

## Government by the Golden Rule

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THE "GOLDEN RULE MAYOR," WHO IS A UNIQUE AND INTERESTING FIGURE IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE, GIVES A FRANK STATEMENT OF THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH HE IS WORKING FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE COMMUNITY.

IT has often been said that we learn the lessons of life only through experience. We get the theories from our parents, our teachers, the books, the schools, the colleges, and the universities; but the real education that makes us free souls can come only from the school of experience.

From five years of study in that school as mayor of Toledo I have gained many valuable lessons. I have learned that there is no "hurry up," "cross lots" way to reform, and no quick acting specific that will give us good government — to use a term that is often employed without a full appreciation of its meaning. I have learned that there is no mere trick of politics and no improved method of bookkeeping that will produce the results that all thinking people desire. To boil the whole proposition down for those who will not take time to read my whole story to the end, let me say that I am unalterably committed to the belief that the way to get good government is by the slow process of building up a nation of good people.

Let me briefly recount the story of my entrance into "politics" or public life. I was born in Wales fifty five years ago, came to this country at three years of age, and lived in northern New York until I was nineteen. Then I went to the oil regions of Pennsylvania, where I remained for twenty years. In 1886 I came to Ohio, and lived at Lima six years; nine years ago I came to Toledo, and five years ago was elected mayor as a Republican. Having been reared a Republican, I grew up in that political faith, never dreaming that my duty as a citizen required anything further than that I should regularly vote the Republican ticket, and then, with the singular inconsistency of Phariseism, thank God that I was not in "dirty politics."

Something less than a dozen years ago I began to think; the more I thought, the better I liked it. To any reader who does not indulge in the luxury of thinking, let me say that he will find it a most satisfying diversion if he will try it.

First, I began to think that I, as a citizen of this republic, ought to take a part in its

affairs as a free, unowned man rather than as the slave of any party, sect, or system. Gradually it began to dawn upon me that the philosophy of our social and political relation is yet very incomplete. In theory, we believe in equality, in democracy; but in a thousand ways we practise the dreariest kind of aristocracy.

One of the results of my thinking was that simply to keep at peace with myself I ought to make an application, in some small degree, of the principles of the Golden Rule to the conduct of my small business, then employing about twenty men. I announced my belief in the shorter work day and fair wages as a necessary step towards a society of equals, and, as best I could, began to practise the principles in which I professed to believe. It was this that led to my first nomination as a candidate for my present office.

I have never done anything in the way of party service in Toledo, either before or since my public life began. Elected the first time as a nominal party man, I sought to apply to the conduct of the mayor's office the same principles that had governed me in the conduct of my private affairs, with the result that I was repudiated by the Republicans at the close of my first term. I then announced my separation from parties, became an independent candidate, and was elected, receiving nearly seventeen thousand out of twenty four thousand votes.

#### POLITICS WITHOUT PARTISANSHIP.

Since that time I have taken another step forward. I have declared myself once and for all non partisan, and have tried, as best I know how, to be true to the requirements of my somewhat unique attitude towards the political questions of the day. I hold myself free, as a matter of duty as well as of right, to vote and act according to the highest impulse of my own soul rather than according to the dictates of a party convention.

In the last election I was nominated for a third term by free petition, without any such thing as convention, caucuses, delegates, or primaries. Under this system any citizen, or number of citizens, who feel that a certain person should be a candidate for any office, can circulate a petition. When the required number of signatures is obtained, the filing of such petition with the board of elections is all that is necessary to nominate a candidate. This gives the people an opportunity to take the initiative; they do not have to wait the motion of some "committee" that rises up out of the ground and assumes authority to furnish them candidates ready made. Such a method of nomination is a distinct step towards true democracy. In the present instance, there were more than six thousand names signed to the petitions asking me to become a candidate. These six thousand citizens had the privilege of participating in the nomination of a candidate, and thus were made to feel that they have some small share

in the process by which public servants are selected.

The slogan of the campaign in the twenty or twenty five meetings that I held was:

It is a golden rule to vote for

Principle ever,

Party never.

Own yourself, be free.

The result was, to my mind, a far greater victory for the non partisan cause than the phenomenal election of three years ago. I repudiate with scorn the charge, so often repeated, that my success was the result of "personal popularity." This is only a half truth. If I have personal popularity, it is because I stand for a principle in which the people believe, a principle that is founded upon the eternal rock of verity. That principle may be stated in the one word "unity," and every attempt at partyism, sectism, or any sort of division is an assault upon this fundamental principle that unites all humanity.

There is hardly room for reasonable doubt that the lines of separation known as partyism and sectism are rapidly disappearing. A few years hence people will devoutly thank God that both of these enemies of human liberty have been shorn of their power, and are no longer more than an unpleasant memory. I know no way in which individual citizens can do so much to aid the cause of good government as they can by announcing their own emancipation from the galling chains of hatred known as partyism, and their readiness to stand in every and any election as free, untrammelled souls, ready to vote and act according to the highest impulse of the conscience for the good of all, without any respect to party domination, dictation, or interest.

That there is still a large measure of the poison of kingcraft in the American body politic is evidenced by our fondness for the spectacular in government, and our indifference to the degradation that accompanies it. Just before the Spanish war, few could have been made to believe that we are yet as devoted to the pomp and display of militarism as the events of the past four years have shown us to be. We have not yet outgrown the love of glory and the empty distinction of titles.

We should drop the prefix "Honorable " with which we now distinguish nearly every office holder in the land. I should be heartily glad if I knew that the word, as a title, would never again be used in connection with my name, and I am very sure that I shall never use it with the name of any of my fellow citizens. Military and naval titles will also disappear with the triumph of democracy, for nothing can be truer than the

statement made by Walt Whitman, thirty years ago, that “if the aristocratic idea that surrounds our army and navy is right, then all the rest of America is wrong.”

## THE BUILDING OF A NEW NATION.

The life of our American cities is doing much to develop the truly democratic spirit. Notwithstanding that this is an era of great individual fortunes, the mass of the people are true to the underlying idea of equality and democracy. Our common schools are the bed rock upon which this idea is based, and we shall be worthy the name of a nation only as we develop conditions that will guarantee the same equality of opportunity in later life that is now provided in the common schools. To do this the artistic idea of harmony must be appealed to. There is nothing that I know of in the municipal life of Toledo that I consider of more value than the work in this direction that we are doing for the children.

Not only in Toledo, but in most of the large cities of the country, the spirit of fellowship is finding expression in a public way through the medium of music. It is taught as a regular study in our public schools, and the children show a remarkable degree of proficiency. The singing of the graduates of the Toledo High School, at their commencement exercises, would compare very favorably with the singing of an equal number of professionals of only a few years ago. Perhaps their singing might lack the overstrained, artistic finish that makes it impossible for the listener to understand a word that the singers say, but there was every evidence that the students appreciated the fundamental thought that harmony is the soul of music, and they produced harmony to a high degree, for there was not the slightest sign of a discord or false note.

We have hardly begun to appreciate the important function that music is to perform in bringing us to civilization. While people are singing they cannot fight; they must live in at least a degree of harmony, or they cannot produce harmony. As we go on with our work, and as all the people learn to sing, we shall forget — thank God! — all that we have learned, at such cost to the individual and national life, about fighting. The children of the public schools are yet to sing the nation into harmonious relations with itself.

Toledo is doing something in the way of providing playgrounds for its children. There are two public ones under the care of the park department; besides, the parks are a veritable playground, not only for the children, but for all the people. The growth of

this playground movement during the last few years is another important factor in civilizing and harmonizing the lives of the young, who are so soon to take important places in the management of municipal affairs. Nothing that I know of in the municipal life of our cities today is filled with more of promise than the work that is being done in inaugurating playgrounds for the children.

It is only three years since Toledo had the first music in the parks, regular concerts are now given each summer; and the fact that these are attended by thousands of people, who patiently stand, for the most part, and listen to the music, is conclusive evidence that the human soul longs for harmony. Let none of our “penny wise and pound foolish” municipal legislators oppose liberal expenditures for any of these humanizing agencies. There is no possible way in which money can be so well expended as in cultivating the love of harmony, the divine impulse, the longing for peace, which is latent in every soul.

The “municipal sleigh ride” is a winter pastime that we have provided for the school children of Toledo. I believe that healthy amusement of this sort is a far better way of building up good citizenship than the peripatetic efforts of over enthusiastic reformers who every now and then call for an “organization” to “clean up the town.” I am certain that the boy or girl who gets a conception of what government is by recalling that it is an institution which provides a free sleigh ride will be on the road to a higher thought of patriotism than the child whose only knowledge of government comes from the sight of a policeman.

By the way, Toledo policemen have not carried clubs for more than four years. During this time the number of arrests has steadily declined; in fact, the total number of arrests per annum now is about five hundred less than ten years ago, when the city was half its present size. During the last decade, Toledo had the largest percentage of growth of any city in the United States having a population of more than a hundred thousand. It increased nearly sixty two per cent; and I think it will be admitted that while our growth in bigness has been phenomenal, our growth in goodness is equally promising.