

UNSEEN SOIL

THERE WAS A TIME in some countries when the cleaning of garments was called whisking—the tradesman was called a whisker....That was before the art of DRY CLEANING was known.

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Americanism

By LEONARD WOOD

We shall teach that this heritage of ours has been confided from generation to generation to the patriotic keeping and loving care of true Americanism, and that this alone can preserve it.—Grover Cleveland: Speech before the New England Society, Brooklyn, December 21, 1891.

WHEN Grover Cleveland, a great Democratic president of the United States, uttered these words, he gave a promise for the present and for the future. He said "We shall teach." He did teach and he continued to teach the Americanism in which he was so fervid a believer. Since his day it has been taught, and under Providence Americans will continue to teach it until the end of time.

The Americanism upon which Cleveland was dwelling was that and is that which was confided, as he puts it, as a heritage from the American generations of the past unto the generation of the present in which he lived. Cleveland knew, as all reading and thinking men knew and know, that the heritage of true liberty, which is the heritage of true Americanism, came down from the Fathers, and that in its essence it was the same in the speaker's day that it was in the day when it first found voice. It is the same today.

Americanism has been given into the patriotic keeping and loving care of the people. Cleveland puts this in another way, but it means the same thing. He speaks of the heritage having been committed into the keeping of true Americanism, therefore it is that true Americanism is in the keeping of itself and of its fellowship of believers. A good many other isms have been called by unthinking men Americanisms. Men's thoughts on what constitute true Americanism may differ, but in the end they come together in the one thought, that the essential Americanism is that which keeps this country what the Fathers intended it to be—a place of law, order and liberty.

The necessity for teaching that this heritage of liberty of ours has been confided to us from generation to generation and that it is as precious now as ever, seemingly, but perhaps only seemingly, is sharper today than it has been in many years. There have been times before this when some men despaired of liberty. There are always hopeless ones among us. It is those who know the pricelessness of the heritage which has come down to us, and who know that men of understanding will not throw it away, who always are ready to enter into the field to combat the doctrines of either those who would give way stonily because they despair or those whose desire and intention is to destroy it.

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It is all right and inevitable that we should divide on party lines, but we to us if we are not Americans first and party men second.—Theodore Roosevelt: Speech September 2, 1902.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT believed that when the nation's life was at stake Americanism should know no party except the one which the word implies, a gathering into one party of all men when matters vital to the country are at issue.

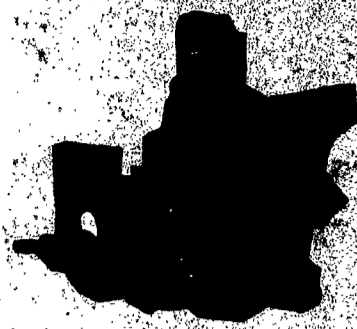
The strength of Roosevelt's words shows how solemnly he regarded the obligation of every citizen of the United States to be first an American and something else afterward. In times of great national peril party lines almost entirely disappear, as in the war when the Republicans supported the administration almost without question. If the day should come when they do not, the beginning of the end is not far off.

Seemingly it is so obvious a thing that considerations of country should rise superior to those of party that it may seem almost useless to stress the point. It is necessary, however, to do so today because there are groups in this country which, while they may call themselves political parties, are not truly such. Men, recently, not in great numbers, it is true, but in large enough groups to cause some apprehension, have been advocating theories which if turned into actual conditions would put a false idealism above country.

It is the endeavor of these men to paint on the canvas a picture alluringly beautiful, but which is a picture only. Roughly speaking, it represents every man as the follower of his own inclinations and desires without regard to the welfare of the members of the community as a body. It is a picture of government without a government—a free-to-do-as-you-will sort of portrayal which can appeal only to the passions of men.

When these painters turn preachers and urge that their false ideas be accepted, it might seem perhaps that they would be dangerous only to the unthinking. The trouble is, however, that many of them buttress their pleas with arguments which seemingly have weight. It is for the stable minded to offset with plain statements of fact the attempts of the enemies of good government to destroy existing institutions.

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