

**OUTLINES OF CIVICS: BEING A
SUPPLEMENT TO BRYCE'S
"AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH"
ABRIDGED EDITION, FOR USE IN
HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

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Outlines of civics: being a supplement to Bryce's "American Commonwealth" abridged edition, for use in High Schools and Colleges by Frederick H. Clark

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FREDERICK H. CLARK

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•The  Co. •

OUTLINES OF CIVICS

*Being a Supplement to
Bryce's "American Commonwealth," Abridged Edition*

FOR USE IN
HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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INTRODUCTION

THERE is great need—never so urgent as at this moment—that our public schools should afford more and better instruction in the true principles of democracy. A new and loftier ideal as to the aim and character of such instruction must be set up. The very existence of the free public school, whether of primary, secondary, or university grade, is evidence that American sentiment recognizes the fact that the state must educate her children as a safeguard to herself. Yet it is remarkable that very small space, relatively to other studies in the curriculum, has hitherto been assigned to the study of history, civics, or civil government,—the subjects, of course, which are best fitted to give the youth some direct training for the duties of citizenship. Moreover, such instruction as has been given has commonly been of the poorest sort. Too often the teacher has at best but a vague conception of the nature or of the possibilities of the task he is undertaking. With few exceptions, text-books are radically defective. The discussion is meagre and fragmentary; little effort is made to give adequate criticism or comparison; and the proper apparatus to develop right methods is lacking.

It is indeed high time that stronger meat were put before the pupils of the secondary school. In history, especially, the text-book maker and the teacher have

usually aimed quite too low. In the attempt to "simplify" they have written down or stooped to the supposed capacity of the pupil. Instead of putting the youth's faculties under a healthy strain, instead of lifting his thought to the highest possible level of attainment, the subject has been deliberately rendered juiceless and devoid of living interest, even when not made utterly distasteful. If this be a grave mistake in the historical field generally, it is positively inexcusable in civics and civil government. The boy or girl of high school age, particularly the American boy or girl, shows a surprising avidity and capacity in seeking and mastering the salient facts of contemporary political and civic life. The youth who without guide or stimulus eagerly reads the political articles in the daily newspaper, and who enters with zeal into the issues of a presidential campaign, is capable of grappling with the same problems when systematically presented in the schoolroom.

Again, if popular education is really to be the safeguard of the Republic, it is absolutely necessary that instruction in the principles of democracy should be broad and free. There must be luminous comparison and fearless criticism. It is but a false and dangerous patriotism which is born of self-flattery and nourished on national conceit. It is a perilous love of country which is blind to the country's faults. In the schoolroom, it is true, the examination of our institutions and our political methods should be sympathetic; but it must be frank and true, if it is to make for a higher ideal of citizenship.

It was a happy thought on the part of the publishers to prepare an abridged edition of Bryce's *Commonwealth* for use mainly in secondary schools. Bryce's

work has the two qualities already suggested as essential in a modern text-book. It presents a broad, critical, sympathetic examination of the plain facts of our national and local life, such as only the trained scholar and practical statesman can give. To the American citizen it is emphatically an "epoch-making" book, for it has become a centre of influence for good in our political life. We have instinctively deferred to the judgments of the wise observer who has looked at us from the outside, and in them the reformer and the honest thinker have found encouragement and support. Furthermore, the analysis of the book is so clear, the diction so pure and simple, and the style so interesting, that every page will appeal almost as readily to the comprehension of the young as it does to the mind of the experienced man of affairs.

Yet to make the American Commonwealth in the highest degree serviceable for school purposes, it was necessary that the text should be supplemented in two ways—it must have an historical setting, and it must be supplied with an efficient scientific apparatus. To provide these aids has been the aim of Mr. Clark, and he has well performed his difficult labor. In the first place, he has perceived, as the experienced modern teacher must perceive, that it is the emphasis of the element of growth, of development, which has converted a task, too frequently as dry and repulsive as it is profitless to the pupil, into a living, fascinating study. A series of historical topics is therefore planned. These are wisely selected in such a way as to disclose to the student the social processes through which the existing local and central organizations have become what they are. Indeed, Mr. Clark's "Supplement" will appeal to the high