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SHIFTING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY FROM THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE STATE

THE INDIVIDUAL irresponsibility and modern tendency to shift the civic burden of citizenship from the shoulders of the individual citizen to the state and the community, is directly responsible for the many failures in political government and the dangerous swinging of the pendulum in the wrong direction. As a direct result many of the European nations are now in the narrows of swiftly changing mental currents. The civic stability that is based upon individual responsibility has lost much of its hold on public confidence, and state responsibility, under rigid rules of dictatorship in one form or another, is receiving considerable attention as a preferable alternative. Unconsciously America is dealing with this problem, more in fact than in name. The American home life today is not the American home life of yesterday. The answer may be found in our enormous child delinquency, a problem that is growing more complex every year.

The parents of today are frequently so busy with group activities for civic improvements and betterment and so heavily taxed with business, social work and pleasure hunting, that their children are left largely to shift for themselves. Parents who indulge in business or pastime pursuits to the extent that they neglect their duties toward their children and fail to care for their moral and spiritual needs, should find little relief in the thought that if their children chance to stray into wayward paths, the uplift agencies which they have helped to set up and so generously sustained, will step in to correct their erring progeny, under state supervision and state control. But there ought to be a pang of remorse at the thought that their parental deficiency and civic delinquency is a contributing factor in breaking down the chief American institution in training for individual responsibility and self-government—the American home.

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