

# Education for American Citizenship

Discourse Delivered by  
 Rev. Bishop Thos. J. Shahan

When we speak of citizenship we mean of course our traditional American citizenship, that choice flower of our public life, from George Washington to Abraham Lincoln. Its roots are still intact and its high spirit is still abroad, wherever the great world-shaping documents and facts of our life are known and honored. That citizenship is the heir of the best thought and the widest world-experience of mankind from Athens to West-India, and in one short century has realized the longings of all lovers of liberty, East and West, through the ages. In one hundred years American citizenship has renewed the political face of the world and it there yet a few conclusive struggles of oppressed mankind, it is largely owing to the very fact of American freedom that there are political convulsions and the just claims of oppressed peoples are not formally and definitely extinguished. Yesterday, it was Brussels, Prague, that stretched out imploring hands to Washington, Prussia, and today the world is noisy with clamors and tests of other oppressed peoples, whose love of liberty is as keen and as just as American citizenship, and whose subjection cannot be defended on any but Prussian principles of imperialism. In a few generations our American sense, and practice of our public rights and duties, has subdued a whole continent, has overcome all obstacles that nature and ignorance could offer; has interpreted, purified and elevated itself amid gigantic tasks of our own country. Its great crises and varied development; has fully tested several foreign human figures, has rejected many brilliant temptations, has walked the paths of opportunism and error; has kept substantially sane its true judgment of all public life outside its own limits; has cherished a spirit of healthy progress and social unity and moral elevation; has followed the ways of peace though in folly, servility or selfishness; has contributed richly to the sciences, and to every phase of intellectual life.

**Fixed Star of Freedom**  
 In a word American citizenship has made the world happier and better in many ways and in turn has ceased to absorb the best that world had to give, whether man-power or brain-power. As far as American citizenship shed its influence in this world, political tyranny sickened, if it has not died. It is the fixed star of modern history, and its light must one day revive all peoples and nations now held unjustly in the grasp of that imperialism from whose talons we were the first to escape, and escaping, closed to it forever, we hope, the doors of the New World. If this be a true description of American citizenship, it follows that it needs no apology for its condition and temper; second, that it must not tolerate any obstacles to its normal beneficent action. The new era that sin against the traditional or usual concept of American citizenship should be followed up, challenged, and destroyed root and branch as anti-American, and thereby inimical to the general welfare of mankind.

The new, bad, and inhuman philosophy of life and government which has come among us quite recently should not be allowed to poison the minds of our youth under the specious but dishonest pretext of free thought and free speech, for that privilege, or that right, if only will, cannot be wisely conceded to thought and speech, evil in themselves and used solely to destroy our common platform of safety under the pretext of a broader humanitarianism, a world citizenship that prescinds from the immediate natural strict duty of every American citizen to conserve and transmit his glorious inheritance!

**American and European Citizenship**  
 Between American citizenship and European citizenship there is a specific difference, ocean-wide, literally and morally. We cannot think in the same terms, for our American constitution and government, differs profoundly from that of Europe. Its political development has been mainly one of endless wars over a thousand years in the same small cockpit and for the benefit of the same type of men. Deep, sullen, patient, ineradicable vindictiveness has long prevailed in vast human strata of Europe, as now throughout Russia, which at first dawn of freedom begin a huge saturnalia of destruction and ruin. Hatred and revenge are gospel of millions rendered quasi-insane by centuries of various oppression, and ringed around by many forms of wrong. It is written across the map of Europe, of most great nations of Europe—defeats, losses of territory, resources, dynastic troubles, transfers of allegiance, of religion, of advantage and opportunity; treacheries and betrayals without number, all the known evils of an immemorial secret diplomacy. Since the days of Charlemagne, for example, a narrow strip of land from the Alps to the sea had been dyed to saturation with human blood, and over it have raged all the political passions and vices, all the social and economic conflicts, all the religious bitterness and antipathy, all the personal ambitions and vagaries of irresponsible rulers, vindictive factions, and nameless miscellaneous selfish misgovernment.

How different the origin and growth of American citizenship; its emittes have been those of nature; i. e., its nature and physical obstacles, its conquests those of knowledge and labor, the peaceful conquests of exploration and transportation, and intercommunal; the incredible development of the forces latent in the elements of nature; the discovery and uses of raw materials and essentials of in-

dustry and commerce; the growth and government of interests that stagger the imagination; the constant knitting together of all human elements and forces within easy range of each other, to make democracy! The evidence and the honor of our traditional American citizenship lie in this immense complex of universally beneficent facts, for they are its proper fruit, and as they stand have so far never been met with in other political forms and conditions.

**War against Foreign Entanglements**  
 The hard fortune of the war has recently brought us into intimate touch with the problems and desires, the traditions and the mentality of the chancelleries of Europe. By these means our traditional American citizenship has entered temporarily into our public life, from George Washington to Abraham Lincoln. Its roots are still intact and its high spirit is still abroad, wherever the great world-shaping documents and facts of our life are known and honored. That citizenship is the heir of the best thought and the widest world-experience of mankind from Athens to West-India, and in one short century has realized the longings of all lovers of liberty, East and West, through the ages. In one hundred years American citizenship has renewed the political face of the world and it there yet a few conclusive struggles of oppressed mankind, it is largely owing to the very fact of American freedom that there are political convulsions and the just claims of oppressed peoples are not formally and definitely extinguished. Yesterday, it was Brussels, Prague, that stretched out imploring hands to Washington, Prussia, and today the world is noisy with clamors and tests of other oppressed peoples, whose love of liberty is as keen and as just as American citizenship, and whose subjection cannot be defended on any but Prussian principles of imperialism. In a few generations our American sense, and practice of our public rights and duties, has subdued a whole continent, has overcome all obstacles that nature and ignorance could offer; has interpreted, purified and elevated itself amid gigantic tasks of our own country. Its great crises and varied development; has fully tested several foreign human figures, has rejected many brilliant temptations, has walked the paths of opportunism and error; has kept substantially sane its true judgment of all public life outside its own limits; has cherished a spirit of healthy progress and social unity and moral elevation; has followed the ways of peace though in folly, servility or selfishness; has contributed richly to the sciences, and to every phase of intellectual life.

Revolution is set up in a hostile, sympathetic light, books filled with "suppression of truth and suggestion of falsehood"; the works of men who would "write and teach the stories of those heroic days as a living world had to give, whether man-power or brain-power." It needs no Cicero to proclaim the influence of historical teaching in this The Great War has taught us to what the historian can penetrate the mind of a great people, and its light must one day revive all offending neighbors. Our American history, such as we have received it, is the history of the men who in great part made it, or knew its illustrious makers, could be widely monumentalized, so to speak, with the conscious purpose of making our public buildings, great natural edifices, and every occasion of its condition and temper; second, that it must not tolerate any obstacles to its normal beneficent action. The new era that sin against the traditional or usual concept of American citizenship should be followed up, challenged, and destroyed root and branch as anti-American, and thereby inimical to the general welfare of mankind.

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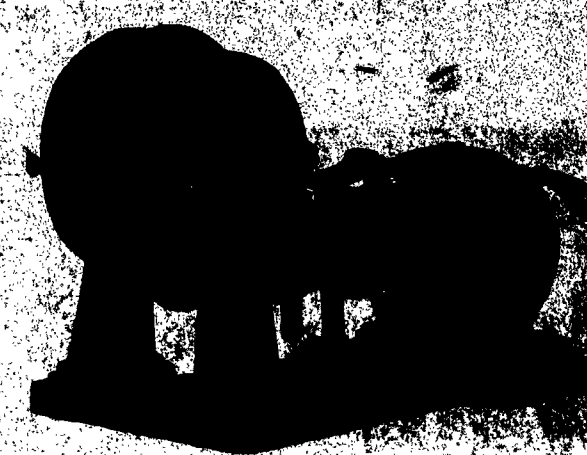
**American Enemy of Monopoly**  
 Individual freedom, vast and delectable as the prairies or the forests, was the dominant note of this first century of American history. Its apostle was the frontiersman who went forth to conquer nature with his rifle, his bible and his newspaper. He was the disciple of George Washington, the Adamses, Marshalls, Monroes, Jeffersons. The old pagan concept of the State as many would have us take it over from Europe, or rather from that pre-war Prussia we have overthrown an absolute omnipotent juggernaut, was foreign and offensive to this original American citizen to whom all centralism and imperialism were very odious. In this respect we are drifting away from the type of American manhood that built our nation, secured its frontiers, and wrote our bill of rights in a few immortal principles. Under specious pretexts and often by reprehensible means, our traditional American concept of individual and local freedom, rights, duties and responsibility, is greatly imperilled in recent times. The family, the home and the natural rights of parents are injured by legislation, actual or proposed, that ignores the fundamental rule of American diplomacy, viz., that the State has no right to restrict the liberty of the individual beyond the limits necessary for its own protection and preservation. Nor will it do to say that new times and conditions, industry and commerce, inventions and discoveries, have created a new order of life in which the American individualism of our golden age can no longer be tolerated. In this personal freedom, for which we are fed kings and aristocrats, the American citizen has ever recognized the primal irreducible element of his political life. Pride in it, and exercise of it, have colored our national life, so to speak, in every decade, and wherever the American citizen set foot on his vast patrimony. Indeed, it is true, that to this great freedom of initiative, we owe the development of American wealth and power, of invention, discovery, and enterprise in all its forms, whereby the whole world has been benefited, the range of civilization broadened in the heart of mankind. This vast freedom of initiative, this and local freedom, the incredible development of the forces latent in the elements of nature; the discovery and uses of raw materials and essentials of in-

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