

## BECOMING A CITIZEN

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men. The working men and the poorer farmers had little influence and power. In most countries they could not vote and even where they could, their use of the franchise was much limited. The colonists of America, having won by force of arms their independence, were determined that such a condition should never come to hold in this country. Hence there had grown up a strong belief that the executive power of government should be much restricted and that the people should be expected and prepared to practice a large measure of self-government. Another condition contributing to the common belief in the right of the individual to a large measure of self-government, was the isolation of the colonies and their people. Consequently the various settlements had always governed themselves and their people felt no need for a strong central ruling power. Because of these two beliefs,— (1) the dread of a strong central government and (2) the intense self-reliance of the people, there arose in the Constitutional Convention a bitter contest between the individualists, led by Jefferson, and the believers in a strong executive power, led by Hamilton. This dispute finally resulted in a compromise by means of which the power of the president and the duration of his service were very definitely limited and with these limitations on the power of the president the government was organized. Since that time, however, as the country has settled up and communities have come to rely more and more on each other, the power of the executive has greatly increased, until today we find generally a strong belief that if we are to have an efficient government, it must be by giving to the president a very great measure of power. Hence President Coolidge today exercises vastly greater power than did Washington. As a manifestation of the tendency to increase executive power, we find in many cities the establishment of commission and city manager governments, types of rule which are much more like those favored by Hamilton than those favored by Jefferson. Despite this tendency, I believe we may still safely say that the right of every individual citizen to a large degree of self-choice and self-government is an important American fundamental idea.

A sixth fundamental idea is that of representative democracy. In such a government there is rule by representatives chosen by the people because of superior ability and experience. This is the type of government the makers of our Constitution meant us to have. We find, tho, of recent years, that there has grown up a strong tendency to place more of the governing power in the hands of the people. This has manifested itself in the enactment of laws providing for the initiative, the referendum and the recall. Oregon was the pioneer state in this movement, a movement which has spread pretty generally over the country and which has led to a considerable use of these devices. There are indications however, today, of dissatisfaction with them because they have not always worked satisfactorily, and out of this dissatisfaction a growing movement of many thinking people to restrict greatly their use. These people argue that the representative democracy idea of the builders of

our government is best. Personally, I am inclined to believe that they are right. If wise, good, loyal men and women could be persuaded to stand for the offices and if citizens would support no one who is not of such character, the representative democracy form of government would undoubtedly give us better, fairer government than any other form.

A seventh fundamental idea is the separation of the powers of government into separate, clearly defined departments. I have written before of the fear that these revolutionary patriots had of vesting too much power in the hands of the rulers. Hence the three functions of government were placed in the hands of different officers and a series of checks upon the power of every officer established.

Based upon such fundamental principles, our government was built and for nearly one hundred and forty years has endured and has grown in prestige and power. Surely we have passed the experimental stage and can sincerely say to our European friends that these fundamental ideas are safe and sound stones upon which to build an enduring and efficient government.

## GOOD CHEER

Philadelphia Ledger

PEOPLE SOON tire of being uplifted, as they grow weary of standing on tip-toe. When a man is left contemplating the drab routine of life once more after a vision on the mountain top he must make the inspiration he receives in one crowded, glorious hour serve him for many working days. He cannot soon expect the electrification and the excitement to return.

But the plain and homely virtue of good cheer will companion every day if we permit, and if it does not lift us to dizzy and exhilarating heights, neither does it let us sag way down to the very nadir of depression after we have soared to the zenith of delight.

Good cheer is a simple thing. It is not a costly program of entertainment and it runs up no big bills in a playhouse or a ballroom. It is a game which any one can play, needing no expensive outfit. It can take place within the confines of a sickroom; it can even go on in one's own mind. The best thing about the game is the benefit to the spectators. So many sports are good for the players and none besides. But this one helps and lifts all within a striking radius of the genial disposition.

Fortunately, good cheer is incurable. Its germs find lodgment and are scattered like motes of the sunbeam's morning gold. Laughter is a bid for laughter; delight is even more contagious than sorrow.

How the world rewards its funmakers! To borrow the old name of the singers who brought good cheer, they might be called the gleemen. Mankind has need of all the mirth a Mark Twain or a Stephen Leacock, a Chaplin or a Harold Lloyd can bestow. Artemus Ward helped Abraham Lincoln to hold the union together, though the two men never met.

## WONDER

By LUCIA TRENT, in The New York Sun

Lonely and wistful some things always seem,  
Part of another world, part of a dream,  
Sunset mountains that shadow the west,  
Rough night winds that will find no rest,  
Shivering trees on a sweep of snow,  
Menacing coasts that the sea birds know,  
A tremulous star in a void of sky,  
Are they lonely, I'm wondering, or am I?

Mexico is said to be compiling a list of claims against the United States that will exceed the amount of the American claims against Mexico. Wonder why Europe has not tried that plan of repayment?

—Houston Post Dispatch.