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The Citizen Who Neglects to Vote

THE Man who fails to vote oftentimes finds himself in a shameful—or is it shameless—majority.

The man who became a citizen because he did not die before he reached the age of twenty-one years, or because he complied with the requirements and actually swore allegiance, who has to be towed and tolled in to the polls, casts a thin shadow as an American, and he should be made to understand this.

LITTLE ATTENTION TO SCHOOLS.

At the weekly Portland Press Club luncheon last week Mr. F. W. Woodward made the statement that at the school elections in the city of Portland, with more than one hundred thousand votes, only about five thousand were cast, and sooner or later the American public must come to understand that the offices connected with the schools are the most important in the nation.

But it is not only the school elections that are neglected when the time comes to register the decision of the sovereign elector. The giant Indifference has been responsible for many of the evil practices that have given to politics the reputation of being rotten. Men who have held themselves righteously aloof, as well as the ignorant and incompetent, must bear the burden of just blame.

AN EXAMPLE FROM OHIO.

A few years ago in the proud state of Ohio, "Mother of Presidents," as she has been called, and martyred presidents, a shake-up in the single county of Adams, probably so named in honor of the second president, nearly two thousand citizens were convicted of having sold their votes and were disfranchised for varying periods or fined in various sums of money. Probably very few had bartered their votes out right, but they had contracted the habit of demanding that they be paid for the time lost in going to polls to cast their ballot, and the standard of remuneration for this loss of time was two pieces of silver stamped with the presentment of the Goddess of Liberty, and bearing the legend "One Dollar; In God We Trust."

These people of the proud Buckeye State were not of any foreign race or class not understanding the gravity of the crime of vote bartering such as the haughty native son has often characterized as "voting cattle," nor were they of the "poor white trash" in need of a pittance to keep soul and body together. They were not "gutter snipes" of the city "gang" nor even a "floating population." They were the average of the great state of Ohio, which ranks well toward the head in political importance, as well as in the intelligence and

culture of citizenship among the states of the Union. They were farmers, artisans and professional men as well as common laborers in all the various lines of industry.

They did not get much for their votes—hardly the value of a mess of pottage—two dollars, five dollars, and occasionally now and then, according to the testimony of witness in court, there were those who held an exceptionally high valuation on their votes, demanding and receiving ten dollars. The bargains were freely made and presumably, in most cases, the goods were delivered according to contract and specifications. This is not promiscuous assertion. It is the sum and substance of court record in the county and state named. No particular party or organization was blamed, one apparently being as deep in the mire as was the other in the mud. It was merely a practice which had existed in a lesser degree in many localities throughout the country, and it was the legitimate offspring of the giant Indifference.

A FIELD FOR SERMONIZING.

A long sermon might here be interjected on how the patriots of the War of the Revolution resisted taxation without representation as tyranny, and how many laid down their lives for the principle; how they were joined by men from across the briny deep who sacrificed much to aid the cause; how a little more than a century later there was found whole communities who valued the rights and privileges secured to them by their grandfathers, through paying the price in blood, so lightly as to toss them off for a few pennies to the highest bidder; men who held so little regard for the sanctity of the ballot, constituting the crown and scepter of the sovereign elector as to do worse than toss it into the ditch—deliberately barter it for a paltry two dollars; how the Goddess of Liberty Enlightening the World, weeping at the sight of the products of anarchy and tyranny invading these hospitable shores to propagate their destructive doctrine, might well pause to drop a few salt tears at the spectacle of the seeming loss of all sense of responsibilities of citizenship. There is substance for a long sermon for the citizen to take to heart. All this may not shock the faith of those who firmly believe in the American form of Democracy, but it furnishes material for the cynic, the skeptic and the imperialist who hold with Cowper that the age of virtuous politics is past.

The fires of patriotism do not feed themselves. They must be tended lest they die. Youth must be stirred with the hope, the recompense and the necessity of living to

be brave and worthy successors of their illustrious forebears—knights of that true Democracy which is a leveling upward and not a leveling downward. There must be implanted in the heart of the child the seeds of thought which shall arrest the attention of youth and hold fast the man.

A FIELD FOR IMPROVEMENT.

Our educational theories, on paper and in text-books have been pronounced almost perfect. Why should they fail in actual operation? Like a great machine with the material of thought the crank turns, the wheels revolve and the world is a-buzz with the noise and the work, but the finished product of all this energy is only in occasional instances an educationally well-equipped man or woman, ready to take a creditable part in life's great drama.

The most difficult problem confronting the giant industrial enterprises of the day is to secure competent and reliable men to fill the numerous and various positions opened by the wonderful development of the past few years. The system of unionism is inadequate and the capacity of the few training schools is insufficient. The day needs men who measure up strong. It needs women with minds broad enough to think and hearts large enough to love. It needs fatherhood that will not flinch in the face of duty and motherhood with understanding mother-heart that can reach out and embrace straying childhood. The electorate of the state is asked to express itself on a return to capital punishment as a crime deterrent. In the midst of education ignorance leers, vice laughs and sensualism thrives, not because of education, but in spite of it. When we consider our schools in their lower grades, our kindergartens and primary schools, and we may as well include Sunday schools, take the infant mind before the tendency to vice has chance for development, and that the next higher grades take them on through successive years, without being able to prevent the results evidenced in the courts, the question naturally arises: What is wrong and where is it? The system may be ideal and it may fit well into ideal conditions, but somehow or other it does not function with ideal results. There is a fundamental part missing—a lack which begins at the basis of our so-called intelligent discipline which runs through the whole in a constantly increasing ratio. Brain is stimulated but heart and soul are left to grasp thistles for nourishment and to develop hideous disfigurements.

There is place on the school boards for the highest order of intelligence—even for genius, but it is not attracted. The office