

of these matters I have discussed elsewhere, and may again. Some are also European problems as well as American. Some are urban, without regard to international boundaries. The mob mentality of the city crowd everywhere is coming to be one of the menaces to modern civilization. The ideal of democracy and the reality of the crowd are the two sides of the shield of modern government. "I think our governments will remain virtuous . . . as long as they are chiefly agricultural; and this will be as long as there shall be vacant lands in any part of America. When they get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, they will become corrupt as in Europe," wrote Jefferson in the days of the Bourbons.

If, as I have said, the things already listed were all we had had to contribute, America would have made no distinctive and unique gift to mankind. But there has been also the *American dream*, that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of a social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. I once had an intelligent young Frenchman as guest in New York, and after a few days I asked him what struck him most among his new impressions. Without hesitation he replied, "The way that everyone of every sort looks you right in the eye, without a thought of inequality." Some time ago a foreigner who used to do some work for me, and who had picked up a very fair education, used occasionally to sit and chat with me in my study after he had finished his work. One day he said that such a relationship was the great difference between America and his homeland. There, he said, "I would do my work and might get a pleasant word, but I could never sit and talk like this. There is a difference there

between social grades which cannot be got over. I would not talk to you there as man to man, but as my employer."

No, the American dream that has lured tens of millions of all nations to our shores in the past century has not been a dream of merely material plenty, though that has doubtless counted heavily. It has been much more than that. It has been a dream of being able to grow to fullest development as man and woman, unhampered by the barriers which had slowly been erected in older civilizations, unrepressed by social orders which had developed for the benefit of classes rather than for the simple human being of any and every class. And that dream has been realized more fully in actual life here than anywhere else, though very imperfectly even among ourselves.

It has been a great epic and a great dream. What, now, of the future?

From the material standpoint, it is probable that the extreme depression will pass in a year or two, barring social and political overturn in some countries, which might delay recovery. I am not here concerned with the longer economic problems raised by the relations of world distribution and consumption under mass production. The problems, fundamental and of extreme seriousness, have been amply discussed elsewhere and by those more competent. But whether, in the next decade, we shall have again to face a furious economic pace or whether we shall be confronted by a marked slowing down of our economic machine, the chief factor in how we shall meet either situation is that of the American mind. One of the interesting questions with regard to that is whether our long subjection to the frontier and other American influences has produced a new type or merely a transient change. Can we hold to the good and escape from the bad? Are the dream and the idealism of the frontier and the New Land inextricably involved with the ugly scars which have also been left on us by our three centuries of exploitation and conquest of the continent?

We have already tried to show how some of the scars were obtained; how it was that we came to insist upon business and

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SAIL — sail thy best, ship of Democracy!
Of value is thy freight — 't is not the Present only,
The Past is also stored in thee!
Thou holdest not the venture of thyself alone — not of the western
continent alone;
Earth's résumé entire floats on thy keel, O ship — is steadied by
thy spars;
With thee Time voyages in trust, the antecedent nations sink or
swim with thee,
With all their ancient struggles, martyrs, heroes, epics, wars, thou
bearest the other continents;
Theirs, theirs as much as thine, the destination-port triumphant;
Steer then with good strong hand and wary eye, O helmsman —
thou carriest great companions,
Venerable, priestly Asia sails this day with thee,
And royal feudal Europe sails with thee. . . .

How can I pierce the impenetrable blank of the future?

I feel thy ominous greatness, evil as well as good;

I watch thee, advancing, absorbing the present, transcending the
past;

I see thy light lighting and thy shadow shadowing, as if the entire
globe;

But I do not undertake to define thee — hardly to comprehend thee.

— WALT WHITMAN