

**THE HINDRANCES
TO
GOOD CITIZENSHIP**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649602575

The Hindrances to Good Citizenship by James Bryce

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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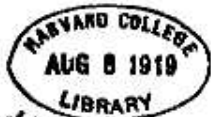
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**NEW HAVEN: YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON: HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
MDCCLXXIX**

Phil 9.75.12



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BY

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL, LONDON.

*First printed November, 1909, 1500 copies
Reprinted March, 1910, 1000 copies
Reprinted September, 1910, 1000 copies
Reprinted November, 1918, 500 copies*

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES.

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I

INTRODUCTION

WHEN first I was honoured by the request to deliver this course of lectures, founded by one whom I knew and respected, and who was himself the model of a generous and public-spirited citizen, zealous in many good works, I hesitated to undertake a function which could, as it seemed to me, be better discharged by some American citizen who, because he was a citizen, knew from personal observation and experience what are the duties and responsibilities that belong to citizenship in this country. Such a lecturer would, I thought, have the facts more thoroughly before him than a stranger could, and could deal with them more freely than one who might feel that it would be unbecoming for him to criticise the standard of civic duty in a nation to which he did not belong.

Presently, however, it struck me that the fundamental problems of citizenship are the same in all free countries, that as all preceding lecturers had

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viewed them from an American point of view, there might be some advantage in having them presented from an European point of view also, that the experience we Europeans have gained might be profitable to you here, and finally that every man who has in one country enjoyed exceptional opportunities of studying the actualities of politics owes it to his friends in other countries to give them such conclusions as he has been able to form. Such opportunities have, as it happens, come in my way during many years spent in active political life in the British Parliament. Moreover, we English students owe a special duty to America, not only in respect of our fraternal attachment to your nation, but also because our political phenomena resemble yours more nearly than they do those of any other country, so that reflections drawn from Great Britain are likely to have some practical worth for you. Thus, I came eventually to the conclusion that the privilege of addressing you on the Duties of Citizenship was one I ought not to forego.

What I have to say to you will accordingly be mainly based on what I have seen in Europe, and especially in England. When my observations are