

LIVE QUESTIONS.

A Series of Articles Contributed to These Columns by Advanced Thinkers.

NUMBER VIII.—A VIEW OF PATRIOTISM.

There is such abuse in the use of terms, such a covering up of ugly reality with ornamental phrases, so much masquerading by the vices in the phraseology of the virtues, that words seem sometimes to have lost their meaning. There is tendency to take words out of their ordinary significance and dress them up with attractive graces of meaning to which they are not properly entitled. Patriotism is a word peculiarly susceptible to this sort of abuse. It has so often been made to perform the office of words expressive of other and higher virtues that all the canons of morality seem sometimes to be summed up in that word.

It is always receiving credit for noble deeds which are really due to something else. How frequently, indeed, has it been confounded with a love of liberty—a totally different sentiment. This confusion is probably largely due to the fact that patriotism is so often used as a cloak for treachery and treason, thus giving rise to the characterization of Dr. Johnson that it is "the last refuge of scoundrels." When designing politicians contemplate the perpetration of some unusual fraud upon the people, they always obscure the horizon with storms of protestations of their patriotism and their piety.

Patriotism has been always classed too high in the catalogue of virtues. It filled an office in the infancy of civilization which a more perfect development will render needless. It was necessary in early days, just as armaments and walled cities were necessary. Christianity, as taught by Christ, did not recognize it. He presents ideals of character and society which would render patriotism superfluous and meaningless. It will doubtless serve a useful purpose as long as governments are menaced with danger of corruption in office and intrigue against the rights and liberties of the people, but even now it oftener manifests itself as a vice rather than a virtue. In Jonesville patriotism means that the town must be boomed, and as a means to that end the rival town, Brownsville, must be demolished. "If our town cannot have the courthouse, or the asylum for the insane, or the new railroad, at least the other town shall not have them."

The reader will probably object to this as presenting too narrow a definition. For true examples of patriotic feeling and action you would refer to national heroes and history makers, to deeds of heroism inspired in times of national crises. But here arises the confusion of terms. The sentiment which inspired the men of 1776 was not patriotism. Every patriotic impulse fastened them to their mother country. The makers of the historic declaration were moved by the love of liberty, which knows no territorial bounds. Patriotism is conservative. It leads one to defend one's country as it is and sustains institutions as they exist. It does not preside at the founding of nations. As worthy as was the devotion to national integrity which led the heroes of 1861, there was something else worthier—it was the love of humanity and equal freedom, indignant hatred of human slavery.

For examples of pure patriotism, un-mixed with other influences, you will have to go back to the models frozen into the permanent crystal of classic fable. The stories of Winkleried and Regulus show just what the thing really is in its primal purity. Schoolboys know how it stirs the blood to recite how Regulus suffered cruel tortures rather than advise his countrymen to make peace against their interests. "Regulus to the Carthaginians" is the standing prize declamation. The story of Regulus is the soul stirring, devotion kindling example of patriotic virtue and heroism. Yet I think the story has never been analyzed with a view of applying it to present conditions.

The incident is the natural outgrowth of the rivalry between two growing, enterprising towns, each one attempting to outdo the other. Regulus had two purposes in his expedition against Carthage—one was to give an impetus to the real estate market in Rome, by killing off the pretensions of a rival town; the other was to depress prices in Carthage and get a corner in the best lots, while they were down, and then receive the benefit of the subsequent reaction. He was "bulling" the market at home and "bearing" the market at Carthage. For a time his enterprise went well. The Carthaginians were a simple, gullible people and he played their inexperience with great success. After awhile, however, a Greek dealer named Zanthippus appeared "on change." Zanthippus had been in the business before, and he was "on to" the Roman game. He caught Regulus "short" and left him "dead broke." Regulus, however, had abundance of that quality which in the pit is called "sand." The people of Carthage made a most liberal proposition, offered to set him up in business again, if he would arrange matters between Rome and Carthage so that they could have a courthouse in each town. But Regulus refused the offer and suffered his fortune to collapse and his life to go out rather than advise his friends against their interests.

What was it Regulus advised his countrymen, for which they ever afterward honored him? It was not the cultivation of the arts of peace, nor the defense of their homes against invaders, nor the building of noble institutions which would make happy and prosperous their posterity. No, he advised aggressive war, the cruel, relentless destruction of Carthage and the enslavement of its people. The same patriotic sentiment which, in that military age, led men to fight in defense of their country also led them to bloody conquests. The national glory was the end in either case. It was

not more honorable to die in the breach repelling an invasion than to return from foreign conquest and enjoy a triumph greeted with a procession of captive slaves. The exploits of conquering Scipio were as dear to the national heart as the heroism of Horatius in keeping the bridge against the Etruscan hosts.

That was the Roman notion of patriotism. It is the prevailing notion of patriotism. The same feeling which to the Hebrews made all the rest of the world gentiles, and to the Greeks made them barbarians, still largely obtains. It is the feeling which nowadays rejoices at the prospect of a famine in Russia, war in Turkey and short crops in India, on the supposition that it will cause a market for our wheat. It makes current the theory that our country can obtain prosperity as another suffers disaster; that commerce is warfare. It hails lockouts in England and silent factories in Holland as contributing to our national greatness. It builds a wall around our ports, fearing that we may trade with other nations and make them prosperous.

"Who is my neighbor?" was asked of Christ. Who is your fellow citizen? The intercourse between distant peoples, which modern invention makes possible, brings you next door to all the world. The Brazilian planter on the banks of the Amazon under the vertical sun loes the coffee which will be used by cheer your breakfast, and the antipodal Australian shepherd washes the fleece which will presently warm your back. The mutual interdependence of all men makes these distant people your neighbors. The mutual moral and intellectual obligation fastened upon you and them makes them your fellow citizens; you, theirs.

Who will say that his duties as a citizen and a man begin and end with the boundaries of his own nation? We are just beginning to realize the interdependence of all men, and that our country is not blessed in the misfortunes of other countries. Whatever is right is economically correct is the proper generalization of the points of convergence between ethics and political economy. Charity, it is said, begins at home, but justice does not end there. Justice knows no national bounds. Whatever is right between you and your fellow townsman is right between you and your antipodes. It will appear by and by that, as there is something better than material prosperity, so there is something more glorious than national glory. In breaking down caste and distinctions of condition you break down distinctions of race and nationality.

If this is a broadening of the scope of patriotism beyond its former bounds into something else which may be called humanity or justice, it is also a reaching out to Christianity as Christ taught it. He knew nothing of mere patriotism and did not teach so narrow a virtue. He taught that there was no distinction of Jew or Greek or Scythian or bond or free. In the code of ethics which is coming there will be no fellow citizen and alien, no neighbor and foreigner, no wars or diplomacy, but one universal brotherhood and universal peace.

JOHN TURNER WHITE, Springfield, Me., January, 1898.

NUMBER IX.—VOX POPULI.

The old Latin proverb, "The voice of the people is the voice of God," is true just so far as the people are right. That majorities err there can be no doubt, but republics and democracies have pledged themselves to abide by the will of the majority and we hold hard by this theory, however far we may fall short of it in practice.

It is of great importance that the will of the people be known. There are two theories regarding the functions of a legislator—viz. Is he to express his own best judgment in voting for a bill, or is he to vote as instructed by his people? Doubtless he may do either, as circumstances may indicate. In any event, he ought to know the wishes of the people he represents and with the exception of one or two party issues, upon which he is elected, he does not know, nor has he any effective way of knowing.

This, among many other facts, shows how crude even yet our methods of legislation are. Congress could devise a simple method of ascertaining public sentiment on every question of importance and at no great expense either. Let printed question blanks covering any proposed legislation be sent to every voter in the country with return frank envelopes. The answers could be easily tabulated and the wants of the people reasonably known. This would cause widespread discussion and inquiry and prove to be a great means of education. It would bring voters into closer contact with the machinery of government, and awaken much interest in affairs and greatly increase the sentiment of patriotism. Sufficient safeguards could be thrown around this method to prevent abuses.

In the same way each state could secure the consensus of opinion of any given legislative proposal. It is to be hoped that some congressman will accept this meager hint and introduce a bill embodying its suggestions.

J. W. CALDWELL.

The respectability of today is the respectability of property. There is nothing so respectable as being well off. The law confirms this. Everything is on the side of the rich. Justice is too expensive a thing for the poor man. Offenses against the person hardly count for so much as those against property. You may beat your wife within an inch of her life and get only three months, but if you steal a rabbit you may be "sent" for years. So, again, gambling by thousands on 'change is respectable enough, but pitch and toss for halfpence in the streets is low and must be dealt with by the police.—Edward Carpenter.

Nations agree on rules and regulations of war. Is it possible that with proper effort they cannot agree on rules and regulations to keep peace?

NOT LEAP YEAR, BUT SHE HELPED.

Jack Was Somewhat Obtuse, and Then, Too, He Was Going Away.

A young married woman, the wife of the private secretary of a Western Congressman, was one of a party the other evening talking about leap year.

"I proposed to my husband," said she, "and it wasn't leap year, and I'm not a new woman." Every one was anxious to know how she happened to do it, for she is a lovely woman of the womanly type, and the last one in the world to ever ask a man to marry her. Then, too, she was a belle, and had hosts of admirers, many of whom would have been glad to have won her.

"Why, I don't know how it happened. You see, Jack had been attentive to me for years, and every little while would tell me how much he loved me, and ask me if I could care for him. I put him off, and then after two or three years he began to neglect telling me of his love. In the meantime I learned to love him, and tried in every way to make him speak, but when he called he never wanted to see me alone, and always tried to have some of the family about. When we were alone he was moody and silent, and no amount of sweetness on my part would bring him to answer avowal.

"At last he called and said he was going to Washington. That there was no use of his staying out West. There were no ties to hold him, and no one for whom he especially cared. I used my best endeavors to dissuade him, and hinted in every way possible that he might expect a favorable answer if he would ask me to marry him. Jack said good-night to the people, and I went to the door with him. We stood there quite some time, and I tried so hard to bring him out, but no use. He spoke of no one caring for him and all that sort of thing. Finally we shook hands and he left. I saw him walk down the yard, and as he reached the gate I called him to come back. I had seen him leave me forever in that minute and could not stand it. When he came up the steps, I said:

"Jack, I care for you a great deal." "The rest naturally followed, and we were married in the spring."—Washington Post.

CURED THE HORSE.

But Now Wants Damages from the Veterinary Man.

A young man in Alexandria visited Washington a few days ago and while here purchased a preparation for curing horses of balking. He owns a handsome animal that has this fault, although otherwise it is a very desirable horse.

The preparation was to be applied to the flanks and was guaranteed. He tested it upon a work horse he possessed, and it operated to perfection. Then he invited a young lady to go riding with him, and hitching his handsome horse to a buggy, started. When a hill was reached he applied the remedy. A moment later the swingle tree flew over his head and the girl fainted; then the dashboard fell in, followed by a crash as the floor of the buggy received a blow from the horse's hoofs. At this juncture the animal started ahead, as the seller of the remedy guaranteed. He took the shafts and front wheels with him, but left the rest of the vehicle and the occupants in the road.

The couple walked three miles to their homes in silence, and the young man called upon a lawyer yesterday to ascertain how much he can recover from the man who sold him the stuff, as a recompense for the loss of the buggy and the affections of the girl.—Washington Star.

She Felt Confident.

"Laura," said the fond mother, "what are the intentions of that young man you are permitting to call on you so often?"

"Never mind 'at, mother," answered the maiden. "I know what my intentions are."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

False to His Pledge.

First Citizen—'I'm agin' this candidate for the Legislatu'. Don't you remember when he ran before how he said he wouldn't wear a collar?"

Second Citizen—An' did he? First Citizen—Did he? A friend of mine seen him wearin' a collar an' tie.—Brooklyn Life.

A Fast Train.

"Is this a fast train?" asked the traveling man of the porter. "Of course it is," was the reply. "I thought so. Would you mind my getting out to see what it is fast to?"—Tit-Bits.

Indian Racers Beaten.

Notwithstanding their reputation for speed, the Indian races of the Northwest and Canada have repeatedly been beaten by white men, while in wrestling they never attain the skill of the whites, and do not seem to learn boxing at all.

A Joker's Joke.

A droll joker says an expeditious mode of getting up a row is to carry a long ladder on your shoulder in a crowded thoroughfare, and every few minutes turn round to see if any one is making faces at you.—Tacoma News.

An Insulted Colonel.

"Pocket flasks? Yessir. Here is a very nice little affair; holds half a pint."

"Half a pint? By gad, sah, when I want to buy toys I will go to a toy stoah, sir!"—Indianapolis Journal.

Cynicism.

"Papa, what's a cynic?" "A cynic, my son, is a man who sneers at everything he hasn't cash enough to keep up with."—Chicago Record.

Expensive Cables.

The eleven cables now in operation across the Atlantic have cost upward of \$14,000,000.—Cleveland World.

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