

THE GOOD CITIZEN

SPEECH AT PUEBLO

30 August, 1910

IN Colorado Springs, some years ago, I laid the foundation stone of a Young Men's Christian Association building. I am particularly glad to have the chance of doing so here, where the Chairman, the man chiefly concerned in the erection of the building, is himself a veteran of the great war, because I believe in the two qualities of manliness and decency. I don't care a rap for the good man who cannot do anything good because he is timid; and as for the efficient scoundrel, the more efficient he is, the more I wish to hunt him out of politics or business. The Young Men's Christian Association stands for decency, for the man who does well in his family and in his home life, and as a neighbor and with reference to the state and the nation; and it also stands for the manly virtues. Your Chairman, the head of this Young Men's Christian Association, lost an arm in battle; there is only one person I will put just a little ahead of him, and

that is his wife, who has brought up six children. I put the veteran of the great war ahead of every man in the country; but I put ahead even of him the good mother, the mother who has done her duty and brought up well a family of children.

My friends, yesterday I had the pleasure of addressing your people in Denver on the subject of Conservation. I noticed that some well-meaning person spoke of the doctrine as the new doctrine of Conservation. It is the identical old doctrine that never has been changed — of Conservation, which means using as fully as possible the resources of the country, but using them in the way that a wise private farmer would use his farm; so that our children shall be better off, and not worse off, because we lived. And I want to call attention to the wonderful work done by the Forest Service in fighting the great forest fires this year. With the very inadequate appropriation made for the Forest Service, nevertheless, that Service, because of the absolute honesty and efficiency with which it has been conducted, has borne itself so as to make an American proud of having such a body of public servants; and they have shown the same qualities of heroism in battling with the fire, at the peril and sometimes

to the loss of their lives, that the firemen of the great cities show in dealing with burning buildings.

One word more. I wish I could get down to New Mexico and Arizona, your southern and southwestern neighbors. I raised most of my regiment in what were then the two territories; and you, friends, know that you have a peculiar feeling for the man who has been in the trenches with you. I have been asked by some there to advise them concerning the constitutions of the new states. I do not know enough of the facts to advise them, excepting on this point: Don't let them tie themselves up so that they cannot untie themselves if the need comes. Whenever a new constitution is formed, there are always two sets of people whom you want to watch. In the first place, the demagogue or the well-meaning visionary who wants to realize the millennium by putting what he regards as portions of it in parts of the constitution; and in the next place, the big corporation attorney, who is not after the millennium at all, but who wants to put in, in unobtrusive fashion, something that he thinks of advantage to the special interest which he serves. Now, because of both, and because of the fact that the Convention may adopt the ad-

vice of one or the other, let the people insist that when the constitution has been adopted, the people shall be able to amend it as they find its working necessitates. Do not tie up the people so that if they do not like what they have got, they have to keep it anyway. Leave them so that they can make any amendments that are necessary.

Now, friends, you have here a wonderful state; a state of wonderful resources, — agricultural, pastoral, mineral, — a state of farms and ranches, of mines and cities of industry. You have a state with a wonderful industrial future, and a state which also ought to be the playground of America. More and more, our people ought to realize that, for beauty of scenery, they cannot do better than come to Colorado; and as I do not think any eastern man's education complete until he goes west of Missouri, I want to have him come here as much as possible. But though I admire your natural resources, what I really care for is the kind of man, the kind of woman, you have in this state; and I pin my faith to you primarily because I believe in the type of citizenship of your state. I think the average American a pretty good fellow; and I think his wife a still better fellow! And I think that even in states

where she does not vote, too! And while I am very glad to see all of you here, those whom I am most glad to see are the men and women who carry small folk. They are sure to be good citizens.

In its essence, good government is nothing very complicated. What we need to insist on is not genius, but the development of the ordinary qualities that make man or woman the kind of man or woman we care to meet in private life. If the man is a good husband, and the woman a good wife; if they do their duty as father and mother; if they are good neighbors, then you have the foundations of citizenship laid. But do not allow any man to impose on you, especially a public man, by asking you to accept decency and domestic virtue as an offset to profligacy in public life. The public man should be honest in the biggest and broadest acceptation of the term. If he is not, then it is your fault if you tolerate him in public life, no matter what he may be in private life. Make it felt by your representatives that the taint of corruption ruins a man forever in your eyes. Make it felt that you demand in your representative, not merely law-honesty, not merely the honesty that consists in escaping indictment, but that you demand the honesty that entitles

a man to the good will of those who know him intimately enough to tell whether or not he is really straight. And remember that you cannot have honesty in great things unless you have it in small things. If you send to Congress or to the legislature, or put in executive office, a man who will try to blackmail a corporation, you can guarantee that, if the price is high enough, he will sell out to the corporation. Make no mistake; never trust a man who says that he is only a little crooked, and that the crookedness is exercised in your interest. If he will be crooked for you, he will be crooked against you. So I ask that our citizens insist in their public representatives upon the same qualities which they insist upon in private life — upon courage, upon honesty, and upon the saving grace of common sense.