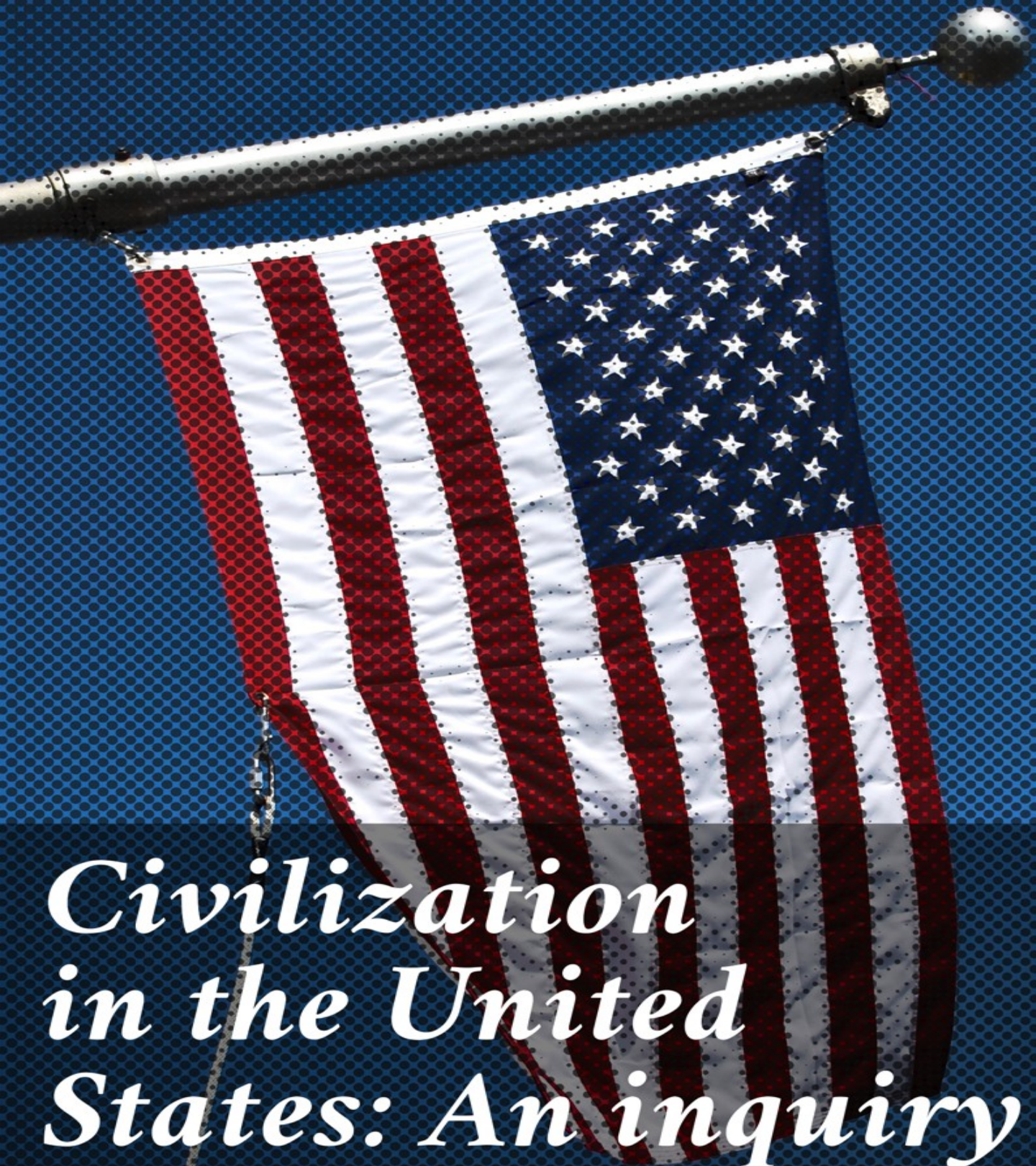


**Various Authors**



*Civilization  
in the United  
States: An inquiry  
by thirty Americans*

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# **Civilization in the United States: An inquiry by thirty Americans**



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# PREFACE

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THIS book has been an adventure in intellectual co-operation. If it were a mere collection of haphazard essays, gathered together to make the conventional symposium, it would have only slight significance. But it has been the deliberate and organized outgrowth of the common efforts of like-minded men and women to see the problem of modern American civilization as a whole, and to illuminate by careful criticism the special aspect of that civilization with which the individual is most familiar. Personal contact has served to correct overemphasis, and slow and careful selection of the members of a group which has now grown to some thirty-odd has given to this work a unity of approach and attack which it otherwise could not possibly have had.

The nucleus of this group was brought together by common work, common interests, and more or less common assumptions. As long ago as the autumn of last year Mr. Van Wyck Brooks and I discussed the possibility of several of us, who were engaged in much the same kind of critical examination of our civilization, coming together to exchange ideas, to clarify our individual fields, and to discover wherein they coincided, overlapped, or diverged. The original desire was the modest one of making it possible for us to avoid working at cross-purposes. I suggested that we meet at my home, which a few of us did, and since that time until the delivery of this volume to the publishers we have met every fortnight. Even at our first meeting we discovered our points

of view to have so much in common that our desire for informal and pleasant discussions became the more serious wish to contribute a definite and tangible piece of work towards the advance of intellectual life in America. We wished to speak the truth about American civilization as we saw it, in order to do our share in making a real civilization possible—for I think with all of us there was a common assumption that a field cannot be ploughed until it has first been cleared of rocks, and that constructive criticism can hardly exist until there is something on which to construct.

Naturally the first problem to arise was the one of ways and means. If the spirit and temper of the French encyclopædists of the 18th century appealed strongly to us, certainly their method for the advancement of knowledge was inapplicable in our own century. The cultural phenomena we proposed to survey were too complicated and extensive; besides, we wished to make a definite contribution of some kind or another while, so to speak, there was yet time. For the cohesiveness of the group, the good-humoured tolerance and cheerful sacrifice of time, were to some extent the consequence of the intellectual collapse that came with the hysterical post-armistice days, when it was easier than in normal times to get together intelligent and civilized men and women in common defence against the common enemy of reaction. We wished to take advantage of this strategic situation for the furtherance of our co-operative enterprise, and decided, finally, that the simplest plan would be the best. Each of us was to write a single short essay on the special topic we knew most thoroughly; we were to continue our meetings in order to

keep informed of the progress of our work and to see that there was no duplication; we were to extend the list of subjects to whatever legitimately bore upon our cultural life and to select the authors by common agreement; we were to keep in touch with each other so that the volume might have that inner consistency which could come only from direct acquaintance with what each of us was planning.

There were a few other simple rules which we laid down in the beginning. Desirous of avoiding merely irrelevant criticism and of keeping attention upon our actual treatment of our subjects rather than upon our personalities, we provided that all contributors to the volume must be American citizens. For the same reason, we likewise provided that in the list there should be no professional propagandists—except as one is a propagandist for one's own ideas—no martyrs, and no one who was merely disgruntled. Since our object was to give an uncompromising, and consequently at some points necessarily harsh, analysis, we desired the tone to be good-natured and the temper urbane. At first, these larger points of policy were decided by common agreement or, on occasion, by majority vote, and to the end I settled no important question without consultation with as many members of the group as I could approach within the limited time we had agreed to have this volume in the hands of the publisher. But with the extension of the scope of the book, the negotiations with the publisher, and the mass of complexities and details that are inevitable in so difficult an enterprise, the authority to decide specific questions and the usual editorial powers were delegated as a matter of



convenience to me, aided by a committee of three. Hence I was in a position constantly to see the book as a whole, and to make suggestions for differentiation, where repetition appeared to impend, or for unity, where the divergence was sharp enough to be construed by some as contradictory. In view both of the fact that every contributor has full liberty of opinion and that the personalities and points of view finding expression in the essays are all highly individualistic, the underlying unity which binds the volume together is really surprising.

It may seem strange that a volume on civilization in the United States does not include a specific article on religion, and the omission is worth a paragraph of explanation. Outside the bigger cities, certainly no one can understand the social structure of contemporary American life without careful study of the organization and power of the church. Speaking generally, we are a church-going people, and at least on the surface the multiplicity of sects and creeds, the sheer immensity of the physical apparatus by which the religious impulse is articulated, would seem to prove that our interest in and emotional craving for religious experience are enormous. But the omission has not been due to any superciliousness on our part towards the subject itself; on the contrary, I suppose I have put more thought and energy into this essay, which has not been written, than into any other problem connected with the book. The bald truth is, it has been next to impossible to get any one to write on the subject; most of the people I approached shied off—it was really difficult to get them to talk about it at all. Almost unanimously, when I did manage to procure an

opinion from them, they said that real religious feeling in America had disappeared, that the church had become a purely social and political institution, that the country is in the grip of what Anatole France has aptly called Protestant clericalism, and that, finally, they weren't interested in the topic. The accuracy of these observations (except the last) I cannot, of course, vouch for, but it is rather striking that they were identical. In any event, the topic as a topic has had to be omitted; but it is not neglected, for in several essays directly—in particular, "Philosophy" and "Nerves"—and in many by implication the subject is discussed. At one time Mr. James Harvey Robinson consented to write the article—and it would have been an illuminating piece of work—but unfortunately ill health and the pressure of official duties made the task impossible for him within the most generous time limit that might be arranged.

I have spoken already of the unity which underlies the volume. When I remember all these essays, and try to summon together the chief themes that run through them, either by explicit statement or as a kind of underlying rhythm to all, in order to justify the strong impression of unity, I find three major contentions that may be said to be basic—contentions all the more significant inasmuch as they were unpremeditated and were arrived at, as it were, by accident rather than design. They are:

First, That in almost every branch of American life there is a sharp dichotomy between preaching and practice; we let not our right hand know what our left hand doeth. Curiously enough, no one regards this, and in fact no one consciously feels this as hypocrisy—there are certain

abstractions and dogmas which are sacred to us, and if we fall short of these external standards in our private life, that is no reason for submitting them to a fresh examination; rather are we to worship them the more vociferously to show our sense of sin. Regardless, then, of the theoretical excellence or stupidity of these standards, in actual practice the moral code resolves itself into the one cardinal heresy of being found out, with the chief sanction enforcing it, the fear of what people will say.

Second, That whatever else American civilization is, it is not Anglo-Saxon, and that we shall never achieve any genuine nationalistic self-consciousness as long as we allow certain financial and social minorities to persuade us that we are still an English Colony. Until we begin seriously to appraise and warmly to cherish the heterogeneous elements which make up our life, and to see the common element running through all of them, we shall make not even a step towards true unity; we shall remain, in Roosevelt's class-conscious and bitter but illuminating phrase, a polyglot boarding-house. It is curious how a book on American civilization actually leads one back to the conviction that we are, after all, Americans.

Third, That the most moving and pathetic fact in the social life of America to-day is emotional and æsthetic starvation, of which the mania for petty regulation, the driving, regimentating, and drilling, the secret society and its grotesque regalia, the firm grasp on the unessentials of material organization of our pleasures and gaities are all eloquent stigmata. We have no heritages or traditions to which to cling except those that have already withered in

our hands and turned to dust. One can feel the whole industrial and economic situation as so maladjusted to the primary and simple needs of men and women that the futility of a rationalistic attack on these infantilisms of compensation becomes obvious. There must be an entirely new deal of the cards in one sense; we must change our hearts. For only so, unless through the humbling of calamity or scourge, can true art and true religion and true personality, with their native warmth and caprice and gaiety, grow up in America to exorcise these painted devils we have created to frighten us away from the acknowledgment of our spiritual poverty.

If these main contentions seem severe or pessimistic, the answer must be: we do not write to please; we strive only to understand and to state as clearly as we can. For American civilization is still in the embryonic stage, with rich and with disastrous possibilities of growth. But the first step in growing up is self-conscious and deliberately critical examination of ourselves, without sentimentality and without fear. We cannot even devise, much less control, the principles which are to guide our future development until that preliminary understanding has come home with telling force to the consciousness of the ordinary man. To this self-understanding, this book is, in our belief, a genuine and valuable contribution. We may not always have been wise; we have tried always to be honest. And if our attempt will help to embolden others to an equally frank expression of their beliefs, perhaps in time wisdom will come.

I am glad that, however serious, we are never solemn in these essays. Often, in fact, we are quite gay, and it would

be a humourless person indeed who could not read many of them, even when the thrusts are at himself, with that laughter which Rabelais tells us is proper to the man. For whatever our defects, we Americans, we have one virtue and perhaps a saving virtue—we still know how to laugh at ourselves.

H.E.S.

New York City, July Fourth, 1921.



# **CIVILIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

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# THE CITY

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Around us, in the city, each epoch in America has been concentrated and crystallized. In building our cities we deflowered a wilderness. To-day more than one-half the population of the United States lives in an environment which the jerry-builder, the real estate speculator, the paving contractor, and the industrialist have largely created. Have we begotten a civilization? That is a question which a survey of the American city will help us to answer.

If American history is viewed from the standpoint of the student of cities, it divides itself roughly into three parts. The first was a provincial period, which lasted from the foundation of Manhattan down to the opening up of ocean commerce after the War of 1812. This was followed by a commercial period, which began with the cutting of canals and ended with the extension of the railroad system across the continent, and an industrial period, that gathered force on the Atlantic seaboard in the 'thirties and is still the dominant economic phase of our civilization. These periods must not be looked upon as strictly successive or exclusive: the names merely express in a crude way the main aspect of each era. It is possible to telescope the story of America's colonial expansion and industrial exploitation by following the material growth and the cultural impoverishment of the American city during its transformations.

The momentum of the provincial city lasted well on to the Civil War. The economic basis of this period was



agriculture and petty trade: its civic expression was, typically, the small New England town, with a central common around which were grouped a church—appropriately called a meeting-house—a school, and perhaps a town hall. Its main street would be lined with tall suave elms and bordered by reticent white houses of much the same design as those that dotted the countryside. In the growing towns of the seaboard this culture was overthrown, before it had a chance to express itself adequately in either institutions or men, and it bloomed rather tardily, therefore, in the little towns of Concord and Cambridge, between 1820 and the Civil War. We know it to-day through a largely anonymous architecture, and through a literature created by the school of writers that bears the name of the chief city. Unfortunately for the further development of what we might call the Concord culture, the agricultural basis of this civilization shifted to the wheat-growing West; and therewith channels of trade were diverted from Boston to ports that tapped a richer, more imperial hinterland. What remained of the provincial town in New England was a mummy-case.

The civilization of the New England town spent itself in the settlement of the Ohio Valley and the great tracts beyond. None of the new centres had, *qua* provincial towns, any fresh contribution to make. It had taken the culture of New England more than three centuries before it had borne its Concord fruit, and the story of the Western movement is somehow summed up in the legend of Johnny Appleseed, who planted dry apple seeds, instead of slips from the living tree, and hedged the roads he travelled with wild apples, harsh and puny and inedible. Cincinnati and Pittsburgh

jumped from a frustrate provincialism into the midst of the machine era; and so for a long time they remained destitute of the institutions that are necessary to carry on the processes of civilization.

West of the Alleghanies, the common, with its church and school, was not destined to dominate the urban landscape: the railroad station and the commercial hotel had come to take their place. This was indeed the universal mark of the new industrialism, as obvious in 19th-century Oxford as in Hoboken. The pioneer American city, however, had none of the cultural institutions that had been accumulated in Europe during the great outbursts of the Middle Age and the Renaissance, and as a result its destitution was naked and apparent. It is true that every town which was developed mainly during the 19th century—Manchester as well as Milwaukee—suffered from the absence of civic institutes. The peculiarity of the New World was that the facilities for borrowing from the older centres were considerably more limited. London could export Madox Brown to Manchester to do the murals in the Town Hall: New York had still to create its schools of art before it had any Madox Browns that could be exported.

With the beginning of the 19th century, market centres which had at first tapped only their immediate region began to reach further back into the hinterland, and to stretch outward, not merely for freight but for immigrants, across the ocean. The silly game of counting heads became the fashion, and in the literature of the 'thirties one discovers that every commercial city had its statistical lawyer who was bold enough to predict its leadership in "population and

wealth" before the century was out. The chief boast of the American city was its prospective size.

Now the New England town was a genuine community. In so far as the New England community had a common social and political and religious life, the town expressed it. The city which was representative of the second period, on the other hand, was in origin a trading fort, and the supreme occupation of its founders was with the goods life rather than the good life. New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and St. Louis have this common basis. They were not composed of corporate organizations on the march, as it were, towards a New Jerusalem: they were simply a rabble of individuals "on the make." With such a tradition to give it momentum it is small wonder that the adventurousness of the commercial period was exhausted on the fortuities and temptations of trade. A state of intellectual anæsthesia prevailed. One has only to compare Cist's *Cincinnati Miscellany* with Emerson's *Dial* to see at what a low level the towns of the Middle West were carrying on.

Since there was neither fellowship nor social stability nor security in the scramble of the inchoate commercial city, it remained for a particular institution to devote itself to the gospel of the "glad hand." Thus an historian of Pittsburgh records the foundation of a Masonic lodge as early as 1785, shortly after the building of the church, and in every American city, small or big, Odd Fellows, Mystic Shriners, Woodmen, Elks, Knights of Columbus, and other orders without number in the course of time found for themselves a prominent place. (Their feminine counterparts were the D.A.R. and the W.C.T.U., their juniors, the college Greek

letter fraternities.) Whereas one will search American cities in vain for the labour temples one discovers to-day in Europe from Belgium to Italy, one finds that the fraternal lodge generally occupies a site of dignity and importance. There were doubtless many excellent reasons for the strange proliferation of professional fraternity in the American city, but perhaps the strongest reason was the absence of any other kind of fraternity. The social centre and the community centre, which in a singularly hard and consciously beatific way have sought to organize fellowship and mutual aid on different terms, are products of the last decade.

Perhaps the only other civic institution of importance that the commercial towns fostered was the lyceum: forerunner of the elephantine Chautauqua. The lyceum lecture, however, was taken as a soporific rather than a stimulant, and if it aroused any appetite for art, philosophy, or science there was nothing in the environment of the commercial city that could satisfy it. Just as church-going became a substitute for religion, so automatic lyceum attendance became a substitute for thought. These were the prayer wheels of a preoccupied commercialism.

The contrast between the provincial and the commercial city in America was well summed up in their plans. Consider the differences between Cambridge and New York. Up to the beginning of the 19th century New York, at the tip of Manhattan Island, had the same diffident, rambling town plan that characterizes Cambridge. In this old type of city layout the streets lead nowhere, except to the buildings that give onto them: outside the main roads the provisions for

traffic are so inadequate as to seem almost a provision against traffic. Quiet streets, a pleasant aspect, ample domestic facilities were the desiderata of the provincial town; traffic, realty speculation, and expansion were those of the newer era. This became evident as soon as the Empire City started to realize its “manifest destiny” by laying down, in 1808, a plan for its future development.

New York’s city plan commissioners went about their work with a scarcely concealed purpose to increase traffic and raise realty values. The amenities of city life counted for little in their scheme of things: debating “whether they should confine themselves to rectilinear and rectangular streets, or whether they should adopt some of those supposed improvements, by circles, ovals, and stars,” they decided, on grounds of economy, against any departure from the gridiron design. It was under the same stimulus that these admirable philistines had the complacency to plan the city’s development up to 155th Street. Here we are concerned, however, with the results of the rectangular plan rather than with the motives that lay behind its adoption throughout the country.

The principal effect of the gridiron plan is that every street becomes a thoroughfare, and that every thoroughfare is potentially a commercial street. The tendency towards movement in such a city vastly outweighs the tendency towards settlement. As a result of progressive shifts in population, due to the changes to which commercial competition subjects the use of land, the main institutions of the city, instead of cohering naturally—as the museums, galleries, theatres, clubs, and public offices group

themselves in the heart of Westminster—are dispersed in every direction. Neither Columbia University, New York University, the Astor Library, nor the National Academy of Design—to seize but a few examples—is on its original site. Yet had Columbia remained at Fiftieth Street it might have had some effective working relation with the great storehouse of books that now occupies part of Bryant Park at Forty-second Street; or, alternatively, had the Astor Library remained on its old site it might have had some connection with New York University—had that institution not in turn moved!

What was called the growth of the commercial city was really a manifestation of the absence of design in the gridiron plan. The rectangular parcelling of ground promoted speculation in land-units and the ready interchange of real property: it had no relation whatever to the essential purposes for which a city exists. It is not a little significant that Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, each of which had space set aside for public purposes in their original plans, had given up these civic holdings to the realty gambler before half of the 19th century was over. The common was not the centre of a well-rounded community life, as in New England, but the centre of land-speculation—which was at once the business, the recreation, and the religion of the commercial city. Under the influence of New York the Scadders whom Martin Chuzzlewit encountered were laying down their New Edens throughout the country.

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It was during the commercial period that the evolution of the Promenade, such as existed in New York at Battery Park, took place. The new promenade was no longer a park but a

shop-lined thoroughfare, Broadway. Shopping became for the more domesticated half of the community an exciting, bewildering amusement; and out of a combination of Yankee "notions," Barnum-like advertisement, and magisterial organization arose that *omnium gatherum* of commerce, the department store. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the part that Broadway—I use the term generically—has played in the American town. It is not merely the Agora but the Acropolis. When the factory whistle closes the week, and the factory hands of Camden, or Pittsburgh, or Bridgeport pour out of the buildings and stockades in which they spend the more exhausting half of their lives, it is through Broadway that the greater part of their repressions seek an outlet. Both the name and the institution extend across the continent from New York to Los Angeles. Up and down these second-hand Broadways, from one in the afternoon until past ten at night, drifts a more or less aimless mass of human beings, bent upon extracting such joy as is possible from the sights in the windows, the contacts with other human beings, the occasional or systematic flirtations, and the risks and adventures of purchase.

In the early development of Broadway the amusements were adventitious. Even at present, in spite of the ubiquitous movie, the crowded street itself, at least in the smaller communities, is the main source of entertainment. Now, under normal conditions, for a great part of the population in a factory town one of the chief instincts to be repressed is that of acquisition (collection). It is not merely that the average factory worker cannot afford the luxuries of life: the worst is that he must think twice before purchasing

the necessities. Out of this situation one of Broadway's happiest achievements has arisen: the five and ten cent store. In the five and ten cent store it is possible for the circumscribed factory operative to obtain the illusion of unmoderated expenditure—and even extravagance—without actually inflicting any irreparable rent in his purse. Broadway is thus, in more than one sense, the great compensatory device of the American city. The dazzle of white lights, the colour of electric signs, the alabaster architecture of the moving-picture palaces, the æsthetic appeals of the shop windows—these stand for elements that are left out of the drab perspectives of the industrial city. People who do not know how to spend their time must take what satisfaction they can in spending their money. That is why, although the five and ten cent store itself is perhaps mainly an institution for the proletariat, the habits and dispositions it encourages are universal. The chief amusement of Atlantic City, that opulent hostelry-annex of New York and Philadelphia, lies not in the beach and the ocean but in the shops which line the interminable Broadway known as the Boardwalk.

Broadway, in sum, is the façade of the American city: a false front. The highest achievements of our material civilization—and at their best our hotels, our department stores, and our Woolworth towers are achievements—count as so many symptoms of its spiritual failure. In order to cover up the vacancy of getting and spending in our cities, we have invented a thousand fresh devices for getting and spending. As a consequence our life is externalized. The principal institutions of the American city are merely



distractions that take our eyes off the environment, instead of instruments which would help us to mould it creatively a little nearer to humane hopes and desires.

The birth of industrialism in America is announced in the opening of the Crystal Palace in Bryant Park, Manhattan, in 1853. Between the Crystal Palace Exhibition and the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 lies a period whose defects were partly accentuated by the exhaustion that followed the Civil War. The debasement of the American city during this period can be read in almost every building that was erected. The influence of colonial architecture had waned to extinction during the first half of the century. There followed a period of eclectic experiment, in which all sorts of Egyptian, Byzantine, Gothic, and Arabesque ineptitudes were committed—a period whose absurdities we have only in recent years begun to escape. The domestic style, as the century progressed, became more limited. Little touches about the doors, mouldings, fanlights, and balustrades disappeared, and finally craftsmanship went out of style altogether and a pretentious architectural puffery took its place. The “era of good feeling” was an era of bad taste.

Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Chicago give perhaps the most naked revelation of the industrial city's characteristics. There were two institutions that set their mark upon the early part of this period. One of them was the Mechanics' Hall. This was usually a building of red brick, structural iron, and glass, whose unique hideousness marks it as a typical product of the age of coal-industrialism, to be put alongside the “smoke-halls” of the railroad termini. The other institution was the German beer-garden—the one bright

spot on the edge of an urban landscape that was steadily becoming more dingy, more dull, and more depressing. The cities that came to life in this period had scarcely any other civic apparatus to boast of. Conceive of Pittsburgh without Schenley Park, without the Carnegie Institute, without the Library or the Museum or the Concert Hall, and without the institutions that have grown up during the last generation around its sub-Acropolis—and one has a picture of Progress and Poverty that Henry George might have drawn on for illustration. The industrial city did not represent the creative values in civilization: it stood for a new form of human barbarism. In the coal towns of Pennsylvania, the steel towns of the Ohio and its tributaries, and the factory towns of Long Island Sound and Narragansett Bay was an environment much more harsh, antagonistic, and brutal than anything the pioneers had encountered. Even the fake exhilaration of the commercial city was lacking.

The reaction against the industrial city was expressed in various ways. The defect of these reactions was that they were formulated in terms of an escape from the environment rather than in a reconstruction of it. Symptomatic of this escape, along one particular alley, was the architecture of Richardson, and of his apprentices, McKim and White. No one who has an eye for the fine incidence of beautiful architecture can avoid a shock at discovering a monumental Romanesque building at the foot of Pittsburgh's dingy "Hump," or the hardly less monstrous beauty of Trinity Church, Boston, as one approaches it from a waste of railroad yards that lie on one side of it. It was no accident, one is inclined to believe, that Richardson should

have returned to the Romanesque only a little time before Henry Adams was exploring Mont St. Michel and Chartres. Both men were searching for a specific against the fever of industrialism, and architects like Richardson were taking to archaic beauty as a man who was vaguely ill might have recourse to quinine, in the hope that his disease had sufficient similarity to malaria to be cured by it.

The truth is that the doses of exotic architecture which Richardson and his school sought to inject into the American city were anodynes rather than specifics. The Latin Renaissance models of McKim and White—the Boston Public Library and Madison Square Garden, for example—were perhaps a little better suited to the concrete demands of the new age; but they were still a long way from that perfect congruence with contemporary habits and modes of thought which was recorded in buildings like Independence Hall. Almost down to the last decade the best buildings of the industrial period have been anonymous, and scarcely ever recognized for their beauty. A grain elevator here, a warehouse there, an office building, a garage—there has been the promise of a stripped, athletic, classical style of architecture in these buildings which shall embody all that is good in the Machine Age: its precision, its cleanliness, its hard illuminations, its unflinching logic. Dickens once poked fun at the architecture of Coketown because its infirmary looked like its jail and its jail like its town hall. But the joke had a sting to it only because these buildings were all plaintively destitute of æsthetic inspiration. In a place and an age that had achieved a well-rounded and balanced culture, we should expect to find the same spirit expressed

in the simplest cottage and the grandest public building. So we find it, for instance, in the humble market towns of the Middle Age: there is not one type of architecture for 15th-century Shaftesbury and another for London; neither is there one style for public London and quite another for domestic London. Our architects in America have only just begun to cease regarding the Gothic style as especially fit for churches and schools, whilst they favour the Roman mode for courts, and the Byzantine, perhaps, for offices. Even the unique beauty of the Bush Terminal Tower is compromised by an antiquely “stylized” interior.

With the beginning of the second decade of this century there is some evidence of an attempt to make a genuine culture out of industrialism—instead of attempting to escape from industrialism into a culture which, though doubtless genuine enough, has the misfortune to be dead. The schoolhouses in Gary, Indiana, have some of the better qualities of a Gary steel plant. That symptom is all to the good. It points perhaps to a time when the Gary steel plant may have some of the educational virtues of a Gary school. One of the things that has made the industrial age a horror in America is the notion that there is something shameful in its manifestations. The idea that nobody would ever go near an industrial plant except under stress of starvation is in part responsible for the heaps of rubbish and rusty metal, for the general disorder and vileness, that still characterize broad acres of our factory districts. There is nothing short of the Alkali Desert that compares with the desolateness of the common American industrial town. These qualities are indicative of the fact that we have centred attention not

upon the process but upon the return; not upon the task but the emoluments: not upon what we can get out of our work but upon what we can achieve when we get away from our work. Our industrialism has been in the grip of business, and our industrial cities, and their institutions, have exhibited a major preoccupation with business. The coercive repression of an impersonal, mechanical technique was compensated by the pervasive will-to-power—or at least will-to-comfort—of commercialism.

We have shirked the problem of trying to live well in a régime that is devoted to the production of T-beams and toothbrushes and TNT. As a result, we have failed to react creatively upon the environment with anything like the inspiration that one might have found in a group of mediæval peasants building a cathedral. The urban worker escapes the mechanical routine of his daily job only to find an equally mechanical substitute for life and growth and experience in his amusements. The Gay White Way with its stupendous blaze of lights, and Coney Island, with its fear-stimulating roller coasters and chute-the-chutes, are characteristic by-products of an age that has renounced the task of actively humanizing the machine, and of creating an environment in which all the fruitful impulses of the community may be expressed. The movies, the White Ways, and the Coney Islands, which almost every American city boasts in some form or other, are means of giving jaded and throttled people the sensations of living without the direct experience of life—a sort of spiritual masturbation. In short, we have had the alternative of humanizing the industrial

city or de-humanizing the population. So far we have de-humanized the population.

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The external reactions against the industrial city came to a head in the World's Fair at Chicago. In that strange and giddy mixture of Parnassus and Coney Island was born a new conception of the city—a White City, spaciously designed, lighted by electricity, replete with monuments, crowned with public buildings, and dignified by a radiant architecture. The men who planned the exposition knew something about the better side of the spacious perspectives that Haussmann had designed for Napoleon III. Without taking into account the fundamental conditions of industrialism, or the salient facts of economics, they initiated what shortly came to be known as the City Beautiful movement. For a couple of decades Municipal Art societies were rampant. Their programme had the defects of the régime it attempted to combat. Its capital effort was to put on a front—to embellish Main Street and make it a more attractive thoroughfare. Here in æsthetics, as elsewhere in education, persisted the brahminical view of culture: the idea that beauty was something that could be acquired by any one who was willing to put up the cash; that it did not arise naturally out of the good life but was something which could be plastered on impoverished life; in short, that it was a cosmetic.

Until the Pittsburgh Survey of 1908 pricked a pin through superficial attempts at municipal improvement, those who sought to remake the American city overlooked the necessity for rectifying its economic basis. The meanness, the spotty development, and the congestion of the