THE AMERICA OF TO-DAY

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THE LIFE OF SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN

THE PUBLIC LIFE

THE CHANGING EAST

LIFE, JOURNALISM AND POLITICS

THE COMMENTS OF BAGSHOT

THE AMERICA OF TO-DAY

by

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK CAN claim to be nothing more than a record of impressions at a particular moment and from a particular angle. For although I had spent some months in the United States in the year 1921, the opportunity of writing it came from my appointment as the first "Senior Walter Hines Page Memorial Fellow" under a scheme organised and administered by the English-Speaking Union with the co-operation of leading newspapers in this country and in the United States. That enabled me in the autumn and winter of 1927-8 to visit many of the principal cities in different parts of the American Continent, and above all to have intimate talk with representative Americans and fellow-journalists in all or most of them.

I cannot too warmly express my gratitude for the kindness which I everywhere received, and I hope there is nothing in what I have written which will make me seem to have been forgetful of it. The abiding impression which I brought away was that of the greatness of the American achievement and the necessity of understanding it, if any comment is to be useful and acceptable. It is an achievement which is too little understood in Europe and the failure to understand it is naturally unpleasing to Americans who are not otherwise resentful of criticism. But with that very important proviso, frankness between English and Americans is the way of friendship and good-will. It is, also, incidentally, the way of journalists who move less easily than after-dinner speakers in the world of toasts and compliments.

I count it a real privilege to have been associated, in however modest a degree, with the name and memory of

Mr. Walter Hines Page, whose friendship I had the happiness to enjoy, while he was Ambassador in London; but I ought perhaps to say that the responsibility for this book belongs entirely to me, and must not be imputed to the Fellowship, or to the English-Speaking Union which promoted it.

In Part II I have borrowed a few short passages from previous books of my own without thinking it necessary to trouble the reader with references.

J. A. SPENDER.

Chantry Place,
Marden, Kent.

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Part I

FROM A TRAVELLER'S NOTEBOOK

CHAPTER I

ON THE THRESHOLD

§ 1

AS WE CAME into New York an American threw a little gibe at the Statue of Liberty, and said that the Goddess was rightly represented as turning her back on his country. He was thinking bitterly of the Volstead Act, which throws a gloom over the travelling American as he approaches his own country. Yet whatever may have happened to Liberty it is impossible to be even a few days in New York without discovering that equality and fraternity are very much alive. These express themselves in a certain quality in the human relationship which is chronic, pervasive, and uniquely American. Everybody in this country seems able to get on terms with everybody else at the first intention; there is no obeisance from poor to rich, or condescension from rich to poor. Our British manners seem to have stuck half-way between a feudalism which we have grown ashamed of and an equality which we are unequal to. American manners are those of equality *sans gêne*. Enormous problems of wealth and poverty there still are on the American side of the ocean as on the other, and clashes of interests there will inevitably be. But approaching them on this basis of social equality America avoids the class consciousness which has become an obsession in Europe.

This struck me as *the* note of America when I spent three months in the country six years ago, and it strikes me even more when I return to it. I can talk to anybody and get an instant and friendly response. All my irritation at the blocks

in New York traffic subsides as the taxi-driver entertains me with the story of his life—for New York cabs are so constructed that there is an open window between you and him. One says that he has two sons and a daughter; one of the sons is still at school (16 years of age), another is training to be a dentist, and the daughter is studying to be a music-teacher. Another tells me of his contentions with the "cops," who, he says, are jealous because the taxi-men earn more than they do, which leads on to confidences about his earnings, which seem to be about ten pounds (fifty dollars) a week. He has saved almost enough to buy a cab of his own, and after that he will get another and so be on the road to fortune as an owner-driver. A third—an old Irishman—tells a different tale. You need nerves of "stayle and concrate" to drive a cab in New York, and he won't be able to stand it much longer. At this point he puts on the brake with a crash and we describe a half-circle towards a street car—which makes him gloomier than ever about his future. But he too, he assures me, has well-to-do sons who will look after him when the time comes. His next performances made me respectfully advise him not to wait too long, and he admitted that it was time to begin thinking about it.

Everybody in New York calls you by your name and shakes you warmly by the hand. Among a score of letters which awaited me on landing, only one addressed me as "Dear Sir" and wound up "Yours faithfully," and this was from an Englishman. All the rest began "Dear Mr. Spender," and wound up "Yours sincerely" or "Yours very sincerely." This in an extraordinary way makes one feel welcome in a friendly country. I am in a vast hotel with more than 2,000 rooms in it, yet everyone in it acts as if his or her sole duty in life was to help and oblige me. The politeness of the telephone operators is quite humbling; they too, by some magic, know one's name, and if there is any

hitch offer their services to overcome it. I ring up a friend in the country on a long-distance call. Before I am summoned to the telephone, the lady at the other end has discovered that he is out, and ascertained what time he will be in and arranged that I shall be called up as soon as he comes in. At every turn one finds people waiting to do these little services over and above what is paid for. In all these ways the Americans are the best-mannered people in the world, and there is no European country in which one gets the same sense of a general community life with, if anything, a prejudice in favour of the stranger. In most other countries the alien is half-way to the enemy ; but it is in the American tradition that he should be welcomed and absorbed. In no other way could an American nation have been built up.

§ II

Americans tell me to beware of taking New York as typical of America, yet the temptation to do so is irresistible. It is so exactly the type of all that Europe takes America to be—a thing bursting with energy, in detail all money and materialism, yet making a whole which is fantastic, imaginative, and incontestably beautiful. I thought, when I visited it six years ago, that the limit had been reached. There could be no more sky-scrapers, no more squeezing and crushing in the narrow causeway between the waters. I was mistaken. New York is still soaring to heaven, adding vertically to a population for which, and its multitude of motor-cars, earthbound streets and roads, which would suit a normal city, are hopeless misfits. Londoners groan at traffic delays and fill the newspapers with their complaints, but any of them who have been in New York and driven about the city for a few days should for ever hold their peace. The traffic control is so perfect that you may easily be held up

five times in ten minutes, and if you have a mile to drive to catch a train, you had better give yourself half an hour's margin. The New Yorker who wants to hustle flies to the Subway and the down-town express ; the others are patient and take a secret pride in the thought that there are about three times as many cars in New York as in London. You must suffer for being big no less than for being beautiful.

There is excess in everything, and by degrees exceeding is being reduced to a fine art. No European city illuminated for a Coronation or a Jubilee comes near Broadway on a normal evening, and electricians and artists in sky-signs have developed an amazing ingenuity in out-shining each other. And since light and colour are intrinsically beautiful things, even when enlisted in the service of a pill or a rat-poison, you need only blur your eyes a very little to see a glorious transformation scene—fountains of coloured light spouting into the air, cataracts descending from the heights ; arabesques vanishing and reappearing in the darkness ; no space up to a hundred feet above the street without its coruscating pattern. It sets one wondering whether any of these prodigal advertisers can get his money's worth out of the enormous expenditure of light and power that the thing must need. No one in New York asks the question : it is just assumed that if you don't boost you go under, and, since everybody boosts, the standard is always being screwed up as in a competition of armaments. Or, to take a humbler comparison, it is like an evening party at which everybody shouts because everybody else is shouting, and nobody is aware that he is speaking above the ordinary tone of voice.

Americans have nerves like other people, but they have grown used to this high level of noise, bustle, and advertisement, and are surprised that the newcomer should notice it. He cannot help noticing it if he is fresh from Europe. Everything, if I may use a mathematical expression, is

raised to the power of New York, and before you can begin to understand you have to adjust yourself to that multiplication of the normal.

§ III

One is told incessantly that New York is cosmopolitan, international, anything but American. Nothing could be less true of its collective life and character. As a whole it is the most American thing that there is on the American continent, and the function which it performs for the foreign-born newcomers, who form a large part of its population, is precisely that of plunging them at once into the full roaring American tide. For the immigrant to America there are no half-way houses in which he can be acclimatised and gradually subdued to the American way of life. He is in it up to the neck from the moment that he arrives, and must go with it or go under. True there is no Mussolini to stamp on his language or destroy his traditions, but there is a massive silent conformity which begins to work from the first moment to make him American. There is a babel of tongues in New York; one may go down a long stretch of Sixth Avenue in the lunch hour and hear not a word of English spoken; one may wander on the East Side and hear only German, Russian, Italian or Polish. But nowhere could one fancy oneself anywhere but in America or in New York. Whatever language they speak these people already have the American stamp and one feels them to be committed beyond recall. And all the time innumerable agencies are at work—Tammany foremost—to make them feel at home. Presently they may pass on, but not before they have got this essential first initiation in New York. The old New Yorkers grumble and speak sadly of the days when their city was really the abode of the English-speaking.

Undoubtedly those days are past, if they ever were, but the city is more than ever performing its predestined part of Americaniser for the whole continent and performing it, to my eye, with an extraordinary efficiency. The leading industry of New York is the mass production of Americans.

§ IV

To the European eye the evidences of prosperity in New York are overwhelming. The city is gradually being lifted up to the level of the original sky-scrapers at what must be an enormous expenditure of capital and effort. The great buildings no longer break the sky-line with sudden leaps into the air; the whole sky-line in the centre of the city is coming up to them. There is a merciful new law which compels the builders to set back so many feet for every ascent after a certain level, and this gives the architect an opportunity which he is using with much ingenuity. The great defect of the original sky-scraper was that its base was too narrow for its height, and where it stands alone there is no way of curing this. But where groups stand side by side forming one mass, you no longer have this uncomfortable disproportion, and if the roadway is broad enough, the effect becomes noble and imposing.

For sheer magnificence there is nothing in the world like the new Park Avenue—much of which has been built since I was last in New York. The architects have wisely eschewed all ornament above the third floor and devoted themselves to bringing the great twenty-storied masses into a uniform relation with each other. The difficulty of all these buildings is that, since human beings in America are much the same height as elsewhere, the rooms within have to be of the normal size, which means piercing them with innumerable little windows which are out of scale with the large design-

ing. So you get the odd sense of a city built by giants for midgets to dwell in. I look down on a street of sky-scrapers from a sixteenth-floor window, and men and women seem to be creeping like ants under the shadow of great cliffs.

Still it is a fantastic, wonderful and extraordinarily interesting thing, and by night, as one looks at it from Central Park, with its festoons of lights where the stars should be, it becomes a veritable fairy-land.

CHAPTER II

BOSTON AND NEW ENGLAND

§ 1

TO SEE BOSTON in its setting of wooded hills in a blaze of autumn glory is to understand the hold which it has on the hearts of its citizens. New York is a place in which you work and make money and between times have roaring fun in spending it. Boston is a place in which you live. It is of course, if one must speak literally, very much alive and thriving and prosperous, for it, too, has great industries and a humming business life, but a large part of it is, to use the English word, "residential," and you get the impression that a great many cultivated, leisured and well-to-do, but not obtrusively rich, people make their homes here. It has long avenues of substantial red-brick houses, built in a nineteenth-century English fashion, and when it spreads outwards, it does so not like New York, into vast blocks of "Apartment houses," planted on spaces cleared to fit them, but into a veritable garden city with charming villas nicely spaced between grass and trees, and looking out on to the pleasant stretches of water that run through the parks.

Once more it strikes an Englishman that for modern domestic architecture the Americans are unsurpassed, and here in Boston they have the old Colonial tradition—so delightfully exemplified in the little towns and villages of New England—to work upon. There is surely no neater, daintier, or more refined application of the classic style, and the modern American architect is careful to preserve it. The one thing the English eye most misses is gardens.

Most of the houses in the outlying districts are detached and have little spaces of unhedged grass dividing them from their neighbours, but few have any signs of flowers. Even in the country, where large houses have considerable spaces of grass or meadow about them, there is seldom anything we should call a garden. I have talked to Americans about this, and they tell me that the growing of flowers is impossible except in walled and hedged enclosures, which are contrary to the American tradition. One told a sad story of how he had started growing tulips and spent a considerable sum of money on the best bulbs, only to find that as soon as they came into flower, they were all rooted up and carried off by undiscoverable thieves. Yet one cannot help thinking that if gardening were a habit, a public opinion would grow up which would stop this plunder. For some reason or other the flower tradition seems lacking in America; the flower shops are few and extremely dear, the public gardens are almost without flowers, and in the country there are no cottage gardens. Possibly some day a millionaire philanthropist who realises what the love of flowers is to simple people in old countries and what pleasure it adds to life, may start a flower crusade in America and endow a few public gardens to show the American public—what every Londoner knows—how flowers may be grown even in the smoke and grime of great cities.

It would play into the hands of the Mayor of Chicago if I said that Boston was English, but an Englishman can't help saying it. The old town still winds and rambles in the inconsequent English way, and stubbornly refuses to be remodelled in the American rectangular way. The broken sky-line of roofs at all pitches crowning houses of five stories or less might be taken from any section of London, and Bostonians still speak of sky-scrapers and sky-signs as enormities. Eighteenth-century buildings are numerous enough to make

parts of Boston seem like an old city, and with your eyes open you may find them in quite unexpected places. Yet if Boston is English in this sense, it is extraordinarily different from any English city. Everywhere one hears the blessed American word "organisation." The hotels are "organised," the shops are "organised," the University across the river is "organised," the Public Library is "organised." There are "organised" drives for charity, "organised" schemes of lectures, and of course "organised" methods of traffic-control with the police in boxes switching signal lights from green to red and vice versa at intervals fixed by authority. Nothing so chaotic as trusting to the private judgment of a possibly erring policeman is permitted in America. This is common form throughout the country, but whereas other towns strike you as all new and having everything in keeping, Boston strikes you as a special blend of new and old—the kind of thing a European city might be, if treated in the American way.

§ II

If the word "organisation" irritates at times—as, for example, when all the hotels and trains are chauffed to the maximum on a certain day in October, in spite of the fact that the thermometer outside is over 70 degrees, or when one's organised baggage arrives twelve hours late—it still represents something of which the old countries are greatly in need. Everywhere in this country one is struck with the intelligence which is brought to bear on common things. In every business someone seems to be supervising, planning, thinking ahead, and to be released from all other duties, provided he does that competently. One crosses the river Charles from Boston to the town of Cambridge, and sees the University of Harvard—a venerable institution

according to American standards, and still, in its older parts, keeping its eighteenth-century flavour—humming with modern efficiency and governed throughout as an organised unity, with all its faculties under a central control. As an old Oxford man, I have a great affection for the college system, but there is something gained when all effort is concentrated on the university and its teaching is methodically apportioned to the different schools instead of being scattered among colleges. Our old universities, one cannot help thinking, would be greatly the gainers, if instead of having ornamental Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors taking the office in rotation, they could evolve men of the type of the American University President, men like President Murray Butler of Columbia and President Lowell of Harvard, who combine high executive ability with academic distinction, and who really govern their universities and stand for them in the eyes of the public. If the American universities are more successful than the English in obtaining endowments, it is largely because men of this type are a guarantee to the business-like wealthy that their money will be wisely expended. In America everything needs to have a personality behind it, and the universities get it in this way.

Go into the Harvard Library. It is a great collection of books splendidly housed, but it is more than this; it is a beautifully organised workshop for readers. In many old-world libraries one gets the notion that the librarians are mainly curators of books whose chief business it is to prevent them being worn or soiled by profane readers. At Harvard, on the contrary, everything possible is done to get books into the hands of readers, to tempt them, seduce them, compel them to read. The books are arranged in "stacks," according to subjects, on floors rising one above the other up to seven or eight stories. On each floor, on the side towards the light, are rows of little rooms running

a general opinion that the construction of dams was an art which would need to be reconsidered all over the country, and it occurred to me later, when I looked at the Mississippi Valley, that the advice of British engineers who have developed this art in India and Egypt might be worth asking. But if the calamities of America are extraordinary, so is the organisation to meet them, and to see Charity mobilise itself in the immediate massive American way is to have an example of how generous emotion may be linked to business-like efficiency.

CHAPTER III

THE "REAL AMERICA"

§ 1

LET ME NOTE in passing one of those things—they abound on the American continent—which ought not to be beautiful but indubitably are. This is the illumination of the Falls of Niagara, which now takes place for two hours every evening, from the Canadian shore. It is a joint Canadian and United States effort and is described as the "greatest experiment in large-scale electric lighting in the world." Unlimited water-power makes it possible, and the guide-book explains that "the plant emits an illuminating force of 1,300 million power." It sounds like an atrocity, and if Niagara had been here, and English enterprise had suggested such a thing, the vindicators of unspoiled nature would have risen in arms and prepared petitions which I should have signed. As it is I can only attest that the result is one of amazing and dazzling beauty. The lights play on both the American and Canadian Falls, and run through a vividly changing scheme of colour; white, blue, orange, red, mauve, green. The white turns the rushing waters into a glistening marble veined with its own green; the other colours produce shimmering rainbow effects of amazing intricacy and beauty. The whole scene is simultaneously illuminated from end to end, but with a glowing light which never fatigues the eye. I watched it for an hour or more from the Canadian shore and came away very reluctantly.

When you are staying on the eastern seaboard there is always someone to tell you that this is not the "real

America." New York is not the "real America," still less Boston, or Concord, or Buffalo. Where then does the "real America" begin? You will begin to see it, is the answer, when you get to Detroit. As a test case of Americanism, Detroit has the disadvantage of being on the Canadian border. Right opposite, across the river, is the Canadian city of Windsor, in which many Detroiters live, especially those who prefer the laws of the State of Ontario to the laws of the State of Michigan. But in spite of this criss-crossing, Detroit is the first true example of the modern booming mass-production industrial America that you meet as you go west. First in time and still supreme, for here the Pope of the movement, Henry Ford, pitched his tabernacle, promulgated the doctrine and invented the laws, rules, and methods which are practised by his now innumerable disciples throughout the continent. Detroit, therefore, has a claim to be considered the mother-city of the new industrial America.

Look up the statistics of its population, and you will find that in 1910 it had 465,000 inhabitants, and in 1924 1,334,000. Certainly by now it has not less than a million and a half, and it evidently expects a great many more. Immense rapid growth, leaping all the stages by which normal cities push out their boundaries and struggle into the country, is now the rule in industrial America, and Detroit is methodically preparing for it. Any plan or map of it tells you not only what it is, but what it is going to be. Somewhere in it is a core of old French town, but that is undiscoverable except to the archæologist. The centre of the city is being built in a methodical way with the usual immense buildings rising to twenty stories or more with Gothic tops which when illuminated at night, look like gigantic flowers on invisible stalks. Outside this inner circle everything is provisional, but on a deliberate plan. All the main lines of the coming

development are laid down. Broad avenues spread outwards from the central hub and already cover nearly as much space as the London Metropolitan area. Abundant parks and open spaces are provided for the city of the future and all else must proceed by rule and method.

The distances are staggering. Merely to keep appointments in one part of the city and another, you may easily have to cover fifty miles in the course of the day. The host who invites you out to dinner courteously sends his car to fetch you and you drive down ten miles of continuously and brilliantly lighted streets with shops and houses on either side, before you reach the pleasant suburb in which he lives. For the last half of the way you have the sense, which comes to you so often in the new American cities, of there being "nothing behind." Everything is in the shop-window and all the houses are on the street. Outside the central nucleus, they are of all sizes and shapes, solid and ramshackle, mean and prosperous; and isolated sky-scrapers shoot up among two-storied shacks. Everywhere there is scaffolding, hoarding and the untidy litter that goes with things in the making. Most of the small houses proclaim that they have been put up to be torn down the moment their site is ripe for steel and concrete.

The immensity of the plan emphasises the meanness of the provisional accomplishment, but patriotic citizens point out with pride that the enormously broad roads are built to the scale of the towering offices and factories which will presently flank them. As the mediæval Gothic builder dreamt of his Cathedrals and Abbeys, so the devout American industrialist sees the dream city of his imagination rising from these beginnings. All of it is to be like what the centre already is. Here, as often in America, I get the feeling of having been admitted to the private view of a great Exhibition some few weeks before its opening. There is the same

litter and confusion, the same bustle and hurry, the same visible and intelligent design, if one takes the trouble to look for it. Detroit will in a few years be one of the most enormous industrial Exhibitions in the world, and it will then have the advantage of having started late under the direction of intelligent town-planners. It should have no slums; its streets should be airy and clean, and its parks and open spaces ample and beautiful.

§ II

The car is its secret. With the car its great spread is its salvation; without the car it would be an impossible place to live in. By providing the cheap car, Mr. Ford made Detroit and numerous other cities on the same plan possible, and he is to that extent a public benefactor. Europe laughs when it hears that American workmen have cars and thinks it an absurd transatlantic extravagance. Europe is quite wrong. In these new cities the workman must have his car, and he could not live or earn his bread without it. All business and all industry proceeds on the assumption that every worker by hand or brain can go twenty miles in any direction whenever he is told to do so. I asked Mr. Ford whether it had occurred to him to put up workmen's dwellings over his works, and he seemed shocked at the suggestion. The last thing in the world he wished was that any workman should live near his place of work, and why should he when he could easily live ten miles away and come in by car? This cuts clean across the notion which some English social reformers favour, of taking the factories into the country. In America the factories and offices will be in the towns and the dwellers will spread out far into the country. An American town of the future will be as deserted by night as the city of London now is.

Just as in Rome one goes to the Vatican and endeavours to get audience of the Pope, so in Detroit one goes to the Ford Works and endeavours to see Henry Ford. When I had been round the Ford Works—or that part of them which is comprised in the Fordson factory—I felt like the Queen of Sheba, of whom it is recorded that when she had seen Solomon's Temple and palaces, there was no more spirit left in her. To be sure these buildings are not temples and palaces, but if absolute completeness and perfect adaptation of means to end justify the word, they are in their own way works of art, and they have the artistic quality of stirring the imagination till it falls back exhausted. Beginning with coal and iron, which comes from Ford mines, everything is here, and all is self-sufficing. The Ford ore enters at one end and comes out at the other as motors or parts of motors, which are taken away on the Ford railway or in Ford ships. There is an immense power station, great blastfurnaces, the largest foundry in the world, the largest steel-rolling plant, a pressed-steel building covering nine acres, a great glass factory, and heaven knows what else. The whole covers 1,100 acres, and has a frontage of a mile and a quarter. What most impresses the observer is the immense size and height of the buildings, and next their cleanliness, airiness, and perfect arrangement. There is no dust or refuse in these factories. Everything that might be waste or refuse in smaller factories is mechanically gathered up to be used again. When the factory is in full work there are 250 tons daily of steel trimmings and scrap metal which are delivered to electrical furnaces for the manufacture of alloy steel. Gather up the fragments that nothing may be lost is the rigid rule of the industry, and incidentally the way of cleanliness and hygiene.

But the secret of these works is not the size or variety of these departments, but their relation to one another. The

" conveyor " is the key to everything. All over the ground one has only to look to see " parts " of motors travelling methodically on overhead rails to the point on the assembly line where the mechanic unships them and fits them into their place in the embryo car. The synchronisation which brings each to the exact spot at the right moment is a miracle of thought and planning, and requires a regularity of output in the various departments which can only be achieved by the most thorough-going discipline of punctuality. Many of the parts have to be separately assembled before they are finally assembled on the car; and the assembling of the magneto struck me as an especially delicate and beautiful operation.

One thing is necessary to the whole process and that is an absolute accuracy in the machining of the parts, so that they fit instantly on reaching the assembly line; otherwise time would be lost and the whole process thrown out of gear. To see how this is achieved one must visit the famous Carl Johanson in his laboratory and see him at work on his " precision gauge blocks," which are so accurate that placed side by side they actually adhere to each other. This method is, of course, not peculiar to the Ford factory, but mass production absolutely depends on it, and no one has done more to bring it to perfection than Mr. Johanson. He is dealing all the time in millionths of inches.

§ III

So much for the mechanical surroundings. What of the human agents? Since the output of cars was suspended until the new model was ready, I could only see them at work on the tractor assembly line, but that, I imagine, is typical of the whole process. All along the line, which extends down a long building, the men are at their stations, and the

embryo tractors pass in an unending procession in front of them. The "conveyors" cross the building at right angles to the assembly line, and in a corresponding endless procession bring to each station just that part—motor, wheels, steering gear, etc.—which has to be fitted in at that station, and at the exact moment when the embryo arrives. At each station there is precise team-work, different rivets being assigned to different individuals or two men working together to lift a part into position. Often I held my breath for fear that a team should not complete its work before the embryo moved on, but I never saw any fail, and the time was apparently sufficient to enable the work to be done without hustling. Indeed, the team-work was so perfect that it all seemed well within capacity. At a certain point the tractor was so far completed as to be ready for painting, and then it entered a covered space in which men in masks sprayed on the paint, completing the work in about two minutes. I walked up and down the line for half an hour, watching every stage of the process, from the initial block to the completed tractor, and found it fascinating. In the last stage a little petrol was fed to the infant now coming to life, and someone mounted its seat and drove it gaily out of the building to the railway siding, where a freight car was waiting to take it West. The whole process, from the raw ore to the finished tractor, takes 28 hours and 20 minutes, and with the present plant 1,000 can be turned out in a day.

This is mass production, and to achieve it and bring its costs down to the lowest, scores of thousands of men have to repeat the same operations for eight hours in the day and five days in the week. While the assembling line is running there can be no lagging or idling, for the whole thing goes inexorably forward, and any man who fell out or lagged behind his time would disorganise the whole line.

The discipline is automatic, and every man has to do exactly what he is paid to do in a given time. Described in set terms, the thing looks uncommonly like turning men into machines, yet these men looked intelligent and alive, and I was assured that there were no labour troubles. Some kinds of work were said to be more skilful and had more variety in them than others ; men were constantly moved about and moved up ; wages began at about 30 dollars (£6) a week ; there was good prospect of increase up to 50 or 60 dollars ; the alert and intelligent had chances of promotion which would take them out of the mechanical branches and start them on the way to fortune. Mass production, I was assured, was actually popular among the workers. Mass factory relieved them from all the harder kinds of toil ; there were no porters with backs bent under heavy loads ; cranes and conveyors did all that, and the work which remained imposed no physical strain. With a five-day week the worker had two whole days in which to devote himself to his own pursuits.

My own impression is that what really redeems this method from the deadening monotony which, in spite of all these palliatives, would sooner or later overtake it, is the pervading sense of its being team-work. The workers are not, as is sometimes alleged, confined in separate compartments, so that none sees what his fellow is doing ; they are all working side by side along the whole length of the assembling line, and co-operating in a process which is visible to everyone. There is a certain exhilaration in working together for an intelligent purpose which all can realise. As I watch it, I find myself thinking that I should be happier working on a Ford assembling line than on many other specialised processes of modern industry. Something of neighbourliness and comradeship must even subconsciously go into this work.

§ IV

An engineer could no doubt give a vastly more intricate and informing account of this amazing establishment, but I am trying to extricate its human and economic aspects. Here is the pattern set for the modern kind of American industry, and it is being followed not only by Mr. Ford's competitors in his own trade, but, with the necessary adaptations, by other manufacturers all over the country. To look at it sets one seething with questions. Can the demand be steadily, year in and year out, equal to the enormous supply? Can so many eggs be safely put into so few baskets, for this enormous plant together with the equally immense Highland Park establishment turns out only three articles, the Standard Ford Car, the more luxurious "Lincoln," and the Ford Tractor. What would happen if fashion changed or something else were invented, or people hadn't money to buy? Is there no saturation point? Is it conceivable that Ford cars will be wanted at the rate of a million a year? To the prudent Anglo-Saxon it looks a colossal gamble.

But here one touches one of the characteristic differences between the American and European points of view. The American goes ahead with supply in serene confidence that demand will follow; the European explores and measures demand before he proceeds with supply. The American railroad magnate laid his rails over untrodden prairies in sublime faith that traffic would follow; Mr. Ford is certain that if he turns out an enormous number of cheap cars, the public will buy them, provided they are cheap enough. If the entire works have to be suspended for a year that they may be changed over to the new model, he faces that with an unshakable belief that the new will catch on like the old,

provided it is turned out in immense numbers at a low enough price. In this business there must be no hedging; you must plunge on supply, and only when that is certain and you are committed beyond retreat will you begin thinking about demand. Then you have your agents and salesmen all over the country creating demand and persuading your countrymen that life is impossible without the particular thing you are going to supply. Merely to wait till demand sets in when you have it in your power to make people want the thing that you have decided to produce is stagnation and futility.

I have had it explained to me by a mass-producer that the idea of a saturation point in the consumer is just as antiquated as the wages fund theory of the early nineteenth century. Mass production pays high wages, but its method ensures that they are earned to the last cent. This takes more out of the worker, but it also puts more back into him, and in proportion as he produces more he will consume more. So the thing goes on automatically and production becomes the measure of consumption and provides for everybody a rich feast of desirable things at prices so tempting that nobody hesitates to buy. If you object that the producer-consumer may prefer to get out of this circle, cease producing and satisfy his wants on what he has saved, the answer is that he doesn't, at least not in America. And again, if you object that he mayn't have the money, the answer is that this is only a temporary incapacity, which can be made good by lending him the credit, and that also the system does by the "spaced payment," or payment by instalment plan. Once more you may object that though the system may average out—at least in America—over the whole field of industry, there may be a break at particular moments or in particular parts of it. For example, General Motors and Henry Ford combined may at least temporarily

produce more cheap cars than even the United States can absorb, and in that case what? My mass-producing friend answers cheerfully that it will be time to think of that when it happens. The limit is not in sight; General Motors and Ford together will have all they can do to maintain a sufficient supply; and the new model opens up an illimitable field. The American consumer doesn't wait till things wear out: he scraps the old to get the new, and when the new car is on the market there will be an immense scrapping all over the continent.

§ v

My slow European brain begins to spin as he develops the argument. A whole continent caught up in this whirl of producing and consuming; streams of cars pouring out on expectant motorists; furniture, houses, typewriters, fountain-pens and all the other things made in the mass way chasing multitudes of buyers who are only waiting to be caught, wants multiplying, factories spreading, machinery whirring—this, as Newman said, is a vision to "dizzy and appal." It is an agreeable surprise to find that the principal ensuer and begetter of this system is a quiet, delicate-looking man with finely chiselled features under beautifully brushed iron-grey hair. He might be a scholar or man of letters, and looks the man of imagination rather than the man of affairs. He is both, if his friends may be believed, and some add that he is a shrewd and rather hard man of business. Certainly his heart is very literally in this business. He speaks of it with affection as his mission in life and no one laughs when he dismisses the fantastic millions which he is supposed to have piled up as a side-issue which interests him hardly at all. He seems genuinely pleased when I pay my tribute to the works, but smiles indulgently when I hint at certain

ruthless aspects of it, e.g , the suspension for a year which has thrown so many workmen and agents on their own resources, which, friends in Detroit tell me, has meant for many of them, on their beam-ends. These men had had a good time and earned big wages for fifteen years ; now they must be patient until he was ready. In life one must bear in mind the great objects and not let them be thwarted by minor obstacles, else one would do nothing. So the talk glides off on to life and books and his plans for the great museum of "Americana," things illustrating the life of America from Colonial days till now, for which material is being piled up in great sheds adjoining the works. Presently he talks again about the new car, as if it were just an incident in the day's work, and invites me to take a spin in her and judge for myself. I did so, and found for the next few weeks that the fact of my having had this privilege—which on that day I shared with Colonel Lindbergh—was my chief title to fame among the real Americans.

Of some great magnates it is whispered that they owe everything to the skilful choice of assistants who have not shared their fortunes. This is not so with Henry Ford. Everyone in the establishment yields the glory to him. He it is, they say, who foresaw the possibilities of the cheap car, who planned to supply it on this immense scale, whose inventive genius has been at work on every part of it, planning new machinery to meet new needs, developing and improving the " conveyor " and every day and all day plotting and scheming to abolish waste and reduce costs. The last point is especially emphasised and with justice. It is undoubtedly Henry Ford who has made the reduction of costs the keynote of American industry. His works and a thousand others on the same model are miracles of thrift. So all over the country one gets the sense of an immense thriftlessness in the public, and an amazing thrift within the works. The

two things go together. Let the people spend and let economy be concentrated on production, says the American, and all will be well. This is how new countries develop. The opposite process of thrifty peoples and costly production is the way of old countries, and the way of stagnation.

I understand now what is meant when it is said that at Detroit you first get into the "real America." At Detroit you begin to understand the new sort of American business and Henry Ford shows it to you. And also you understand the cost of it for those who can't keep pace, the ruthlessness, the concentration, the unsleeping demand for efficiency, and intolerance of inefficients which are the price of its success. Detroit knows all about that also.

CHAPTER IV

CHICAGO AND ITS POLITICS

§ 1

ARRIVING BY night at Chicago, I look out from a tenth-storey window on a scene which is undeniably impressive and beautiful. The vast tower of the *Chicago Tribune*—the most imposing monument to the power of the Press in all the world—stands illuminated from top to base, like a gigantic incandescent version of the Westminster Victoria Tower, and around it are other buildings more massive, and only a little lower, with the light playing upon their upper stories, some of which have battlements like Gothic castles. The lower levels are relatively in darkness, but at their base the streets are brilliantly lit, showing toy motor-cars and once more, as in New York, men and women walking like ants at the base of enormous cliffs.

The daylight scene is a little less impressive, for the critical eye dwells on details and finds some buildings detestable, but the impression of size and power is still overwhelming. New York has an air of having risen freakishly and incidentally, but Chicago, you would say, is being thoughtfully and deliberately planned on the Titanic scale. With about half the population, it already spreads over an area as big as that of Greater London, and having built itself to the edge of its great Lake, it is now pushing back the waters and creating a vast new tract of reclaimed land to serve as a public park between city and lake. Its magnificent Lake-side Drive already runs—with a few breaks

shortly to be made good—very nearly thirty miles, and much of it is bordered with great houses and vast blocks of flats. When Chicago wants to broaden its streets or make new ones, it drives ruthlessly through all obstacles and scraps solid houses of normal size built the day before yesterday to make room for the giants of to-day. It would laugh derisively if it knew that London had been discussing new bridges for twenty years and was still wondering whether it could afford to sacrifice Charing Cross Bridge. I pick up a paper and find in it plans for seventy-storied buildings, and a serious argument for adding another thirty and making it a round hundred as "the most economical way of building." The hundred-storey building is still in the future, but such an enormous effort in the gigantesque and grandiose as Chicago has made in the last twenty years is, I suppose, not to be seen anywhere else in the world.

It is smokier than London and on at least two days that I was there was nearly as foggy. The railway runs right into the city and along the shore, belching out black smoke, and factory chimneys seem to do as much as they choose, regardless of the near presence of rich men's palaces and sumptuous public buildings. A not very prolonged tramway ride will show you as much squalor and seeming poverty as anywhere in East London, and in American cities the poor quarters are often worse to the outward eye than in England, and refuse and dirt seem to be more tolerated, and the sanitary services to be less efficient and regular. But with it all the dominant impression is that of wealth and power using itself with a prodigality that is utterly reckless of consequences, and finding happiness and satisfaction in the creation of something new at whatever sacrifice of the old. Sensitive Europeans may shiver at the thought of the great stock-yard industry, which is one of the centres of wealth and power, but Chicagoans speak of it with pride as the

pioneer of mass production and a model to the world of rapid, efficient and humane method.

Such is creative evolution in the American industrial world. Creative beyond a doubt, and somehow one gets the sense of great imaginative qualities pushing up and through all obstacles and refusing to be quenched by the gross materialism of the immediate purpose. The design of the city-to-be, with its broad avenues and towering landmarks, is magnificent. The Chicago University is nobly planned; many of its buildings are excellent scholarly Gothic in the manner of Bodley's new buildings at Oxford expanded to the American scale, and the new chapel, also Gothic, must surely rank with the half-dozen finest modern examples of that type in the world. The great Marshall Field Natural History Museum is magnificent within and without, and covers a vast space without compromising the purity of its noble Greek style. These and a dozen other buildings testify to the versatility and ingenuity of American architects and their increasing success in handling the massive and grandiose. Seeing all this marks Chicago as one of the great cities of the future. With its incomparable site and the boundless wealth it has yet to draw upon, it can scarcely fail to fulfil its promise.

§ II

And yet the Mayor of this city is "Big Bill Thompson." I was asked again what we British thought of "Big Bill Thompson." I answered that we thought nothing of him, but that we did think a good deal about his being elected and re-elected Mayor of Chicago. All the Chicago people I met said that they were deeply ashamed of him, and that he injured and misrepresented Chicago, but still he got elected. Would they explain that?

The answer cut deep into the local politics of America. Practically it comes to this. The most distinguished, the most successful, the most respected citizens of this city have no time or inclination for local politics. They leave it to "the politicians" who have dug themselves in with the Germans, the Poles, the Italians, the Irish and other blocks of the poorer population, by methods which it would be a long, tiresome and squalid business to disturb. But they drew a line. There were certain things which the politicians must not do. They must not interfere with the great plan on which the city is being laid out; the Lake-side Drive, the public park which is being reclaimed from the Lake; the new avenues and roads. These are settled by citizens' Commissions on which the best people are willing to serve. It was true that the Mayor and politicians appointed these bodies, but there was a strong public opinion, organised in Chambers of Commerce and business clubs, which compelled them to appoint honest and competent men and to defer to their views. The city would be up in arms if the politicians laid hands on these schemes or attempted to apply their methods to them, but so long as they kept within their boundaries, the politicians were let alone, and when election time came they had the field to themselves.

What are the politicians' methods? Ultimately these depend on the fact that the spoils go to the victors. All salaried officials, including judges, magistrates, police, and even clerks are liable to lose their jobs when their party goes out of power. As a condition of getting office nearly all of them are expected to serve their party in one way or another. The policeman or the clerk has a district or part of it assigned to him which he is expected to canvass and keep straight on the party-ticket when election time comes. There is thus an extremely effective political machine constantly at work and running at high pressure whenever the call is made on it.

Normally there are two machines, the Republican and Democratic, which are supposed to be running in opposition to each other, but I was told that in Chicago their opposition was mostly make-believe. The bosses of the two parties have an understanding as to which candidates they wish elected and how the spoils should be distributed, and in the absence of any other organised party the business of displacing them is thought hopeless. I forbear to pass on stories told me as to their methods of raising money, for I have no means of verifying them, but there was a general agreement that, since the whole system, including what we should call the administration of justice, is steeped in politics, laxity in the enforcement of the law and a great many other doubtful practices leading at times to orgies of crime and plunder were bound to follow. Man yields to custom as he bows to Fate, and the system, I was told, had become so customary that it was accepted as an inevitable evil which had to be tolerated. Admittedly it added to taxation and raised costs and prices, but the margin of wealth was so great that it was thought more economical to pay than to waste time in combating it.

§ III

I am reporting what was told me in November, 1927, and substantially the same story was repeated in other cities. In the following months Chicago appears to have decided that its politicians had crossed the line within which respectable citizens could afford to be passive, and at the primary election which followed the Mayor and his henchmen suffered their first set-back for several years. Possibly by this time the movement had got beyond their control, but it was evident that no city could tolerate bomb-throwing as an incident in its municipal politics without being

plunged into anarchy and forfeiting the respect of its neighbours. The elections showed the kind of effort which has to be made to clear a city of a gang of politicians which has dug itself into it, and explain the reluctance of ordinary law-abiding citizens to undertake that task. It is not always or everywhere that the gang in possession can be challenged by a leader who, like Senator Deening in Chicago, had as strong a will as his opponents, or that ordinary citizens will face the unpleasantness and even risk to life and limb which attends the simple act of recording a vote. The struggle in Chicago is far from being played out in the encounter of last April, and what I heard of the local conditions is a warning against rash prophecy, but I feel confident that the people of Chicago will carry through what they have begun, and in doing so afford an example to other cities whose plight, if less notorious, is only a little better than theirs.

Of another aspect of Mayor Thompson's movement—its effect on racial politics—I shall speak in a subsequent chapter, for it touches not Chicago alone, but all America. Let me add one or two impressions gathered in this place and other industrial centres visited so far. One is that side by side with a stupendous display of wealth, there is also considerable poverty. The notion that America offers wealth to all-comers is clearly an illusion, and may be a disastrous one. The United States keeps no record of its unemployed and their number is apt to be both underestimated in prosperous times and exaggerated in times of depression. All estimates are guesses, but my own guess, after seeing Chicago and other industrial cities, was that the number of unemployed in prosperous times was at least as great as in Great Britain, and might easily with a slight dip in trade be much greater.

There are several reasons for this. American industry on its present basis has no room for the incapable or half capable. It pays high wages to efficient men subject to a

constant and ruthless process of weeding out. It is perpetually changing its form and substituting machines for hand-labour, and there is and must be a corresponding shifting or supersession of labour. The competent superseded have, it is true, greater opportunities in a new country than in an old of finding fresh jobs, and there is in America little of the conservatism which in England chains a man to a particular job or a particular part of the country. The American is mobile and he moves on. But at any particular moment, and even in times of great prosperity, there is and must be a considerable over-spill of men temporarily without a job, and these have no provision made for them corresponding to that made under Unemployment Insurance in Great Britain. For those unable to support themselves, there is in most cities and States only the workhouse and the "Community Fund" which, though an admirably organised form of charity, cannot take the place of an assured provision for which the unemployed man has himself subscribed.

I was told in Chicago that "no physically capable man who knows his way about" need be out of a job. That may be, but the qualifications are important. In Chicago there is a large population of foreign ne'er-do-wells and many of these are not physically capable and do not know their way about. The unrest of the poor foreigner who has lost his way finds a reflex in the turbulent politics of this place, for he remains a voter and is soft material for demagogues. The thought occurs to one that some more careful and systematic way of dealing with the derelict immigrant may in the long run be the way to clean and quiet politics in Chicago.

CHAPTER V

THE MIDDLE-WEST

§ 1

WHATEVER MAY be said about the special character of Detroit or Chicago, it is admitted that when you get to Kansas City and go on thence into the Middle-West you are in the "real America." In this region you are out of the "melting-pot" and among people who claim with pride to be of pure New-England descent, which means for the most part of old-English blood. Yorkshire is, I am persuaded, the spiritual home of large numbers of them; they have the same agricultural background and retain in business the same raciness of the soil that may be observed in the Leeds or Bradford manufacturer. But in yet another respect this region is reminiscent of old England—one hears all round the horizon the rumbling sound of agriculture complaining that it has fallen on evil days. The Englishman ought, of course, to be sympathetic about this, but undeniably it helps him to feel at home, and if he dare say it, it is almost a relief to come at last in this continent upon an industry which confesses that it is not prosperous.

Something is happening to American agriculture, something a little different from anything that is happening in other parts of the world. It is simultaneously passing through two crises, one which is common to all the world, the other which is characteristically American. The first is the readjustment to post-war values after the enormous inflation of the previous years; the second, a change-over to mass production with the aid of Mr. Henry Ford's tractors

and the new machinery which combines reaping, binding and threshing in one operation. One can see the two things expressed statistically in the fact that whereas the value of farm property declined from 78 billion to 50 billion dollars between the year 1920 and 1925, the purchases of farm equipment rose between 1925 and 1926 from 278 to 364 million dollars. American agriculture is not sitting down under its losses; it is all the time endeavouring to recoup itself by cheapening production through the use of machinery. But this kind of farming means that fewer individuals per acre are employed on the land and that large scale farming has every advantage over small. It is estimated that the total farm population has fallen by three millions since 1920, and many of the smaller farmers are said to be perilously hanging on with earnings that are insufficient to provide their families with clothes, boots and education, let alone luxuries and pleasures.

This threatens to make the tariff once more a live issue in American politics. Men who are in this position do not see why the value of their scanty earnings should be cut in half by a 60 per cent. tariff which not only gives them no protection, but actually damages their prospects in the world market. So the farmers' unrest vibrates through the Republican party which is pledged to high tariffs and finds itself at its wits' ends to discover something to hold their allegiance. But in the meantime, the absorption of the little men by the big and their combinations will go on till the great wheat-belts of the West and Middle-West are subdued to mass production with the minimum of men and the maximum of machinery and the lowest overhead charges, which means incidentally the smallest number of separate farms. Then no doubt the Tariff issue will assume another phase and we may see the great agricultural combines at grip with the great industrial combines.

Though this belongs to the future, the traveller who passes through the Middle-West becomes aware of the shifting background against which he must view the present scene. He hears the complaints; he learns that the agricultural population is on the move, and that the young people are looking elsewhere for their livelihood than to the hard toil of raising wheat in the solitude of the plains with their fierce sun in summer and bitter frosts and icy winds in winter. He is told that one day all these lands will be cultivated in an efficient, scientific way by mechanic-agriculturalists who will live in the towns and camp out for the seasonal operations. In the meantime, the change is visibly on foot. Men in the prime of life are realising their holdings, coming into the towns, streaming with their families into California and adding to the population of its new cities, especially Los Angeles. The old Californians complain bitterly of the "incursion from the Middle-West," but it is precisely on that delectable coast that the Middle-Westerner finds the life and gaiety, the equable climate and charming scenery which most appeal to him after the long winters and solitary life on the plains. Being of a bustling disposition, he does not wait to go to it till he dies; he picks himself up, takes his capital with him, and emerges as a business man with a cheerful determination to make a new start in life.

The cities of the Middle-West are quite composed about it. Agriculture may be depressed, but they are obviously thriving. It matters little to them whether the same amount of grain is produced by a smaller or a greater population, provided it is produced, as it must be. They handle it and mill it and market it, and are all the time throwing up industries of their own which are independent of agriculture. One realises in these places the immense number of alternative industries and occupations which this country is capable

of producing, the cheerful mobility of the population to meet changing needs, and the ingenuity of the busy brains that are incessantly at work devising and supplying these needs. The air of America in general to the Middle-West is that of the Londoner to the provinces, only more so. The Middle-Westerner is supposed to be out of the swim, a Babbitt, a rough uncultured person who barely understands the language of polite society. I was solemnly told in New York that I must not be discouraged if my "English accent" rendered me unintelligible at first to a Middle-West audience; I was to persevere and they would pick it up as I went along. Least of all was I to expect that they would be interested in world politics or be surprised if I found them anti-British. A short visit does not entitle me to speak dogmatically about anything, but I can only say, so far as my own experience went, that nowhere in America did I find keener and more intelligent and friendly audiences, and if language was any obstacle it was my lack of lucidity and not their understanding which was at fault.

The Middle-West, it seems to me, has suffered much wrong at the hands both of the novelists and of other Americans who seldom pay it the compliment of visiting it.

§ II

The four cities I visited—Kansas City, Topeka, Lawrence and Wichita all left on me the impression of a vigorous local life developing in an independent and characteristic way. The Press holds its head high and refuses to be amalgamated or syndicated. Some half dozen of the ablest journalists and newspaper proprietors are at work in this region, especially Henry J. Allen of Wichita, William Allen White of Emporia, and Henry Haskell of the *Kansas City Star*. All are out for clean journalism and honest politics. They have hard

fights sometimes, but they can be relied upon to stand firm against threats or blandishments. Everywhere one finds leading citizens doing something for their cities, helping with their money, working out schemes for town-planning or education. The educational ferment is amazing. In several of these towns the age of compulsory education has been raised to sixteen, and elementary schools, secondary schools, colleges, universities and appliances for scientific teaching and research are provided on a scale far more liberal than would be found in European towns of the same size. The whole population says in chorus that it believes in education.

Lawrence in Kansas shows the higher education in its best western form. It is the principal university city for a large part of this region, and in it one sees the modern American spirit breaking ground in a characteristic way. The utmost effort is being made to keep this town clear of soot and grime and to give it the character of a home of learning. The University stands on a high hill overlooking a great expanse of rolling and wooded country, and all its Faculty buildings, "Fraternities" and "Dormitories"—i.e., the hostels for students—have wide spaces of grass about them. Many of the newer buildings are of excellent design, and the great Auditorium, seating some three thousand people, is the last word in scientific and acoustic planning. All subjects are taught here, including journalism, but I was assured that literature, history and the humanities were not neglected, and that Latin and Greek had a modest place.

Anyhow it is a charming place, and the lads and girls who are educated here seemed to have a warm devotion to their alma mater and its teachers, and a keen and zealous outlook on their own education. I was asked to address a Congress of journalistic students, and had excellent talk with a group

of them afterwards. They struck me as fine, simple, straightforward lads, with charming manners, especially in their dealings with their elders. They take you into their confidence, tell you all about themselves, and their homes, and their upbringing, and what they hope to do in life, with a frank simplicity which is most attractive. In this country democracy rules not only between classes, but between old and young. The young pay the old the high compliment of treating them as equals, and have none of that ironic respectfulness which puts the elder on the shelf. I have no happier memories than that of the bubbling talk with these young people.

Many of the lads who are graduating in these colleges and Universities earn their keep by working half the day as newspaper-sellers, salesmen in shops and porters in the hotels or railway stations. The elevator was kept waiting in one hotel while the lad in charge of it told me about the course he was taking in the University, and asked me whether I thought it would help him into journalism. At the railway station at Wichita I was smilingly greeted by two porters who had been among my audience at a lecture I had given at a certain college the previous morning. They were only two out of hundreds who were " working their way " through college. In one town where I stayed a deputation came to the principal newspaper proprietor asking him to change the hour when the distribution of his paper started from 3 a.m. to 4 a.m. on the ground that it would give a hundred students who were earning their keep by delivering the papers, an hour more in bed in the morning. An Englishman feels a warm sympathy for these lads who are doing this double toil to get themselves educated, and I fancied that some of them looked ill and tired for all the cheerful face that they put upon it.

§ III

I have seen scores of "Main Streets" but not more Babbitts than one would expect to find in growing provincial towns, whether in America or England. The actual physical Main Street is worth looking at, for it is an epitome of the process by which an American town grows out of nothing. The first stage is that of wooden shacks planted on each side of a broad straight road, and one can still see these on the outskirts of new towns and villages. The next stage is that of one-storied shops or dwellings, the latter with wide porches or verandahs on which the family sits on summer evenings. The more prosperous then begin to build up, leaving their neighbours on the ground floor, and presently some more ambitious individual shoots ten stories into the air, sublime and solitary. This sets the pace, and his neighbours follow as soon as they dare, but at irregular intervals which give the street a jagged appearance, since the ten-storied dwelling as often as not is flanked on both sides by bungalow shops. As prosperity comes these intervals are filled up by banks, stores and offices which, being on the big scale, pay a handsome price for the site to the original owner. The whole process is accompanied by a lively speculation in reality which is the favourite gamble of those who have a little money to burn.

Of course, one misses the nucleus of old things, the church, the inn, the village street, the walled houses with their gardens, from which the English town grows, and the absence of mystery in the deliberate rectangular lay-out of the American town is a little chilling to the English eye. Round and about Main Street all these American towns seem an endless repetition of the same pattern and that certainly not a romantic one. But they atone in their suburbs.

That business should be in the city and life outside it is the decision of all of them, and, as in Detroit, the cheap car has enabled them to spread miles from their centre. In almost every one of them some enterprising person—whether from public-spirited or commercial motives—seems to have laid hold of them betimes, planned broad avenues, planted trees, spaced out building plots so that there should be no crowding; laid out parks, established "country clubs" which become the centres of sports and gaieties. The houses one sees in these garden-suburbs are of all sorts and kinds, but a considerable number are of excellent design, arguing a refined taste in owner and architect, and many are charmingly furnished in the old-English manner.

Often in walking about these suburbs I have been reminded of an Indian cantonment. You walk everywhere under trees. There are deep verandahs and shady porches to the houses, you have the sense of a very sociable kind of life with amusements and sports in common. No one hides himself behind wall or hedge; the little grass plots around the houses are apparently open to all comers, and however big the house, the plot on which it stands is always of quite moderate size. Here, again, what an Englishman chiefly misses is the garden. A few flowers there may be on the plots, but no one seems to want what we should call a garden, and public opinion is altogether against any one individual taking a big space and shutting it off from his neighbours.

This everywhere is one of the characteristic differences between the English and the American way of life. The Englishman (and still more the Englishwoman) wants, as he says, his home to himself. He "hates to be overlooked," builds walls, plants trees to keep his garden in seclusion and his house from the road; his wife has only certain hours when she is "at home," and feels justified in refusing to see neighbours at any others. Americans seem to have none of

this feeling. Their houses, though detached, overlook each other shamelessly ; they call on each other at all hours, live in a whirl of clubs and societies for entertainment and uplift, and are perpetually organising and being organised for the promotion of causes which are entirely remote from their daily lives. They pursue art together, read books together, practise music together. There seem positively to be no solitary occupations.

If one passes back from the garden-suburb to the city, one sees the same characteristic. Everything seems to be going on in public. Take the lift in any of the new offices, and it lands you on a floor which is one vast room. There are no partitions. Thirty or forty men and women may be working at different jobs at different desks or tables, but they are all in sight of each other, and all apparently deaf to the sound of each other's voices and typewriters, which to an outsider coming suddenly in would seem to make work impossible. Nobody has or seems to want a den of his own, and if the principal has one, he is always in and out of it and always being invaded. In an American newspaper office, the editor, the writer, the reporter, the advertisement manager, and the comic draughtsman are, as often as not, all in one vast unpartitioned room, and all seem to think the noise and the company a stimulus to efficiency in their various departments. Again and again I was told that the " undivided floor " was the secret of efficient control in business.

This social collectivism is seen everywhere in America, but above all in the Middle-West. There especially one gets the sense of a community life which one finds seldom in Europe. The Americans are said to be a highly individualistic people, but their gregariousness is what most strikes the European observer.

CHAPTER VI

CALIFORNIA AND SAN FRANCISCO

§ 1

AMONG THE many places in different parts of the world which I have marked down as places of residence when I am a Methuselah is a certain house above the Cheeseman Park in Denver, Colorado. It is a pillared Georgian structure, about 6,000 ft. above sea-level, affluent and comfortable looking, with a pleasant garden city all about it, and just across the road is the charming marble portico which a benevolent lady has erected as a memorial to her husband and an adornment to the Park. These are incidentals; the main point is that almost every window in this house looks across the town and beyond it to the great sweeping line of the "Rockies," from Pike's Peak on the east to the great snow-fields and summits which melt away into the sky on the north-west. This is how mountains should be seen—at least by Methuselahs who have ceased to dream of climbing them—and, unless it be the view of the Himalayas from Mahatsu above Simla, I can think of no unbroken line from horizon to horizon which equals this one. The sunset on a November evening strikes near the middle of it, turning the whole range from pale amber to hazy blue, and then down the scale of amethyst and pink to the final velvety purple against an orange sky. Twilight is short in this region, and we watched it till darkness fell, and the night-chill sent us back to our hotel, but envy filled us for the owner of the house, who looks on this scene from his windows morning, noon and night.

You have the same scene behind you when you depart westward from Denver to the coast, and as you climb up to the Colorado plateau the mountains slip down the horizon till you see only their white edges on the rim of the green and brown upland. In the morning you wake to find yourself approaching the causeway, which takes you forty miles through (not across) the shallower part of the great Salt Lake. What it is exactly that makes these great salt inland seas a waking dream of desolation is more than I can say, but even in the glittering morning light which turned its waters into silver and clothed the surrounding mountains with a haze of tender blue, this lake seemed the solitude of solitudes, and if there could be water on the moon, one might think it a scene from moonland. Nothing lives in these dense salt waters; there is no sign of habitation on the shores; the wild duck which disport themselves in the brine and seem to like it are said to render themselves unfit for human company or consumption—which is perhaps why they do it. The scene is one of fantastic beauty, but it causes a slight shiver.

The train passes on into the Nevada desert, which to the English eye is a real novelty in landscape and a thing of rare beauty. Right and left are vast rolling expanses of sage-brush, grey brown and spring-green on the sandy soil, and closing the horizon on either side jagged, deep blue mountains, with flashes of vermilion on their flanks. The scene changes incessantly as the sun rises and sinks, and new mountains come into view and are swept with waves of colour. It is not wholly desert; cattle, goats and even horses find a living on the sage-brush; and there are immense ranches where now and again one may see the steers being rounded up and get exciting glimpses of real cowboys doing their own business in the wild. Darkness comes on a winter evening long before you are tired of this desert.

§ II

Finding that if we kept to our plan we should make the descent into California in the dark—which is what most travellers do—we left our train and sleeping-car, and risking our reputation, found a lodging for the night at Reno, Nevada—the Mecca of those who have wearied of matrimony—and took train again the next morning. We were richly rewarded. If I had to choose the six most beautiful day's journeys that I have taken in my life, I should place the descent into California across the Sierra Nevadas very high among them. There are finer snow passes in Europe, and the Himalayan gorges and valleys are beyond compare, and the slopes of the Apennines and the Alpes Maritimes seem at times the loveliest things in the world, but this Californian journey takes you through snow passes into great forests, with lakes in the heart of them, and brings you out into peach-land and vine-land and apple-land, breaking down steeply into the great fertile plain under a brilliant sun. On the lower slopes olive and palm and all the subtropical tribe flourish abundantly, and added to them is the English walnut, now in favour with the fruit-growers, who report that it grows three times as fast as in England. Look back and you see all this against a background of immense Californian pines with the snows above, and now and again you catch a glimpse of the Sacramento River running swiftly through a wooded gorge.

Then leaving the mountains, you run for an hour or two over the great Californian plateau, where the fruit-growers are making their fortunes, and pass through Sacramento to the delta which lies between that city and the Bay of San Francisco. Part of that has been reclaimed and makes splendid wheat-land, another part is reedy marsh into which

the tide comes, and where snipe, quail, duck and wild geese abound. Flocks of all kinds are feeding or wheeling in the air regardless apparently of the train and of the sportsmen who have built their club-houses on piles in the marshes. As night falls the scene is again one of rare beauty. The mountains to the north become a deep violet, a faint pink mist comes up from the marsh, and the tidal waters flash between the reeds.

It is dark when we come to Oakland and take the ferry across the Bay to San Francisco. But the city is in the usual blaze of light, its vast sky-scrapers being illuminated from top to base, and the advertisements keeping up an incessant twinkle which is reflected in the waters of the Bay. We are aware of something gigantic, precipitous, and entirely American which must be discovered by day.

§ III

Taking it for all in all, I am tempted to say that San Francisco is the most wonderful thing in the United States. It is a city of 800,000 people entirely rebuilt on a towering scale in little more than twenty years. When the earthquake and fire laid it low in 1905, its inhabitants had to decide whether they would rebuild it in the timid bungalow style which is supposed to be safe against earthquakes or begin again as if nothing had happened, or at all events as if nothing of the kind ever could or would happen again. Unhesitatingly they decided for the second alternative. It was, they said, the fire and not the earthquake which did the main damage—so now they would build fire-proof structures of steel and concrete, duplicate and triplicate their water supplies, and banish even the thought that the earth might betray them. It was a splendid decision carried through with unflinching courage and energy.

In San Francisco one speaks always of the great fire and never of the earthquake; from the moment you set foot on this coast it is bad manners to mention the word "earthquake," and if at some charming seaside spot you feel a tremor in the night and incautiously mention it, you are told that this is a reassuring sign that the earth is settling down on its return to normalcy. I have discussed it sotto voce with a geologist, and he told me that the risks are negligible if you build boldly on a solid foundation. The foundation was the danger-spot; be sure that it is solid earth, rock or concrete, and you may sleep safely in your bed on the thirteenth story; build on rubbish, sand, or shifting surface ground, and you will be in danger in a bungalow. This is the theory on which San Francisco has been rebuilt, and I am assured that there need be no hesitattion about it. For all that, the stranger catches his breath a little as he sees the vast sky-scrapers, some, like the Telephone tower, among the most beautiful and imposing in all the States, hurling their defiance at the Earth-shaker.

In a peculiar way this place seems to me a symbol of the American spirit—its courage, its initiative, its exultation in the chance of making something new, its power of creating belief in what it wants and thinks good to believe. All move together in the same thought. Everywhere it is treason to whisper the words "depression" or "unemployment"; in California it is treason to hint fear or doubt which might break the nerve or dash the spirit of the dwellers in this special paradise in God's own country. All spectres being thus laid and every skeleton locked in its cupboard, the Californian jumps to the chance of clearing away the burnt-out rubbish of the past—the shacks and slums of the old city—and starting again on a glorious new plan. He can now draw his beloved rectangular lines for streets and blocks; lay out the roads for the garden cities

in which his prosperous citizens rejoice, and with the motor to help him, spread out his boundaries and build on precipices that were altogether inaccessible to the horse-driving, foot-padding, prehistoric population of the days "before the fire." There it is after twenty years, towering over the Bay, all brand-new and gleaming in the sunshine; its massive business and public buildings and great stores in the centre, its splendid "homes" in orderly ranks one above the other stretching out towards the Golden Gate; and from every height that incomparable view of blue waters and bluer mountains in which Constantinople alone among European cities can claim to be its equal.

A fastidious taste can pick faults; there are ugly as well as beautiful new buildings; there are the hideous advertisements dear to the heart of business America, and bringing it, I suppose, a sort of spiritual consolation by a perpetual reminder of the things that are booming: there is to the European eye a lack of the rounded and mellowed forms, the domes, the tapering spires, and intricate roof-patterns that break the harsh lines of square upstanding blocks in old cities. It is especially sad that the Golden Gate Park, which is probably the most beautiful public park in the world, should end abruptly in a poor imitation of Coney Island on the lovely Pacific beach. It seems churlish to mention these things when the whole is so splendid and so magnificent a monument to the courage and energy which have made it possible. Almost everywhere in America one hears of public-spirited citizens who grasped a situation, planned towns of the future, built museums and art galleries, gave public parks to make the centre of a pleasanter life than that provided in the main streets and the business towns. San Francisco in 1906 was fortunate in having a whole group of these, who instead of wringing their hands over the ruins, started at once to rebuild, and determined from the begin-

ning to make something bigger and finer. It should be added that they were greatly helped by the splendid decision of the British Insurance Companies to pay up at once, and not boggle about their legal liabilities for damage due, in the first instance, to earthquake.

§ IV

One might suppose that life would relax in this equable, warm climate and surroundings that are a perpetual temptation to a *far niente* existence. It is apparently not so on this coast. San Francisco hums with business, it flatters itself on having a Stock Exchange which is second only to that of New York, it is all the time developing new industries —above all the great fruit industry—and oil and minerals, including gold, silver, and copper, are close at hand. Here, as elsewhere, men grow rich with what seems to a European extraordinary ease, and they tell you with one accord that they are only beginning. Some slight disappointment there is about the maritime trade, and the little of it that is in American hands, and it is possible that the Pacific coast will be quicker than the Atlantic to discover that the Fordney Tariff and an expanding mercantile marine are things which don't go together. In the meantime the daily procession of immensely long freight trains which starts westward from San Francisco is a sufficient consolation and the Coast sees itself becoming more and more one of the great sources of supply for the continent. The Californian talks alternately of the beauty and the richness of his country; he is proud of the former, but he is determined that the latter shall not run to waste.

Californians would be offended if one hinted that they were a fraction short of 100 per cent. Americanism, but there is a nuance in their Americanism which they like you

to recognise. Those who were happy enough to be born in the State dwell on the fact with a modest pride; those who were not speak regretfully of the tardiness of the parents in discovering their predestined home. The born Californians and the early arrivals stand together against the flood which is coming in from the other States, and it is the special consolation of San Francisco at its annoyance at being passed in population by Los Angeles that it is true Californian, whereas Los Angeles is a mixed multitude of new-comers. I don't presume to judge between these rivals, but San Francisco undoubtedly has a vivid personality which marks it off from other American cities. Its shops and cafés —they call them cafeterias—have a Parisian air; the people seem gay and vivacious; numerous fruit and flower stalls makes splashes of bright colour in the streets; Chinese and Japanese add a flavouring of the East. Poverty is out of sight, if it exists; and wealth compels you to admire its palatial clubs, vast hotels, and luxurious "homes." Nowhere can there be more charming villas or beautiful subtropical gardens than among the woods of Burlingame. Here the American architect and garden-planner spreads himself in the Italian and Spanish manner, and with unlimited money behind him and a climate in which everything grows can make little Paradises. Visiting some of these I understand the saying that the Californian does not know when he dies.

San Francisco prides itself on its artistic and literary movements, and above all on its Universities and schools. At Berkeley, across the Bay, the University of California, occupying a superb site among wooded hills, provides for 15,000 students, and on the other side, Stanford, the pious memorial of a wealthy lady to her husband and son, gives a more intensive education to another 3,000. It is all built in the Spanish style—with Byzantine reminiscences—and is justly the pride of its students and teachers. Wherever one

goes, one is conscious of a vivid Californian local patriotism with unbounded wealth and munificence behind it. The only question I have heard raised about Stanford is whether it is big enough for an American University. I hope that the answer will be in the affirmative, for bigness is becoming the bane of American Universities.

CHAPTER VII

FROM LOS ANGELES TO NEW ORLEANS

§1

THE UNDEVELOPED mineral, timber, and other resources of California are said to be unlimited, and it has a soil in which the trouble is not to make things grow, but to prevent them from growing too fast. So big business has its eye on it all the time, and is daily pouring a greater and greater volume of its products into the other States. On the other hand, it is more and more being discovered as a pleasure ground and a health resort—the Riviera of the continent—and the Eastern millionaire is already in two minds whether, when winter comes, he shall flit to Cannes or Monte Carlo, or make his home by a sandy bay on the Pacific. There are already thousands of beautiful villas on the long coast-line between San Francisco and Los Angeles, and many little towns which, like Santa Barbara, keep the old Spanish atmosphere in scenery which recalls the finest Mediterranean. So there are two streams constantly coming into the State—the money-makers and the pleasure-seekers—and together they are adding at an almost incredible pace to its population.

Los Angeles is for the moment the chief centre of this immigration, and its growth is, by all European standards, miraculous. I hesitate to mention the figures lest they should not be believed, but the facts are roughly that within the memory of people now living it was a rather mean and

not very important town of thirty thousand or so, and that it is now a vast, spreading, luxurious garden city of a million and a half, the greater part of which is a growth of the last fifteen years. San Francisco, which looks on a little jealously, calls it an incursion from the Middle-West, and it is certainly true—as was said in a previous chapter—that the Middle-Westerner who has made his money is especially tempted to change his hard winters and hot summers for the sunshine and equable warmth of the coast. Who can blame him? But at this moment—thanks largely to Mr. Sinclair Lewis—the rest of America is in a state of irritation with the Middle-West, and old Californians see themselves submerged in a tide of Babbitts. To me it seems as if the Middle-Westerner who, in spite of his Babbitts, has a great many of the solid British provincial virtues, is just what the coast needs, as ballast to its film-stars and millionaires. Anyhow, he will come, and in his wake a great multitude from all parts of the continent seeking a place in the sun for the end of their days.

Los Angeles gives it this place, and on a scale unrivalled in the world. There is room for everyone on the plateau on which it stands between sea and mountains, and a choice of lovely valleys and perches on the hills a little way back. Except in the old central part, it is or will be a city of broad, shady avenues, with well-spaced houses and villas on either side, and delectable mountain views to close the vistas. Many of these avenues are finished, others are laid out, and in a very few years they will cover the whole fifteen miles to the Pacific beach on the one side, and on the other more villas and houses will cover the hills and valleys for the twelve miles to Pasadena. The old Californians deplore the desecration of their favourite solitudes, but nothing can stop it, and once more it is only fair to say that the American architect is doing his best to mitigate it. There are, of course, some mon-

strosities, but there are an astonishing number of ingenious, original and pleasing designs, and once more one comes to the conclusion that the American architect is leading the world in domestic architecture. Moreover, here at length the garden is coming into its own, and the absence of hedges and fences, on which America insists, makes every garden a public as well as a private amenity.

§ II

Merely to state these facts is to dispel the illusion that Los Angeles is a nest of film stars, pursuing the peculiar kind of life that they have invented and perfected. The stars are there all right, and in a moment I will say something about them, but Hollywood, though a very important industry, is only one of many, and the vast majority of the million and a half of people who live in Los Angeles are not even remotely connected with it. They are of all sorts—some very rich, some quite poor, and a great many of modest fortune who have come here for the good reason that it is a very nice place, where the company is thought to be good and living not too dear. It is anyhow quite a mistake to suppose you become a star and get even a reflected glamour by living in Los Angeles. It is for the most part a quiet, respectable, and very busy place, for even the retired American generally tries his hand at a new business, and a place which is adding population yearly by scores of thousands offers many opportunities for such.

Nor would I by any means exclude Hollywood from its serious activities. That is first of all a great industry and one of the most important in the world. Here again one sees American method at work, with its vast capital and its mass production. I spent several hours in the "studios,"

and they left my brain in the same sort of whirl as a visit to Mr. Ford's factories at Detroit. The supremacy of Hollywood is no longer due to its unrivalled sunshine, for even there the greater part of the work is done by artificial light; it is due to the long start which the Americans have given themselves in the technique of the business and in the immense assemblage of all conceivable properties and accessories that is now to be found there. The producer can get every sort of crowd in every sort of costume, a battalion of almost any sort of army in correct uniform, a camel corps or a troop of savages. He can call for performing dogs, horses, elephants or rats and be sure of getting them. And within a radius of a hundred miles is almost every sort of scenery —great forests, rocks, precipices, high mountains, wide plains, sandy deserts and tropical gardens. Then the "sets" in stock are of immense variety, and, if the observer is not too critical, may be made to fit for almost any scene in Europe or America. They are at all events what Americans think European scenery ought to be. The material accumulated here is worth some ten million dollars, and with it is a whole army of experts and an unrivalled company of trained actors and actresses. Until Europe sets up a similar apparatus it is idle to blame producers for coming to Hollywood.

A vast business of this kind must, of course, be run on commercial lines, and the incessant search for what will catch on with the public is, I should say, as tedious, anxious and worrying in this as in all other trades of the same kind. Even the crudest film needs enormous pains, skill and industry before it can be got approximately right; and those who think the life of the star to be a romantic holiday would be rapidly undeceived if they tried it. Nothing can be predicted with certainty of scenario or actor or actress. The most likely fail, the most unlikely succeed. What might be

supposed to be the perfect film face fails for some inscrutable reason to "get across," and another with apparently no qualification is an instant success. The great successes are very few; the failures lamentably many. Thousands of both sexes come here to go away sorrowful. Young men with Greek profiles and university educations, lovely girls with flawless features and lustrous eyes discover that their faces are not their fortunes. To become a star you must shine in the peculiar way which enables you to outshine the other lights, and if nature has not endowed you with this inner glow, no vows or tears or the most rigid discipline or instruction will enable you to succeed or raise you from the ranks of the supers.

The great Hollywood machine grinds out its products and averages its results, relying, like a publisher of novels, on a few great successes to make the chief part of its handsome profits. Undoubtedly it is commercial, but among its directors and stars are a certain number of real and sincere artists who are honestly trying to educate public taste and perfect their art. Hollywood opinion crowns Chaplin as a master, and stories are told of the enormous pains he takes with his slightest efforts. But none in this place exert a greater influence than Douglas Fairbanks and his wife Mary Pickford, who are charming people as well as very serious and conscientious artists. No one in private life could be less like the popular idea of a film hero than Douglas Fairbanks. There is not a trace of pose about him; and though he will talk freely about the art and craft of picture-making, it is difficult to get him to say a word about himself and his exploits. Picture-making apart, he is a delightful talker with vivid and original ideas on almost any subject that comes up. I came away from a talk with him feeling him to be one of the most gifted Americans.

§ III

Before leaving the coast I had a glimpse of the charming Garden City of Pasadena and visited the great Huntington House recently bequeathed by its owner, exactly as he left it, to serve as a picture-gallery and art museum for this region. It is packed with English masterpieces of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and an Englishman cannot but feel a certain sadness when he looks upon the superb Reynoldses, Gainsboroughs, Romneys, and Constables which have gone for ever from the old country. It is one of time's curious revenges that a patriotic American should furnish his gallery almost exclusively from the grandees and great ladies of the time of George III; and one hardly dares think what the Mayor of Chicago would think about it, or—still more poignant—what the subjects of these portraits would have said if they had known what fate had in store for them. Was there, I wonder, just a spice of malice in the collector's mind when he bought these illustrious captives to his home in California? I do not know, but it must anyhow be admitted that he did everything possible to mitigate their misfortune. They are sumptuously housed in rooms designed and furnished in the style of their own period, and they will be seen and admired by far greater numbers than would have visited them in their ancestral homes. The "Blue Boy" and "Pinkie" hang on either side of a Georgian fireplace in the great drawing-room, and, their wanderings over, look out on one of the loveliest of Californian valleys. It is difficult to believe that these beautiful portraits and the lovely English landscapes that keep them company will not stir kindly thoughts of old England in the Americans who visit them.

§ IV

Leaving Los Angeles on the first stage of your journey east you pass for a hundred miles or so along the great open valley which claims to be the largest orange-growing district in all the world. There are at all events more orange trees than I have ever seen before in a day's journey, and there seemed to be room for as many more again. This set me wondering why oranges should be twice as dear in California as in England, and the more so as the grower grumbles incessantly at the price which he evidently thinks far too low. But America abounds in little mysteries of this kind, and the American consumer, having no experience of any other price-levels, is content that it should be so, and is warm in sympathy with orange-growers and all other producers who are not (in their own opinion) making enough money.

Leaving oranges behind, you climb the beautiful mountains of South-Eastern California, and presently come out on to the cactus desert. I don't know whether it is actually so called, but I have it so marked in memory, for its chief feature is an abundance of tree-like cactuses, which apparently flourish (and have edible juicy inward parts) in completely dry sand. Once more I was told when I started on this journey that the hours spent in traversing deserts must be submitted to for the felicities on the far side, and on the morrow we were promised the high privilege of seeing the Grand Canyon, which lies across the border in New Mexico. The Grand Canyon is indeed an extraordinary thing, of which I wish to speak with all respect. It is undoubtedly the greatest thing of its kind in the world. There can in all the world be no other chasm thirteen miles broad and a mile deep descending sheer to a river bottom from a

flat plateau seven thousand feet above the sea. This statistical aspect of it is justly emphasised, and the English visitor who intends to visit it will do well to bear it carefully in mind. But beautiful and impressive as it is when the sun plays on it or the clouds roll about it, it has still the air of a natural freak which somehow quenches a complete satisfaction. It would have done equally well for heaven or hell in one of those old Bible pictures which fascinated and frightened the children of sixty years ago; it would have served Gustave Doré as a background for almost any scene in Paradiso or Inferno. It is, in fact, like an enormous gravel pit quarried by defunct giants; who departed in a hurry, leaving their colossal unfinished workings behind them.

The deserts, on the contrary, are sheer natural loveliness. All through New Mexico and Arizona one looks out on the sea of sage-brush, with beautifully sculptured mountains in a haze of pale blue rising out of it like Greek islands from the Ægean. The air on these high plateaux is amazingly exhilarating, and one feels a sense of well-being in merely passing through them. This should be an ideal country for consumptives and other invalids, and if American ingenuity can solve the problem of bringing water to it, it may yet provide sanatoria for half the continent.

§ v

In English eyes the South is markedly different from the rest of America. It is prosperous, but not aggressively so; it seems on the whole to be inhabited by people of moderate means, who take life more easily than their fellow citizens in North and West. There are evidences of old times, old colonial houses, farmhouses, with high-pitched red roofs, clapboard cottages which might have been taken bodily out

of Kent. New Orleans prides itself on its old French quarter—some of it rather dilapidated, but containing a few good specimens of a seventeenth-century style which is midway between Spanish and French, and a score or so of interesting inns and houses with vaulted ceilings and inner courtyards. But even in New Orleans the sky-scrapers are beginning, and have turned the centre of the town into a modest imitation of Wall Street. The Southerner explains to you rather apologetically that he has been kept back by the Civil War and the yoke put upon him afterwards by the Northern Yankee, and he dates his emancipation from the year 1912, when the establishment of the Federal Reserve Bank released him, or so he says, from his dependence on New York for credit.

The hatchet is buried, but one gets some reminders that it is not far below the surface in the minds of the older generation. At Atlanta one is shown the battlefields, and prosperous as the place looks, one is assured that it would have been far bigger and wealthier if General Sherman had not thought it necessary to set it on fire. But the chief legacy is still the negro question. Travelling in the South, one sees black faces looking out of cottage windows, black people in the fields, whole quarters of towns in which only negroes live. Everywhere is evidence of the desire to segregate the coloured people, to keep them in separate compartments in trams and trains, to make them eat apart and use separate conveniences. Again and again one is reminded of the Indian caste system which has fundamentally the same object—the prevention of inter-marriage. It is the purity of its blood which the South is thinking about, and all else follows from that beginning. I asked a citizen of New Orleans why the solid South remained so persistently democratic when (as he himself had told me) the sympathies of many of them were with the Republican party. His answer was that the

Republican Federal Government had just appointed a negro as Federal Customs Officer.

When in Atlanta, the mother city of the Ku Klux Klan, I tried to inform myself about that strange organisation, but it altogether baffled me. Its antics, its violence, its profound convictions about drink and Protestantism, and Jews and Roman Catholics, are things which could not be combined in any other organised body in any part of the world, and the tales told about its doings and methods were to me altogether incredible, though vouched for by the most respectable testimony. It is now said to be waning in influence, but it numbers its adherents by the hundred thousand and, when I was on the spot it was preparing a frantic "drive" to prevent the Roman Catholic Governor, Al Smith, from obtaining the Democratic nomination for the Presidency. The attraction which its ritual and its dressing-up have for large numbers of Americans is, I think, partly a reaction from the lack of ceremony in the public life of the country. The romantic and decorative sense which elsewhere finds satisfaction in the colour and pageantry of courts and armies needs some outlet. But the spectacle of blameless and respectable citizens taking the law into their own hands, like Mr. Edgar Wallace's *Just Men*, and flogging and lynching their neighbours at their own discretion is one of those things which have to be accepted, because they are there. The strange thing is that the law-abiding tolerate these proceedings, but this again arises from the disbelief in the authorised law and its administrators which one observes in so many parts of this country.

My grand circle brings me up at Asheville in North Carolina for a halt before returning to the familiar ground of Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York. This, too, is one of the characteristic new places which have been developed in the last few years. I look out from my win-

dows on to the " Great Smoky Mountains " of which for many years I have had a mental picture drawn from " Charles Egbert Craddock's " one-time famous novel, *The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains*. They are spread out in a high jagged misty line rising to six thousand feet and closing the horizon to the South. On all sides are other mountains with deep and densely wooded valleys in between. It is a delectable place, which has grown in the characteristic American way from small beginnings to about 75,000 inhabitants, and its new roads and pillared white houses run in and out of the valleys for miles about the original town. Asheville is becoming a sort of Bath or Cheltenham for retired naval and military officers and retired missionaries—a great company in America—who find life agreeable and healthy at its 2,500 ft. level. It is also a half-way house for the fashionable pleasure-seekers who winter in Florida and find it agreeable to spend a week or so on the way out or the way back in its splendid Park Grove Hotel. All through this country and all along the Gulf of Mexico, which is rapidly being provided with great hotels and villas, one may see the apparatus of luxury being feverishly thrown up to catch the new rich and their wives, especially the latter.

Such are my samples of America seen in a cursory way in a three-months' journey at the end of 1927. The date is important. A traveller may go over the same ground five or ten years hence and see another phase in the never-ending transformation scene. The difficulty of this country is that before you have caught up with any phase of it, it will probably have gone on to something else.

Part II

LIFE AND INSTITUTIONS

CHAPTER VIII

THE AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT

§ 1

HAVING, SO TO speak, sampled the American continent, let me try to gather up certain general impressions.

Europe in general has only the vaguest idea of the material development of the United States, and only those who have visited it and revisited it after an interval of years can get the measure of it. In America, as nowhere else in the world at the present time, one gets the sense of a creative evolution working collectively and subconsciously to ends greater than individuals are aware of, and unforeseeable by living man. Never in the world's history can there have been such a display of wealth, power and energy as is spread out across the whole continent; never such feverish activity in breaking and making.

When you leave Chicago or Kansas City, you imagine that you must be at the end of it, but you cross the plains and the mountains to find it beginning again and taking new forms on the Californian coast. San Francisco, all built new in about twenty years, is perhaps the greatest achievement of all, but that, too, is being challenged by the even newer Los Angeles, which has added a million to its population in twenty years, and promises to be *the* garden city in all the world.

The pace of the movement all over the continent needs its own time-machine to measure it. Villages grow into towns and small towns into vast cities within a dozen years. Buildings which in old countries would be thought good

for centuries are scrapped without a thought to make way for the sky-scraper, which continues to soar in the great cities. The twenty-storeyed building is superseded by the thirty and forty-storeyed, and the newspapers produce plans for the seventy and even the hundred-storeyed. Wealth increases proportionately. People of modest fortunes drawn from safe investments have only had to sit still to see themselves become millionaires by the appreciation of their holdings in the last ten years. Speculation in real estate and oil have brought wealth undreamt of to the enterprising and the lucky. Skilled workmen easily make £2 and £3 a day and many own their cars and their houses. Spending by all classes is on a scale unknown in Europe and would be thought wildly extravagant anywhere else. Prices are high, but wages and salaries—with certain marked exceptions—are well up to their level.

Can it last? It is almost a crime in America to ask the question. Just as earthquakes are never mentioned in California, so throughout America it is bad manners even to speak of depression and unemployment. Christian Science is applied to economics. Outwardly and visibly there is unbounded optimism, and even if inwardly there were misgivings, discipline would require them to be dissembled. Virgil says of the winning oarsmen in the Æneid—*possunt quia posse videntur*, "They can because they think they can." This is the serious philosophy of American business. It can do anything, if it thinks it can; it will do nothing if it doubts. Claims of colossal success and unbounded confidence in the future resound throughout the country. There may be dangers in raising hopes too high, but the buoyancy and self-confidence of the American spirit are in vivid contrast with the weariness and mistrust of the European. America, it is clear, did not feel the war as Europe did, and looking at her brings home to one what Europe has

suffered from the loss of its youth and the quenching of its spirit in its long ordeal.

In this atmosphere many of the minor moralities of life have to be inverted. No one is content with that station in life from which he started. Simplicity, thrift, the art of making a little go a long way, the cultivation of the fireside, have few votaries. The creation of new wants is one of the greatest of American industries, and is pursued with an energy, ingenuity and prodigality of advertisement which make European performances in the same line look childish.

In America advertising is an essential part of the structure of business, and there is unlimited belief in its power of evoking demand. I have recorded the opinion of an American business man that the idea of a "saturation point" in the consumer is as antiquated as the old wages-fund heresy. Properly stimulated (and supplied with credit under the payment-by-instalments plan), the consumer's appetite will grow by what it feeds upon, and there should be no limit but the capacity of feeding it, which need never fail. To want more, and to ask more, are thus the conditions of a continuing material progress and nothing but organisation is required to make high wages and mass production keep step together. The courage with which Labour and Capital pursue these ideas compels admiration and presents us with what is undoubtedly the most daring economic experiment of these times.

Another dominant impression already recorded is that equality has real meaning and value for the American people. Whatever liberties may have been taken with Liberty, Equality and Fraternity hold their own. There is an easy familiarity in the intercourse of rich and poor, a recognition of the worth of men and women as such, which makes an Englishman suddenly aware of the extent to which his own

country is class-ridden. When all the other obvious reasons for the prosperity of American industry have been stated, this, I am convinced, remains one of the fundamentals. It determines the spirit in which work goes forward, disarms jealousy, encourages hope. For the mass of people there are none of "birth's invidious bars"; the young workman is as sure of his chance as the young university graduate; the employer, the manager, the foreman are human beings like the rest; and keenly on the look-out for rising talent and the best way of utilising it.

§ 11

With the enormous output and unceasing energy just described, there goes a certain roughness and a lack of finish which catch the eye of the European. Almost everything, to use the old philosophical tag, is in a state of becoming, and scarcely anything in a state of being. No sooner is a street finished than the part which was built first is being torn down, and nothing comes to life which has not a sentence of supersession hanging over it. In the haste of making and breaking no one seems to have leisure to tidy up. Debris and hoarding are everywhere, and instead of being an offence, counted a sign of enterprise and activity. Beautiful public parks and other amenities are laid out, but before they can be planted and gardened, planners and architects seem to have passed out of the cities into the suburbs and country. This haste to move on runs through all American life, and large numbers of people seem to be living so completely in the future and so incessantly pursuing something which they can never catch up, that they have almost no time to enjoy the present or ruminate on the past.

This is what comes of living in a "new country" with a

highly stimulating climate. The new country is an incessant and exhausting challenge to its inhabitants, and its climate spurs them on. Even the visitor feels it and keeps going at a pace which would be exhausting and nerve-racking in the atmosphere of his own country. One might suppose that in this enormous and thinly populated country, with no competition except what its inhabitants make for themselves, life would proceed in a leisurely way. Everything is there; no envious foreign neighbours can steal a march; whenever the wealth is garnered, it must be American wealth. Why, then, not wait and go quietly? The American does not even ask the question. The sense that life is short, that the possibilities are limitless, that now is the time, is in his pioneering blood and drives him forward with an impetus which he neither wishes nor is able to control. To be swept along in this current is his main pleasure in life.

He is said to be sensitive to criticism, and undoubtedly he does resent what he considers to be a carping on small points which ignores his big achievements. I have heard accidentally an American mimicking an English critic, and it taught me for the first time how the "English accent" falls on American ears. The sound was thin, squeaky and querulous, issuing from pursed-up lips which pecked the air. Superiority, condescension, finicking fastidiousness were cleverly suggested. Let us take the hint, for the ultra-refined Englishman who comes over for a short time, visits a few cities, and deplores their "lack of culture" is a figure of fun to some Americans, and a good deal on the nerves of others. These answer, with much justice, that if they had been "cultured" in the sense that their English critic suggests, they would still have been groping their way somewhere between New York and Detroit, instead of blazing their trail and spreading their civilisation through the whole continent. The European who complains that he does not

find the old European culture in a modern American city is wasting his breath. Of course he does not find it, and it cannot be there. The interest of the American experiment and its value to the world is precisely that it is developing on lines of its own which promise to make a new thing.

That thing is for the moment rough-hewn and, with their genius for big-scale action, Americans have been more concerned to block it all out than to finish any part of it. This is the artistic way, the way of the painter on the big canvas, and of the sculptor on the great statue; and it is also the way of the pioneer. But it was not the way of the European civilisers who concentrated their culture on a few cities and made little or no effort to raise the level of life and education for the multitude outside them. Hence the sharp division between the cultured and the uncultured classes which survives in Europe to-day, and makes it still an accepted assumption that culture is for the few. The American sets his face against this exclusive culture and cares little what becomes of that exotic plant. Knowledge in this country is to be as democratic as everything else. Colleges and universities are to open their doors not to thousands, but to tens of thousands and scores of thousands. The largest numbers of students must be encouraged to "work their way through college" and taught things which enable them to get on in life. Art and science must be popularised; libraries organised to keep books circulating and not merely to guard them; museums arranged so as to make their contents interesting and amusing to the unlearned. In this way a thirst for information and self-improvement, especially among women and young people, has been created which is to be found nowhere else in the world.

§ III

With all their worship of material success there is nothing on which Americans pride themselves more than their "idealism" and they are honestly surprised when Europe expresses doubt about its existence. To themselves they seem to have showered benefits without stint upon an ungrateful world. They enabled the Allies to win the war, they fed the hungry, helped the fallen to their feet, poured out their money in golden streams for the relief of distress. And yet these exorbitant Europeans, so far from being grateful, are full of reproaches because they have not in addition been relieved of the whole of their debts. France, for example, expects not only that the United States should have saved her from destruction, but that she should wipe the slate clean of everything that France owes her. This, in American eyes, is a positive discouragement to well-doing.

I deal with the details of this question elsewhere and only touch it here to illustrate a characteristic which it is difficult for Europeans to understand. The European says thank you for the millions that have been poured out in charity, but sets against them the millions more that will presently be exacted in payment of debt. The American considers this to be inexcusable confusion of sentiment and business. He is conscious of having given full rein to sentiment as an individual in his subscriptions to charity, but he expects his Government to be business-like in what he regards as a purely business transaction. It gives the measure of his distance from Europe that he fails to perceive that business, sentiment and policy are inextricably interwoven in this affair. Had a British Government been in the same position as the United States at the end of the war, its much closer contact with Europe would have told it that strict business

principles could not safely be applied to a transaction so deeply involved in sentiment and politics. In America these things are in separate water-tight compartments.

But it would be a profound mistake to deny the claim of idealism which Americans make for themselves. They are a generous people with strong emotions which are easily kindled by those who know how to appeal to them. In no country is money poured out on such a scale for charity, for education, for the endowment of art and science, for the support of Missions in all parts of the world and of every conceivable religious sect. A strong strain of Puritanism and even of fanaticism seems to mingle in the American temperament with the hardest realism in the pursuit of wealth and power. At one moment the country is swept with a wave of temperance zeal, and at another convulsed with a religious controversy which seems fifty years out of date by European standards. In large parts of the country Church-going is practised on a scale without parallel in Europe, and the shrewdest and most successful men of business are fervent upholders of a rigid orthodoxy.

The difficulty, when one turns it over in one's mind, is to harmonise so many apparently conflicting qualities—such realism, such individualism, such munificence, such philanthropy. The American seems alternately to be the most boastful and the most humble of men. He will tell you in the course of a few minutes that his country licks creation, and that its politics are an abomination; that it leads the world in civilisation and that everything said about it by Mr. Sinclair Lewis and Mr. Mencken is perfectly true.

CHAPTER IX

METHODS OF BUSINESS

§ 1

ANY JUDGMENT upon the present phase of American life must start from the achievement described in the previous chapter. It is a very great achievement, but it has certain consequences.

Immensely the greater part of the brains and energy of the United States is going out into the making of money, as some would bluntly call it, or the development of the country, as Americans prefer to call it. Money-making is undoubtedly one of the most respected industries in the country, but it is also the measure of activities which are generally assumed to be beneficial. There are comparatively few American fortunes which, like the inherited wealth of Europe, have " no damned merit " about them, and many are definitely earmarked as the reward of enterprise which has enriched, or added to the convenience of, vast numbers.

Mr. Henry Ford, for example, is generally considered to be a public benefactor, and he is taken seriously when he speaks of his colossal money-spinning as just an incident of his mission in life, which is to supply the American public with the cheap car. Most of the big business men idealise themselves and their occupations in the same way and the public concedes their claim. President Coolidge talks in poetic language of the romance of modern industry and the impressive thoughts suggested by forge and power-house. Business to the American is the great adventure—sport,

work, pleasure and patriotism all rolled in one. If the business man plays golf, it is, as he will tell you, to keep himself fit for business; if he takes a holiday, he is submitting to boredom for the same dutiful purpose. His wife may love Paris, but he wants to be back at business as soon as she has got him there. Such concentration, such absorption in business is not to be seen in any other country in the world, except possibly Germany.

On no other terms would the present development be possible, but a price has to be paid, as the observer from Europe can hardly fail to notice. In England business has had to win its footing from aristocracy and been more or less tamed in that process. It has had to cultivate manners, to profess a respect for learning and the arts, to veil its appetite for money. A well-established upper middle-class with a public school and university education has steadily challenged its right to the prior place and maintained a competition in which the educated poor man may easily get the better of the Philistine rich. Snobbery may enter by this door, but the general result is to keep wealth in its place. In America commercial success has had the field to itself. Almost everywhere the dollar is the accepted standard, and the newspapers tell you what everything costs. The ten-million-dollar university, the five-million-dollar art gallery, the million-dollar church daily proclaim their triumphs to the world. There are hundreds of distinguished men in scholarship, archæology and science, but unless they make "big money" by their writings their names are scarcely heard of outside the circle of experts. American millionaires are extraordinarily generous in endowing universities and colleges, but they want outward and visible tokens of their beneficence, and in many an institution which has splendid buildings the teachers are underpaid and held in little repute. An American professor said to me bitterly that America

was a land of over-endowed universities and underpaid teachers.

With the scientific apparatus which makes her modern of the moderns, America is still in the pioneering stage and the two things combined give the present result. We see the pioneering spirit raised to the power of applied science. Men who eighty years ago would have trekked with ox-wagons over plains infested with Indians are now controlling great Trusts, spreading big business, raising enormous factories and power-plants, erecting new cities, and bringing to all these tasks the feverish energy of the former time multiplied by the power and machinery of the present time. Many of them have a creative genius which would entitle them to be called artists, but their pride is to be thought practical men who believe in doing things and not thinking about them, or reading about them, or writing about them. And since the dollar is the most convenient way of measuring things done—things made available and saleable—they adopt it without the slightest sense of guilt or shame for themselves and their neighbours. The old European view inherited from Platonists and ecclesiastics that there is something vulgar about money simply does not exist for these men.

One must throw aside prejudices to get at the reality which is greater and bigger than it makes itself out to be. One is conscious in America as nowhere else of a collective impulse behind these activities, of a national will and character finding expression in them. It is as if some instinct of the hive forbade these insatiable workers to pause or rest while so little has been done and so much remains to do over their vast and thinly populated country. They speak themselves as if private profit and citizenly duty were merged in a joint effort which had the happy characteristic of enabling them to fill their pockets while doing their duty as citizens.

The European shrugs his shoulders but the conception of business as service has real value for the American people. It lends dignity to business and inspires the successful to the princely munificence that is practised in all parts of the country. Moreover the organised units of industry are now so immense that in serving them the business man can easily persuade himself that he is doing a public service. Indeed the former condemnation of the great Trusts has even given place to a glorification of them as the great cheapeners of commodities, and not a few Trust magnates think of themselves, and are thought of by their fellow-citizens, as performing an indispensable public part.

On the other hand this idea of a duty to the public is held to justify a certain ruthlessness. Big business must keep steadily before it the paramount aim of cheapening production, and not permit sentiment to stand between it and this purpose. The lame dogs of an industry must not be helped over stiles, but pensioned off or otherwise cleared from the path. Workmen may be paid high wages, but guarantees must be taken that they are earned to the last cent. The British method of insurance, the demoralising "dole," and all other misplaced benevolence which saps character and encourages the inefficient to lag superfluous on a stage where they are merely in the way must not be dreamt of. The American worker must get on or move on, and to check the serviceable mobility which leads him to go somewhere else, when he has failed to find or keep a job, would be folly. An Englishman finds himself arguing in vain that the "dole" is not a charity, but a business-like method of providing for unemployment to which the worker contributes. Whatever the method may be, the American employer does not want any encouragement offered to an unemployed workman to stay where he is not wanted. The

country is vast and its opportunities are unlimited. Let him go and break new ground. All this coddling is for old and small countries.

§ II

This feverish energy in producing things presupposes a capacity for buying them of which no European country has dreamt. Assuming the purchase power of Americans to be greatly in excess of that of Englishmen or Frenchmen, it still, according to the accepted ways of reckoning, falls far short of the productive capacity of American industry. How is it possible for Mr. Henry Ford to reckon confidently on finding a million purchasers a year for his new model? Where is the money to come from to pay for these cars?

The American answers boldly that this need be no obstacle. All that is necessary is to give the purchaser time. Don't wait till he has saved the money in the stupid old-fashioned way, let him have the article and pay for it by instalments. There is, of course, nothing new about this; all the world over brides and bridegrooms have furnished their houses and bought pianos on the instalment plan. It is only necessary, says the American, to extend this familiar thing, systematise it, spread it over the whole field of working-class life and expenditure, and a purchasing power will be developed of which the world has never dreamt till now. Why not? The lack of credit is the great handicap of the working-class home. Give it credit and bring desirable commodities to its doors and it will be able to provide itself with comforts and luxuries which its income well justifies, but for which capital fails. Fortify good wages with credit, maintain and stimulate demand with an army of trained salesmen, and the captains of industry will be able

to sleep comfortably in their beds. Mass demand will keep pace with mass production.

All over the country the idea is being put into operation. There are now about 750,000 " scientific salesmen " ringing every day at 20,000,000 doors, and offering articles for sale on the deferred-payment plan. Their efforts are backed by a prodigal expenditure in advertisement proclaiming the efficacy and necessity to American existence of an immense number of commodities, some of which are quite unknown in other countries. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the creation of wants is at this moment the leading American industry, the industry which is prior to all other industries. One sees the result in the possession by people of very moderate means of things which would be altogether beyond the reach of even well-to-do people in other countries. In America to-day there are countless families in possession of land, houses, cars, furniture, gramophones, books, mangles, radios, trinkets, etc., all of which are being paid for on the instalment plan. Seventy-five per cent. of the output of the motor industries is being paid for in this way. At any given moment, according to Professor Wilbur Plummer, the instalment debt outstanding is $2,750,000,000, of which more than half is due on automobiles.

An English Minister recently pulled a long face over these figures and declared them to be fraught with future disaster. To which the American replies " fudge." The amount outstanding represents a very moderate risk, and if it shows signs of exceeding safe limits the banks can easily pull it in. The social results, meanwhile, are said to be as important and useful as the economic. The number of property-owners with a stake in the country is greatly increased, and stability of employment at high wages ensured. All things thus work together for prosperity and peace between Labour and Capital. The team-work of the mass factory

makes idling or shirking impossible, the necessity of keeping up the stipulated payments for house or car discourages unrest and affords an incentive to keep at work. Workman and employer together are involved in a "circle of production" which ensures that the whole country shall be provided with good things in the exact proportion that it will work for them. In such circumstances supply and demand will automatically balance each other, and the producer be assured that good wages return to him in orders.

§ III

The argument may be developed on paper in this symmetrical way, but some liberties would have to be taken with the facts before they could be supposed to correspond to it. I have read several dissertations on the deferred payment plan by learned economists, but in the end the tests seem to be the quite simple one which commonsense suggests. If all or even a majority of buyers could be relied on to buy wisely and well, so that the goods bought were real assets when the instalments had been paid off, and if they could be educated to make a fair estimate of their own capacity to pay, the system would be economic and beneficent. The workman would get the credit to buy the car which would help him to earn the wages to pay for it and keep his family in comfort; his wife would get the sewing machine or the mangle which would lighten her toil and be a real saving in the home; the children would get the books necessary for their education, and everything would pay for itself by the increase of wealth and efficiency. This is the ideal picture, and the wary buyer who knows the worth of things is, I do not at all doubt, getting a very real benefit.

But all buyers are not wary, and the salesmen are dreadfully scientific. They have been trained to the finest

skill in discovering the weak spots of men and women, especially women. Every gesture, every move in the opening gambit has been thought out. They call upon the wife when the husband is at work, and on the husband when the wife is out of the way. They have the enthusiasm of missionaries bursting to impart good tidings, bringing boons which they simply cannot let you be without.[1] They never mention the price of the article, only the absurd 25 cents. a week for which it may be "your very own." So it goes on, with the husband buying one thing and the wife another, and between them a great many rubbishy things, until the weekly pay-envelope is all forestalled, and the home scientifically provided with credit finds itself reduced to paying butcher and grocer by instalments. That is the other side to the deferred payment system, and I have heard a good deal of testimony that it is exhausting the savings of a large number of workers and plunging them into a morass of debt in spite of the high wages they are receiving.

In any other country one would say that this could not go far without breaking the system and producing a slump in demand. But in America the capacity for recovering and starting again is so great that everyone is confident that all will come right. Having burnt his fingers, the buyer, you are told, will learn and get even with the salesman, and the system will settle down to a wide distribution of solid and useful things on a sound basis of diffused credit. Anyhow, it is announced that the thing is only in its infancy—that the salesmen will be a million next year and millions in years to

[1] A manual of salesmanship quoted by an American magazine carefully defines the methods of approaching women. The salesmen are instructed whether they are to smile or look serious, plant the left foot in front of the right or the right in front of the left; whether, if there are steps, they are to remain on the ground or mount up one step or two steps. If they are selling a bracelet to a woman, they are required to have a duplicate ready and as soon as they have induced the woman to take No. 1 into her hands, instantly to put No. 2 into their own extended palms, so that she may not be able to return the dazzling thing before the spell has worked.

come. All real business men are now agreed that the public must never be let alone or permitted to slide into the un-American habit of resting and being thankful. Never to be content with old things when new are available, to spend up to and beyond your income and not to be afraid of what old fogies call being in debt—this is the new gospel which is now being preached all over the country and opening up new and exciting possibilities for the American people. There is no other way if the country is to be made safe for mass production—with its postulate of unlimited demand. The simple life of few wants, quiet thrift and placid leisure would be ruinous to the mass factory.

The moralist may shake his head and the artist hold up his hands in protest, but the American makes his usual reply : it works. There is greater abundance in his country over a wider area than anywhere in Europe ; Labour shows every sign of accepting the rôle assigned to it and joining up with Capital instead of fighting it. The total number of trade unionists in the country is less than 15 per cent. of employed persons, and the Federation of Labour to which most of these belong is a respectable and conservative organisation which seldom gives an employer a sleepless night. True, that when struggles do come, they are intensely bitter and not seldom fought out with guns, but this is a reason the more for keeping the prosperous workman in line with the employer, and seeing that he has a stake in the country. All things thus work together to the best result, and between getting and spending and the constant lure of new things which may be won with a little more effort, the population is kept amused and occupied, and there need be no limit to prosperity, or fear of what the future may bring forth.

CHAPTER X

POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

§ 1

AFTER SPENDING three months at Washington in 1921 what chiefly struck me as a British onlooker was the extreme cautiousness of American politicians. Neither of the American parties, Republican nor Democratic, seemed ready to take any of the risks that are all in the day's work for British parties. Both, as I wrote at the time, seemed to be living in a state of doubt as to what the great mass of Americans, especially those in the West, were saying and thinking at any given moment, and to give these people a lead was declared to be too dangerous an adventure for wise men. Parties, I was told, had to be absolutely sure of their ground before they committed themselves to novel opinions on any subject, and the example of Wilson, who had plunged ahead without exploring the ground, was cited as a warning to all who come after.

This sense of an unexplored world of opinion hangs heavily over American politics and strikes one as different in kind from the doubts and perplexities of politicians in Europe. It is not merely that politicians in America, as elsewhere, are waiting for signs; it is that even serious and responsible men have a real apprehension of setting forces in motion which may have incalculable results among the millions of many races spread over the American continent. To observe neutrality on all issues which might transfer the racial quarrels of Europe to American soil or divide the Europeans in America on the same lines as their kinsmen

are divided in Europe is both an instinct and a tradition with the leaders of American parties. The injunction of the fathers of the Constitution to keep clear of European entanglements seems more and not less compelling as anxieties about the racial blend increase.

But apart from this an Englishman has always to remember that the politics of a Federal country differ essentially from those of unified countries with one Parliament. Large numbers of the issues which make politics in Great Britain are State and not Federal matters in America, and when these are subtracted, there remains in normal times little or nothing that divides parties on the familiar British lines of Radical and Conservative, or that ranges individuals according to their temperament and natural bias. This vacuum has to be filled with traditions and personalities, the traditions becoming always dimmer and vaguer, and the personalities more lively in the proportion that principles are lacking. In the North and West the Republican party has got itself accepted as the party of power and prosperity—the party which, if one may believe its members, has an almost hereditary right to govern the country. Big business supports it, the "best people" belong to it as they do to the Conservative party in Great Britain. In the South these conditions are reversed, and lingering memories of the Civil War combine with the negro question to make the "best people" Democratic. Either affiliation seems to be consistent with any principles. Conservatives and Liberals, as we understand those terms, are to be found in both parties; both have their "drys" and "wets" and even their Protectionists and their free-traders. The Southern Democrat is often a high-tariff man and the Western Republican a low-tariff man, if he is a farmer or out for the farmers' vote; and neither is restrained from expressing his opinions by the traditional policy of his party. But through all this confu-

sion, as it seems to an Englishman, party allegiance remains strong and militant, and the desire to win is a passion with both parties. Winning carries with it the disposal of an enormous patronage; and this glittering prize works automatically to impose discipline, for the faithful are rewarded and the faithless receive no mercy.

The Englishman has to divest himself of most of his preconceived notions before he can begin to understand this system. He sees American parties manœuvring for position on the questions of the day, and apparently in doubt up to the last moment whether they will take one side or the other. When he inquires about Prohibition, for example, he is told that if the Democratic party goes wet, the Republican party will assuredly be "bone dry," but that on both sides the party managers think it an uncomfortable subject which had better be avoided. There is no tradition such as, in similar circumstances in Great Britain, would compel the Radical party to be dry and the Conservative party to be wet. There are the same cross-divisions in foreign affairs. Accidentally and incidentally, through President Wilson, the Democratic party got entangled with the League of Nations, but there was no foundation of faith or principle which made it *de fide* for a Democrat to advocate the cause of the League and to go on advocating it after the first failure, as, for instance, the Liberal party in Great Britain advocated Home Rule for Ireland and continued to advocate it in the teeth of failure and discomfiture. Had Mr. Gladstone been an American President instead of a British party leader, he would almost certainly have retired from the scene and been heard of no more, when he was beaten on Home Rule. On the other hand there is nothing in the character or composition of the Republican party which requires it to go on opposing the League policy, because it did so in 1920. Support or opposition is for both parties a

question of time, circumstances and expediency. To occupy favourable ground and retire as quickly as possible from unfavourable is thought to be plain political commonsense, and opportunism in this sense is the avowed, approved and habitual practice of American politicians.

§ II

Coming from London to Washington, the Englishman is at once aware of a difference in the political atmosphere. The lively competition in programmes and the incessant effort to convert the public to something new which he had left behind him have no counterpart on the American scene. The American politician does not desire to convert anybody to anything and if he has stumbled or been lured by too impetuous leaders into proposals which have outrun popular opinion, he is anxious to forget or cover up that indiscretion as quickly as possible. There is thus no propaganda of ideas conducted by political parties in or out of office, as in Great Britain. There are innumerable propagandist societies with very able and serious people behind them endeavouring to spread various kinds of social and political gospel, but none of them are or can be a substitute for the advocacy of a political cause by a political party or provide the education which is furnished by the battles of parties representing opposite opinions. It is taken as an axiom in America that the partnership of lost, failing, or difficult causes is folly for practical politicians. American parties are out to win or keep power, and they compete with each other in endeavouring to give the public what it wants. To go crusading for causes is no necessary or normal part of their duties.

Two consequences follow from this state of things. The American public lacks the education in national politics which, with all its defects, the British party system provides,

and obstructing minorities have, what seems to an Englishman, excessive power. For when there is no dividing line of principle, pros and antis on a given policy are distributed between both parties, and in choosing a winning platform it becomes an object of capital importance to both not to offend any considerable number of them. Just as in England before the war, woman suffrage was blocked by minorities in both parties strong enough to prevent its adoption by either, and just as to this day marriage reform is obstructed for the same reason, so in America a large part of the normal subject-matter of politics is kept definitely ruled out of political controversy for fear of offending minorities. If the Democratic party is "wet" to-day it is because its Presidential candidate insisted on breaking down the reserves with which the party managers sought to stifle that issue. The same cause works in State politics to keep a large part of what we should call social policy, factory legislation, and the like, outside the sphere of politics. The interests opposing these things are evenly distributed between the two parties and neither wishes to incur their hostility. Big business, in fact, gets a large part of its power by supporting both parties impartially and putting both under an obligation not to give it offence.

In such circumstances the general tendency is to regard politics as organisation rather than as propaganda.

§ III

Politics so conventionalised would not in any case appeal to men of adventurous minds, but there are other obstacles to the formation of the non-professional political classes which has served older countries and especially Great Britain so well. One is the custom or law which requires that members of Congress shall be domiciled in their own

States or districts and which in effect localises and provincialises even Federal politics. The men of leisure and the keener wits who might be expected to play a leading part in public affairs tend naturally in America, as elsewhere, to gravitate to a few centres, New York, Boston, Chicago and the like, and for most of these the door is shut on what we should call a Parliamentary career. They have a remote chance of coming in at the top as members of the Executive without the previous apprenticeship in Parliament which is required of a European Minister. They may serve their States, become State Governors, even get to the White House, as Cleveland, Roosevelt, and Wilson did, or be brought straight into the Executive from business or the lawyer's office by the President. This access to the high Presidential circle for men of first-class ability without the usual graduation is the saving grace of the American system, and it might well find a place in other democratic systems. But it provides only for the few of exceptional ability and is not the equivalent of the unlimited access to Parliament which the British system affords. Moreover, since a seat in Congress is a positive disqualification for Executive office, a seat in Congress cannot be the same spur to ambition as a seat in the British Parliament.

Nor is Congress the equivalent of the British Parliament or of any Parliament with an Executive responsible to it. Whatever may be the advantages or the necessity in a Federal Constitution of detaching the Executive from Parliament, it necessarily deprives public life of what in England is its most arresting and picturesque characteristic, the conflict, namely, of Government and Opposition in Parliament—that unceasing duel in which not only legislation but every act of the Executive is day by day exposed to comment, criticism and censure. With us there is always the sense of important events hanging on the proceedings

in Parliament. Sudden storms may blow up, Governments may be changed by a division, the reputation of public men made or marred in a debate. However much the interest in its legislative activities may flag, Parliament remains always the grand inquest of the nation and the whole country may be listening to an answer given by a Minister at question time. Equally important with us is the collective responsibility of every Minister for every act of the Government—which makes even a minor Minister a person of importance for his term of office. Under this system, Prime Minister and Cabinet present themselves daily as one body to the scrutiny of Parliament, and over against them is another body similarly acting together and prepared to take their place, if opinion should change. There is no counterpart to any of these salient characteristics of British Parliamentarism at Washington.

There neither President nor Ministers take any part in the ordinary proceedings of Parliament. The President addresses Congress periodically and may do so in person, and Ministers may be summoned to give evidence before Committees, but they are expressly forbidden to hold seats in either Senate or House, and in their relations with both bodies are rather Heads of Departments than politicians. In the absence of Ministers, Congress is to an English eye leaderless and rudderless, the least spectacular of all Assemblies. It divides itself into Committees, most of which do their work and consider the Bills submitted to it behind closed doors. Many of these Bills are promoted by members to please their local constituents with the reasonable expectation that they will be vetoed by the President, and have no interest for the general public. Though the Senate and the House of Representatives are, strictly speaking, co-ordinate bodies, the Senate, through its control of Foreign Affairs and the longer tenure of its members and their power of

checking the appointments of the President is by far the the more distinguished body, and to become a Senator is the highest ambition of the ordinary politician. No body of men have more important functions assigned to them, especially in foreign affairs, than United States Senators, but here again the way is barred to the vast majority of those who are likely to have the best qualification for this work by the law which requires the Senator to be domiciled to his State. It is as though the foreign policy of Great Britain were committed to a body of men who were chosen by their counties and each compelled to be resident in his own county. Henry James said that when he went to Washington he was unable to discover the names of more than ten Congressmen. All the rest were local men doing local work behind the closed doors of the Committee, and either not speaking in general debates or speaking for the sole purpose of keeping favour with their constituents and being wholly unreported except in their local newspapers.

In such circumstances there is not and cannot be any of the team-work for the promotion of policies which is expected from British parties. At a Presidential election almost everything centres round the personality of the candidates, and they alone can speak with any authority or certainty of being heard. There are no Cabinets or ex-Cabinets to take the platform collectively and support their leaders as Ministers and ex-Ministers are expected to do at a British General Election. The main part of the electioneering falls upon the machines which develop enormous energy, and behind the machines are individuals, whose position and history it is difficult to ascertain, but who seem to have great influence, though they never make speeches and seldom appear in public.

§ IV

All America hums with politics; the machinery devised for it is a vast and intricate system extending over the whole continent and embracing State and Municipal as well as Federal politics. Between them the two great parties cover all the activities of Federal, State and Municipal life and impose on their standardised types of organisation which almost everywhere reproduce the same features of rings, bosses and workers organising elections and distributing spoils by party nominations. The now consecrated and legalised system of "primaries" (i.e. party conventions for the selection of candidates) practically duplicates elections and greatly increases the cost and fatigue of them. The costs for the greater elections are often staggering. In a recent inquiry by the Senate into the election of two of its members it was brought out in evidence that one of them had spent 600,000 dollars on his election. Behind everything is the power of the machine and that is deeply entrenched in the "spoils" system. The enormous patronage which depends on the results of elections, the power of drawing subsidies from business organisations which think it wise to pay, and the opportunities for illicit gain which attach to so many elected persons in cities and States and to the holders of many official positions, all work together for the aggrandisement of the machine, which almost inevitably makes the winning of victories and the reaping of the resultant profits, rather than the advancement of causes and principles, its primary objects.

There is no country in the world in which so much energy, money, ingenuity and industry are devoted to public affairs, and none in which there seem to be so many obstacles to the steady pursuit of politics as a career for men

of distinction. The American people are sincerely anxious that the Federal Executive shall be composed of men of high distinction and probity, and nothing touches them more than a scandal in these high quarters; but they have an extraordinary tolerance of the misdoings of their politicians in the State and Municipal sphere, and they seem to be almost without the tradition which leads large numbers of Englishmen to regard unpaid political work as a necessary part of a citizen's duty. As one travels through the country, the impression is more and more left on one that not nearly enough of the brain and character of the country is going into its public affairs.

§ v

I am doing little more than repeat what Americans have told me about their system, and have suppressed most of the epithets that they apply to it. If an Englishman may say it, there is something irrational in the complaints of Americans about their politics. They complain incessantly of things which they have it in their power to alter and yet do not alter. The results which they complain of would follow almost anywhere from the system which they have adopted, and which they apparently regard as an integral part of the finest constitution in the world. If in this country a large part of the permanent Civil Service, including Judges and Public Prosecutors, were subject to election, and a great many of the remainder, including the police, depended for getting and keeping their appointments on the success and goodwill of politicians, it would be useless to complain that they were mixed up with politics, or that they were expected to give a return to their party for the favour they had received. When an Englishman is told in an American town that the police are required to spend a stated portion

of their time on politics, i.e. in canvassing wards and keeping the voters in it well disposed and ready to vote when election time comes; and when he further learns that the citizens take this as a matter of course, and only begin to grumble when the time which the police devote to politics exceeds what they think to be the reasonable limit, he is at first struck with the oddity and impropriety of the proceeding. But on second thoughts his sympathy begins to veer round to the police, who feel all the time that their livelihood is at stake unless they give satisfaction in their political as well as their official duties, and contrive somehow to reconcile the impartiality which is expected of them in their official capacity with the partisanship which belongs to their political work. The surprising thing, to an English eye, is not that there are abuses and scandals under this system, but that it does not give worse results than, on the whole, it does.

Indeed, one's sympathies are very often actively enlisted for these and other official servants of the politicians. There can hardly be a less enviable life than most of them seem to lead. For the most part they are ill-paid and their tenure is precarious, and the more conscientious among them find themselves in a perpetual conflict between their public duties and the demands of their masters. In some towns like Chicago the police take all the risks of soldiers in war, and act with a courage and staunchness which deserve the highest commendation. Again and again one hears stories of good men and true, Judges, State-Attorneys and the like, who have risked their careers and livelihood in order to fight corrupt politicians. But the average American is so inured to the system that he takes it as a matter of course that these liabilities should attach to the public service. Civil service reform has made progress in recent years, but is resisted all the way by politicians who see themselves

deprived of prizes and patronage if it succeeds, and has little backing from the average citizen who regards a permanent service withdrawn from election as undemocratic and un-American—an idea which has been handed on from the fathers of the Constitution, who had in their minds the corrupt placemen of the British Georgian régime. In this and in many other ways American practice is still a reaction from the eighteenth-century British régime.

"What a city to sack!" said Blucher, as he rode through London, and again and again as he passes through the United States, an Englishman accustomed to English politics thinks to himself—what material for a campaign, what an opportunity for a crusading political party to set the heather on fire! But second thoughts follow quickly which check all analogies from British politics. First there is the immense good-humoured tolerance of the American public and its conviction that it has more important things to do than go campaigning on politics; and next the absence of any focus for the kind of political agitation that we are familiar with. Most of this business belongs to the States and not to the Federal Government, and they would not for a moment tolerate any attempt by Federal politicians to impose a policy on them. Their systems are so various that even to state them correctly is a task which the most laborious writers find fatigui..g, and to prescribe a uniform policy suited to their various needs and stages of development would be a practical impossibility, even if they were willing to accept it. It is taken for granted that each must work out its own salvation, and the hope is expressed that the more backward States and Municipalities will in time learn from the more progressive. In such circumstances the kind of control which Whitehall exercises over local government in England—its provisions for audit and surcharge, the guarantees that Chief Constables and Medical Officers and Stipen-

diary Magistrates shall be protected in the discharge of their duties, and the network of statutes which prescribe and limit the function of local authorities—are a practical impossibility, and we see instead an all but complete local autonomy unchecked by the Federal authorities and free to choose between a great variety of charters and Constitutions. It follows that in each State and city the citizen must do his own reforming and not look for help from other citizens linked up with him in a campaign such as in similar circumstances in England would spread over the whole country.

When he considers the enormous expanse of the country, the great distances between the chief cities, the difficulty of making any voice heard over the whole area, the necessarily limited circulations of even the most influential newspapers, an Englishman is checked in all rash inferences from his own institutions. He is constantly faced with the paradox that things work in spite of obstacles and drawbacks which would be fatal in his own country. He goes to a city and is told that its politics are corrupt beyond redemption, and sees there great public buildings, splendid public parks, schemes of town-planning and slum-clearance which would be the envy of the best governed English city. He hears of one set of men engaged in mischief, but also of another set of men showing a splendid munificence and labouring indefatigably for the good of their State or city. The combination of the two things and the tolerance of the bad men by the good men are a perpetual puzzle to him until he realises that in this country government plays a much smaller part than in his own and that it is the serious belief of patriotic men that they are serving their country best by leaving it alone and devoting their energy to creating and providing the things that make for its prosperity. "We are only beginning," said a very able business man, "and we have no time to spare, but when we have got on a bit we will turn

back and deal with the politicians." Burke said that it was a large part of wisdom to know how much of an evil it is necessary to tolerate and the cheerful American spirit says that nothing much matters so long as the country is prosperous. One realises at the end that it is adversity which makes politics.

CHAPTER XI

LAW AND DISORDER

§ 1

A CHRONIC WAR of words goes on between New York and Chicago as to which is the more criminal city. Two years ago (1926), New York held the primacy beyond dispute. No other city could rival its long series of chain-store raids, restaurant hold-ups, bank manager stick-ups, pay-roll robberies, fur and silk robberies, automobile thefts, and the heavy mortality inflicted by its thugs and bandits in their operations. In the ten years from 1914 to 1924 no less than thirty-nine policemen were murdered by criminals, and the large profits reaped from crime had enabled the underworld to organise itself with a peculiar and sinister efficiency. Its members subscribed to a "fall fund" which provided them with bail when they were arrested, helped them to escape out of the jurisdiction and start operations again on new ground, and, if or when they were brought to trial, hired the cleverest lawyers to aid them in dodging justice. The criminals worked collectively on a footing of war and had repeated pitched battles with the police in which neither side hesitated to shoot.

Then New York State decided that something must be done and in a few weeks wrote the drastic Baumes laws—so-called because they were mainly the work of Senator Caleb H. Baumes—into its Statute books. These deprived the Courts—with the rarest exceptions—of the power of granting bail, and enormously increased the sentences for robberies and burglaries, especially those accompanied with

violence. A fourth conviction for any sort of felony now automatically carries with it a life sentence, and, if previous convictions are discovered after the prisoner has been sentenced as a first or early offender, his sentence is converted into a life one. A similar severity was prescribed for the "fence" or receiver of stolen goods.

The result of this law was to scatter the gangs, at all events for the time being. Some of them rushed over into New Jersey, where they operated in the chief cities with machine guns and gas bombs. Then New Jersey announced that it would follow the lead of New York, and the ring-leaders made another jump, some of them into Ohio and others into Chicago. Whether the more drastic code of New York will in the long run diminish crime in that State is much debated among criminologists, some of whom point out that thieving was never so common in England as when a thief could be hanged for stealing five shillings. There is always a possibility that the more desperate kind of criminal will conclude that he may as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb, and take to killing to save his own skin. This indeed seems to have been the immediate result in New York, for during the next eleven months there were twenty-five pitched battles with armed bandits in which eight policemen were killed and seventeen wounded—the largest number in a single year in the history of New York City.

This, however, was said to be a good sign, and the Chief of the Police explained that "policemen under the new régime and improved morale courageously faced the armed bandit more often in a determined effort to enforce the new laws, while the bandit, realising that he had little chance of escape under the Baumes Acts, if caught, shot it out with the representatives of law and order."[1] In Chicago, mean-

[1] The American *Review of Reviews*, "A Panic in Crookdom," February, 1928.

while, the battle was going forward on parallel lines, but there the case was complicated by the fact that rival gangs of bandits were at war with each other as well as with the police, and both turned their weapons on the police when the latter interfered with them. When the police killed a notorious gunman in November, 1927, the chief of the detectives made the following comment:

"That's great news. This is the first skirmish in the battle with the gunmen. The police came out successfully. I am going to commend this squad.

"This is the kind of work that saves disagreement of juries. It saves the country great expense in trying these bandits and murderers. Of course it means a little more work for the coroner's office, but I am sure they will be glad to co-operate with the police in this kind of work."

The newspapers add that in talking to his men before the skirmish the Chief of Detectives had "promised to give a banquet for the first to kill a gangster," and they record the fact that "Sergeant John Gibbons shot Herbert" (the gangster).

Between the middle of October, 1927, and the first week in April, 1928, sixty-three bombs were exploded in Chicago and much injury resulted to property, especially shop-fronts, though fortunately not much to life and limb. The motive of these outrages was constantly in dispute, various political groups blaming each other, and the police blaming the gunmen. Another complication in Chicago at this time was that the Federal officers enforcing Prohibition law constantly came into conflict with the local police, sometimes at the cost of bloodshed. Thus a Federal agent killed a municipal agent in a "speak-easy" (illicit liquor shop), and the Federal authorities had to resist by force a determined effort on the part of the police to take their agent before a County Court Judge.[1] Prohibition in and about Chicago

[1] *Times* New York correspondent, April 5th, 1928.

appears to be a frequent cause of killing. In November, 1927, it was reported in Judge H. Wickerson's (Michigan) Federal Court that "at least twelve witnesses in Government liquor conspiracy cases had been slain in order to silence their stories." Nevertheless, the Mayor, big Bill Thompson, continued to claim that Chicago was far more orderly than New York, and insisted at the beginning of 1928 that he had reduced crime in 1927 by no less than 67 per cent. However that may be, the primary elections in the following year were attended with extraordinary violence, and the friends of law and order who made a determined stand for clean government went to the poll in many cases at the risk of life and limb.

§ 11

What strikes one in reading these records is the existence in the chief towns of something approaching a state of war between the police and armed and organised bands of criminals. The police are not, as generally in England, pursuing individual criminals and suspects, and gradually drawing round them a net of evidence which will presently bring them to the gallows or penal servitude; they are routing out gangs and engaging them openly with guns in the roads and public streets. It is taken for granted that both parties to these encounters will use their guns and that the main business of peaceful citizens is to keep out of the way. In Chicago certain of the ringleaders appear to be popular heroes, and semi-public funerals attended by a great concourse are given to them, when they are shot down. The warfare seems to be conducted according to certain rules understood by both parties. There are periods of truce and periods of activity, and in the former the leading gangster exchange chaff with the police. A notorious gunman,

having secured an acquittal with the aid of a skilful lawyer, departs in his car for his home—in quite a fashionable quarter of the town—with a cheerful " so long " from the police. They—it is stated—have plenty of other counts against him, but he has won this respite and it would not be good manners to pursue him again until after a reasonable interval. The rival gangs are not unlike our race-course ruffians, and they fight each other with an even greater ferocity. Often they are competing firms of bootleggers, and their feuds begin with a suspicion that they are " double-crossing " each other with the police, but this comparatively respectable beginning leads easily to crimes of violence, especially motor-banditry which is pursued with great skill and daring.

We are not without our gunmen and our motor-bandits, but they are few and unorganised compared with their kind in the United States. On the whole our British experience is that an unarmed criminal class is the counterpart of our unarmed police, whereas the armed police of the United States seem unable to procure the disarmament of the criminals opposed to them. But in America, and especially the western part of it, no one appears to question the propriety of shooting. I pick up a newspaper in Denver, Colorado, and read that six men were shot on the previous day in an encounter between pickets and police in a coal-miners' strike going on about six miles away. The incident is heavily head-lined, but no comment is made about it, and when next day I search the papers for the sequel, there is not a word to be found. All English analogies lead me to expect loud protests at the " savagery " of the police, agitation in the Legislature and the newspapers for the setting up of public inquiry. In Colorado it fades out of the newspapers and is forgotten before the end of the week. All parties seem to take for granted that if there are strikes there

will be shootings. This has been the history of American Labour disputes from the beginning and not infrequently, as in the case of the Homestead strike and the Pullman strike, the casualties have been on the scale of a small war. Seldom or never does public sympathy seem to be on the side of the striker when he gets shot.

§ III

The Englishman who travels over America and reads the daily records of its doings finds himself in a new psychological climate. The elaborate precautions won by centuries of struggle in Great Britain to keep the officers of the law within strictly defined limits seem to have no parallel in this country. The police, like the criminals, take the law into their own hands and the use of firearms is the first and not the last resort. The public watches with intense interest, but there is none of that anxious questioning which follows in England when lives have been lost and there is a possible doubt whether more than sufficient force has been used by police or troops, when these have been called out. America, one begins to realise, has plunged straight into the modern way of life from the pioneering stage in which rough and ready ways were thought essential to safety, and both her criminals and her police are still practising the methods of the frontier camp in the heart of her cities. In such circumstances it becomes less surprising that private citizens should arrogate to themselves the right of vindicating the law by lynchings and floggings and other acts which in Western Europe would be regarded as gross outrages, and bring down upon the perpetrators the heaviest penalties of the law whose functions they were usurping. The acts of violence or vengeance attributed to the Ku Klux Klan would otherwise make it incredible that such an organisation

should be tolerated, let alone that it should be able to enlist hundreds of thousands of seemingly respectable citizens in its astonishing operations.

Legality is in the United States a comparatively late virtue which is only now beginning to win its footing. We have only to read back a few years into the history of American big business to find that that also was for many years on a footing of private war. Describing the methods of the Standard Oil group in their *Rise of American Civilisation*,[1] Mr. and Mrs. Beard observe that "when armed thugs assailed the workmen of an independent pipe line company, the assumption usually was made that the assailants did not act without motive or direction, but it was one thing to assume, another thing to prove, and a nice problem in ethics anyway to render a just judgment in a baronial epoch when physical force was a normal part of high business procedure." In this baronial epoch rival gangs of railway promoters brought Bowery toughs to stockholders' meetings, and dispatched trains of armed men to head-on collisions, and pitched battles on a disputed line.[2] Provided the Barons were successful, no one seemed to mind, but they left behind them an atmosphere which was highly unfavourable to the quiet acceptance of law and order by those who see profit in disturbing it. In large parts of this country one finds that respect for law is regarded not as a thing which may be taken for granted, but as the subject of a continuous and undecided battle between organised forces on both sides. Nothing seems to have astonished Americans more than that the General Strike in England should have passed without disorder. I was told again and again that in the United States such an occurrence must have brought bloodshed and conflict over the widest area.

Chicago is the standing paradox among great cities. It is

[1] II, 186. [2] *Ibid.* 201-2.

magnificent and modern, violent and primitive, proud and ashamed of the peculiar qualities of its greatness and its wickedness. Its newspapers are full of the exploits of its gangsters and bandits, and its inhabitants tell you fearsome stories of the doings of the politicians and their affiliations, real or alleged, with the criminal classes. Yet if other cities reproach it with lawlessness, it retorts angrily that there is a conspiracy to blacken its characters and produces a whole battery of statistics to prove that at least sixteen other cities are worse. What other city, it asks, has an apparatus for dealing with crime comparable with its own—thirty fast cars, each with a crew of five detectives provided with rifles, shot-guns, machine-guns, and tear gas-bombs, capable in case of need of being expanded to three times that number? What more could the best governed city do? What other shows such spirit, such initiative, or has in a comparatively short time disposed of so many thugs and bandits? It is pointed out, and I am sure with truth, that Chicago contains a large number of the most prosperous, industrious and business-like people in the United States, people making quantities of money and leading an orderly and sumptuous life without the smallest inclination to desperate courses of any kind. Would these people choose such a city to live in if it were the nest of desperadoes and criminals that its envious critics in less prosperous cities allege?

And certainly, as one looks at its sumptuous houses, splendid streets and flashing display of wealth and power, the question seems to answer itself. I have asked certain leading Chicagoans and they have replied with one accord that they would rather live there than anywhere else in the world. As for the risks of this dangerous place, you are far more likely to get run over in the streets than to be shot by a bandit. One has to accept the fact of chronic violence going on in this extraordinary place side by side with its

elaborate parade of wealth and splendour. To the rich and prosperous the doings of the underworld are of no importance. Its battlegrounds are easily avoided and the life of law and order can be comfortably pursued without coming into collision with the lawless, if the right precautions are taken. Once more one perceives the vast tolerance of the American public and its readiness to accept anything that works, anything that enables it to go about its business and leave the things that don't concern it to those whom they do concern. Nevertheless there are limits, and, as I write this chapter, a sudden perception that its Mayor and his henchmen had passed the bounds of the tolerated performances of their kind, appears to be sweeping over Chicago, and arousing its citizens to a heroic effort to battle with him on his own ground.

§ IV

But if Americans are tolerant of disorder, this complacency by no means extends to the administration of justice. There is no subject on which the average American talks with such unceasing bitterness or on which he will communicate his feelings more freely to the stranger in his midst. I fell into talk with three business men on a train somewhere between Denver and Salt Lake, and for an hour or more they discoursed on this theme, capping each other's stories with a wealth of detail which was to me altogether incredible. In general, they said that in certain States in which they did business or resided it was almost impossible to bring highly placed criminals to justice, or any who had enough money behind them to employ clever attorneys to spin out the proceedings. A few Judges in the Superior Courts were respected and did their best, but the majority were nowhere in the hands of skilful attorneys, and, being grossly under-

paid, they were generally men of inferior capacity, whose chief thought was to be re-elected when the time came. One man said he had been defrauded of a thousand dollars by a "banker" who had raided his own bank, and though the facts were notorious, the thief was still at large, and even if finally he was brought to justice, he would almost certainly get out of the Penitentiary after a few weeks, and having the plunder safely put away, go off and start again in another State. Another instanced the case of a young man who had shot a girl on the steps of a cathedral before a crowd of people, and was only now, after seven years, being brought to trial. Having wealthy friends, he had pleaded insanity and dodged the law for all that time. All three denounced certain Governors for the laxity with which they granted pardons, alleging them to be amenable to all sorts of influences, to the ruin of belief in equal justice between rich and poor.

I said that the freedom with which American newspapers commented on trials which were pending astonished an Englishman, and asked whether they had no rule of "contempt of Court." The question baffled the Americans, who seemed not to have heard of this form of discipline, but they said with one accord that an active newspaper interest was one of the best ways of securing justice and preventing the escape of criminals. Then they turned on me about Sacco and Vanzetti, and said that European criticisms on that case were ignorant nonsense. The men were undoubtedly guilty, but, having powerful political friends behind them, they had managed to dodge justice for six years. Decent Americans were determined that protected criminals should not escape the "chair," however long they succeeded in dodging it. This was the only security for the public, and the only way of discouraging the dodgers. We might think it inhuman to execute criminals after six years, but in existing conditions it was a grim necessity.

§ v

There is no "truth about America" in this or any other respect. There are forty-eight States in different degrees of culture, each of which has its own laws and its own system of justice and police, which it jealously guards from interference from the Federal authorities. In such circumstances none of the consequences follow which would be expected as a matter of course, if similar grievances were alleged in Great Britain. If in Great Britain half the things were true which Americans allege about their system of justice, it is certain that there would be a powerful agitation from one end of the country to the other, and that political parties would vie with each other in more or less drastic schemes of judicial reform. In the United States there is no centre for agitation and there can be no uniform movement for reform. The more backward States cannot be pulled up by the more advanced; each must find its own salvation. The subject, therefore, remains more or less academic. There are learned symposia in the magazines, all saying the same things—that Judges should be men of greater capacity; that they should be invested with power to sweep away technicalities, to control counsel, to instruct juries; that they and all other judicial officers, including State Attorneys and Commissioners of Police, should be independent of politics and politicians—all of which means that they ought, like British judges and judicial officials, to be permanent and non-elective and remunerated on a scale which would tempt the best men to occupy these positions, and make them equal or superior in capacity to the Advocates.

But when this solution is broached to responsible Americans they say with one accord that however desirable it may be in theory, it is in practice impossible. The Supreme

Court of the United States and the Federal Courts are admitted to be wise exceptions and hopes are expressed that the Supreme Courts of the States will gradually follow the Federal example and make at least a portion of their Judges permanent and immovable. But this is as far as even wise men think it practicable to go. The majority of the States, they say, have definitely chosen the democratic road for this as for all other institutions, and salvation must be found by following it to its conclusion.[1] The electors must be educated to see that their interests lie in supporting strong and independent Judges, and in the more progressive States that education is gradually but steadily proceeding. The ideal of democratic justice is said to be intrinsically a finer one than that of justice imposed by the Administration on a passive people, and in the long run the foundations will be surer and deeper if laid by the people for themselves, than if there is a sudden breach with democratic conditions in a moment of impatience.

This argument deserves to be treated with respect and it is important to understand it, if one would judge rightly what is to an Englishman one of the most puzzling features of American life. If an Englishman seems to be complacent about his system of justice it is that Americans make him so by their repeated acknowledgments that it works better than theirs; and yet when he suggests that they might borrow what is acknowledged to be good in the British system, he is given to understand that this would, in American eyes,

[1] In most of the States Judges are elected either for the whole State by its citizens voting at the polls, or for local areas by the citizens resident in those areas, and for terms of years usually short. In three the Judges of the Highest Court are appointed for life by the Governor (subject to confirmation by the legislature or the Senate alone) and are removable only by impeachment, and in four others they are appointed by him (subject as aforesaid) for a term of years, while in four others they are elected by the legislature for terms, longer or shorter. The salaries of these officials vary according to the wealth of the State and the importance of the particular post, but are mostly small, averaging about $6,000 (£1,200).—Bryce, *Modern Democracies*, II, 14.

be a betrayal of democratic principle. Once more it is brought home to him that no country can teach any other in the way that it should go. With its enormous margin of error the United States can survive mistakes and tolerate grievances which would be ruinous in old and congested countries, and its sense of youth and opportunity fills it with an unquenchable optimism which regards the breakdown of institutions as a minor and temporary incident in its buoyant and energetic life.

§ VI

But it is no doubt an uneasy sense that the country is as yet lacking in discipline which accounts for the intolerance of radical and advanced opinions which so often surprises an Englishman in this democratic country. The United States went ahead of Europe in its suppression of opinions thought dangerous during and after the war, and Attorney-General Mitchell Palmer's "war on the reds" was of a drastic character which would scarcely have been tolerated under any constitutional Government in Europe. To this day "radicalism" is a word of ill-omen among average Americans and the supposition that they hold advanced opinions is a black mark against even estimable citizens in ordinary American society. All this is coloured by the feeling that a very little preaching of discontent might set disorderly forces in motion which would quickly pass out of control. In America it is brought home to one that freedom of opinion and liberty to agitate depend on a firm background of law and order and that, where this is in doubt, there will be a corresponding readiness to take strong measures against possible disturbers of the peace. It is not for nothing that large numbers of Americans are warm admirers of Mussolini.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION AND THE CHURCHES

§ 1

THERE ARE MANY things in one's own country which one only understands by getting away from them; for an Englishman one of these is the influence of an established Church. Coming to a country where all the Churches are free and equal, he feels at once the difference of the atmosphere. There is no metropolis in the religious life of America; there is no authority to set a standard of orthodoxy, to claim a favoured relation with the State or enjoy the monopoly of official appearance on ceremonial occasions. The word Nonconformist ceases to have meaning, because there is no Church to which anybody is expected to conform. The whole country is a free recruiting ground for all the denominations, and in consequence there is a stir and bustle and activity, a rivalry and competition in the religious world which are lacking in Great Britain. The denominations seem to be innumerable and nearly all to obtain handsome financial support which enables them to erect large and costly, if not always beautiful, buildings. One realises by contrast how greatly a predominant established Church quenches this kind of zeal. The English people—excepting always a zealous minority of Nonconformists—have the comfortable sense that religion is provided for them; the American people know that they must provide it for themselves.

There is no form of propaganda so effective as the collection of money and the American Churches and Missionary

Societies are not ashamed to be efficient in this art. They both get the money and in getting it keep alive interest in their faith and work. In return they are expected to give their congregations their money's worth. The inexpert and fumbling preacher, the merely good man, who has no gift either as a preacher or as an organiser, must not expect the indulgence which he would get as a matter of course in England from an Anglican congregation. He cannot tell his flock that they have a sacred duty to attend his ministrations; he must compel them to come in by his eloquence and his activities, and make his Church a part of their social life. It is small wonder if sometimes the commercial side of it gets mixed up with the spiritual. To run a successful Church with its accompaniments of Sunday schools and clubs, its choir on Sundays and sacred concerts and lectures in the week, needs considerable business ability as well as fervour in the faith. A successful young preacher invites me to "come and inspect his plant," and my impulse is to raise my eyebrows in the supercilious English way. I am wrong; he is an excellent and gifted young man who is holding a congregation of 1,500 every Sunday morning and evening in a busy commercial town, and doing, I was told, a really fine work. Moreover, he is (or was till quite recently) a countryman of my own. But he couldn't have said just this thing to me in England, and I detect a shade of difference in the religious atmosphere.

I have read in American newspapers the same complaints about the falling-off in Church-goers and the number of candidates for the ministry that I am familiar with in England, and I suppose there are grounds for them in certain parts of the country. But the large numbers of Churches and Chapels in almost any American town is one of the first things that strikes the visitor from Europe, and, if he inquires, he is told that most of them are full on Sun-

days. I was assured in certain towns in the west and south that 80 per cent. of the adult population habitually attended Church on Sundays—a figure which, if even approximately accurate, is far in excess of any that could be claimed by the most devout city in England. When I inquired again as to the faith of these Church-goers, I was assured that though scattered between various denominations—Baptists, Methodist, and Presbyterian—the vast majority were "evangelical fundamentalists" (i.e. Protestants of the strictest orthodoxy).

§ 11

This was in the South, and I do not suppose for a moment that it is typical of all America. But it is probably nearer the average than any such figure would be in Great Britain. In the course of the year 1927 a religious census was undertaken by 200 newspapers in different parts of the United States, which between them brought in 125,000 answers to the questionnaire. The results, as summarised in the *New York World* (December 27th, 1927), were as follows:

Question.	"*Yes.*" Per cent.	"*No.*" Per cent.
1. Do you believe in God?	91	9
2. Do you believe in immortality? ..	88	12
3. Do you believe in prayer as a means of personal relationship with God? ..	88	12
4. Do you believe that Jesus was divine as no other man was divine?	85	15
5. Do you regard the Bible as inspired in a sense that no other literature could be said to be inspired?	85	15
6. Are you an active member of any Church?	77	33

Question.	*"Yes."* Per cent.	*"No."* Per cent.
7. Do you regularly attend any religious services?	76	24
8. Would you be willing to have your family grow up in a community in which there is no Church?	13	87
9. Do you regularly have "family worship" in your homes?	42	58
10. Were you brought up in a religious home?	87	13
11. Do you send your children to any school of religious instruction?	72	28
12. Do you think that religion in some form is a necessary element of life for the individual and for the community?	87	13

The organisers of the census claim that the results are "singularly representative" in spite of the relatively small numbers, but since 76 per cent. of the respondents say that they "regularly attend some place of worship," whereas the total Church membership for the whole country, including all faiths, is only 43 per cent., it is plain that they represent largely the opinions of Church-goers. But among these the answers undoubtedly indicate a high standard of orthodoxy and religious observance. The director of the census himself draws the conclusion that religion in America "is on the whole conservative" and that "the people are not bothered very much by the doubts of the 'high-brows.' When it comes to religion they are old-fashioned."

An interesting point in this inquiry is that New York yields widely different results from those given by other cities and centres. Belief in immortality declines in New York to 64 per cent., as compared with the general average of 88 per cent., and belief in the divinity of Christ to 61 per cent. compared with the general average of 85 per cent. In

New York again, the Church attendances are only 50 per cent., compared with the 76 per cent. shown in all the cities combined. This may only mean that the unorthodox responded more freely to the questions in New York than elsewhere, but it is natural to suppose that the great cosmopolitan sea-board city is more affected with modernism than the inland cities and centres.

§ III

All such tests are inconclusive, but this one confirms the general impression which the traveller in America gets, as he passes from city to city, that orthodox Protestantism has a firmer grip of America than of any European country. Indeed, the records of its denominations show, or claim to show, that Church membership has steadily increased from the year 1800 up to the present time, whereas in most other countries it has steadily declined, at all events, in the last part of this period. The Protestant denominations claim greatly to have increased their membership since the beginning of the century, and to-day the total Church membership of all creeds is set down as 43 per cent. of the population. That is undoubtedly a high average for the whole country, if Church membership means definite affiliation to a denomination, and it may well be doubted whether any other country, except possibly the Catholic-practising countries of Southern Europe, could show the same result.

The Fundamentalist[1] controversy which swept over a large part of the country three years ago can be better under-

[1] The Fundamentalists take their stand on five points: the infallible Bible, the Virgin birth of Jesus, the substitutionary atonement, the carnal resurrection and the second coming of Jesus in His physical body. They belong to all denominations, but appear to have acted together on a concerted plan to enforce their creedal discipline on their respective denominations. The late Mr. W. J. Bryan was their most conspicuous lay champion, and the movement seems to have lost some of its militancy since his death.

stood if seen against this background of cohesive Church-going orthodoxy. The tide has since ebbed, and it is improbable that there will be more trials on the Dayton model or that the campaign for anti-evolution laws will have further successes. In 1927 nine States (Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, North Carolina, Missouri, Oklahoma, Maine, West Virginia) rejected such laws and in only two (Mississippi and Tennessee) are they now on the Statute book. The Tennessee law is as follows :

An Act prohibiting the teaching of the Evolution Theory in all the universities, normals, and all other public schools of Tennessee, which are supported in whole or in part by the public-school funds of the State and to provide penalties for the violation thereof.

Section 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee*, That it shall be unlawful for any teacher in any of the universities, normals and all other public schools of the State which are supported in whole or in part by the public school funds of the State, to teach any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals.

Section 2. *Be it further enacted*, That any teacher found guilty of the violation of this Act shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction, shall be fined not less than One Hundred Dollars ($100) nor more than Five Hundred Dollars ($500) for each offence.

Section 3. *Be it further enacted*, That this Act shall take effect from and after its passage, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed March 13, 1925.

It was generally supposed that the Supreme Court of the State would disallow this law as conflicting with the guaranteed rights of individuals under the Constitutions of the

States and the United States. But the Court ruled that a law which touched only the schools and universities did not affect the constitutional principle that "no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious establishment or mode of worship"; and that such a law did not contravene the constitutional veto on the "exercise of the police power of the State undertaking to regulate the conduct of individuals in their dealings with each other." It was simply "an act of the State as a corporation, a proprietor, an employer, a declaration of master as to the character of work the master's servant shall, or rather, shall not, perform." The Court concluded that "if this be regarded as a misfortune, it must be charged to the Legislature, which passed the pro-Bible law." Under the influence of this ruling the Fundamentalists are now pressing not only for expurgated text-books, but (as in Louisiana) for a definite veto "on the teaching of any subject in such a manner as to contradict the fundamental truth of the Holy Bible," but in the present phase of opinion their success does not seem to be probable.

Nevertheless, as the net result of this controversy, the Fundamentalists appear to have had great success in silencing their opponents and imposing their doctrine on the principal Protestant denominations, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist and even Episcopalian. The Baptists are said to be 85 per cent. Fundamentalists; the Presbyterian and Methodists have disciplined or silenced their liberal theologians; and the "House of Bishops" has issued a "Pastoral Letter" reaffirming a strict orthodoxy against its Modernists. Dr. Albert C. Dieffenbach, in a vigorous call to arms on behalf of the Liberals,[1] gives a long list of Fundamentalist activities in these different denominations and reproaches the Modernists with much bitterness for having permitted themselves

[1] *Religious Liberty. The Great American Illusion.* William Morrow & Co., New York.

to be silenced for the sake of a quiet life. Dr. Dieffenbach quotes De Tocqueville as having said in 1830 that there was no country in which there was "less independence of thought and less real liberty of discussion than in America," and suggests that these words are still true to-day.

To the outside observer it seems rather as if America is liable to cycles of opinion in which ideas that a Liberal might think obsolete suddenly reappear in all their pristine vigour. In the years since the war the fear of radicalism in politics and of neology in religion has run a parallel course, and bold speculations on either field have been discountenanced as subversive of social order. I have had it expounded to me by a hard-headed American business man that the institutions of the family and of property stand or fall with belief in the verbal inspiration of scripture and that this essential faith cannot decay without the decay of the others following. To uphold it, therefore, against the pretensions of both the Catholic who would substitute the authority of the Church, or of the Modernist who would supplant it by a fallible science, was the duty of good Christians and good citizens. My friend carried the argument forward to the point of justifying State Governments in taking steps to protect their citizens from "false doctrine"—the very argument which all through the Middle Ages and down to the eighteenth century was held to justify what we now call religious persecution. I do not suppose that this argument carries far, but to hear it at all in the country whose Pilgrim Fathers braved everything to escape the shackles of "religion by law" is one of those things that surprise the Englishman in America. It would be a strange result of their religious history if Americans substituted doctrines established by law for Churches established by law.

§ IV

No country has a right to give itself airs over any other on its superior enlightenment in religious thought. To a large number of Americans the Anglican controversy about the revised prayer-book and the reserved Sacrament seems as remote from reality as the Fundamentalist controversy does to the majority of Englishmen. The American who takes his stand on the authority of the Bible probably thinks himself more emancipated than the Anglican who stands on the authority of his Church. The difference between the two countries is that, whereas only a small minority of Englishmen take an active interest in these controversies, there are large parts of America in which immense numbers of Americans think them of vital importance. And in America these are not kept within bounds by that nucleus of leisurely, reading and thinking people who in England have kept pace with modern speculations and insensibly brought the general level of opinion up to them. In large parts of America the scientific ideas to which theology has had gradually to adjust itself in England are as unknown or as novel and dangerous as they seemed to the orthodox English in the 'sixties and 'seventies of the last centuries. In this as in many other ways the Englishman in America finds himself constantly brought up against the contrast between the ancient ways of thinking and the modern ways of acting. A nation which in all material and mechanical ways is modern of the moderns, and which in the material sense is advancing at a pace of which its neighbours have little conception applies a standard of orthodoxy to both religion and politics which most of these neighbours discarded fifty years ago. All its energy and thought is going out into the practical business of life

and it obediently accepts its beliefs and opinions from authority.

Yet, however it manifests itself, this religious spirit is one of the great realities of American life. With the intolerance and the narrowness go zeal, fervour, generosity, philanthropy which are a shining example to other countries. Whether for Christian missions abroad, distressed and starving foreign nations, Community funds, Church buildings, or Mississippi floods at home, there is no appeal which seems to fail of an instant and generous response. This response is not, as is sometimes alleged, merely from rich people who can spare money without feeling it or who will give it for the sake of advertisement; it comes from all quarters and represents a very real sacrifice on the part of large numbers of people of very moderate means. Of this pervading charitableness and its religious inspiration no one who is even a short time in America can have any doubt, and it goes far to justify the claims which Americans make for their country that it is idealistic at heart.

How much of the Christian ethic can be absorbed into the immensely energetic, acquisitive, mundane life of a very prosperous people is another question which may be asked of other countries besides the United States. But there as elsewhere it is probably easier for the Minister of a highly organised Church supported by wealthy men to take a bold stand on disputed points of theology than to apply the Christian precepts about wealth and poverty to the daily lives of his congregation, and the practice of big business. Whatever may be their views on the infallibility of scripture, the Fundamentalists of most countries appear to be as latitudinarian as their neighbours, when it comes to the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. The preacher who insists on the literal infallibility of the Old Testament narrative invites the question whether he makes the same claim

for the fifth and sixth chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel, and if not, why not? When one looks at the religious situation in America or England or any modern thriving community, the same question seems to arise in all. Is it possible to make the Christian message real and vital and to keep it steadily in the minds of men and women as the corrective to the prevailing worship of success and prosperity? Can the Kingdom which is not of this world hold its own in the actual world of wealth and power—among the successful preachers, the rich and well-organised Churches, the regular Church-goers? There are Elmer Gantrys and Sharon Faulkners in all countries, and to generalise from those types would be a gross injustice to the thousands of zealous and upright American ministers, but the highly efficient and prosperous religious organisations which one sees in all parts of the country raise the question in a rather acute form. It is probable that in America, as in Europe, a considerable number of people find but a dusty answer to this central religious issue in the dogmatic controversies in which so many ministers of religion seem to be involved.

CHAPTER XIII

PROHIBITION

§ 1

THE COMMON belief in Europe that the United States was rushed into Prohibition in an access of war-time emotion needs many qualifications. It is true that Prohibition was adopted as a war-time measure by the Federal Government in 1917, but both the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act which gave it legal force belong to the years after the war and presumably embodied a deliberate decision to continue the experiment after a fair trail. It was no novelty even in 1917. By that time the movement had been on foot for fifty years; and Prohibition in some form was the law of thirty-three States, covering 68 per cent. of the population and 95 per cent. of the territory of the Union, before the Eighteenth Amendment was carried. All that that Amendment did was to impose it on the minority of fifteen States and 32 per cent. of the population. Several of these States remain bitterly opposed to the law and have refused to employ the State machinery to enforce it.

The Prohibition campaign was one of the most persistent in the history of the country, and its opponents say that it achieved its results as much by intimidating legislators as by convincing the public. I have been told over and over again that, if there could have been a free referendum of the electors over the whole country there would almost certainly have been a majority against the Eighteenth Amendment even in 1919. I own I remain sceptical about this. Undoubtedly in America the apathy of the electors accounts

for a good deal, but it is difficult to believe that any large body of them would have permitted themselves to be circumvented and outwitted by a minority, however zealous, in a matter so nearly touching their daily lives and habits. The probability is, I think, that when it was passed, the Eighteenth Amendment represented the opinion of a large majority of the American people.

But this was not necessarily at any time a purely Temperance opinion. In the end the Amendment appears to have been carried by a combination of the Puritans, who think alcohol sin and poison, and the captains of industry and men of business who think it a hindrance to the desired output of manufactured goods. There were also large numbers in the South who were willing to make any sacrifice to keep liquor from negroes, and a multitude all over the country who were ready for any law which promised to abolish the "saloon." Hence the large number of "wets" (in their private capacity) who can still be relied on to "vote dry" for the good of business, or to prevent other people from drinking. These, by adding their votes to those of sincere and devout believers in abstinence both enabled the law to be passed and are likely to prevent its repeal, so long as it appears to give good practical results, and does not greatly interfere with their own private habits.

There is, however, a third body of opinion which was from the beginning, and remains, bitterly opposed to the law on what may be called first principles. These see in it a denial of personal liberty breaking the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution, and allege that it is doing far more harm by bringing the law into contempt than good by checking drunkenness. They question every claim made by either its temperance or its business advocates, and assert that the demoralisation becomes constantly worse.

The visitor to America finds himself bombarded by all these opinions, and he quickly perceives that temperance in language and thought is no more characteristic of this controversy in America than in England. Figures showing swollen Savings Bank deposits, enormously increased output in factories, immense extensions of house-owning, constantly increasing purchases of boots and clothes, improved health, longer life are hurled at him from one side and all attributed to Prohibition. Figures showing increases in crimes of violence and of deaths from alcoholic poisoning; observations of Judges and College Presidents about the growth of the cocktail habit and the consequent demoralisation of youth; a stream of testimony about the corruption of police and enforcement officers pour in from the other side, and everything again is attributed to the attempt to enforce abstinence. There are times when it might be supposed that Americans have only one vice and one virtue and that all they have done, or failed to do, since the year 1919 is due to their abstaining or not abstaining from alcohol. Certainly to the other results of Prohibition should be added the extraordinary psychological effect which it appears to have upon the mind of the country. If there is less liquor consumed in the United States than elsewhere, in no country does liquor fill so large a place in the thought and talk of the average citizen.

§ II

It is rash to plunge into what is after all a domestic question for the people of the United States, and the more so, as the people themselves tell so many different stories. Nevertheless, this immense sumptuary law is undoubtedly the most interesting experiment of the kind in the world, and no one in Europe can be indifferent to it. I will, there-

fore, very tentatively set down certain observations of my own in two visits each of several months' duration, since the Eighteenth Amendment came into force.

I should say that on the whole the outward observance of the law is better enforced now than when I was in the country in 1921. Six years ago the stranger coming into the country would have had alcohol offered to him, whereas now, if he wanted it, he would have to "know the ropes." On all public occasions and in most places where men and women forgather, outside private houses, observance seems generally to be strict. I have attended a great many public dinners and lunches, and never seen the law broken or evaded. The traveller who goes to America and stays in hotels will be very much mistaken if he imagines that, as is commonly supposed in Europe, he can get as much liquor as he likes, in spite of the law. If he has the normal decent feeling which makes a visitor to another country feel that he is abusing its hospitality when he breaks its laws, he will have to go without, unless he is being legitimately entertained by private persons. The sense of guilt is heavy on him if he even carries a flask with him for the emergencies of travel, unless he has legitimised this exception by obtaining a doctor's prescription—which he almost certainly will not have done.

I am speaking now only of outward observance, and many Americans hasten to tell me that my impressions are misleading. They say that all that has happened in the six years is that non-observance has been systematised and canalised, so as not to conflict with outward appearances. Some suggest that more and not less alcohol is consumed than six years ago.

At this point I ask for facts and of course nobody can give them. That is one of the ironies of this controversy. Since the trade in alcohol is forbidden by law, it is unknown

to the Administration.[1] The bootlegger cannot be asked to inform the authorities of the dimensions of his illicit trade; the authorities can only suspect the degree to which the law is evaded. Everybody's opinion is as good as everybody else's, and everybody's opinion seems to differ passionately from everybody else's.

So the observer coming in can do nothing but collect opinions and endeavour to weigh them against each other. My own weighings are somewhat as follows:

1. The prevailing (though not unanimous) opinion of employers that Prohibition is good for industry points to a real decline in the consumption of alcohol. Even among employers who profess themselves "wet," as individuals, I have heard this factor put high among the causes of American prosperity. If this is warranted, it must mean that in the opinion of these presumably competent witnesses there has been an increase of sobriety.

2. The general belief that women voters are strong supporters of the law points in the same direction. Just as employers are competent witnesses of the results of the workshop, so are women competent witnesses of the results in the home.

3. There is a unanimous opinion that the abolition of the saloon has been an advantage, coupled with some doubts whether the recrudescence of the saloon under various disguises is being sufficiently guarded against. I take it that there is no doubt that all Americans, or at least an overwhelming majority of Americans, wish the abolition of the

[1] A correspondent of the *New York Herald Tribune* chides me for my assumption of ignorance on this subject. Is Mr. Spender not aware, he asks, that the withdrawals of alcohol (for licit and industrial purposes) which in the first year of Prohibition were 18,000,000 gallons, rose in 1926 to 202,000,000 gallons? The Bureau of Prohibition, he adds, has issued a permit (N.Y. No. 21,403) for the manufacture of chocolate candies containing "whisky, brandy and cordials." I give the facts as the correspondent states them, but I am not competent to draw the inferences.

saloon to be permanent, and think that the country has gained by it.

These undoubtedly are strong practical grounds for continuing the law. What is there to be said on the other side? Here again I am only collecting opinions, but I should sum up what the critics and opponents of the law allege somewhat as follows:

1. The evasion of the law is on such a scale and so many otherwise blameless people are implicated in it that it brings not only this one law into disrepute, but is seriously undermining the respect for all law throughout the country.

2. A large proportion of the liquor smuggled into the country is of inferior quality, and its consumption is injuring the health of those who drink it—witness the largely increased number of deaths from alcoholic poisoning.

3. The obtaining of illicit liquor has become a sport and an adventure which specially appeals to the young of both sexes, large numbers of whom are now said to be drinking on a scale which they would never have dreamt of before the Act came into operation. A similar result is attributed to the constant talk about liquor in all circles which has accompanied the law and the controversy about it. This is reported in most of the big towns, and many of the universities are said to be seriously concerned about it.

There are ramifications of the argument in many other directions, but these, I think, are the main points.

I am told that even if an actual majority of the country were in favour of repealing the amendment, the minority would still be strong enough, and be so distributed, as to make repeal impossible. Many "wets" tell me that they will vote "dry" if their party decrees it, and very few appear to contemplate repeal. Most of the "wets," so far as I have been able to ascertain their views, would be con-

tent with an amendment which they think to be within the competence of Congress and likely to be sanctioned by the Supreme Court, permitting light wines and beers.

§ III

Though for the reasons stated, the truth is unascertainable, I find it impossible not to keep guessing at the dimensions of the illicit trade. If one supposed that the hundred and twenty millions of the United States consumed between them about half as much liquor as the forty millions of Great Britain, the amount measured in money would be about £150,000,000 ($1,500,000,000) a year.[1] I have heard it put a great deal higher, and the prices charged in America might easily swell the money total out of all proportion to the liquor consumed. In any case it is an immense and widely ramifying trade, with an enormous capital behind it, and, according to popular belief, earning rich profits for large numbers of people, many of whom are American citizens. The police and enforcement officers maintain a running fight with it and secure a certain number of convictions which are followed by fines and imprisonments. But with so much at stake the penalties are of little importance, and the bootleggers can afford to bribe on a scale which is acknowledged to be a far-reaching corrupting influence upon police and enforcement officers.

Prohibition is now a most valuable vested interest to this great illicit trade and by a curious and unexpected turn of events, it has turned out to be a rich source of profit to various subsidiary enterprises. When the Volstead Act was passed, it was generally supposed that the hop-grower and the wine-

[1] A large proportion of the British figure of course represents revenue, but it seems to me a reasonable conjecture that the American "bootlegger" adds to the normal profits of the trade nearly as much as the British Government takes in revenue.

grower, to say nothing of the rye and barley growers, would be ruined. The very opposite has proved to be the case. I was assured in California that wine-grapes and hops had never fetched such prices as in the last few years, and that the growers of both might now be reckoned among the staunchest upholders of the Prohibition law. Italians will have their wine, if they have to make it themselves, and if Germans can obtain hops, they know how to make beer. Some effort was made to prevent the sale of hops and wine-grapes on the ground that the intention of the buyer was sufficient to convert them into an illicit product, but the Courts have so far refused to impeach the unfermented product, and enforcement is apparently powerless to trace the innocent beginnings to the guilty conclusion. Wine-making, home-brewing, and the use of the domestic still are said in large parts of the country to have passed out of the crude and poisonous stage, and to be on the way to becoming highly developed domestic arts.

Certainly by all ordinary standards the existence of these practices and the daily spectacle of a large and prosperous illicit trade carrying on its operations under the noses of the authorities and with the connivance of hundreds of thousands of otherwise law-abiding and respectable citizens must be demoralising to the general cause of law and order. It is difficult to believe that it could go on if opinion was as overwhelmingly on the side of the law as the Prohibitionists assert. In that case one would expect a stern demand from all over the country that the iniquitous illicit trade should be rooted out at whatever cost to the taxpayer. There is no such demand: the Federal appropriation for enforcement is admitted on all hands to be insufficient for its purpose, but said to be as much as opinion will sanction. To the onlooker the United States seems to be stuck half way in this business. The "dry" opinion is strong enough

to maintain the Volstead Act in the Statute book, but not strong enough to procure anything approaching a rigid enforcement. The great company of "wets who vote dry," thinking Prohibition to be a good thing for other people, have no desire to see enforcement officers prying into their own habits or coming between them and their sources of supply. To be rid of the "saloon" and to prevent its return they will keep the Government armed with powers which may in theory be applied to themselves, but they expect tolerance and common sense and a judicious turning of the blind eye when the thing comes near home.

The United States is so different from other countries and, according to British ideas, so eccentric in its legal methods that almost any judgment which an Englishman might pass would distort the American point of view. To vast numbers of Americans it is, apart from the results, a very real satisfaction to have in their Constitution a declaration which dedicates their country to a sober life. They may not for the moment live up to it, but it is an ideal held before them which they are bound to respect and may presently achieve. The common objection that law must not run in advance of opinion gives way, in the minds of these people, to a conviction that, if the law is boldly affirmed, opinion will rise to it. It is argued that under the discouragement of Prohibition the taste for alcohol will constantly diminish until a generation arises to which it will be as repugnant as drugs are now to normal persons. From this point of view merely to make it difficult to get intoxicating liquors is said to be an advantage which far outweighs the alleged harm in the tolerance of law-breaking. There are already so many laws on the Statute books which no one thinks of observing that the partial defeat of Prohibition by passive resistance is of little consequence as a blow to legality, and may even be thought of as a common-sense method of easing the burden

for frail humanity. Thousands of good citizens sip their "Scotch" with the comfortable reflection that the saloon is a thing of the past, that the output of manufactured goods is constantly increasing, and that the United States is setting a fine example to the rest of the world.

§ IV

Americans will settle it in their own way, and it is useless to pester them with British advice. But when they ask me whether, after seeing it at work in America, I am disposed to go back and advocate Prohibition for Great Britain, I own I am not. Great as the object may be, I do not think we could afford to pay the price. I doubt if enforcement would be easier, or the danger of corruption less in Britain than in America, and I am sure that with our acuter class-consciousness, a measure of this kind would be a serious danger to us, unless we could count on its rigid and uniform enforcement. Our poor men would not consent to be deprived of their public-house or their beer, unless they were quite sure that a similar discipline were being imposed upon their rich and well-to-do fellow-citizens. In our small country I should greatly fear the ill-will and jealousy which would follow, if it were supposed that the rich could buy what the law forbade the poor. Americans may judge that the good outweighs the evil, and decide to persist until public opinion is brought up to the level of the law, but it is one of the differences between old and new countries, that the former can afford experiments which are too perilous for the latter. We have not the same margin of error in case of failure.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RACIAL QUESTION

§ 1

DURING THE greater part of my life, the United States has been held up as the shining example of a policy of unrestricted immigration. She might be exclusive and Protectionist in all else, but she had never wavered in her policy of free imports for the human material, and had been rewarded by an unprecedented prosperity. Her faith that all would come right, if she only kept her doors open and trusted to the working of natural forces to fit the new-comers into her scheme, seemed to be abundantly justified in comparison with the sorting and sifting and exacting of conditions which were being practised by other Colonial countries. In fact there seemed to be no other way in which she could have raised her population from the 4,000,000 at which it stood in 1790 to the 119,000,000 which it reached in 1927.

But since the beginning of the twentieth century there has been a marked repentance on the part of the American people. That has been due mainly to a change in the quality of immigration which has been going forward progressively from 1880 onwards. Up to that date the immigrants had been mainly "Nordic"—to use the now fashionable word—i.e. from the United Kingdom and North Europe; since that date they have been mainly Latin-Slav from South and South-East Europe. During the former period the original settlers with their strong English Puritan tradition, felt confident of their power to assimilate the new-comers; during the latter period, they have been in a state of growing

anxiety lest they should themselves be swamped. As "the Latins" came in increasing numbers, the Catholic Church grew in power and authority, and seemed to threaten the Protestant ascendancy. In the eyes of the old inhabitants, large numbers of the newly arrived looked strange and alien, and it was alleged that instead of being fused in the melting-pot, they remained massed together in unassimilable chunks. The Irish had always done this, and provided an element of gaiety and devilry in American city life which had been watched with a certain anxiety by the staider part of the population; but the Irish had been a tolerated exception, and the idea of there being other racial *blocs* holding together and refusing to be assimilated was an alarming thought which seemed to cut at the roots of American national unity. When the 1920 census appeared, the native-born Americans, the "hundred per centers," reflected gloomily that they were only 61 per cent. of the white population and 55 per cent. of the whole population.

The war intensified these misgivings. President Wilson, when he enjoined "neutrality in thought, word and deed," was evidently wondering whether American unity would stand the strain of partisanship in the European quarrel, and up to the last moment before the American entry into the war, some pessimists predicted that, if the plunge were taken, it would be necessary to fight out the European quarrel on American soil. When the war ended, two conclusions were possible, one that these alarms were unfounded, the other that the American people had had a fortunate but narrow escape from a peril to which they must never again be exposed. The great majority seem to have adopted the second conclusion.

Accordingly the Immigration Act of 1917, imposed as a war-time measure, was further stiffened in 1924. The first took the 1890 census as its basis and fixing the total of per-

mitted immigrants from non-American countries at 165,000, provided that each country should have as its quota 2 per cent. of the number of persons in the United States in 1890, who were born in that country. Thus, if there were 100,000 persons resident in the United States in 1890, who had been born in a certain foreign country, the quota for that country was 2 per cent. of 100,000, or 2,000. The native-born Americans, however, objected to this that it provided a foreign-born and not an American basis, and the Act of 1924 abolishes the 1890 census test and substitutes the total population at the last census as the foundation of the quota. The total of non-American immigration in a given year is now fixed at 150,000, and the quota assigned to each country is the percentage which persons deriving their descent from that country and resident in the United States bear to the total population of all races. Thus, if the white population derived by birth or descent from a certain foreign country is 10,000,000, or one ninth of the total population derived from all the foriegn countries, the quota for that country would be one ninth of 150,000, or 16,666. No objection could be taken to this change on the ground of fairness, but by taking all the native-born "Nordics" into the basis, it obviously favoured those elements and is a further step to checking Latin-Slav immigration.

§ II

This legislation, which is an almost complete reversal of previous policy, is the combined result of instinctive racial feeling, and Darwinian and eugenic theorisings on the subject of race. The theories of de Gobineau and Houston Chamberlain have been revived and popularised by writers like Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant, and have been aimed at the common American assumption that all the

races could be assimilated into an American whole, which would presently transmit purely American characteristics to its descendants. If, as these writers urge, acquired characteristics are not transmitted to descendants, this assumption is plainly not true, and safety must be sought in favouring the stocks which these writers thought of as "superior," but which were in any case capable of being assimilated in some national unity. These objects can, of course, not be avowed in legislation which has to be squared with the politics of racial equality, but they have no doubt influenced this legislation, and few native-born Americans would deny that it was now a deliberate object of policy to keep the native-born stock pure and dominant.

But there are still leakages. The new laws do not apply to the Americas, and some of those whom it is desired to keep out, filter in across the Canadian boundaries, and still worse, there is a constant infiltration of Mexicans, of mixed Latin and Indian origin, who threaten to disturb the racial balance. In his Report on the Third Year of the new Immigration Law, Prof. Robert De C. Ward winds up by saying that there is pressing need of legislation for (1) "the extension of the quota limitations to Mexico and other countries to the South of the United States, with perhaps some form of numerical limitation for Canada," (2) the passage of a deportation Bill, and (3) the enactment of an alien registration or enrolment law. The first of these proposals raises large questions of American policy on which, in its present relations with Latin America, the State Department may be less willing to act precipitately than some of its advisers.

Meanwhile, the question is being anxiously asked whether these enactments may not be too late. It is true that the native-born, mostly of British descent, are still in a proportion of 61 per cent. to the total number of whites, but birth control has made large inroads among them, whereas the

Irish and Latin-Slavs breed abundantly, and have religious objections to the limitations of families. After all, then, the immigration Acts may only be a locking of the stable door after the steed is stolen. The question opens up a wide field for conjecture into which I cannot enter. If they have smaller families, the native-born have still the advantage of a lower death-rate, and experience seems to show that the rate of increase falls rapidly in the second generation of new-comers. Moreover, there is considerable inter-marriage between the "Nordic" and the other types, and the offspring of these unions may not conform to any of the types which the theorists regard as permanent and unassimilable.

There is almost complete unanimity that no more Asiatics, whether Chinese, Japanese or Indian, must be admitted, and that the negroes, now amounting to ten millions, must be kept segregated. Here the ruling idea is to keep the white race pure, and no argument or theory avails against it. The Constitution may proclaim the negro to be a free and equal citizen, but in practice it is impossible to prevent the States in which he abounds from finding ways of defeating equal franchise laws and passing "Jim Crow" regulations which segregate him from his white fellow-citizens. The Northern and Western States have a tradition which places them on the side of the negro, but when he invades their territory, as he has recently done in large numbers, they seem to be no more tolerant than their Southern neighbours. Their excuse is that they are defending the American standard of life against the competition of coloured cheap labour, but the negroes generally earn good wages, and not a few of them are extremely wealthy. I was told in Chicago that the poor whites greatly resented seeing rich negroes drive about the streets in Rolls Royces. In the dearth of white servants competent negro women can command their own price, and $25 a week all found is, I have been assured, quite an

ordinary wage for a good negro cook in New York. On the whole the negroes seem able to look after themselves in the matter of wages, and though I have talked to many of them and heard their tale of grievances, I have seldom heard them allege that they are badly paid.

It is not the standard of life, but the racial question pure and simple which governs the negro question. In regard to all the other racial *blocs*, the anxiety is lest they should not be assimilated; in regard to the negroes it is lest they should be assimilated. Their numbers—roughly ten million—begin to look formidable and their rate of increase is much higher than that of the native-born population. It would need long residence and careful study of this question to justify any confident opinion, and an Englishman has no right to speak censoriously of an attitude which is little different from that of his own countrymen when in contact with black populations. But certain impressions may be recorded. One is that there is no "black peril" in the least comparable to that which may be alleged when a small white population is living in the midst of a great black one. Such as it is, the black problem in the United States should be easily manageable with good sense and the toleration which is quite possible between castes that do not intermarry. But the inclusion among negroes of large numbers who have only a "touch of the tar-brush" and are to all intents and purposes white, swells the nominal negro population artificially and inflicts a special hardship on large numbers whose social affinities are wholly white. To throw people thus situated into a segregated class seems on the face of it to complicate the negro problem unnecessarily.

The migration of negroes from the South to the North and West has been proceeding rapidly since the war, and there are some signs that it is breaking down the traditional belief that the negro obtains preferential treatment in the

North. The North is apparently not favourable to the mass migration of negroes and the South claims that in spite of its " Jim Crow " regulations, it has a friendlier way with them than the North. I was told repeatedly in the South that Charleston and Atlanta were pleasanter places for negroes to live in than New York and Chicago. It is said that the old plantation days have left memories of friendship and attachment which mellow the relationship, in spite of it harsh-looking appearance. This is not difficult to believe.

Another large practically segregated community is that of the Jews, who number nearly 4,000,000 in the United States. For these the segregation (in the racial sense) is their own choice, since for the most part they decline intermarriage with their Christian fellow-citizens. The Jew presents a peculiar and rather exasperating problem to the Nordic American. America is the material but not the spiritual home of the Jew. He is entirely at home in this wealth-producing, money-spinning country. He needs the American and the American needs him. But in the last resort he leads his own life, and thinks his own thoughts, and can with difficulty, or not at all, be made to conform to the dominant American pattern.

Cutting across these racial controversies there is a steady campaign on the part of " eugenists " which aims at the purity of all the races through the weeding out of criminal or degenerate stocks. The State system of the United States permits great variety and originality in legislation, with the result that a movement which is largely academic in other countries has had very important practical results in America. In no less than nineteen States there are laws authorising " eugenic sterilisation " in the case of idiots, incurable degenerates, habitual offenders and other irresponsible and vicious persons who might procreate unde-

sirable offspring.[1] Other States have decided that these laws are unconstitutional, but one hears them seriously discussed in America, as nowhere else in the world, and the controversy between the advocates of birth control and their opponents goes forward unceasingly. Here, as everywhere, the difficulty is that the "superior stocks" are already converted to birth control and the others insist on going their own way.

§ III

In all these respects the United States is race-conscious as no other country in the world. Doubts about the races and their balance and the purity of the blood seem to be a perpetual worry and anxiety to thinking Americans, whereas in other countries none but a few theorists think about them at all. And yet to the outside observer it is precisely in the overcoming of these difficulties that American civilisation has shown its most conspicuous and remarkable quality. There has been no experiment in nation-making at all like it in the history of the world, and none which, on the face of it, presented such formidable difficulties. There were not only differences of race, but differences of climate and natural conditions, and the intense particularism of the States, all throwing up obstacles against the making of one people over so vast an area. Antecedently it might have been said that the American Constitution was the least promising framework for such an experiment. And yet no one can doubt that, with whatever qualifications and drawbacks, the thing has substantially been accomplished, and that one dominant American character has been stamped upon the people as a whole and the country as a whole.

It is true that certain of the great cities—New York and Chicago—may be called cosmopolitan, and that others are

[1] Siegfried, *America Comes of Age*, p. 116.

predominantly German or Scandinavian. One may walk in certain parts of New York and not hear a word of English, or indeed of any language that a European commonly knows. This is an inevitable preliminary in the evolution of the immigrant, but even at that stage the Americanism of his surroundings is overwhelming and his adaptation to them is astonishingly quick. Whether he goes south or west there is no escape from these surroundings ; New York, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, may differ in detail, but they are all characteristically American and far more like each other than, say, Lille is like Nice or Edinburgh is like London. This development of the one type, regardless apparently of differences of climate and natural conditions is what mostly strikes the traveller, and he finds it difficult to believe that any racial *blocs* will long resist or seriously modify it. All the evidence goes to show that with rare exceptions they do not resist. Conformity is in the air in America ; there is in this atmosphere a natural gregariousness which is not found in Europe. If parents cling to their old traditions, their children seem generally to be absorbed into the American ranks with remarkable ease and regularity.

For this reason it is seriously misleading to infer the racial or political sympathies of an American from his name or racial origin. The German Emperor boasted before the war that he had twenty-five million subjects in the United States. There are, of course, German-Americans with German sympathies, but, as the event proved, there were hardly any who would place these before their obligations as American citizens. Large numbers of the Germans who emigrated to the United States in the last century did so to escape the military and despotic conditions which they left behind them in their own country, and were definitely out of sympathy with modern imperial Germany. Many have intermarried with English and Scottish-descended Americans,

and their children have lost all trace of their German origin. Not a few are active and prominent supporters of good relations with Great Britain, and their names may be seen on the rolls of the English-Speaking Union. Often when addressing meetings in America, I have had a chairman with a German name, and he has warmly advocated the closest possible relations with Great Britain. An invitation to visit an American school which the writer described as closely resembling "the public schools in the old country," is signed with a German name. Incidents of this kind perpetually remind you of the fallacy of drawing inferences from names, and my own impression is that a great many Americans with Latin-Slav names are completely "Nordics" in character and disposition.

This is not to argue in favour of one element or another in the composite American type. That type is American and nothing else. The native-born, whether British, Dutch or "Nordic," have a long start and the dominant pattern is mainly theirs. It will no doubt be modified as time goes on, but it will not be Italianised or Balkanised or Polified, it will still be American. It is already sufficiently distinguished from Anglo-Saxon to afford no reasonable ground for jealousy to the other races, all of whom have their opportunity of contributing to it, according to their character and ability. As an Englishman I should like to think that the English contribution will survive this process, and I do think it. But it never occurs to me to think of an American as an Englishman, though I like to think that British ancestry and tradition have played their part in the American result. I cannot think that the German or Italian or Polish-descended Americans will grudge me a little secret pride in the American Commonwealth; and I cannot see why the British-descended American should give offence to his neighbours, if he too takes pride in his ancestral home.

CHAPTER XV

RACIALISM AND POLITICS

§ 1

THE RACIAL background described in the last chapter explains much that would otherwise be mysterious in American politics. Mayor Thompson of Chicago, for example. Without this clue the Mayor seems to an Englishman an impossible being escaped out of some wonderland where fantastic nonsense is talked. To see him in full armour valiantly repelling an invasion of Chicago by King George V and "hitting King George on the snout" is to be plunged into doubt about his sanity or your own. But with the racial clue you begin to see what he is after. Suppose that the Mayor is rallying the Irish and the Latin-Slavs or other "inferior stocks" against the native born, and suppose that for this purpose it is good business to suggest that the native-born are humble lieges and vassals of the British Sovereign who take their orders from a British Government, and you begin to see daylight. Americans understand perfectly what is on foot, for it is one of the oldest games in their politics, and was played unashamedly in the former days in New York by Boss Tweed and Mayor Wood. Then Queen Victoria was dragged into it, now it is her grandson, but the object in both cases was the same—to discredit the "Nordic" American by suggesting that he wished to put America back under the sway of the British Sovereign.

Great Britain, therefore, comes into it only innocently and incidentally. The real issue is between the races in America, and for them it raises a serious and anxious problem. For, if

their politicians are going to " play politics " with the races, form racial *blocs* which will vote together and possibly draw gunmen into their feuds, then undoubtedly the unity of the country will be endangered and the melting-pot may become a volcano. This is a thought which weighs with many Americans who have nothing but contempt for politics as played in Chicago, and for this reason they think it necessary to take the Mayor seriously.

For the Latin-Slavs and other non-Nordics have their case. It is impossible that there should be all this talk about the " inferior stocks " and Immigration laws which reduce their quotas to the minimum without a certain resentment being kindled among the supposed inferiors. They protest that they are American citizens like the rest, and guaranteed under the Constitution freedom and equality and the same place in the sun as their Nordic brethren. Why, then, should they submit to be " bossed " by the older settlers or treated as if they were lower in the scale of being? Who are these people who claim to be the " superior stock," and is America to be graded in castes like a Hindu village?

The question is social even more than political. The newcomers complain that they are not treated as social equals, and that the others give themselves airs of patronage and condescension, and behave as if the whole place belonged to them. The Englishman listening to this debate is interested to hear the things commonly attributed to the British by all Americans imputed to the British-descended by the other races in America. It is evident that we British or British-descended have something in us that irritates other peoples, and all through our history we have contrived to irritate the Latins and the Irish. It is not what we do or say, it is our " air " which is supposed to be at fault. For generations this complaint of the Anglo-Saxon has gone up from Europe, and when one sees it transferred from Europe to

America and brought into play against the British-descended American, one recognises an ancient historical thing. But there are no remedies and there is nothing to be said about it except that the British-descended, like the British, have to live down their "air" by proving themselves to be decent, fair-minded, neighbourly people. In the meantime the less talk there is about "inferior" and "superior" stocks or about "white men" and "dagoes," the easier will be the desired fusion.

But there are political, as well as social, consequences which cannot be quite ignored. The organising of political *blocs* is an object of desire to all politicians, and its results have to be reckoned with, especially at election times. Mayor Thompson, I am confident, has had very little success in beating up anti-British feeling, and the reaction against him has brought not a few of those who favour friendly relations with Great Britain into the open. But his movement, while it lasted, had, I believe, a subtle if indirect influence upon British-American relations. While he is lying in wait for them, politicians become wary of doing or saying anything which may expose them to the charge of being "lieges of King George." Official America walks delicately lest it should seem to be departing from the strict neutrality between the different European Governments which its citizens of non-British origin demand. In such an atmosphere the Englishman feels that he is getting a little less than his due, simply because a partiality for him is suspected and has to be disproved.

§ 11

The Immigration laws have an obvious bearing, which needs a little separate consideration, on industrial and economic conditions. In the last years before the war the policy

of the open door coincided with an expanding demand for unskilled cheap labour. The prevailing idea was that skilled and highly paid work should fall to the American-born, and the lower grade labour to the new-comers, an unlimited supply of whom was thought to be good for industry. But about this time Mr. Taylor and other apostles of efficiency came into the field preaching the entirely different doctrine that low-grade labour was inefficient and uneconomic, and that the object of industry should be to get the utmost out of a given number of efficient men and develop machinery to do as much as possible of the work of the unskilled. What followed is well described by Prof. Edward M. East in his *Heredity and Human Affairs*.[1]

Employers began to see that human machines (i.e. unskilled workers) required space in the factory and that space was costly. As machines they must produce enough to warrant their use of space, and by this criterion their value diminished. They made mistakes which no well-regulated steel machine would make; they caused accidents and breakdowns; they injured other workmen. So it gradually began to dawn on the American business man that unskilled labour at a low wage might be expensive. To complete his education, another gadfly appeared to annoy him. At about this time agitation to maintain the American standard of living at any cost became increasingly frequent. To accomplish this feat, in contravention of all economic theory, a minimum wage must be established in every industry sufficient to give every family some degree of comfort. Laws to this effect were placed on the statute-books in quite a large proportion of our States, though it was necessary to disguise them somewhat in order not to transgress the provisions of the Constitution.

The result of this campaign of printer's ink and oratory was a change of heart among many of our capitalists. Their ethical standards mounted overnight. They no longer desired to play the rôle of philanthropist by giving jobs to incompetents under the plea that said incompetents were fellow human beings who ought to be supported, and that their wages, while necessarily low, were better than no wages at all. They realised that they

[1] Chap. xiv, 281-283.

had sinned in this regard. They demanded that they be allowed to pay high wages. All they asked in return was that the workmen employed should be profitably efficient.

Mr. Henry Ford, with the business acumen which he had always shown, was an early convert. At a time when the current wage for machinists was about $3.50 per day he announced a standard wage of $5.00 in his Detroit factory, and shouts of applause arose from among our amateur sociologists that here at last there was a capitalist who appreciated the worker. But Mr. Ford was not an altruist—he was a business man. Machinists vary tremendously in their skill. If the going price for machinists is $5.00 per day, there will be machinists who are worth only $2.00 a day, and there will be machinists who are worth $8.00 a day. By this revolutionary economic scheme, therefore, Mr. Ford obtained five million dollars' worth of free advertising, and at the end of eighteen months had hired and fired enough machinists to fill his factory with workmen who were worth $8.00 a day. Mr. Ford's sapience and his psychology seem very obvious, but apparently the press of the country, and in particular our amateur sociologists, made no such obvious deductions as to the cause of his activities. They pictured him as the guardian angel of the working man, and called down the wrath of Heaven on every employer who did not follow his example forthwith.

But, one must ask, who is to take care of the labourers who, under these standards, are worth only $2.00 per day? We have these incompetents, many of them, native as well as immigrant; and in the pre-war days we were getting increasing numbers of them from foreign shores, for the impelling cause of immigration had changed during the past half-century. Immigrants were no longer thoughtful political and religious radicals taking refuge here because their ideas were in advance of their time, or adventurous men, full of energy, whose powers could not be fully developed in their homeland. In an increasing percentage they were people forced out of their native land by economic pressure, squeezed out, one might say, by the Malthusian law. They came because they could not make a living in competition with the best of their own race.

So the conclusion now was that unlimited immigration was unnecessary for industry, and a liability rather than an asset to the country, since the incompetent immigrants required

more than their fair share of public money for their education, protection and care.

These ideas were powerfully reinforced by the Army tests of 1917 and 1918. According to these, about 12 per cent. of the total white draft was rated A or B, i.e. as men of superior intelligence, while 13·2 per cent. of the native-born came up to this standard. Of the foreign-born drafted men, only English, Scotch or Dutch were above the average, England producing 19 per cent. of superior men, Scotland 13·1, and Holland 12·4 per cent. In contrast with these, Ireland showed only 4·3, Austria 4·1, Russia 3·3, Greece 2·2, Italy 1·5, and Poland 1·1 per cent. of superior men. These figures were balm to the "Nordics," who pointed out that the last-named countries were precisely those from which the United States had been drawing the largest number of immigrants in recent years. From this point onwards, to limit the number of immigrants, and, so far as possible, to encourage the "superior" and check the "inferior" stocks became an object of policy. This was said to be sound economically and to fit in best with the evolution of American industry.

§ III

There is, in fact, a new orientation which, if it continues, must profoundly affect the national self-consciousness, and its outlook on the future. Hitherto it has been the custom to think of the United States as a country of unlimited resources with room for an infinitely expanding population. That it would contain 200 million people at the end of the present century has been thought a very moderate estimate; and the eye of faith has seen it populous as Europe in the time to come. Now we are seriously told that with a population of 35 per square mile, as compared with the 700 of

England, it is rapidly approaching its limits. Prof. East, whom I have just quoted, develops the theory of an "optimum figure of population," i.e the figure at which the largest number will be able to maintain "the good life," and comes to the conclusion that this figure for the United States is somewhere about 150 millions [1]:

> The most desirable population figure is one where distress and misery are at the ebb; where sunshine, good cheer, and happiness are at the flood. The optimum population of the United States is a population large enough for the protection of its borders and for the efficient production and distribution of the material comforts of life. It is one small enough to give every individual an opportunity to make living a real joy without a nerve-racking struggle for existence. It is one small enough to allow success to crown the efforts of preventive medicine in bringing about a lower disease-rate and a lower death-rate. It is one low enough to give every boy and girl all the education and preparation for life that they are capable of assimilating. It is one low enough that we may be able to retain our national parks and open spaces. It is one low enough to permit some leisure to cultivate science and arts. Now what is the magnitude at which these conditions can be attained?
>
> In my belief this point is where the efforts of a nation begin to show diminishing returns, the point where the labour of an increased number of hands results in a smaller amount of goods for each. Every economist agrees that such a status is reached in all spheres of life sooner or later. Nations, like individuals, have a point of highest efficiency. They go up the hill, and pass down on the other side. If we can find this point and there keep the population stationary both in quantity and quality, we shall be saved from some of the horrors other countries have had to face. To calculate this altitude on the national barometer would unquestionably be the greatest service the science of economics could render, if the conclusions of its leaders were accepted and acted upon. It is a great task, and one is hardly justified in making a mere estimate. It may not be out of place, however, to call attention to that fact that agriculture is the basic industry, the keystone of the Nation's greatness. And the era of diminish-

[1] *Heredity and Human Affairs*, pp. 276-8.

ing returns has already arrived in agriculture. The same statement holds true for forestry. One should not be surprised, therefore, if the point where the breaking-down process begins is nearer than is apparent on the surface of things, even though it be admitted that increasing returns are still visible in many lines of activity. My own private opinion, speaking as one who has studied these matters as carefully as his capacity permits, is that *the optimum population figure for the United States is not far from* 150,000,000. It is more likely to be smaller than larger. In fact, Professor L. J. Reed, our foremost population mathematician, believes that we have already passed the optimum population point, because we have reached that place on the curve where population meets more depressing factors than accelerating factors.

That is to say, the United States is to be declared full when it has reached a population of about 46 per square mile.

It is beyond the scope of this book to follow up these speculations, but I own to a complete scepticism as to their validity. Making all allowances for that part of the United States which is mountain or desert or otherwise unsuitable for human habitation, the traveller from Europe is still struck by the thinness of its population, and the apparently enormous unexploited resources which it possesses. He sees either gone out of cultivation or not brought into it vast tracks of seemingly cultivable land which, with an intensive agriculture, might support human life at a prosperous level; he is told everywhere of latent and unexploited wealth; he sees industry on a basis which presupposes the constantly increasing demand of an expanding population. It seems to him highly improbable that a vigorous and creative people will be able or would desire to keep its increase within the limits suggested by the writer just quoted, and consider itself replete when it had reached a population of 46 per square mile.

Americans may perhaps get a little help in this matter if they consider the course of speculation on it in nineteenth-

century England. There one can observe alternating panics about the failure of population and its too rapid increase. From the end of the eighteenth century up to the end of the Napoleonic wars, the fear was lest oaks should fail for the building of ships, and men for their manning. To plant trees and bring forth children were said to be the first duties of patriotic Britons, and the old Poor Law was seriously defended on the ground that the subsidy which it gave to the labourer helped him to marry early and breed quickly. But at the end of the war opinion swung to the opposite pole, and now and for the next fifty years the fear was lest Malthus should be proved right and population outgrow subsistence. But once more, when the rate of increase began to slacken, opinion turned again and both preachers and economists fell into gloomy forebodings at the supposed symptoms of declining fertility. The only thing clear in these controversies is that all the prophets on either side were wrong when they endeavoured to predict the future. Cobbett thought that he had reduced the figures of the 1821 census for England and Wales to absurdity by arguing that if they were right, the population of these countries would reach the impossible total of 29,000,000—about three millions short of the actual figure realised. W. R. Greg, writing in the 'seventies, was of opinion that population was already five or six millions in excess of what Prof. East would call the optimum, whereas for the next forty years the standard of life rose rapidly and coincidently with a rapid increase of population.

The truth is that the factors which determine an optimum figure of population are so unpredictable in modern conditions of life that most speculations as to the future are mere guesswork. The development of steam wrought havoc on all prophecies in the last century and new scientific developments and new discoveries of natural wealth may easily have

the same result in the present century. The fact that the United States closes its door on immigration by no means necessarily means that the rate of increase will decline in the coming years, or that it will be kept within the bounds of an optimum limit laid down for it at the present time. Prof. East quotes a respectable authority for the opinion that, if there had been no immigration, its population would have been actually greater than it is now, and if, as this speculation supposes, the effect of immigration has been to check the fertility of the native-born, stopping it may have the reverse effect of stimulating that fertility.

A visitor to the country cannot presume to dogmatise, but my impression is that Americans worry more than they need about their races and their population question.

CHAPTER XVI

AMERICAN JOURNALISM

§ 1

THE ENGLISH journalist in the United States is perpetually asked whether he prefers the British press to the American press, and wherein the one press differs from the other press. This tiresome and ubiquitous word "press" conjures up the idea of some abstract and typical British newspaper which can be compared with some abstract and typical American newspaper. There is no such thing in either country. All that the English journalist who is asked this question can do is to say that there are some British and American newspapers which he likes and admires, and some British and American newspapers which he does not at all like or admire.

Forty years ago the question might have been intelligible. Comparing British and American newspapers in the 'eighties and early 'nineties, one was as much aware of certain differences between them as, say, between British and French papers to-day. But in the interval the British press has borrowed so much from American practice that some American newspapers to-day are much nearer the former British type than many present-day British newspapers. Popular and widely circulated newspapers in both countries employ the same technique in the handling of news and getting of circulation. Both assume their readers to be people of lethargic disposition who need the stimulus of large print and copy-book display if their attention is to be caught. Both adopt the shop-window method of presenting the "stories" of

the day on the front page and sending their readers on a hunt for the continuance of them into the unexplored interior of the paper. Both are more and more falling into the habit of repeating the same items three times over in the same "story," first in the headline, next in the opening sentence, and finally in the body of the article. Both run the printed text in and out of illustrations so arranged as to make standardised patterns on each page. The Americans are on the whole more vivid and ingenious in their headlines,[1] but even in this respect the British competition is very even. Some of these methods are, of course, an abomination to the old-fashioned, but they are the fruits of anxious and scientific research, and are constantly tested by results which, it is claimed, prove incontestably that they reflect the taste of the public and are necessary to attract and keep a large circulation.

Not being subject to any effective law of "contempt of Court" or much in danger from the law of libel, the American press has a large free field in stories of crime from which its British contemporaries are cut off. In the United States there is no law or public opinion to restrain newspapers from canvassing every feature of a criminal trial or following a convicted murderer from the dock to the condemned cell and thence to the death chair. The last days of the murderess Ruth Snyder were followed hour by hour with a wealth of detail obtained from behind the prison walls by nearly all the American newspapers, and a New York *Tabloid* (i.e. a daily illustrated paper) actually succeeded in obtaining an apparently authentic photograph of her in the "chair." This was generally condemned, but the paper in question

[1] As a masterpiece of condensed summary I have stored up in my memory a headline which I saw in a Washington paper in 1921: OYSTER BARS JAM QUIZ. This being interpreted meant that a Congressman named Oyster was opposing an inquiry (Quiz) into an alleged mishandling of the crowd (Jam) on a recent public occasion. I was assured that an American reader would have no difficulty in understanding this.

secured an immense sale and, so far as I am aware, no proceedings were taken against it.

Many American newspaper men would greatly prefer that these activities should be curtailed by an evenly enforced rule of contempt of Court, but they are agreed, as I think English newspaper proprietors would be in similar circumstances, that, failing such a rule, they cannot afford to leave the field clear to their competitors and practise a virtue which would not be its own reward. The public may profess to be shocked, but in America, as here, it runs after the papers which give it sensation. Moreover, the practice of the newspapers in dealing with crime is part and parcel of the whole system of law and justice, and, as I have suggested in another chapter, public opinion would be slow to sanction restraint upon newspapers, unless that system could be relied upon to work automatically without the stimulus of publicity and criticism. The result is a somewhat higher level of sensationalism even in serious newspapers, than in England, but it should be added that the great majority of American newspapers, while giving full scope to descriptions of thefts, murders, crimes of violence, are very careful not to print details which offend decency.

§ II

Nothing is likely to go more astray than hasty judgments founded on the front pages of American newspapers. Few or none have the sober appearance of our *Times*, *Morning Post* or *Manchester Guardian*; nearly all think it necessary to paint up a lively façade. But turn the front page and you will discover in many of them a greater variety of serious articles than can be found in most European newspapers. If the American public is uninstructed in foreign affairs, it is certainly not the fault of the leading American news-

papers. Several of the New York papers, and not a few published in other cities, provide comments on European affairs, either cabled by correspondents abroad or written by experts on the spot, which rank with the best examples of this kind of journalism, and are continued day by day with remarkable continuity and consistency. No expense in cabling is spared by these journals, and when the subject is serious, the writers are not required to popularise or abbreviate to suit a popular taste. On certain subjects which baffle the European press, such as the economic conditions of Fascist Italy or Bolshevist Russia, enterprising American correspondents seem able to write with a fulness and freedom which are denied to their confrères in Europe. So far as the greater newspapers are concerned, nothing could be wider of the mark than the common European opinion that they are all sensationalism and triviality.

But like so much else in America, the American newspaper presents contrasts and combinations which to the English eye are in mutual conflict. A great newspaper may be both serious and sensational in the same number, serious in one part and sensational in another. On a certain day in January in 1927 in the same newspaper contained a whole page of the Malines conversations on the reunion of the Roman and Anglican Churches cabled verbatim from London, and another whole page profusely illustrated about the murderess then awaiting execution. An English journalist accustomed to think it a leading principle in the editing of newspapers that they should aim steadily at one kind of reader, asks in despair what kind of American reader can possibly desire both these items of news, or how any reader who desired the one could fail to be offended or bored by the other. The American editor apparently does not ask this question. He goes out after all sorts of readers at the same time and assumes, or hopes, that, if a reader dislikes

or is bored by one part of the paper, he will be amused or interested by another part.

This the editor can do the more easily because of the enormous size of his paper according to European standards. I once bought an evening paper in Washington which contained 118 pages, and forty or fifty pages are quite a common allowance for a daily, and twice that amount for a Saturday issue. How the newsagents and distributors can handle these enormous papers is a chronic puzzle to the English journalist. The answer is partly that the American newspaper, being confined to its own district, has generally a smaller circulation than the widely circulated popular English newspapers, and therefore presents an easier problem for distribution; and partly, I think, that the distributors and packers of American newspapers are a more docile people than those who perform similar functions in England. But in any case the vast amount of space at his disposal leaves the American editor free to cater for a greater variety of tastes than the British with his much smaller paper.

Hence unity is sacrificed to variety and the editor throws his net as wide as possible. He hopes to get—and apparently does get—both the high-brow and the popular reader for the same paper. But when unity ceases to be an aim, order and arrangement become inferior virtues, and the English reader who expects his newspaper to group its news items and give him the same things in the same place day after day searches helplessly in the jungle for the things he wants. There is no doubt a clue which the American reader possesses, but it takes a long time to pick up, and when you think you have got it, the scene shifts, and you have to start again. Two things contribute to this confusion: one the short time in which these immense newspapers have to be made up, the other the uncontrollable nature of the Ameri-

can advertiser who floods the space at all hours and expects editor and news-editor to give way to him.

Here one touches a technical matter in which the American practice appears to differ from the British. Restricted by their general circumstances to a smaller space, the prosperous English newspapers are obliged to keep the advertiser in order. With their larger numbers, they judge that it is not worth while to increase the cost of paper and printing in order to carry unlimited advertisements. There is a certain size of paper, and a certain equilibrium between news space and advertisement space which day by day yields the best profit. Their policy is, therefore, to place a limit on advertisements and increase their rates as the demand for space increases. The advertiser is told that he must wait and that insertion cannot be guaranteed before a certain date, except possibly on payment of a preferential rate. American newspapers do not seem as yet to have adopted this practice at all generally. The advertiser demands and gets immediate insertion, and the paper is expanded to meet his needs. This greatly increases the size of papers and prevents that orderly delimitation of the boundary between news and advertisements which enables editors and newspapers to lay their plans for a given space.

The English journalist is more surprised that his American confrères do so well in the circumstances than that there are, according to his standards, lapses from orderly arrangement. But necessarily in the circumstances display and emphasis become more important. If the reader is not sure of finding what he wants, say, on page 10, he must be helped by conspicuous headlines to find it as he casts his eye along the other forty pages. The front page must contain the substance of all the principal news of the day, so "splashed" and condensed that it can be taken in at a glance. Then if the reader chooses to pursue the matter into the interior he

is given a clue which he may follow up if he likes. Very often he does not choose. Again and again I have watched the readers of newspapers in the Subways and seen them read to the bottom of a column on the front page, where a certain item breaks off, possibly in the middle of a sentence, and then, instead of pursuing the thing into the interior, turn back and start another front page item and follow it till it similarly goes underground. And sometimes I have wondered whether it would make any difference to most of these readers if the things just ended there, and editors and news editors saved themselves the trouble of pursuing it beyond the point at which the bottom of the page brought it to its abrupt conclusion.

This is not an idiosyncrasy of the American reader only. The thought of what happens to serious and careful articles in the unexplored interiors of newspapers is for all journalists, British or American, a rather gloomy speculation, but it comes to one specially in America, where so much able and careful writing is buried in vast newspapers which do everything possible to save their readers from the mental effort of reading it. The mere size defeats the would-be student of newspapers. I can in London take the principal morning newspapers and discover in a reasonable space of time what each contains, and reserve for careful reading their more important articles, but if in New York I try to follow intelligently as I ought, the principal morning and evening newspapers, which include some of the best in the world, I find myself defeated by the mere quantity and have often ashamedly to confess that I have not seen articles which were of undoubted importance. An American newspaper proprietor told me that he had to keep a secretary to read his paper.

§ III

So far I have been speaking of newspapers mainly as producers of news, but what of their influence on opinion? To speak confidently on that subject would need long residence in the country, and I can only venture certain impressions founded on a comparison of British and American conditions.

It is brought home to one in America how much in England the influencing of opinion depends on the alignment of newspapers with political parties. English newspapers are often reproached with being "party hacks," and those that are the obedient mouthpieces of party deserve the rebuke. But to have a definite party affiliation is an enormous advantage in a newspaper's approach to the public. It marks it as standing for a certain body of doctrine, gives focus and objective to those who are writing for it on political subjects and prevents it from yielding to the fads and fancies of individual writers. The affiliation no doubt discounts its opinions when it is supporting its party, but it also gives them weight and point when, as must happen, if it has any spirit at all, it is opposing or criticising its party. But, if parties and newspapers are to play into each other's hands in this way, parties must have definite policies and doctrines which are well understood by the public, and are the subject of frequent discussion in Parliament and on the platform.

This condition scarcely exists in the United States. The two chief parties have traditional and historical boundaries, but they have no policies or programmes which divide American citizens as English are divided between Conservative, Liberal and Labour, or which appeal to the natural differences of disposition and temperament. Differences in

what we call political principle no doubt exist in America and may some day declare themselves to the confusion of parties, but they find little or no expression in the platforms of political parties. Such as they are, these are generally improvised on the eve of a Presidential election with the idea of keeping a correct balance and alienating as few voters as possible on contentious subjects. Affiliation to a party, therefore, offers no guiding line or only a very thin and wavering one to an American daily newspaper. That cannot hammer away, as an English newspaper might, with the object of getting a particular reform adopted by its party and so passed into legislation ; it can only express an individual view, which however useful and important, has not behind it the driving power of a political organisation, which may presently give it the force of law. Though it may sound odd to say so, this makes newspaper comment on politics much more academic in America than it is in England. The reader may find it interesting and suggestive, but he does not think of it as presaging action which may affect him personally.

Moreover, in a Federal State, the field of political action for the country as a whole is very much narrowed. A large number of the subjects which enter into what we call social policy are State questions and not Federal questions. The newspaper which is interested in these must appeal to its own State and not to the country as a whole. Some do that with great effect, and when a powerful man like Governor Al Smith is at work on reforms in his State, newspaper backing is of real importance ; but the general apathy about State politics does not make them a lively subject for newspapers. On the other hand, when it comes to Federal politics the vast distances make it impossible for any newspaper to reach the whole country, as the London papers do in England. New York is a very important centre, but the newspapers which appeal to it or to the district within its

range, cannot have the same sense as a Metropolitan press has in smaller countries of appealing to the public at large, and being able to influence it on a given line of action.

The result is that political journalism in the United States is less continuous and organised and more scattered and isolated than in Great Britain. In a Presidential year the newspapers with party affiliations generally rally to the party candidate, but ordinarily they do not give the impression of working together on any line which can be definitely thought of as the line of next advance, if or when their party comes into power. In a country where parties follow rather than lead opinion, newspapers inevitably tend to do the same. Moreover, in the newspapers, as in Congress, the fixed term of the Administration induces the feeling that serious events can only happen once in four years, and that for three years out of the four politics are mainly marking time. American politics have been described with some truth as coma alternating with fits, three years of coma and one year of fits. The unexpected events and suddenly arising crises affecting the existence of governments, which in Great Britain give the newspapers their opportunity and keep the public on the tiptoe of excitement, have no counterpart in the United States, which is always assured that, whatever happens among the politicians, the Administration is safe till its term runs out.

These conditions take the sting out of politics as a subject for editorial writing, but they are favourable to influential individuals who write under their own names and have a wide field for discursive writing untrammelled by party attachments. Men like Mr. Mencken and Mr. Frank Simonds keep up a stream of vigorous critical journalism covering all phases of life and politics which have a real and salutary influence upon public opinion. The daily communications of Mr. Will Rogers, with their flashes of humour

and common sense playing on the daily doings of his fellow beings, are another characteristic and happy American invention about which one only wonders how it can be kept up. The American press abounds in these individual features which indicate that some of the best and liveliest brains in the country are at work on it, but the geographical conditions and the lack of team-work which belongs to party politics, as practised in other countries, makes it difficult or impossible for the press as a whole to play the concerted part that it still plays in Great Britain.

CHAPTER XVII

AMERICAN JOURNALISM—(*continued*)

§ 1

IN AMERICA, AS in England, complaints about the commercialising of the press are loud and deep. America, indeed, was the first in the field in this business, and long before the name of Northcliffe was known, Pulitzer and Hearst were working their will upon the high-brow press with their daring appeals to the masses. But in both countries the press movement has run the same course, which may be briefly summarised as a popularising of the press, and for that purpose the provision of a new and costly equipment which could only be financed by the big circulation and the wide appeal. Advertisement and more advertisement was now the key to the situation and that could only be secured by attracting the largest number of readers.

Syndicating and amalgamating followed in the course of nature. The journal of opinion, the newspaper appealing to a small and select number of readers, giving what they wanted but what the multitude thought dreariness and boredom, had no footing in this world of enterprise and vast expenditure. Even the well-established serious organs with moderate circulations found themselves threatened by the flaming headlines and splashing display of their "yellow" competitors, just as the latter in their turn are threatened by the still yellower proceedings of the *Tabloids*. In this industry, as others, it soon became evident that mass production was the way of salvation, and instead of a large number of moderately circulated newspapers giving employment to

large numbers of journalists and expressing a great variety of opinion, the field is now held by a relatively small number of big circulations. Hence the standardising of opinion in a few types and the fining down of the profession to the point at which the fewest number of journalists cater for the largest number of readers.

Controversy on this subject follows the same course in America as in England, the advocates of the one school maintaining that the public gets better, bigger and more entertaining newspapers, and the advocates of the other that opinion and serious influence are lost in the modern commercialised newspaper industry. Now and again, as I visited the palatial establishments from which the great American newspapers are issued, my thoughts went back to the dirty little office in Northumberland Street, Strand, from which Greenwood, Morley and Stead pontificated to a former generation of the English, and the contrast between the two seemed to be the measure of the distance which modern journalism has travelled. But in America the individual independent newspaper has the great advantage, denied to it in Great Britain, of not being invaded on its own territory by a metropolitan press. Delivery by air may change this, but up till now the great New York dailies, however early they publish, are not able to push their circulations beyond the three or four hundred mile limit within which they can appear on the breakfast table. Beyond this the field is left clear to the local newspapers.

So the number of journalists employed is larger in relation to the population and there are more independent newspapers with a vigorous local life and character in America, than in Great Britain. Where no newspaper can obtain a larger circulation than half a million, there must be more newspapers, and more newspaper staffs to the population, than in a country where anything up to two millions can be

attained by the enterprising. In America the local newspapers have to meet only one invasion from without, that of the Syndicate or "chain papers," mainly Hearst and Scripps-Howard, which, though linked up in one organisation and containing a great many common features, have to localise themselves and be published separately in the different centres, in order to gain a footing. These flame across the continent and keep a multitude gaping at their sensational audacities, but the independent local newspaper generally succeeds in holding its own against them, and has, I should say, a far greater and more enduring influence. This is not to deny that in moments of excitement the syndicated press may be a formidable engine of mass suggestion, but the steady chronic influence remains with the staider type. The different cities and centres are proud of their own newspapers, and many of these are of the quiet and serious type which the Englishman recognises as characteristic of the best kind of British provincial journalism.

§ II

The journalist in America gives one the impression of being more carefully trained to a standardised technique than his brother in England. The writer of "stories" writes them to a particular pattern, which has been carefully studied and tested by its results on the reader, and which is taught in the schools of journalism. Generally he projects the point of supposed greatest interest into the first sentence and proceeds—very often backwards—from that. The interviewer, again, is trained to his job, and, if he seems to be an artless and random young man, that, too, is part of his business. He has different ways with different kinds of quarry, and his approaches to each are carefully studied.

As soon as I landed in New York in 1927, I was asked by an interviewer if I could say why there were " no outstanding men in the United States." I was fortunately on my guard and perceived that, if I dallied with this question for one moment, I should almost certainly be reported as having said (or agreed) that there were no outstanding men in America—which would scarcely have been an auspicious way of introducing myself to my American hosts. Caveat interviewee, and in these little ways he must back his wits against those of his questioner. But the current European idea that the American interviewer is out to make trouble for his subjects is, very seldom, if ever, the truth. He may now and again have his revenge on high and mighty beings who consider themselves too good for the press, but those who do not walk on these stilts will generally find him genial and agreeable and anxious only to serve his paper without giving offence. In a considerable experience I have never had to complain of my confidence being betrayed by American interviewers, or of anything being printed which I asked them to withhold, and I have often had to thank them for the skilful dressing up of quite crude ideas communicated on the spur of the moment. What the visitor to the country has to realise is that interviewing is a universal habit, and that it is part of the courtesy expected of him that he should lend himself to it affably and co-operate, so far as he can, in making the result useful and agreeable. Good manners may properly be exacted from the press, but good manners towards it are equally to be desired, and in America it is a part of good manners to be courteous and helpful to the interviewer.

The American reporter seldom or never writes shorthand, at all events at the speed which would enable him to take down a public speech verbatim. The corps of reporters which an English newspaper puts into the field on the

bigger public occasions has almost no existence in America. If a speaker wishes to be reported, he generally sends his own report to the press and not seldom forgets to deliver a considerable part of what he has written out for the newspapers. Nobody seems to mind about this; it is apparently an accepted convention that a man should say what he likes to his audience so long as he has sent what he thinks important to the newspapers. Apart from this, reporting is done in a brief and vivacious style by journalists who take notes and work them up into a "story." It is the pride of the American journalist that he is not a literal transmitter of dusty fact, but a painter of scenes and pictures to which he gives his own colour and design. Local news is reported at far greater length in American than in English papers, and the slightest excuse for printing the names of inconspicuous people appears to be taken advantage of.

Whether in America or in England, it is useless to take a popular newspaper and complain that it is not a solemn organ of opinion. It no more professes to be that than a musical comedy professes to be grand opera. It is avowedly seeking to entertain and divert a multitude of people who would have no more use for it if they supposed it to be an exponent of what is called opinion. In December, 1927, the American *Mercury* published a table of instructions issued for the benefit of its staff by one of the most enterprising of the popular newspapers, and it is worth reproducing, if only to show what thought and pains are bestowed on their work by the practitioners of this kind of journalism:

The "——" should be full of bright, snappy, interesting local stories.

We have a natural tendency to place emphasis on matters which are ponderous, dull and uninteresting. We must resist this tendency.

We must consider that the COMPOSITE newspaper reader does not care a hang about tax rates, budgets, insurance, disarma-

ment, naval appropriations, public utilities policies, municipal improvements, or scores of other subjects which may appear to be important.

Newspaper readers are most interested in stories which contain the elements most dominant in the primitive emotions of themselves, namely:

1. Self-preservation.
2. Love, or Reproduction.
3. Ambition.

Stories containing one of these elements are good; those which contain two of the elements are better; those which contain all three elements form first-class newspaper material.

Self-preservation. Under this heading come stories of murder, suicide, rescues, accidents, fights, facts as to health, food, liquor, etc.

Love, or Reproduction. This element is contained in stories of marriage, scandal, divorce, human triangles, romances, unusual acts done with love motive, jealousy, sex attraction, etc.

Ambition. The ambition element is aroused, also, by the mystery factor in a story. Mystery forms a challenge to the intelligence, and it thus stimulates the reader to buy further editions to note whether his solution, perhaps unconsciously made, is verified.

For example: The X.Y. story contained all three major-interest elements. The killings provided the self-preservation element. The intimacy of Mr. Y. with Mrs. X. introduced the love element. The mystery of who did the killings, why and how, challenged the intelligence and fired the reader's ambition to solve the problem.

Let us write our stories for the composite reader.

Let us minimise stories which do not carry the major-interest elements. Let us disregard, or cover perfunctorily, subjects which are merely important, but not interesting.

Let the same principles apply to the headline writing, selection and editing of telegraph news and departmental features.

A bonus of $5 will be paid for the best written local story each week, until further notice. The city editor will be the judge.

A bonus of $5 will be paid the copy desk for the best headline of the week. This will be awarded by a vote of the copy editors, the head of the desk to cast two votes if necessary to break a tie.

The difficulty about this kind of journalism is that truth so often fails to act up to its reputation of being stranger than fiction. A locality must be very fortunate which day by day or week by week provides the elements of love, ambition and self-preservation desiderated by an enterprising newspaper, and when they fail, the journalist is hard put to it to make good the deficiency. The curious air of unreality which hangs over the American yellow press is, I think, due to this unceasing struggle to make the truth equal to the supposed demands of the reader. It lives in a melodramatic world of its own invention, and to discover the "real America" behind its fabulous presentment of it, is one of the chronic difficulties of the visitor to the country.

§ III

In an address to a gathering of 790 business men in Boston in October, 1927, Col. Robert R. McCormick, the editor of the Chicago *Tribune*, set out with great frankness what he considered to be the ethics of newspaper proprietorship. Disclaiming altogether the notion that the newspaper was "the guardian of the public mind," he laid down emphatically that it was a "daily publication conducted for profit," a "public organisation conducted to make money." In the course of a lively speech in which he aligned himself as a business man with other business men, he made sundry observations which are of great interest to journalists and newspaper readers:

> The explosive property of the printing press seems to have developed on the newspaper. . . . It has certain cataclysmic qualities that are beyond its managers to control and beyond its readers to understand.
>
> Individually most people rail at the newspapers of to-day. Collectively they will not tolerate any other kind. We must

know how to accommodate ourselves to our environment or disappear as did the Dodo bird.

To the charge that newspapers were inexact he would say "amen," for accuracy is difficult and rare of attainment. Their honesty he would express in the ration of 11 out of 12, and to claim a higher ratio would seem presumptuous.

Editorial policies vary widely and to some extent follow the public opinion in which they circulate. Editorials are the product of organisation rather than the work of an individual. The greatest function of a newspaper comes from "a function not mentioned in the constitution and without which the constitution could not continue the function." This, he said, is the exposure and denunciation of corruption in government. "Fortunately," he added, "corruption is important news."

In conclusion he said, "I am now led to give a final definition of the newspaper: The newspaper is an institution developed by modern civilisation to extend knowledge by publication of the news of the day, to encourage industry by the wide distribution of advertising, and to place that check upon government that no constitution has ever been able to provide."

I was asked many times, when I was in America, what I thought of this speech, and I replied that an editor or proprietor who sincerely held these views could only be commended for stating them thus candidly. For though the public may be disturbed to learn that the managers of newspapers are conducting for profit something which is liable to develop "cataclysmic qualities" that are beyond their control, the least damage is likely to be done, if the fact is widely known. And again, if editorial policies are the product of something called "organisation," and if they follow the public opinion in which they circulate, this also should be widely known. For otherwise the reader might be misled by their seeming claim to be disinterested and independent guides of opinion—a claim which, if it is well founded, must have behind it the responsibility of an individual or group of individuals, and must have some other motive than the making of profits. The danger lies in retaining the form

after the reality has gone out of it. Provided the conditions are thoroughly understood, there may be entertainment and profit for readers, as well as for proprietors, in the daily efforts of shrewd business men to "follow the opinion in which they circulate," or to produce something which is the "product of their organisation," but the proviso is necessary, or the public may measure these efforts by an entirely different standard from that which their producers intend to be applied to them. The American editor seems to me in this respect to offer a good example to others who act on his principles, but are less candid in acknowledging them.

The editor is reported in the same speech to have made the rather mysterious remark that "in England, if the ordinary newspaper men attended such a gathering as one he was addressing, they would not be served luncheon." This means, I suppose, that the English newspaper men would not be recognised as real "business men" or admitted to the comity of business at a business luncheon in England, as they are at a business luncheon in Boston. I own I have not observed in England any such reluctance on the part of business men to "serve luncheon" to newspaper men, or any disposition on the part of the latter to accept the position of lunch-less spectators. The American editor seems to be misinformed on this point. But he raises the very interesting question of how far in either country the professional journalist wishes to be or can be absorbed into the fraternity of commerce, or whether, as the American editor seems to think, he would gain in status and prestige, if he were so absorbed. An English newspaper proprietor of the modern type said a good many years ago that he had found journalism a profession and left it a branch of commerce, but that has scarcely been held to dispose of the matter in England, and I greatly doubt whether the American editor's generalisation disposes of it in America.

For, when all has been said, journalists are still human beings, and when you put a pen into the hands of a human being, and set him to the daily task of recording and commenting on the lives of his fellow beings, humanity will break in. However desirable from the commercial point of view may be the idea of turning out daily the "product of organisation" and calling it "opinion," or of following faithfully the opinion of the largest numbers of advertisers and subscribers, it is in fact not realisable. The newspaper press in America employs a large number of able, gifted and zealous men who are as sincerely interested in the welfare of their country as their fellows in England, and they cannot be subdued to these mechanical processes or induced to think of their task as merely the making of profit for their employers. The psychology of the writer puts a limit to this process. An editor who knows his business must become aware that he cannot get the best out of his writers, unless he is prepared to give them freedom to express themselves and their individuality in the way that is natural to honest men pursuing a serious profession. He may mechanise his editorials in the manner suggested, but in proportion as he does so, they will surely cease to interest the reader, and then to keep his paper alive and powerful, he will have to open a wide door to the individual writers in other parts of his paper. I have been told many times in America that the editorial opinions of a considerable part of the press count for nothing, but that the opinions of individual writers in the same paper have great influence. I cannot profess to judge about this, but if it were true, it would be a natural result of the mechanisation of the press in the sphere of opinion. Opinion is a live and human thing which, if it is not free and disinterested, becomes an imposture which is quickly found out.

§ IV

In America, as in England, these questions of journalistic ethics are in process of working themselves out to conclusions which no one can foresee. There, as here, one is conscious of a veiled conflict between the writers for the press and the commercial masters of the press. I have visited numerous journalistic schools attached to universities in different parts of America and found young men and young women asking exactly the same questions as are asked by their English contemporaries—is it worth while, will there be any place for us if the process of commercialising and amalgamating goes on, shall we ever be able to call our souls our own, or reach any position of freedom and responsibility? In many of the newspaper offices, the unrest and the sense of uncertainty and insecurity are at least as great as in London to-day, and with newspapers on all seven days, the driving is harder and the intervals for repose are shorter and less certain than in England. It is a hard life subject to an incessant speeding-up and demand for results and efficiency which are a strain on all but the strongest. I came away with a great respect and sympathy for the American newspaper man, and a much greater disposition to make allowances for whatever failings or shortcomings may be attributed to him. Taking the country as a whole he is producing a great quantity of vivid and original work, which it is folly to disparage because it is presented in unfamiliar forms, and in proportion as he wins his freedom, or his employers are wise enough to give it to him, he will defeat the mechanisers of the press and save them in spite of themselves.

But the proprietors of newspapers also are God's creatures, and they too have their anxieties and difficulties. Large profits are undoubtedly made by some, but a slight

ebbing of the tide of circulation or advertisement may wipe these out and inflict correspondingly heavy losses. No other industry is faced to the same degree with a problem of turning out day by day a miscellaneous product to suit a perpetually shifting public taste. Other industries have a few "lines" which may have to be varied over weeks or months; the newspaper has a hundred "lines" which have to be watched and regulated day by day. Undoubtedly the newspapers are faced with the dilemma which the American editor indicated when he said they must either conform to their environment or disappear, as did the Dodo bird. But "conforming to the environment" is an anxious and difficult business in which desperate mistakes are liable to be made; and when new-comers, bringing big money from other fields, are for ever plumbing deeper depths in the collective mind of the "composite reader," it is small wonder if proprietors conclude that they may as well go out of business as listen to the fastidious and high-browed. The condition is not singular to America, but in a country in which there is no effective law of libel and "contempt of Court" has no terrors, and the general level of sensationalism is higher, the problem of keeping within the limits of what refined people call taste is certainly more difficult.

In general the American newspaper proprietor prides himself on giving the public a far better commodity than his predecessors of former times, and answers his critics by saying that this is rendered possible by the commercialism which they condemn. No newspaper, he will tell you, could afford to give what the modern press now gives daily to its readers if its eyes were not firmly glued to its circulation and advertisement departments. True the journalism of opinion is a thing of the past, but in its place is an instructed public which, with the aid of the information supplied by the newspapers, is able to form its own opinions. This, it is

said, is a more democratic, a more truly American condition than the instruction of their fellows by a small number of opinionated journalists. Yet in this camp, too, human nature breaks in upon all theories. Very few proprietors are capable of owning great newspapers and not wishing to use them in some way which cuts across the commercial scheme of things. One has his favourite stunts, another spreads his slogans all over the country; some have political ambitions or political antipathies which defeat the cool judgment of profit and loss. The merchant of soap or oil can sell his wares and not bother himself about the mental or moral effect that they may have on his customers; the merchant of news, let alone opinion, finds himself in a world of personal relationships and excitable emotions upon which, whether he wishes or not, he is playing all the time. He cannot escape the judgment of his fellows upon the results which his operations may have upon the mind and taste of his countrymen, or, if he is a man of normal feeling, divest himself of his responsibility by pleading that he is a mere man of business. If he did, he would run a serious risk that his trade would one day be labelled a dangerous one which would need regulating for the public safety. The conclusion of the matter seems to be that whether in England or America no newspaper owner can or does act up to the theory that journalism is a mere branch of commerce. Even the least responsible are bound to acknowledge some boundary which delimits their trade from other trades. But in both countries alike, the journalism of commerce and the journalism of opinion is in a state of shifting and uneasy compromise which is certainly not the final solution. On the whole I should say that in America the limits of competitive sensationalism have been reached and that the tendency is towards a more serious kind of journalism, in which the journalism of opinion will get back a little of its own.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

§ 1

AMERICAN YEAR BOOKS are apt to leave an Englishman dazed and shattered with the immensity of the statistics with which they commemorate the wealth and progress of the country, and there are no pages in them that are more calculated to have this effect than those which record the number, size and endowments of the Universities. The Englishman is hard put to it to bring the total of the Universities of Great Britain and Ireland up to a score, and to do that he must include some whose claims are quite modest, if technically undisputed. But on the American list there are a score with endowments of over ten million dollars, and no less than two hundred with an endowment of a million dollars and upwards. Harvard is credited with 82 million dollars, Columbia with 62, Yale with 49, Chicago with 38, Stanford, California, with 28, Johns Hopkins with 24, Duke in North Carolina with 27. The smaller institutions, many of them enjoying the title of university and comfortably endowed, fill seven pages in the Annual I am consulting, and there are 180 on each page.

Between them these institutions cover every stage and phase of education and to generalise about them would be folly. But they constitute one of the great facts of the modern American life; their numbers, the wealth which is poured out on them, and the armies of lads and girls who are flocking to them point to a mental and intellectual ferment which must be without parallel in all the world. Since

my Year Book does not add up its figures, and patience fails me to do the sum myself, I will take the grand totals from Mr. John Benn, who has written a charming little book about his year as a student at Princeton.[1] He puts the number of students "enrolled in the Universities, professional schools, and similar institutions" as 726,000. More than 500,000 of these are members of Universities and Colleges proper, of which there are no less than 644. 'It is computed that there are four times as many students to the population in the United States as in Great Britain. In Iowa alone there are as many university institutions as in England, though the population of this State is only 2,000,000 and the largest of these have more students than either Oxford or Cambridge. In some States the age of compulsory education in the schools has been raised to sixteen and public money is being poured out to enable the largest number of boys and girls to go on to Colleges and Universities.

I am not entitled to speak in any detail about education in the United States, but I have visited and lectured in about a score of these Universities, including both the largest and oldest, and the newest and smallest, and I cannot refrain from setting down a few impressions. An Englishman, if he is a graduate of either Oxford or Cambridge, can never quite get out of his head that these are the typical exemplary seats of learning, and in the older and more famous American Universities he finds not a little to encourage him in that conceit. With all the differences that the absence of the College system brings with it, he cannot be in Harvard or Yale or Princeton without feeling that they draw from the same source as his own alma mater. They are ancient, as age is counted in America,—Harvard dates back to 1636, and is a sort of colony from Emmanuel College, Cambridge; Yale was founded in 1700; Princeton in 1756. These three have

[1] *Columbus—Undergraduate*, by John Benn.

a core of old buildings and their modern buildings are splendid and lavish, beyond any that have recently been erected in Europe. For the graceful and ingenious use of academic Gothic by modern architects Yale and Princeton are unsurpassed; and the Harkness buildings in the former take one's breath with the audacity with which they have preserved the Oxford style while enormously enlarging its scale. Mr. Rogers, the gifted architect, shows himself in this respect a typical American. Princeton has the advantage over its sisters of being first and last a university town, whereas the other two of the "big three" are in the heart of great towns or populous areas.

But these old Universities are also very modern, and one feels in them the all-pervading something called organisation as one does not feel it in Oxford or Cambridge. Having no separate Colleges they are visibly under one control, with Presidents, who are able and efficient business men, as well as academically distinguished, and who devote their whole time to the affairs of the University as a whole, and keep it in touch with the world of business and affairs outside. The enormous success with which the American universities have collected money is due not a little to the activities of these Presidents, and they are a guarantee to the men of wealth that the money they give will be spent wisely. The unitary principle is applied throughout. One sees these Universities lit, warmed, and provided with hot water from a central plant, their catering undertaken on the great scale, instead of by separate stewards and cooks in different colleges. The undergraduates are organised in platoons according to their years, and their teaching provided by the faculties on the same scale. Yet some of the features of undergraduate life, as we understand it, are preserved in the "dormitories" and "fraternities," and there are no more charming college rooms than the little suites with two bedrooms and bath-

room to one sitting-room, which are provided in the newer buildings.

Mr. Benn's little book to which I have already referred, being based on a fresh and youthful experience of a year at Princeton followed by two years at Cambridge, furnishes excellent material for a comparison of the British and American systems from the undergraduate's point of view, and I would strongly advise the more mature students of university institutions to consult it. Briefly his witness is that the highly organised American University provides best for the ordinary man who needs to be guided continually if he is to work, while the English system does best for the naturally studious. The American lectures covering definite courses, with prescribed reading and frequent examination to test the results, compel the average to keep at work as the much looser English system does not, but the great majority of American students miss the influence of the college tutor which, for the studious and scholarly, is the greatest thing in university life, and the most delightful to look back upon.

§ 11

But none of these forms are final, and certain of the American Universities are, I was told, making serious efforts to supplement their own more mechanical system with the personal touch of the English college tutor. In the meantime, I should say from my own small experience that the English Universities have a good deal to learn from the American in the art of lecturing. I have attended several lectures as a listener in different Universities and was in each case greatly struck by the skill and accomplishment of the lecturer. The classes were, to the English eye, inordinately big, but the lecturers held their attention and kept them alive

by firing questions up and down the line. My watching on these occasions was partly to instruct myself in the task which awaited me in different parts of the country of addressing university audiences, and I learnt at once that, if I was to do any good, I must abandon all dependence on written manuscript or even notes, and forget most of the arts and graces that would be thought appropriate to an academic audience in Oxford or Cambridge. But the art to be acquired in place of these things was, as I soon perceived, a very difficult and subtle one, and my few attempts at it taught me a very real respect for the accomplished lecturers of the American Universities.

All the Universities, old and new, have a severe struggle to preserve a place for the " humanities " and those higher studies, theoretical and philosophical, of the utility of which it is so difficult to persuade the practical man. When I was in Boston the newspapers were full of complaints from business men that the Universities and schools of New England were devoting an inordinate quantity of their time to " useless " subjects instead of turning out young men properly equipped for the battle of life in the local industries, especially cotton-spinning. America is not singular in this, but its Universities, and especially the newer ones, feel the impact of this onslaught from the " practical " men the more severely since learning for its own sake has not yet won the respect that it enjoys by tradition in old countries. The wealthy men of America have for the most part made their own fortunes without the aid of what is called " book-learning," and in endowing Universities they think first of how to help young men to get on in life, which means to obtain a vocational training in the businesses which they are likely to follow.

The English academic, who has been brought up on Newman's " Idea of a University," feels a certain dreariness

of spirit, as Matthew Arnold used to say, when he sees the great University of Harvard launching out into immense and imposing Business faculty. And he laughs sarcastically when he learns that certain American Universities of the modern type give degrees or diplomas in horticulture, domestic science, salesmanship, drug-store management, etc. The Englishman, nevertheless, is wrong. This is the natural way in which a new and developing country breaks into education. In such a country the higher education will remain in the air—the privilege of a few favourites of fortune—if it is jealously guarded as the region of a few select studies. A new American University regards it as its first task to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in. In this initial stage its feast must be spread to tempt the appetite; and it follows the universal habit in this business country of discovering what the public wants and giving it without stint or shame. Very unlike Oxford or Cambridge, no doubt, but it is absurd to compare this breaking of ground in a new country with the traditional life of those ancient institutions. Even they are finding that they have to compromise with new ways, and the new country inevitably starts with them.

Anyhow the young people are coming in, as nowhere else in the world, and making a movement, which, as one sees it in the aggregate and traces its gathering impetus as one goes west, is very nearly the most impressive thing on this continent. I have spoken in an earlier chapter of the boys "working through College," but a little more on that subject may be added here. The Scottish student who works in the vacation in order to support himself in term time has long been familiar, and there are no doubt many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of students who are doing the same in the newer English Universities. But these American boys work for four hours a day in term time to pay for four

hours' tuition in the other part of the day. It became one of the pleasures of travel to discover them working on the elevators in the hotels, in the railway station as porters, in the newspaper offices as reporters or even distributing papers from house to house in the early mornings. They have the delightful American habit of telling you everything for the asking, and talks with them gave me ideas of the new American Universities which altogether quenched any disposition to scoff at their methods.

I was told in the west that from 60 to 70 per cent. of the students were earning the greater part, if not the whole, of their expenses in this way, but even at Harvard and Princeton and Yale a considerable proportion are doing the same. All the waiting in the Princeton dining halls is done by students who, Mr. Benn tells us, are able to earn their entire board by serving a certain number of tables a week, and a good bonus besides for any above this minimum. The cooking and washing-up are done by negroes and other outsiders, but the whole management and service is composed of students, and those who take on this work do not suffer in social status by doing so. "It is the most usual thing," says Mr. Benn, "to find oneself at table with one's best friend as waiter and naturally to have a lively conversation with him. Everyone, in fact, may work for his living without prejudice."

Here onte more one sees the American spirit of equality working to admirable results. I wish it could confidently be said that lads working in this way would not lose caste with their fellow-undergraduates in our older universities. In America the opening of this door and the arrangement of University time-tables to meet the case of those who enter by it, goes far to solve the problem of providing equal opportunities for all classes, and keeps the colleges and universities refreshed with a stream of young people who

prove the seriousness of their intention by their willingness to undertake this toil. There are smart sets in the older universities, and in most the "young barbarians" may be seen at play; but the general impression one bears away, after looking at all kinds and types, is that of eager, strenuous youth, passionately demanding to be taught and evidently believing that to get knowledge is the key to a happy and prosperous life. Such conviction on such a scale exists nowhere else in the world, except possibly in Germany, and the mere fact of its being there is its own tribute to the spirit of American youth.

§ III

How is this multitude being taught? Americans themselves are as critical on this subject as on most other aspects of their way of life. I have read scores of articles in American newspapers and magazines ridiculing the "education mania" and denouncing the new universities in terms which could scarcely be bettered by the stiffest of English academics. My own impression is that the teaching is a good deal better than might be inferred from the appearance which some of these universities present and the rather pretentious claims which they make in their competition with each other. A teacher must be very dull indeed, if he is not in some measure kindled by the opportunity offered to him in these universities, and if he does not find some means of escape from the purely utilitarian task which is too often imposed on him. I have been told in talks with teachers that even in the crudest of Colleges and Universities there grows up a kind of collective demand for something more satisfying than the purely vocational course and that it has somehow to be met, if students are to be attracted. That, I think, affords ground for hoping that there will gradually be

a reaction from the purely utilitarian objects which so many of these institutions profess. The American student has more than his share of the insatiable curiosity of his race, and it will not suffice him to be turned out as a unit from factories for the mass production of chemists, engineers, journalists, business men, lawyers, agriculturists and so forth.

But it is idle to pretend that teachers in America are as yet equal to the opportunity which the amazing multiplication of students offers them. Perhaps they are nowhere, but in America the problem is forced on one's notice by the immense and rapid growth of the student bodies. I found an almost unanimous opinion among those who think on this subject that the status of the teacher is not such as it should and must be, if the country is to take advantage of this rush to the Universities. Efforts have been made in recent years to increase the emoluments of teachers, but they are still in most parts of the country on a far lower scale than they should be in relation to the cost of living and the earnings of business and professional men. In an earlier chapter I quoted a Professor as saying that America was "a land of over-endowed Universities and underpaid teachers." This is a way of speaking which need not be taken too literally, but it is true, I think, that the American pious founder is too much inclined to look for bricks and mortar and concrete equipment as evidence of his benefaction, and too little convinced of the invisible, and literally inestimable, value of good and sufficiently endowed teaching. I go beyond my province in expressing opinions on this subject, but my excuse must be the overwhelming impression which the youth of America has left in my memory and the conviction that it deserves the very best that its country can give it.

Let me add a postscript in case I should be told that I am blind to the other side. Of course you do not get this fer-

ment all over a continent and extending to an immense number of lads and girls who are being educated side by side, without getting its other side—emotional and sexual excitement, a general breaking loose from the tradition of the elders, a certain amount of disorder and wreckage. The American lad who comes to the University has not behind him the tradition of the English public school, and very often he comes from a home in which there is, in our sense of the word, very little of the home-life. He—and the same is true of the girl—must find his own way and break his own ground in a manner quite different from that of the average English boy and girl. Very often he is in revolt from all the old American things—the Puritan tradition, the Fundamentalist religion, the conventional party politics,—and most of the bridges which conduct from the old to the new have yet to be built for him. In the meantime he shares to the full the energy, the tendency to excess and exaggeration, the impatience of law and restraint which characterises all ages in this country. But together with it go a fine independence of spirit, and a determination to be his own master and to make his own way in the world. This is youth in the new country, extraordinarily impressionable, full of possibilities, good and bad, believing little, hoping all things. Sometimes one wishes that the gifted American writers could turn away a little from their incessant and searching criticism of their middle-aged countrymen and devote themselves to this expectant audience.

Part III

AMERICAN POLICY AND BRITISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS

CHAPTER XIX

THE BACKGROUND

§ 1

IN THE YEAR 1793, Alexander Hamilton came to the defence of Washington's policy of neutrality against the advocates of an alliance with France in a series of letters, one of which contained a notable definition of the limits of sentiment in foreign policy :

Between individuals, occasion is not infrequently given for the exercise of gratitude. Instances of conferring benefits from kind and benevolent disposition or feelings towards the person benefited, without any other interest on the part of the person who renders the service than the pleasure of doing a good action, occur every day among individuals. But among nations they perhaps never occur. It may be affirmed as a general principle, that the predominant motive of good offices from one nation to another is the interest or advantage of the nation which performs them.

Indeed, the rule of morality in this respect is not precisely the same between nations, as between individuals. The duty of making its own welfare the guide of its actions, is much stronger upon the former than upon the latter ; in proportion to the greater magnitude and importance of national, compared with individual, happiness, and to the greater permanency of the effects of national than of individual conduct. Existing millions, and for the most part future generations, are concerned in the present measure of a government ; while the consequences of the private actions of an individual ordinarily terminate with himself, or are circumscribed within a narrow compass :

Whence it follows, that an individual may, on numerous occasions, meritoriously indulge the emotions of generosity and benevolence, not only with an eye to, but even at the expense of, his own interest. But a government can rarely, if at all, be justi-

fiable in pursuing a similar course; and, if it does so, ought to confine itself within much stricter bounds. Good offices which are indifferent to the interest of a nation performing them, or which are compensated by the existence or expectation of some reasonable equivalent, or which produce an essential good to the nation to which they are rendered, without real detriment to the affairs of the benefactors, prescribe perhaps the limits of national generosity or benevolence.

It is not here meant to recommend a policy absolutely selfish or interested in nations; but to show that a policy regulated by their own interest, as far as justice and good faith permit, is, and ought to be, their prevailing one: and that either to ascribe to them a different principle of action, or to deduce, from the supposition of it, arguments for a self-denying and self-sacrificing gratitude on the part of a nation which may have received from another good offices, is to misrepresent or misconceive what usually are, and ought to be, the springs of national conduct.[1]

Governments, in short, are Trustees who must pursue the interests of their beneficiaries, "as far as justice and good faith permit," and resist the temptation of displaying the private virtues of charity, benevolence and gratitude at the expense of their clients.

All Governments act more or less on this principle, and all depart from it under stress of emotions which prove too strong for the most enlightened self-interest. But Europe would be less often disappointed in the conduct of American Governments if it remembered that their susceptibility to European emotions is only partial and occasional and that their permanent preoccupation is and must be with American interests determined by American standards. This is one of the simple things that nations commonly forget in their dealings with each other. In the Great War we saw each nation successively in despair at the slowness of its neighbours to enter into its own emotions and anxieties, and all the Europeans finally in a state of smothered irrita-

[1] *The Works of Alexander Hamilton*, Federal Edition IV, 464-465, quoted by Sears' *History of American Foreign Relations*.

tion at the undeclared intentions of the United States. It was impossible for them to realise that an American Government did not share their exultations and agonies, and would act only, if it did act, on a clear perception that American interests were at stake. Still more difficult was it for them to foresee that, when it had acted, it would withdraw from the scene, and resume its traditional policy of aloofness from Europe as soon as it supposed American interests to be secure.

In American eyes this is a return to "normalcy," but to the European it is disappointment and disillusion. President Wilson had raised other nations to a high pitch of hope and expectation by his zeal for the League of Nations, and the refusal of his countrymen to follow his lead produced a corresponding reaction. Europe now discovered something inhuman and self-centred in American policy which belied the claim of "idealism" that Americans made for it. America seemed not merely to have returned to its normal course, but to have defected from a standard which she herself had set up.

§ II

In view of their own history the British may be expected to understand this course of events better than most of their neighbours in Europe. For it is not many years since the continental nations made exactly the same complaint against Great Britain as is now made against the United States. Great Britain, too, was supposed to be inhuman and self-centred, to be in the habit of intervening in continental affairs at moments favourable to herself and withdrawing, without thought for the convenience of her neighbours, when her purpose was accomplished. But in their efforts to understand each other British and Americans have special

difficulties which do not enter into the dealings of either with other Powers. The British are tempted to suppose that Americans, being predominantly of their own race and blood, ought to share their thoughts and sympathies on the main issues of world politics. Americans have still in their minds that independence of Britain is a traditional object of American policy. Both have to reckon with a historical background which is hardly at all in the mind of the one, and very much in the mind of the other. That background is worth a little examination, and in what follows I will try briefly to indicate a few of its main features.

The English have short memories for historical rights and wrongs, and the Americans rather long ones. We, looking back, throw the blame of the American Revolution on ourselves and even take a modest pride in having learnt our lesson and applied it to the upbuilding of the Self-Governing British Empire. The statue of Washington stands not so far from that of Nelson in Trafalgar Square. But generations of American children were rooted and grounded in the belief that Great Britain was the enemy; and in the national and patriotic history on which young Americans even now are brought up, she still plays the part of the dragon and the United States that of St. George. For us the American Revolution was only an incident in our history, and was soon submerged in our life and death struggle with Napoleon; for Americans it is still the foundation of their being, and no detail of their Constitution can be understood without reference to it. All this history was vividly in the minds of the British-descended Americans until recent years, and it has been the special business of the Irish and certain other races to keep it alive. As the years pass and the population increases, it sinks down into the lower regions of consciousness, but a skilful demagogue can still play on it, and even serious statesmen have to beware of it. The difference in the

point of view governs the entire historical retrospect of the two peoples. For us the war of 1812 is an all but forgotten incident in the much greater struggle in which we were then engaged; for America it is still the baptism of fire of their little community seeking its footing in the world. I can remember as a boy having it impressed on me that the American Republic chose at that perilous moment to side with the European tyrant against the Mother Country, and this for some of my elders remained a little nagging memory. But an English boy of to-day has probably never heard of the war of 1812, whereas to an American boy it is a burning chapter of patriotic history. Many—possibly most—Englishmen are unaware that a British army sacked the city of Washington, whereas all Americans seem to remember it. In the year 1927 patriotic Americans were indignantly protesting against the efforts of some too impartial historians to reduce this incident from an "unprovoked act of vandalism" to a "legitimate reprisal," and I found myself following this controversy with a certain curiosity, but a total indifference as to which party was right.

§ III

Next to these differences in historical prospective there is one thing which it is specially important to bear in mind for the understanding of the present situation. All through the last century and down to the entry of America into the Great War, the contentions of Britain and United States have been largely about sea-power and its uses. It was the seizure of her merchantmen by the European Powers in their efforts to blockade each other which provoked the war of 1812; it was the threat to her merchantmen by the German Submarine which finally brought her into the Great War. The history in both cases is curiously parallel.

In the French wars we see the United States for a long period equally incensed with all the European belligerents and even at one moment (1798) in a state of war with France, while finally weighing in on the French side (1812). From 1914 to 1917 we see her in a dangerous state of tension alternately with Germany and Britain, though finally and under extreme provocation weighing in on the anti-German side. In both cases her policy is governed by her conception of herself as the predominant neutral who has to defend the rights of neutrality by going to war. The neutral standing aloof from the quarrels of her neighbours claims the "freedom of the seas, that is, the right to trade with whom she will, and to supply with arms, munitions and provisions whichever side she chooses, or all sides in proportion as they can keep their ports open, irrespective of the embargo imposed by any of them. This claim arises naturally from her conception of herself as the permanent neutral in a fighting world, and naturally clashes with the views of other Powers, who found their maritime policy on their experience in war. When she becomes a belligerent, and it is important for her, as in the Civil War, to maintain a blockade, her practice does not seem to differ greatly from that of other Sea Powers engaged in war.

§ IV

If differences of opinion about sea-power have been a latent cause of irritation between Britain and America, the Monroe doctrine has on the whole brought the two countries together. The degrees of credit respectively due to John Quincy Adams, James Monroe and Canning for this famous declaration of American policy are still a subject of debate among American historians, but the precise apportionment of it is of little importance. It may be true that in

the circumstances of 1823—the growing estrangement of Great Britain from the Holy Alliance and her practical isolation in Europe—Canning had good British reasons for "calling on the New World to redress the balance of the old." But that did not render his action at all the less timely and useful to the United States. Without the backing of the British fleet a declaration by the Washington Government alone "that the American continents by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintained are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonisation by any European Powers" might have been a *brutum fulmen*, if not an actual provocation to these Powers. And if up to the present time the whole of these continents has been railed off from the competitive land-grabbing by European Powers which has been extended to almost all other desirable and undefended territory on the globe, and if this has been accomplished without any considerable extension of American sea-power, that too may be attributed at least in part to the silent influence of British sea-power. Sometimes it has been a little more than silent, as on a memorable occasion in the Spanish-American war.

Nor, on the whole, can it be said that Great Britain has been hostile to those developments of the Monroe doctrine which are more and more making the United States the referee, if not the Suzerain, of the American continents. We know too well from our own experience the logical and inevitable developments of Imperialism and its half-sister, economic penetration, to take up any jealous or censorious attitude to the United States, acting within what we have acknowledged to be her sphere of interest. The one solitary flare-up on the Venezuela boundary question in 1895 and 1896 is all that can be imputed to Great Britain on the score either of forgetfulness of the Monroe doctrine, or a desire to dispute its application, and a reader of the correspondence

on that incident can only wonder that either Lord Salisbury or Mr. Olney or President Cleveland thought it necessary to bring heavy artillery into play on a question so trivial. We may take it at the present moment as settled British policy that the Monroe doctrine and its application shall be left to the United States on the implied understanding that British territory and interests on the American continents are respected. Happily the English-speaking peoples on the American continent have never found the slightest difficulty in living together or manifested the smallest inclination to adopt the European method of armaments and armed frontiers in their dealings with each other.

§ v

It was formerly one of the complaints of those Americans who bear grudges against Great Britain that her obstruction delayed the building of the Panama Canal by half a century. What is meant is that in the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 the two Powers engaged that neither of them should fortify the Canal, obtain exclusive control over it, "nor occupy, nor fortify, nor colonise, nor assume, nor exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast or any part of Central America," and that the United States was not willing to build the Canal so long as she was fettered by these conditions. The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty was the wind-up by mutual concessions of a tiresome dispute between the two Governments about their rights and pretensions in Central America, and it embodied the principle generally accepted at that time that the Canal between Atlantic and Pacific should be open on equal terms to all nations. It was hardly to be expected that Great Britain should voluntarily abandon a right of such value to her as a trading nation as that of equal user of the Canal, and so far as I

know, no serious approach was made to her on the question of its fortification until Mr. Hay took it up with Sir Julian Pauncefote in 1899. Then it was settled without great difficulty by the removal of the embargo on fortification and the maintenance of the principle of equal tolls. When twelve years later Congress appeared to be on the point of defeating this proviso by passing a measure exempting coastwise shipping from the tolls payable by other nations, President Wilson manfully insisted that American honour was engaged in it, and no act in his career tended more to good feeling between Britain and the United States.

§ VI

There is in Washington a museum devoted to venerated relics of Lincoln, and one room in this is (or was, when I last visited it) devoted to pillorying the British enemies and critics of the cause of the Union during the Civil War. Here displayed on a screen was a selection of hostile *Punch* cartoons, together with the portraits of statesmen, editors, writers and draughtsmen who assailed Lincoln during the years of that War. This, too, must be accounted among the memories which rankled in the older generation of Americans, who in their anger at the attitude of our ruling classes forgot the other side of the picture—the splendid advocacy of Bright and Cobden, the fine resolve of the Lancashire cotton operatives to face starvation rather than abet the cause of slavery, the strong popular sympathy for the cause of the North, the wise Alabama Settlement. Great Britain was not as wrong on this issue as Americans commonly suppose, but the fact which is borne in on one in studying the records of these times is that it was British hostility and British criticism which counted for more than that of all the rest of the world put together. Napoleon III might

take the lead in Europe in urging the recognition of the South and no grudge be borne against France in the subsequent years, while Gladstone's indiscretion, Palmerston's hostility, and the perverse views of London society remained on the record as evidence of British jealousy and hostility.

Here again we touch the special quality of the British-American relationship. However separate the two nations may be, Americans dislike British criticism, and resent British hostility more than they do the criticism and hostility of any other nation. France may err and be forgiven and quarrels with her in one week be followed by appeals to Lafayette in the next week. The German Empire may be the enemy for five years and the German Republic the friend for the next fifty. But there is never a clean sheet in the account with the British; their doings and misdoings are posted up in American history and form a continuous record which may leap to light at some critical moment. Through their common origins and their use of a common language the two nations are, as no others, an open book to each other. Englishmen and Americans sometimes say in their haste that the way of safety is to have done with this special relationship, cease talking of kinship and common ties and treat each other frankly as foreign countries. Then, it is said, they would be rid of false sentiment and extravagant expectations and get the benefit of practical politics. The difficulty about this is precisely that it is not practical politics. British and Americans may resolve to cut clear of their entangled past and start again on the basis of formal and polite acquaintanceship, but history and memory will not be denied, or the susceptibilities of either be quenched in the formalities of a correct diplomacy. Their relationship remains a thing apart from the normal dealings of foreign Powers; and it needs careful steering on both sides to reap its advantages and avoid its dangers.

§ VII

One is struck in looking through these records with the harsh and rasping tone of many of the communications which passed between Europe and the United States. It was long a belief in the European Foreign Offices that the Americans did not understand the rules of the game as played in Europe and that they needed to be addressed in words that were very loud and clear. The Americans on their side seem to have given as good as they got and sometimes a little better.

In 1840, when the Americans seized and threatened to hang a British subject, McLeod, who had helped to scuttle an American ship carrying arms to Canadian rebels, Lord Palmerston instructed the British Minister to tell the President that the British nation would never permit a British subject to be so dealt with, " without taking a signal revenge on the offenders." McLeod's execution, the President was to be told, " would produce war, war immediate and frightful in its character, because it would be a war of retaliation and vengeance." Lord Salisbury in later years was painfully surprised at the tone in which Mr. Olney and President Cleveland addressed him on the Venezuela boundary question, but the Foreign Office quickly consoled itself with the reflection that such language coming from the United States need by no means be interpreted as it would have to be, if it came from a European Government. The German Emperor no doubt comforted himself in the same way, when President Roosevelt told the German Ambassador in 1903 that if he did not get a favourable answer on the Venezuelan debt question within ten days he should order the American fleet to the spot to prevent any German landing on Venezuelan territory. But he was painfully alarmed and astonished

when, failing to get the desired answer, the President next told the Ambassador that he would advance the time and order Admiral Dewey to sail twenty-four hours before the expiration of the ten days. Past-masters as they were supposed to be in the use of the big stick, the Germans acknowledged themselves beaten and consented to arbitration without further ado.

Communications of this kind passing, say, between a French President and a German Ambassador or a British Foreign Secretary and a French Ambassador would have terrified the world, and in all probability had a far different conclusion. But in America even the withdrawal of an Ambassador might be only a passing incident. France withdrew her Minister in the dispute over the French claims in 1836, and nothing happened. The British Minister received his passports from the President in the dispute over the enlistment question in 1856, and again nothing happened. Even the fire-eating Palmerston thought it judicious on this occasion to turn the blind eye and continued to receive the American Minister in London with all civility. Manners have since softened, and a long line of distinguished Ministers and Ambassadors have established a high tradition of diplomatic courtesy between London and Washington. Nevertheless, in reading the past records, it is necessary to make considerable allowance for the bluff and bluster which attended diplomatic transactions. Generally, it may be said, the bark was, on both sides, a good deal worse than the bite.

CHAPTER XX

THE PRESENT PHASE

§ 1

IF WE SEE IT against the background which I have endeavoured to sketch in the last chapter, we shall be better able to understand the present phase of American politics. This is very far from being a simple matter, and Americans themselves, let alone Europeans, seem to be a good deal puzzled by it. Once more, the first thing, as it seems to me, is for Europeans to realise that the United States is not a European Power. The habit of treating her as if she were swayed by the same motives and must share the sympathies and antipathies of European nations or particular groups of them has been the source of much mischief and is still one of the surest ways of going wrong in dealing with her. The great mass of Americans still think it to be a Providential fact that they are not in Europe and not compelled to mix themselves up in its very tangled affairs. To these—the vast majority—participation in the war to meet the German challenge was a suspension but not a reversal of their traditional policy, and they think it obvious commonsense to keep out of Europe if they can. But this, though the predominant, is not the only opinion in America. A large minority of influential and politically instructed people have a generous desire to do what they think to be their duty to the world, and the whole business community is concerned in trading with Europe, lending it money and recovering from it what it owes. This "commonsense," this idealism, and this tradesmanship are all factors in American policy, and we

have to consider their interplay in attempting to judge of any particular phase.

At the present moment America is seeking a compromise which, as she hopes, will give her the best of all worlds. She will trade in Europe, maintain her claims on Europe and cry "hands off Europe." This vexes and mystifies the European and lands America in such apparent contradictions as the launching of an enormous programme of naval construction at the same time as she is proposing a plan for the universal renunciation of war. There is nevertheless a veritable search for the right and wise policy going on all the time, and to treat it cynically would be a profound mistake. It is better to consider what has happened and why it has happened.

I said a few pages back that the British people ought to be slow in adopting the current complaints of American policy, since these are in all essentials what were alleged against British policy until a few years ago. For the same reason they ought the more readily to enter into the American state of mind, since this, too, almost exactly corresponds with their own until quite recently. For a large part of my life—roughly from the year 1880 up to the year 1904, when the Anglo-French Entente was concluded—it was the acknowledged aim of both the British political parties to keep clear of "continental entanglements." We said to ourselves that the sea made us safe and that we should be able to sit quietly on our island, though the other nations raged furiously together. Why, we asked, should we throw away this gift of the Gods by meddling in quarrels which did not concern us, when we had the whole British Empire demanding our spare energy and capital?

It was not argument but events which drove us out of our "splendid isolation." Very reluctantly we came to the conclusion that we must either help to control events on the

adjacent continent, or be controlled by them and probably to our ruin. Whether we chose rightly or wrongly history must decide, but by the beginning of the century we had discovered that "non-intervention" was not, as we had supposed, an easy and simple solution, but the most difficult and complicated of all foreign policies. If it took two to make a quarrel, it might easily, as we discovered, take four to ensure the neutrality of one. The European neutral was in danger of becoming, not as President Wilson said, the "friend of all," but the object of a common antipathy. So far from being discharged from the liabilities of the grouped and allied nations, it was in danger from both the great groups and found itself steering an anxious and perilous course between the snags and shoals on both their charts. Much as it might wish to turn its back on its neighbours and cry a plague on both their houses, they could not or would not turn their backs on it, and every year the points of contact and friction seemed to increase.

I am not suggesting that American policy will run the same or a parallel course. The three thousand miles of ocean seem to make it even more obvious commonsense for Americans to stand aloof than our twenty-one miles of Channel made it for us. The physical points of contact between the United States and other nations are far fewer than those between the British Empire and other nations. An attack on the United States from Europe would be a far more formidable enterprise than an attack on the British Isles from continental bases. But Americans, too, discovered in 1917 that it was impossible for them to remain outside a great European struggle, and at the end of it, their President said that there would be no neutrals in another war. On this hypothesis he proposed a League of Nations to keep the peace. Europe accepted it and America rejected it. Europe is thus left with an American institution which America

repudiated—an American foundling left on the European doorstep. The United States still believes, in spite of her experiences of 1917, that non-intervention is a possible policy; and at all events she is determined to be sole arbiter of whether, and if so, when and how she will intervene.

§ II

Americans can scarcely be surprised if the course of events has left a certain soreness behind it in Europe. Some European nations protest that if they had ever imagined that America would be outside the League they would have acted quite differently and demanded a different kind of peace in 1919. Apart from the League the rejection by America of the Tripartite guarantee to which President Wilson had consented, left Europe with an unsolved problem which postponed its recovery and was the main factor in the events which led up to the French expedition into the Ruhr. Europeans in general were so little acquainted with the American Constitution and the part which it reserved for the Senate in foreign affairs, that they had taken for granted that President Wilson was, like other members of the Peace Conference, a plenipotentiary in fact but not in theory, instead of a provisional spokesman who had to persuade his countrymen before his proposals became operative. The discovery of the true state of the case came as a shock which was presently intensified by the American attitude on international debts. To a philosophic observer all these events had a logic and sequence of their own, and looking back on American history such an observer might have been more surprised that President Wilson committed himself so deeply, than that his fellow-countrymen refused to follow his lead. But the common judgment is not formed by philosophic observers with a knowledge of history, and

Europe, having expected too much, has been proportionately disappointed.

America, on the other hand, has found much *ex post facto* justification for her policy in the conduct of Europe since 1919. Viewed from a distance, the behaviour of Europe during these years has offered little encouragement to intervention by those who are in a position to stand aloof. The average American compares Europe with the United States and asks why its nations cannot dwell together in the same peace and amity as the States of his Union. He brings to his judgment none of the historical charity which veils the scene for a European, and cannot share the traditions and memories which explain, if they do not condone, the fiery passions of the European States. Most of them seem to him grasping, jealous, irrational and incurably quarrelsome. When M. Briand told the Washington Conference in 1921 that in spite of the disarmaments of Germany, the land forces of France must remain at substantially the same level as before, the average American thanked God for the thousands of miles of stormy ocean which separated him from these incurably quarrelsome nations, and quieted his conscience on the subject of international debts by the thought that if he forgave his debtors, they would only spend the money on making more weapons to kill each other.

§ III

Such in general terms has been the course of the argument between America and Europe since the war ended. It is too soon for dispassionate judgment and we shall probably perceive hereafter that the forces at work have been greater and more compelling than were realised by statesmen on either side. But as events have shaped themselves, I will say boldly that I see no reason to regret that the United States

did not join the League of Nations at the end of the war. We may, I think, be grateful for that American legacy without resenting the refusal of the American people to take it up on their own account. It is possible to believe that President Wilson rendered a great service to the world by his courageous initiative, and yet to feel that it was better for America to leave Europe to work out its own salvation in, at all events, the early stages of the League.

The reasons are borne in on one, if one takes a little pains to explore American opinion, and not in Washington alone, but in different parts of the country. Adhesion to the League implies two things, first an active public opinion about the subjects on which the League is engaged, and next a willingness on the part of the public to trust its statesmen to act for it. There is not, so far as I can see, as yet an active public opinion in the United States about the questions (mainly European) on which the League is engaged, and there is a great reluctance to give any statesmen the discretion which is permitted to European Prime Ministers or Foreign Secretaries. The United States Senate regards itself as continuously on guard to prevent Presidents and Secretaries of State subordinating American interests to European conveniences, and there is scarcely any issue before the League of Nations which might not involve the same sort of conflict between the American representative and the Senate as took place between President Wilson and that body in 1919. In Europe there is a permeating opinion on foreign affairs which keeps statesmen and Parliaments in step and enables the former to judge with sufficient accuracy how far they can go. In America there is no general opinion about European affairs, and it is difficult to predict with any certainty what view the Senate may take about the action of American statesmen. While these conditions last it seems to me natural that the United States should fight shy of the

League of Nations, and provided they are understood, Europe has no right to complain about them.

The trouble is that they have not been understood and that the action of the United States has been interpreted as vacillation and backsliding instead of as the normal working of her democratic system. If Europe had realised at the beginning the Constitutional limitations of President Wilson's power, much trouble would have been avoided. But this is the kind of knowledge which, though accessible in books, is only apprehended by experience and to this day it is not apprehended in Europe.

§ IV

What has been said would create a totally false impression if it seemed to imply that there was no interest in world affairs among intelligent and instructed Americans. There is a great and continuous interest. The Universities, the Foreign Policy Association, and numerous other Associations and study-circles deal with these affairs in a serious and student-like way that is rare in Europe. The foreign correspondence of the greater newspapers more than holds its own with the best in Europe, and the editorials in these papers lack nothing in knowledge and shrewd criticism. Books, pamphlets and magazine articles dealing with all aspects of world affairs and propounding ingenious projects for keeping the peace come even more copiously from the American than the British press; and in almost every American city may be found men and women who have followed the League of Nations and its affairs with the closest and most anxious attention. What is lacking is the link between these activities and the organised politics of the country, and for lack of it comparatively little of the results reach either the public or the politicians. Here again

one has to get into one's mind that neither of the political parties is wedded to any policy for which the aid of these students might be enlisted. Following British analogies, we might have supposed that the Democratic party, having pledged its fortunes to the League of Nations, would have continued to fight for that cause, as the British Liberal party continued to fight for Home Rule in the face of not one but several defeats, until it finally prevailed. But there was nothing in the tradition or principle of the Democratic party which inclined it to one view rather than another of world affairs, and it merely followed the habit of American parties in moving off unfavourable ground after the initial disaster. The League of Nations just faded out of the picture after this one adventure.

There is therefore no education of the public through the clash of alternative policies from which something apprehended as an American policy may some day emerge and find lodgment in the general consciousness; there are only individual opinions which politicians and party managers accept or reject according as they think opinion may be ripe for them. A few eminent men, like Senator Borah, do their countrymen the service of raising their voices to rather shrill tones on critical occasions and compelling them to think; and what the Senate may be thinking is all the time a necessary subject of thought among practical politicians. But these speculations about other people's opinions, or about what the American people may say, if it becomes necessary to put a question to them, are not a substitute for the continuous education in foreign affairs through the play of political parties or the actual pressure of events, which is going on all the time in most European countries.

No sensible European who tries to put himself in the place of an American will wonder at or complain of these conditions. It is in the blood and bones of millions of

American citizens that they or their forefathers came to the United States to escape the tyrannies and troubles which beset them in Europe; and not to be obliged to concern themselves with the remote and dangerous affairs that they deliberately left behind them seems to these people a privilege which it would be folly to abandon. For them the intervention of 1917 was a strictly limited exception on which Europe must not be allowed to presume. Binding obligations which encroach upon the Constitutional position of the Senate or fetter the discretion of the American people to act as they choose in some future emergency, must therefore be ruled out, and the United States remain free and independent in this as in all other respects. It is after all very much what the British attitude was up to a comparatively few years before the Great War; and even a few days before that war British statesmen were still telling foreign Governments that British action must be decided by Parliament.

If the United States departs from this attitude it will be from the force of events and not from any pressure put on her from outside. Wooing and worrying her, reproaching her for her supposed defection, instructing her about her own business, are worse than useless. Whatever American policy may be, it will be an American product and Europeans who try to pull it their way are least likely to be in favour.

CHAPTER XXI

THE UNITED STATES AS CREDITOR

§ 1

WE ARE ALL aware of inconsistencies in the proceedings of our neighbours, but an Englishman finds a rather special difficulty in piecing together certain aspects of American policy. In the years since the war, as I pointed out in the last chapter, the *political* tendency has been, broadly speaking, to reassert the traditional policy of isolation from Europe, but in these same years the economic tendency has been to increase American commitments in Europe. Americans generally seem to regard these two things as in water-tight compartments. The same newspapers advocate the policy of "hands-off Europe" and the collection of debts in Europe. It does not occur to them that, if the United States is in the position of creditor to European nations over a long period of years, it will establish a relationship which, for good or ill, is bound to affect its policy. Nor is it perceived that under the fiscal policy of the United States which renders direct payment from creditor to debtor all but impossible, the European commitments of the country must automatically increase, since in lieu of direct payment, interest and sinking fund—or a large part of them—are reinvested in European countries. If this process continues, Europe must be the recipient of American loans and American capital up to the "saturation point," and it becomes impossible to believe that the United States will dissociate itself politically from a continent in which she will be so enormously interested economically.

I have already glanced at one aspect of the International debt problem, but further detail is necessary for its understanding; and it is above all desirable for Europeans to understand the American point of view. Let me try to state this before going further.

The majority opinion shared by most of the men in the street is that the American loans to the Allies were just a common commercial transaction. The money was "hired" and the money must be repaid with interest. A large number of Americans have persuaded themselves that the United States was compelled by the quarrelsomeness of the European nations to engage in a war which she did not at all desire, and they think it beyond all reason that the Allies, having been helped by American intervention to win the war, should now ask to be relieved of their debts in addition. In the view of these people their Government has acted generously in consenting to receive less than its full legal claim, and the European nations show a very ungrateful spirit in refusing to recognise that generosity.

Against this prevalent opinion there is a strong minority which recalls what was said about the "common cause" under the generous emotions of war-time, and considers that the American Government should regard its loans as a contribution to that cause in the period in which it was unable to put an army into the field, and the "associated nations" were making a much more costly sacrifice. This minority goes to the length of saying that America will be "dishonoured" if she insists on repayment of these debts.

There is no reconciliation possible between these disputants. According as they take one view or the other of America's participation in the war, their conclusions are justified or the reverse. All that can be said is that when the United States entered the war, the "common cause" theory appeared to be accepted by both the Administration

and the majority of the American people, and that this theory leads naturally to a cancellation of the debts.

But apart from this ethical controversy, there is a political and economic argument which is warmly debated among bankers, financiers and business men. When I was in America in 1921, the opinion in these circles appeared to be generally in favour of cancelling the debts. Apart from the question whether it was right or wrong to collect them, it was said that the payments would complicate finance, increase the difficulties of exchange and in the long run do more mischief to American trade than the recovery of the money would do good to the American tax-payer. It was perceived that the Tariff policy of the country would make direct payment difficult, and it was thought undesirable that American credits should be piled up artificially in Europe.

But those who held these views were unwilling to take any steps to convert their countrymen to the same state of mind. They said that American taxpayers all over the country had been led to look for these payments in relief of taxation, and that the appearance of financiers urging them to forgo their claims would merely be denounced as "another Wall Street conspiracy." I was told that there was nothing for it but to get the debts funded, to exercise patience, and to hope that the American taxpayers would learn by experience.

Nevertheless, the Harding Administration seemed at this time to be contemplating some steps towards the relief of the European debtor. Journalists who attended the Washington Naval Conference learnt from "the spokesman" at the White House that the President contemplated continuing Conferences, the next on land armaments, and another after that on economic questions, including international debts. But these plans, if they were ever seriously entertained, seem to have been shattered by the later developments

of the Washington Conference, which first chilled American opinion and then turned it into an adverse direction. Even the "idealists" now began to suggest that the maintenance of the claims might prove to be the higher wisdom, since it could always at some future time be relaxed in favour of those debtors who showed a disposition to disarm.

§ II

Undoubtedly the British Government earned high marks when in the following year it proceeded to fund its debt and start its payment. This was said to be the proper way between business peoples engaged in a simple business transaction. The British had backed the bill, the bill became due and the British paid up, without talking sentiment or asking indulgence. Good for the British. The British lost a little favour by the Balfour note, which put the United States in the uncomfortable position of standing between the European debtors of Great Britain and the indulgence which she would otherwise have given them. But after all it was fair that Great Britain, which was repaying to America what she had borrowed mainly on their account, should tell these nations that she could only give them relief for this part of their borrowings, if she received relief from America. Something was due to the British taxpayer, who otherwise would have been in the position of paying everybody's debts and cancelling all his claims on other people.

It cannot be pretended that the British settlement was popular in Great Britain. It had the merit in American eyes of acknowledging that the debt stood on the same plane as an ordinary business transaction, an obligation of honour to be met as soon as it became due. But the British, though not

for a moment questioning that this view should be taken, if the American creditor expected it, had cherished the belief, or illusion, that he would not expect it. Apart from the theory of the "common cause," all the money had been spent in America at the high prices prevailing in war-time, and a considerable part of it taken back immediately into the American Treasury as excess profits duty. This, of course, did not affect the British obligation to repay, but a friendly allowance for the circumstances in fixing the total and the rate of interest would, let us admit, have been welcome.

At this point Americans answer that, if we are paying too much, it is our own fault. The American Government could not have been expected to be more British than the British, and it merely accepted what we offered. I do not presume to judge on this point. Opinions are conflicting. Some say that no hard bargaining would have got us better terms at that moment and that we did well to put a good face on it and end the matter quickly. Others say, after the event, that the American Treasury expected us to bargain and would have given us better terms if we had held out for them. Certainly the British terms are not an unmixed advantage to an American Government, for it has been found necessary to concede much easier terms to other debtors, and as time goes on, the disparity between the British settlement and the other settlements is likely to create a sense of injustice. France is asked to pay 50 per cent., Italy 26 per cent., and Great Britain 85 per cent. of the original total.

§ III

But it can hardly be supposed that we are at the end of this affair. Americans stand before the world with a claim on Europe of some £2,000,000,000 on which interest and sinking fund rising to about £75,000,000 a year will

have to be paid for sixty or seventy years.[1] Relatively to American wealth it is not a very large sum, but it is enough to raise difficult and vexatious questions between the United States and the Governments concerned and to stick in the memory of European taxpayers when they are considering the relations of their respective countries to the United States.

Looming just ahead is the question of the relations of this debt to German Reparations, on which Americans and Europeans hold conflicting views. Mr. Mellon, the United States Secretary to the Treasury, has repeatedly said that his Government recognises no connection between these two things. Whether the European Allies recover or fail to recover what they think due to them from Germany has, in his opinions, nothing to do with what they owe to America. M. Poincaré, on the other hand, has said with equal conviction that France cannot and ought not to be expected to pay more than she receives from Germany, and most Frenchmen believe that the cost of repairing the French devastated areas should first be defrayed out of German reparations, and only the surplus, if any, be devoted to the repayment of debt.

Whatever the official American view may be, no one seriously believes that these two questions can be kept apart. It has been from the beginning a large part of the American argument that, since the European Governments were extracting immense sums from Germany, they could not reasonably complain if the United States held them to the payment of a small part of what they expected to receive from Germany. In a sense the European Allies are hoist with

[1] At the end of the war the total obligations of all the foreign Governments to the United States were £2,360,000,000 from nineteen Governments, and the British share of this was £920,000,000. It is not easy to state the present capital value after the abatements under the various funding schemes, but it is sufficient for practical purposes to bear in mind that these schemes contemplate the payment of annuities by the European debtors to the United States rising to a total of £75,000,000 ($375,000,000).

their own petard. American opinion hardened against them in proportion as they were exacting towards Germany, and has not relaxed as their hopes of recovery from Germany have waned. Many Americans still believe that their country will receive no more than its fair share of what will be recovered from Germany. Some even think, as Mr. Mellon appeared to say, that Great Britain is doing quite well out of her own part in the transaction, though she has been largely out of pocket so far and has very little chance of balancing her final account with the United States with her receipts from Germany and her Allies.[1]

§ IV

In 1923 the Dawes Commission, in which Americans played a leading and honourable part, got to work on the Reparations question and produced a scheme which shattered illusions on the subject of recovery from Germany. The Dawes Commissioners approached the question with the cool realism of business men and considered not what Germany ought to pay, but what she could pay. The annuities they proposed brought the total down from the £6,300,000,000 of the Paris schedules of 1921 to something between £2,000,000,000 and £3,000,000,000, and nearer the former than the latter figure. From the time that the Dawes Commissioners issued their Report it began to look as if

[1] If all the Dawes contributions were paid by Germany in addition to the sums payable by her Allies, Great Britain would in the year 1933 be recovering about as much from these two sources as she would be paying the United States. It is the general expectation at the time of writing that the Dawes Settlement will need to be revised downwards before 1933. But in any case Great Britain can make no profit out of the transaction, for up to now she has paid the greater part of her disbursements out of her own resources, and she will in no case receive more from her Allies than is needed to pay the United States. She has in fact offered to cancel the whole of what her Allies owe her, and to forgo her claims on Germany in their favour, if the United States would relieve her.

there would be very little over for the Allies, if the United States maintained its claims. But more than ever the American Treasury persisted that there was no connection between Debts and Reparations, and more than ever the connection seemed obvious to Europeans.

Economists are apparently now agreed that the Dawes Scheme needs further revision. Bankers and financiers, when I was in America, were discussing the next phase on this hypothesis, and expert opinion in Europe is apparently convinced that a scaling down of the annuities and a fixing of the total at a figure still lower than the Allies had expected are among the inevitables of the near future. It is not that the Germans are unable to pay the stipulated number of gold marks into the Dawes pool, but that there is no prospect of their producing the exportable surplus of goods which would enable the equivalent value to be transferred to their creditors. Probably their creditors would be horrified if they did produce it, but that is another question. The general expectation, as I write, is that at the next revision, the maximum annuities will be fined down to about £75,000,000, from the present maximum of £125,000,000, and that the total of the debt will be correspondingly reduced.

If or when that comes to pass, it will appear in European eyes that the United States is taking the whole of German reparations, leaving nothing to France for the repair of her devastated territories or to the other Allied nations for their costs and losses. I am afraid in such circumstances it will not help to understanding if the United States Treasury merely repeats its opinion that Debts and Reparations are different and unrelated subjects. For what is very likely to happen is that some of the European debtors will decline to accept any further revision of the claims on Germany, unless it is accompanied by a corresponding revision of the claims of

their creditors upon them. M. Poincaré has more than once warned us that this will be his attitude, and it is very likely to be the opinion of the French people that too much was being expected of them when they were asked to forgive Germany and required to pay America.

It would be rash to venture more precise predictions, but Europeans are, I think, entitled to point out to Americans that, natural as it may be for them to take the purely commercial view of these transactions, this view cannot be exhaustive for Europe. Circumstances may easily be imagined in which the attitude of the Washington Government on the Debt question might be the deciding factor in the relations *inter se* of the principal European nations. The unsolved debt problem is still one of the principal obstacles to an abiding policy of reconciliation and therefore to the outlawry of war; and in the long run it can only be solved with American co-operation. To us it seems as if the rôle of an absentee creditor disinteresting himself in the proceedings or fate of his debtors must be at least as difficult to maintain as that of an absentee landlord. However remote our doings may seem to Americans, the attitude of the American Government must, so long as this situation lasts, be of profound importance to us. But we do not expect that Americans should realise this all at once as we do. Our hope and belief is that when they do realise it, they will behave as generously and wisely as in their capacity of individual citizens they have almost invariably behaved to neighbours who have looked to them for assistance.

CHAPTER XXII

THE NAVAL QUESTION

§ 1

LEAVING THE questions which affect the United States and Europe generally, let me now consider the question which most nearly touches the relations of Great Britain and the United States. This above all others needs intelligent and patient handling, for, as we have learnt from our European experience, it is a veritable tap-root of mischief, and if mishandled, may thwart all efforts towards friendly co-operation between the two peoples.

The first thing necessary is that we British should make an honest effort to understand the American attitude on the naval question, and not dismiss it as an idle or passing fantasy. Mr. Winston Churchill produced an uproar in Germany a few years before the war by saying in an unguarded moment that a fleet was a " luxury " to the German Empire, whereas to us it was a necessity. On British assumptions this seemed an innocent observation, but the Germans read it into a desire to dictate to Germany what kind of armaments she should adopt and what would and what would not be acceptable to Britain. We shall risk the same misconstruction if we talk lightly of an American fleet as a purposeless extravagance. " What business is it of the British anyway ? " will be the mildest retort.

We shall run into even worse trouble if we proclaim our belief that the Americans are incapable of making a great fleet. When I was in Washington at the beginning of this year an American, who is a sincere friend of ours, showed

me a letter which he had received from a British member of Parliament. This took the high line of defying the United States to do its worst. "Build your big cruisers, waste your money if you choose," said he, "but at the end of it all you will not have a navy to compare with ours, for you haven't got the seamen and you can't make them." There could be no better way of setting up the backs of patriotic Americans and making them vow that, if they have to rake Europe for them, they will get the men and produce a navy bigger than the British and as good.

On the other side, I heard an American say in a public speech that "if John Bull could not be brought to reason in any other way, it would be necessary for the United States to build recklessly, extravagantly and unnecessarily." This, in its turn, would be admirably calculated to rouse the wrath of John Bull and make him vow, as he did in his competition with Germany, that he would sell the shirt off his back before being brought to "see reason" in this way.

All this on either side is foolish bickering which will defeat its purpose, if the purpose is to make either side "see reason." That will only be if each endeavours to understand what is in the mind of the other. Having had many opportunities for discussing this question with the advocates of an American big navy, I will endeavour to set down as fairly as I can what I understand to be the main points of their argument.

First, it is not admitted that a big navy is in any sense a luxury or a purposeless extravagance for the United States. It is acknowledged, I think, that since the actual food supplies of Great Britain depend on her sea-roads being kept open, her necessity is the greater, but it is argued that the American necessity is only a little the less, since her industry depends on the regular importation of certain essential raw materials, chiefly rubber, manganese and wool, the stoppage

of which would almost immediately produce disorganisation and distress. It is pointed out that under the present organisation of American industry for mass production, these results would be wholesale and widespread, and would probably lead to disorder and perhaps even to a revolutionary situation. The big navy, therefore, is said to have an obvious utilitarian purpose.

Next there is a school which argues that the storm centre of sea-power will in no long time be transferred to the Pacific, where it is vital for the United States to hold, if not the command of the sea at least a position on which she will be unassailable. Volumes have been written on this subject, and here I can only glance at it and add my testimony that it is very much in the minds of Americans and especially of those who dwell on the Pacific coast. It embraces the whole question of coloured immigration, and all the hopes and fears and ambitions which are centred on the course of events in China and the Far East. That trade follows the flag and will languish if the flag is not in evidence is as strongly believed by many Americans as by many British. Moreover, there is the constantly looming question, how are the Philippines to be defended if there is not a preponderant American fleet?

But to the average American, who is not a student of strategy or sea-power, the dominant motive and the one most easily worked upon is, as already indicated, concern for the protection of American commerce, not only or chiefly when the United States is at war, but when other nations are at war. The American claims the "freedom of the seas," which he interprets as meaning freedom in time of war to send his ships where he chooses or at all events to any port which is not effectively blockaded, and freedom especially from the claims of the European belligerent to intercept goods consigned to a neutral port on the ground

that they are destined for the enemy. Again and again, I have heard it said that a great country like the United States can never again be in a position in which it will have to submit to such mortifications as it suffered in the first years of the European War. It must, therefore, have a fleet which will make it master in its own house, i.e. enable it to say with whom it will and with whom it will not trade, regardless of the fiat of any belligerent Power.

Finally, the Monroe doctrine comes into the argument. It is acknowledged that the British fleet has by its silent pressure played a serviceable part in railing off the American continent from European aggression, but it is argued that a great Power ought not to be in a position of depending on another great Power for the maintenance of a fundamental principle in its policy. Whatever the American claims may be under the Monroe doctrine, the American fleet should be equal to making them good without assistance from another Power.

These, I think, are the main points in the American big navy argument, or at least the main points that concern other Naval Powers.

§ II

This is not a book on naval strategy, and my object in this chapter is rather to set out the American case than to argue about it. But one or two general observations may be in place at this point.

It is evident that all the objects set out above could not be achieved without an expenditure which would stagger humanity, as President Kruger used to say, and be a heavy burden on even the richest people in the world. No Power in modern times ever has had the complete mastery of its own policy which the achievement of such a programme

would confer on the United States, and none could have it without creating the suspicion that its intentions were more than defensive. If the strongest sea Power before the war was driven into combinations from which it had every desire to remain aloof, it was because it perceived that it could not guarantee its own security single-handed.

It is necessary to group these aims and objects of American naval policy together in order to see the dimensions of the problem, but I am not for a moment suggesting that they are all simultaneously in the minds of Americans or even of American naval strategists. Some dwell on one point and some on another, and what is common to all is merely the general notion that the United States must have a fleet which will enable her to resist the dictation and be independent of the assistance of other Powers. And beyond question most Americans are convinced that what they are aiming at is a purely defensive position which shall enable the country to remain neutral and ensure it such respect as will prevent the European Powers from taking liberties with it.

But the difficulty about this is that there are no absolute standards in the provision of armaments. What is deemed necessary at any given moment will always be measured by the armaments of other Powers, and that at once sets up a difficult and possibly dangerous relationship with some other Power or Powers, conceived as the principal competitors. The mere fact of such a competition becomes a danger to the neutrality which a competing Power may suppose itself to be defending, and since the same armaments will serve both for defence and aggression, nations are slow to believe in a purely defensive intention on the part of any of their rivals.

This was the experience of Britain and Germany in the twenty years before the Great War. At the end of the last

century the great majority of the British people desired nothing so much as to remain neutral in any conflict between Germany and her continental neighbours. Commercial rivalry there was between Britain and Germany, but experience was proving to both that they gained by each other's prosperity, and that in proportion as they were prosperous they were good customers to each other. Commercial rivalry alone was unlikely to have disturbed the political relationship of the two Powers. But when Germany started building a great fleet, no protest of innocent intentions could prevent the British people from seeing in it a menace to themselves. With each new programme of construction, the Germans proffered the explanation that their fleet was intended not to challenge British supremacy at sea, but merely to ensure respect for Germany by providing a force which the strongest sea Power would not be able to attack without imperilling its supremacy. Whether this explanation was genuine or not, it became evident, as one programme of construction followed another, that the British margin was becoming dangerously narrow, and that any combination between Germany and the next strongest European Power, or any conflict which left her in possession of another strong fleet, would place the British Empire at her mercy. We have learnt from our experience in Europe that disclaimers as to the purpose for which armaments are intended are of no avail against the patent fact that they can be used for any purpose. One nation may not intend to build a fleet against another nation, but the future is inscrutable and if its intentions change, it will have a fleet which it will be able to use against that other nation. The mischief begins when two Powers begin to think of each other as competitors.

No Englishman who lived through the years of naval rivalry between Germany and Britain and remembers the bitterness with which the two countries pursued their argu-

ment, can help feeling anxious, when he sees signs of a similar contention starting between Great Britain and the United States. Other countries, which have at least their food supplies guaranteed to them, seem unable to understand the susceptibilities of a people which is always aware that, if the sea were closed to it, it would be faced with starvation in a few weeks. In such circumstances the argument can never be conducted on equal terms. The self-contained land Power adding a fleet to its armaments is always, in the eyes of its competitor, on velvet; it will not be hurt if it fails or repents of its intention, whereas its rival may be destroyed if that intention succeeds. British sensitiveness on this subject has never been understood in Europe and is not easily understood in America. To all continental peoples the anxieties of the Islanders are apt to seem remote and exaggerated.

For these reasons to speak lightly or use smooth words about a possible naval rivalry between Britain and the United States is not in the interests of either country. Such a rivalry could not become chronic without clouding their relations and making friendly co-operation between them more difficult. Whatever the smoothers and the pacifists might do, we should both know that our respective Admiralties in Whitehall and Washington were at work day by day playing the war-game in which on the one side the United States, and on the other Great Britain was the presumptive enemy. Nothing is less to be desired than such a background to the friendly dealings of two friendly peoples.

§ III

How is it to be avoided? Only, I think, by a serious effort on both sides to get away from the past and face the problems of the future in the dispassionate spirit which

alone can solve them. So far, we have on both sides been applying the old European analogies to the new situation. The formulas and the ratios and the idea of "parity in global tonnage" are all based on memories of the British-German competition before the war, and of the various efforts, all of which failed, to abate that competition. The Washington Conference proved that it was possible to establish a ratio for battleships of approximately equal fighting strength; the Geneva Conference that it was impossible to establish "parity" between cruisers of different sizes and strengths. It may be useful as a provisional measure to continue the agreement as regards battleships, but experience is proving to us that all these formulas, though devised with the best intention, are producing in the public mind the impression that a competition is on foot in which the United States is playing to Great Britain the part which Germany played before the war. This is the very idea that we most need to avoid.

For it is a radically false idea. Any competition that there might be between Great Britain and the United States would take an entirely different form from that between two European Powers. The problem of attacking either Great Britain or the United States from across three thousand miles of ocean has no point of similarity with the problem of attacking either Great Britain or Germany from across the North Sea. To make it practicable, not equality or even a moderate superiority, but an enormous preponderance on one side or the other would be necessary. The new strategy, if there is to be one, would at least have to be conceived in terms of the new distances; and making every allowance for the possibility of aircraft, the difference between the old problem and the new would still be immense. The late Lord Salisbury once said that the best corrective to panic was to use big maps, and no better advice can be given to

the panic-mongers between Great Britain and the United States. The use of big maps, it may be said incidentally, would also reduce to their proportions most of the alarms which have been current about the Pacific and the Far East, for in that region it is a merciful dispensation of Providence that all the potential enemies, if they took to fighting, would have an enormous difficulty in getting at each other.

If we pass from strategy to policy, the analogies from the old to the new situation are even fewer. The United States stands outside the rivalries and traditional feuds which ranged the European nations against each other. Except as a peacemaker, she has no motive for intervention in any of their affairs, and she shows every sign of reverting to her old policy of keeping hands off Europe on condition that Europe keeps hands off her. She is therefore railed off from all that perilous stuff which has made wars in Europe, and there is no European nation which has any direct quarrel with her. The former European competition in armaments had its roots in political schisms and cleavages; a competition with America would be in the air, so far as what may be called the settled policies of her or her competitors were concerned.

There is, in fact, if we bring the matter down to Britain and America, no probable clash of either interest of ambition which threatens conflict between the two nations. We may scan the horizon in vain for any point at which British policy is likely to come into collision with American policy. When we wound up the Japanese Alliance we deferred to American opinion on the one question which might in some remote future have divided us, and elsewhere our respective spheres are so delimited or so geographically distributed that we are under no temptation to encroach upon each other. The British Commonwealth is a "sated" Power whose main anxiety is to keep and guard what it has; the American

Commonwealth has a vast and thinly populated territory with immense undeveloped resources. It would not be ambition or conflicting interests but pure unreason which made either steer a course which threatened a collision with the other. The United States may realise all the ambitions desired by the American Naval School and leave the British Empire untouched.

What then remains? Solely, so far as we can look into the future, the question of "the freedom of the seas." Though we shall not quarrel with each other, there is yet the possibility that in some war of the future we shall get entangled in the quarrels of other peoples. Suppose we were at war with another nation or applying sanctions in the name of the League of Nations, and the United States claimed the "freedom of the seas" for its merchantmen—freedom from our embargoes or the League's embargoes—we should undoubtedly be in the danger zone, and if we faced each other with the same theories and claims as in the first two years of the Great War, we could by no means rely on the same happy issue as on that occasion. The hypothesis is remote and extremely unwelcome to the friends of world peace, but in this connection it must be faced.

Observe, however, what is implied in this hypothesis, and what alone makes it dangerous. This is that we shall face each other with the same theories and claims as in the previous years. Is this credible? Before the Great War was ended, the unlimited submarine, and in a lesser degree mines and aircraft, had made confusion of all our claims and theories and reduced the whole code of maritime law in time of war to chaos. It is extremely probable that when they are examined anew in the light of this experience, the old phrases with which the British and American schools debated together before the war will be found to have lost all meaning and appropriateness to modern conditions. If

that were so, it would be folly to let a spent and obsolete issue cloud our relations and inflict on our taxpayers the cost of an unnecessary naval competition.

§ IV

An Englishman cannot be expected to admit all that an American alleges about the arbitrary uses of British sea power in past times. I am no expert on the subject, but the records suggest that British seamen have loyally acted up to their own code and that Prize Courts though nominally *ex parte* tribunals, have steadily striven to be fair and even generous to neutrals in their awards. But this does not make it less desirable that the code itself should, if possible, be an agreed one and interpreted by a tribunal not open to the suspicion of partisanship. With the world busily devising international machinery to meet new needs, this ought not to be very difficult.

But once more in approaching this question all parties must be ready to cut loose from prepossessions drawn from the past and especially from the last war. If Great Britain were to think of her position as permanently that of a blockading belligerent, or the United States to think of herself as eternally a neutral, accommodation would be difficult. In any future that we can foresee it is extremely improbable that the circumstances of the last war which made the blockading of the principal enemy a feasible operation will recur. The all but complete circle drawn round the Central Powers by the combination of France, Britain, Belgium, Russia and Italy is unique in history and very unlikely to be repeated. On the other hand, if the hypothesis of war has to be faced, it is at least conceivable that the United States will be a belligerent with a strong motive for preventing the supply of her enemy by neutrals. Americans have only to

recall the memories of their own civil war to realise this possibility.

In any case, all the principal maritime Powers have to face the fact that whatever they may desire to do, they will almost certainly be unable to do anything drastic without the consent of the principal neutral, whichever it may be. In the last war the wise statesmanship of Mr. Walter Page and Lord Grey kept British operation within the limits of what would be tolerated by the United States, but the discovery of these limits was a dangerous process of trial and error which might not on a future occasion have the same happy results. To this day there are naval zealots on the British side who have persuaded themselves that the war would have been won much earlier if the British Government had defied the United States, and on the American side there are anti-British zealots who believe that their Government showed inexcusable weakness in deferring so far as it did to the British. Wise men on both sides will deduce from this experience that no belligerent in a future war, if there is one, will be able to act up to the measure of its capacity without the agreement of the most powerful neutral; and if so, the sole question is whether that agreement shall be sought at least on principle in the cool atmosphere of peaceful negotiations, or reached under compulsion in the heated atmosphere of war and possibly after a period in which both parties have been estranged by a naval competition.

This, it seems to me, is the angle of re-entry into the Naval question for Great Britain and the United States. Let them keep, if they choose, the Washington agreement on battleships, but let them drop the vain idea of parity between ships of different types and strengths, and leave each other to build according to their separate necessities. But let them in the meantime turn their thoughts seriously to the making of a new code of maritime law in time of war,

and see if they cannot reach a common understanding on its main principles in view of the new conditions. Both at the moment occupy the same ground on the most important of the new factors. We have said that we desire to abolish the submarine as a weapon of war; and Mr. Kellogg, speaking presumably for his Government, has expressed the same desire. It is improbable that we shall persuade other nations to follow our lead,[1] but if not, it is the more incumbent on us to endeavour to straighten out the confusion which the submarine has brought to the laws of naval warfare. It is a dangerous subject for us, and the United States learnt in 1917 that it is a dangerous subject for her. All the more reason, then, that it should be faced and, if possible, removed from the danger zone.

I refrain from suggesting times, seasons or methods. We have learnt two things from Geneva, first, that unprepared Conferences are worse than useless; next, that questions which raise big issues of policy cannot safely be entrusted to experts. The last thing to be desired is that, having failed with the naval experts, we should now throw the problem to legal experts and expect them to decide it. It is for Governments to lay their minds together and consider what they can do for their own peace and the world's peace. The ground needs careful preparation and much of it may have to be fought against both legal experts and naval experts. Success will be ensured in proportion as the Governments realise the high political importance of putting behind them a cause of mischief which has got lodged in the public mind and may on a side issue cloud the relations of two peoples whose general policies in no way conflict.

If we could remove this which, for the majority of

[1] This was written before the suggested British-French agreement was heard of, but whatever may be the fate of that, it is unlikely to affect the main lines of this argument.

Americans, is the chief source of irritation, we might be easy in our minds about ship-building programmes. The course of events since the Geneva Conference has been full of reassurance for those who believe in the essential friendliness and will-to-peace of the British and American peoples, however their Governments or Admiralties may stumble and blunder. Public opinion, as both Governments learnt, was strong and clear against the aggravation of the mischief by launching out into new competing programmes. The British Government, instead of increasing its programme, cut out two cruisers; the Wilbur programme submitted by the American Naval Department, which originally provided for twenty-five cruisers of 10,000 tons, and aircraft carriers, submarines and other ships amounting to a huge total of seventy-one of various kinds, was cut down to fifteen cruisers of 10,000 tons, and one aeroplane carrier. The proposed expenditure on ship-building now stands at £55,000,000, spread over three years, which cannot be called an alarming figure in relation to the expenditure of others. This result was achieved by an all-but-silent self-mobilisation of public opinion which, without any ostensible agitation or clamour, made Congress aware that the country was in no mood to take the lead in a competition in armaments. It is customary to blame democracy when statesmen blunder, but on this occasion, at all events, the democracies showed themselves wiser than most of their official advisers. If the American and British democracies were to be driven into hostile relations with each other, it would not, I am firmly convinced, be from any desire or initiative on the part of either.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE COMMERCIAL SITUATION

§ 1

IT IS FREQUENTLY alleged that the economic and commercial rivalry of Great Britain and Germany was, if not the chief, at least a very important cause of the Great War; and it is suggested that a similar rivalry between Great Britain and the United States will in due course bring these two countries also into collision. Is there any substance in this discouraging idea?

I answer with some confidence that so far as the British were concerned, commercial rivalry contributed almost nothing to Anglo-German hostility in the years before the war; and again, so far as the British are concerned, that it will not be an obstacle to friendly relations with the United States. In the years before the war we recognised the Germans as formidable competitors in the markets of the world, but we learnt from experience that German and British prosperity ran on parallel lines, and that a prosperous Germany was the best customer of a prosperous Britain. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's fiscal campaign made us a little more conscious of German rivalry than we should otherwise have been, but the result was rather to stimulate British manufacturers to improve their methods than to incite feelings of hostility against the German people. It is undoubtedly part of the German theory of "war guilt" that an envious Britain wished to destroy the rising German Empire before it became too formidable, and this may be an excusable after-thought in all the circumstances. But an Englishman

who tries honestly to review the past can find nothing in his own thoughts or in the conduct of his Government which even gives colour to that supposition. He may freely admit that he was alarmed by the growth of the German navy, which the Germans appeared to think of as a corollary of their commercial position, but until they compelled him to do so, he had never thought of transferring commercial rivalry to the plane of physical warfare.

Indeed, to think of commerce as warfare is alien to the British habit of mind. A long practical experience had taught the Englishman that his competitors are also his customers, and he is learning still that when they suffer, he suffers. For the last eighty years he has given them the same right of trading freely with the British Empire that he enjoys himself, and resisted the arguments of those who would make this Empire a commercial enclave with its doors shut against the foreigner. Imperial preference has in recent years made a slight encroachment upon this complete equality, but the root idea of the trading Englishman is still that commerce is a mutual benefit from which temper, hostility and nationalist jealousy should as far as possible be excluded.

§ II

For these reasons I do not believe that commercial rivalry need or will embitter the relations of Britain and the United States. But there are certain points in the attitude of both which may set up a small chronic irritation that is better avoided, and these perhaps are worth a little consideration.

The American is apt to assume that the Englishman must be jealous of American progress and prosperity. He supposes the Englishman to be mortified at seeing himself

deposed from his position of supremacy, and imagines that he harbours resentful feelings. I have been told many times by good friends in America that they honestly sympathise with Britain in the position in which she finds herself. It is impossible to take offence when the intention is so friendly, but an Englishman would be more grateful for this sympathy if it were not accompanied by a delicate implication that his day is past. He does not look at the situation through the same eyes as the American. To him it seems one of the inevitables that a population about three times as great as his own occupying a largely virgin territory thirty times the size of Great Britain should surpass him in all the aggregates of production and wealth, and he has long ago resigned himself to that happening. His problem as it seems to him, is not that of competing with America in population or aggregate wealth and production, but of holding his own in Europe, keeping the British Commonwealth together, governing intelligently his great and scattered possessions, and contributing some special flavour and quality which shall be British to the civilisation of the world. Sometimes when he is in the United States he feels that the American habit of judging things quantitatively does less than justice to the work of Great Britain in the world.

There are other Americans of the hasty and summary kind who put it more bluntly and speak of Great Britain as a "back number." So far as this idea is current, we have ourselves largely to thank for it. Our habit of self-depreciation is less understood in America than in Europe, and in recent years it has obscured the British recovery—the shouldering of the great debt, the restoration of credit, the development of new trades, the large measure of prosperity which, in spite of depression in the basic industries, is enjoyed by many millions of British people. The monthly

publication of the figures of unemployed is regarded as a kind of S.O.S. sent broadcast to the world. The true position is thoroughly well understood by American bankers and financiers, who are whole-hearted in their tributes to British finance, but it is often misunderstood in the business world, and the American public generally has, I should say, a greatly exaggerated idea of the depressed condition of Great Britain. This does not make a favourable atmosphere for us in a country which is rather specially prone to judge its neighbours by results.

On the other hand, a good deal of British comment is irritating to Americans. They have heard more than enough about their supposed worship of the almighty dollar. Measuring things in dollars is with Americans a way of speaking which ought not to be taken too seriously. For though the word dollar is always on their lips, it is the achievement which it measures and not the mere money which they admire. Undoubtedly they worship success, but successful and wealthy Americans are generous and not purse-proud, and the intercourse between them and their poorer neighbours is far easier and more genial than that between rich and poor in old countries. In any case England is not so conspicuously free from obeisance to wealth that she is in a position to preach on this subject. She also in her time has had to listen patiently while her European neighbours have called her a nation of shopkeepers and attributed the meaner sort of commercial motive to her policy.

Another unwelcome critic is the Englishman who judges everything by his own standard and sees ruin or folly in the characteristic American developments—the Trusts, the system of mass production, the payment by instalment plan, and so forth. When Englishmen talk hastily of American industry turning men into Robots and omit all that other side of it which relieve them from the hardest physical

toil, shortens the hours of labour and keeps the level of wages high, they simply confirm the notion that British industry is a "back number." And so does the British Minister who indicts the system of payment by instalments as a mere incitement to thriftlessness, without considering the important and useful part that it plays in supplying thrifty people with capital.

§ III

But these are minor matters which will have comparatively little importance if there is nothing more serious to bring British and American business into collision. This is not an economic treatise and I cannot go deeply into the matter, but certain salient facts may be glanced at.

American business men frequently return from a journey to Europe declaiming at the folly which divides that continent into innumerable enclaves cut off from each other by tariff barriers. They contrast that condition with the enormous free trade area of their own continent and wonder that Europeans have not the sense to see that chopping up their country in this way is fatal to the efficient kind of modern industry which works through mass production and wide distribution. But on returning to their own land they consider it obvious good sense that having obtained this enormous free trade area they should keep it to themselves as far as possible. What is sauce for the goose is therefore not sauce for the gander, and in the eyes of many Americans, it is as wise for them to build a tariff wall round their territory as it is foolish for Europeans to divide theirs into tariff-bound enclosures. Some mass producers, like Mr. Henry Ford, do not agree, but the prevailing opinion is that mass production imperatively requires an internal market secured against foreign competitors.

Whether this is good or bad as an American policy is not for me to say, but certain consequences follow which are important in considering the place of the United States in international commerce.

If a man will not buy, neither shall he sell is a first principle which we see verified in American experience. The American Tariff—the Fordney-McCumber Tariff—is directed mainly against manufactured goods coming from Europe, and admits free, or at very low rates, the large quantity of raw materials and foodstuffs, rubber, tin, manganese, coffee, sugar, silk, wool, etc., which come from the rest of the world. The result is that in the last seven years American trade with Europe in manufactured goods has been all but stationary, if allowance is made for the increase of prices, in spite of the great increase of population and wealth, whereas the same trade with the rest of the world has increased threefold.

The conditions are undoubtedly discouraging to the European exporter, but British trade has done relatively well, and in spite of the tariff, the United States still stands normally as our third-best customer (after India and Australia) for exports. Competition with the mass-produced American article is of course hopeless, but there are a good many highly finished British goods which the American buyer will have, and for which he is prepared to pay the price with the duty added. If there were any serious decline in American wealth and prosperity, this might not be the case, but, so far, we have profited from the prosperity which enables the well-to-do American to purchase our goods.

When the war ended the United States held the position of *the* creditor nation of the world and had deposed Great Britain from that pedestal. Foreign Governments owed her £2,360 millions, and American citizens had investments abroad of about £1,500 millions, as against £800 millions in-

vested by foreigners in America; whereas in 1913 foreigners held £1,400 millions of American securities, and Americans only £500 millions of foreign securities. These figures look formidable, and alarming ideas have been current about the increasing grip which the United States is securing over Europe. It is certain, for example, that the obstacles which the tariff throws in the way of direct payment, are a stimulus to the reinvestment in Europe of the sums paid by Great Britain and other nations on the debt account. This is partly set off by the enormous "invisible" factors, including the expenditure of American tourists in Europe, but we may see the result registered in the considerable increases of foreign capital securities offered to and taken by Americans in recent years. These amounted in the year ending June, 1927, to £370 millions, but against them must be set the considerable amount of money coming into the United States, which in the same period reduced the net amount going out to about one third of the gross total, say £120 millions. This figure, though large compared with the corresponding pre-war figures, in no way threatens an economic ascendancy over Europe. In the last seven years, as Mr. George Peel points out in his admirable study of the American economic situation,[1] Great Britain has added £860 millions to her net foreign holdings, while the corresponding figure for the United States was only £640 millions. If foreign holdings cause nations to become "economic vampires," as is sometimes suggested, it would appear that Great Britain is still the more accomplished blood-sucker.

Normally only about a quarter of the American money invested abroad goes to Europe, and by far the greater part is absorbed by Canada and Latin America. But Europe, so far from being hurt, has greatly profited by the larger flow of American money which has come to Europe since

[1] *The Economic Impact of America*, by the Hon. George Peel, p. 225.

the war. American investments, combined with American charity, have played a most useful part in relieving distress, restoring currencies, and placing exhausted nations in a position in which they could again take up their normal life. I have dealt in another chapter with the international debt question, and the special dangers and difficulties which it threatens, but to confuse American investments with debt claims and lump them all together as evidence of an intention to impose an economic servitude upon Europe is a mischievous absurdity. Whether these investments are good business for America, and how far they can be expanded on a basis of sound security are questions which may now and again disturb the tranquillity of American business men, but that they have on the whole been of benefit to Europe, and incidentally to Great Britain, which must gain in so far as her potential customers in Europe are restored to health, cannot be doubted.

§ IV

There is, however, considerable doubt whether American foreign investment will or can continue on anything like the same level as in the years succeeding the war. The figures quoted above are based on the Stock Exchange records of securities floated in the years in question, and already it is suggested that much larger deduction must be made to arrive at the net figure of United States capital exports. Let me quote on this subject a passage from Mr. T. A. Layton's address on "Europe's future rôle in World Trade" before the Academy of Political Science in New York[1]:

"It may be suggested that America can in fact develop her sales to her greatest market without buying in return by landing

[1] *Europe's Future Rôle in World Trade*, by Walter T. Layton, New York, published by the Academy of Political Science.

capital freely; and that in fact a growing stream of export would merely be the expansion of her capital. Perhaps to some extent that is what has happened in the last two or three years, but can we assume that it will continue? I do not know how many people realise that last year, according to Mr. Hoover's estimates, America's net capital exports only amounted to $13,000,000; in fact, there was practically no margin of capital export. It is true that on the stock exchange here in New York a record number of foreign securities were floated, but they did not represent a net export because they were paid for, or balanced by capital movements in the opposite direction, by sinking-fund operations on old loans, by purchases of American securities by foreigners, by sales back to London and to other foreign centres, and finally by the influx into the United States of a very considerable amount of short-term money. The net result is that net out-flow was, as I say, only $13,000,000. The United States is doing exactly what we are doing in Britain, namely, borrowing short and lending long. I make no forecast or prognostication. I merely call attention to this fact as indication that it is not at all certain that the United States—with vast uses at home for her annual savings and a very high standard of consumption which puts an effective check on the rate of capital accumulation—has a true margin for capital export at all. If America wants to regain her export position in her greatest market, there is a simple method of doing it, and that is by increasing direct exchanges."

In fact, at the end of it all we come back to the point that nations cannot have it both ways. They cannot close the door to the foreign seller without limiting his capacity to buy from them.

§ v

To sum up, the notion that the United States will play the part of blood-sucker or impose an economic servitude upon Europe appears, if the facts are examined, to be a groundless alarm. The war gave her a great opportunity of enrichment, while the other nations were being impoverished, and she cannot be blamed for having taken it. There

is always a *tertius gaudens* when nations fly at each other's throats. But apart from the official debt, upon which the last word has yet to be said, American investments in Europe have been a useful aid at a critical moment, and there is little danger of their being so extended as to constitute anything that can be called a strangle-hold. Americans are still far too much concerned with the development of their own country to be able to spare much of their capital for investment abroad in normal times. Undoubtedly the Fordney Tariff makes hard going for the manufacturers of other countries, but surmounting tariff has been all in the day's work for British traders and they have accepted the conditions with their usual philosophy. The American method of mass production has the advantage from their own point of view of leaving a large field for the various kinds of highly finished goods in which they excel; and they are likely to do best, if they resist the advice so freely offered them to imitate American methods—which postulate an immense internal market—and devote themselves to improving their own specialities.

So far as fiscal policy goes, it is by no means certain that the present American high tariff is permanent. Agriculturalists feel it a serious grievance that they should be compelled to pay more for everything that they buy, and be hampered in selling by a policy which makes it difficult for their customers to pay. They are already making themselves felt in politics, and the mass-producing highly organised agriculture which is now being developed is not likely to accept tamely a policy which is purely for the benefit of manufacturers. Further, if capital should accumulate beyond home needs or the possibility of profitable investment abroad, it must be used for expanding the export trade, which, again, will necessitate a lower tariff. It is sometimes suggested that we should have most to fear from a free-

trading or low-tariff United States, but this, I believe, to be a mistake. We should gain by a more abundant direct exchange of goods, and the situation in the neutral markets would not be greatly changed, since the American manufacturer already has the benefit of free, or nearly free, importation of the material that he needs. Then, as now, the advantage of the American would be his genius for cheap production, and in that it would be our business to learn from him all we can without being tempted to depart from our own special lines of highly finished goods. On these lines the two countries should be able to supplement, without greatly conflicting with, each other in neutral markets, and each profit from the other's prosperity.

The American, on his side, will ease matters if he resists the temptation to think that Great Britain is a back number and considers the enormous effort that she has made in the last ten years to recover and consolidate her position. She has led Europe in returning to the gold standard, and in spite of the enormous load of debt and taxation that she carries her credit is unassailable. She still holds the supremacy in the export of manufactured goods; she still finds more capital for foreign investment than any other country; she has recovered and seems likely to increase her long lead in shipping. If certain of her basic trades are depressed, she suffers in that respect in common with the whole world and with the United States. An Englishman travelling in America may be excused if he finds some little consolation in discovering that all the trades—cotton, coal, iron and steel, ship-building—that he left depressed in his own country are depressed in the country to which he comes and generally for the same reason. That reason is, broadly speaking, that the world's capacity for consuming the products of these industries has temporarily been reduced by the impoverishment following the war. Both Great Britain

and the United States have a great part to play in curing that impoverishment, and in proportion as they play it, they are likely in the long run to promote each other's prosperity. The bankers and financiers of the two countries have already shown that there are many services that they can render to each other, and merchants and manufacturers also are likely to find opportunities for co-operation without at all abating their legitimate competition.

CHAPTER XXIV

SOME CONCLUSIONS

§ 1

THE IMPRESSIONS recorded in the previous chapters do not lend themselves to any brief summary, but I may perhaps conclude with a few general reflections.

It is not for nothing that a large part of the territory of the United States lies in a latitude which, compared with that of the British Isles, is distinctly southern. The sky has the brightness and at morning and evening the warm glow which Englishmen call Italian. But with it, and especially as one goes away from the coast, is a keen dry atmosphere which keeps the human fit, and gives trees, plants and crops a northern vigour. One sees the Italian cypress casting its black shadow on what might be an English countryside. If the ultra-violet rays have the potency that modern medicine attributes to them, it can hardly be a fancy that the transplanting of the north European from the mists and fogs of the North Sea and the British Isles to a region where he gets an Italian sun without the relaxing qualities of the Italian climate, has had some effect upon his character. In fact, one seems to see this effect in the collective vitality which distinguishes the people of the United States from all other peoples in the world.

The stress must be on the word collective. It runs through all parts of the country, keeping it in a state of movement and ferment which extends to the whole people. In England business is still for the most part an individual occupation in which each man does his best to win bread

for his family and leisure for himself. In America it is a movement. "The business of the United States is business" is a saying attributed to President Coolidge, and as an Englishman looks at it, the entire country seems to be mobilised for the winning of an industrial war in just the same way as a few years ago we were all mobilised for another kind of war. All the newspapers, all the means of publicity and advertisement, even the Government itself, seemed to be commandeered for and concentrated on an industrial campaign which is broadly conceived as a national effort. With this go the unrest and the nervous excitement which we noted in Europe as war-time symptoms and they seem to be chronic in America. Men and women live so much in the future that they seem to have little time either to savour the present or to reflect on the past; they dislike solitude and do everything in common. The Englishman sees an immense gregariousness contrasting with the scattered, individual, private life of his own country, and everybody and everything being carried along on a high tide of confident expectation which is in still greater contrast with the ebbing spirits of some parts of Europe.

But, of course, this movement has its casualties, though they may be veiled in the dazzling generalised impression which the traveller brings away with him. The pace is too quick for some and especially for the unacclimatised newcomers. The incessant scrapping of old things and substitution of new, the unceasing search for new labour-saving devices involve a constant displacement which at any given moment and even in times of prosperity mean unemployment and poverty for large numbers. Ability which cannot conform to the dominant patterns, incompetence and physical unfitness get less mercy in this country than in Europe. If wages are high, they must be earned to the last

cent ; and the average kind of worker who looks for security in return for a moderate effort will find life harder than in the old countries. Here the race is to the swift, and for them the constant moving on and the sense of unlimited possibilities, with the attendant risks and chances are what give spice, savour and colour to life. For all these America is uniquely the country of equal opportunity.

The general acceptance of the idea that " the business of the United States is business " explains a great deal that is puzzling to the outside observer who thinks of nations in terms of their institutions. The American is honestly convinced that he is doing the chief part of a citizen's duty in pursuing business. Incidentally he may be making a fortune, but in the main he thinks of himself as developing the country, raising its standard of life, providing it with the things it wants at the lowest cost. His claim is generally conceded. The notion which flits uneasily through the mind of Europe that employers and capitalists prey upon their fellow-beings is scarcely intelligible to Americans, most of whom dismiss Socialism as the self-evidently absurd proposition that politicians should control business.

§ II

It follows that the great men of the United States are the big business men, not the statesmen or politicians. When a Committee of American Professors and literary men is asked to name the greatest men in the world, it puts Mr. Henry Ford high on its list, but names not a single politician or statesman. It must be said that the business men take their position seriously as leading citizens. They play a leading part in all public enterprises of a constructional kind ; they give munificently to charity, and endow universities, museums and art galleries on a scale unknown in any

other country. In all this they show an admirable social instinct and make the readiest acknowledgment of the duty which wealth owes to the community. But one thing they will not do, or do only very reluctantly, and that is to take an active part in the government and administration of the country.

The onlooker, therefore, gets the impression that too little of the brains and character of the country is going into its public affairs. The greater part of State and municipal administrations is left to professional politicans, and the few business men who come into politics do so comparatively late in life and with little previous experience of affairs. Taking the country as a whole there is no large body of men who can be relied upon to make a career in either Federal, State or Municipal politics a steady object of ambition from their youth upwards. For lack of these the bosses and machine politicians who have their ears to the ground (and sometimes their noses in the mud) obtain inordinate power.

I have discussed the reasons which make the political career (as we understand it) difficult or impossible in the United States; they are written in all the text-books and everywhere acknowledged. There is, nevertheless, the strongest reluctance to alter them. All the more obvious roads to reform, as an Englishman would consider them, lead back to the Constitution and to touch that in any of its vital parts is, in American eyes, profanity. Possibly an American feels, in ways that elude the outside observer, the difficulties and dangers of changing an instrument which effects so delicate a balance between the Federal and the State Governments, but whatever may be the reason, the result is a paradox. The people who in all the world crave most for new things and in the ordering of all other parts of their life are modern of the moderns, are all but Chinese in

their worship of the Constitution and their ancestors who devised it. In Europe nearly all the eighteenth-century political structures have long ago been thrown on the scrap-heap, but in America they survive unquestioned. The populous modern United States remains faithful to laws and institutions laid down by the fathers of the Constitution for their little community in the eighteenth century.

Thus the most daring innovators in all else present the appearance of being politically the least enterprising and the most tolerant of outworn institutions. In the United States, Great Britain is still thought to be an ancient, conservative and politically backward country; and in Great Britain the United States is still regarded as an impetuous modern democracy. But the actual facts largely invert these opinions. In spite of its democratic forms, the United States is one of the most conservative of great nations, and one of the least susceptible to new and radical political ideas. It is sometimes said that wealth exercises a veto over free economic or political speculation in American universities, but this I believe to be largely a misunderstanding. Political and economic thought in America needs no dictation from any superior authority to keep it running in conservative channels. It is naturally and instinctively conservative and accepts of its own accord the first principles that are congenial to average prosperous people.

It needs adversity to give politics the keen edge that they have in Europe, and the United States—or that part of it which counts—is and has long been abundantly prosperous. Mistakes in government which would be ruinous in old and congested countries seem to be of little consequence in this enormous country with its great margin of error and easy ways of recovery. Practical men draw the conclusion that politics don't much matter, and that they have far better ways of serving their country and occupying their time than

engaging in the scramble for office and spoils which fills so large a part of the political life in the United States. Some day when they have leisure or there is a really serious emergency, they will turn about and put the politicians in their place, but till then "the business of America is business." There have been signs in some parts of the country, for example in these last months in Chicago, of a change in this attitude. It is beginning to be realised that, if corruption and lawlessness are allowed to go too far, the remedy may not be so easy as has been supposed. The youth of the country is beginning to think new thoughts for which political expression will some day have to be found. It is a possibility which occurs to one that when the American people do finally bring their strong wills and inventive minds to bear on their public affairs, they may devise novel and drastic expedients which will astonish the world. But in the meantime, in considering their politics and especially their dealings with other nations, it is necessary to remember that they are very imperfectly organised for any quick or strong expression of the national will. For that reason their statesmen seem always to be in doubt as to the authority behind them, and their politics tend to be of the nature of experiments to discover what their own people desire or will support.

Undoubtedly the American scene is puzzling to the stranger who tries to get a consistent picture of the whole. The national virtues are immense, but they seldom run through the whole of the national life. A breathless futurism in industry goes with a stubborn reluctance to change in politics; the utmost economy in production with an amazing prodigality in consumption. While the manufacturer is making a science of thrift in the workshop, the salesman is all the time discouraging thrift in the household. But the moralist who tries to draw edifying conclusions

from either virtues or faults will constantly find himself baffled. He goes to a city which is a by-word for corrupt government and finds there schemes of town-planning and public improvements which might be the envy of the best-governed municipality in Europe. Conditions of disorder which would be thought intolerable in Europe exist side by side with a prosperous and refined way of life and seem to cause it no inconvenience. The majority of Americans seem to be convinced that if only they stick to business, everything else will cure itself.

It follows that an Englishman who goes to the country with the idea of interpreting its life and terms of politics is in danger of going very much astray. Its life is first of all the life of engineering, planning, developing, producing, and only a small part of its brains and thought can be spared for the doings of politicians whether in domestic or world affairs.

§ III

M. Siegfried said recently in a lecture in Paris that the United States is "moving away from Europe." He thinks it was nearer Europe thirty years ago than it is now, and that thirty years hence it will be farther away still than it is now. If this means that the United States is making a characteristically American civilisation in American surroundings, it is of course true and its differentiation from Europe is likely to go on. The characteristic middle and upper-middle class life which we are apt to think of as specially representing civilisation in Europe must in America be mechanised in a way that is not called for in European conditions. The difficulty of obtaining domestic servants alone requires a different organisation of the home life; the automobile habit keeps American humanity in a

perpetual state of circulation which looks feverish and restless to the European eye. A household with three cars and one servant lives in a different way from a household with three servants and no car. The habit which Americans have of doing everything in common; their flight from the fireside to the club, the lecture hall, the pictures, the theatre; their liking for publicity; their willing conformity to standards set for them and ready acceptance of things produced in bulk are a perpetual surprise to Europeans brought up to think of privacy, domesticity and individual development as things of high value.

But this is not so much an American peculiarity as the characteristic of a still unsettled and developing country. Life is not fixed and canalised as it is in old and compact countries in which the greater part of the population expects to live and die where it was born. The sense of unbounded opportunity awaiting those who have the grit and energy to seize it, the desire for new things and the discontent with old ones which is in the blood of pioneers forbids what the Englishman thinks of as rest and leisure. In America there are very few "idle rich," and hardly anyone seems to look forward to retirement and old age. The class of small rentier so numerous in France, where the possession of a little house with a little garden and a small assured income is the dream of the middle-aged, is almost non-existent in the United States. There the rich are not idle because it does not amuse them to be, and those who are retired from one business start another and like to think that they will continue to be wealth-producers till the grave closes over them.

In recent years the native energy of the American people has been the working under the artificial stimulus of the capital poured in from Europe during the war, and great as have been the results in development and wealth-production, it is improbable that this phase can continue indefi-

nitely without a reaction. Though often scoffed at by Europeans, the idealism of the American people is a very real thing, and the signs of its unease may be seen in the stream of criticism which is being poured out by the most distinguished American writers on the American way of life. The tolerance which is accorded to these writers and the wide sales that they enjoy point to a response in the American people which presently may make itself felt in a demand for the things that money cannot buy and the leisure which it ought to bring. All the elements are there—the mental curiosity, the zeal of youth to be educated, and of women to be informed, the response to causes and movements, the demand for beautiful things of great price—everything but leisure. But for this, too, there must with so lively and ingenious a people be a demand, as time goes on. One sees the American people some day turning in on themselves and being fired with an ambition to lead the world in a new civilising movement. All things are possible in this country.

§ IV

The attitude of Americans towards Europe must be interpreted in the light of this intense concentration on their own affairs. For a vast number of them the war was a first discovery of Europe, and not altogether to Europe's advantage. The unquestioning faith of the belligerent lasted till the war ended, but trouble began with the Peace Conference. The onlooker on the far side of the Atlantic saw the proceedings in Paris in the year 1919 as a welter of unintelligible feuds and insatiable ambitions; and he judged that his spokesman was no match for the subtle and accomplished European performers on that scene. To keep out of it and return as quickly as possible to the traditional neutrality of his country, seemed at that moment the sum of all wisdom

to the American man in the street. Why, he asked, should not the States of Europe dwell together in the same amity as the States of the American Union, and if they could not, why should he be bothered with their affairs? Europe has all the time to reckon with this simplified view of its proceedings. The custom and usage and historical charity which mellow the scene for those who live with it are not to be expected from those who view it from a distance.

And yet I believe it is the sober second thought of the country that the reaction against Wilson went too far. It is beginning to be realised that political severance cannot be squared with increasing economic commitments. The universal creditor cannot disinterest himself in the fate of his debtors. To be complete and consistent the policy of "loose from Europe" should have included the cancelling of international debts, for those alone, to say nothing of the commercial credits which have followed in their wake, constitute an entanglement in the intimate affairs of Europe which fatally compromises a policy of neutrality. What Washington does or declines to do in this matter may in the next few years be of the profoundest importance to European nations, not only in their relations with the United States, but in their dealings with each other. Hasty judgments on this subject have done much harm and there is no easy way out of the present situation. On the one side the debtors have to remember that their own extravagant claims on Germany encouraged their creditor to believe that he was only asking his share of what they would presently recover from her; and on the other the creditor has to recognise that the maintenance of his claim to the point of absorbing the whole or greater part of what can be recovered from Germany, must be regarded as a grievance by his debtors.

Americans generally have not realised how great is the

complication which this question threatens to their foreign policy, but when they do realise it, they will, I believe, be prepared to consider its moral and equitable as well as its legal and commercial aspects. When that time comes, the way out will be found not by objurgations from Europe, but by the teaching of events and the innate kindliness of the American people. A large allowance must be made, meanwhile, for the difficulties of politicians who have inherited what looks like a solid asset in relief of American taxation and cannot be expected to abandon it except with the willing consent of their taxpayers. But all the signs point to a reawakening of the American people to the fact that they have a part to play in the world which cannot be discharged by any formula of neutrality. Mr. Kellogg's proposal for the all-round renunciation of war as an instrument of policy is from that point of view of the highest importance, and, if it comes to a prosperous issue, may mean at least that, without compromising its independence, the United States desires to be consulted in world affairs. No one can have visited the United States in recent months and had any intercourse with those who are shaping its policy without becoming aware of something stirring which may in the end make of the United States not an isolated country shrinking from entanglements, but a World Power, acknowledging its duties as a leader among nations.

§ v

For some years now the intentions of the United States, like those of Soviet Russia, have hung like a note of interrogation over all policy in Europe. There is no nation which can leave it out of the reckoning and none which can presume on its intentions. The United States might seek to turn its back on Europe, but Europe cannot turn its back on the

United States. In one way or another the question which it poses must be answered, for it is inconceivable that so great a country should be without an international policy.

I have dwelt in the previous chapters mainly on the things to be avoided in the relations of Great Britain and the United States. But an Englishman feels reluctant to end on that negative note. The things that the two countries might learn from one another and the things that they might do for the world, if they kept step together, are so evident, that at least to dream of them and hope for them must be permitted. I am persuaded that, as between Englishman and American, it is as foolish to say that kinship and language count for nothing as to suppose that they count for everything. No one can have travelled as I have in all parts of the United States and been everywhere admitted to comradeship and intimacy without knowing for what they count. But they belong to the imponderables, which weigh most when one does not weigh too heavily upon them. It is a good rule in international as in domestic life not to presume on relationship, and above all not to give oneself the airs of an elderly relative. The Englishman has always to remember that every American Administration is faced with a delicate racial problem in which to keep a strict balance between the nations from which the population of the United States is drawn, seems a national necessity. And precisely because a preference for Great Britain is more easily suspected than any other it may seem at times that in the disarming of that suspicion Great Britain gets a little less than justice from American politicians. But these things lie on the surface and do not affect the natural friendly disposition towards one another which is the abiding mood of the great majority in both countries.

To face difficult questions candidly and fairly, to nurse no grievances which cannot be avowed and explored, and at

all times to keep in touch, is all the advice that can be tendered to British and American Governments in their dealings with one another. There is no British-American policy which can be pursued against the rest of the world and none is to be desired. But Great Britain still stands on the bridge between the new world and the old and she may still help in interpreting the one to the other.

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