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SOUTHEAST PA CHESTERTON SOCIETY READING PACKET

EXCERPTS FROM:



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WHAT IS AMERICA?

I have never managed to lose my old conviction that travel narrows the mind. At least a man must make a double effort of moral humility and imaginative energy to prevent it from narrowing his mind. Indeed there is something touching and even tragic about the thought of the thoughtless tourist, who might have stayed at home loving Laplanders, embracing Chinamen, and clasping Patagonians to his heart in Hampstead or Surbiton, but for his blind and suicidal impulse to go and see what they looked like. This is not meant for nonsense; still less is it meant for the silliest sort of nonsense, which is cynicism. The human bond that he feels at home is not an illusion. On the contrary, it is rather an inner reality. Man is inside all men. In a real sense any man may be inside any men. But to travel is to leave the inside and draw dangerously near the outside. So long as he thought of men in the abstract, like naked toiling figures in some classic frieze, merely as those who labour and love their children and die, he was thinking the fundamental truth about them. By going to look at their unfamiliar manners and customs he is inviting them to disguise themselves in fantastic masks and costumes. Many modern internationalists talk as if men of different nationalities had only to meet and mix and understand each other. In reality that is the moment of supreme danger—the moment when they meet. We might shiver, as at the old euphemism by which a meeting meant a duel.

Travel ought to combine amusement with instruction; but most travellers are so much amused that they refuse to be instructed. I do not blame them for being amused; it is perfectly natural to be amused at a Dutchman for being Dutch or a Chinaman for being Chinese. Where they are wrong is that they take their own amusement seriously. They base on it their serious ideas of international instruction. It was said that the Englishman takes his pleasures sadly; and the pleasure of despising foreigners is one which he takes most sadly of all. He comes to scoff and does not remain to pray, but rather to excommunicate. Hence in international relations there is far too little laughing, and far too much sneering. But I believe that there is a better way which largely consists of laughter; a form of friendship between nations which is actually founded on differences. To hint at some such better way is the only excuse of this book.

Let me begin my American impressions with two impressions I had before I went to America. One was an incident and the other an idea; and when taken together they illustrate the attitude I mean. The first principle is that nobody should be ashamed of thinking a thing funny because it is foreign; the second is that he should be ashamed of thinking it wrong because it is funny. The reaction of his senses and superficial habits of mind against something new, and to him abnormal, is a perfectly healthy reaction. But the mind which imagines that mere unfamiliarity can possibly prove anything about inferiority is a very inadequate mind. It is inadequate even in criticising things that may really be inferior to the things involved here. It is far better to laugh at a negro for having a black face than to sneer at him for having a sloping skull. It is proportionally even more preferable to laugh rather than judge in dealing with highly civilized peoples. Therefore I put at the beginning two working examples of what I felt about America before I saw it; the sort of thing that a man has a right to enjoy as a joke, and

the sort of thing he has a duty to understand and respect, because it is the explanation of the joke.

When I went to the American consulate to regularise my passports, I was capable of expecting the American consulate to be American. Embassies and consulates are by tradition like islands of the soil for which they stand; and I have often found the tradition corresponding to a truth. I have seen the unmistakable French official living on omelettes and a little wine and serving his sacred abstractions under the last palm-trees fringing a desert. In the heat and noise of quarrelling Turks and Egyptians, I have come suddenly, as with the cool shock of his own shower-bath, on the listless amiability of the English gentleman. The officials I interviewed were very American, especially in being very polite; for whatever may have been the mood or meaning of Martin Chuzzlewit, I have always found Americans by far the politest people in the world. They put in my hands a form to be filled up, to all appearance like other forms I had filled up in other passport offices. But in reality it was very different from any form I had ever filled up in my life. At least it was a little like a freer form of the game called 'Confessions' which my friends and I invented in our youth; an examination paper containing questions like, 'If you saw a rhinoceros in the front garden, what would you do?' One of my friends, I remember, wrote, 'Take the pledge.' But that is another story, and might bring Mr. Pussyfoot Johnson on the scene before his time.

One of the questions on the paper was, 'Are you an anarchist?' To which a detached philosopher would naturally feel inclined to answer, 'What the devil has that to do with you? Are you an atheist?' along with some playful efforts to cross-examine the official about what constitutes an ἀρχή [Greek: archê]. Then there was the question, 'Are you in favour of subverting the government of the United States by force?' Against this I should write, 'I prefer to answer that question at the end of my tour and not the beginning.' The inquisitor, in his more than morbid curiosity, had then written down, 'Are you a polygamist?' The answer to this is, 'No such luck' or 'Not such a fool,' according to our experience of the other sex. But perhaps a better answer would be that given to W. T. Stead when he circulated the rhetorical question, 'Shall I slay my brother Boer?'—the answer that ran, 'Never interfere in family matters.' But among many things that amused me almost to the point of treating the form thus disrespectfully, the most amusing was the thought of the ruthless outlaw who should feel compelled to treat it respectfully. I like to think of the foreign desperado, seeking to slip into America with official papers under official protection, and sitting down to write with a beautiful gravity, 'I am an anarchist. I hate you all and wish to destroy you.' Or, 'I intend to subvert by force the government of the United States as soon as possible, sticking the long sheath-knife in my left trouser-pocket into Mr. Harding at the earliest opportunity.' Or again, 'Yes, I am a polygamist all right, and my forty-seven wives are accompanying me on the voyage disguised as secretaries.' There seems to be a certain simplicity of mind about these answers; and it is reassuring to know that anarchists and polygamists are so pure and good that the police have only to ask them questions and they are certain to tell no lies.

Now that is a model of the sort of foreign practice, founded on foreign problems, at which a man's first impulse is naturally to laugh. Nor have I any intention of apologising for my

laughter. A man is perfectly entitled to laugh at a thing because he happens to find it incomprehensible. What he has no right to do is to laugh at it as incomprehensible, and then criticise it as if he comprehended it. The very fact of its unfamiliarity and mystery ought to set him thinking about the deeper causes that make people so different from himself, and that without merely assuming that they must be inferior to himself.

Superficially this is rather a queer business. It would be easy enough to suggest that in this America has introduced a quite abnormal spirit of inquisition; an interference with liberty unknown among all the ancient despotisms and aristocracies. About that there will be something to be said later; but superficially it is true that this degree of officialism is comparatively unique. In a journey which I took only the year before I had occasion to have my papers passed by governments which many worthy people in the West would vaguely identify with corsairs and assassins; I have stood on the other side of Jordan, in the land ruled by a rude Arab chief, where the police looked so like brigands that one wondered what the brigands looked like. But they did not ask me whether I had come to subvert the power of the Shereef; and they did not exhibit the faintest curiosity about my personal views on the ethical basis of civil authority. These ministers of ancient Moslem despotism did not care about whether I was an anarchist; and naturally would not have minded if I had been a polygamist. The Arab chief was probably a polygamist himself. These slaves of Asiatic autocracy were content, in the old liberal fashion, to judge me by my actions; they did not inquire into my thoughts. They held their power as limited to the limitation of practice; they did not forbid me to hold a theory. It would be easy to argue here that Western democracy persecutes where even Eastern despotism tolerates or emancipates. It would be easy to develop the fancy that, as compared with the sultans of Turkey or Egypt, the American Constitution is a thing like the Spanish Inquisition.

Only the traveller who stops at that point is totally wrong; and the traveller only too often does stop at that point. He has found something to make him laugh, and he will not suffer it to make him think. And the remedy is not to unsay what he has said, not even, so to speak, to unlaugh what he has laughed, not to deny that there is something unique and curious about this American inquisition into our abstract opinions, but rather to continue the train of thought, and follow the admirable advice of Mr. H. G. Wells, who said, 'It is not much good thinking of a thing unless you think it out.' It is not to deny that American officialism is rather peculiar on this point, but to inquire what it really is which makes America peculiar, or which is peculiar to America. In short, it is to get some ultimate idea of what America is; and the answer to that question will reveal something much deeper and grander and more worthy of our intelligent interest.

It may have seemed something less than a compliment to compare the American Constitution to the Spanish Inquisition. But oddly enough, it does involve a truth; and still more oddly perhaps, it does involve a compliment. The American Constitution does resemble the Spanish Inquisition in this: that it is founded on a creed. America is the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed. That creed is set forth with dogmatic and even theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence; perhaps the only piece of practical politics that is also

theoretical politics and also great literature. It enunciates that all men are equal in their claim to justice, that governments exist to give them that justice, and that their authority is for that reason just. It certainly does condemn anarchism, and it does also by inference condemn atheism, since it clearly names the Creator as the ultimate authority from whom these equal rights are derived. Nobody expects a modern political system to proceed logically in the application of such dogmas, and in the matter of God and Government it is naturally God whose claim is taken more lightly. The point is that there is a creed, if not about divine, at least about human things.

Now a creed is at once the broadest and the narrowest thing in the world. In its nature it is as broad as its scheme for a brotherhood of all men. In its nature it is limited by its definition of the nature of all men. This was true of the Christian Church, which was truly said to exclude neither Jew nor Greek, but which did definitely substitute something else for Jewish religion or Greek philosophy. It was truly said to be a net drawing in of all kinds; but a net of a certain pattern, the pattern of Peter the Fisherman. And this is true even of the most disastrous distortions or degradations of that creed; and true among others of the Spanish Inquisition. It may have been narrow touching theology, it could not confess to being narrow about nationality or ethnology. The Spanish Inquisition might be admittedly Inquisitorial; but the Spanish Inquisition could not be merely Spanish. Such a Spaniard, even when he was narrower than his own creed, had to be broader than his own empire. He might burn a philosopher because he was heterodox; but he must accept a barbarian because he was orthodox. And we see, even in modern times, that the same Church which is blamed for making sages heretics is also blamed for making savages priests. Now in a much vaguer and more evolutionary fashion, there is something of the same idea at the back of the great American experiment; the experiment of a democracy of diverse races which has been compared to a melting-pot. But even that metaphor implies that the pot itself is of a certain shape and a certain substance; a pretty solid substance. The melting-pot must not melt. The original shape was traced on the lines of Jeffersonian democracy; and it will remain in that shape until it becomes shapeless. America invites all men to become citizens; but it implies the dogma that there is such a thing as citizenship. Only, so far as its primary ideal is concerned, its exclusiveness is religious because it is not racial. The missionary can condemn a cannibal, precisely because he cannot condemn a Sandwich Islander. And in something of the same spirit the American may exclude a polygamist, precisely because he cannot exclude a Turk.

Now for America this is no idle theory. It may have been theoretical, though it was thoroughly sincere, when that great Virginian gentleman declared it in surroundings that still had something of the character of an English countryside. It is not merely theoretical now. There is nothing to prevent America being literally invaded by Turks, as she is invaded by Jews or Bulgars. In the most exquisitely inconsequent of the Bab Ballads, we are told concerning Pasha Bailey Ben:—

*One morning knocked at half-past eight
A tall Red Indian at his gate.*

*In Turkey, as you 'r' p'raps aware,
Red Indians are extremely rare.*

But the converse need by no means be true. There is nothing in the nature of things to prevent an emigration of Turks increasing and multiplying on the plains where the Red Indians wandered; there is nothing to necessitate the Turks being extremely rare. The Red Indians, alas, are likely to be rarer. And as I much prefer Red Indians to Turks, not to mention Jews, I speak without prejudice; but the point here is that America, partly by original theory and partly by historical accident, does lie open to racial admixtures which most countries would think incongruous or comic. That is why it is only fair to read any American definitions or rules in a certain light, and relatively to a rather unique position. It is not fair to compare the position of those who may meet Turks in the back street with that of those who have never met Turks except in the Bab Ballads. It is not fair simply to compare America with England in its regulations about] the Turk. In short, it is not fair to do what almost every Englishman probably does; to look at the American international examination paper, and laugh and be satisfied with saying, 'We don't have any of that nonsense in England.'

We do not have any of that nonsense in England because we have never attempted to have any of that philosophy in England. And, above all, because we have the enormous advantage of feeling it natural to be national, because there is nothing else to be. England in these days is not well governed; England is not well educated; England suffers from wealth and poverty that are not well distributed. But England is English; esto perpetua. England is English as France is French or Ireland Irish; the great mass of men taking certain national traditions for granted. Now this gives us a totally different and a very much easier task. We have not got an inquisition, because we have not got a creed; but it is arguable that we do not need a creed, because we have got a character. In any of the old nations the national unity is preserved by the national type. Because we have a type we do not need to have a test.

Take that innocent question, 'Are you an anarchist?' which is intrinsically quite as impudent as 'Are you an optimist?' or 'Are you a philanthropist?' I am not discussing here whether these things are right, but whether most of us are in a position to know them rightly. Now it is quite true that most Englishmen do not find it necessary to go about all day asking each other whether they are anarchists. It is quite true that the phrase occurs on no British forms that I have seen. But this is not only because most of the Englishmen are not anarchists. It is even more] because even the anarchists are Englishmen. For instance, it would be easy to make fun of the American formula by noting that the cap would fit all sorts of bald academic heads. It might well be maintained that Herbert Spencer was an anarchist. It is practically certain that Auberon Herbert was an anarchist. But Herbert Spencer was an extraordinarily typical Englishman of the Nonconformist middle class. And Auberon Herbert was an extraordinarily typical English aristocrat of the old and genuine aristocracy. Every one knew in his heart that the squire would not throw a bomb at the Queen, and the Nonconformist would not throw a bomb at anybody. Every one knew that there was something subconscious in a man like Auberon Herbert, which would have come out only in throwing bombs at the enemies of England; as it did come out in his son and namesake, the generous and unforgotten, who fell flinging bombs from the sky far beyond the German line. Every one

knows that normally, in the last resort, the English gentleman is patriotic. Every one knows that the English Nonconformist is national even when he denies that he is patriotic. Nothing is more notable indeed than the fact that nobody is more stamped with the mark of his own nation than the man who says that there ought to be no nations. Somebody called Cobden the International Man; but no man could be more English than Cobden. Everybody recognises Tolstoy as the iconoclast of all patriotism; but nobody could be more Russian than Tolstoy. In the old countries where there are these national types, the types may be allowed to hold any theories. Even if they hold certain theories, they are unlikely to do certain things. So the conscientious objector, in the English sense,] may be and is one of the peculiar by-products of England. But the conscientious objector will probably have a conscientious objection to throwing bombs.

Now I am very far from intending to imply that these American tests are good tests, or that there is no danger of tyranny becoming the temptation of America. I shall have something to say later on about that temptation or tendency. Nor do I say that they apply consistently this conception of a nation with the soul of a church, protected by religious and not racial selection. If they did apply that principle consistently, they would have to exclude pessimists and rich cynics who deny the democratic ideal; an excellent thing but a rather improbable one. What I say is that when we realise that this principle exists at all, we see the whole position in a totally different perspective. We say that the Americans are doing something heroic, or doing something insane, or doing it in an unworkable or unworthy fashion, instead of simply wondering what the devil they are doing.

When we realise the democratic design of such a cosmopolitan commonwealth, and compare it with our insular reliance or instincts, we see at once why such a thing has to be not only democratic but dogmatic. We see why in some points it tends to be inquisitive or intolerant. Any one can see the practical point by merely transferring into private life a problem like that of the two academic anarchists, who might by a coincidence be called the two Herberts. Suppose a man said, 'Buffle, my old Oxford tutor, wants to meet you; I wish you'd ask him down for a day or two. He has the oddest opinions, but he's very stimulating.' It would not occur to us that the oddity of the Oxford] don's opinions would lead him to blow up the house; because the Oxford don is an English type. Suppose somebody said, 'Do let me bring old Colonel Robinson down for the week-end; he's a bit of a crank but quite interesting.' We should not anticipate the colonel running amuck with a carving-knife and offering up human sacrifice in the garden; for these are not among the daily habits of an old English colonel; and because we know his habits, we do not care about his opinions. But suppose somebody offered to bring a person from the interior of Kamskatka to stay with us for a week or two, and added that his religion was a very extraordinary religion, we should feel a little more inquisitive about what kind of religion it was. If somebody wished to add a Hairy Ainu to the family party at Christmas, explaining that his point of view was so individual and interesting, we should want to know a little more about it and him. We should be tempted to draw up as fantastic an examination paper as that presented to the emigrant going to America. We should ask what a Hairy Ainu was, and how hairy he was, and above all what sort of Ainu he was. Would etiquette require us to ask him to bring his wife? And if we did ask him to bring his

wife, how many wives would he bring? In short, as in the American formula, is he a polygamist? Merely as a point of housekeeping and accommodation the question is not irrelevant. Is the Hairy AINU content with hair, or does he wear any clothes? If the police insist on his wearing clothes, will he recognise the authority of the police? In short, as in the American formula, is he an anarchist?

Of course this generalisation about America, like other historical things, is subject to all sorts of cross] divisions and exceptions, to be considered in their place. The negroes are a special problem, because of what white men in the past did to them. The Japanese are a special problem, because of what men fear that they in the future may do to white men. The Jews are a special problem, because of what they and the Gentiles, in the past, present, and future, seem to have the habit of doing to each other. But the point is not that nothing exists in America except this idea; it is that nothing like this idea exists anywhere except in America. This idea is not internationalism; on the contrary it is decidedly nationalism. The Americans are very patriotic, and wish to make their new citizens patriotic Americans. But it is the idea of making a new nation literally out of any old nation that comes along. In a word, what is unique is not America but what is called Americanisation. We understand nothing till we understand the amazing ambition to Americanise the Kamskatkan and the Hairy AINU. We are not trying to Anglicise thousands of French cooks or Italian organ-grinders. France is not trying to Gallicise thousands of English trippers or German prisoners of war. America is the one place in the world where this process, healthy or unhealthy, possible or impossible, is going on. And the process, as I have pointed out, is not internationalisation. It would be truer to say it is the nationalisation of the internationalized. It is making a home out of vagabonds and a nation out of exiles. This is what at once illuminates and softens the moral regulations which we may really think faddist or fanatical. They are abnormal; but in one sense this experiment of a home for the homeless is abnormal. In short, it has long been recognized that America was an asylum. It is] only since Prohibition that it has looked a little like a lunatic asylum.

It was before sailing for America, as I have said, that I stood with the official paper in my hand and these thoughts in my head. It was while I stood on English soil that I passed through the two stages of smiling and then sympathising; of realising that my momentary amusement, at being asked if I were not an Anarchist, was partly due to the fact that I was not an American. And in truth I think there are some things a man ought to know about America before he sees it. What we know of a country beforehand may not affect what we see that it is; but it will vitally affect what we appreciate it for being, because it will vitally affect what we expect it to be. I can honestly say that I had never expected America to be what nine-tenths of the newspaper critics invariably assume it to be. I never thought it was a sort of Anglo-Saxon colony, knowing that it was more and more thronged with crowds of very different colonists. During the war I felt that the very worst propaganda for the Allies was the propaganda for the Anglo-Saxons. I tried to point out that in one way America is nearer to Europe than England is. If she is not nearer to Bulgaria, she is nearer to Bulgars; if she is not nearer to Bohemia, she is nearer to Bohemians. In my New York hotel the head waiter in the dining-room was a Bohemian; the head waiter in the grill-room was a Bulgar. Americans have

nationalities at the end of the street which for us are at the ends of the earth. I did my best to persuade my countrymen not to appeal to the American as if he were a rather dowdy Englishman, who had been rusticated in the provinces and had not heard the latest news about the] town. I shall record later some of those arresting realities which the traveller does not expect; and which, in some cases I fear, he actually does not see because he does not expect. I shall try to do justice to the psychology of what Mr. Belloc has called 'Eye-Openers in Travel.' But there are some things about America that a man ought to see even with his eyes shut. One is that a state that came into existence solely through its repudiation and abhorrence of the British Crown is not likely to be a respectful copy of the British Constitution. Another is that the chief mark of the Declaration of Independence is something that is not only absent from the British Constitution, but something which all our constitutionalists have invariably thanked God, with the jolliest boasting and bragging, that they had kept out of the British Constitution. It is the thing called abstraction or academic logic. It is the thing which such jolly people call theory; and which those who can practise it call thought. And the theory or thought is the very last to which English people are accustomed, either by their social structure or their traditional teaching. It is the theory of equality. It is the pure classic conception that no man must aspire to be anything more than a citizen, and that no man should endure to be anything less. It is by no means especially intelligible to an Englishman, who tends at his best to the virtues of the gentleman and at his worst to the vices of the snob. The idealism of England, or if you will the romance of England, has not been primarily the romance of the citizen. But the idealism of America, we may safely say, still revolves entirely round the citizen and his romance. The realities are quite another matter, and we shall consider in its place the] question of whether the ideal will be able to shape the realities or will merely be beaten shapeless by them. The ideal is besieged by inequalities of the most towering and insane description in the industrial and economic field. It may be devoured by modern capitalism, perhaps the worst inequality that ever existed among men. Of all that we shall speak later. But citizenship is still the American ideal; there is an army of actualities opposed to that ideal; but there is no ideal opposed to that ideal. American plutocracy has never got itself respected like English aristocracy. Citizenship is the American ideal; and it has never been the English ideal. But it is surely an ideal that may stir some imaginative generosity and respect in an Englishman, if he will condescend to be also a man. In this vision of moulding many peoples into the visible image of the citizen, he may see a spiritual adventure which he can admire from the outside, at least as much as he admires the valour of the Moslems and much more than he admires the virtues of the Middle Ages. He need not set himself to develop equality, but he need not set himself to misunderstand it. He may at least understand what Jefferson and Lincoln meant, and he may possibly find some assistance in this task by reading what they said. He may realise that equality is not some crude fairy tale about all men being equally tall or equally tricky; which we not only cannot believe but cannot believe in anybody believing. It is an absolute of morals by which all men have a value invariable and indestructible and a dignity as intangible as death. He may at least be a philosopher and see that equality is an idea; and not merely one of these soft-headed sceptics who, having risen by low tricks to high places, drink bad] champagne in tawdry hotel lounges, and tell each other twenty times over, with unwearied iteration, that equality is an illusion.

In truth it is inequality that is the illusion. The extreme disproportion between men, that we seem to see in life, is a thing of changing lights and lengthening shadows, a twilight full of fancies and distortions. We find a man famous and cannot live long enough to find him forgotten; we see a race dominant and cannot linger to see it decay. It is the experience of men that always returns to the equality of men; it is the average that ultimately justifies the average man. It is when men have seen and suffered much and come at the end of more elaborate experiments, that they see men as men under an equal light of death and daily laughter; and none the less mysterious for being many. Nor is it in vain that these Western democrats have sought the blazonry of their flag in that great multitude of immortal lights that endure behind the fires we see, and gathered them into the corner of Old Glory whose ground is like the glittering night. For veritably, in the spirit as well as in the symbol, suns and moons and meteors pass and fill our skies with a fleeting and almost theatrical conflagration; and wherever the old shadow stoops upon the earth, the stars return.

A MEDITATION IN A NEW YORK HOTEL

All this must begin with an apology and not an apologia. When I went wandering about the States disguised as a lecturer, I was well aware that I was not sufficiently well disguised to be a spy. I was even in the worst possible position to be a sight-seer. A lecturer to American audiences can hardly be in the holiday mood of a sight-seer. It is rather the audience that is sight-seeing; even if it is seeing a rather melancholy sight. Some say that people come to see the lecturer and not to hear him; in which case it seems rather a pity that he should disturb and distress their minds with a lecture. He might merely display himself on a stand or platform for a stipulated sum; or be exhibited like a monster in a menagerie. The circus elephant is not expected to make a speech. But it is equally true that the circus elephant is not allowed to write a book. His impressions of travel would be somewhat sketchy and perhaps a little over-specialized. In merely travelling from circus to circus he would, so to speak, move in rather narrow circles. Jumbo the great elephant (with whom I am hardly so ambitious as to compare myself), before he eventually went to the Barnum show, passed a considerable and I trust happy part of his life in Regent's Park. But if he had written a book on England, founded on his impressions of the Zoo, it might have been a little disproportionate and even misleading in] its version of the flora and fauna of that country. He might imagine that lions and leopards were commoner than they are in our hedgerows and country lanes, or that the head and neck of a giraffe was as native to our landscapes as a village spire. And that is why I apologise in anticipation for a probable lack of proportion in this work. Like the elephant, I may have seen too much of a special enclosure where a special sort of lions are gathered together. I may exaggerate the territorial, as distinct from the vertical space occupied by the spiritual giraffe; for the giraffe may surely be regarded as an example of Uplift, and is even, in a manner of speaking, a high-brow. Above all, I shall probably make generalisations that are much too general; and are insufficient through being exaggerative. To this sort of doubt all my impressions are subject; and among them the negative generalisation with which I shall begin this rambling meditation on American hotels.

In all my American wanderings I never saw such a thing as an inn. They may exist; but they do not arrest the traveller upon every road as they do in England and in Europe. The saloons no longer existed when I was there, owing to the recent reform which restricted intoxicants to the wealthier classes. But we feel that the saloons have been there; if one may so express it, their absence is still present. They remain in the structure of the street and the idiom of the language. But the saloons were not inns. If they had been inns, it would have been far harder even for the power of modern plutocracy to root them out. There will be a very different chase when the White Hart is hunted to the forests or when the Red Lion turns to bay. But people could not feel about the] American saloon as they will feel about the English inns. They could not feel that the Prohibitionist, that vulgar chucker-out, was chucking Chaucer out of the Tabard and Shakespeare out of the Mermaid. In justice to the American Prohibitionists it must be realized that they were not doing quite such desecration; and that many of them felt the saloon a specially poisonous sort of place. They did feel that drinking-places were used only as drug-shops. So they have effected the great reconstruction, by which it will be

necessary to use only drug-shops as drinking-places. But I am not dealing here with the problem of Prohibition except in so far as it is involved in the statement that the saloons were in no sense inns. Secondly, of course, there are the hotels. There are indeed. There are hotels toppling to the stars, hotels covering the acreage of villages, hotels in multitudinous number like a mob of Babylonian or Assyrian monuments; but the hotels also are not inns.

Broadly speaking, there is only one hotel in America. The pattern of it, which is a very rational pattern, is repeated in cities as remote from each other as the capitals of European empires. You may find that hotel rising among the red blooms of the warm spring woods of Nebraska, or whitened with Canadian snows near the eternal noise of Niagara. And before touching on this solid and simple pattern itself, I may remark that the same system of symmetry runs through all the details of the interior. As one hotel is like another hotel, so one hotel floor is like another hotel floor. If the passage outside your bedroom door, or hallway as it is called, contains, let us say, a small table with a green vase and a stuffed flamingo, or some trifle of the sort, you may be perfectly certain that] there is exactly the same table, vase, and flamingo on every one of the thirty-two landings of that towering habitation. This is where it differs most perhaps from the crooked landings and unexpected levels of the old English inns, even when they call themselves hotels. To me there was something weird, like a magic multiplication, in the exquisite sameness of these suites. It seemed to suggest the still atmosphere of some eerie psychological story. I once myself entertained the notion of a story, in which a man was to be prevented from entering his house (the scene of some crime or calamity) by people who painted and furnished the next house to look exactly like it; the assimilation going to the most fantastic lengths, such as altering the numbering of houses in the street. I came to America and found an hotel fitted and upholstered throughout for the enactment of my phantasmal fraud. I offer the skeleton of my story with all humility to some of the admirable lady writers of detective stories in America, to Miss Carolyn Wells, or Miss Mary Roberts Rhinehart, or Mrs. A. K. Green of the unforgotten Leavenworth Case. Surely it might be possible for the unsophisticated Nimrod K. Moose, of Yellow Dog Flat, to come to New York and be entangled somehow in this net of repetitions or recurrences. Surely something tells me that his beautiful daughter, the Rose of Red Murder Gulch, might seek for him in vain amid the apparently unmistakable surroundings of the thirty-second floor, while he was being quietly butchered by the floor-clerk on the thirty-third floor, an agent of the Green Claw (that formidable organisation); and all because the two floors looked exactly alike to the virginal Western eye. The original point of my own story was] that the man to be entrapped walked into his own house after all, in spite of it being differently painted and numbered, simply because he was absent-minded and used to taking a certain number of mechanical steps. This would not work in the hotel; because a lift has no habits. It is typical of the real tameness of machinery, that even when we talk of a man turning mechanically we only talk metaphorically; for it is something that a mechanism cannot do. But I think there is only one real objection to my story of Mr. Moose in the New York hotel. And that is unfortunately a rather fatal one. It is that far away in the remote desolation of Yellow Dog, among those outlying and outlandish rocks that almost seem to rise beyond the sunset, there is undoubtedly an hotel of exactly the same sort, with all its floors exactly the same.

Anyhow the general plan of the American hotel is commonly the same, and, as I have said, it is a very sound one so far as it goes. When I first went into one of the big New York hotels, the first impression was certainly its bigness. It was called the Biltmore; and I wondered how many national humorists had made the obvious comment of wishing they had built less. But it was not merely the Babylonian size and scale of such things, it was the way in which they are used. They are used almost as public streets, or rather as public squares. My first impression was that I was in some sort of high street or market-place during a carnival or a revolution. True, the people looked rather rich for a revolution and rather grave for a carnival; but they were congested in great crowds that moved slowly like people passing through an overcrowded railway station. Even in the dizzy heights of such a sky-scraper there could not possibly be room] for all those people to sleep in the hotel, or even to dine in it. And, as a matter of fact, they did nothing whatever except drift into it and drift out again. Most of them had no more to do with the hotel than I have with Buckingham Palace. I have never been in Buckingham Palace, and I have very seldom, thank God, been in the big hotels of this type that exist in London or Paris. But I cannot believe that mobs are perpetually pouring through the Hotel Cecil or the Savoy in this fashion, calmly coming in at one door and going out of the other. But this fact is part of the fundamental structure of the American hotel; it is built upon a compromise that makes it possible. The whole of the lower floor is thrown open to the public streets and treated as a public square. But above it and all round it runs another floor in the form of a sort of deep gallery, furnished more luxuriously and looking down on the moving mobs beneath. No one is allowed on this floor except the guests or clients of the hotel. As I have been one of them myself, I trust it is not unsympathetic to compare them to active anthropoids who can climb trees, and so look down in safety on the herds or packs of wilder animals wandering and prowling below. Of course there are modifications of this architectural plan, but they are generally approximations to it; it is the plan that seems to suit the social life of the American cities. There is generally something like a ground floor that is more public, a half-floor or gallery above that is more private, and above that the bulk of the block of bedrooms, the huge hive with its innumerable and identical cells.

The ladder of ascent in this tower is of course the lift, or, as it is called, the elevator. With all that we] hear of American hustle and hurry it is rather strange that Americans seem to like more than we do to linger upon long words. And indeed there is an element of delay in their diction and spirit, very little understood, which I may discuss elsewhere. Anyhow they say elevator when we say lift, just as they say automobile when we say motor and stenographer when we say typist, or sometimes (by a slight confusion) typewriter. Which reminds me of another story that never existed, about a man who was accused of having murdered and dismembered his secretary when he had only taken his typing machine to pieces; but we must not dwell on these digressions. The Americans may have another reason for giving long and ceremonious titles to the lift. When first I came among them I had a suspicion that they possessed and practized a new and secret religion, which was the cult of the elevator. I fancied they worshipped the lift, or at any rate worshipped in the lift. The details or data of this suspicion it were now vain to collect, as I have regretfully abandoned it, except in so far as they illustrate the social principles underlying the structural plan of the building. Now an

American gentleman invariably takes off his hat in the lift. He does not take off his hat in the hotel, even if it is crowded with ladies. But he always so salutes a lady in the elevator; and this marks the difference of atmosphere. The lift is a room, but the hotel is a street. But during my first delusion, of course, I assumed that he uncovered in this tiny temple merely because he was in church. There is something about the very word elevator that expresses a great deal of his vague but idealistic religion. Perhaps that flying chapel will eventually be ritualistically decorated like a chapel;] possibly with a symbolic scheme of wings. Perhaps a brief religious service will be held in the elevator as it ascends; in a few well-chosen words touching the Utmost for the Highest. Possibly he would consent even to call the elevator a lift, if he could call it an uplift. There would be no difficulty, except what I cannot but regard as the chief moral problem of all optimistic modernism. I mean the difficulty of imagining a lift which is free to go up, if it is not also free to go down.

I think I know my American friends and acquaintances too well to apologise for any levity in these illustrations. Americans make fun of their own institutions; and their own journalism is full of such fanciful conjectures. The tall building is itself artistically akin to the tall story. The very word sky-scraper is an admirable example of an American lie. But I can testify quite as eagerly to the solid and sensible advantages of the symmetrical hotel. It is not only a pattern of vases and stuffed flamingoes; it is also an equally accurate pattern of cupboards and baths. It is a dignified and humane custom to have a bathroom attached to every bedroom; and my impulse to sing the praises of it brought me once at least into a rather quaint complication. I think it was in the city of Dayton; anyhow I remember there was a Laundry Convention going on in the same hotel, in a room very patriotically and properly festooned with the stars and stripes, and doubtless full of promise for the future of laundering. I was interviewed on the roof, within earshot of this debate, and may have been the victim of some association or confusion; anyhow, after answering the usual questions about Labour, the League of Nations, the length of ladies' dresses, and other great matters, I took refuge in a rhapsody of warm and well-deserved praise of American bathrooms. The editor, I understand, running a gloomy eye down the column of his contributor's 'story,' and seeing nothing but metaphysical terms such as justice, freedom, the abstract disapproval of sweating, swindling, and the like, paused at last upon the ablutionary allusion, and his eye brightened. 'That's the only copy in the whole thing,' he said, 'A Bath-Tub in Every Home.' So these words appeared in enormous letters above my portrait in the paper. It will be noted that, like many things that practical men make a great point of, they miss the point. What I had commended as new and national was a bathroom in every bedroom. Even feudal and moss-grown England is not entirely ignorant of an occasional bath-tub in the home. But what gave me great joy was what followed. I discovered with delight that many people, glancing rapidly at my portrait with its prodigious legend, imagined that it was a commercial advertisement, and that I was a very self-advertising commercial traveller. When I walked about the streets, I was supposed to be travelling in bath-tubs. Consider the caption of the portrait, and you will see how similar it is to the true commercial slogan: 'We offer a Bath-Tub in Every Home.' And this charming error was doubtless clinched by the fact that I had been found haunting the outer courts of the temple of the ancient Guild of Lavenders. I never knew how many shared the impression; I

regret to say that I only traced it with certainty in two individuals. But I understand that it included the idea that I had come to the town to attend the Laundry Convention, and had made an] eloquent speech to that senate, no doubt exhibiting my tubs.

Such was the penalty of too passionate and unrestrained an admiration for American bathrooms; yet the connection of ideas, however inconsequent, does cover the part of social practice for which these American institutions can really be praised. About everything like laundry or hot and cold water there is not only organisation, but what does not always or perhaps often go with it, efficiency. Americans are particular about these things of dress and decorum; and it is a virtue which I very seriously recognise, though I find it very hard to emulate. But with them it is a virtue; it is not a mere convention, still less a mere fashion. It is really related to human dignity rather than to social superiority. The really glorious thing about the American is that he does not dress like a gentleman; he dresses like a citizen or a civilized man. His Puritanic particularity on certain points is really detachable from any definite social ambitions; these things are not a part of getting into society but merely of keeping out of savagery. Those millions and millions of middling people, that huge middle class especially of the Middle West, are not near enough to any aristocracy even to be sham aristocrats, or to be real snobs. But their standards are secure; and though I do not really travel in a bath-tub, or believe in the bath-tub philosophy and religion, I will not on this matter recoil misanthropically from them: I prefer the tub of Dayton to the tub of Diogenes. On these points there is really something a million times better than efficiency, and that is something like equality.

In short, the American hotel is not America; but it is American. In some respects it is as American] as the English inn is English. And it is symbolic of that society in this among other things: that it does tend too much to uniformity; but that that very uniformity disguises not a little natural dignity. The old Romans boasted that their republic was a nation of kings. If we really walked abroad in such a kingdom, we might very well grow tired of the sight of a crowd of kings, of every man with a gold crown on his head or an ivory sceptre in his hand. But it is arguable that we ought not to grow tired of the repetition of crowns and sceptres, any more than of the repetition of flowers and stars. The whole imaginative effort of Walt Whitman was really an effort to absorb and animate these multitudinous modern repetitions; and Walt Whitman would be quite capable of including in his lyric litany of optimism a list of the nine hundred and ninety-nine identical bathrooms. I do not sneer at the generous effort of the giant; though I think, when all is said, that it is a criticism of modern machinery that the effort should be gigantic as well as generous.

While there is so much repetition there is little repose. It is the pattern of a kaleidoscope rather than a wall-paper; a pattern of figures running and even leaping like the figures in a zoetrope. But even in the groups where there was no hustle there was often something of homelessness. I do not mean merely that they were not dining at home; but rather that they were not at home even when dining, and dining at their favourite hotel. They would frequently start up and dart from the room at a summons from the telephone. It may have been fanciful, but I could not help feeling a breath of home, as from a flap or flutter of St. George's Cross, when

I first sat down in a Canadian hostelry, and read the announcement that] no such telephonic or other summonses were allowed in the dining-room. It may have been a coincidence, and there may be American hotels with this merciful proviso and Canadian hotels without it; but the thing was symbolic even if it was not evidential. I felt as if I stood indeed upon English soil, in a place where people liked to have their meals in peace.

The process of the summons is called 'paging,' and consists of sending a little boy with a large voice through all the halls and corridors of the building, making them resound with a name. The custom is common, of course, in clubs and hotels even in England; but in England it is a mere whisper compared with the wail with which the American page repeats the formula of 'Calling Mr. So and So.' I remember a particularly crowded parterre in the somewhat smoky and oppressive atmosphere of Pittsburg, through which wandered a youth with a voice the like of which I have never heard in the land of the living, a voice like the cry of a lost spirit, saying again and again for ever, 'Carling Mr. Anderson.' One felt that he never would find Mr. Anderson. Perhaps there never had been any Mr. Anderson to be found. Perhaps he and every one else wandered in an abyss of bottomless scepticism; and he was but the victim of one out of numberless nightmares of eternity, as he wandered a shadow with shadows and wailed by impassable streams. This is not exactly my philosophy, but I feel sure it was his. And it is a mood that may frequently visit the mind in the centres of highly active and successful industrial civilisation.

Such are the first idle impressions of the great American hotel, gained by sitting for the first time in its gallery and gazing on its drifting crowds with] thoughts equally drifting. The first impression is of something enormous and rather unnatural, an impression that is gradually tempered by experience of the kindness and even the tameness of so much of that social order. But I should not be recording the sensations with sincerity, if I did not touch in passing the note of something unearthly about that vast system to an insular traveller who sees it for the first time. It is as if he were wandering in another world among the fixed stars; or worse still, in an ideal Utopia of the future.

Yet I am not certain; and perhaps the best of all news is that nothing is really new. I sometimes have a fancy that many of these new things in new countries are but the resurrections of old things which have been wickedly killed or stupidly stunted in old countries. I have looked over the sea of little tables in some light and airy open-air café; and my thoughts have gone back to the plain wooden bench and wooden table that stands solitary and weather-stained outside so many neglected English inns. We talk of experimenting in the French café, as of some fresh and almost impudent innovation. But our fathers had the French café, in the sense of the free-and-easy table in the sun and air. The only difference was that French democracy was allowed to develop its café, or multiply its tables, while English plutocracy prevented any such popular growth. Perhaps there are other examples of old types and patterns, lost in the old oligarchy and saved in the new democracies. I am haunted with a hint that the new structures are not so very new; and that they remind me of something very old. As I look from the balcony floor the crowds seem to float away and the colours to soften and grow pale, and I know I am in one of the simplest] and most ancestral of human habitations. I am looking

down from the old wooden gallery upon the courtyard of an inn. This new architectural model, which I have described, is after all one of the oldest European models, now neglected in Europe and especially in England. It was the theatre in which were enacted innumerable picaresque comedies and romantic plays, with figures ranging from Sancho Panza to Sam Weller. It served as the apparatus, like some gigantic toy set up in bricks and timber, for the ancient and perhaps eternal game of tennis. The very terms of the original game were taken from the inn courtyard, and the players scored accordingly as they hit the buttery-hatch or the roof. Singular speculations hover in my mind as the scene darkens and the quadrangle below begins to empty in the last hours of night. Some day perhaps this huge structure will be found standing in a solitude like a skeleton; and it will be the skeleton of the Spotted Dog or the Blue Boar. It will wither and decay until it is worthy at last to be a tavern. I do not know whether men will play tennis on its ground floor, with various scores and prizes for hitting the electric fan, or the lift, or the head waiter. Perhaps the very words will only remain as part of some such rustic game. Perhaps the electric fan will no longer be electric and the elevator will no longer elevate, and the waiter will only wait to be hit. But at least it is only by the decay of modern plutocracy, which seems already to have begun, that the secret of the structure even of this plutocratic palace can stand revealed. And after long years, when its lights are extinguished and only the long shadows inhabit its halls and vestibules, there may come a new noise like thunder; of D'Artagnan knocking at the door.

A MEDITATION IN BROADWAY

When I had looked at the lights of Broadway by night, I made to my American friends an innocent remark that seemed for some reason to amuse them. I had looked, not without joy, at that long kaleidoscope of coloured lights arranged in large letters and sprawling trade-marks, advertising everything, from pork to pianos, through the agency of the two most vivid and most mystical of the gifts of God; colour and fire. I said to them, in my simplicity, 'What a glorious garden of wonders this would be, to any one who was lucky enough to be unable to read.'

Here it is but a text for a further suggestion. But let us suppose that there does walk down this flaming avenue a peasant, of the sort called scornfully an illiterate peasant; by those who think that insisting on people reading and writing is the best way to keep out the spies who read in all languages and the forgers who write in all hands. On this principle indeed, a peasant merely acquainted with things of little practical use to mankind, such as ploughing, cutting wood, or growing vegetables, would very probably be excluded; and it is not for us to criticise from the outside the philosophy of those who would keep out the farmer and let in the forger. But let us suppose, if only for the sake of argument, that the peasant is walking under the artificial suns and stars of this tremendous thoroughfare; that he has escaped to the land of liberty upon] some general rumour and romance of the story of its liberation, but without being yet able to understand the arbitrary signs of its alphabet. The soul of such a man would surely soar higher than the sky-scrapers, and embrace a brotherhood broader than Broadway. Realising that he had arrived on an evening of exceptional festivity, worthy to be blazoned with all this burning heraldry, he would please himself by guessing what great proclamation or principle of the Republic hung in the sky like a constellation or rippled across the street like a comet. He would be shrewd enough to guess that the three festoons fringed with fiery words of somewhat similar pattern stood for 'Government of the People, For the People, By the People'; for it must obviously be that, unless it were 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.' His shrewdness would perhaps be a little shaken if he knew that the triad stood for 'Tang Tonic To-day; Tang Tonic To-morrow; Tang Tonic All the Time.' He will soon identify a restless ribbon of red lettering, red hot and rebellious, as the saying, 'Give me liberty or give me death.' He will fail to identify it as the equally famous saying, 'Skyoline Has Gout Beaten to a Frazzle.' Therefore it was that I desired the peasant to walk down that grove of fiery trees, under all that golden foliage, and fruits like monstrous jewels, as innocent as Adam before the Fall. He would see sights almost as fine as the flaming sword or the purple and peacock plumage of the seraphim; so long as he did not go near the Tree of Knowledge.

In other words, if once he went to school it would be all up; and indeed I fear in any case he would soon discover his error. If he stood wildly waving his hat for liberty in the middle of the road as Chunk] Chutney picked itself out in ruby stars upon the sky, he would impede the excellent but extremely rigid traffic system of New York. If he fell on his knees before a sapphire splendour, and began saying an Ave Maria under a mistaken association, he would be conducted kindly but firmly by an Irish policeman to a more authentic shrine. But though the foreign simplicity might not long survive in New York, it is quite a mistake to suppose

that such foreign simplicity cannot enter New York. He may be excluded for being illiterate, but he cannot be excluded for being ignorant, nor for being innocent. Least of all can he be excluded for being wiser in his innocence than the world in its knowledge. There is here indeed more than one distinction to be made. New York is a cosmopolitan city; but it is not a city of cosmopolitans. Most of the masses in New York have a nation, whether or no it be the nation to which New York belongs. Those who are Americanized are American, and very patriotically American. Those who are not thus nationalized are not in the least internationalized. They simply continue to be themselves; the Irish are Irish; the Jews are Jewish; and all sorts of other tribes carry on the traditions of remote European valleys almost untouched. In short, there is a sort of slender bridge between their old country and their new, which they either cross or do not cross, but which they seldom simply occupy. They are exiles or they are citizens; there is no moment when they are cosmopolitans. But very often the exiles bring with them not only rooted traditions, but rooted truths.

Indeed it is to a great extent the thought of these strange souls in crude American garb that gives a meaning to the masquerade of New York. In the] hotel where I stayed the head waiter in one room was a Bohemian; and I am glad to say that he called himself a Bohemian. I have already protested sufficiently, before American audiences, against the pedantry of perpetually talking about Czecho-Slovakia. I suggested to my American friends that the abandonment of the word Bohemian in its historical sense might well extend to its literary and figurative sense. We might be expected to say, 'I'm afraid Henry has got into very Czecho-Slovakian habits lately,' or 'Don't bother to dress; it's quite a Czecho-Slovakian affair.' Anyhow my Bohemian would have nothing to do with such nonsense; he called himself a son of Bohemia, and spoke as such in his criticisms of America, which were both favourable and unfavourable. He was a squat man, with a sturdy figure and a steady smile; and his eyes were like dark pools in the depth of a darker forest, but I do not think he had ever been deceived by the lights of Broadway.

But I found something like my real innocent abroad, my real peasant among the sky-signs, in another part of the same establishment. He was a much leaner man, equally dark, with a hook nose, hungry face, and fierce black moustaches. He also was a waiter, and was in the costume of a waiter, which is a smarter edition of the costume of a lecturer. As he was serving me with clam chowder or some such thing, I fell into speech with him and he told me he was a Bulgar. I said something like, 'I'm afraid I don't know as much as I ought to about Bulgaria. I suppose most of your people are agricultural, aren't they?' He did not stir an inch from his regular attitude, but he slightly lowered his low voice and said, 'Yes. From the earth we come and to the earth we] return; when people get away from that they are lost.'

To hear such a thing said by the waiter was alone an epoch in the life of an unfortunate writer of fantastic novels. To see him clear away the clam chowder like an automaton, and bring me more iced water like an automaton or like nothing on earth except an American waiter (for piling up ice is the cold passion of their lives), and all this after having uttered something so dark and deep, so starkly incongruous and so startlingly true, was an indescribable thing, but very like the picture of the peasant admiring Broadway. So he passed, with his artificial

clothes and manners, lit up with all the ghastly artificial light of the hotel, and all the ghastly artificial life of the city; and his heart was like his own remote and rocky valley, where those unchanging words were carved as on a rock.

I do not profess to discuss here at all adequately the question this raises about the Americanisation of the Bulgar. It has many aspects, of some of which most Englishmen and even some Americans are rather unconscious. For one thing, a man with so rugged a loyalty to land could not be Americanized in New York; but it is not so certain that he could not be Americanized in America. We might almost say that a peasantry is hidden in the heart of America. So far as our impressions go, it is a secret. It is rather an open secret; covering only some thousand square miles of open prairie. But for most of our countrymen it is something invisible, unimagined, and unvisited; the simple truth that where all those acres are there is agriculture, and where all that agriculture is there is considerable tendency towards distributive or decently equalized property, as in a peasantry. On] the other hand, there are those who say that the Bulgar will never be Americanized, that he only comes to be a waiter in America that he may afford to return to be a peasant in Bulgaria. I cannot decide this issue, and indeed I did not introduce it to this end. I was led to it by a certain line of reflection that runs along the Great White Way, and I will continue to follow it. The criticism, if we could put it rightly, not only covers more than New York but more than the whole New World. Any argument against it is quite as valid against the largest and richest cities of the Old World, against London or Liverpool or Frankfort or Belfast. But it is in New York that we see the argument most clearly, because we see the thing thus towering into its own turrets and breaking into its own fireworks.

I disagree with the aesthetic condemnation of the modern city with its sky-scrapers and sky-signs. I mean that which laments the loss of beauty and its sacrifice to utility. It seems to me the very reverse of the truth. Years ago, when people used to say the Salvation Army doubtless had good intentions, but we must all deplore its methods, I pointed out that the very contrary is the case. Its method, the method of drums and democratic appeal, is that of the Franciscans or any other march of the Church Militant. It was precisely its aims that were dubious, with their dissenting morality and despotic finance. It is somewhat the same with things like the sky-signs in Broadway. The aesthete must not ask me to mingle my tears with his, because these things are merely useful and ugly. For I am not specially inclined to think them ugly; but I am strongly inclined to think them useless. As a matter of art for art's sake, they seem to me] rather artistic. As a form of practical social work they seem to me stark stupid waste. If Mr. Bilge is rich enough to build a tower four hundred feet high and give it a crown of golden crescents and crimson stars, in order to draw attention to his manufacture of the Paradise Tooth Paste or The Seventh Heaven Cigar, I do not feel the least disposition to thank him for any serious form of social service. I have never tried the Seventh Heaven Cigar; indeed a premonition moves me towards the belief that I shall go down to the dust without trying it. I have every reason to doubt whether it does any particular good to those who smoke it, or any good to anybody except those who sell it. In short Mr. Bilge's usefulness consists in being useful to Mr. Bilge, and all the rest is illusion and sentimentalism. But because I know that Bilge is only Bilge, shall I stoop to the profanity of saying that fire is only fire? Shall I

blaspheme crimson stars any more than crimson sunsets, or deny that those moons are golden any more than that this grass is green? If a child saw these coloured lights, he would dance with as much delight as at any other coloured toys; and it is the duty of every poet, and even of every critic, to dance in respectful imitation of the child. Indeed I am in a mood of so much sympathy with the fairy lights of this pantomime city, that I should be almost sorry to see social sanity and a sense of proportion return to extinguish them. I fear the day is breaking, and the broad daylight of tradition and ancient truth is coming to end all this delightful nightmare of New York at night. Peasants and priests and all sorts of practical and sensible people are coming back into power, and their stern realism may wither all these beautiful, unsubstantial,] useless things. They will not believe in the Seventh Heaven Cigar, even when they see it shining as with stars in the seventh heaven. They will not be affected by advertisements, any more than the priests and peasants of the Middle Ages would have been affected by advertisements. Only a very soft-headed, sentimental, and rather servile generation of men could possibly be affected by advertisements at all. People who are a little more hard-headed, humorous, and intellectually independent, see the rather simple joke; and are not impressed by this or any other form of self-praise. Almost any other men in almost any other age would have seen the joke. If you had said to a man in the Stone Age, 'Ugg says Ugg makes the best stone hatchets,' he would have perceived a lack of detachment and disinterestedness about the testimonial. If you had said to a medieval peasant, 'Robert the Bowyer proclaims, with three blasts of a horn, that he makes good bows,' the peasant would have said, 'Well, of course he does,' and thought about something more important. It is only among people whose minds have been weakened by a sort of mesmerism that so transparent a trick as that of advertisement could ever have been tried at all. And if ever we have again, as for other reasons I cannot but hope we shall, a more democratic distribution of property and a more agricultural basis of national life, it would seem at first sight only too likely that all this beautiful superstition will perish, and the fairyland of Broadway with all its varied rainbows fade away. For such people the Seventh Heaven Cigar, like the nineteenth-century city, will have ended in smoke. And even the smoke of it will have vanished.

But the next stage of reflection brings us back to] the peasant looking at the lights of Broadway. It is not true to say in the strict sense that the peasant has never seen such things before. The truth is that he has seen them on a much smaller scale, but for a much larger purpose. Peasants also have their ritual and ornament, but it is to adorn more real things. Apart from our first fancy about the peasant who could not read, there is no doubt about what would be apparent to a peasant who could read, and who could understand. For him also fire is sacred, for him also colour is symbolic. But where he sets up a candle to light the little shrine of St. Joseph, he finds it takes twelve hundred candles to light the Seventh Heaven Cigar. He is used to the colours in church windows showing red for martyrs or blue for madonnas; but here he can only conclude that all the colours of the rainbow belong to Mr. Bilge. Now upon the aesthetic side he might well be impressed; but it is exactly on the social and even scientific side that he has a right to criticise. If he were a Chinese peasant, for instance, and came from a land of fireworks, he would naturally suppose that he had happened to arrive at a great firework display in celebration of something; perhaps the Sacred Emperor's birthday, or rather

birthnight. It would gradually dawn on the Chinese philosopher that the Emperor could hardly be born every night. And when he learnt the truth the philosopher, if he was a philosopher, would be a little disappointed ... possibly a little disdainful.

Compare, for instance, these everlasting fireworks with the damp squibs and dying bonfires of Guy Fawkes Day. That quaint and even queer national festival has been fading for some time out of English life. Still, it was a national festival, in the double] sense that it represented some sort of public spirit pursued by some sort of popular impulse. People spent money on the display of fireworks; they did not get money by it. And the people who spent money were often those who had very little money to spend. It had something of the glorious and fanatical character of making the poor poorer. It did not, like the advertisements, have only the mean and materialistic character of making the rich richer. In short, it came from the people and it appealed to the nation. The historical and religious cause in which it originated is not mine; and I think it has perished partly through being tied to a historical theory for which there is no future. I think this is illustrated in the very fact that the ceremonial is merely negative and destructive. Negation and destruction are very noble things as far as they go, and when they go in the right direction; and the popular expression of them has always something hearty and human about it. I shall not therefore bring any fine or fastidious criticism, whether literary or musical, to bear upon the little boys who drag about a bolster and a paper mask, calling out

Guy Fawkes Guy

Hit him in the eye.

But I admit it is a disadvantage that they have not a saint or hero to crown in effigy as well as a traitor to burn in effigy. I admit that popular Protestantism has become too purely negative for people to wreath in flowers the statue of Mr. Kensit or even of Dr. Clifford. I do not disguise my preference for popular Catholicism; which still has statues that can be wreathed in flowers. I wish our national feast of fireworks revolved round something positive and] popular. I wish the beauty of a Catherine Wheel were displayed to the glory of St. Catherine. I should not especially complain if Roman candles were really Roman candles. But this negative character does not destroy the national character; which began at least in disinterested faith and has ended at least in disinterested fun. There is nothing disinterested at all about the new commercial fireworks. There is nothing so dignified as a dingy guy among the lights of Broadway. In that thoroughfare, indeed, the very word guy has another and milder significance. An American friend congratulated me on the impression I produced on a lady interviewer, observing, 'She says you're a regular guy.' This puzzled me a little at the time. 'Her description is no doubt correct,' I said, 'but I confess that it would never have struck me as specially complimentary.' But it appears that it is one of the most graceful of compliments, in the original American. A guy in America is a colourless term for a human being. All men are guys, being endowed by their Creator with certain ... but I am misled by another association. And a regular guy means, I presume, a reliable or respectable guy. The point here, however, is that the guy in the grotesque English sense does represent the dilapidated remnant of a real human tradition of symbolising real historic ideals by the sacramental mystery of fire. It is a great fall from the lowest of these lowly bonfires to the

highest of the modern sky-signs. The new illumination does not stand for any national ideal at all; and what is yet more to the point, it does not come from any popular enthusiasm at all. That is where it differs from the narrowest national Protestantism of the English institution. Mobs have risen] in support of No Popery; no mobs are likely to rise in defence of the New Puffery. Many a poor crazy Orangeman has died saying, 'To Hell with the Pope'; it is doubtful whether any man will ever, with his last breath, frame the ecstatic words, 'Try Hugby's Chewing Gum.' These modern and mercantile legends are imposed upon us by a mercantile minority, and we are merely passive to the suggestion. The hypnotist of high finance or big business merely writes his commands in heaven with a finger of fire. All men really are guys, in the sense of dummies. We are only the victims of his pyrotechnic violence; and it is he who hits us in the eye.

This is the real case against that modern society that is symbolized by such art and architecture. It is not that it is toppling, but that it is top-heavy. It is not that it is vulgar, but rather that it is not popular. In other words, the democratic ideal of countries like America, while it is still generally sincere and sometimes intense, is at issue with another tendency, an industrial progress which is of all things on earth the most undemocratic. America is not alone in possessing the industrialism, but she is alone in emphasising the ideal that strives with industrialism. Industrial capitalism and ideal democracy are everywhere in controversy; but perhaps only here are they in conflict. France has a democratic ideal; but France is not industrial. England and Germany are industrial; but England and Germany are not really democratic. Of course when I speak here of industrialism I speak of great industrial areas; there is, as will be noted later, another side to all these countries; there is in America itself not only a great deal of agricultural society, but a great deal of agricultural equality; just] as there are still peasants in Germany and may some day again be peasants in England. But the point is that the ideal and its enemy the reality are here crushed very close to each other in the high, narrow city; and that the sky-scraper is truly named because its top, towering in such insolence, is scraping the stars off the American sky, the very heaven of the American spirit.

That seems to me the main outline of the whole problem. In the first chapter of this book, I have emphasized the fact that equality is still the ideal though no longer the reality of America. I should like to conclude this one by emphasising the fact that the reality of modern capitalism is menacing that ideal with terrors and even splendours that might well stagger the wavering and impressionable modern spirit. Upon the issue of that struggle depends the question of whether this new great civilisation continues to exist, and even whether any one cares if it exists or not. I have already used the parable of the American flag, and the stars that stand for a multitudinous equality; I might here take the opposite symbol of these artificial and terrestrial stars flaming on the forehead of the commercial city; and note the peril of the last illusion, which is that the artificial stars may seem to fill the heavens, and the real stars to have faded from sight. But I am content for the moment to reaffirm the merely imaginative pleasure of those dizzy turrets and dancing fires. If those nightmare buildings were really all built for nothing, how noble they would be! The fact that they were really built for something need not unduly depress us for a moment, or drag down our soaring fancies. There is something about these vertical lines that suggests a] sort of rush upwards, as of great cataracts

topsy-turvy. I have spoken of fireworks, but here I should rather speak of rockets. There is only something underneath the mind murmuring that nothing remains at last of a flaming rocket except a falling stick. I have spoken of Babylonian perspectives, and of words written with a fiery finger, like that huge unhuman finger that wrote on Belshazzar's wall.... But what did it write on Belshazzar's wall?... I am content once more to end on a note of doubt and a rather dark sympathy with those many-coloured solar systems turning so dizzily, far up in the divine vacuum of the night.

'From the earth we come and to the earth we return; when people get away from that they are lost.'

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

The title of this final chapter requires an apology. I do not need to be reminded, alas, that the whole book requires an apology. It is written in accordance with a ritual or custom in which I could see no particular harm, and which gives me a very interesting subject, but a custom which it would be not altogether easy to justify in logic. Everybody who goes to America for a short time is expected to write a book; and nearly everybody does. A man who takes a holiday at Trouville or Dieppe is not confronted on his return with the question, 'When is your book on France going to appear?' A man who betakes himself to Switzerland for the winter sports is not instantly pinned by the statement, 'I suppose your History of the Helvetic Republic is coming out this spring?' Lecturing, at least my kind of lecturing, is not much more serious or meritorious than ski-ing or sea-bathing; and it happens to afford the holiday-maker far less opportunity of seeing the daily life of the people. Of all this I am only too well aware; and my only defence is that I am at least sincere in my enjoyment and appreciation of America, and equally sincere in my interest in its most serious problem, which I think a very serious problem indeed; the problem of democracy in the modern world. Democracy may be a very obvious and facile affair for plutocrats and politicians who only have to use it as a rhetorical term. But democracy is a very serious problem for democrats. I certainly do not apologise for the word democracy; but I do apologise for the word future. I am no Futurist; and any conjectures I make must be taken with the grain of salt which is indeed the salt of the earth; the decent and moderate humility which comes from a belief in free will. That faith is in itself a divine doubt. I do not believe in any of the scientific predictions about mankind; I notice that they always fail to predict any of the purely human developments of men; I also notice that even their successes prove the same truth as their failures; for their successful predictions are not about men but about machines. But there are two things which a man may reasonably do, in stating the probabilities of a problem, which do not involve any claim to be a prophet. The first is to tell the truth, and especially the neglected truth, about the tendencies that have already accumulated in human history; any miscalculation about which must at least mislead us in any case. We cannot be certain of being right about the future; but we can be almost certain of being wrong about the future, if we are wrong about the past. The other thing that he can do is to note what ideas necessarily go together by their own nature; what ideas will triumph together or fall together. Hence it follows that this final chapter must consist of two things. The first is a summary of what has really happened to the idea of democracy in recent times; the second a suggestion of the fundamental doctrine which is necessary for its triumph at any time.

The last hundred years has seen a general decline in the democratic idea. If there be anybody left to whom this historical truth appears a paradox, it is only because during that period nobody has been taught history, least of all the history of ideas. If a sort of intellectual inquisition had been established, for the definition and differentiation of heresies, it would have been found that the original republican orthodoxy had suffered more and more from secessions, schisms, and backslidings. The highest point of democratic idealism and conviction was towards the end of the eighteenth century, when the American Republic was

'dedicated to the proposition that all men are equal.' It was then that the largest number of men had the most serious sort of conviction that the political problem could be solved by the vote of peoples instead of the arbitrary power of princes and privileged orders. These men encountered various difficulties and made various compromises in relation to the practical politics of their time; in England they preserved aristocracy; in America they preserved slavery. But though they had more difficulties, they had less doubts. Since their time democracy has been steadily disintegrated by doubts; and these political doubts have been contemporary with and often identical with religious doubts. This fact could be followed over almost the whole field of the modern world; in this place it will be more appropriate to take the great American example of slavery. I have found traces in all sorts of intelligent quarters of an extraordinary idea that all the Fathers of the Republic owned black men like beasts of burden because they knew no better, until the light of liberty was revealed to them by John Brown and Mrs. Beecher Stowe. One of the best weekly papers in England said recently that even those who drew up the Declaration of Independence did not include negroes in its generalisation about humanity. This is quite consistent with the current convention, in which we were all brought up; the theory that the heart of humanity broadens in ever larger circles of brotherhood, till we pass from embracing a black man to adoring a black beetle. Unfortunately it is quite inconsistent with the facts of American history. The facts show that, in this problem of the Old South, the eighteenth century was more liberal than the nineteenth century. There was more sympathy for the negro in the school of Jefferson than in the school of Jefferson Davis. Jefferson, in the dark estate of his simple Deism, said the sight of slavery in his country made him tremble, remembering that God is just. His fellow Southerners, after a century of the world's advance, said that slavery in itself was good, when they did not go farther and say that negroes in themselves were bad. And they were supported in this by the great and growing modern suspicion that nature is unjust. Difficulties seemed inevitably to delay justice, to the mind of Jefferson; but so they did to the mind of Lincoln. But that the slave was human and the servitude inhuman—that was, if anything, clearer to Jefferson than to Lincoln. The fact is that the utter separation and subordination of the black like a beast was a progress; it was a growth of nineteenth-century enlightenment and experiment; a triumph of science over superstition. It was 'the way the world was going,' as Matthew Arnold reverentially remarked in some connection; perhaps as part of a definition of God. Anyhow, it was not Jefferson's definition of God. He fancied, in his far-off patriarchal way, a Father who had made all men brothers; and brutally unbrotherly as was the practice, such democratical Deists never dreamed of denying the theory. It was not until the scientific sophistries began that brotherhood was really disputed. Gobineau, who began most of the modern talk about the superiority and inferiority of racial stocks, was seized upon eagerly by the less generous of the slave-owners and trumpeted as a new truth of science and a new defence of slavery. It was not really until the dawn of Darwinism, when all our social relations began to smell of the monkey-house, that men thought of the barbarian as only a first and the baboon as a second cousin. The full servile philosophy has been a modern and even a recent thing; made in an age whose invisible deity was the Missing Link. The Missing Link was a true metaphor in more ways than one; and most of all in its suggestion of a chain.

By a symbolic coincidence, indeed, slavery grew more brazen and brutal under the encouragement of more than one movement of the progressive sort. Its youth was renewed for it by the industrial prosperity of Lancashire; and under that influence it became a commercial and competitive instead of a patriarchal and customary thing. We may say with no exaggerative irony that the unconscious patrons of slavery were Huxley and Cobden. The machines of Manchester were manufacturing a great many more things than the manufacturers knew or wanted to know; but they were certainly manufacturing the fetters of the slave, doubtless out of the best quality of steel and iron. But this is a minor illustration of the modern tendency, as compared with the main stream of scepticism which was destroying democracy. Evolution became more and more a vision of the break-up of our brotherhood, till by the end of the nineteenth century the genius of its greatest scientific romancer saw it end in the anthropophagous antics of the Time Machine. So far from evolution lifting us above the idea of enslaving men, it was providing us at least with a logical and potential argument for eating them. In the case of the American negroes, it may be remarked, it does at any rate permit the preliminary course of roasting them. All this materialistic hardening, which replaced the remorse of Jefferson, was part of the growing evolutionary suspicion that savages were not a part of the human race, or rather that there was really no such thing as the human race. The South had begun by agreeing reluctantly to the enslavement of men. The South ended by agreeing equally reluctantly to the emancipation of monkeys.

That is what had happened to the democratic ideal in a hundred years. Anybody can test it by comparing the final phase, I will not say with the ideal of Jefferson, but with the ideal of Johnson. There was far more horror of slavery in an eighteenth-century Tory like Dr. Johnson than in a nineteenth-century Democrat like Stephen Douglas. Stephen Douglas may be mentioned because he is a very representative type of the age of evolution and expansion; a man thinking in continents, like Cecil Rhodes, human and hopeful in a truly American fashion, and as a consequence cold and careless rather than hostile in the matter of the old mystical doctrines of equality. He 'did not care whether slavery was voted up or voted down.' His great opponent Lincoln did indeed care very much. But it was an intense individual conviction with Lincoln exactly as it was with Johnson. I doubt if the spirit of the age was not much more behind Douglas and his westward expansion of the white race. I am sure that more and more men were coming to be in the particular mental condition of Douglas; men in whom the old moral and mystical ideals had been undermined by doubt but only with a negative effect of indifference. Their positive convictions were all concerned with what some called progress and some imperialism. It is true that there was a sincere sectional enthusiasm against slavery in the North; and that the slaves were actually emancipated in the nineteenth century. But I doubt whether the Abolitionists would ever have secured Abolition. Abolition was a by-product of the Civil War; which was fought for quite other reasons. Anyhow, if slavery had somehow survived to the age of Rhodes and Roosevelt and evolutionary imperialism, I doubt if the slaves would ever have been emancipated at all. Certainly if it had survived till the modern movement for the Servile State, they would never have been emancipated at all. Why should the world take the chains off the black man when it was just putting them on the white? And in so far as we owe the change to Lincoln, we owe it to

Jefferson. Exactly what gives its real dignity to the figure of Lincoln is that he stands invoking a primitive first principle of the age of innocence, and holding up the tables of an ancient law, against the trend of the nineteenth century; repeating, 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator, etc.,' to a generation that was more and more disposed to say something like this: 'We hold these truths to be probable enough for pragmatists; that all things looking like men were evolved somehow, being endowed by heredity and environment with no equal rights, but very unequal wrongs,' and so on. I do not believe that creed, left to itself, would ever have founded a state; and I am pretty certain that, left to itself, it would never have overthrown a slave state. What it did do, as I have said, was to produce some very wonderful literary and artistic flights of sceptical imagination. The world did have new visions, if they were visions of monsters in the moon and Martians striding about like spiders as tall as the sky, and the workmen and capitalists becoming two separate species, so that one could devour the other as gaily and greedily as a cat devours a bird. No one has done justice to the meaning of Mr. Wells and his original departure in fantastic fiction; to these nightmares that were the last apocalypse of the nineteenth century. They meant that the bottom had fallen out of the mind at last, that the bridge of brotherhood had broken down in the modern brain, letting up from the chasms this infernal light like a dawn. All had grown dizzy with degree and relativity; so that there would not be so very much difference between eating dog and eating darkie, or between eating darkie and eating dago. There were different sorts of apes; but there was no doubt that we were the superior sort.

Against all this irresistible force stood one immovable post. Against all this dance of doubt and degree stood something that can best be symbolised by a simple example. An ape cannot be a priest, but a negro can be a priest. The dogmatic type of Christianity, especially the Catholic type of Christianity, had riveted itself irrevocably to the manhood of all men. Where its faith was fixed by creeds and councils it could not save itself even by surrender. It could not gradually dilute democracy, as could a merely sceptical or secular democrat. There stood, in fact or in possibility, the solid and smiling figure of a black bishop. And he was either a man claiming the most towering spiritual privileges of a man, or he was the mere buffoonery and blasphemy of a monkey in a mitre. That is the point about Christian and Catholic democracy; it is not that it is necessarily at any moment more democratic, it is that its indestructible minimum of democracy really is indestructible. And by the nature of things that mystical democracy was destined to survive, when every other sort of democracy was free to destroy itself. And whenever democracy destroying itself is suddenly moved to save itself, it always grasps at rag or tag of that old tradition that alone is sure of itself. Hundreds have heard the story about the mediaeval demagogue who went about repeating the rhyme

When Adam delved and Eve span,

Who was then the gentleman?

Many have doubtless offered the obvious answer to the question, 'The Serpent.' But few seem to have noticed what would be the more modern answer to the question, if that innocent agitator went about propounding it. 'Adam never delved and Eve never span, for the simple

reason that they never existed. They are fragments of a Chaldeo-Babylonian mythos, and Adam is only a slight variation of Tag-Tug, pronounced Uttu. For the real beginning of humanity we refer you to Darwin's *Origin of Species*. And then the modern man would go on to justify plutocracy to the mediaeval man by talking about the Struggle for Life and the Survival of the Fittest; and how the strongest man seized authority by means of anarchy, and proved himself a gentleman by behaving like a cad. Now I do not base my beliefs on the theology of John Ball, or on the literal and materialistic reading of the text of Genesis; though I think the story of Adam and Eve infinitely less absurd and unlikely than that of the prehistoric 'strongest man' who could fight a hundred men. But I do note the fact that the idealism of the leveller could be put in the form of an appeal to Scripture, and could not be put in the form of an appeal to Science. And I do note also that democrats were still driven to make the same appeal even in the very century of Science. Tennyson was, if ever there was one, an evolutionist in his vision and an aristocrat in his sympathies. He was always boasting that John Bull was evolutionary and not revolutionary, even as these Frenchmen. He did not pretend to have any creed beyond faintly trusting the larger hope. But when human dignity is really in danger, John Bull has to use the same old argument as John Ball. He tells Lady Clara Vere de Vere that 'the gardener Adam and his wife smile at the claim of long descent'; their own descent being by no means long. Lady Clara might surely have scored off him pretty smartly by quoting from 'Maud' and 'In Memoriam' about evolution and the eft that was lord of valley and hill. But Tennyson has evidently forgotten all about Darwin and the long descent of man. If this was true of an evolutionist like Tennyson, it was naturally ten times truer of a revolutionist like Jefferson. The Declaration of Independence dogmatically bases all rights on the fact that God created all men equal; and it is right; for if they were not created equal, they were certainly evolved unequal.

There is no basis for democracy except in a dogma about the divine origin of man. That is a perfectly simple fact which the modern world will find out more and more to be a fact. Every other basis is a sort of sentimental confusion, full of merely verbal echoes of the older creeds. Those verbal associations are always vain for the vital purpose of constraining the tyrant. An idealist may say to a capitalist, 'Don't you sometimes feel in the rich twilight, when the lights twinkle from the distant hamlet in the hills, that all humanity is a holy family?' But it is equally possible for the capitalist to reply with brevity and decision, 'No, I don't,' and there is no more disputing about it further than about the beauty of a fading cloud. And the modern world of moods is a world of clouds, even if some of them are thunderclouds.

For I have only taken here, as a convenient working model, the case of negro slavery; because it was long peculiar to America and is popularly associated with it. It is more and more obvious that the line is no longer running between black and white but between rich and poor. As I have already noted in the case of Prohibition, the very same arguments of the inevitable suicide of the ignorant, of the impossibility of freedom for the unfit, which were once applied to barbarians brought from Africa are now applied to citizens born in America. It is argued even by industrialists that industrialism has produced a class submerged below the status of emancipated mankind. They imply that the Missing Link is no longer missing, even from England or the Northern States, and that the factories have manufactured their own monkeys.

Scientific hypotheses about the feeble-minded and the criminal type will supply the masters of the modern world with more and more excuses for denying the dogma of equality in the case of white labour as well as black. And any man who knows the world knows perfectly well that to tell the millionaires, or their servants, that they are disappointing the sentiments of Thomas Jefferson, or disregarding a creed composed in the eighteenth century, will be about as effective as telling them that they are not observing the creed of St. Athanasius or keeping the rule of St. Benedict.

The world cannot keep its own ideals. The secular order cannot make secure any one of its own noble and natural conceptions of secular perfection. That will be found, as time goes on, the ultimate argument for a Church independent of the world and the secular order. What has become of all those ideal figures from the Wise Man of the Stoics to the democratic Deist of the eighteenth century? What has become of all that purely human hierarchy of chivalry, with its punctilious pattern of the good knight, its ardent ambition in the young squire? The very name of knight has come to represent the petty triumph of a profiteer, and the very word squire the petty tyranny of a landlord. What has become of all that golden liberality of the Humanists, who found on the high tablelands of the culture of Hellas the very balance of repose in beauty that is most lacking in the modern world? The very Greek language that they loved has become a mere label for snuffy and snobbish dons, and a mere cock-shy for cheap and half-educated utilitarians, who make it a symbol of superstition and reaction. We have lived to see a time when the heroic legend of the Republic and the Citizen, which seemed to Jefferson the eternal youth of the world, has begun to grow old in its turn. We cannot recover the earthly estate of knighthood, to which all the colours and complications of heraldry seemed as fresh and natural as flowers. We cannot re-enact the intellectual experiences of the Humanists, for whom the Greek grammar was like the song of a bird in spring. The more the matter is considered the clearer it will seem that these old experiences are now only alive, where they have found a lodgment in the Catholic tradition of Christendom, and made themselves friends for ever. St. Francis is the only surviving troubadour. St. Thomas More is the only surviving Humanist. St. Louis is the only surviving knight.

It would be the worst sort of insincerity, therefore, to conclude even so hazy an outline of so great and majestic a matter as the American democratic experiment, without testifying my belief that to this also the same ultimate test will come. So far as that democracy becomes or remains Catholic and Christian, that democracy will remain democratic. In so far as it does not, it will become wildly and wickedly undemocratic. Its rich will riot with a brutal indifference far beyond the feeble feudalism which retains some shadow of responsibility or at least of patronage. Its wage-slaves will either sink into heathen slavery, or seek relief in theories that are destructive not merely in method but in aim; since they are but the negations of the human appetites of property and personality. Eighteenth-century ideals, formulated in eighteenth-century language, have no longer in themselves the power to hold all those pagan passions back. Even those documents depended upon Deism; their real strength will survive in men who are still Deists; and the men who are still Deists are more than Deists. Men will more and more realise that there is no meaning in democracy if there is no meaning in anything; and that there is no meaning in anything if the universe has not a centre of

significance and an authority that is the author of our rights. There is truth in every ancient fable, and there is here even something of it in the fancy that finds the symbol of the Republic in the bird that bore the bolts of Jove. Owls and bats may wander where they will in darkness, and for them as for the sceptics the universe may have no centre; kites and vultures may linger as they like over carrion, and for them as for the plutocrats existence may have no origin and no end; but it was far back in the land of legends, where instincts find their true images, that the cry went forth that freedom is an eagle, whose glory is gazing at the sun.