

**THE YOUNG
AMERICAN: A
CIVIC READER**

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The young American: a civic reader by Harry Pratt Judson

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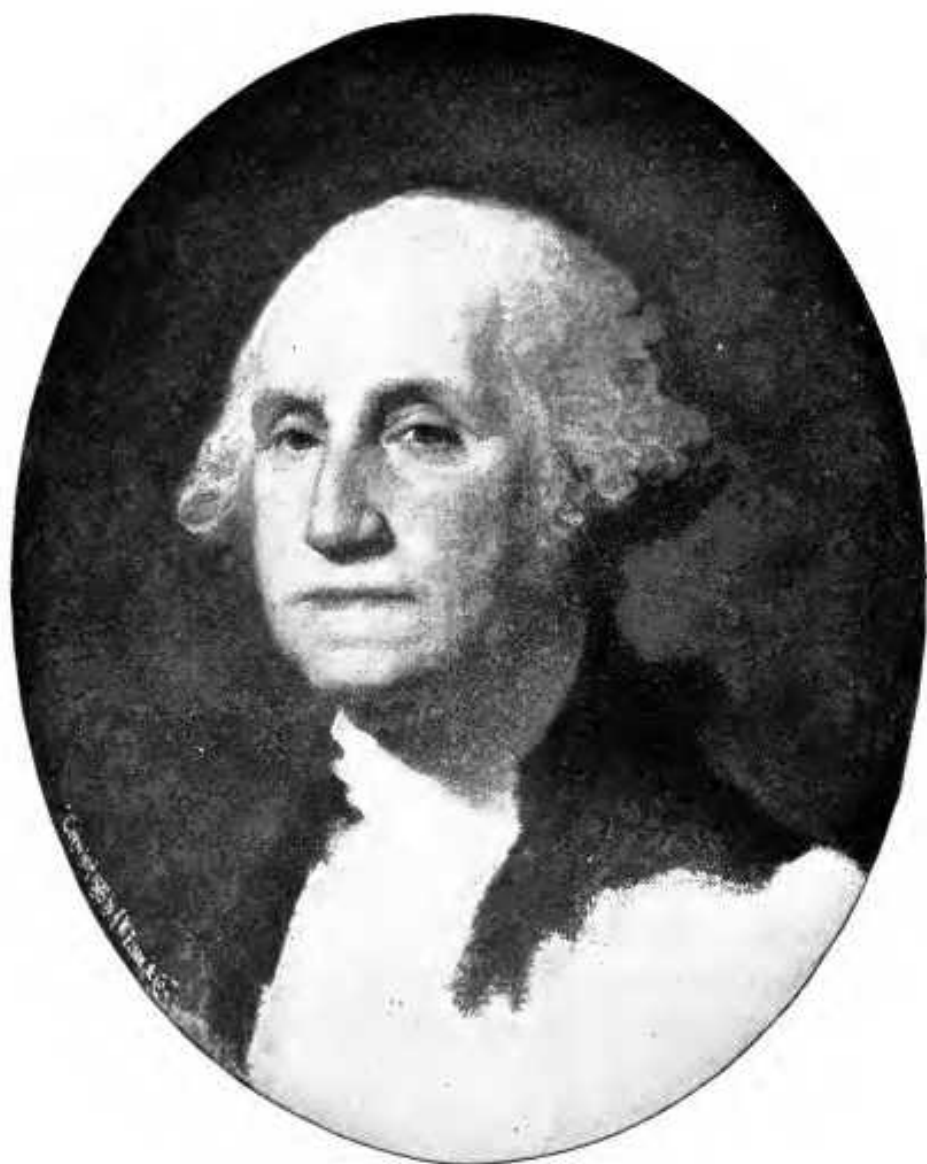
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HARRY PRATT JUDSON

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AMERICAN: A
CIVIC READER**



GEORGE WASHINGTON

THE
YOUNG AMERICAN



A
CIVIC READER

BY

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IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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THE interest of the day is not that of mere study, of sound scholarship as an end, of good books for their own sake, but of education as a power in human affairs ; of educated men as an influence in the commonwealth. "Tell me," said an American scholar of Goethe, the many-sided, "what did he ever do for the cause of man?" The scholar, the poet, the philosopher, are men among other men. From these unavoidable social relations spring opportunities and duties. How do they use them? How do they discharge them? Does the scholar show in his daily walk that he has studied the wisdom of ages in vain? Does the poet sing of angelic purity and lead an unclean life? Does the philosopher peer into other worlds, and fail to help this world upon its way? Four years before our Civil War, the same scholar—it was Theodore Parker—said sadly : "If our educated men had done their duty, we should not now be in the ghastly condition we bewail."—*George William Curtis.*

PREFACE

READING is more than mere elocution. It implies good articulation, accent, inflection, modulation of voice, and all the rest that has to do with using the vocal organs as a mechanism for conveying ideas. But all this is merely mechanical unless there is also a clear comprehension of the meaning of the ideas to be conveyed. One may perhaps learn to pronounce a foreign language without understanding it. But such rendering of a piece of literature in that tongue would be highly unintelligent.

A book adapted to practice in reading, then, may be in one of two forms. It may contain merely a variety of selections, carefully graded to the average capacity of pupils of a given age, and by the variety of its contents affording a wide range of interest and exercise. Or it may throughout follow one main line of thought, with such incidental variety as may be convenient. The former is obviously preferable for the main work of teaching to read. But no one learns to read without also learning many things from what he reads. And if this learning, incidental in the use of most reading books, is made more prominent, it is clear that a book might well be constructed on the second plan.

This is the thought which underlies the present volume. It is intended to fulfill a double function—to afford exercise in reading, and at the same time to give such knowledge as, being treated continuously, instead of in the usual fragmentary manner, may be of substantial value.

Nothing need be said of the importance of the study of our civil institutions in the schools. It is a well-known fact that the great

mass of boys and girls finish their schooling in the lower grades. Few reach the high school, still fewer get to college. Whatever teachers can do, then, in the direction of good citizenship, must be done early, or not at all.

But much can be done. In many ways love of country may be fostered. No little knowledge of the structure and working of our government may be imparted; and it is quite possible to give a very definite notion of the rights and duties of citizenship. This must be done, however, by the teacher. No text-book alone will answer. Whatever aid of that nature is furnished must be supplemented by the teacher's living knowledge and constant interest.

It is the hope of the author that this book may serve as a help to teachers in such work—as the nucleus around which such work may gather. Of course each teacher will use it in his own way. But in the appendix will be found a few suggestions which may be helpful.

There has been no attempt to make a comprehensive treatise on civics, or on American history. The outlines only of our system of government have been sketched, leaving the teacher to fill in the sketch and to adapt it to his particular locality as he may see fit. As to history, that has been treated only when it seemed necessary for understanding given existing institutions. The author will be more than satisfied if the brief historical discussions suffice to illuminate the various topics of government, and at the same time prove suggestive—a stimulus to wider reading and more exact knowledge.


The selections which are scattered through the chapters, in prose and verse, it will be seen are largely from American authors. Of course many more might have been added. But perhaps there are sufficient for the purpose.

The book is submitted with the hope that it may aid in teaching genuine patriotism and intelligent citizenship.

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