American Union.

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PATRIOTISM AND JULY FOURTH

"Patriotism," says Webster, is "love of country; the virtues and actions of a patriot." And looking back to the word "patriot" we find, "one who is zealously and unselfishly devoted to the service of one's country."

When the Fourth of July comes round, we decorate our homes and stores, organize a parade and hire a band. Our hearts thrill at the sight of Old Glory, and shivers of excitement go up and down our spines as the strains of The Star Spangled Banner ring out. Yea, verily, we are patriotic on July Fourth.

But what of the other three hundred and sixty-four days of the year? How far does the light of the Truth shine on the path of the following days? It's easy enough to stand in a crowd and yell for the United States and the Flag. But to live one's patriotism—that is different. "Zealously and unselfishly devoted to the service of one's country" implies a lot, when you carry it out to the true meaning. It implies not only the protection of the country in time of war; it implies the protection of the country in time of peace.

It implies the holding fast to the high ideals of her famous statesmen, the working out of their plans for a better country. And above everything else, it implies the obedience in spirit, as well as in fact, to her laws. Too many find a measure of joy in evading the laws, or circumventing them, or even deliberately defying them. And some who stand ready to cast the first stone at the man who has openly disobeyed, are guilty of just as serious secret disobedience.

It might be well to think a bit on this subject before Monday comes, and dig deep into our minds to see whether we can qualify as patriots. And when the parade is over, and the band and crowds dispersed, and the decorations down, don't let us take in our patriotism with the flag, and, folding them neatly together, store them away till next year. Let's zealously and unselfishly devote ourselves to the service of our country from July 4, 1921, to July 4, 1922.

THE AMERICAN UNION PUBLISHED THURSDAY

Beginning with this issue, The American Union will from now on be published late Thursday afternoon and dated that day. Heretofore, The American Union has been dated Friday but was published late Thursday. This way of publishing, however, puts the editor in a peculiar place many times, when a story breaks on Thursday night or early Friday, as the news then must be carried over until the next week, although it ought to have been covered in the issue published the same week as it occurred.

Under the new ownership several changes have been made in order to give the readers of The American Union better service. We feel that this innovation will also be one of these changes for the better. We will endeavor to publish all stories which occur before four o'clock on Thursday afternoon. Any persons having news items for the paper, will help the editor very much if they will get the items in as early in the week as possible, though any late happening can be handled up to three or three-thirty on Thursday afternoon.

WE WANT A LIVE TOWN

Let's all get together and help to make our community a live one. We all realize the consequences of poor business, stagnation in commercial affairs, depreciation of real estate values, low wages, etc.

What we want is plenty of business, money in circulation, a live interest in the building of houses, the sale of lots and acre property and a genuine healthy condition of business in our community.

HOW SHALL WE ACCOMPLISH IT?

The easiest thing in the world. Just keep our money in circulation, right here among ourselves, and we will create our own prosperous conditions.

In other words, LET'S PATRONIZE OUR OWN BUSINESS MEN INSTEAD OF SENDING OUR DOLLARS OUT OF TOWN TO THE MAIL ORDER HOUSES. Let's be loyal to our own best interests instead of helping to bolster up the big monopolistic establishments that are draining our resources of all the ready money in sight.

It is the aim of the big city mail order houses to drive the small town merchants out of business, so that we will all be compelled to send to the cities for our merchandise. The big mail order houses are spending thousands of dollars every month to accomplish this object.

THEY WILL DO IT, TOO, UNLESS WE ARE SENSIBLE ENOUGH TO STOP IT.

It is up to us to prevent the big mail order houses from driving our storekeepers out of business, for several reasons, the greatest of which are that our community will be rubbed off the map if we have no business concerns and that our ownership of property here will not amount to anything in this event.

The local stores to a very large extent make this town. The taxes paid by our business men are the principal support of our schools and churches. It is the taxes paid by our storekeepers that pay for the local improvements, for the street lighting, for fire protection and for all other communistic privileges and protection.

WOMEN'S CITIZENSHIP

When the New York League of Women Voters held its annual convention in January, Governor Miller was invited to address them.

In the presence of five hundred del-

In the presence of five hundred delegates, alternates, and guests, the chief executive of the most populous the richest state in the Union, denounced the National League of Women Voters as a "menace to the nation."

Those women who for half an hour sat under the lash of Governor Miller's tongue did not represent the great Empire State alone. They represented the new voting body of America—its women citizens. The political problems, the legislative programs, which they discussed were the same that every reader of this magazine is considering for her state and her town.

This will explain why the Editor of the Woman's Home Companion presents for the consideration of voters, both men and women, all over America, some of the statements made by Governor Miller.

"This is a free country," said Governor Miller, "and any two or more people have a right to form any kind of a league that they wish, so long of course as they obey the law. But I do think that there is no proper place for a League of Women Voters, precisely as I should say that there is no proper place for a League of Men Voters. And I have a firm conviction that any organization that seeks to exert political power is a menace to our institutions, unless it is organized as a political party."

Since when has it been dangerous for a free people to form openly a society for the study of good government for the support of legislation?

Why is it a menace to the nation for women—and men—to agitate and educate for better laws, for better enforcement of those laws, for cleaner administration of those laws?

How can the country suffer from more intelligent voting?

Do men in high places, men like Governor Miller, really believe that the voters should not be interested in the various bills pending in the Federal Congress and state legislatures, that the voters of this country should entrust blindly all public questions, especially of economic and social welfare, to their representatives in legislative bodies? Have we Americans reached the point where we should close our eyes to poor legislation and make no demand for good measures?

The Governor of New York holds that there is no place for an organization of voters in this country except within the framework of a political party. "No group," he said, "except through the medium of an organization" (political party) "which can be made responsive and responsible can undertake to exert political power for the purpose of securing the adoption of measures which they favor, or preventing the adoption of measures which they oppose, without, in my judgment, constituting what I said was a menace to free representative government."

We have no quarrel with the Governor's statement that "the two-party system is necessary if our representative system is to endure." The Companion has repeatedly urged women voters to enroll in one of the two great political parties. The League of Women Voters is equally emphatic on this point. In its constitution it is clearly stated that the object of the organization is to "foster education in citizenship, and to support improved legislation. The National League of Women Voters urges every woman to become an enrolled voter, but as an organization it shall be allied with and support no party."

It is true that our American Government is a government of the parties, and that every voter should therefore join one; but this is not the whole truth.

Parties administer government, but progress is compelled by groups—"menacing groups," they are often called. Can any Companion reader recall any great reform, any really important change in American institutions, that has been brought about by a political party? As a matter of fact, every great act of any political party has been brougght about by group action.

Prohibition, now a fact, never appeared in the political platform of either of the two great parties. It was agitated by a group. The popular election of senators was forced upon the parties by a group. The very party which placed Governor Miller in office, the Republican party, was only a group seventy years ago, the group which agitated and educated for the abolition of slavery. And in its day it was pronounced a "menace to the free institutions of the nation." To-day, the powerful political parties which denounced it are dead, their very names forgotten.

There is danger, menace, always in a group of earnest thinkers, but the danger is not to the nation, only to institutions which have outlived their usefulness. Political parties which would educate voters only in partisan politics must inevitably die of dry rot. The salvation of the parties lies in the revitalizing ideas agitated by groups and forced upon the parties by the power of the vote. No political party will ever take up an idea until that idea has grown so strong that the party failing to take it up will lose votes.

Gov. Miller suggests that it is better to orgganize a new political party than to attempt to influence legislation by group action. The National League of Women Voters has no intention of organizing a "woman's party." They will never do anything so stupid, so foolish. The League will continue to be a thinking, agitating minority, that will stand fast and strong until their town, their state, their nation, catches up with them.

Governor Miller says that there should be no League of Women Voters, no League of Men Voters. Yet, as everyone knows, there are all over the country leagues of women and men known by other names. No one fears them or their influence except narrow-minded, tradition age. "Menacing groups" like the League of Women Voters are pledged to put him and his slogan out of commission.

Wise party leaders will welcome nonpartisan political education for women, because women thus educated will bring new ideas, new power, to their parties, and force these parties to put up good men. But before this fact is fully realized by party leaders there must be agitation and education.

In spite of its two million members, the National League of Women Voters is still a minority, a mere group. Another minority is made up of those intensely biased politicians of both the leading parties who are afraid of innovations, of any new element or factor in the business of politics. This minority is violently opposed to nonpartisan education and independent thinking on the part of women voters, or of men voters either, for that matter. In place of the nonpartisan schools of citizenship and civics, now being established the country over, this minority would substitute training schools in party politics, with the slogan, "My party. May it always be right. But, right or wrong, my party."

Which will you have in your community, education in citizenship or training in party politics? Think it over.—Woman's Home Companion

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