

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AMERICAN?

By Roselle Mercier Montgomery

This little interpretation of what it means to be an American was read before the Manhattan Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution on the twenty-fifth anniversary of its founding. — The Editor.

What does it mean to be American?
Around a foreign group the question ran —
I strive to answer it as best I can!

What does it mean? I look across the years . . .
I see them come — but through a mist of tears —
Our gallant forbears, full of hopes and fears!

I see them leave behind for conscience' sake,
The homes they loved, the ties so hard to break —
Their questing, wondering westward way to take.

I see them face and fight the wilderness,
Undaunted by its dangers, its duress,
And from its wildness wrest and win success.

I see them take their living from the soil —
The men and women joined in homely toil —
Where they then planted, now our heart-roots coil!

I see them build their homes, their house of prayer,
And when its bell rings out upon the air
I see them kneel in simple worship there!

I hear the drums of War's alarum beat,
I see them seize their arms, rise to their feet,
Their enemies — and Liberty's — to meet!

I see them face and conquer every foe,
I see great cities rise, a nation grow,
To whose broad breast Earth's eager pilgrims go!

To be American — is to be one
In whom these brave inheritances run —
A worthy daughter, or a noble son!

And ye, who seek America today,
To succor you, to wipe your tears away,
Must come as they came, in that older day!

Their questing made a noble pilgrimage,
Their daring wrote a bright, illumined page —
Their dreaming is our country's heritage!

New pilgrims from the lands beyond the sea,
If true Americans you wish to be,
Take them to be your patterns, reverently.

Forget the Old World wrongs and tyranny,
Reject the new, base use of Liberty —
Read well the page they wrote in history!

Each tablet and each monument mark well
That we, remembering, have raised to tell
How they were victor here — how there, they fell!

Bow your uncovered heads in reverence deep
Beside the honored places where they sleep —
The memory of their deeds forever keep!

Learn to respect, all ye who cannot share
The brave inheritance we proudly wear
As heirs of those who lie so silent there!
They dreamed and dared — and died,
When need arose.
In true Americans their red blood flows!
Who fail to honor it, we call — our country's foes!

Around a foreign group the question ran:
What does it mean to be American?
And I have answered it as best I can.

FATHER

By Edgar A. Guest

I used to wonder just why father
Never had much time for play.
I used to wonder why he'd rather
Work every minute of the day.
I used to wonder why he never
Loafed along the road an' shirked;
I can't recall a time whenever
Father played while others worked.

My father didn't dress in fashion,
Sort of hated clothing new,
The style with him was not a passion,
He had other things in view.
For boys are blind to much that's going
On about 'em day by day.
And then I had no way of knowing
What became of father's pay.

For all I knew was when I needed
Shoes I got 'em on the spot;
And everything for which I pleaded
Somehow father always got.
I wondered, season after season,
Why he never took a rest,
And that I might be the reason
Then I never even guessed.

I saw his cheeks were getting paler,
Didn't understand just why.
I saw his body growing frailer,
Then at last I saw him die.
The rest had come. His tasks were ended,
Calm was written on his brow:
My Father's life was big and splendid.
And I understand it clearly now.

Employer: "Don't you bother your head about fame, Pat. It rarely comes to any of us until after we are dead."
Pat: "Faix, an' o'im willing to shtay here and wait for it."

Uncle: "If you are good, Charlie, I'll give you this nice bright new penny."
Nephew: "Haven't you got a dirty old nickle instead?"

A NEW LINE

"Do you suppose hardware stores could sell golf suits and motor togs?"
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