Principles of politics from the viewpoint of the American citizen

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PRINCIPLES OF POLITICS
FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE AMERICAN CITIZEN

BY

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TO

MY STUDENTS OF POLITICS
WHO HAVE GREATLY ASSISTED ME
BY THEIR HELPFUL QUESTIONS
AND SUGGESTIONS
PREFACE

It is the purpose of this volume to explain as simply as possible from the viewpoint of the thoughtful American citizen the principles by which political action is in the main guided in the United States and in other countries similarly situated. This material was prepared originally as a course of lectures to be given on the George Bluementhal Foundation at Columbia University in the fall and winter of 1907. The lectures are printed substantially as given, so far as substance and arrangement are concerned. If in any way they are to be distinguished from other writings on similar topics, it is in the effort to bring into closer touch than is usual the work of the scholar and of the practical man of affairs. Too often students in our Universities take the courses in economics and in politics without becoming fully conscious of the fact that the topics that they are studying are those which concern actual living conditions, and that if they are thoroughly understood they may prove helpful later in the business of life. Unfortunately, the men who write books on economic and political topics too frequently base their studies only on other books written by men who likewise have not had practical experience. In consequence, such studies at times lack touch with actual life. On the other hand, the men who do business and those who are active in guiding the affairs of state comparatively seldom write out in detail their methods of work and the principles by which their activities are guided. In the preparation of this work, while it has been the
intention not to neglect the books that have been written on the subject, more material has been secured from men engaged in the practical work of politics and from a somewhat long experience in the observation of political affairs.

The topics here treated have been discussed for many years with students in the classroom as well as with citizens of many types who are interested in public questions. I hope that the work may prove helpful to citizens, especially to our young citizens who are ambitious to play a part in politics, in making clear and impartial their own outlook on life, and in enabling them to fix thoroughly and wisely the principles by which their own political activity may be guided.

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Cornell University,
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