

HYPHENATION JUSTIFIED.

BY THE EDITOR.

THERE is much talk to-day about "hyphenated Americans" and the objection to hyphenation is common if not almost universal. The objection is justified, but is there not a side to the question in which hyphenation is quite legitimate?

We all agree that our nation should be one in love of country and unanimous in its ideal of building up a new nation on the western continent, cherishing the ideals of humanity in independence and with strength; but we do not, nor can we, deny that the new nation is the result of many factors and a coalescence of all the nations of the world. The union of all becomes possible only through the faithfulness of all to the common ideal, but the elements of which the whole is wrought hail from different countries of Europe. First there are the Yankees, the Puritans, who came here from England for conscience's sake because they sought liberty for the free exercise of their religion which they could not find in the old country. A different type are the Virginians and further still the Marylanders under Lord Baltimore, many of whom were adherents of the Roman Catholic faith. Quite different again were the Friends, called Quakers, who acquired Pennsylvania, and it was in their territory that the first Germans settled, coming from the Palatinate on the Rhine.

On the basis of these first colonizations the development of the country began, and after a successful war with England the colonies changed into a federation of states inviting immigrants from all quarters of the world. A period of immigration set in and the thirteen states became the refuge of innumerable men and families who for some reason or other sought a new home in the great land of the west because they were dissatisfied with the conditions of their former homes, or because they strongly sympathized with the ideals of liberty and hoped to help in building up a nation

of the future where mankind would find happier and nobler and better prospects than in the past.

It is not expected, and has never been deemed necessary, that these immigrants should blot out their past, that they should forget their old homes or acquire a contempt for their forefathers or become hostile to their brothers whom they left behind in Europe. On the contrary, they were welcome here on account of their intellectual inheritance. They were invited to bring along all the treasures of their civilization so as to enrich their new home with the best they had to offer. Only one thing was expected of them, to cut off and forswear all former political allegiance to their princes or governments, for that is indispensable if they would be free citizens of this country and serve its interests faithfully.

It is in this sense that the objection to hyphenated Americans is justified. All those who settle in this country and become naturalized do so by their own free will in becoming Americans. The United States of America owns their allegiance fully and wholly. The governments of their original homes lose every claim, for these new citizens promise solemnly no longer to recognize any other obligations than toward the country of their adoption.

In this sense the objection to the use of hyphenated designations is rigidly justified and there is no question about it. But there is another sense in which the use of a hyphen is perfectly legitimate, and it is entirely suitable to speak of German-Americans, Irish-Americans, French-Americans, Anglo-Americans, Afro-Americans, Greco-Americans, Italo-Americans, Polish-Americans, and of the very small contingent of Indians as the original true Americans. We are different in blood and in tradition. Our mental constitution is not the same although we are all Americans, and I know more about a man if I hear him spoken of as an Afro-American or an Anglo-American or a German-American. In this latter sense the hyphenated designation is perfectly justified and it would be positively foolish to forbid distinctions of this kind.

In the narrow sense of the word there are very few Anglo-Americans in this country. Englishmen who settle in this country as a rule remain British. They would consider that they were surrendering a privilege if they were to give up their connection with Great Britain. The first Englishman I met in this country, when asked whether he was an American, answered with indignation, "I never foreswore my allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen!" And the same spirit of allegiance to their old country is noticeable in most Englishmen living in this country. The patriotism of the English

is a commendable trait, but at the same time I must confess that it prevents the subjects of the British empire from making desirable citizens for the United States.

The old Anglo-Americans were very different; they possessed, and many of their descendents still possess, a spirit of independence. They are also broad enough to recognize the good in other nations. They are proud of being able to trace their ancestry back to colonial days and few of them have forgotten that we owe our liberty to a struggle with Old England. They are friendly to England but not submissive. They know very well that the English people look down upon the Americans at best as third-class English. The colonials, the British subjects in the colonies, are second-class English, and when a native Englishman is kindly disposed he ranges Americans directly after these second-class English subjects, as third-class Englishmen.

There is another kind of Anglo-Americans who object to being third-class Englishmen. They are Anglomaniacs. Convinced of many shortcomings—especially in manners—traceable in their countrymen, they become what Professor Patten calls Britonets.¹ They ape the English and succumb to a typical disease, Anglo-mania. These people are a dangerous element in this country because they exhibit an ill-concealed tendency of submission to Great Britain and are somewhat ashamed that the thirteen colonies ever broke away from England and asserted their independence again and again. They would not have joined Washington's army and regret that there should have been the war of 1812.

I do not hesitate to regard the German-Americans, by the side of the old Americans of colonial descent and with revolutionary traditions, as the most valuable portion of American citizenship. Their merits in building up the United States have been fully recognized by historians and if they now show a discontent with our administration on account of its Britonet tendencies, exhibiting an unworthy submissiveness to the dictates of Great Britain and a positively unfair treatment of Germany, we are inclined to say that their complaints ought to be heeded. From the start the Germans have made the best and most faithful and enthusiastic citizens, but we cannot expect that they have become Americans for the purpose of assisting the American nation to serve as a catspaw for England. They came here to become citizens of an independent nation and wanted to help in building up the great humanita-

¹ See "Becoming American" by S. N. Patten in *The Open Court* of July, 1915.

rian republic of untold future possibilities, but decidedly they did not mean to become either third-class English or Britonets.

We Americans are at present subject to the latter danger and are likely to lose our chances of becoming the great republic of the future, in which the ideals of mankind shall be actualized in a higher degree than ever before.

With very rare exceptions German-Americans are good Americans, inspired by the proper spirit of American ideals, but considering their intellectual inheritance of high-minded ideals, their love of solid education, their respect for law, their insistence on liberty and regard for the rights of others, we deem it wrong to do away with the proper designation of their origin.

The objection to the hyphenated expression is justified only when the double name does not so much refer to the descent of American citizens as to a state of mind in which a man is supposed to serve two masters. Since this is the case only in the rarest possible exceptions, we see in the opposition to hyphenation a sly attempt to weaken the just criticism that at present comes from our German-American fellow citizens.

The German-Americans are right when they denounce the "neutrality" of the United States in furnishing ammunition to the Allies so as to help them kill the German soldiers in their defense of the fatherland. We have no business to support either British supremacy on the seas or the plans of the Czar in extending the muscovite dominion over Europe.

There is no need of leveling all Americans, those of colonial descent, the German-Americans, the Irish-Americans, the Latin-Americans, the Slav-Americans, and the Afro-Americans, to the indiscriminate mass of "Americans," and the suggestion to do so indicates a bad conscience. It is mainly directed against the German-Americans because they have a complaint against our administration which is Britonet (as Professor Patten would say). But the Britonets do not dare to discuss the situation openly with proper arguments, and so, with a sly trick worthy of a British diplomat like Sir Edward Grey, they transfer the issue to a field where they claim the right to silence the warning which comes from German-American quarters. They would mark it as treason if the German-American did not approve of this country's policy of helping the English in reducing Germany to defeat for a proper remuneration in dollars and cents.

Therefore we feel it advisable to declare in all honesty that we are all hyphenated Americans and shall remain so, and we hope

that in later centuries America will be proud of being the product of several different elements of European blood mixture. We do not mean to become Anglomaniacs but will build up a new nation in which, though the foundations have been laid by the Anglo-Americans, the German-American element has given to this nation the most important and most valuable addition.

The Germans of the old world have proved to mankind in the present world war that in spite of being more than six times outnumbered by their enemies they hold their own, and there is no chance that they will be crushed or defeated by the allied powers. Their admirable efficiency in their peaceful pursuits is fully equalled by an efficiency in battle, and the time will come when we Americans will deem it advisable, yea indispensable, to imitate their institutions, their methods of civil service, their methods of education, their inventions in industrial spheres, their progress in science, in music and other arts. The proof of German efficiency, of their superiority in almost every respect, is manifest and our fellow citizens of German descent will take pride in calling themselves German-Americans.

In concluding these comments, I will sum up the result of my consideration thus: The existence of hyphenated Americans is an undeniable fact, and the condemnation of the use of hyphenated names takes its origin from a desire to make an important part of our population connive in violating our duties, in submitting to the policy of our country in shirking the duties of neutrality, in legalizing the enslavement of the United States under British rule and in serving British interests—in a word, in changing our republic into a British dependency.