago. Think you our Revolutionary fore-fathers would have undergone the perils and privations of a seven year's war had they not had vital principles at stake? They were Americans in the full sense of the word. They were striving for truth and right and believing that "Truth crushed to earth would rise again," kept struggling on until Truth did "rise again" - a Phoenix from the dreary waste of war and desolation. "A government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

Of late years America has been the dumping ground of all nations for the vile and ignorant, the social and moral outcasts; the pauper and criminal - the lowest dregs of their society. These people come here with their vague, visionary forms of government

clothed with socialism and anarchy, and are determined to maintain and perpetuate them whether or no. The hangman's noose, or death in any other form is the making of martyrs of them in the eyes of their fellows. Take the Hay-market Riot in Chicago for example. With such a class flocking to our shores by thousands, is it any wonder that vice, crime, and moral depravity are on the increase?

In order to carry their fiendish work still further, and affect the very root of our government itself, these foreigners only have to declare their intention to become citizens, and they are entitled to suffrage - to say what kind of laws we shall have, and how Americans shall be governed. When these people with all their vice, crime, moral depravity, and ignorance of all forms of good government, enter the political arena, is it any wonder that the American ballot has been degraded? These people care no more for our good laws than they do for the principles of science which rendered their exit from home possible. All they want is their own personal aggrandizement, and the "Almighty dollar." The wily demagogue

is in his glory here, and the outcome is that an honest ballot and a fair court is only a phantom in many of our large cities. This ought not to be the case. American politics should be pure and clean. Honest politics is a necessity in a representative government. American citizenship can never be perfect while this corruption lasts.

It is true that not all who come to our shores belong to this detestable class. There are many who come from a love of freedom, and to get a home where they can live, - not merely eke out a miserable existence. We feel pleased that we can confer the right of citizenship on these. From such immigrants we need have no fears; they take up our manners and customs and make good, honest American citizens.

The foundation of true citizenship is loyalty. The love of country should so intermingle our being that no privation would be counted dear, no sacrifice deemed too great if it will but add luster to his country's fame. The citizen should be ready at all times to respond to his country's aid. His country's life should be first, his own second.

Love of American principles should be, next to his God the American's highest object of worship and adoration. To be called an American citizen should make his proud heart swell with gratitude to his God, for who is the equal of an American.

Sterling integrity should be a chief character; industry, thrift, and enterprise should be dominant factors; uprightness of character and sound judgment should be a sign; but education of his three natures - physical intellectual and spiritual - should be a positive proof of American citizenship. Then can it truly be said we are a christian people.

The question naturally arise, if our citizenship is not as pure and dignified as it should be, how are we to obtain that coveted state. I would reply there is probably no one remedy, but there are several which, if taken together would bring about the desired result.

I would begin with agitation. Keep the condition of things before the people. The public mind needs to be thoroughly aroused to the situation. Once aroused, the people will arise in their

dignity as Americans, and as one man, with a mighty stroke sweep the mischief-maker, together with his corruption and vice into eternal oblivion.

Public moral sentiment is a point to be agitated. While the American born citizen does not always live strictly morally right, the percentage of vice is much lower among them than among our imported citizens, and I verily believe if this latter class were done away with entirely the percentage of crime would fall to almost nothing. I believe that if the people of the United States could be made to realize that the low tone of morality is due almost wholly to the motley horde of foreigners who are, and have been for years seeking our shores, they would enact such stringent legislation as would clear our shores of this detestable class.

This done it would leave the corruption in our political system to tumble down, and our enlightened citizens would soon renovate the whole political circle, and thus establish clean pure honest politics. Then would good men fill our offices. Efficient legislation would ensue which would give such an impetus in

The upward, onward march of citizenship, that a peace and quiet happiness would ensue such as this country has never known.

Another factor that should be at work with this agitation of moral sentiment, is restricted immigration. We need better immigration laws. The old laws are full of loopholes through which the wily immigrant may enter the country. The United States is today the strongest and most respected nation on the globe. She can say to John Chinaman, "You can come no more," and he obeys. Is there any reason then, why she cannot say the same to any other detestable class of people that insists on coming to our shores. There is none. We now have a population of about sixty-four millions, and yet there is room for more who actually want homes and are willing to be good, peaceful, law-abiding citizens, but we have none for anarchists, socialists, paupers, and tramps. We want America for Americans.

To effect this restriction I would propose the following plan: Determine a standard. Then hold every steamship company criminally liable for each immigrant they bring over

who falls below it. Let the deserving alien who wants to be a citizen of our country, (for we want none who are not to become citizens) go to the American Minister or Consul in his native country, and there establish his character as an industrious, peaceful, moral man, with a certain amount of education and money. We want neither ignoramuses nor paupers. It is true that the cost of extra clerks in some countries would be considerable, but this would be more than compensated for by having a less number of charitable institutions, police courts, judges, lawyers, jails and penitentiaries. This plan would, I believe, if carried out, save us from a vast amount of evil tendencies; and left to ourselves, we could soon clean up things at home, and our citizenship would then have a chance to renovate itself and return to its original purity.

Carrying the matter still further, I would make the tests for obtaining the right more severe. Require a definite knowledge of our constitution, and a certain amount of general knowledge regarding our American principles, of

the would-be American. This would cause them to study our customs, so that when they were made citizens they would be educated citizens and capable of participating in our government.

As it now is, the distinction between alien and citizen is not very marked. It is true that a state cannot grant the former the privileges of a citizen of the United States, yet when they allow them to reside within their limits, carry on trade, grant them protection by their laws, allow them to hold and transmit property, and as is the case in about one-fourth ^{the} allow them to exercise the right of franchise, thereby making eligible to be a national elector, and thus decide the policy of our government towards their own and all other countries, while they as yet do not belong to this country, and care little or nothing what becomes of it so long as they prosper, I say the line between citizens and aliens is only theoretical.

Still another thing that I would have at work in this remodeling of citizenship is the enactment and enforcement of better school laws. Educated citizenship is the highest type. It is among the ignorant classes that lawlessness prevails. History reveals the fact that

As man becomes educated and enlightened, vice becomes less, and prosperity increased.

Education is the safeguard of the nation. The boy is father of the man. Educate the child so when he arrives at his majority he will be competent to help participate in the management of our government. If his education has been thorough his citizenship will be all that can be desired. He will love peace; he will be honest and true, patriotic and devoted. Then will American citizenship stand a worthy example for the world to follow; then will the purification of politics be no longer an iridescent dream; then will the citizen's highest aim be to promote the best interests of his country; then will the United States stand a living monument to the world that popular republican government is a success and shall not perish from the earth; then will the world join us in one grand chorus which shall fill the vaulted heavens and reverberate till time shall be no more.

"My country 'tis of thee
Sweet land of liberty
Land where my fathers died
Land of the Pilgrim's pride
From every mountain side
Let freedom ring -

W. O. Lyman