

HELP HIM TO HELP HIMSELF, BUT DON'T CARRY HIM

There are plenty of apostles of discontent, and there are plenty of men who will try to teach you that our social and industrial conditions are all wrong and must be completely overthrown. There is a need for betterment in a great many of our conditions, there is urgent need that we should each of us resolutely do his part in helping solve the great problems of the day, the problems that need government action.

But, we can never afford to forget that the most important factor in the success of this country is, the factor of individual citizenship. I do not care if you had the most perfect laws that could be devised by the wit of man, or the wit of angels, they would not amount to anything if the average man was not a pretty decent fellow, and I base my firm belief in the future of this country, because I believe that the average American is a pretty decent fellow. Nothing can take the place of the individual factor, or the average man's quality and character, his industry, his energy, his thrift, his decency, his determination to be a good man in his own house, a good neighbor, and a good citizen in his relations to the state.

Of all men, distrust the man the most who tries to incite one set of Americans against another set of Americans. No man is a true servant of the people, if he does not always warn the people that those "who take the sword shall perish by the sword," that the people who do injustice to any class of citizens must surely, in the end, suffer for doing that injustice. This government will succeed because it will never fall into such a pit as the republics of old fell into. This government shall not be a government by a plutocracy, and it shall not be a government by a mob. It is to be and it shall be, a government by the plain people, where each man zealously guards his own rights, and no less scrupulously, remembers his duty and pays regards to the rights of others; a government whose guiding principle is and shall be, that each man, rich or poor, whatever his rank, whatever his occupation, whatever his creed, is to be judged, solely, on his worth and merit as a man.

Remember that there is nothing so very peculiar in running the state or the government, you need only apply the same principles to it that you do in your own life. Among your friends and neighbors, which one is it that wins success? The man who does his best with the tools at hand, or the man who is always sitting down and thinking that some one should give him a push along? **No government can help that man who is always sitting down. Each one of us stumbles at times, and shame on any one of us who will not reach out a helping hand to his brother who stumbles. Help him in the only way that any real help can ever come, help him to help himself, but if he lies down, it is of no use to try to carry him.**

The millionaire, the man of wealth generally, is not a harm but a good to the community if he appreciates that he is a trustee for that wealth. That his use of it must also be a use which tells for decency in private life, for honesty and courage in business and public life. We need material well being in this nation as a foundation, without which no superstructure can be raised. But upon that foundation, we must see to it that we build the superstructure of high individual and national conduct, so that each man in his relations to his fellows, shall actually be influenced by the ethical standards which teach us that the thing in life best worth having will prove in the end to be, the sense of having so lived that others are better and not worse off because we have lived.

No man is going to be of any real use to others, until first of all he is able to carry his own weight. And if a man entirely disregards the things of the body, it means that someone else has to regard them for him. He cannot be a factor for good in the community at large, unless he is first able to support himself and those dependent upon him, that is fundamental. A basic duty for every man, and if he does not fulfill it, he is not only doing wrong to others who are near him, but he is depriving himself of the chance to do decent work for outsiders. **Distrust the man in private life who is filled with enthusiasm to reform mankind, but who cannot support his own wife and family.** Let that man first pull his own weight, let him support himself and those dependent upon him, he will find it, at all times, a good deal of a job.

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