

The Elements of Ideal Citizenship.

Paper read before the Montreal Social Study Club, Nov. '99.

It seems wise to discuss the subject of citizenship from the social rather than from the purely political standpoint. We are presumably concerned here not so much with the technical view of man's allegiance to some particular state, and the duties and privileges arising thereupon, as with his more intimate relations to the society in which he lives and works. This is the all important starting point, for he who is not an effective member of society cannot be a valuable adjunct to the state.

With the foregoing distinction in mind, we may proceed to the task of analyzing citizenship. As we must have some starting point on which to base our judgments, I suggest that we accept as a standard fact the universal practical judgment that man is the measure of all things.

All objects and acts get their valuation by reference to man. He is the unit of ideal moral values. Human life and happiness should be the supreme consideration. But it is a lamentable fact that in practise they are often held cheaper than mere things. The endeavor to create a sentiment which would change this criminal reversion of the moral order, is a duty incumbent upon us all. Oh ! the pity of it, that human life should ever be held cheaper than material things !

We all desire to have our country filled with a high type of citizens,—with effective human beings. And the question of vital importance here is, how can we help to raise the standard of citizenship ? That the standard is now deplorably low, all must acknowledge.

Now what test shall we apply in order to discover the normal and thus desirable citizen ? All artificial tests must be more or less unsatisfactory. it is true ; yet there is a somewhat famous six-fold classification of the rational elements of human welfare that appeals to me here as being of value in determining the standard sought. I refer to Dr. Small's schedule of human desires. He holds that all human wants necessary to the good of the race may be reduced to six, namely (a) health (b) wealth (c) sociability (d) knowledge (e) beauty (f) righteousness. The very simplicity of this classification makes it easily applicable to the type in question.

Let us then apply this test to see if we can get any nearer to an agreement about the kind of citizens we desire. As social superiority must depend on individual superiority, it is of vast importance that a high type of individual should be produced.

The following specifications may seem rather didactic, and I do feel that with my firstly and secondly up to sixthly that I am violating the canons of good pedagogy ; but I must present the qualities of the ideal individual as he seems to me.

The first essential of my normal citizen then is health. He need not be an athlete, but he must have such a measure of physical well-