



# *The American Story*

GARET GARRETT

*The*  
**American**  
**Story**



*The*  
American  
Story

*by*  
Garet  
Garrett



HENRY REGNERY COMPANY

*Chicago* • 1955

Copyright 1955 by Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, Illinois.  
Copyright under International Copyright Union. Manufactured in  
the United States of America. Library of Congress Catalog Card  
Number: 55-5163

DEDICATED

*to*

DOROTHY

—G.G.



# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
APOLOGUE . . . . .	1
BOOK ONE	
I THE WORLD IN EUROPE'S BELLY . . . . .	5
II THE AMERICAN STORY BEGINS . . . . .	13
III FREEDOM ON A RAFT . . . . .	23
IV BEARDING THE RELUCTANT LION . . . . .	33
BOOK TWO	
I GIANT IN THE GRISTLE . . . . .	39
II THE FEUD WITH TIME . . . . .	43
III CONCERNING MEN . . . . .	48
IV FREEDOM'S LARES AND PENATES . . . . .	61
V THE AMERICAN SYSTEM . . . . .	66
VI LAND ECSTASY . . . . .	75
VII KILLING THE GREAT REPTILE . . . . .	85
VIII THE HEAT OF SIN . . . . .	95
IX LINCOLN . . . . .	101
X IN THE SCALES OF BATTLE . . . . .	106

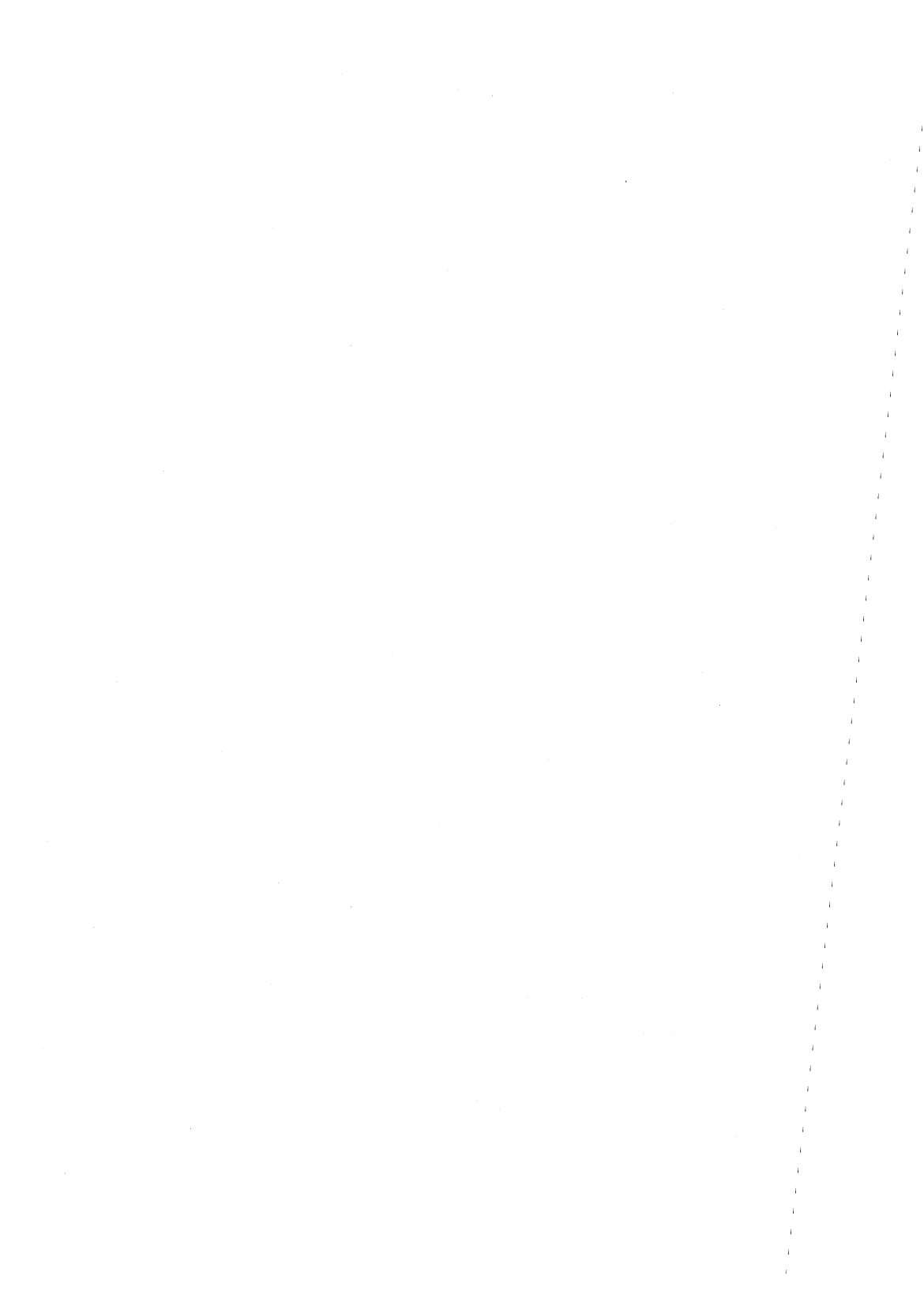


## CONTENTS—*continued*

CHAPTER	PAGE
BOOK THREE	
I OVERSIZE SINEWS . . . . .	119
II LAISSEZ FAIRE . . . . .	129
III LOSING HEAVEN AND HELL . . . . .	139
IV A GILDED CONSCIENCE . . . . .	147
V QUARRELING OVER DIVISION . . . . .	156
VI SATAN WAS MONEY . . . . .	160
VII WORLD, MOVE OVER . . . . .	170
VIII GOING FORTH . . . . .	174
IX THE FIRST ROOSEVELT . . . . .	182
X THE BIG STICK AT HOME . . . . .	185
BOOK FOUR	
I MR. WILSON'S CRUSADE . . . . .	199
II THE WILY OLD WORLD . . . . .	214
III STRANGE NORMALCY . . . . .	226
IV ABYSS . . . . .	236
V A TREACHEROUS DAWN . . . . .	245
VI THE ROOSEVELT REVOLUTION . . . . .	256
VII PROLAPSE . . . . .	265
VIII UNPLANNED DEBACLE . . . . .	283
IX THE RED SNAKE . . . . .	290

## CONTENTS—*continued*

CHAPTER	PAGE
BOOK FIVE	
I STALKING A WAR . . . . .	299
II BACKING INTO IT . . . . .	309
III WHENCE THE ATTACK CAME . . . . .	315
IV THE TOOLS OF WAR . . . . .	323
V COMRADES ALL . . . . .	330
VI ON HIS FEET . . . . .	333
VII MIGHT . . . . .	339
VIII SUICIDE OF VICTORY . . . . .	346
IX CHRONOLOGY CONTINUED: THE BOMB . . . . .	356
BOOK SIX	
I FACE OF EMPIRE . . . . .	363
II BUYING ALLIES . . . . .	372
III THE TOP OF THE WORLD . . . . .	379
IV LOOKING BACK . . . . .	385
APOSTROPHE . . . . .	393
APOLOGUE . . . . .	399



*The*  
American  
Story



## APOLOGUE

THE AMERICAN STORY, from its beginning on the empty stage of a New World until now, is entirely improbable. Every attempt to account for it rationally leaves you with a feeling that something important, perhaps the most important thing of all, has been left out. Yet you cannot say what that was. Many will say freedom did it; but the story of freedom itself is not clear. Nothing is ever quite as we see it. For all its seeming reality we cannot be sure that a thousand years hence it may not all have dissolved in myth. If you believe there is Divine agency in human affairs that makes it easier, for then you may imagine it was as if—

Mankind's Advocate had been speaking continuously since last the Great Dipper was in a spilling position. A long silence was broken by the sound of the Supreme Voice, saying:

*"They have done badly with the world they possess."*

*"Very badly,"* admitted Mankind's Advocate.

*"And worse,"* said the Supreme Voice, *"since they have known good from evil."*

*"Would that they had been endowed with wisdom too,"* said Mankind's Advocate.

*"You have learned to speak as they speak,"* said the Supreme Voice. *"You know very well that wisdom does not exist. Therefore we cannot impart it. Wisdom is the fumbling substitute for perfect knowledge."*

*"Knowledge of good and evil,"* said Mankind's Advocate,

*"made them both better and worse. It should not have come first."*

*"What should have come first?" the Supreme Voice asked.*

*"Knowledge of matter," said Mankind's Advocate.*

*"How could knowledge of matter have saved them from their follies?" asked the Supreme Voice.*

*"If the secrets of matter are revealed to them," said Mankind's Advocate, "they will learn that what works is law. In law there is truth. In truth there is neither good nor evil."*

*"If they possessed the secrets of matter," the Supreme Voice asked, "what would keep them from thinking they were gods, not men?"*

*"Mortality," said Mankind's Advocate.*

*After another long silence the Supreme Voice said: "And now you ask for a new world. What reason is there to suppose they would do better with a new world—the same people?"*

*Mankind's Advocate answered: "They will not be the same people. As the mountains select mountain people and the valleys select valley people and the deserts still others, so a new world will select its own people—those in flight from evil, from oppression, from the glory of war. They will begin all over again and they will have no history."*

*"They find no benefit in history?" asked the Supreme Voice.*

*"History," said Mankind's Advocate, "is their fatal luggage. They were better when they had no history. Now they fight endless wars about what they remember."*

*The Supreme Voice said: "Creation works by laws of form, rhythm and essence. A tree is not created. Only the principles and conditions pertaining to trees. And so with men and beasts and all living things. This cannot be apprehended by the finite mind. Therefore, given all else you ask and then a new world, still your people will never know what they are doing or why."*

*"Only the mystics," said Mankind's Advocate.*

*The Supreme Voice said: "Given more knowledge, then*

*all the more, unless they do better with a new world than they have done with the one they have, they shall be added to the discontinued series. Do you accept that condition?"*

*Mankind's Advocate said: "But they will spare you the trouble. They will destroy themselves."*

*By that time the Great Dipper was full again.*





# BOOK ONE

---

## I

### The World in Europe's Belly

FIRST THE ROUNDNESS OF THE EARTH HAD TO BE IMAGINED.

Then the New World was discovered by a man who was sure it was not there.

With the idea that by sailing due west he would arrive at the east, Columbus was looking for Cathay and thought he had found it. Cathay was the olden name for China. His dream was to loot the fabulous Orient and use its wealth to recapture the Holy Land from the infidel. The possibility of another world lying between Europe and Asia never occurred to him; and he died without knowing what he had discovered.

This New World had the shape of a sack tied in the middle, with grain in one end and a pig in the other—two continents extending from the Arctic north to the Antarctic south, joined together by a narrow tropical isthmus.

At that time the great maritime nations of Europe were Spain and Portugal. They were jealous and competitive. By right of discovery Spain claimed the whole of the New World

for her own. But Portugal's sailors also had performed a spectacular feat. They had reached the wonderful East by sailing around Africa. They quarreled over how the world should be divided between them—not the New World alone but all the earth, each according to the axiom that finders are keepers. Since they were both Catholic countries they appealed to the Pope. He settled it by drawing a line north and south to bisect the earth in two equal parts. All to the west of the line belonged to Spain; all to the east of it belonged to Portugal. That was before there were any proper maps. Spain wanted the line moved a little to the west and the Pope moved it. As it turned out, to everybody's amazement, that little westward shift of the Pope's line gave Portugal title to the great eastward bulge of South America which now we call Brazil, and so it happens to this day that the language of Brazil is Portuguese, not Spanish. Portugal did very little in the New World. Her valor was great but her boots were small, and she soon fell out of the race.

The Spanish came to the New World with the cross in one hand and a sword in the other; and their first word was gold. Unhappily for them, the gold was there, and it ruined them. The treasure belt began in what now we call Mexico, continued down through the Isthmus, which is Central America, and into Peru. Here in the mysterious spontaneity of life, a rich and gorgeously ornamented civilization had been upraised. The Spaniards conquered it, pillaged its temples, tamed the natives to work in the gold and silver mines; and for more than one hundred years, to waylay the rich Spanish galleon on its homeward passage was piracy's principal pastime.

However, this indictment of Spain is a cliché of history, true only so far as it goes. The mighty feats of daring and valor performed by the Spanish *conquistadors* make glamorous reading; and the fall of the empire points a facile moral. The fact is that for all the greed and cruelty of their conquering soldiers, the Spaniards were the first to bring culture

to the New World. Archbishops followed the soldiers. They established libraries and universities. Authority was divided between the Church and the Crown. The largest example of ecclesiastical architecture built in the 16th century, anywhere in the world, was the cathedral of Mexico. To the gentle heroism of the Jesuit missionaries, who worked patiently with the people, taught them simple arts and the uses of irrigated agriculture in their arid lands and then baptized them, there is the silent testimony of ruined Spanish missions, with their sweet imported bells, spaced across what now is the American southwest from Texas to California. What the Spaniards paid in civilizing Christian works for the gold and silver they took to Europe left an indelible mark on this side of the world. The other moral may be that civilization becomes too hypocritical to acknowledge its debt to war and conquest.

The French came looking for the northwest passage to Asia that God forgot to make. They found the St. Lawrence River and put a military outpost at what now is Quebec. From there they pushed on to the Great Lakes, discovered the Mississippi River and followed it to its mouth on the Gulf of Mexico, planting outposts on the way. They were staking out much more than they could hold. They were neither pioneers nor colonists. They brought no women. They were the first of all fur traders, and made friends with the Indians; following the fur traders came the religious martyrs, bearing the cross. The Protestant Huguenots would have been glad to colonize New France, but the French king would permit only Catholics to come, and even Catholics could not acquire title to land. Everything belonged to the King. New France was pure adventure, an explorer's dream, a canoe empire, capsizable.

The English came late.

For one hundred years England's principal interest in the New World ran to piracy. Her fierce sea dogs made a romantic business of capturing Spanish treasure ships; and so long as they brought the loot home and gave the Crown the

lion's share of it they were all right, save only in those rare intervals when England was at peace with Spain, in which case they might get hanged as pirates, merely as a regal gesture to the amenities; but that also was part of the pirates' trade and they didn't take it too hard. Moreover, it did not happen often.

Resolved at last to wipe out once for all this marauding new sea power, the Spanish King built the Invincible Armada and sent it against England. But by this time, from so much practice upon the Spanish galleons as well as by temperament, England's sailors were the killingest fighters on the sea. They destroyed the Invincible Armada as an afternoon's sport, a little helped by Providence, which provided a storm. This was a blow from which Spain never quite recovered.

With now the intuition that their future lay in seapower, the English dimly arrived at the idea of doing something about the New World. They were slow. From the Gulf of Mexico south and west the Spaniards had already established an empire. Above the Great Lakes and from the Great Lakes southward between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River the outlines of New France were fairly marked. But from Florida to Maine there was some fifteen hundred miles of seacoast that had not been preempted. On this wonderful seaboard were all the fine harbors and all the natural gateways to the New World. The Spaniards had passed it by because in all the length of it there were no rumors of gold; and the French likewise because the fable of a northwest passage to Asia led them further north.

Here the English began to plant colonies. Under charters permitting a large degree of self-government, the King granted enormous tracts of land to people who would form companies, provide the capital, find the emigrants and make the venture. The first one, "the lost colony of Roanoke," where Virginia Dare was born, vanished without trace. The second, in Virginia, was a ghastly failure until the prodigal sons, the sojourners and the halt-handed either died or went

home, and were succeeded by farmers and artisans who knew the meaning of work, who were changing worlds for good, and who brought their women with them.

The New England foundations came next; then Maryland, Pennsylvania and the Carolinas.

Meanwhile the Dutch had arrived. The Dutch were great sailors too, yet they hired a British navigator named Henry Hudson to look for a passage to Asia, and he thought he had found it when he sailed into what now is New York harbor and up the mighty river that bears his name to this day. The Dutch bought Manhattan Island from the Indians, built a fort there and called it New Amsterdam, and then up the Hudson River valley they parcelled out huge baronial estates to important Dutch families. But they never could get people to come and settle the land. Their system was wrong. Moreover, their heart was not in it really; their imagination was fixed on the Spice Island of the East Indies, where at length they did make their Empire. And so one day when a British squadron appeared in the harbor, trained its guns on New Amsterdam and sent a message ashore saying New Amsterdam now was New York and belonged to the English King's brother, the Dutch gave up without a struggle.

After that the seaboard was a solid tier of thirteen English colonies, Massachusetts at the top and Georgia at the bottom. They were by no means all alike.

Georgia was an afterthought.

Virginia and the Carolinas were Church of England.

Maryland was Catholic because the King had the happy thought of that way getting rid of some of his Catholic subjects.

Pennsylvania was Quaker, not because the King loved Quakers when he gave Pennsylvania to William Penn but because the Quakers worried his troublesome Puritans both in England and in the New World.

New York, with its mixture of English and Dutch, worshipped God in an easy way; the Church of England was first

for the ruling caste, the Dutch Reformed Church second.

New Jersey was just people, wishing to be let alone as such; and Delaware was a little piece that was whittled to fit a hole in the jig-saw pattern.

The New England colonists were Puritans, hair-splitters of Calvinist doctrine, non-conformists, dissenters, religious rebels and some heretics.

The school book myth is that what the New England colonists had in common was a passionate love of liberty. No doubt the seed of liberty was there, even from the beginning, but it was latent and the plant was a long time coming up. They did not understand liberty. They did not know that liberty itself must be free. They tried to imprison it.

Having fled from persecution and kingly tyranny in England, the Puritans set up in Massachusetts a tyranny of their own, that is to say, a theocracy. The church and state were one. Only members of the church could take part in government. The church elders laid down all the rules of life—moral, esthetic and economic. Disobedience was dealt with severely. Some Quakers came and were cast out. If they returned, as they often did in a spirit of defiance, they were mutilated, their ears might be cut off, and some of both sexes were hanged.

In all New England, religious tolerance was unknown, save only in the colony of Rhode Island, which was founded by Roger Williams after he had been expelled from Massachusetts in the winter time for saying religion was one thing and government another and that people should be free to think and say what they pleased. For many years, to all the rest of New England, Rhode Island was a scandal—the breathing witness of how badly people were bound to behave when they were let alone.

In other colonies it was not so bad, though bad enough; and nowhere except in Rhode Island could you say there was more liberty than people had known under kings in the Old World.

Yet there was one state of feeling that made the colonists

all kin. A passion for self-government, free from the parental restraints of the English crown, burned with thirteen flames—highest in Massachusetts, next highest in Virginia.

There was endless quarreling over the terms of their charters. Except in a Crown Colony like New York, where the royal word was law, the colonies generally were permitted by their charters to tax themselves and to pass their own local laws, subject always to veto by the King's ministers in London; but beyond that it was English policy to hold the economic life of the Colonies in a straitjacket—as to say, for example, where, with whom and on what terms the Colonial merchants should trade when they sent their ships to sea; to forbid the colonists to weave cloth and make beaver hats for sale, and to forbid them to manufacture iron at all, even for their own use.

This was all because the English wished to monopolize colonial trade in the first case, and for the reason, secondly, that the English idea was that the colonies should provide raw materials for English industry and then buy their manufactured goods in England. Briefly, to oblige the Colonies to exchange raw materials and food for manufactured goods. The whole British Empire of later years was based on that notion of swapping skill for drudgery, and it made England the richest and most powerful nation in the world. Then it ruined her, for when at last the exploited drudge people began to rebel her profit was gone and she was in trouble.

But the idea was bound to fail—and to fail first—with the English colonists in America. It made them smugglers, law-evaders and rebels, who had only to bide their time. This they did with a kind of Oriental simplicity. When they had done such a thing as to throw the King's agent into the river, or to burn down his house, the King would say: "Now I will show these rebellious subjects. Unless they mend their ways and become immediately obedient I will cancel their charters and take away their lands." On receiving this ultimatum, the Colonists would reply: "Your beloved Majesty, we didn't mean it. We promise to carry out your wishes as fast as we



can and to the best of our ability. We are sorry." And then they would do nothing at all but sit down to wait for something to happen in England—for that king to get his head cut off, perhaps, or for a revolution to come—and something always did happen in England to save them.

Their time was not yet.

Events in Europe had their repercussions here. When England and France were at war, which was most of the time, a favorite diversion was for one to try to push the other out of the New World. On one side would be a few regular troops from England supported by English colonists, and on the other side a few professional troops from France reinforced by such fighting material as New France could provide; and then when they could both sides made allies of the Indians and incited them to slaughter. If the infamy of employing savages in a white man's war was not equal, that was perhaps only because the French fur traders were generally more friendly with the Indians than the English colonials. Romantic legend hides many dishonorable scars, even this one—savages hired by white Christians to massacre other white Christians under the sign of the cross in the wilderness.

During seventy years there were four such wars. The War of the League of Augsburg in Europe had its recoil in the New World as King William's war, the War of the Spanish Succession in Europe was Queen Anne's War here, the War of the Austrian Succession in Europe was King George's War here, and the Seven Years' War in Europe was called here the French and Indian War.

The last one was conclusive. With their star everywhere ascendant, the British were at last resolved to expel France from the New World and sent troops enough to do it. After that, all east of the Mississippi River and north to the top of Hudson's Bay was British territory. A vast region to the west of the Mississippi called Louisiana passed at the same time from France to Spain; and with it also New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi.

## II

# The American Story Begins

THE YEAR WAS 1763.

There the colonial story starts to fade and the American story begins, although no man yet had called himself an American.

Fighting with the British against the defenders of New France the Colonials had measured the valor of professional troops and found it inferior to their own; moreover, and un-awares, they had produced a military genius named George Washington.

The Colonials alone could not have ejected France from the New World; it took the might of Great Britain by sea and by land to do that. But once the British had done it, and especially since they had seen for themselves how the Colonials could fight, they might have known better than to go home and leave thirteen willful Colonies in complete possession of the entire eastern seaboard of the North American continent. Thirteen is the recalcitrant number. It took the thirteen colonies just thirteen years to decide to expel the British.

The spirit of revolt was like an underground forest fire, slowly consuming the roots of loyalty, and they were very tough roots. Even the firebringers were afraid to say what their intentions were, if they really knew themselves. They talked of resistance, not of independence or separation. Four

months after the shot at Concord bridge "that was heard around the world," weeks after the battle of Bunker Hill, and with George Washington preparing to attack the British at Boston, the second Continental Congress declared that the Colonies had taken up arms "with no design of separation from Great Britain."

The Declaration of Independence came a year later.

They were driven to it, step by step. The British King was behaving like a mad parent. The British Parliament passed a series of punitive laws, called the Intolerable Acts. Hired German troops were sent to impose them by force. The British position was that no grievances could be considered, much less redressed, until the Colonies became submissive.

The grievances, economic and political, were both real and valid, but it is absurd to suppose that reasonable men would have said, "We would sooner die than endure them," or, as Patrick Henry did say, "As for me, give me liberty or give me death." Indeed, in a little while the thirteen Colonies might have become members of a British Commonwealth, like Canada or Australia, who certainly think of themselves as quite free.

No. But it was a mysterious thing men were willing to die for, even though they could not say what it was—a thing true beyond reason, an event toward which everything that had happened in the world before was now tending with the anonymous force of life itself.

An unknown nation was struggling to be born. And this was a nation that in six generations would become the mightiest power on earth.

How easily it might have been strangled at birth! If Europe had only known she might have dropped her internal quarrels to unite for the single purpose of destroying this child of destiny, for if it lived the sign of paramount power which had belonged to Europe for two thousand years would presently cross the heavens and stand over the United States of America.

Of all the fictions that have ennobled the mind of man the one under which this nation was born made the most dazzling light.

The Declaration of Independence said: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Certainly it is not evident to common sense that all men are created equal. Morally it was a fiction because it left out the Negro slave. It became a supportable fiction only if you took it to mean that under a government of laws all men were equal before the law, but even that would be by resolution of men, not by act of the Creator.

The words were not new. They were current in radical European thought. But never before had they been raised to the eminence of a working political doctrine; and if a government based upon that ideal doctrine could endure, if people could actually behave as if it were true, the world would never be the same again.

For thus came the end of night for the common man.

One immediate effect was to give the common man a stake in the revolution. Yet that could hardly have been the intention. The curious fact was that the authors of the Declaration of Independence—Jefferson perhaps alone excepted—and after them the authors of the Constitution, were afraid of the common man. They held a low opinion of his political character. At that time he had not even the right to vote. Only such as owned property could qualify as voters. Manhood suffrage came in the next generation.

You do not suppose that the Colonies rose in mass to chase the British into the sea. If that had happened the war might have been won in two years instead of dragging wearily on for eight.

Society was stratified in the Colonies as it was in England, with only royalty and nobility left out. At the top was an

aristocracy of wealth and birth; next came the middle class; at the bottom were the common people.

The revolution bitterly divided them. On one side were the loyalists, who stood with the British, and on the other side the revolutionaries, calling themselves patriots.

Among the aristocrats a minority only, and at first a very small minority, were patriots. The middle class—merchants, traders and farmers—was split vertically, with undoubtedly a considerable majority on the side of the patriots. The common people were both hot and cold, turbulent, riotous and apathetic, by turns.

It was a shapeless war, conducted on one side by a fatuous government three thousand miles away, whose chocolate generals loved good living more than they enjoyed killing Americans, and on the other side by a Continental Congress that was not a government. It was a body of delegates from the thirteen Colonies, elected by mass meetings, conventions and committees of patriots, and was without power to command men, money and ammunition. It could only ask the Colonies, who were now beginning to call themselves states—it could only ask them to provide an army, to clothe and feed and pay it, and the states could respond as they pleased.

Their response was so carping, so unwilling, so uncertain, that the Continental Army miserably withered. Reduced to one-quarter of its original size, it passed the third winter at Valley Forge—three thousand men “unfit for duty,” said George Washington, “by reason of their being barefoot and otherwise naked.”

The spirit of liberty might have died at Valley Forge. Washington alone kept it alive, by prayer and will and Mosaic anger. How could a people who deserved liberty forsake a naked, hungry army in the snow. Where? Not in some remote inaccessible wilderness but in Pennsylvania, which of all the Colonies was richest in food.

A few miles away in Philadelphia a British army was living on fat rations and British officers were being entertained at

gay parties in some of the fine Colonial homes. The British had gold to spend, and the farmers of Pennsylvania would sooner exchange their produce for British gold than to sell it to hungry patriots at Valley Forge for Continental money. Owing to the failure of the Colonies to provide enough money, as they were perfectly able to do, the Continental Congress had to print money, but since the only security behind it was faith in the revolution people everywhere were distrustful of it and its value became a byword—"Not worth a Continental." Afterward it was all very honorably redeemed. But the revolution had first to be won.

Having expelled the British from Boston in the first year, Washington never again won a great victory. He tried to defend New York and failed; he tried to defend Philadelphia and failed; when the British decided to leave Philadelphia and concentrate in New York he tried to stop them in New Jersey, and failed again. The explanation is not that he was either outgeneraled or outfought, but that he never dared to take a supreme risk. Always he had to think of saving his little army, for if he lost it that would be the end of the revolution. How to keep an army in being, such as it was—that was his first problem. At the end, besides all that he could do, it took a French fleet and a French army to trap Cornwallis at Yorktown.

The Colonials as soldiers were militia minded. That was their tradition—the fireside story of men springing to arms at the call of the fife and drum to perform their feats of valor. They had no taste for continuous disciplined military duty. They were fractious and willful, and went AWOL for any reason of their own, especially the farmers when they heard from their women folk that the ripened fruits of the earth were falling to the ground.

The idea of one united Continental Army was never realized. Massachusetts was loath to send troops to defend the southern Colonies and the south thought the northern Colonies ought to take care of themselves. But in a local en-

vironment, when they were self-aroused and the battle was imminent, then the Colonials were fierce and invincible.

This was notably true of the New Englanders, as the British General Burgoyne found out when in the third year of the war he set out from Canada with a professional army of 7,000 men, intending to descend through the Hudson River valley to New York.

As he approached Saratoga the tread of his soldiers seemed to press demon patriots out of the ground. Came the Green Mountain Boys from Vermont, German farmers from the Mohawk Valley, militia men from all around, and these, opportunely supported by a contingent of the Continental Army under command of Horatio Gates, brought the British army to bay and captured it whole.

This as it turned out was the decisive victory of war, because it moved the French to come to the aid of the revolution. The French of course were athirst for revenge against the British for having cast them out of the New World, and now it would be sweet to help the Americans cast the British out—and sweeter still the secret thought that in so doing they might regain a foothold for themselves.

However, until Burgoyne's surrender the revolution on its own resources had fared so badly that the French were reluctant to beard the British. Now at last they were willing to sign the treaty of alliance for which the Americans had been pressing with all the seductive power of Benjamin Franklin, who was their inimitable plenipotentiary at Paris. This meant of course a renewal of war between France and Great Britain.

Four years later Cornwallis was caught at Yorktown, between a French fleet in Chesapeake Bay and an army of French and Colonial troops on land. The French troops were commanded by Rochambeau and Saint Simon; the American by Washington and Lafayette.

With the surrender of Cornwallis the revolution was won. The Colonials alone might have won it if only they had

been united by a single national passion and quick to pool their resources. As it was, the patriots could not have won it without the help of the French.

Nor could it have been won at all without the active sympathy of the liberal sentiment of all Europe, even in England, where the Americans had many great friends. In France, where the spirit of revolution was moving on the waters in premonition of the storm that was coming, the Declaration of Independence was hailed with popular ecstasy. Young zealots for liberty and the rights of man, among them Lafayette, took Washington for their idol. Besides Lafayette, several distinguished European military officers volunteered to come and help train the raw Continental Army and then to fight with it, such as Baron Von Steuben, the Chevalier du Portal, Thaddeus Kosciusko; and Count Pulaski and Baron de Kalb, both of whom gave up their lives.

\*

The American revolution was a pilot flame that leaped the Atlantic and lighted holocaust in the Old World. But its character was misunderstood and could not have been reproduced by any other people. It was a revolution exemplary. Its first fair visage never became sinister or frightful. It did not devour its own children, as most revolutions do, but made them fathers of the Republic. There was no terror, no after blood lust, no liquidation of the anti-bodies. There were fanatics but no demagogues basely to exploit the passions of the mob. Most remarkable of all, considering what the opportunities were, no false patriot attempted to seize power from the hands of the weak Continental Congress and make himself dictator.

The peace had to be made between the British on one side and the French and the Americans on the other side, and Spain came into it too because she had been on the side of France in the war on the Continent of Europe and



France had vowed that the Spaniards should recover Gibraltar, which never happened.

The treaty makers gathered in Paris. The British, who still held New York, Savannah and Charleston and had more troops in America than the French and Americans combined, assumed a mighty manner. The French, who expected to dominate the American commissioners, were wily. Spain wanted anything she could get and claimed more than one-third of the whole North American continent. The Americans, who held very weak cards in this dangerous game, possessed the guile of innocence. They guessed that the British were bluffing, which was true. They suspected the French of double dealing and caught them at it; later it was proved that the French had been willing to sell out any interest but their own, and in the end they got nothing.

The Continental Congress had instructed the American Commissioners to sign nothing without the consent of France. Nevertheless, the Americans went around the French and opened direct negotiations with the British, and signed with them a most favorable preliminary treaty. As the Americans had thought, the British were anxious to make peace. Their treasury was low, the American war was too costly to go on with, and they wanted their troops and their warships back because the European cauldron was beginning to boil in a very alarming manner.

The final treaty was signed in 1783.

The Americans won everything the revolution was for. First, his British Majesty agreed that the thirteen Colonies were "free, sovereign and independent states." Then the North American continent was divided in three ways. Great Britain kept Canada. The Americans got everything east of the Mississippi River from Canada to Florida. To Spain went all the rest of the continent—that is, everything west of the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico, all the way north to Canada and west to the Pacific; also Florida and unhappily New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi.

So the United States of America was born, as yet without a name, but already too big for its cradle.

### *Marginalia*

The prenatal story is perhaps too long for the design of the book, even though it covers three centuries of time; however, let it stand.

The book, as it is planned, will be in several parts, with such minor divisions of time and matter as may suggest themselves. The first part will be the outline of what happened, like the sketch for a large drawing, all details that retard the narrative left out; the second will tell how it happened, the third why it happened, and in the remainder, which will be very difficult, there will be a struggle with meaning.

How dim one may be about the meaning of one's own life. And before you come to the enigma of meaning there is something you have to do about the facts. You may think you may know what kind of person you are. Indeed, you must be pretty sure of it, else you will fall apart for want of a soul center. Yet if your entire life could be unrolled before your eyes as on a movie film, at a speed of one year per minute, giving you time only to verify the naked facts and no time to hide any of them, again, you would almost certainly cry out, "No. I am not that kind of person." Of course you are not. But neither are you quite the person you think you are. Which means this—that there is a truth beyond the facts, a truth to which facts pertain but which is not itself the simple sum of facts.

If this may be true of the life of an individual, what can one hope to do with the life of a nation? There can be no history without facts, yet facts alone are not history.

Here the postnatal story begins. From gristle to bone was thirty years; and on the dial of life that records the fluctuating probabilities of survival the reading was sometimes zero.

The immediate business was to create a national government; and many people demanding to know why that was necessary at all. Why couldn't they just go on being free?

The second imperative was to isolate the new nation from the malign influence of European politics and get its life into its own hands. The writ of independence—that had been acquired and it was a precious possession, but the reality of independence had yet to be won. Until Americans could walk alone they could not say they were either independent or free.

### III

## Freedom on a Raft

LAUNCHING A NEW SHIP OF STATE ON THE TREACHEROUS political waters, even a seaworthy one, is in any case perilous enough. But in this case there was no ship of state. There was no national government. There was in fact no nation. What was it then that pushed off on a raft?

During the revolution each of the thirteen colonies had resolved itself into a political entity, calling itself a sovereign state, with a written constitution. In the second year of the war the Continental Congress, which as we have seen was merely a kind of national committee, proposed Articles of Confederation to join them all together. It took them five years to agree on the terms. One of the terms was that the Articles could be changed only by unanimous consent, which meant, practically, that they could not be changed at all—and still no national government.

By the Articles of Confederation the Continental Congress was for the first time formalized. But it was denied the right to levy taxes. Therefore it could not fill its own purse. It might pass laws; it had no power to enforce them. It had no president; therefore no executive power. It had no courts; therefore no judicial power.

The thirteen sovereign states had reserved to themselves the power to control commerce, and a pretty mess they made of it, setting up tariff barriers against one another.

Movements of secondary revolt became alarming. Al-

though during the war conservatives and extremists had struck hands, they were never reconciled. Now the common people began to mutter and rise. Their saying was that those who had done the fighting should be rewarded by those who had saved their property. In Massachusetts poor farmers who could not pay their debts, supported by a motley of propertyless malcontents, began turning judges out of doors because they allowed the claims of creditors. That was the Shay's Rebellion. It was put down by the militia.

The house of freedom was in trouble. Sparks were everywhere falling on combustible materials. George Washington was one who had forebodings of a great fire. Thoughtful men were in despair. The old, old problem of how to harmonize liberty with order—a problem never hitherto solved—was presenting itself in an ugly form at a most unfortunate time. The national committee that called itself the Continental Congress agreed at last that something would have to be done. What it proposed to the thirteen states was a convention of delegates to be held in Philadelphia "for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation."

The thirteen states sent fifty-five delegates to the Philadelphia convention; and it happened that these fifty-five men represented the American mind at its highest sum, for then or thereafter. One may say it just happened. Yet why did that happen in place of something else? It might have been very different. The doors were closed to the people; therefore no gallery and no harangue. George Washington presided.

He said: "It is too probable that no plan we propose will be adopted. Perhaps another dreadful conflict is to be sustained. If to please the people we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterward defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair. The event is in the hand of God."

The first thing the delegates did was to tear up their instructions—namely, the mandate from the Continental Con-

gress to revise the Articles of Confederation. They resolved instead to create a national government in the republican form and write its constitution. Only thirty-nine of them signed the document when it was finished, and these we now speak of as the Founding Fathers.

The preamble of the Constitution reads: "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America."

It became the most famous political document in the world. Never before had a people, by an original act, created for themselves the kind of government they wanted, not upon the sills of an old one but from the very footing up, and bound it in writing. It had to be like that because when the revolution had been won there was no existing national government to seize or take over or build upon.

Implicit in the Constitution is this proposition: If the few rule they will oppress the many. If the many rule they will oppress the few. Therefore both the few and the many must be restrained as to things which neither shall ever do to the other. Thus the theory of inalienable individual rights becomes law.

Limitation of power is the great theme throughout.

The power of the law maker is limited.

The power of the president is limited.

The power of the courts is limited.

The sword is placed in the hand of the president, who is commander-in-chief of the armed forces—this to insure civilian control of the military power. But control of the public purse belongs to Congress, so that the sword and the purse shall never be in the same hand. Moreover, the president is forbidden to draw the sword but by consent of Congress.

Over all is the Constitution, which is the supreme law of

the land, binding upon the law maker, the president and the courts, to the end that it shall be a government of laws, not a government of men.

The power of ultimate sovereignty—where is that? That resides with the people. Only the people are sovereign. The people collectively are king. Yet even here is a limitation, perhaps the most significant one of all. The people may change the Constitution to their heart's content, they may even tear it up if they like and write a new one, only provided they do it by such deliberate and orderly procedures as are set forth in the Constitution itself. This is to safeguard not the Constitution only but the people themselves, against the dangers of passionate, impulsive and unreflective action.

The problem being how to reconcile government with liberty, this was in all political history the fairest and most practical solution, and so far the most successful.

The Constitution was then submitted to the people, to be ratified or rejected by vote of a popular convention in each state. It would be their government. They could take it or leave it. Ratification by nine states was necessary to give it effect.

It was a close thing. The debate moved on a very high plane, and the papers that were written both for and against ratification are among the classics of political literature in the English language to this day, especially a series of eighty-five numbers called the Federalist Papers, by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay.

The wounds of liberty were still hurting. Fear of tyranny was a powerful emotion. The idea of a strong national government was definitely unpopular. One sweeping criticism of the Constitution was that it did not clearly define the inalienable rights of the individual. Friends of the Constitution, called the Federalists, granted the validity of that point and accepted the idea of ten amendments to spell out such personal rights as, among others, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and trial by jury. Thereupon

the Constitution as the founders wrote it was adopted and the ten amendments were duly added. They have ever since been known as the American Bill of Rights.

George Washington was unanimously elected President. John Adams was Vice-President. Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence but had nothing to do with writing the Constitution because he was then in Paris, was Secretary of State. Washington was conservative. Adams was the self-contained middle class principle. Jefferson, who loved revolution and hated bloodshed, was the common man's first hero. Nearly every line of political cleavage for more than one hundred and fifty years thereafter could be traced back to that triangle.

The year was 1789.

In that same year the French Revolution began; and for more than twenty years thereafter the young American Republic was dangerously and almost continuously embroiled in the angry affairs of Europe, with such consequences as— (1) a shattering division of the American household on lines of partisan passion, (2) an undeclared war with the French at sea, and (3) the war of 1812 with Great Britain.

The first American reaction to the French Revolution was to regard it as the glorious love child of the American Revolution. Did not the French slogans echo the words of the American Declaration of Independence? Liberty. Equality. Fraternity. People wore French emblems, adopted the language of the Paris streets, and went about calling one another Citizen, like the French. Boston and New York renamed some of their streets to commemorate the rise of the common man in the Old World. It was the American idea that was liberating Europe. The people were overthrowing the symbols of tyranny. In a little while the whole world would be one free brotherhood, ruled by the natural goodness of man.

This frenzy lasted for nearly three years. Then came the guillotine, the terror, the news of regicide, the beginning of



war between France and Europe; and the American ecstasy was chilled. Presently France and Great Britain were at war again, and France was calling upon the Americans to honor the treaty of alliance by which we were bound to defend French possessions in the West Indies. This was the treaty the Continental Congress had signed with the king of France when the Americans had to have French aid to win their independence from Great Britain.

Now the Americans were in a bad dilemma. Another war with Great Britain would probably cost them their independence, for the British, as they very well knew, had never given up the idea of returning. On the other hand, the French were not to be trusted; they were conniving with Spain to make trouble in Florida, at New Orleans and in Louisiana territory west of the Mississippi.

President Washington took the position that since the Continental Congress had made its treaty with the French king, who now was in his grave with his head cut off, the United States of America owed nothing to the new revolutionary regime in France. Therefore, he declared, the Americans were neutral, and issued a proclamation accordingly.

The effect of his action was threefold. War with Great Britain was averted for the time being, the French were very mad, but at the same time it was as if the American flag had been rent.

The people divided three ways. There was a peace party, represented by Washington; a pro-British party, which was largely New England, and a pro-French party, calling itself the republicans, led by Thomas Jefferson, who was Secretary of State.

Just then, fortunately, the French sent over an amazing person named Citizen Genet, who entered at Charleston in a grand manner, threw French gold around, fitted out privateers to prey upon British commerce, moved triumphantly from there toward Philadelphia accompanied by the plaudits of republican crowds waving the French colors, and behaved

generally as if he were in a French province. At last he went so far as to insult the President, appealing from him to the people on the question of American neutrality. That was too much even for many republicans, who had in them some rudiments of national pride. Jefferson, though he loved the French, stood with the President and asked France to take her Citizen Genet home. But by that time the guillotine was working so playfully that he was afraid to go home. He begged to stay here, became an American citizen, and lived quietly ever after.

The British, nursing their sore afterthoughts, were behaving in a churlish manner. On the terms of the Ghent treaty that ended the revolutionary war they stood in obstinate default, taking the position that the Americans too were evading their part. Almost more than anything else Washington dreaded another war with Great Britain. He sent John Jay to London to soothe the British temper, and Jay brought back a treaty so humiliating in its terms that mobs burned effigies of him and stoned Alexander Hamilton in New York when he tried to speak in defense of the treaty. Washington stood fast—probably the most unpopular thing he ever did—and the treaty was ratified by the Senate. That made the French very mad again. They had been sure that the pro-French republicans would force the United States into war with England.

That was the state of things when John Adams succeeded Washington. Adams too was willing to pay a high price for peace. He sent a commission to Paris to pour oil on the waters there. France at that time was ruled by the corrupt Directory. The American commissioners were treated at first with silent contempt. Then Talleyrand had a brilliant thought. He sent word to the Commissioners that a settlement could be discussed, provided they undertook beforehand to pay the Directory a large gold tribute.

When one of the commissioners came home with that news there was an explosion. The pro-French republicans were

sunk. People shouted: "Millions for defense; not one cent for tribute." Mobilization for war began. Washington was called back to the colors. There was fighting on the sea. However, war was not formally declared. The French Directory said: "Sorry. It was all a misunderstanding. Please send your commissioners back." But before the new American Commissioners arrived in Paris Napoleon had blown the Directory away with his whiff of grape shot; and Napoleon was easy to deal with in the matters immediately at issue. He had deeper designs and was not yet ready to disclose them.

So war was again postponed.

Now Jefferson succeeded Adams. Jefferson the philosopher was pro-French and republican—the word republican meaning then a radical, a leveller, or those who, if they could not have both liberty and order, would choose liberty. Later the republicans began to call themselves democrats, but for a long time the word democrat was too strong and tabu, because of its association with the frightfulness of the French revolution. But Jefferson the President was another person. It took only one scratch to touch his tough American hide.

Jefferson discovered that Napoleon secretly had obliged Spain to return to France her Mississippi Bubble, namely, title to Louisiana Territory and New Orleans; he discovered also that Napoleon was dreaming of a colonial empire in the New World. New Orleans would give him control of the Mississippi River and take him very far west, perhaps to the Pacific. He had already sent an army to Santo Domingo to put down a black revolt; the same army was expected then to take possession of New Orleans and Louisiana. Happily for the Americans the blacks and the yellow fever destroyed his Santo Domingo army. But what would he do next?

This was very alarming news. The Mississippi River system was the way to the sea for all that pioneer agricultural civilization that was rising west of the Appalachian Mountains. The Spaniards had been bad enough; but the idea of

Napoleon in control of the Mississippi struck western Americans with dismay. Moreover, no matter how bitter the enmity between France and Great Britain might be, they had, at least until then, one thing in common, and that was a desire to clip the wings of the young American republic.

Once again it looked as if the Americans were going to have to make a Hobson's choice in foreign policy. Jefferson said: "The day France takes possession of New Orleans we must marry ourselves to the British fleet."

While Napoleon was quiescent, Jefferson had an idea. He sent commissioners to Paris to offer him a few million francs for New Orleans and Florida or a lesser sum for New Orleans alone. At first their offer was ignored. Then one day in his bathtub Napoleon made one of his sudden decisions. He sent Talleyrand to ask the Americans what they would give for all of Louisiana Territory, New Orleans included.

The commissioners had no authority to buy Louisiana; that had never been thought of. But when Talleyrand said they could have it for sixty million francs they bought it and brought it home, fearful that if they waited to get instructions Napoleon might change his mind.

What had moved Napoleon? He had just received news that a British fleet was about to sail for the Gulf of Mexico to seize Louisiana. He knew he could not defend it. He would sooner see the Americans have it, possibly with the reservation that they could not defend it either if ever he should want to take it back. Nevertheless, it has been recorded that he said: "This day I have laid the foundations for a New World power that will sometime overthrow Great Britain's control of the sea."

Out of Louisiana Territory would come what now are the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Colorado.

When the American commissioners got home and laid their Louisiana purchase in Jefferson's lap he was embarrassed.

Nobody knew what it was. It had never been explored. Although it more than doubled American territory, that was unknown at the time, and nobody could realize that it was the most astounding real estate bargain in all the history of land.

The voice of intuition told Jefferson that the Americans must keep it. By his own strict interpretation of the Constitution he had no power to buy it. He thought of proposing that the Constitution be amended, but that would take time, and always Napoleon might change his mind. So at last, with apologies to the Constitution, he asked the Senate to ratify his bargain, which it did over very strong opposition. The republicans at that point had the true American vision.

## IV

# Bearding the Reluctant Lion

MADISON, A GIFTED THINKER, WAS THE FOURTH PRESIDENT and the first weak one. In his Administration the postponed crisis arrived.

The war of 1812—the second war with Great Britain—was fought at the right time for the wrong reasons. It brought the young Republic to the verge of dissolution and then saved it. The issue of defeat was victory. In an age of myth it might have been our own Red Sea story.

All of Europe was at war. Great Britain and France were locked in a mortal struggle. Each was trying to starve the other by strangling its sea trade and both were ruthless with neutrals. The French forbade American ships to enter English ports and the British forbade them to enter any European port controlled by Napoleon, on pain of seizure and forfeit. Both sides shamelessly made war booty of American ships and cargoes.

Although American shipping suffered actually more from France than from England, because the British fleet for selfish reasons protected American ships running for British ports, yet feeling ran higher against England, for two reasons: one, that there was an old dispute with her over freedom of the seas in principle, and two, that ever since the beginning of American independence the British fleet had entertained itself by stopping American ships on the high seas and taking sailors away from them by force. If the kidnapped sailor was

a naturalized American the pretense was that he had become an American citizen to evade British sea duty; on one pretext or another many native American sailors also were "impressed," as the word for it was. Year after year the Americans bore this outrage. Short of going to war there was no redress.

Yet it was neither the treatment of neutrals nor the impressment of American sailors that brought on the war. If these had been fighting matters New England would have been first for war, since so much of her wealth was involved in ocean trade; but New England renounced the war. Before it was a year old Massachusetts was talking of secession and of opening her own peace negotiations with Great Britain. She refused to let her militia serve, closed her purse to war bonds and invited all the New England states to a treasonous anti-war convention at Hartford. They called it Mr. Madison's war.

The clamor for war came not from the eastern seaboard at all but from the west—that is, from people who had no interest in ships and had never seen the sea. The war party of the west was hostile to the peace party of the east. Henry Clay of Kentucky was leader of the war party, called the War Hawks. He struck the chords of a new patriotism. Should this proud new Republic take the insults of foreign powers lying down? The first conscious feeling of nationalism began to stir in men's hearts; a forethought of continental destiny was in the air. The voice of the land drowned out the voice of the sea.

The Republic was already land rich; rationally, the last thing it needed was more land. But the continental idea was intuitive, not rational; and it seized upon Canada. That was the last British possession left on the North American continent. The War Hawks demanded Canada. The Kentucky militia, said Clay, could take it in two weeks.

Well, they got their war. The British did not want war, certainly not then. They had their hands full with Napoleon.

Partly the President was pushed into war by the War Hawks and partly he was tricked into it by Napoleon, who said the French restriction on American shipping had been lifted, which was not so.

It was disastrous. Not only was the country not prepared for war; it was dangerously, almost suicidally divided.

Save only for some brilliant naval victories at sea and on the Great Lakes, which were of no decisive importance, the Americans bungled the war from the beginning, and in fact lost it. They could not defend their own capital. A small British force entered Washington and the government fled. British officers ate the dinner that had been prepared for the President and then burned the White House and all other public buildings. The campaign against Canada was a sad failure.

During the first year Great Britain was fighting with her left hand. In the second year the European scene dramatically changed. Napoleon was crushed and exiled to Elba. Great Britain was then free to bring all of her force against the American Republic, and the situation was extremely desperate.

When the American and British commissioners met in Ghent to discuss terms for ending the war the facts were these:

The American capital was burning.

The English people were calling upon their government to punish the Americans without mercy for having stabbed England in the back while she was fighting Napoleon for her life.

Wellington's veteran troops were embarking for North America.

A new British army was poised in Canada to liberate the New Englanders and cut them out of the Republic.

Spain was expecting the British to see that she recovered possession of New Orleans and Louisiana.

In New England the sentiment for secession was very



strong. There were many who believed the end of the Republic was at hand.

For all of that, the American commissioners at Ghent won the peace. And they won it without the benefit of Andrew Jackson's stunning victory over the British in the battle of New Orleans. News of that incredible event came afterward.

The first terms proposed by the British were as humiliating as the facts. The American commissioners rejected them flatly. The British were not anxious to go on with the war. Their treasury was low again, there was the broken map of Europe to be remade, and the French might rise from the mat. They did, in fact; Napoleon returned from Elba and then the British were glad they had not sent Wellington to North America.

Or it may be that history cannot tell what takes place in men's minds, since it seems often to be true that they do not know themselves.

At any rate, the American commissioners blandly behaved as if all the facts were different and slowly the British began to love peace more than its terms. Then it was easy to write a treaty—a treaty that forgot to mention what the war was about, if anybody knew. Great Britain kept Canada, as it was before, and the American Republic kept everything it had before, including of course New Orleans and Louisiana.

You may have often read that the war of 1812 was the unnecessary war. So many people thought at the time. It was not so. In unexpected ways the consequences were vital. By the revolutionary war the Colonies won their independence from Great Britain. By the war of 1812 the American Republic won its independence in the world. After that it walked alone.

For now it was possible to establish the supreme principle of American foreign policy—the principle, namely, that Europe should meddle no more in the New World.

After the fall of Napoleon there had been formed in Europe a Holy Alliance of monarchs, dedicated to the proposition that monarchy was the only legitimate form of govern-

ment and divine, wherefore the world should be made free of republican revolutions forever. It worked at first only in Europe and put down several revolutions there. Then its thoughts began to expand and under the zealous leadership of the Czar of Russia the Holy Alliance proclaimed its grand policy. It would restore legitimate government everywhere and thus confer the blessings of tranquility upon all the states of the civilized world. This design included the newly-created republican states of Latin America, which had only recently cast off Spanish and Portuguese rule.

Clearly, Europe was planning a return to the New World. At the same time Russia was silently slipping down the Pacific coast and had established trading stations as far south as what now is San Francisco.

Great Britain did not belong to the Holy Alliance; moreover, she was definitely hostile toward its designs upon Latin America. Therefore, she proposed to the United States an Anglo-American alliance to resist it. Monroe was then President. Surrounding him were the Republic's veteran statesmen, who again and again had out-thought and out-guessed the diplomats of Europe. They debated the startling British proposal for a long time and then John Quincy Adams, for one, found the gimmick in the terms. It was that the United States should bind itself never to acquire any Latin American territory.

If we had so bound ourselves then the conquest of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California might not have happened later. These were Mexican possessions. We had at that time no designs upon them, at least not consciously. There was only a very dim premonition of the country's geographical destiny.

The outcome was that the British invitation was politely declined. The American government decided to act alone. Then President Monroe made his historic utterance, which ever afterward was known as the Monroe Doctrine.

The meat of it was—

(1) That neither of the American continents was any longer open to colonization by a European power;

(2) That any attempt of a European power to extend its political system to any part of the New World would be regarded as an act dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States, and

(3) That, per contra, the United States pledged itself not to meddle in the political affairs of Europe.

That was the final act in the political separation of the New World from Europe.

# BOOK TWO

---

## I

### Giant in the Gristle

NOW YOU CAN SEE ALL AROUND HIM, YOUR AMERICAN, BECAUSE for the first time he is standing alone in the midst of a hostile world, making defiant gestures at it.

He has no history. Nobody can guess what he is likely to do. He does not know himself. It is impossible for him to imagine that in 150 years he will hold in his hand the paramount power of the earth, and this he will have achieved by his own exertions, for no ends that he could foretell. If he could have known that he might have foreseen that his rise would cause the human race to divide—on one side those who would fear and hate him and seek to destroy him, and those on the other side who, fearing him too, would nevertheless cling to him for his strength.

As you observe him at this moment it is important to note that in what he has already accomplished there is nothing complete, nothing that is bound to work.

He has just conquered the kingdom of freedom, without knowing quite how he did it; and since he has successfully

defied the powers of Europe he may do what he likes with this kingdom. He is free to destroy it himself—and that could happen, for he is a stranger in his own castle.

The ways of freedom are unknown. He has yet to learn *how* to be free—how to be as free as he thinks he is, or wants to be, and how at the same time to be responsible; how to govern and be governed, how both to command and obey, how to restrain a sovereign people and keep them in order—these were problems that had never been solved.

His first intention was to set up not a government but a living society dedicated to the proposition “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

It would be the first society so conceived in the history of man. But even as he wrote these words in his Declaration of Independence he forgot his own slaves; and it was written in the book of irony that among civilized men he would be the last to abolish slavery, and that to do it he would be obliged to turn his sword against himself.

There was no natural nation to begin with. There was only a ganglion of thirteen very jealous, very willful sovereign states.

To tie them together he had to write himself a Constitution—a Constitution that was all sail and no ballast, said Great Britain’s seer Macaulay, who was sure it would never work.

It had to work.

Until now he has been living a day-dream. Suddenly a grimness comes into it. Now it is the rational part of him that must begin to act.

As he wrote his Constitution, to be his supreme law, he thought of justice, tranquility, the general welfare and the blessings of liberty, but he omitted to repeat the noble words of the Declaration of Independence. He was beginning to be a little afraid of them and of himself—more afraid of the re-

bellious elements in his own nature than of all the kings in the world.

There was no necessity for a nation at all. It was idea only. In view of all history there was no reason why the North American Continent should not have become a New Europe, divided among many nations; but if there was going to be a nation certain things were immediately imperative. The first was the Constitution. The purposes of the Constitution were, first, to create a central government with power to conduct the affairs of a nation, and secondly, to impose upon people the disciplines of self-government.

If it was a good Constitution it would be unpopular, because, first, each state would have to surrender some measure of its precious sovereignty, and because, secondly, the revolution had left in people the passionate feeling that any government at all was a necessary evil and the less of it the better.

Thus even as he wrote his supreme law he found himself torn between reason and emotion. Liberty was sweet but order was vital.

He knew that if his Constitution were put to a popular vote it would be lost. If all the people, if half of them, voted on it the American dream would die. Happily for the dream there was no such thing as a popular vote. All men may have been created equal but manhood suffrage was still unknown, almost to say unimagined. Only about one in four of white male adults could vote; the rest were voiceless for want of a minimum amount of property.

In state conventions the Constitution was carried by small margins. When nine states had accepted it the others could take it or leave it. Nine promptly ratified it. New York, Virginia, Rhode Island and North Carolina held out for a while, until they felt the screw.

Thus the American established his nation.

There a new world history begins, and although he doesn't know it yet he will be its hero.

If you were leaving him here, not knowing the sequel, you might reasonably say that even if he were a child of destiny, clothed with fabulous immunities, still he would need a great deal of luck. And he did. Again and again he would see the better way and take the worse; again and again he would be saved as by an inner light his eyes could not see, as by a voice his ears could not hear.

## II

# The Feud with Time

DURING THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, OR, THAT IS, NOT until after the second war with England, which might be called our coming-of-age war—not until after that had anybody noticed any difference between the Old World and the New in the tempo of life. A visitor from London or Paris could be at ease in Boston, New York or Philadelphia. There was time for everything and a little to spare.

Then suddenly it was different. The tempo of American life began to rise, faster and faster and the higher the faster, and presently it was as if these new people in a new world lived in a time dimension of their own. Then when visitors came from the leisurely life streams of Europe they had the alarming sense of shooting the rapids.

Nor was this for just then or for a while. A mortal feud with time came to be the nature-way of the American.

Imagine four or five million people living on the Atlantic fringe of the North American Continent with no more than a toe-hold there, only the most primitive means of communication, no proper tools, no engines, no industry, no capital. Right behind them a forbidding mountain barrier and no roads; beyond the barrier a wilderness full of savages to the Mississippi River; beyond the Mississippi River two thousand miles of awesome plains inhabited by the terrible buffalo; next a most amazing mountain barrier hardly crossable at all, and then the Pacific coast which belonged to anybody who would have the hardihood to take it. The Mexicans were



already there and the Russians were sifting down from the north.

If the Americans were going to grapple this continent to themselves, do it with their bare hands, and do it before a land-hungry world could see too much, they would have to be in a hurry.

Yet after they had performed this incredible feat, after they had bound their continent together with bands of steel and it was entirely safe, still their feud with time went on. When they were fifty million, then one hundred million, and already the richest people in the world, still their minds were obsessed with time saving inventions of method, device and machine, as if they knew how much more there was to do and were fearful that they could not get it done in time.

This is what made American industry supreme in all the later phenomena of mass production. Other people had machines that were just as good, and had them first, other people knew the methods too, and were welcome to come and look, but they worked in another dimension of time.

Here the machine was not to save labor; it was to save time.

The first generation to live its life at the new tempo, giving it forty years from 1820 to 1860, had more sense of achievement, more excitement, more wonder and more luck than any other generation of mankind before or since.

It was not only that so many things that happened either were or seemed to be original, or as if the creative muse were acting in a spirit of purposeful play; more than that, marvel, portent and discovery obeyed what we might call a rule of sequence, so that again and again there was the right thing at just the right time, else the story might have been very different in the sequel. This was true of men, or ideas, of invention and of events that were purely adventitious, like the reluctant annexation of Texas, which had vast and unforeseen consequences.

To see it in the simplest way one may take the order

in which certain physical things appeared, for example, the steamboat, which moved a European observer to say: "These Americans, who have not discovered one of the general laws of mechanics, have introduced into navigation an engine that changes the aspect of the world."

Even so, he did not know what the problem was. These early Americans were not thinking how to change the aspect of the world; they were wondering how they were going to create the means of internal communication. This was crucial. A letter from Boston to Charleston might arrive within a month. Travel was by stagecoach, horseback and slow coast-wise sailing ships. All roads were terrible and in bad weather impossible. The cost of moving a ton of freight a long distance was prohibitive. There were rivers of course; but the trouble with rivers was that they all ran downstream.

First there was a frenzy to build turnpikes and toll roads. These were necessary and important, but they were local, and anyhow, the great problem of internal transportation was never going to be solved by wagon roads.

Meanwhile the siren voice of free land was calling from the other side of the Appalachian mountain barrier and people were spilling over it like a cataract, making their pathways as they went. The moment they disappeared over the summit they were lost. The wilderness swallowed them up. Then as they broke open the virgin soil they began to have a surplus of meat and grain to sell, but the cost of sending this produce back over the mountains was more than it was worth. So it went down the Ohio River to the Mississippi and down the Mississippi to New Orleans on rafts and flat boats; and it looked as if New Orleans was bound to become the door to the world for the great Mississippi River System. The difficulty was that the door opened only out, not in. That was so because the return was all up stream.

Then came the steamboat. It could navigate a river down stream and up. Then the door at New Orleans could work both in and out.

The steamboat was wonderful. It solved the problem of the river people. But if the steamboat had been the ultimate solution, as many people then thought it was, the American history we know would never have been written.

A self-contained Mississippi River System, having its own port of exchange with the world at New Orleans, would never tie the continent together. It would almost certainly split it down the middle. Thus you would have had a seaboard civilization between the Appalachians and the Atlantic, an inland civilization between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River, and whatever else might happen west of that. The continent had to be tied together, if at all, by east and west transportation.

Facing this dilemma, the eastern seaboard states turned desperately to canals—east and west canals of course. New York state had the only natural way around the Appalachian wall. Its Hudson River was navigable to Albany; from Albany west it was feasible to dig a canal 363 miles long to Lake Erie, at almost water grade. That was done. The Erie Canal was a mighty achievement. Much to the discomfiture of New Orleans, it enabled New York City to tap the top of the Mississippi River System. Now it could bring grain and meat and lumber from the middle west to seaboard and send back its own manufactured goods, all the way by water; and the cost of freightage was so low that the exchange was enormously profitable. The chroniclers noted that by canal four horses could move one hundred tons twenty miles in a day, whereas even on a good turnpike four horses could move only one ton and a half eighteen miles in a day, and even then couldn't cross the mountains.

But one unfortunate effect of the Erie Canal was that it deformed the national economy. While New York City flourished, what were Philadelphia and Baltimore going to do?

Pennsylvania resolved to make carriage easy between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. That would take her to the Ohio River. She dug a canal to the foot of the Appalachian wall

and then hauled her canal boats over the mountains by means of an inclined plane and windlass. It was a remarkable engineering stunt and that was all. It only proved that you could not leap mountains with canals.

So it would be New York on the seaboard with a siphon into the top of the Mississippi River System and New Orleans on the Gulf working the spigot, and a pattern of economic geography that could never be continental. If canals could not cross the gentle Appalachian mountains, neither could they cross the dry plains west of the Mississippi nor jump over the grim Rockies and the wild Sierra Nevadas to reach the Pacific coast.

But the Appalachian wall was about to fall, along with every other obstacle to east and west transportation. For then, just then, the locomotive appeared.

For centuries men had been dreaming of something like a locomotive. It might have come as well fifty years later as then; but if it had come fifty years later the outcome of the Civil War might have been otherwise, and fifty years later railroads had been more likely to follow the economic patterns which by that time would have been well established than to create new ones. Next in sequence came the telegraph. The railroads and the telegraph together bound up the continent with withes of cheap and fast east and west transportation before it could be split down the middle by nature's north and south rivers—and the steamboat.

### III

## Concerning Men

THERE WAS A CERTAIN ORDER ALSO IN THE WAY MEN appeared.

Washington was the first perfect gift from the eternal unknown. We have the record of his nativity, the story of his life, the memory of his going; but whence he came and why at that one salient moment of infinite time are such questions as children ask. There is no answer. He stands utterly alone—the true father symbol of a people, himself the believer for all of them, writing slow words of wisdom on tablets of stone. The time, the place and the man were as one indivisible necessity. No Washington, no nation; no Washington, no American history. If that were his epitaph it would have to be engraved on the fragment of a broken mould.

After him, the next five Presidents were three from Virginia and two from Massachusetts; and although that includes Jefferson, who worshipped the common man in the seclusion of his library, what these five represented was austerity of government.

That was very important. The new wine of freedom was heady stuff. A demagogue at the head of government, with a people's torch in his hand, might have reduced the republic to ashes. The debtor class, which was large, wanted cheap money. Everybody resented taxes. Had they not fought a war to get rid of the British tax collector? Now in place of him came one from the Federal Government at Washing-

ton. Almost nobody wanted a strong Federal Government at Washington. Yet a precocious wizard named Alexander Hamilton, who was the first Secretary of the Treasury and thought the people "a great beast," was able to impose on the young republic a sound monetary policy. He persuaded an unwilling Congress to restore the value of a debased currency and to undertake the honorable payment of the entire debt created by the revolution. These measures were extremely unpopular, especially as speculators who had been buying up the debt for a few pennies on the dollar were bound to make a killing. That couldn't be helped. It was above all important to establish American credit in the world.

Well, all of that was to the good and very necessary, and perhaps could not have taken place at all if it had been postponed; and yet it would be bad if the conservative principle got itself enthroned. If it were trusted to say how far it should go it would almost certainly go too far. Unless it were tempered by the radical principle a day would come when it would have to fight for its life, and that would be an ugly struggle. There had to be a state of elastic tension between them, so that when one insisted the other would yield and when the other insisted the first would yield. On no other terms would responsible self-government work.

Moreover, it was bad that people should begin to feel, or to imagine, the existence of a governing caste divided between Virginia and Massachusetts. Why had all the Presidents so far come from one of these two states? New states were being admitted to the union—Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri. This was the west—the pioneer's second promised land.

The people of the west were building a civilization of their own. In contrast with that of the east it was poor and crude and yearning. They were borrowers and debtors. They hated the rich capitalistic east, where their money came from; their black beast was the eastern banker, who squeezed them with high interest rates and foreclosed their mortgages.

Worse than all that, they had a sense of not belonging. Whose country was it? Although they sent Representatives and Senators to Washington, it was not their government. They felt more like petitioners than participants—and they were a proud and sudden people.

In the east *democracy* was not yet a respectable word. In the west it was a fighting word, and there manhood suffrage was arriving. The President was John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts who in his diary had expressed his "Abhorrence and contempt of simple democracy as a government."

All the materials were divisive or explosive, or both; if they had continued to accumulate the young republic might have blown itself up. But what might have happened we shall never know, for just then Andrew Jackson appeared and made a great bonfire in which the anger of the west harmlessly burned itself out.

Jackson was from Tennessee, a violent spirit, who first went to Washington as a member of Congress with his hair done up in an eel skin and so full of choler that he could hardly make a speech without choking himself. That image of him has survived. It is both true and false.

What was he?

You may say he was a natural manifestation of the frontier. So he was; but so was Clay of Kentucky at the same time. It was more than that. In his ways of thinking and feeling, in his visceral fearlessness, in his emotional exaggerations, in what he liked and what he hated, Jackson *was* the frontier. He held the people in his hand. His power of destruction was tremendous—if he had been destructive. The saving fact was an integrity of character so innocent and deep that he could be moved only by conviction.

His early life in Tennessee was wild and quarrelsome, even after he had acquired a small plantation and a few slaves, who adored him. His lust for combat put him at the head of the militia. In that suitable activity he soon gained regional fame as an Indian fighter. His feats became legendary; they

were owing partly to an unlearned skill in generalship and partly to the fact that he could command the obedience of willful and lawless men by sheer terror of will. His soldiers feared him, trusted him like children, and fought for him like demons.

Then came the second war with England and in one day he became a national hero by demolishing the handsome British army that had been sent to take New Orleans. The British lost their commander and 2,000 men. Jackson lost 71 men.

Later, under pretense of putting down the Indians, he seized Florida and incidentally executed two British subjects who had been helping the Indians, shooting one and hanging the other. That made a fine international row but in the end the British decided to make nothing of it and Spain ceded the territory of Florida.

As the idol of the frontier and now clothed with a national garment of military glamor, Jackson was bound to become a political figure. Tennessee of course sent him to the Senate; and there was soon a Jackson party in Washington. The population of the west was increasing very fast and its disaffection began to be alarming.

The first time Jackson was put forward for the presidency the east was incredulous. But the popular vote was startling. In the electoral college he was the high candidate, but wanted a majority, so that the House of Representatives had to decide it, and there he was beaten by a political cabal. John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts got it. Massachusetts again.

Until then Jackson probably had no great passion for the office of President. But when he felt he had been tricked out of it, and the voice of the common man strangled, that was a fighting matter; and then he went in pursuit of it as once he had pursued the Creek Indians.

Adams ran for re-election. It was the first dirty campaign in the history of American politics—the people against the aristocrats—and before it was over the possibilities of print-



able invective had been exhausted. Jackson was called a drunkard, a gambler, a killer, and his wife Rachel, to whom he was wonderfully devoted, was slurred because she smoked a pipe. His victory was stunning. He carried the entire country, save only New England.

Defenders of the conservative principle thought this was the beginning of the end. The bitterness was such that the courtly Adams broke the amenities by refusing to meet the incoming President. Well, it was the end—the end not of the republic but of the regime of the elite. Thereafter anybody might become Mr. President.

It is a habit of history to speak of the Jackson revolution; to say that at that time power was transferred from the few to the many and the common man emerged from his immemorial oblivion with the sign of political sovereignty on his brow. That makes a kind of emotional sense; and indeed it was important that people should arrive at that state of feeling. But it was definitely a state of feeling. For all his imperious temper, Jackson apparently never was tempted to put forth his hand to seize power in the name of the people. Democracy as he understood it meant political equality, not levelling. His respect for the foundations was a habit of mind. With the temperament of a stern parent he would not permit the national purse to be opened for public works such as roads and canals which he thought states and communities ought to build for themselves.

He destroyed only two things. One was the myth of an elite, inheriting the right to govern, which in any case could not have long survived. The other was the Bank of the United States, which acted as the government's financial agent and issued paper money.

The Bank was his dragon and he was bound to kill it. The struggle was terrific. The dragon had many defenders because it had been kind to its friends, many of whom were men in public office who were either not as innocent as they pretended to be or too naive to serve government. When it

was dead the carcass stank. After all, it was absurd for the government to have a banker. Later the United States Treasury became its own banker and next there was a National Bank System controlled by national laws.

Then what was it Jackson did for that political frustration called the common man?

The appellative common man was objectionable in itself, suggesting the existence of an inferior class, and should never have had any American meaning. At that time, however, more than at any time since, it was a challenge: and it made a chord between the injured stepchild feelings of the west, where living was hard, and the unhappy wage earners of the east, who with the rise of organized industry in place of little homeside workshops, began to be conscious of themselves as a propertyless class. Jackson did not bribe them with promises or public funds; he held out to them no evangel of soft living. He was himself a passionate individualist.

But what he did do was to give them a sense of belonging; a feeling that it was their government too. "The duties of public office," he said, "are, or at least admit of being made, so plain and simple that men of intelligence may readily qualify themselves for their performance." Therefore one as well as another was entitled to take part in government.

At his first inauguration they were all welcome to come and put their feet on the satin upholstery of the White House furniture because it was their White House too. They did come—the multitude itself. Their manners were terrible. Furniture was smashed, serving tables were overturned, the President himself had to be rescued from the uncouth hands of the people; and it might have been worse if somebody had not had the presence of mind to think of taking the punch bowls out on the lawn.

Those of the elite who had not fled were aghast. There was the mob. God save the republic! It was a vulgar and alarming spectacle. To Europeans and to many Americans also it was like a bad scene from the French revolution and

they gave it the same meaning. But it had no such meaning, and the curious fact is that it was never repeated. The common man never had to assert himself in that way again. He had elected a President and could do it again. The rule of the elite was broken. That was really all that he wanted; and he did not mind that the next President was a New Yorker.

\*

Nevertheless, to keep her way through the Jackson era the ship of state did need a lot of ballast, and that happily had been provided beforehand by another man who appeared in an unpredictable manner.

Out of the woods of Virginia had come a youth named John Marshall, with no advantages and only two possessions—one, great hardihood of character nurtured in a log cabin environment, and two, a very rare mental apparatus. In those days law was the poor young man's pathway to career and he took it; but he had not got far when the Revolution called him. He was at Valley Forge and saw there the tragedy of feeble government; that marked him for life.

The quality of his mind began to be revealed in the struggle to get the Constitution ratified. He was on the side of the Federalists, who elected Washington to be the first President and so took control of government. More and more after that the elders included him in their solemn pow-wows, and presently he was one of three commissioners sent to Paris to reason with the corrupt and insulting body called the Directory that last governed revolutionary France until Napoleon blew it up. It was Marshall who returned from Paris with the explosive "XYZ" papers, in which it was disclosed that the French Directory would discuss nothing, not even the outrageous seizure of American ships, unless the Americans would buy its good will with a large tribute in gold. The effect was to unite the country in angry feelings against France, and there was actually some fighting at sea; a declaration of war was avoided when the French apologized.

Not long after that President Adams unexpectedly named John Marshall to be Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. He did this to make sure that there would be on the bench, irremovable, one strong conservative, against the rising power of Thomas Jefferson and his dangerous republicans. Jefferson and his followers called themselves republicans because they did not yet dare to call themselves democrats; but they were neither so dangerous nor so radical as they thought they were.

Marshall was Chief Justice for thirty-five years. He was there at the summit of his amazing power when Andrew Jackson arrived. Meanwhile, with his own hands, he had placed so much ballast in the hold of the ship—which to begin with, Macaulay said, was all sail and no ballast—that even with all her sail set she could ride out a squall with ease.

There have been few indispensable men in American history. You could count them on your fingers. John Marshall was one of them.

\*

We need here some background. Beginning with the Mayflower Compact and the Colonial charters, the Americans have always had a childlike trust in words committed to paper. Once when his British Majesty called upon the colonists of Connecticut to surrender their charter they hid it in an oak tree, as if the parchment itself was their talisman; so long as they had physical possession of it they were safe.

The American procedure for setting up any institution is first to agree on the principles and then to put them in writing. Then there it is in black and white and no going behind it. Besides the Constitution of the United States, which is the supreme law, every state has one of its own. The British, by contrast, though very jealous of constitutional government, have never had a written constitution.

Only a little less naive than the idea of the parchment as talisman was the idea that a written constitution, once rati-

fied by the people, could be altered only by will of the people.

The reasoning was this. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. The Congress, the President, every officer of government, the Supreme Court itself, the individual citizen, all alike are bound by it. The Constitution therefore is above government. Only the people can ever change it because the Constitution says that only the people possess sovereign power. True—literally true. Not a word, not one punctuation mark in the Constitution can be changed but by consent of the people.

Nevertheless, the Constitution may be altered by interpretation.

Words are not mathematical symbols. Saving pronouns and proper names, very few words are exact. In the common language the difficulties of making a precise and simple statement, with sharp and impervious edges, are almost insurmountable. There is a language of science and a language of law, both pretending to be exact, and that is why they are so dreary and to the layman unintelligible—and the meaning still in dispute. As we live with them, the use of words is to communicate emotions and suggest images; and the images have an embarrassing habit of changing their clothes without changing their names. A constitution has to be written in the common language; and no matter how clear it may be at first the argument very soon begins. What do the words mean?

When the Constitution says that the government may levy taxes for the "general welfare," what does general welfare mean? At the time nobody could have imagined that these words would ever be construed, as they have been, to sanction the rise of a vast paternal bureaucracy to mind the lives of the people—their hours of labor, their sowing and reaping, their behaviour in the market place and what they do about their sickness and old age.

When the Constitution says the Congress shall enact "all laws which shall be necessary and proper" to execute the

powers conferred upon government, does it not follow that what is *necessary* and what is *proper* are left to the hazards of emotional decision?

And when the Constitution says Congress "shall regulate commerce among the several states," who will say what interstate commerce is? Is it merely the actual exchange of goods between the states, or perhaps also the means such as railroads whereby goods are brought to the point of exchange, or, in the extreme case, does it mean the manufacture in one state of goods that *may* be sold in another?

Such questions have given rise to endless controversy. Each dispute must somehow be settled so that people may go on with their business. But how? By a decision of the United States Supreme Court. It must say what the words mean. There is no other way out.

Disputation over the metaphysics of an unalterable law that may be altered by interpretation was 150 years old when at last a Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court said bluntly what everybody already knew: "The Constitution is what the Court says it is."

The ink was still bright on the face of the Constitution when the people began to divide. On one side were the Federalists, led by Washington, Hamilton and the Adamses, who wanted a strong and magisterial central government. On the other side stood Jefferson and his republicans, whose fear of government was instinctive; they wanted to chain it down, believing that by nature all governments contain a biological principle of giantism, so that unless they are shackled they will grow out of control and devour the liberties of the people. Historically it had always been, said Jefferson, that government advanced and liberty gave way. This he dreaded.

The doctrine of limited government was fundamental in the Constitution, hence all that procedural machinery which we have learned to call the system of checks and balances, whereby the Congress may check the President, the President may check the Congress and the Supreme Court may

check both of them, and then the Supreme Court itself is checked by the Constitution. In that case, what was the quarrel about? How could such a Constitution be construed in two different ways—in one way to enhance the natural powers of government and in another way to fetter them?

Well, that possibility, as we have seen, was bound to arise because rubber words like *general welfare*, *necessary* and *proper* can be made either to stretch or shrink. It was a conflict of theory that could not come to rest; it had to be solved by tension. A government strong enough to keep order, to discipline the ways of liberty, to hold the country up to its destiny, and at the same time a docile government belonging to the people, with no will of its own—such were the irrecconcilable terms of the problem.

In the beginning certainly the need was for a much stronger Federal government than the people had imagined when they ratified the Constitution. For want of it the republic would have fallen apart. Among the original thirteen sovereign states there was a latent spirit of resistance to Federal authority, breaking forth from time to time in murmurs for secession, notably in New England, Virginia, Kentucky and South Carolina.

\*

Into this dangerous confusion came John Marshall, as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, like a mighty Vulcan resolved to forge a nation. He had no patterns or drawings to work from, nor any legal tools to work with. He took his refractory material as he found it, annealed it in the fires of reason and shaped it to his logic with terrific hammer blows. Nobody quite understood what he was doing, for it was a new thing. Lord Bryce, the British historian who wrote the one best story of the American Commonwealth, said of him that the Constitution seemed not so much to rise under his hands as to be gradually unveiled by him until it stood revealed in its harmonious perfection.

His principal antagonist was Thomas Jefferson, who said: "There is no danger I apprehend so much as the consolidation of our government by the noiseless and therefore unalarming instrumentality of the Supreme Court."

All the same Jefferson, even when he was President, accepted the law as Marshall laid it down. Marshall's power lay in the fact that he could make people see the necessity for building up the authority of the Federal Government, whether they liked it or not; if it was a great nation they were dreaming of, then it had to be like that.

His most compelling and daring decisions were unpopular. In one he established the power of the Supreme Court to declare an act of Congress null and void, on the ground that it was unconstitutional. In another he established the power of the Court to overturn an act of any state legislature on the same ground. In general he stoutly upheld the sanctity of contract, and that was important, because the repudiation of onerous contracts was becoming customary; nevertheless there was such a thing as an unconstitutional contract. New York state made a contract with the inventors of the steamboat giving them a monopoly of navigation on the Hudson River. Marshall destroyed it by holding navigation on the Hudson River to be interstate commerce, and only Congress could lawfully regulate interstate commerce.

Marshall's time was from Jefferson, the first republican President, to Jackson, the first President to call himself a democrat, roughly thirty-five years. During all that period he *was* the Supreme Court; and at the end of it Constitutional law as he wanted it was so fixed that people took it to be a part of their national heritage, and in the next generation it would be proved that it could survive the shock of Civil War and save the Union from dissolution.

As between Marshall and Jackson, notwithstanding much fuming on both sides, there was less positive disagreement than people at the time imagined. Although they might disagree violently as to who should run it, both believed in a



strong Federal Government. More important still, both put the sovereignty of the Union above the sovereignty of the separate states; with equal passion both denied the right of any state to defy Federal law or to secede from the Union.

Their minds met at that point when South Carolina defied a high protective tariff law and threatened to leave the Union if the Federal Government tried to enforce it. Jackson's answer was to issue a proclamation denying the right of any state to secede, to send revenue cutters to Charleston harbor and to threaten a series of hangings under martial law if the Federal revenue collectors were resisted. Clay of Kentucky, the great compromiser, poured his special snake oil on those angry waters and nothing happened.

## IV

# Freedom's Lares and Penates

ALL THIS BUSINESS OF BUILDING THE FIRST TEMPLE WAS VERY exciting. The hewers and bringers were many. Design, structure and materials were matters of intense interest. They were debated in the halls of Congress, on every platform, in the newspapers, in the churches, and of winter evenings around every country store stove. The difference between that debate and one that might now be current is that then the people were discussing what government should be for everybody alike, not what it should *do* for the farmer, for organized labor, for the little business man, for the old, the sick and the halt.

Since it was the people's temple, dedicated not to any superstition but to the free will of man, there were many altars.

There was an altar to Union in a central place. Putting it there may have been an act of blind forethought; more be-like it was done with a sense of fearful premonition. Many already knew that if that altar fell the temple was doomed, and yet there was no rational probability that in defense of it hundreds of thousands of lives would be sacrificed in the next generation. Indeed, many would have said that Union could not be bought at that price, or that if it could be it was not worth it.

Again it was that if reason had been vision we should have lost our way.

There was an altar to the Individual Man. The high priest

there was Ralph Waldo Emerson, who spelled democracy with a little *d* and gave it the first description of its own soul. "The root and seed of democracy," he said, "is the doctrine, Judge for yourself. Reverence thyself. It is the inevitable effect of the doctrine, where it has any effect, to make each man a state."

He took the American ethos to be his clay, and turned it as on a potter's wheel, raising forms of unattainable perfection and beauty which crumbled in the instant they became visible and yet were never forgotten. In his ideal state the highest law would be ethical sovereignty, wealth and property would be subordinate to good will, and every man would know how to walk alone with his spirit in high places. The possibility of such a state had never existed anywhere, unless perhaps here for Americans, standing morally and culturally free of the world—and for them only provided they could tame their incorrigible commercial motive. This he abhorred. It made man the servant of his belly, a money chest, his feet serving his head, the ideal serving the actual. Believing in the perfectability of man, he was an optimist. Yet he had moments of extreme pessimism as he turned his gaze to a dimly lighted place in the temple and saw there the ugly altar of Mammon, toward which even his disciples slyly bent their knees as they passed out.

The other nature of man had yet much actual work to do, and although after Emerson it would never be quite the same again, nothing at that time could have stopped it from building the most gorgeous altar in the temple. That was the altar to Success.

Nearby was the altar to Progress. The idea of progress was then new in the world. We who now take it for granted as a natural concomitant of life can hardly realize how exciting it was. The first seeds of it were planted in Europe, most hopefully by a French thinker named Condorcet; but the soil of Europe had been sterilized by the wisdom of the ages. This wisdom, knowing all human history, said that civiliza-

tions were repetitive, in a preordained cycle—the beginning, the sudden growth, the rise only to heights that had been scaled many times before; then the decay, the fall and the succession. Everything that was had already been, would pass and be again, over and over.

Here only, and here for the first time in human experience, the idea of progress seized the imagination of a people who had nothing to forget, nothing to destroy and no ancient wisdom to bury. Progress—why not? Continuous, cumulative progress, with unlimited benefit to the welfare of humanity.

As B follows A, so a second idea appeared. If unlimited progress was possible, why was poverty necessary? Thus came a thought that not only was original here but original in the history of mankind—the thought of abolishing the immemorial curse of poverty.

But this progress that people now imagine—is it not more actual than ideal? Certainly it is actual. And will it not lead them to adopt that economic view of life which Emerson so deplored? They will be going straight toward it.

The fatal enigma now appears. Material progress will cause spiritual values to wither. That is not arguable. But the other side of it is that it remains to be discovered how in a real world poverty may be abolished by spiritual advance alone.

Emerson was the great idealist. Benjamin Franklin, founder of American science and zealot for the idea of progress, was the realist. Nevertheless, they had a theme in common. Their theme was humanity. The difference was that one of them was thinking of its soul and the other of its body.

Hear Franklin saying: "It is impossible to imagine the height to which may be carried in a thousand years the power of man over matter. We may perhaps learn to deprive large masses of their gravity and give them absolute levity, for the sake of easy transportation. Agriculture may diminish its labor and double its produce. All diseases may by sure means be prevented or cured, not excepting that of old age, and our lives lengthened at pleasure even beyond the ante-

diluvian standard. O, that moral science were in a fair way of improvement, that men would cease to be wolves, and that human beings would at length learn what they now improperly call humanity."

If Franklin's real world was a millenium away, Emerson's ideal world was much more remote, if attainable at all; and a time when people could have both was not imaginable. In any case, no conscious choice was possible. For reasons we cannot know, a vast potential of cosmic energy was entrapped in the American's seed. It obliged him to put forth his actual power.

There was an altar to Law. The American's extraordinary attachment to law was not sentimental, nor was it, as some have suggested, a defense against the demon of lawlessness which he knew to be lurking in his lower nature. It derived from his political understanding. Equality before the law meant one law for all alike, and that was the very footstone of human freedom. The whole of his political philosophy was contained in the precept—"that this shall be a government of law, not of men."

Utopia had its bright little altar. It received many prayers and answered none; gradually it was forsaken, and one day, long after the last of its candles had guttered out, it was dragged away. There were niches for the Saints of Liberty, and an altar to Science, which would become the tallest and most imposing of them all.

But there was no altar to God.

This was not a thoughtless omission. The American was neither godless nor irreligious. But in his political nature he was resolved that church and state should be forever separate. He remembered the evils and tyranny of theocracy, as in Colonial New England, where the established church laid down the laws under pretense of having received them direct from God; and he would have no more of that. A church should be what a church was for. Let God be privately housed. Let each of the fighting denominations do it in its

own way—the Congregationalists in their way, the Unitarians in theirs, the Episcopalians in theirs, the Catholics in theirs, the Methodists in theirs, the Quakers in theirs, and so on.

In fact, owing to the first intoxications of modern science, to the complete release of intellectual curiosity and to the epidemic of skepticism that had seized the world of the mind, religious thought was in a state of such ferment that God could not have been comfortable in any public temple.

A new religion was rising called the natural religion, or Deism. Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, Madison—these were religious men, reverently believing in a Creator, only they could not accept the God of the Puritans. The only deity invoked by the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence was "Nature's God." They referred to the Creator who had made all men equal, to the Supreme Judge of the World, and went so far in the last paragraph as to lean upon Divine Providence, but never did they speak simply of the Almighty God.

In the Constitution, God was not mentioned in any way at all. The Founding Fathers who wrote it were Deists. They looked twice at religion—once to say, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," and again, "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."

Then for the first time since man began to build temples 3,000 years Before Christ, religion, in spite of itself, was both free and unprivileged.

## V

# The American System

THIS IS STILL THE STORY OF THE FIRST GENERATION THAT LIVED the life of the high tempo.

Its gait was boom and bust, always falling down and getting up like a stumbling young giant; and that early habit of walking was to mark the Republic for life. In that one generation there were six panics. Falling down was from losing balance on the eager forward impulse.

For a while there was no sense of economic direction, simply man as the left hand of nature reacting to his environment.

Attachment to agriculture was very strong, not only for love of the soil but for other reasons. Jefferson's famous distrust of commercialism had a long survival; so also his notion that only a nation of farmers could be free, virtuous and politically responsible. That was his ideal of a durable democracy.

Toward the end of his life he began to waver. There was something to be said for manufacturing, even though Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury, had made the thought of it repugnant in his Report on Manufacturers, wherein he proposed protective tariffs and factories like England's to absorb child labor.

Then, as more and more people began to see the limitations of an agricultural nation, came Henry Clay of Kentucky with his vision of what he called an American System. As the American farmer went on plowing and reaping free virgin

land, what would he do with his surplus? If he sold it to Europe he would have to take payment in the products of European industry, the terms of that exchange would be always to his disadvantage, and this might become a permanent pattern once it had ramified itself in habit. It would be much better for the American nation to eat more of its own surplus. But how could it do that when nine-tenths of the population lived on the soil, provided its own food, and could not eat any more?

What Clay proposed was a high tariff against Europe's manufactured goods. In the lee of this protection against foreign competition American industry would rise very fast, cities would grow, factories would draw labor away from the soil where it was already producing more than could be sold and then you would have on one side an urban population to eat the food and on the other side a rural population to produce it, tending to balance. Moreover, high tariffs would bring revenue to the United States Treasury, since of course some foreign goods would continue to come in and pay the tariff; and the Federal Government would use this revenue for internal improvements, especially roads, so that the surplus of the farms might more easily reach the cities to be exchanged there for the products of native American skill.

This was a theme of economic independence. Clay imagined a time when it would be said: "America is America's best customer."

Not only did that time come; a time came when from being its own best customer the United States became the great supplier of the world, with a power of industrial production equal to one-half that of all other civilized people combined, and with still a surplus of food to sell abroad, because American industry had revolutionized farming by putting mechanical energy on the land, in place of human drudgery and animal power, with the result that one man on the soil could produce as much as ten could have produced before.



To this same breathless generation—besides the steamboat, the railroad and the telegraph,—happened things such as—

The reaper, which began the mechanization of farming;

The rotary printing press;

The penny newspaper;

The first public high school;

Public sewerage;

Ether as an anesthetic;

The beginning of the revolt of women;

Garrison's *Liberator*, a portent of the Civil War;

Patent medicine;

The camp meeting and revivalism;

The Yankee peddler who took culture to the backwoods;

McGuffey's Reader;

Noah Webster's American dictionary;

The New England poets;

The transcendentalists;

Long trousers, or democracy in the fashions;

Many utopias, like Brook Farm and New Harmony, founded on the wistful expectation of a New Moral World;

An exciting ferment of radical ideas, mostly imported from Europe by the intellectuals, with Karl Marx writing communism in Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*;

A new philosophy of labor;

The call for a World Convention to emancipate the human race from ignorance, poverty, division, sin and misery;

The China trade;

The lovely clipper ship that outran everything on the seas not only because it was swift but because also the American sailor was the first to sail all night at top speed;

The joy of a robustious world manner that stunned the diplomacy of Europe and scared Japan into opening the gates of her hermit kingdom to western trade;

And then two fateful distractions:

One was the war with Mexico over the possession of Texas, which ended with the addition also of New Mexico, Arizona and California to American territory, thus completing the continental shape of the United States;

The second—as if to make that arid geographical mass digestible—was the discovery of gold in California a year later.

The Gold Rush of the Forty Niners, besides being the most colorful single episode in American history, had very fortunate consequences, for whereas the sheer weight of that vague and remote region might have given the vessel a bad list to port, the rapid rise of an exuberant civilization in California was compensatory and put the ship in trim again.

\*

On the San Antonio River in Texas, just across from the town of San Antonio, was an early Catholic mission named the Alamo. It was a church surrounded by walls, in the beautiful old Spanish style, and could be used as a fort. There in February, 1836, one hundred and fifty Americans, calling themselves Texans, were trapped and besieged by 3,000 Mexicans commanded by a butcher named Santa Anna. At the head of the Texans was Lt. Col. William Barrett Travis, who sent out a call for reinforcements, saying:

“The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken. I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls. I shall never surrender or retreat. Then I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism and everything dear to the American character to come to our aid with all dispatch.”

Thirty-eight men from Gonzales did fight their way through the Mexican army to stand with the suicidal band. That made the Texans one hundred and eighty-eight. But other Texans were too far away to help and the Mexicans still were sixteen to one.

The siege lasted twelve days. In moments of lull, before

the Mexicans got over the wall, they could hear from inside strains of hill-billy music. David Crockett of Tennessee, the hardest shooting man of them all, had his fiddle with him. The only woman was the wife of one of the Texans. She was cowering in the church when he rushed in to kiss her good-bye and then back again, at a signal that the Mexicans were getting over, to die with the rest. Not one Texan survived. That was the only kind of word the brutal Santa Anna could be trusted to keep. Afterward for many years it was a saying among Texans: "Thermopylae had its messenger of fate; the Alamo had none. Every man died."

Who were these men?

The old mission has been preserved as a precious relic. You will find there a bronze plate telling you who they were. One was from New York, one was from New Orleans, one from Glasgow, and so on; they were from everywhere. That tells you nothing.

Then what were they doing there?

They were fighting for Texas. But why for Texas? It did not yet belong to them, it did not belong to the United States, it did not in fact belong to itself. Yet here were one hundred and eighty-eight Americans who would sooner die for it than surrender. Still, why? These were roving and restless men, pushing the frontier westward, whose feet never had been still before. There was plenty of land, limitless land as it then seemed; they could have gone on or they could have gone back. No. But here they would stop and here they would fight for something they did not possess, something they could not define, save by the one word Texas.

There can be only one answer. They did not choose Texas. It was the other way. Texas chose them. This you will not understand unless you are a certain kind of person, nor even then unless you have had the experience of coming awake one morning in Texas and feeling it for the first time, as might happen to you now on a Pullman train. And so, when man and nature are free to act upon each other, an environ-

ment will select its own people and put a spell upon them; and so in fact to this day in the life of America there is definitely such a thing as a Texas race.

It is not an uncommon American gesture slightly to avert one's face from the war with Mexico or to turn that page of history quickly. It is a long and zig-zag story. The facts are all in the textbooks. Yet though you have all the facts you will have not the meaning unless you begin with the Alamo.

Underlying it all is this question: To whom does the land belong—to those who happen to be there first or to those who will make better use of it? There is a legal title and there is a moral title. Lawful societies lay stress upon the legal title, and that is proper enough; but in the end it turns out that only the moral title is valid. This you may prove by supposing the case of the man who owns a farm under a perfectly legal title. All the powers of the law and the courts, and if necessary even force, will defend him in the possession of that farm because his title is legal. All the same, unless he makes good use of the land he will certainly lose it. Both title and possession will eventually pass to a better farmer, perhaps under the sheriff's hammer. And as for the rights of the people who happen to be there first, as for example, the Mexicans in Texas, how did they get possession but by taking it away from others who were there before them?

Americans first began to settle in the Mexican province of Texas on the invitation of the Mexican government. It offered free land to planters and farmers who would bring their families, agree to abide by the laws of Mexico and embrace the Catholic religion. The mercurial Mexican government in one of its rational moods had probably despaired of ever being able to do this pioneer job itself. The area was vast and, besides, it did not have that kind of people.

The word Texas, merely the exotic sound of it, strangely stirred the imagination of migratory Americans. They moved in so fast that the Mexican government began to be uneasy.

That may not have been a very good plan, after all, especially since these Americans turned out to be not docile colonists but a forward and willful people and very hard to govern because they had ideas of their own about law. It took measures first to restrict the immigration and then to stop it and fell into the bad habit of forgetting the terms of its original contract with the settlers.

So the mortal quarrel began. The Americans—now all calling themselves Texans—resented the arbitrary nature and changeableness of Mexican law; and every effort by the Mexican government to impose its decrees by force led to acts of fierce retaliation. All the Texans demanded at first was the status of a loyal but self-governing state. That of course would not work. At last the Mexican government resolved to put the Texans in their place once for all and started an army north. The Texans thereupon set up a provisional government and prepared to fight.

The shooting started over possession of one little brass cannon that belonged to the village of Gonzales. The Mexicans sent a detachment of eighty men to take it. Eighteen Texans put them to rout and Gonzales kept the cannon. Just then the Mexican army arrived at San Antonio, sixty-four miles away. The men of Gonzales improvised a militia of Texans and went to meet it. After five days of lurid fighting the dazed Mexican army took refuge within the walls of the Alamo—the same Alamo where a few weeks later another Mexican army would catch the heroic garrison of one hundred and eighty-eight and commit its act of slaughter. The Texans had not yet learned their lesson about the enemy. In this first encounter the Mexican army inside the Alamo walls asked for terms, was permitted to surrender and then marched away.

The trouble was that the Texans had neither an army nor a general. They rose of themselves in small volunteer bodies and did as they pleased and were widely scattered. In this

case, they left only a small garrison behind at the Alamo, then divided themselves and went on various errands which they believed to be military. The Mexicans of course, under a new general, returned in force for revenge, and the Alamo tragedy was what happened.

Now the Texans knew better. They let Sam Houston take command. He gathered them all up into one army and met the Mexicans at the battle of San Jacinto. In that action the Texans, crying "Remember the Alamo!" utterly destroyed the Mexican army and captured Santa Anna himself. Instead of hanging him they kept him for a while and then let him go. He returned to Mexico where he flourished in ignominy and in the end turned traitor to his own country.

Now Texas was free, a republic with a flag of its own, but bankrupt and still in danger, for there was no peace and the Mexican government might at any time return to the attack.

For nearly ten years the Texas problem was a political plague. The American government reluctantly recognized the new republic as an independent state—reluctantly for fear of giving mortal offense to Mexico—but that was not enough. Texas wanted protection and money. The money she tried to borrow first in New York and then in Europe and was disappointed. Then she wanted to be annexed to the United States. But that would mean war between the United States and Mexico, and the American government did not want war with Mexico. Instead, it offered to buy Texas from Mexico, and this with no result but to outrage Mexican pride.

Now in a very bad strait, Texas turned to Great Britain. The British Prime Minister had several ideas. One was to persuade Mexico to recognize the independence of Texas. That failed. Another was to provide Texas with British money, on one condition among others that she should abolish slavery. Nothing came of that. What the British seemed to be thinking of was an independent cotton state able to

supply their spindles with fibre forever and related to Great Britain by a kind of umbilical cord, which might be something as tenuous as gratitude.

It was all somewhat vague. Nevertheless, it was alarm over Great Britain's interest in Texas that tipped the scales in favor of annexation. The American people had wanted Texas and still did, but the subject had become embroiled in the passions of the slavery debate. The anti-slavery forces of the north were anti-Texas, believing that this was all a conspiracy on the part of the southern slave owners to extend their peculiar institution; also there was a very strong feeling both north and south against war with Mexico. One treaty of annexation, already signed by Texas, was rejected by the United States Senate.

In the next Presidential election the subject thrust itself forward in spite of anything the politicians could do about it, the friends of Texas won, and on March 1, nine years after the Alamo massacre, Texas was invited to join the United States. Thereupon the Mexican Minister at Washington asked for his passports and went home.

For a year after that the American government tried to restore amicable relations with Mexico. It was too late.

Between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande in the south of Texas was a twilight zone, controlled neither by the Americans nor by the Mexicans. There a clash occurred and the war was on.

Abraham Lincoln, then a member of Congress, denounced it; so did all the anti-slavery people, for Texas was a slave state. But in the country at large there was fervor for it. Volunteers overwhelmed the recruiting stations. Never was the American soldier more valiant.

Seventeen months later Mexico City, from which the Mexican government had fled, saw the Stars and Stripes.

## VI

# Land Ecstasy

### LAND.

The ceaseless land.

Mother of increase, responsive to caress, preferring impressment, sternly wanton, the ageless, anonymous, immovable land!

With now—

- (1) The annexation of Texas, plus,
- (2) The territory ceded to the United States by Mexico at the end of the war, plus,
- (3) The addition of the Oregon country, as to which a boundary dispute with Great Britain had just been settled—

—the land room was one-half square mile for each family in the population, and hardly more than a quarter of it tamed by agricultural man.

Never before had it happened that a people already conscious and highly evolved *began* a civilization on land that was both virgin and free.

Being virgin it contained elemental properties which once exhausted could perhaps never be replaced by chemical ingenuity, and it may be that these properties so long stored in the soil gave the early Americans a kind of food that no large segment of the human race will ever eat again.

Being free it had one enchantment that will never return.

We now who at sight may fall in love with some lovely stitch of the earth and say, "I wonder who owns that," or



inquire perhaps for the nearest real estate agent, cannot recall the ecstasy of the man who could say, "That is mine; I saw it first."

That alone was wonderful enough. But there was a value much deeper than satisfaction of the acquisitive instinct. Free land meant freedom. It meant freedom broken down to the grasp of one man's hand—any man's.

In the Old World land ownership was the lord's portion, or it was the king who could give title and take it away again. The king, the nobles and the church—these few—owned all the land. The land could not belong to the people; the people belonged to the land in relations of serfdom, villeinage, docile peasantry and servility.

But here every man could own his piece of ground. The trees, the shade, the grass, the brook, the very stones were his, as immune from trespass as the greatest lord's domain. In the individual case, therefore, possession of land, besides being a means to independent livelihood, satisfied also a psychic hunger. The rain was sweeter on mine than ever it was on his lordship's, and because he could say mine, the farmer at last was a free being, and hence the spirit of American agriculture.

Yet land did not make itself free. The Old World tradition of a landed gentry put its roots down here and might have flourished if the Revolution had not savagely killed it.

In the New England Colonies the practice was to survey new land as it was needed and then allot it in small parcels. Under their charters each Colony was proprietor of all the land within its boundaries, except that the British king reserved the right to take it back at any time if he got mad. In the Crown Colonies, notably New York, immense tracts of the best land were conferred upon families and individuals who had favor with the king, and thus the beginning of large indivisible estates administered in the grand manorial manner. In Pennsylvania, which was a grant colony, the Penn family owned the land by title from the king and disposed

of it to settlers in small tracts on easy terms, but did not relinquish ownership. A farmer's land belonged to him only so long as he made to the Penn family a small annual payment, called quit rent. This quit rent arrangement was very common throughout the Crown and Grant Colonies. The annual payment was never large, but it was irksome; and moreover, under that system, land ownership, protected as it was by laws of primogeniture and entail, would become the monopoly of a few to whom the many who worked the soil would be paying tribute forever. By primogeniture and entail the owner of land bequeathed it to his first-born son, and he in turn was forbidden to bequeath it otherwise than to his first-born son, and so on and on, with intent to keep the estate intact through generations.

These beginnings of an aristocratic Old World land system were swept away by the Revolution. The king's hand was removed from the land and the titles he had conferred were torn up. The great manorial estates were seized and broken up for the benefit of small farmers. Quit rents simply died. And the practice of primogeniture and entail was abolished by law.

Now therefore it was the people's land. What would the people do with it? How should a wilderness be governed to begin with?

Over most of it the Indians had tribal rights, regionally demarked by use and habit; and although they were incessantly fighting one another over trespass, still they could unite from time to time to resist the white man's advance. How should they be appeased and pushed back? If they had to be bought out, who was going to pay them? If they had to be dispossessed and killed, whose hands were to be stained with the red man's blood?

It was easy enough to say that all open and unsettled land should be treated as public domain; that nominally the Federal Government should be the sole proprietor, able to sell and give title to it. Yet there had to be laws under which

people could claim the land, take possession of it in a reasonable way with no hogging and be secure in their rights.

The first complications arose over what were called state lands. Prior to the Revolution several Colonies had acquired claims to vast reaches of wild land west of the Appalachians, particularly in the Ohio country, and although the king in a fit of ill will had cancelled them, it was natural that when the Colonies became free and independent states they should revive them. They did, and since there was no one to dispute their claims, they were all land rich. States that had no such claims took the position that since everybody had fought the war for independence all territory lying outside the boundaries of the original thirteen Colonies should belong to all the people as a public domain. New York state, whose claims were small, was the first to surrender them to the Federal Government, whereupon Congress forecast a land policy in the following resolution:

“The unappropriated lands that may be ceded or relinquished to the United States shall be disposed of for the common benefit of the United States, and be settled and formed into distinct republican states, which shall become members of the Federal Union, and have the same rights of sovereignty, freedom and independence as the other states.”

Other states followed, even Virginia, which only a little while before had been minded to validate her western claims by men in arms. Almost without summons and certainly in a most unpredictable way, the spirit of union was working with a force which perhaps nobody at the time quite understood. Thus the public domain was consolidated.

To populate the wilderness was essentially a business of colonization. The problem was not how to plant colonies. The pioneer people were doing that for themselves. The problem was how to govern a colony through its infancy and then raise it to statehood under uniform and predetermined stipulations.

The first high act of statescraft on the part of Congress was to enact two perfect laws—one the Land Ordinance of

1785 and the other the Northwest Ordinance two years later. These laws provided that the public domain should be surveyed and mapped in rectangles of thirty-six square miles each, called townships; that in each township four square miles should be set aside for the Federal Government and one for the benefit of public schools; that as fast as the survey could be made land offices should be established to sell the land, the proceeds to be converted into the public treasury at Washington; that when any certain large area with natural geographic boundaries had been indicated as a territory its affairs should be administered by a governor and judges appointed by Congress; that when such a territory had 5,000 free male settlers it could elect a legislature and send a representative to Congress; that when it had 60,000 it should be admitted to the Union as a state equal in all respects to the original states, and finally that there should be no slavery in any territory. The land could be sold either at a low fixed price per acre which Congress might change at any time or it could be sold at auction to the highest bidder. It was in fact sold both ways.

But there is no such thing as perfect administration of a perfect law. Many bad complications were unforeseen, and for fifty years there was turmoil and agony over the distribution of the land.

In the first place, long before the government's surveyors could make their maps and of course long before any land offices were established, hundreds of thousands of settlers were already there in possession of the land.

These were the land hungry people who could not wait for the government to push the Indians back. They would do that for themselves. Groups of them built stockades and lived inside of them while they did their first clearing and farming outside with rifles leaning against the stumps; and then as the Indians receded each man went outside and built himself a log cabin or a mud hut, and when the Indians returned, as they often did, he fought them single handed or with the help of his woman, who could use the rifle too. These were

the people who had squatter rights when the government arrived—rights by virtue of having been first in possession of the land, or tomahawk rights by virtue of having killed their own Indians.

What were you going to do with them? They had improved the value of the land by working it and by building crude habitations upon it. Was it fair that when the land office appeared and the land was put up for auction they should have to bid against newcomers and speculators to keep the little farms for which they had risked their lives? Was it fair that they should have to buy back their own improvements?

They were injured and very vocal and the heart of the country was with them. Here and there an individual squatter might be dispossessed, even by force, but a number of them together could successfully invoke the oldest New World tradition there was. That was the tradition that free white men had a right to pre-empt unoccupied land on sight, to have and to keep for their own. No example was more famous than that of the Vermonters, who so loved their Green Mountains and were so willing to fight for them that they defied either of the states that claimed the land or the Federal Government itself to come and take it, and won at last a state of their own.

Everywhere it was the same. First in the Ohio country, then in the Mississippi Valley, on the trans-Mississippi plains, in Texas, in California, in Oregon—the pioneer settler was there, long before the government could overtake him with its maps and land offices and scheme of order; and his rights, with or without any legal title, were bound to be upheld by a people who knew in their cells what land hunger was.

\*

Pioneers were of two kinds. First were the pathfinders, like Daniel Boone, in skin coats and mocassins, solitary men in flight from civilization, who could live in the wilds endlessly, with only a rifle and a knife and a skill of woodcraft

superior to that of the Indians. They built nothing and wanted nothing. Their role was to descry the land; and for their first knowledge of it they were often employed by exploring expeditions, survey parties and speculators who sometimes could not locate their own property.

But the pioneer farmer was the man who wanted to lay his hand on the land. His thrill was from the sight, the feel, the smell of it, and in the struggle to win it from primeval nature, no odds asked or given. He too was in flight from the demands and disciplines of civilization. Generally he took with him his woman, a bag of seed, an axe, and if he could, a pair of oxen. Picture, with that simple equipment, a man, a woman and an infant as they vanish into the wilderness. Somewhere they will find their ideal piece of ground. They do not know how far it is. The woman carries the infant, and the man, to save the oxen, carries on his shoulders the heavy oak ox yoke. That is an historically true image of the pioneer.

Later, in the west, after the land had been surveyed, thousands of wistful settlers arrived at government land offices with even less equipment, and not enough money to pay the minimum price of a dollar and a quarter an acre. They could borrow the money from the agent of an eastern bank, betting their labor against a mortgage; and it was only the farmer who could lose, for if he failed to pay, the bank could foreclose the mortgage and take the land on which he had wasted his prayers and curses.

From time to time Congress was moved to provide relief for the first land tammers, the deedless ones, whose rights were those of possession only, and then at length it passed a general law called the Pre-emption Act, which gave them legal status. Against speculators and newcomers who might be willing to pay more, the farmer who was already there could hold his land and get his title by paying the government's minimum price of a dollar-and-a-quarter an acre.

But even at that price land was dear for the poor man whose only risk capital was his labor and hardihood.

Why had not every man a natural right to a piece of land?

So long as there was a vast unoccupied public domain, why shouldn't land be as free as air and sunshine? So the cry for free land began to be heard; it swelled to a chorus and became the slogan of a political party, and after fifteen years of withstanding the clamor Congress passed the Homestead Act. Then anywhere in the surveyed public domain a man could stake out his own farm and all he had to do to gain absolute title to it was to live on it for five years.

From the beginning land speculation was an American folk way: yet at its very worst there was more delirium than evil in it.

You might have called George Washington a land speculator, as he was, or you might say he was a forestaller on western land, which sounds better and was perfectly honorable. So also were other presidents and many public officers and members of Congress who made the land laws, and it was no reflection upon them. So also were bankers, lawyers, merchants, judges, preachers, New England spinsters, fantasists and swindlers.

Land companies appeared like mushrooms in the morning grass. One of the largest was the Ohio Company which, before there was any Land Ordinance, bought directly from Congress  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million acres of land at an average price of nine cents an acre. The public treasury was low and needed the cash; but Congress had also the idea that these speculators would promote settlement, as in fact they did; and the land as such was worth nothing until the hand of labor touched it.

The profits of those early land companies were not as great as you might suppose; many of them collapsed. Their one aim of course was to beat the settler to the land and then sell it to him at a profit. Their trouble was that the government at the same time was selling land to the settler at low prices. More than that, the government was making large grants of the public domain to the states in aid of education, canals and railroads, so that these states also had public land to

sell in competition with the speculators. Thirdly, the speculators were under this disadvantage, that having bought their land they had to sell it to get their money back and could not wait forever, lest the taxes eat it up, whereas anything the government or the states got for land was profit, since it cost them nothing, and meanwhile they had no taxes to pay.

It was different when the government began to make large grants of land to private companies in aid of transcontinental railroad construction—to the Union Pacific, for example, alternate strips one mile wide and five miles deep on each side of the track all the way. There was scandal there, although it was less from the land grants in principle than from the corrupt profiteering of the builders in their construction contracts, against which they were receiving government loans. All of that now is forgotten. What lives is the magic, sin and all, as Robert Louis Stevenson felt it when he wrote:

“When I think how the railroad has been pushed through this unwatered wilderness and haunt of savage tribes, how at each stage of the construction roaring, impromptu cities, full of gold and lust and death, sprang up and then died away again; how in these uncouth places pigtailed Chinese pirates worked side by side with border ruffians and broken men from Europe, talking together in mixed dialect, mostly oaths, gambling, drinking, quarreling and murdering like wolves; and then when I go on to remember that all this epical turmoil was conducted by gentlemen in frock coats and with a view to nothing more extraordinary than a fortune and a subsequent visit to Paris, it seems to me as if this railroad were the one typical achievement of the age in which we live. If it be romance, if it be contrast, if it be heroism that we require, what was Troy town to this?”

The great use of the railroad land grants was precisely what Congress intended. The railroads did not want the land as land. They wanted freight. The land itself cannot yield freight. Only the labor of settlers can do that. Therefore what the railroads wanted was people on the land. Thus they be-



came the mighty agents of western colonization. They advertised the land in Europe. They found the wistful immigrant, helped him to bundle up his lares and penates, moved him across the ocean, took him by the trainload to where the land was, settled him on it and minded his welfare until he could buy his farm—not because they loved him but because they wanted freight.

As now we look back on the history of the vanished public domain it seems to make sense if we say the disposition of it was badly managed—that there was never such a thing as a rational land policy.

It was not rational to open new land faster than the need for it increased, or faster than the total population grew, for thereby the East was hurtfully drained of people.

With land that was cheaper and cheaper and then free, the government subsidized new agriculture in the West at the expense of old agriculture in the East, with such results as that food became too cheap, there was no profit in the fruits of the soil, land values fell in a disastrous manner and the deserted farm became a poetic subject in New England. That was not rational.

Nor was it rational to give the land away, when if it had been sold at a reasonable price only as it was needed the public domain might have been a source of public revenue for many, many years.

Nevertheless there was all the time a suprarational land policy. It was never formulated. Nobody was conscious of it. Reason could not have invented it.

For what was the supreme problem? It was how to get the land settled, to get it firmly in our hands, all the way to the Pacific—*as fast as possible*. Now we can see it. And as against the possible failure to have done it, what great difference does it make how it was done? What would the west be like now, by what alien people might it not be settled, if we had waited at the Mississippi River until we actually needed more land?

## VII

# Killing the Great Reptile

OUR MOST TRAGIC HISTORICAL POSSESSION IS THE CIVIL WAR. As the event recedes in time it comes to have the kind of elsewhere reality that belongs to an epic poem, in which people are moved beyond themselves by forces they can only pretend to understand.

Yet we wrote it ourselves—that is, unless history too is fiction, only that those who make it true by enacting it do not invent it. If we wrote it we made it up as we went along. What happened was unwilled and unwanted. Therefore it must have been inevitable, if we know what that means.

Of rhetoric and reasoning there was an outpour the like of which has never occurred since, and neither one nor the other had anything to do with it; both collapsed in magnificent futility because, for one thing, all the premises were in quicksand.

It was that debacle of human wisdom which makes it necessary that the issue, whatever it is, shall be decided in the evening of battle. Killing is the unanswerable argument. Afterward it may turn out that neither side knew for sure what it was fighting for. Then all that was ugly, indecent, treacherous and base will be dismissed as of course; and all that was brave, heroic, generous and grand will be celebrated with festival, pageantry and memories of glory, so that life may go on again in a tolerable manner.

The abomination of slavery was abolished—yes. But it now is clear that it would have abolished itself in a little time; in the modern world it could not have survived another fifty years. Moreover, at first, even the extreme abolitionists would have sooner let the South secede, slavery and all, than to fight a war for emancipation of the Negro. The Unionists, on the other hand, were unwilling to admit until almost the end that slavery was in fact the issue. They said it was a war to preserve the Union. But the use of force to keep a state from leaving the Union was a contradiction of the Federal tradition—a contradiction so extreme that until it had been dissolved in blood forever few in the North would face it squarely.

What gave the tragedy its complete form was the fact that both sides were acting under a spell of compulsion. Even as they tore at each other's vitals in the agony of fratricide, both the North and the South in their own hearts were divided, not only about slavery but on the question of secession. There was a great deal of anti-slavery sentiment in the South. At one time it had been even stronger than the feeling in the North. That was before the New England abolitionists began to put the mark of infamy on the slave owner, forgetting or ignoring the fact that their Puritan ancestors not only had been slave owners too but had got rich in the African slave trade. As for the right of the Southern states to secede if they wanted to, that could not be proved one way or the other. There was no law about it. Certainly the New England states, now supporting the Union, were not consistent. Their history was that they themselves had talked of secession whenever they had been mad at the Federal government, or at the party in power, and had once, during the war of 1812, gone so far in disaffection as to discuss a separate understanding with Great Britain.

But consistency is not a thread you will find in the story of the Civil War. The very passions that governed it were

not consistent. Its worshipful hero, Lincoln himself, was not wholly consistent.

Now the story.

\*

In the Constitutional Convention, year 1787, the slavery question was a sleeping two-headed reptile. One head was the black slave already here, and nobody had any clear idea of what to do about that; the other head was the continuing African slave trade. Although the common sentiment was one of loathing for the reptile and nearly all were for putting at least one of its heads in a noose that might be tightened later, nevertheless a majority held for stirring it up as little as possible, lest the Southern states with their slave economy refuse to sign the Constitution.

But a man from the slave state of Virginia, Colonel George Mason, himself a slave owner like Washington and Jefferson, was for scotching it then and there; and he uttered this dire prophecy:

“The western people are already calling out for slaves for their new land. Slavery discourages arts and manufacture. The poor despise labor when performed by slaves. They produce the most pernicious effect on manners. Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. They bring the judgment of Heaven on a country. *As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of cause and effect Providence punishes national sins by national calamities.*”

You may search in vain all the vast literature of the subject for a simpler and more satisfying version of the calamity that did come, and all the more terrible when it came for having been postponed for more than seventy years.

Yet one must consider the fact that slavery was not a sin until people began to think it was. Nowhere in Christendom for nearly 1,800 years had anybody regarded it as a sin. The

Puritans of New England, who would have enslaved the Indians if the Indians had been tame, could not have thought of it as a sin, since they lived by the Bible and nowhere in the Bible was slavery forbidden.

It was at first a labor problem in the immemorial design.

Greek colonists going forth to settle the Mediterranean world were instructed to seek three things: fertile land, good water and tame slaves. More than 2,000 years later in the New World the Spaniards found in Mexico and South America people who could be made to work; and that was one reason why Mexico City grew to be rich and splendid while the English colonists were still hacking away at the North American forests and had no fine cities at all.

The North American red man could not be tamed. Facing extinction he made one of the grand gestures in the history of mankind. He would sooner perish than be a slave.

The British Colonists, disappointed in the red man, had some pretty grim ideas about labor. Virginia passed a law under which an idler, even though he were a free man, could be assigned to a master who would make him work.

It was not only the elementary fact that a solitary man acting upon the land accumulates capital very slowly, whereas if he can hire labor and add it to his own it goes much faster; it was also as if the Colonists knew what it was they had to do, and the amount of labor it would take, merely to get the trees cut down by hand, was appalling. Everywhere the cry was for labor—labor for hire. Many able-bodied men would sooner work for themselves on land that was either very cheap or free, even though their reward was but primitive sustenance, than to work for others on hire. For that reason labor for hire was both scarce and dear.

There was resort to what was called indentured labor, which was a kind of limited slavery, both willing and unwilling. By the shipload England sent over paupers for whom there was no work at home; also convicts to serve sentence, London scum, disturbers of the political peace, persons en-

ticed by false allurements, even many who were kidnapped. On arrival at a colonial port all these victims of induced migration were sold at auction to the Colonists. Their bodies were not sold, only their labor, at so much per head for a number of years, usually five to seven. The proceeds paid for their passage, with a profit of course to the shipowner, and it was a thriving business.

For many it turned out not so badly in the end. When they had worked out their time they were free, if they had behaved well and not tried to run away; and the law was that when the master set them free he should furnish them with suitable clothes to be free in, a supply of food and some rude tools with which to work the small pieces of land they were entitled to receive. After that they were better off. And it was true also that many voluntarily sold themselves into servitude beforehand in order to pay their passage to the New World. These had the true pioneer temperament and turned out very well indeed.

Then one day a Dutch vessel appeared in Jamestown harbor with twenty African negroes for sale. That was different. When you bought a Negro you bought more than his labor; you bought his body too for so long as he lived. He was yours like an animal; he was property; if he multiplied the increase was yours.

That was the beginning of the African slave trade. For a while it grew slowly because for all purposes of the Northern Colonies, in both agriculture and handicrafts, Negro labor was inferior to white labor. But when it was discovered that Negro labor was perfectly suited to the culture of tobacco and rice in the large hot fields of the South, and when to those two simple crops cotton growing was added on a plantation scale, the Negro appeared to be the complete solution of the labor problem in the South, from Virginia down.

After that the slave trade increased very fast. In a little while the plantation system of the South came to rest entirely on Negro labor. In South Carolina the blacks outnumbered

the whites. The exports of tobacco, cotton and rice increased enormously. Indeed, without these cash exports, which enabled the Colonies to buy the manufactured goods of England, the story of early American development must have been very different. And black labor did it. Never could white labor alone have done it.

It has been estimated that during two hundred years the number of African natives captured for the slave trade was twenty-four million. Of these twenty-four million, half are supposed to have died miserably in the suffocating holds of slave ships. The surviving half were sold either in the West Indies, which had then the largest slave market in the world, or to the American Colonists, perhaps half and half.

And this was entirely the work of Christian slave traders, principally the British, the New England Yankees and the Dutch, in approximately that rank. The British were foremost because they had the paramount naval power of the world. In 1713 they obliged Spain to give them a monopoly of the awful traffic from Africa to the Spanish possessions in the New World. Later she repented and employed all her diplomacy to abolish the slave trade under the name of piracy. So conscience may evolve. But so far as North American civilization was concerned, the damage was already done.

The Southern Colonies bought the Negro for economic reasons; their part in stealing him out of Africa was relatively unimportant, perhaps only because they did not have the ships. The Yankee traders of New England had the ships.

Their interest was not in the Negro but in the slave trade, to which they gave a triangular pattern of infamous simplicity. On the first leg of the triangle they brought molasses from the West Indies to Boston and Providence, where it was made into rum. On the second leg, they took the rum to the coast of Africa and swapped it for Negroes. On the third leg they sailed back to the West Indies, with the Negroes stowed where the rum had been, and sold the Negroes for more molasses, to make more rum, to buy more Negroes, and so

round and round. Apparently no thought of its inhumanity, let alone a sense of sin, ever entered their heads. It is remembered that one Yankee skipper engaged in the trade was censured by his Puritanical church brethren for pursuing it on Sunday when, even in Africa, he should have been observing the Lord's Day.

Such had been the history of the slave evil up to the time of the War for Independence.

You cannot say precisely when it was that people began to think of slavery as a sin. Certain it is that after the Declaration of Independence in 1776 the American conscience was never again quite easy about it. The idea that God had created the Negro a human being and might have given him a soul was an irrepressible torment.

Eleven years later, when the Founding Fathers sat down to write a Constitution, the facts were that Massachusetts had abolished slavery, Connecticut was on her way to abolish it, Maryland and Virginia had already forbidden the importation of slaves, and North Carolina was about to do likewise.

Nevertheless, the roots of slavery as an institution had struck very deep. Georgia and South Carolina said they would be ruined without slaves. And whatever might be done about the slave trade, that is, about the importation of slaves, the case was that the Negro already here was multiplying so fast in Virginia and Maryland, called the breeding states, that now it was cheaper to raise slaves than to import them.

Unable either to ignore the abominable two-headed reptile or to challenge it, the Constitutional Convention took refuge in the hopeful position that in time slavery would disappear of itself, provided it were left to states. In that mood the Convention performed the first great feat of ambiguity in our documentary history.

The Constitution recognized slavery in an oblique manner without accepting it, and it never once used either the word *slave* or *Negro*. It referred instead to "persons held to service or labor." The oblique recognition was on three points, name-



ly: (1) for twenty years the Federal Government would not prohibit the importation of such persons, thus giving the slave trade a period of grace; (2) any such person escaping from a slave state to a free state should be treated as a fugitive and returned to his master when caught, and (3) when a slave state enumerated its population for purposes of representation in Congress it could count five slaves as equal to three free men. The purpose of this was to give the Southern states more seats in the House of Representatives than they would have been entitled to hold on the count of their white population alone.

As political realists the Founding Fathers were right to fear what they feared and to accommodate the reptile. It could not have been destroyed at that time; it could only have been driven South, and that would have wrecked the purpose of the Constitution, which was "to form a more perfect Union." The feeling for Union was still very fragile.

What followed was a period of comfortable delusion. That also was necessary.

For nearly the whole of the next generation the question of slavery was what lawyers call moot—that is, something that may be debated in a harmless manner at low temperature because nobody means to do anything about it. There were free states and slave states and they lived together in one Union quite amicably. In his first message to Congress President Monroe declared that sectional jealousies were rapidly dissolving in a spirit of national unity. That was true. He was re-elected by acclaim and his second administration was known as "the era of good feeling." The anti-slavery movement went into eclipse. In all of Congress it had but one voice. Abolition societies were folding up.

True, Congress had passed some laws intended to restrict the slave trade, but they were not enforced. At the end of the 20-year period of grace allowed in the Constitution it passed a law to prohibit the importation of slaves; nevertheless, the slave trade went on. Twelve years later it passed

another law calling the slave trade piracy and forbidding American citizens to engage in it, on pain of death. Then the smugglers took over.

These laws, observe, touched only the slave trade—that is, the importation of more Negroes from Africa. Not one of them looked at the domestic institution of slavery, which now was near to be self-sustaining, with the Negroes already here multiplying almost fast enough to meet the demand for more slaves, Virginia and Maryland breeding them as a business and selling them to the Southern planters.

\*

After having been quiet for more than thirty years the reptile made the first lunge.

The circumstances were these.

Although Congress had always treated slavery itself as a problem for the sovereign states to solve in their own way, nevertheless from the beginning there had been a law forbidding slavery in the territories—the territories being public domain over which the Federal Government claimed complete jurisdiction. This may sound a bit involved and yet it was logical enough. Many who for political reasons were unwilling to challenge slavery where and as it already existed were at the same time strongly opposed to any extension of the slave system. So, if slavery were forbidden in the territories, then as the territories one by one came into the Union they would come in as free states, until in time free states would so far outnumber slave states that slavery would wither and die. That, as it turned out, was wishful thinking.

Then one day the territory of Missouri, otherwise qualified to become a state, demanded to be admitted to the Union as a slave state. The struggle was on. The debate became extremely bitter.

The Southern states of course supported Missouri, not only because slavery was their institution but for the further reason that their power in Congress would be diminished if

Missouri were added to the number of free states. For the first time the Constitutional right of Congress to prohibit slavery in the territories was brought into question, on the ground that slaves were legal property. Could Congress forbid citizens to own legal property anywhere?

At the same time all the smouldering anti-slavery sentiment in the North began to send forth forked flames. It came to what seemed an ominous impasse, only that everybody desperately wanted to find a way out. The time was not yet. If the crisis could not be postponed the Union was lost.

The way out was that Maine and Missouri should be admitted to the Union simultaneously, Maine as a free state and Missouri as a slave state, which kept the balance as it was; and that thereafter slavery should be unlawful north of a line which represented an extension of Missouri's southern boundary due west.

That was the famous Missouri Compromise. It put away the evil day for nearly one generation more. The delusion of national unity was mended like a broken vase, everybody pretending to believe the cracks were invisible.

But never again would anything be the same.

## VIII

# The Heat of Sin

PECULIAR TO THIS STORY, AS YOU WILL SEE, IS A CERTAIN timing of events.

Hitherto it had been the nature and meaning of government that engrossed the American mind. Why now did it begin to be rocked by strange winds? High overhead they had been blowing for some time before. Whence they came nobody knew. They seemed to rise sometimes in Europe, sometimes here, and again both there and here at once.

The grounds of morality were shifting. The authority of Biblical theology was failing and at the same time a conviction of sin was rising. That was paradox.

Humanitarianism was the new religion. Reform was its shibboleth. It had the faith to believe that man was perfectible, not as a being of divine origin but as a member of the good society. By his own will he could make his world over with evil and injustice left out. This would lead to the perilous position that the righteous, who could abolish evil if they would, became themselves guilty of the sins of the unrighteous. But here also is paradox, for to abolish sin you have either to abolish the sinner or lay restraining hands upon the freedom of the individual who would sooner live in a free world than in a perfect one.

All of that could wait perhaps. The angels were writing this page of history.

In Great Britain John Morley was saying that "A great wave of humanity, of benevolence, of desire for improve-

ment—a great wave of social sentiment, in short” was exerting its power upon “all who had the faculty of large and disinterested thinking.” Here Emerson, in the essay entitled “New England Reformers,” was saying: “What a fertility of projects for the salvation of the world.”

The reformers—militant ameliorists, zealots, radicals and visionaries—were the large thinkers and had not the false humility to deny it. One of their early projects was a feud with alcohol. The first idea was to reform the drunkard; the second was to remove the temptation by law. Hence the prohibition movement of that day, celebrated in theme, sermon and balladry, with most exciting repercussions in politics.

Other projects were such as prison reform, rights for women, regulation of child labor, humane treatment of the insane, non-imprisonment of debtors, care for the blind, a better social status for wage earners, to shorten the work day which was then twelve hours or more, and to make war an impossible crime forever.

But these admirable projects, even all of them run together, could not immediately canalize the rising flood of altruistic emotion. What it required was one immense resistant evil, touching and visible, upon which to discharge its power. That evil was slavery.

Meanwhile the moral position of slavery had been worsening in the sight of the world. As a domestic institution it had wholly disappeared in Europe. Great Britain had bought the freedom of all the slaves in her colonies. All the maritime nations of Europe had willingly agreed to treat the slave trade as piracy, save only Spain and Portugal, and they were persuaded to do likewise by a subsidy from Great Britain. Even Mexico had set her slaves free by decree.

And now, whereas before the anti-slavery feeling in the North had been content to resist extension of the evil, the new passion for reform demanded its extinction, and demanded it as a judgment upon sin, with no compensation to the slave owners.

Thus the abolition crusade began. Its dreadful knight was

William Lloyd Garrison, an obsessed and reckless man, to whom moderation was unknown. He was a printer to begin with and first appeared as co-editor of an anti-slavery paper in Baltimore. In 1831 he started one of his own, *The Liberator*, and it was a fearsome torch that blackened the day and disrupted the night. To quench it ultimately required the blood of more than a million men—but none of Garrison's. He did not believe in war. His energy was prodigious. The Constitution, he said, was a compact with hell because it tolerated slavery and authorized the Fugitive Slave Law. Therefore he defied it, publicly committed it to a bonfire, and organized the historically famous Underground Railroad. That was a chain of secret arrangements by means of which slaves were spirited out of the South and smuggled into Canada. The number of slaves actually liberated in that way was not large, but the slave owners naturally were enraged. Slavery was legal and this was theft.

Although nothing more than a wicked coincidence could ever be proved, it happened very soon after the appearance of *The Liberator* that a slave rising took place in Virginia. Sixty whites were murdered by blacks. Such a thing had never occurred before and the South could hardly be blamed if it imagined that the incitement came from the North; but in the North all but the fanatical abolitionists were horrified.

After that the abolitionist forces divided. A minority of extremists followed Garrison; on the other side were the conservatives who deplored his methods and pursued the delusion that even yet there could be a political solution. And all the time in the North were many who were for letting slavery alone until in time it should perish of itself.

Violence begat violence. Conservatives and anti-Garrison abolitionists sometimes ran together in what were always described as "well-dressed mobs" to wreck the meetings of Garrison and his radicals, even in Boston, where the dreadful knight himself had a close call with lynching.

Thus it was to the end, except—first, that as feeling became incandescent on both sides the radical and moderate wings of

the abolitionist movement were bound to fuse at the edges, and, second, that where formerly the leaders of Southern thought had defended slavery only as an economic necessity, now with their pride hurt to the quick by the vituperations of the North, they were obliged to invent and to believe a social doctrine in which slavery was elevated to the plane of a classical human institution indispensable to an ideal civilization. For this they could find their texts in the Bible, in Plato, in Aristotle and in immemorial historical experience.

And so a nation walked backward toward the abyss, knowing it was there and yet helpless, not fascinated but helpless. Its reason was free but its feet were caught in a winding chain. Was this what Colonel Mason had foreseen—that there would be no other way to expiate a national sin?

The doom of the reptile now could be foretold. Yet the end was postponed for a while more by two great distractions. One was the war with Mexico and the other was the discovery of gold in California. These events complicated the drama, one by raising the question of what should be done about slavery in Texas and the other by unmistakable signs that California would choose to be a free state; yet everything else would have happened anyhow, as if supreme tragedy may have its own logic of form and sequence. The sequence was as follows.

(1) The Southern members of Congress made the mistake of demanding a law to exclude anti-slavery literature from the mails, thereby alienating all defenders of freedom of communications.

(2) Next, with intent to impound the flood of angry polemics, Congress resolved to entertain no more petitions against slavery. The only effect of this was to embitter a debate which could be interminably continued under pretence of discussing not slavery but the people's Constitutional right of petition.

(3) Harriet Beecher Stowe's story *Uncle Tom's Cabin* appeared—a gentle sentimental book that produced an amazing

effect: it did more to move pity for the slave as a human being than all other anti-slavery propaganda put together.

(4) The South broke the Missouri Compromise truce by demanding that in place of a Federal law forbidding slavery in the territories it should be left to the people in the territories, as they came to write their state constitutions, to say for themselves whether they wanted slavery or not. The disaster here was that no longer could anybody believe that slavery if let alone would abate itself; clearly the South was aiming to extend it.

(5) In retaliation the free states passed more laws to frustrate the enforcement of the Federal Fugitive Slave Law, making it harder for the Southerners to get back their runaway slaves.

(6) Then was the stupid and bloody struggle for political control of Kansas, between the free soil settlers who wanted it to be a free state and lawless killers from the slave state of Missouri who were resolved to see Kansas organized as a slave state.

(7) After Senator John Sumner of Massachusetts had delivered an impassioned speech on "The Crime Against Kansas," he was found alone in the Senate chamber by a young Southern Representative named Brooks who beat him with a cane until he was insensible, inflicting incurable injuries. Brooks had the decency to retire and go home; but he was re-elected as a hero and sent back to Congress by his admiring constituents, who also presented him with a number of memorial canes in place of the one he had broken on Sumner's body.

(8) The case of a Negro named Dred Scott came before the Supreme Court. Scott was born a slave. He claimed now to be free on the ground that he had sojourned with his master in a territory where slavery was unlawful. The Supreme Court did not stop at deciding the case as a legal problem; it went on to say by the way that Congress had no Constitutional power to prohibit slavery in the territories or anywhere



else. This opinion stunned all the anti-slavery people, both the extreme abolitionists and those who had believed that slavery could somehow be contained by law. Now the law was out. Not only was the life of the reptile beyond reach of the law in its own habitat forever; legally it was free to grow wherever it could insinuate itself.

Enter John Brown, as a pure forethought of violence, in this vacuum of law. He was a queer mystic, probably a mental case, whose movements were obscure. He had appeared in the Kansas embroilment as a killer for the Lord. Then he disappeared and was lost and turned up again here and there, a furtive, whispering figure as he accumulated some money, a few arms and a little band of fanatics. One day he appeared at Harper's Ferry, seized the arsenal there and called on the slaves to rise. He would arm and lead them.

The slaves did not rise. Federal troops immediately recaptured the arsenal. John Brown's sons were killed but he was taken alive.

The country's blood ran cold. John Brown was duly hanged and in the North all the right sounds of abhorrence were heard. Much more penetrating, however, were the sympathetic sounds from those who thought of Brown as a martyr. Had he not been willing to give his life for the slaves? Ralph Waldo Emerson was applauded in Boston for calling him a saint who had made the gallows glorious, like the cross; and even Abraham Lincoln, then coming to eminence, placed him in the historic company of many before him who conceived themselves appointed by Heaven to liberate an oppressed people by killing the king.

A symbol had been created. The Yankee soldier carried it South when he sang:

*John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave,  
John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave,  
John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave,  
As we go marching on.*

## IX

# Lincoln

FIRST AND LAST THE WHIRLWIND WAS RIDERLESS.

Political behaviour was governed by a principle of avoidance. Leaders whose views were mortally irreconcilable could nevertheless converge again and again to find one more compromise. Some did it at the risk of their political lives. New England angrily smashed its idol, Daniel Webster, because in his passion to save the Union he had voted in the Senate for an unpopular concession to the South.

Several old parties were breaking up; like restless crystals their fragments coalesced, flew apart and combined again in an aimless manner, but with one common foreboding, which was that it would be disastrous to put the question of abolition to a vote of the people. In fact, it never was.

The Republican Party was formed. It was afraid to make up its mind. It denied the martyrdom of John Brown and called for a containment of slavery, not its abolition.

The falling star of the Democratic Party was Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, who expected to be President. Between two presidential elections he came up for re-election to the Senate.

He was opposed by an obscure lawyer of extraordinary size and uncouth exterior who smelled of the earth and its primary people. His name was Abraham Lincoln.

What followed was the memorable Lincoln-Douglas de-

bate, in seven installments, which brought out the people of Illinois in multitudes and caught the ear of the nation.

By relentless logic Lincoln forced Douglas to take the position that slavery could be protected by law in the territories, as the South demanded, and still be defeated by subterfuge if the people really did not want it. This extreme sophistication of compromise—that you could appease the reptile under safeguard of snake bite medicine—was too much. It cost Douglas his chance to be President and split his Democratic Party in two at the middle. The South would never trust him again and the North burned his effigy in a thousand bonfires. He was not a Machiavelli. At heart he was a Unionist, as the sequel proved; his trouble was that the gathering clouds of conflict obstructed his burning vision of a trans-Mississippi empire and a railroad to the Pacific coast. With or without slavery he wanted to get the territories settled.

Well, but for all his logic, Lincoln himself was not sure. In a prophetic vein he said:

“A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe that this government cannot endure half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; I do expect it to cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.”

Yet he had no solution.

He said: “Wrong as we may think slavery to be, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence. But can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national territories and to overrun us here in these free states?”

And again: “When Southern people tell us that they are no more responsible for the origin of slavery than we are, I acknowledge the fact. When it is said the institution exists and that it is very difficult to get rid of it in any satisfactory way, I can understand and appreciate the saying. I surely

will not blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself. If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do as to the existing institution."

Although Douglas did squeeze back into the Senate, his career was ruined; and Lincoln became a national figure.

Two years later the Republican Party convention in Chicago nominated Lincoln for President, by that kind of decision which on very rare occasions seems to make itself—or as if the men who gave it voice had been speaking with strange tongues. These could not have known by any rational process of mind that they passed by more attractive men only to pick the one who could save the Union. Indeed, they were not thinking of Union. The Unionists were holding their own convention.

In the brooding campaign that followed there was a common sense of impending disaster. The hot southern leaders were saying openly that if Lincoln were elected the South would secede.

There were three other candidates, one representing the southern wing of the Democratic Party, one to represent its northern wing and one for the new Unionist Party. This meant that there would be a great scattering of ballots. Lincoln was elected by much less than a majority of the total popular vote.

In December—that is, during the interval that had to elapse between the election of the new President and his inauguration—South Carolina proclaimed her independence. Secession had begun.

Still there was hope. The spirit of compromise was not quite dead. On the motion of Senator Crittenden of Kentucky a Senate Committee of Thirteen adopted a plan that was acceptable both to the South and all the conservatives of the North. The plan was to amend the Constitution in a way to guarantee the rights of the slave owners in the South for all time and let the North be free. Bearing the benediction of his own party, the plan was carried to Lincoln, who

was sitting alone in melancholy meditation at Springfield, waiting to become President.

His answer was—No. It was a solution that would have divided the house forever—half slave and half free.

Before Lincoln was inaugurated on March 4, 1861, the Confederate States of America—commonly called the Confederacy—had been formed as a separate nation with a provisional president; later came the permanent organization, with a constitution, a Congress, courts and ambassadors.

Lincoln in his inaugural address was conciliatory to the point of tenderness. He referred to slavery only once, without using the word, and that was to say the Federal Government had neither the intention nor the legal right to “interfere with the domestic institutions of the states, including that of persons held in service.” Meaning that he was not going to touch slavery where it already was.

Beyond that his single theme was Union. No state upon its own mere motion could disrupt the Union by leaving it. Therefore all resolutions and ordinances and acts of secession were insurrectionary and illegal. The Federal Government would continue to hold and occupy its own property in the South, as everywhere else; it would continue so far as as possible to collect duties, administer the laws and deliver the mails, in the South as elsewhere, but “there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere.”

Union was his single theme until almost the very end.

In the second year of the war he wrote to Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, saying: “If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it. If I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.”

The Emancipation Proclamation was issued in the third

year, and that was defined in its own text as "a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing the rebellion." So that also was to save the Union. Moreover, this freedom was proclaimed for slavery in the seceding states only; slavery in the so-called border states, which were Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri, was left as it was.

Indeed, it was not until the fourth and last year of the war that he seized the reptile by the neck.

In his second inaugural address, March 4, 1865, he uttered these magnificent words:

"If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the Providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—ferently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

## X

# In the Scales of Battle

### SOUTH CAROLINA FIRED THE FIRST SHOT.

When the small Union garrison that was holding Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor refused to surrender it the shore batteries opened a bombardment that reduced it in a few hours, providing a gala spectacle for the charming elite of southern society, viewing it from the porticos and from excursion boats on the water, and the bells exulting in the church steeples.

The Rebel Secretary of State, a very ardent secessionist, nevertheless tried to stay the hotheads, saying: "If you fire on that fort you will start the greatest civil war the world has ever seen."

The curious fact was that almost nobody either North or South had realized that secession would mean war. In the North the radical abolitionists were still saying: "Let them go."

But the reaction of the North to the shelling of Fort Sumter was a roar of animal rage. The wound was bloodless. In the battle for Fort Sumter not a single life was lost on either side. But the Stars and Stripes had been hauled down in defeat, and that was all that had been necessary to convert the faltering idea of Union into a fighting faith. The bells of Boston tolled for a day. The streets of New York and Philadelphia were choked with marching throngs. Lincoln called for 75,000 troops—to serve for three months.

The war would be over in ninety days.

Just before the go-day enlistments ran out the first battle came—the Battle of Bull Run, only a few miles from the Capital. The fashionable society of Washington went forth in carriages to witness the chastisement of rebellion. It was an absurd battle. The Union forces broke, threw away their arms, and raced the civilians back to Washington. If the Rebel forces had been less astounded they might have taken Washington then. It was the only good chance they ever had.

So it began. Before it was finished enlistments on the Union side were 2,900,000 and on the Rebel side more than a million, and fifty years later every war college in the world was still teaching military science from the records of the American Civil War.

Weighed in the scales of a layman the advantages of the North were overwhelming—such as seven-tenths of the total population, more than seven-tenths of the country's railroad mileage, industrial power six times greater than that of the South, and a command of credit and capital immeasurably superior.

Even so, the War of Independence against Great Britain had been won at worse odds.

The layman's scales are wrong. They cannot weigh the imponderables. If Lincoln had once wavered or if a whiskey drinking cave man from Illinois, named Ulysses S. Grant, had not turned out to be a military Titan, the South almost certainly would have won.

It had some advantages too. One was a monopoly of cotton, which had become an indispensable commodity both here and in Europe; it expected to use cotton as an economic leverage, not only to trade it in Europe for guns and ammunition but to oblige Europe, especially Great Britain, to recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation.

It had the good will of all the wily statesmen of Europe, who were not loath to see the rising American power divided in twain.



It had what military people call the advantage of interior lines,—that is, it was fighting defensively within a circle and could move swiftly in any direction on its own ground, whereas the Union forces had to mill around the periphery and crash it here and there as invaders of a hostile country.

That was true until the third year when Grant, as supreme commander, subdued all the Union armies to a single will, synchronized their striking power, and moved them with one impulse toward the heart of the Confederacy. Later, when he could reveal his strategy, he wrote:

“Before this time these various armies had acted separately and independently of each other, giving the enemy an opportunity often of depleting one command, not pressed, to reinforce another. I determined to stop this. To that end I regarded the Army of the Potomac as the center; all west to Memphis and north of it as the right wing; the Army of the James as the left wing, and all the troops south as a force in the rear of the enemy.”

That stopped it. Several times the Rebels broke out of Grant's ring, but were forced back, and never again were they free to run to and fro in it.

At first and for a long while the martial spirit was higher in the South. That you may understand. The Union soldier was fighting for a political idea, or if not that, then, as he said in his foul moods, for the damn niggers; whereas the Rebel soldier, however it started, had the feeling that he was defending his homeland against the invader.

And from the first the South had Robert E. Lee, who broke his heart to transfer his loyalty from the Union to his native state of Virginia. His generalship was superb and became a terrible legend. The North had not his equal until the arrival of Grant.

Lastly the South was immensely benefited in a negative way by the fact that the North was never united. It was neither all resolute nor all loyal, but torn to its vitals by dis-

sensions and treason. In his own Cabinet Lincoln had to deal with treachery, intrigue, contempt and disaffection.

The war fervor itself was fickle. Whereas at first volunteers overwhelmed the recruiting offices, in a little while willing enlistments began to fail, and this together with the insatiable demand of the generals for men, always more men, made it necessary to resort to the draft. Then came the draft riots in New York City, which had to be put down by the army at a cost of 1,000 lives.

The worst work of the disloyalists was to obstruct the draft and encourage desertion. In that role a member of Congress from Ohio, named Vallandigham, became so offensive and dangerous that the general in command at Cincinnati seized him and put him in jail. At this there was an angry uproar in the country over the suppression of speech by military authority. Lincoln changed the sentence to banishment and sent Vallandigham across the lines as a present to the Rebels, and at the same time wrote a famous letter, saying:

“Long experience has shown that armies cannot be maintained unless desertion shall be punished by the severe penalty of death. The case requires, and the law and the Constitution sanction this punishment. Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts while I must not touch a hair of the wily agitator who induces him to desert? . . . I think that in such a case to silence the agitator and save the boy is not only constitutional, but withal a great mercy.”

The Constitution says that the President shall be commander-in-chief of the armed forces. His war powers, however, are not clearly defined. Lincoln carried them far—so far as to suspend that most precious instrument of civil liberty, namely, the writ of habeas corpus. Many civilians were tried by military tribunals for treasonable conduct and sent to prison. Deplorable incidents were bound to occur. Those who denounced Lincoln as tyrant, dictator, usurper, were not all disloyalists. Many whose loyalty to the Union was above

question sincerely feared for the survival of the individual's Constitutional rights.

Lincoln took this simple position: It was absurd to suppose that the Constitution which created the nation would forbid it to take whatever measures were necessary to save its life in war. What were the necessary measures? That was a decision that had to be made by one man. If the commander-in-chief of the armed forces was not the man to make it, who was?

In situations of necessity he could be very grim; yet at heart he was the greatest republican of them all. His highest sense of triumph, next to that of having saved the Union, was that through all the passions of war and notwithstanding some extreme uses of the military power, free elections were never once interrupted.

The memorable fact is that political speech, barring only the fangs of treason, was almost entirely free. The disloyalists were called Copperheads, from the stealthy snake of that name. There was a Copperhead press and an organized Copperhead party that held its mass meetings anywhere, one in Lincoln's home town of Springfield. There was an anti-war party and a peace party, and of course the northern wing of the Democratic Party which viciously criticized the conduct of the war and was defeatist principally because it hated Lincoln.

By the middle of the third year the outcome could have been foreseen by any dispassionate mind. The North was winning, not only on the battle field, with Grant now in supreme command, but also in the world of diplomacy. Great Britain at last had made up her mind not to recognize the Confederacy as a nation, and to accept the blockade by which the North had stopped all trade between the South and Europe, this to the acute distress of Great Britain because her immense textile industry was dependent on the South for cotton.

This shift in British policy was owing partly to signs of Union victory and perhaps even more to the fact that after the Emancipation Proclamation popular feeling in England turned ardently to Lincoln. This led to one of the very few purely unselfish demonstrations of human spirit in the story of civilization.

A million wage earners in Great Britain had been reduced to beggary for want of cotton to keep their textile mills running, yet they held mass meetings and sent resolutions of cheer and sympathy to Lincoln, saying they could stand it, and, praise be, would he go on to the end. In a letter to them, Lincoln said: "I cannot but regard your decisive utterances as an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country."

Even yet the South might have won by default. A virus of defeatism was spreading like a plague in the North, blinding its eyes to the omens of victory. A demand for peace grew from murmur to crescendo. Horace Greeley, of the *New York Tribune*, the fickle oracle who could keep his following and be always wrong, addressed a petition to Lincoln, begging him to stop the war; the country could take no more. That became at once the formula for an avalanche of petitions.

Lincoln's first term was expiring. He was nominated for re-election by a coalition of Republicans and War Democrats, many of whom began very soon to regret it and thought of looking for a substitute candidate. There was a party of Vindictives, who were for going on with the war, but without Lincoln, and the inconsistent Greeley joined these.

The Democratic Party met in Chicago and adopted the following resolution—

"After four years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment of war, justice, humanity, liberty and the public welfare demand that immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities"

—and then nominated for president a disgruntled general, George B. McClellan, who was the wickedest of all detractors of Lincoln.

Of this crucial time Grant afterward wrote in his Memoirs:

“I had reason to believe that the administration was a little afraid to have a decisive battle fought at that time for fear it might go against us and have a bad effect on the November election. The convention that had met and made its nomination of the Democratic candidate had called the war a failure. Treason was talked as boldly in Chicago at that convention as ever it had been in Charleston.”

Lincoln himself lost heart, but not his resolution. The Republican National Committee was in a panic and wished him to make an overture for peace. This he would not consider. But in the presence of his Cabinet he wrote and sealed a note, which, when opened afterward, read as follows:

“It seems exceedingly probable that this administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to so cooperate with the President-elect as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration, as he will have secured his election on such ground that he cannot possibly save it afterward.”

Optimism of despair. The interval between the election and the inauguration would be four months.

All the politicians were wrong. They had strangely misunderstood what was silently passing between Lincoln and the people. An amazing change took place. It seemed to bring itself to pass, and was sudden, like an atmospheric phenomenon. A new light began to play upon the signs. There was Farragut's gallant naval victory in Mobile Bay, still to be properly celebrated, to the theme of “damn the torpedoes.”

Sheridan had so scorched the Shenandoah Valley that it was no longer of any use to the South either as a storehouse or a corridor.

Sherman had burned Atlanta and was about to slash the South across the belly with his epic march to the sea.

And Grant, for all his heart-breaking losses in the Wilderness, had Lee in a bottle at Richmond.

But more than anything else, what restored the morale of the North and confounded the politicians was a glimpse of the unexpected depth of dogged resolution, like Lincoln's, in the hearts of the people. The next call for troops was met with the crashing Battle Hymn of the Republic:

*We're coming from the hillside,  
we're coming from the shore,*

*We're coming Father Abraham,  
six hundred thousand more.*

All but the Democratic party's opposition to Lincoln collapsed. The Vindictives withdrew their candidate. And McClellan, the Democratic candidate, repudiated the defeatist plank in his party's platform.

Lincoln was re-elected by a large popular majority.

On Christmas Day Sherman announced the capture of Savannah. From there with his demon army he would turn north to join Grant.

In February the South desired to negotiate for peace. Lincoln met its commissioners on a boat at Hampton Roads; one of them was vice-president of the Confederacy. They proposed to discuss peace terms as between two warring nations. Lincoln would not proceed on that ground. He would not recognize the Confederacy as a nation; it was a group of rebellious states. There is an apocryphal story, partly confirmed by Grant in his Memoirs, that Lincoln wrote on a piece of paper *Union and Abolition*, and pushed it over to them, saying that under these words they might write almost anything they liked. They pushed the paper back and so the result was nothing.

Shortly thereafter the South made two desperate moves. Its representatives in Great Britain were instructed to say that if the British government would recognize the Confed-

eracy as a nation the South would abolish slavery. Too late. The second move was a resolution by the Confederate Congress to arm the slaves.

Lincoln's mind now was deeply engrossed with the problem of what to do with the Rebels afterward. He did not want to hang any of them. For the leaders who might deserve hanging, leave the outer gates open; let them flee. For all the rest, re-engage them in loyalty to the Union and let them establish new state governments in their own way, but of course without slavery. This was his program for reconstruction. In his second inaugural address, March 4, 1865, he said:

“With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

One month later Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox; and Grant, who knew Lincoln's heart, made these forgiving terms: All men and officers to be paroled, all arms to be surrendered except the officers' side arms, and any man who could claim a horse or a mule to take it home with him.

As Lee in his splendid uniform rode back to his men to tell them, the Union soldiers began to cheer; Grant in his battered hat and a private's unbuttoned blouse, stopped them, saying: “The war is over. The rebels are our countrymen again.”

Two days after Lee's surrender Lincoln made his last public speech. The theme of it was that vengeance belonged to the Lord. Let the rebellion be forgotten. Let every southern state be welcomed back as soon as one white man in ten was willing to swear allegiance to the Union.

The reptile was dead. Sherman in the middle South was trampling out its last reflex wiggle.

But the countenance of peace was haggard.

On the night of April 14, 1865, Washington was in gala attire. People were singing in the streets. The President went to the theatre. A mad actor named John Wilkes Booth entered his darkened box, shot him through the head, and leaped to the stage, shouting in Latin: "Thus always with tyrants."

Lincoln was carried across the street to a poor lodging house where in a shabby room he lay all night, slantwise on a bed that was too short for his giant form, and there in the morning he died.

His mould was buried with him. His like would never be seen again. No President was ever so misunderstood, so hated, so shamefully reviled in life; nor was ever one so deeply revered, so imperishably enshrined in the heart of simple humanity.

His memory had no enemies, not even in the South. In a moment of afterseeing Jefferson Davis, who had been President of the Confederacy, said: "Next to the destruction of the Confederacy, the death of Abraham Lincoln was the blackest day the South has known."

\*

The Furies had yet to be sated.

It must be believed that if Lincoln had lived he would have mended the Union with loving hands. His successor, Vice-President Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, was a man who had the common misfortune to be born without wisdom. He was pugnacious, always inept, with no gift at all for leadership, but honorable. He lived for his enemies. They impeached him on a specious political indictment and he survived by grace of but one vote in the House of Representatives.

Under the unholy leadership of a malevolent dipsomaniac from Pennsylvania and a righteous monomaniac from New England, Congress gave itself up entirely to a spirit of vengeance. The work that Lincoln had done toward reconcilia-



tion was destroyed in a ruthless manner. Instead, the South was treated as an alien and conquered country, subject to military rule.

It was divided into five districts, each with a military czar whose powers were despotic. The business of these military rulers was, first, to keep order, and secondly to nurse the creation of fantastic state governments controlled by Negroes, carpetbaggers and scalawags. Carpetbaggers were Northern politicians who came with no more in their hands than could be stowed in a carpet bag and with nothing more in their minds than the vulturous intention to feast on gobbets from the corpse of a proud civilization. Scalawags were renegade southerners willing to take part in the ghoulish festival.

The Constitution was amended three times—once to abolish slavery everywhere forever, again to declare that Negroes, now being free, were citizens and entitled as such to full civil rights, and a third time to confer upon the Negro the unlimited right to vote.

Giving the Negro the vote was the supreme act of cruelty, for it meant that in some parts of the South blacks would govern whites and that in any southern state a coalition of Negroes, carpetbaggers and scalawags would possess the governing power. Wherein it was not conscious cruelty it may be explained by what Andrew C. McLaughlin in his "Constitutional History of the United States" called "a belief occupying otherwise vacant space in many minds that the earth could be purified and regenerated if only enough people were allowed to vote."

Such were the conditions under which the symbol of government in the South became a grinning gargoyle. Morals, decency and sanity were outraged. Scandal, waste and corruption were orgiastic. The Negro sitting in the seat of his master, voting laws he could not read, was more pathetic than evil. He could not understand what he was doing.

Many times in history people had delivered themselves from slavery, but in doing so they had passed through fire,

learning on their way the use of discipline and what freedom would mean; or, when emancipation had come from above, they were not torn suddenly from the context of a life they would go on living, the one difference being that they were free.

But the Negroes had not delivered themselves; they had never really thought of trying. It was something that happened to them, like a miracle. They had no idea what freedom meant. To many thousands of them it meant simply freedom from work. And in this innocent fantasy they were encouraged by the designing carpetbaggers, who put them up to vote raids on the public funds or for absurd bond issues, and then kept most of the swag for themselves. Negro members of a state legislature might be seen staring at money in their hands, more than they had ever seen before, wondering where it came from and what it was for.

The Negro could not govern. That he should even participate in government on terms of equality with the whites was an idea that arrived with the Furies. Lincoln had never imagined giving him the vote.

Neither could the North govern the South in a spirit of revenge, so hostile to a return of white supremacy that it would sooner see a black republic.

One of the three new amendments to the Constitution said that no man who had broken his oath of loyalty to the Union by taking part in the rebellion could ever hold public office again. The effect of this was to disqualify not only every statesman in the South but nearly every native southerner who knew anything at all about government.

What was the southerner going to do with his pride? Soak it in the vinegar of poverty and eat it? Did unconditional surrender entail unconditional submission?

He did a dire thing. He too invoked the Furies.

With a single passion, which was to restore white supremacy, he organized secret societies to visit terror upon the Negroes. The most famous one was the Ku Klux Klan.

They rode silently at night, on horses with muffled hooves—anonymous spectral figures in hooded white robes, threatening, flogging, burning and killing. The northern military forces were unable to suppress them because nearly the entire white population was actively sympathetic.

Years later many a son of a southern doctor, teacher, preacher, lawyer, banker or merchant was astonished to find among his austere sire's relics, perhaps at the bottom of a locked trunk in the attic, a faded Ku Klux Klan regalia.

The blacks reacted as the white man knew they would. With no history or tradition of resistance, racially docile minded, superstitious by nature, they succumbed to terror. The Constitution might say they could vote; the Ku Klux Klan said they couldn't. The Constitution did not go riding at night in white robes with a rope in its hands.

Fewer and fewer Negroes thought that the act of casting a ballot was worth a cabin in ashes. Wherever they insisted there was trouble. Many lives were lost in race riots. Throughout the whole South violence was a natural fact to be lived with.

Gradually, however, white supremacy was restored, largely by physical intimidation of the Negro; but also the sons of the politically disqualified white men began to grow up and the hands of vengeance began to relax.

It took time. Seven years after Lee's surrender Congress passed the Amnesty Act; that was the beginning. It took four years more to restore home rule in South Carolina, where at one time two-thirds of the lower house of the legislature had been black. Twelve years after the end of the war the last of the northern troops were withdrawn from the South, the Union was in one piece again, and the wages of sin were paid.

Meanwhile Ulysses S. Grant had been President for two terms and the people of the North and West were travelling a high road at reckless speed.

# BOOK THREE

---

## I

### Oversize Sinews

AMERICAN GIANTHOOD WAS NEVER THE CONSCIOUS INTENTION. All the phenomena were eruptive; and the giant becoming was himself absurd, always falling down and getting up, never seeming to know what he was about, subject to alternate seizures of wild exaltation and extreme depression. We should call him a manic-depressive.

Forces hitherto unmeasured in the world were acting through him; whether he understood them or not he was obliged to release them. There was no goal that he could see. The vitamin in his diet was hard times.

He was a fool for delusions. The one he loved most, when he had fallen down again, was that he was already too big, that he had done everything, and that he was doomed to perish in a Sargossa sea of excess plenty. Then he would rise and go on, producing more and more, as if it were a fatal compulsion.

Times were hard because everything was too cheap. He could live on twenty cents a day, that was true, but neither

in the fruits of the soil nor in the products of toil was there any profit.

His second most beloved delusion was that this evil enigma was from something that was wrong with his money. Yet the more he did to reform his money the worse it was.

He was rich when he thought he was poor and poor when he thought he was rich; and all the time he was creating wealth as wealth had never been created before, in kind or quantity. Even that he did not understand and gave it wrong names; and from giving it wrong names he got the uneasy feeling that he might be losing his soul.

And so he achieved gianthood. It took the last third of the 19th century, from the end of the Civil War to circa 1900, which on the dial of historic time might be ten minutes.

In that little time he lost heaven and hell and the ancient values of patient poverty.

The sinews had to be oversize. Nobody knew why, not then, nor for a long time. They seemed to grow by a strange law of excess, and it was as if all other values of life had to yield to that one necessity.

No period of American history has been so little understood, so misrepresented, so morally disesteemed. Precious minds look away, saying it ought never to have been like that; or, if they look, it does them a psychic damage, like cutting yourself in a shaving mirror when some unwelcome piece of your past suddenly intrudes itself.

In a merciless manner Mark Twain satirized it as the Gilded Age. It was ugly, certainly. Fashions, furniture, buildings, morals—everything was ugly. A habit of bad manners was the national strut. What survived of good taste quietly celebrated its own obsequies. Gilt and gold had equal glitter. A member of the New York Stock Exchange retired from Wall Street to manufacture brass spittoons with a plush top that lifted delicately by a silver-plated treadle.

Even today if you will stand in lower Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, and look down the mews at lovely old Carpenter's

Hall, then face directly about and look at some of the things that were built about 1880, you will wonder how men with fine early American patterns in their eyes could have designed those absurd later facades, heavy with specious ornamentation. But they were fumbling with new materials, new tools and new boredom with anything old or repetitious; and it was in any case a passing phase.

A supreme building genius was acting at the same time, only that it was preoccupied with purpose and function, that is, with railroads, bridges, steel mills, industrial projections, docks, terminals and monster storage bins. It could not stop to look at the outside of what it was doing. The engineers who built Brooklyn Bridge at that time had perhaps not a single aesthetic idea about it, and yet contributed to the world one of its perfectly beautiful forms. The architect was lost until he began to derive form from function. Then new vistas opened. And near the end of the Gilded Age came the Columbian Exposition at Chicago, which was architecturally the finest thing of its kind the world had ever produced; and after that the skyscrapers and the awful grandeur of the New York skyline.

Then you will hear that this age of the vulgarian was also ruthless. So it was.

At the Stockyards in Chicago there is a very pleasant club on the walls of which you may see three generations in portraiture. In the top row are the grimires—the old pork packers, famous brigands of the grain trade, the merchants who made State Street, speculators in untamed land, men who pushed railroads across mountains and deserts before there was anybody there, who made and lost the great American fortunes and made them again, all with that far-away look in their eyes that comes from gazing beyond the horizon. On every one of them is the uncouth sign of power. You should not like ever to have been in their way.

In the next row are the inheritors, all intelligent and capable men, who learned to live with the amenities, married

gorgeous women, bought art objects in Europe and supported symphony orchestras.

In the bottom row is the third generation—men who know their humanities, speak a liberal dialect and like to be known for their social mindedness.

The point is to ask whether these could have made the world that was handed down to them. The answer is no. It was a world that belonged to the strong; they treated it as a private possession. Yet it turned out to be a world that could be divided with the weak, and was, and the more it was divided the more there was of it. Only, before it could be divided it had to be created, and whereas there were many ways of dividing it there could have been only one way to create it in the first place.

If the mystic thinks it was predestined and if others say it was luck, what difference does it make? There was a running together of many things, both with and without apparent casual relationship, at a certain time in a certain way, so that what happened could not have happened anywhere else, at any other time or under other conditions.

It is customary at this point to develop the fact that the Civil War had a terrific impact upon industry. It had of course; and yet the stimulating effect of war upon the economy of a victorious nation amounts only to this, that the necessities of war oblige man to discover his latent powers. He gets excited, money is flung about in a reckless manner, prices rise, there are delusions of great profit, and then a post-war boom which ends in depression and panic—in this case the disastrous panic of 1873. But for all of that there will be a remainder of value, such, namely, as the actual increase of industrial capacity and new ways of performing more work with less labor that had to be learned when so much manpower was on the battle field and war's insatiable demands for food, clothes and guns had somehow to be met. However, in the story that now begins to be told these factors

are unimportant. It would have come out the same way if there had been no Civil War.

There was first of all the fact that the economic shape of the world was changing. The Second Industrial Revolution was beginning, and so far as we were concerned its place in time was perfect. That will be explained.

\*

*The Industrial Revolution* is a dim name plate in history. It refers to the downfall of the ancient guilds and handicrafts and the rise of the factory system that began in England 100 years before this time. Its bible was *The Wealth of Nations*, by Adam Smith, published in 1776. England even then was the paramount industrial power of the world and had what she was pleased to treat as a monopoly of machine craft. But mark you, this was before railroads, before steamships, before steel or electricity, before smokestacks and engines, in a world still lighted at night by candles. It was a revolution founded not on engines but upon machines that could automatically and tirelessly perform the tasks of the skilled hand, only of course much faster—and these at first were principally spinning, knitting and weaving machines.

When about 1760 the first spinning and weaving machines appeared there were in England 5,200 spinners using spinning wheels and 2,700 weavers using hand looms, making cotton cloth; and all they could see was that the machines were going to take their work away. It made them frantic. They ran together in mobs to wreck the machines and burn down the buildings that housed them and the homes of the wicked machine owners, until they had to be put down by force. This was perhaps the most tragic labor disturbance in history.

They could not imagine that within one generation the number of workers in the cotton textile industry of England,



working shorter hours for higher wages, would increase *40 times*. Why? Because the cost of making cotton cloth had been so cheapened by machines that it became England's principal staple of export, to clothe the people of China, India and Egypt, whereas before by handicraft they had been able to make only enough for themselves.

All machines have to be turned. These early machines were turned principally by water power. Steam engines were still crude and monstrous and very costly; and even after they had become docile the only way of conducting power away from them was by pulleys and belts, so that the limitation on the size of a factory was the length of a leather belt and the machines had to be crowded together; and for that reason among others the conditions of labor in a factory were pretty terrible.

The Industrial Revolution, you see, was at first a fumbling method. There was invention in it, but no science—a substitution of the machine for the skilled hand and a division of labor into a series of small repetitive tasks requiring no skill at all. Children could mind machines. Only do not forget the hitherto non-existent skill that now went into the making of machines.

When this country began, the factory system of Europe was already more than half a century old, its principles were set forth in political economy books, and machines were calling people from the land to the cities.

But here more than nine-tenths of the people were on the soil and the other one-tenth in towns and seaports lived mostly by trade. There was very little manufacturing of any kind. There was no machine industry at all, no machines, no engines; the Industrial Revolution had passed us by.

That was because England was protecting her monopoly of machine craft. She would not sell machines and tried to keep her mechanics from migrating. Manufacturing in the American Colonies had been repressed and in some cases

actually forbidden, even for home use. She wanted from the Colonists only raw materials for her own machines and no competition. The first textile machine in America was smuggled out of England in the head of a mechanic, who built it here from memory, and hitched it to a New England water-wheel.

One of the very early acts of the American Congress, after Independence, was a tariff law as a barrier against British machine-made goods, because the British, having lost the power to forbid American industry, now sought to discourage it in another way—that is, by filling the market with manufactured goods at prices with which infant American industry could not compete.

But it was slow. Even after England was willing to sell machines and engines it was slow, owing to the Americans' want of skill and experience, to the technical superiority of British industry at almost every point and to the long habit of thinking British was best, as it usually was—the best cloth, the best leather, the best china, the best iron and the best machinery. For the first American railroads locomotives were brought from England; the iron rails on which they ran were British made.

Yet in this handicap, as it turned out, there was an advantage that no one could have foretold. Indeed, for a long time nobody could see what the American advantage was. The shape of the whole economic world was changing again. Why the pace of this second change should have been faster here than anywhere else was not at first understood.

To see it clearly we need the aid of a figure.

\*

As water in the reservoir behind the dam gently rises a little higher each day, silently storing its power, until suddenly with one rain more it begins to spill over the top in a

wild release of energy, so it was with the Second Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution that passed us by had evolved machines. *The radical principle of this Second Industrial Revolution was the engine.*

For more than 100 years the world's store of mechanical power had been rising in the reservoir, slowly at first and then faster and faster, until its potential was immeasurable. There was no scale. Engines begat engines by a law of geometrical proportion and the machines that engines turned grew likewise. There was no optimum of size—only bigger and bigger.

In one generation the power developed by steam engines was three times the manual power of the world's entire working population.

Came steamships and railroads and power tools, and then mighty works, such as the Suez Canal, which foreshortened the trade routes. Electricity was coming. Communication was subdued to the speed of light by the telegraph. Agriculture began to be transformed by machines, so that fewer people on the soil could feed more people in the cities. The mechanic gave way to the engineer, the technologist and the scientist; dazzling rewards were reserved for the inventor.

None of these things had the effect of a cloudburst. Each thing was born small and had to grow. It was rain that raised the level of the reservoir.

Then suddenly it began to spill over. That was the first flood of the Second Industrial Revolution. You cannot rest your finger on the date. You may say only that the disastrous phenomena began to appear in the early 1870's.

Disastrous in a relative way. Disastrous in fact only to the old capital that was invested in machines, nearly all of which were doomed to die.

Why? Well follow it.

What was it that came spilling over the dam? Goods, a flood of goods—engines, machinery, iron and steel, cloth,

shoes, food, everything that could satisfy human wants or tend to the greater satisfaction of them; and all this from the fantastic increase that had been taking place in the productive power of industrial man.

The effect was what you might suppose. Prices began to fall. They fell for twenty-five years: and the why and wherefore of their falling became the subject of anxious investigation by Royal commissions, international round tables and committees of economic seers. Why was everything too cheap? What had happened to the thing remembered as profit?

Now, as prices fall what must the industrialist do to save himself? He must reduce his costs. And how will he do that? By calling on the inventor for bigger, faster and more cunning machines.

But in this competitive world each better machine destroys the value of every older machine, even though the older machine may be still mechanically perfect with yet a long life to live if only a better one had not been invented. Obviously a machine that produces cloth at a cost of 15 cents a yard cannot live against one that produces it for 10 cents a yard.

As the new machines came in the output of goods was increased, naturally, since now the industrialist must learn to live by a very small margin of profit on a larger quantity of output. But these consequences have a spiral pattern. As prices fall output increases; as output increases prices fall again; and the rate at which capital in old machines is destroyed becomes heartbreaking. The capitalist who is loath to scrap his old equipment, or who even hesitates, is lost.

You may now have guessed what the American advantage was. When the Second Industrial Revolution began this country's investment in machines, compared to that of Europe, was small. Therefore it had much less to destroy; and what there was of it was destroyed with a kind of glee. It was known to happen in a steel mill that before it could be bolted down to the floor a very costly new machine, never having

turned a wheel, would be carted off to the junk heap because a more efficient one had just been invented. That could not have happened in Europe.

Thus it was that at the onset of a Scythian struggle for economic supremacy American industry began with all young and new machines and a ruthless way of killing them as fast as they became obsolete—and this against the older machines of Europe and against the reluctance of the European industrialist to destroy capital which until then had been very profitable. The old mare was still what she used to be; the trouble was that better mares were getting born. Moreover, American industry had no complacency of laurels, no traditions, no habits. It was rash and experimental; it could embrace a new method with amazing ease, and no one to say, "But we have always done it this way."

## II

# Laissez Faire

NOW TO GO ON—

There was the fact, secondly, that in this period for the first time—possibly for the last and only time—the philosophy of Laissez Faire found here its suitable climate and could make its complete demonstration.

For better or worse, later generations have buried Laissez Faire in lime. Social teaching now says its only meaning was—every man for himself; devil take the hindmost. But for a nation of individualists, such as this nation had been from the beginning, it was a natural philosophy and responsive to the original political conviction that the first anxiety of a free people should be to limit the power of government. Let the people be; let them make their own mistakes and absorb their own troubles. Few Americans now living have any idea how strong that conviction was.

The theorem of Laissez Faire was first clearly expounded by Adam Smith. It was this—that the individual, freely making his own decisions and pursuing his own selfish ends, was bound in the sum of things to serve the welfare of society whether he meant to or not, because the grand total of innumerable individual decisions, recorded in the market place, would represent a truth of economic reality such as could never be arrived at by the wisdom of bureaucratic government. Therefore let him be.

If it was cruel, it was cruel in the way nature is cruel, and beneficent in the same way, if you stop looking at the weak and mistaken things that lie withering on the ground and look instead at the forest.

Anyhow it worked, as nothing else had ever worked; and although it worked for the strong in a pre-eminent way, it worked also for the weak and for the wage earners, all emotional sayings to the contrary notwithstanding.

It is true that when the employer brought in new and faster machines his single idea was to produce more goods with less labor and that profit was his motive. It is true also that when the immediate effect was to displace labor he thought very little about it. He simply took it for granted that the labor he could dispense with would be absorbed elsewhere in the free economic system, and in fact it was, not despite the machine but because of it, since what the machine really did in a little while was greatly to increase the total demand for labor, as in the case of Great Britain's textile workers after the introduction of spinning and weaving machines.

Or, if the employer thought about it at all, he thought of the discharged wage earner as an individual like himself—an individual who in an expanding economy would somehow be able to take care of himself, as in fact the individual did, with no benefit of government, no unemployment insurance, no social problem on his account, with the result that never before on earth had there been such a nation of self-resourceful individuals.

In England at this time the social doctrine was that a man was entitled to a living by reason of having got himself born an Englishman; and in England there was wretched poverty. No American of this time ever imagined he was entitled to a living by reason of being an American; and the English kind of poverty was unknown here.

As these changes were taking place there were those who could see only the debris. Most people in fact were unable to understand the fabulous work of construction that was

causing the litter. The Creator himself made a lot of litter. We are still clearing it away.

In 1886 the United States Commissioner of Labor made an ominous report on the displacement of the precious human hand by the insensate machine. Here were six hundred doing the work that had formerly employed 2,145, a displacement of 1,545 workers. Where were they, these 1,545, and what were they doing to do? In a certain shoe factory one hundred doing the work that five hundred did before. In metal working industries manual labor had declined one-third. In flour milling it had declined three-fourths, and so on.

Statistically it was dire. What would become of the wage earner? And when he had been entirely dispensed with, who would consume the products of the machine? Should the machine be chained down? Should there be a holiday on invention?

There was never in our history a greater disparity between the emotional surface of American life and the underlying verities. The verities were such as these:

(1) At that time we were receiving immigrants from Europe at the rate of more than a million a year, most of it manual labor, and it was all absorbed, by the factories or by the soil.

(2) The national pay roll was all the time increasing.

(3) The standard of common living was rising because the trend of wages was upward and the trend of prices was downward, so that the buying power of the wage earner's dollar was consistently greater. This is only to say that the price of labor was rising and the price of everything else was falling.

(4) Never before in modern history had the physical welfare of the common man been so high; witness for one thing the fact that from fuller nourishment and less drudgery he was increasing in average size. In his book *Recent Economic Changes*, published in 1889, David A. Wells, United States Special Commissioner of Revenue and president of the Social



Science Association, wrote: "Dealers in ready-made clothing in the United States assert that they have been obliged to adopt a larger scale of sizes, in width as well as in length, to meet the demands of the average American man, than were required ten years ago. . . . The American is, therefore, apparently gaining in size and weight, which could not have happened had there been anything like retrogression or progress toward poverty on the part of the masses."

All the same the common man complained more than ever. The unrest of labor was a chronic cause of national anxiety. Why was that? It is another subject and may be looked at in another place. The physical story is still running.

If a celestial economist had been able to view the scene of American activity as a whole, through a magic lens, his impression would have been that of a people whose behaviour was controlled by a frenzy to get ready, and fearful that time would overtake them.

To get ready for what? They couldn't have known. Blindly they were laying the foundations for a power that was destined to encompass the earth. Intuition kept telling them to make their designs massive, beyond any need of their own they could then imagine, and if it did not immediately pay they were not discouraged.

For a while they had nothing in the way of machines or technical knowledge that Europe did not already possess. What they did was to make everything bigger and faster and hang weights on their safety valves. Nothing was ever so big but it had to be torn down right away and made bigger. Enough was a word they could not pronounce. Stability was one that had not come out of the dictionary. The only stability they knew, as Henry Ford said afterward, was the stability of change; bankers and actuaries might speak of security, but the word had no social meaning whatever.

Railroad mileage—now with American locomotives, American rolling stock and American rails—increased faster than

a horse could travel. What if at one time a quarter of it might be bankrupt? That made no difference except to the stockholders who lost their money; the railroads went on running just the same, sometimes growing by the use of receiver's certificates for new capital, so that a railroad emerging from bankruptcy might be better than when it went broke. And whereas it had been that railroads were built only where the traffic was, originally in competition with canals, now at the rate of three or four thousand miles a year they were pushed westward into country where nobody was. Population followed the railroads.

Thus, until 1881 Dakota Territory had never raised a bushel of wheat for sale; six years later its wheat crop was more than sixty-two million bushels, which may be accounted for as follows: first, railroads had made it profitable to raise wheat for sale, since it could be shipped to market, and, secondly, the use of agricultural machinery had made one man's labor equal to 5,000 bushels of wheat. In the new roller mills of Minneapolis one man's labor for a year could reduce these 5,000 bushels of wheat to 1,000 barrels of flour. The labor of two men engaged in transportation would put the flour dockside at New York for shipment to Europe. The cost of carrying it to Europe by steamship was but a fraction of a cent per pound. So the labor of four men—one a farmer in Dakota, one a miller in Minneapolis and two on the railroad—plus a very low rate for ocean carriage—could put into Europe enough flour to feed 1,000 people for a year, and this in competition with Russian peasants and Egyptian fellahs, working by hand at ten and fifteen cents a day, on land as good as Dakota's.

The effect upon the world's food supply was prodigious. England at that time was feeding her agriculture to industry, that is, she was providing her industrial workers with cheap imported food and letting her own agriculture starve. Before a Royal Commission in 1886 an English farmer testified: "I

have calculated that the produce of five acres of wheat can be brought from Chicago to Liverpool at less than the cost of manuring one acre of wheat in England."

Here the relation between agriculture and industry was fundamentally symbiotic, which is to say that one form of life was vital to the existence of the other, by a law of mutual benefit. If the fruits of the soil were cheap, so also were the products of industry cheap, and this was important, as the farmer became one of industry's principal customers, buying always more and more machinery.

Never did the country cease to be farm-minded, since nearly everybody had farm ancestry, so that if and when it was that the terms of exchange between agriculture and industry moved to the farmer's disadvantage he was sure to receive sympathetic hearing in Congress.

Owing to a disproportionate decline in the value of farm commodities the farmer was in distress when the historic Granger Movement began. The trouble was that for many reasons food was too cheap, not only here but everywhere in the world, and there was very little that could be done about it until population began to overtake the food supply. This was hard for the farmer to see, or to wait for if he did see it. Anyhow, he got the notion that the railroads were devouring his profit by charging too much to haul his produce to market. Out of this agitation came a Federal law creating the Interstate Commerce Commission, and at the same time state railroad commissions, to mind the behaviour of the railroads and regulate their rates. More of that later.

It would have taken 500 years to subdue the west to grass by hand, if it could have been done at all by hand. And the inner voice that could never be still kept saying: "If you take 500 years you will lose it. Do it quickly."

That is why the mechanical extension of man's power over the soil became the ruling obsession of American inventive genius. First, then, the steel plow, which had to overcome an immemorial superstition against wounding the earth with

metal. Then the riding plow, two furrows at a time; the harrow, the planter, the multiple cultivator, and most wonderfully the reaper, which was a machine that moved against the standing grain and laid it down in swaths by means of a long cutting blade full of gnashing teeth.

Now the wooden plow, the hoe, the scythe and cradle were gone; and that was only the beginning. Came the harvester—a machine that cut the grain like the reaper but at the same time gathered it up in sheaves and tied a string around the sheave with its own steel fingers. Behind the harvester lay the sheaves, in rows as neat as dominoes, needing only to be picked up. And then the threshing machine—first a stationary one to which the sheaves were brought from the field by wagons, the grain passing back to be sacked and the straw piling up in mountains; and then one that by its own power moved over the standing wheat, reaping it into its maw with one stroke, threshing it by internal commotion, spilling the straw back to the ground as it passed, sending the winnowed grain through a pipe to a tank tender.

The first machines were moved by animal power. The power was transmitted to the active parts through the wheels. The steam engine when it came was awkward on the soil and fit only for big farming. The complete mechanization of agriculture had to wait for the internal combustion gas engine that now moves the farm tractors we see everywhere in the rural landscape—activating the mechanical animals that plow and sow and reap, that bale the hay, that dig the potatoes and the sugar beets, that pick the cotton and harvest the corn.

It happened here—originally here. The idea of machine farming, with intent at first only to increase the strength of man in his struggle with the earth, which it did five-, ten-, fifty-fold, and then secondly to eliminate the stooping drudgery—that was an American idea. Other people took it from us, slowly; and with the idea went the American machines to every part of the earth. From the beginning American pre-

eminence in the invention and manufacture of agricultural implements has defied the competitive ingenuity of the whole world.

Invention was before science. Any tinker might be an idiot-genius. In sheds and attics and little machine shops everywhere, with sticks and strings and glue and bits of metal, eccentric minds were making models of things that might work, either to save labor or to save time—two thoughts with the same meaning. It might be a washing machine to replace the Monday tub and washboard, a perpetual motion apparatus, a rotary engine, a flying machine; and there would be a fortune in it if it worked. A young news butcher named Thomas A. Edison, who would live to be called the electric wizard, was thrown off the train one night for exploding some chemicals in the end of the car.

During 70 years until 1860 the United States Patent Office had granted fewer than 40,000 patents; in the next 30 years it granted 400,000.

The leather belt was broken by the discovery that the power of a steam engine could be converted into electric energy and the electric energy could be conducted by thin wires to little motors attached directly to the machines. The telephone arrived. It was a poor day that brought no new thing—either a new thing or a new way of using a thing that had been recently discovered. One day the steel rail, another day the steam hammer, and, seriatim—

the power excavator,  
the steam drill,  
the sewing machine,  
rubber,  
electric light,  
the rotary printing press,  
the typesetting machine,  
cranes and elevators,  
wire rope,  
the compound steam engine,

dynamite,  
steel ships,  
petroleum,  
natural gas,  
pipe lines,  
Pullman cars,  
the air brake,  
the electric street car,  
plumbing,  
refrigeration,  
the mass production of clothing.

During one night the width of all railroads was changed to a standard guage so that equipment might be interchangeable throughout the entire railway system. National advertising, national distribution and the mail order catalogue were solvents of localism. There was one Main Street from New York to San Francisco.

Let the master guage be steel.

In 1870 there was nothing that could be called an American steel industry. We bought our steel and iron in Europe. Thirty years later we were producing more than 10 million tons of steel annually, passing first Germany, then England, then Germany, France and England added up, and this would continue until we alone should be making more steel than all the rest of the world.

When the Second Industrial Revolution began this country was 100 years behind Europe in machine craft. Its foreign trade consisted principally in the exchange of bread and meat and cotton for the manufactured goods of Europe, mostly British goods still.

What the next American generation wrought so unbalanced the world that it has never been in a state of equilibrium since.

We continued to sell enormous quantities of bread and meat and cotton to Europe, else she could not have lived; but before the century was out American industry had a

great surplus of machine products to sell in foreign markets, and sold them so hard that "the American invasion" began to be bitterly complained of, and in 1897 the Foreign Minister of Austria could be saying: "The destructive competition with trans-oceanic countries requires prompt and thorough counteracting measures if the vital interests of the European people are not to be greatly compromised. European nations must close ranks and fight shoulder to shoulder in order successfully to defend their existence."

Prophetic, yes; but too late. No counteracting measures would be of any avail. The European system was bankrupt, though few could believe it—the system whereby Europe exchanged her dear manufactured goods for the cheap food and raw materials largely produced by the drudge labor of the world.

The sign of paramount power that had stood over Europe like a star for more than 2,000 years had already crossed the Atlantic to stand over us.

One generation of Americans, with their fierce jealousy for freedom of enterprise and their philosophy of *laissez faire*, had created here the most powerful industrial nation on earth. It was not what they possessed in land and treasure and knowledge; other people had as much of these or more. It was what they did with what they had; and they were bound to go on until they should have in their hands, of their own making, half the industrial power of the whole world—and no rational idea of what to do with it.

### III

## Losing Heaven and Hell

IN THE CHANGELESS FRAME OF HUMAN NATURE, WHAT WOULD happen to a people like that? As they learned to command nature, to surprise her secrets and deduce her laws, with no benefit of prayer, how would their own works react upon them? What would happen to their ideas of God, their mores, their ways of thinking and feeling and what they quarreled about?

Here we leave statistics. The steel gauge bears no further witness. Facts there are, only now they are facts that have weight without substance, movement without mechanism, locomotion without means.

What they lost should come first.

They lost the Bible of their forefathers and with it their faith in Special Creation according to Genesis. That is not to say they lost God—not quite. A few became agnostics, many became skeptics but most of all, whether they could define it or not, people became Deists, not denying God but thinking of Him as an impersonal creative power, author of the evolutionary principle, who perhaps never did count the falling sparrows or the hairs on every human head.

Secondly, they lost Milton's Heaven and Hell, and with that went the last trace of Christian resignation to poverty. Man was responsible for poverty, especially the poverty of his neighbor, and man himself could abolish it.

So passed the two fears that for time immemorial had dis-



ciplined human behaviour, namely, fear of missing Heaven, where the first shall be last and the last shall be first, and fear of want.

The great experiment began. With poverty people had always behaved well; with riches never. Could a people who had reduced God to an abstraction assimilate bewildering wealth with any profit to their souls? That was to be found out.

At any rate, the American had become a secular animal—the word secular to mean of this world, here and now, and the church in its place.

None of this was as sudden as it sounds.

Some historians, among them Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, think it was but the logical evolution of Protestantism, unforeseen by its founders, such as Luther and Calvin, who today would be more at ease in a Catholic monastery than in a New York Protestant church. However that may be, the significant fact is that long before this, Puritanism was gone from New England and in place of it was Unitarianism, together with many degrees of heresy. Emerson's Deistic transcendentalism was non-Biblical. Nature was God and man by himself could touch the stars.

The theologian, for long the supreme teacher, had lost his control of the world of learning. Education's break with theology was drastic, led by Harvard, Yale and Princeton, all theological foundations, who began to put cap and gown on chemists, engineers and mechanics. The task of supporting colleges passed from religious denominations to the rich men of business, whose ideas of education were practical. When Johns Hopkins University was opened, laymen, not divines, ruled the board of trustees, the endowment came from the business world, and Thomas Henry Huxley, the celebrated English agnostic, made the inaugural speech, with no clerical benediction; which led the devout to say: "It was bad enough to invite Huxley. It had been better to ask God to be present. To have asked both would have been absurd."

Then came the impact of Herbert Spencer, with his faith

in the power of man to perfect himself if he were let alone; and more disturbing than Spencer was Charles Darwin with his evolutionary theory of life, which seemed more exciting and for some reason more wonderful than the Biblical story of creation, and more scientific of course; and which with its evidence for the modification of living things by the ceaseless struggle of the fittest to survive exactly suited the American philosophy of *laissez faire*.

The church was in a bad dilemma. It could go on preaching Hell Fire and Salvation and lose its people through boredom or it could revise its creeds to suit the thinking of the new mundane mind. It was even more complicated. Hitherto the rich had supported the church and the poor were sure that everything would come out even in Heaven. But now the rich were supporting secular education and the poor were in revolt against poverty.

The church made its choice. The creeds had to suffer. The divine became social minded. He went to look at the slums and was scandalized to realize that the church itself had large investments in slum property. He began to preach amelioration, social justice, hatred of the idle rich, more here and now for the underprivileged, and let Heaven be what it might turn out to be. Jesus was probably a socialist; if not, He would be now.

A group of radical divines met in Boston, named themselves Christian Socialists, and issued a manifesto. Control of business was concentrating itself in the hands of a dangerous plutocracy. The teaching of Christ led directly to some form of socialism. The Chicago Theological Seminary began to teach social economics. Where the maledictions of the pulpit had been hurled at little sins of the flesh, now the targets were sweatshops, child labor, the inequities of social division and the vulgarities of the idle rich.

\*

The idle rich were a grand invention.

To Arabian Night's tales of their silly behaviour the dema-

gogue was indebted for his sting, the reformer for his parables, the socialist for his thesis that the poor were poor because the rich were rich, and the lurid press for a kind of news that divided the headlines with sex and crime.

Contemporary writing was dank with foreboding and hard sayings and classical allusions to the decay of Rome, and everybody loved it, including the rich.

Current history is partly mirage. It perhaps could not have been written differently; and indeed if that had been the last chapter or the beginning of the end of the story, the Jeremiahs of the Gilded Age might be better remembered.

It is not so easy to understand later historians who, with the advantage of perspective, continue to write pages and pages about bejeweled monkeys, Lucullian feasts, real pearls in the oysters, fantastic balls and Kubla Khan dwellings, as if a rash of money had been a kind of leprosy.

To this day it is their habit to speak ill of that exuberant time, even in text books. Their phrases are stereotyped. Here is a late textbook entitled "The Making of Modern America," in many ways an excellent book, now widely used in the public school system. It says:

"It has been estimated that in 1861 there were only three millionaires in the country. Before the turn of the century this number had increased to at least 3,800, and about nine-tenths of the country's wealth was controlled by one-tenth of the population. Interest on bonds and dividends on stocks made it unnecessary for members of this top-income group to work. . . . The period was one in which ability and success were measured very largely by wealth. Under such conditions it is not surprising to find that many of the newly rich were spending money in showy ways. They lived in elaborate, over-ornamented homes and had many servants to wait on them. One such man was the financier Jim Fisk, who lived perhaps more extravagantly than any one else in his day. In New York City he occupied a great marble home that contained his own opera house. Hundreds of canary birds in

gilded cages sang in the rooms. He loved showy clothes.”

Here the writer has solemnly copied down the cliché about one-tenth of the population controlling nine-tenths of the wealth. He had perhaps never heard of Pareto's law, which proves that a division of wealth between the few and the many in about that ratio is a constant phenomenon in any civilized society and has been for thousands of years.

In any case, neither the gildedness of the age nor the rise in the number of millionaires had anything to do with it. The millionaires increased because the wealth of the country was increasing very fast—and increasing largely from the vision, daring and ability of those same millionaires. Suppose it had been otherwise. Suppose the number of millionaires had not increased at all. Would that have been a sign of health and prosperity? And most of these new millionaires had come from the ground—from the mines and steel mills and oil wells and packing houses—and smelled of their work. That is why their manners were crude.

Waiving that, how does Jim Fisk alone rate a long paragraph in a school book, as if he were typical. The impression that he was typical is produced by the phrase: “One such man—” But he was not typical. Nor was he a financier. He was a low gambler who went up in smoke and left nothing behind him but the smell. Any society may cast up that kind of excrescence. He belonged to Wall Street. Therefore he may be used as an image either of Wall Street or the Gilded Age, as you please, and either image will be true only in the sense that a gargoyle is true.

\*

Wall Street certainly was a wild and dangerous place—a free and open tilting field where a man like Jay Gould could try to corner gold and cause the Black Friday panic, and manipulators could rig the rise and fall of prices to fleece the fatuous people who could be trusted endlessly to present

themselves for shearing, the same ones coming back again and again when they had grown more wool.

It was a national game, in the mores of the times, for unlimited stakes and but one rule: Let the player beware. Yet for all the drama, notoriety and scandal, it was relatively unimportant. Perhaps the worst thing about it was that for a long time it obscured the true function of Wall Street, which on the whole it performed very well.

What was that function?

Formerly the business of the country had been largely conducted by firms and partnerships, that is to say, in each case by a few individual capitalists as proprietors. For small business that was all right, but for the big business that was coming it was an inadequate form of organization. A great railroad system, for example, would be beyond the resources of five or six men acting as a firm, no matter how rich they were; and for purposes of a risky adventure it was not easy to find many partners because in a partnership, if anything went wrong, each partner became personally liable for the debts. Remember that nearly everything worth doing was at that time risky. The country was built with what now the economist calls venture capital. How to limit the liability of venture capital, so that cautious investors would be more willing to take part in financing the growth of the country, was one of the problems.

Thus when it became necessary for many people to run their money together to provide the capital with which to perform great works, the ideal organization for that purpose was the limited liability stock company. The stock could be sold at auction in the open market, in any amount from one share up, and *limited liability* meant that the investor's personal liability was limited to the value of his own stock. If the company went bankrupt he would lose his investment, but he could not be held for the company's debts.

Nor was that all. The limited liability stock company had the further allurements that it enabled men to capitalize not

the present only but the future too. Generally, therefore, a limited liability stock company issued bonds and preferred stock up to the full value of present assets, and then common stock to represent hope of the future. The value of the common stock was speculative only. The vernacular name for it was water—whence watered stocks.

The buyer of common stock often lost his money and most certainly did if the future had been too cheerfully discounted; but on the other hand if the future was rich, and it often was, his position was very good, since it was that after the bondholders had got their interest and the preferred stockholders their limited dividends, he could claim all the profit. Common stocks, you see, were for those who wanted to make bets on the future of the country, and millions did to their ultimate profit, because the future that did materialize was fabulous.

You may see it this way: If, beginning in 1870, your grandfather on the first day of each year had bought 100 shares of common stock at maybe three or four dollars a share, and any common stock at all provided only it was a different one each year, and had kept on doing it until he died and had then willed them to you under the simple injunction to keep them, you would now be very rich. Out of each five it might be that two would disappear as worthless, but no matter; the gain on the other three would represent a fortune. It may now occur to you that the silly fleece-bearing lambs who presented themselves again and again to Wall Street to be sheared were not altogether as silly as they seemed. First and last they did buy and keep an enormous quantity of common stocks.

The most memorable case was that of United States Steel. It was the first billion-dollar corporation. It was put together by the premier banking house of J. P. Morgan. The purpose, for better or worse, was to avert a panic in the steel industry from an anarchy of competition led by Andrew Carnegie, who was running amuck. The common stock as everybody

knew was all water. Nevertheless, Wall Street by arts of sorcery was able to make it an object of speculative adoration; and while the steel men themselves were selling out the public bought it at from \$40 to \$50 a share. Then the bubble burst. The stock fell miserably to less than \$9 a share, and at that point Morgan appeared in newspaper cartoons as Napoleon in retreat from Moscow. It was his worst debacle. But a few years later Wall Street itself was buying Steel common back from the public at \$100 a share and nearly everybody lived to see it sell above \$200.

Can you wonder that speculative ecstasy, for all its pitfalls, was a common American delirium?

So that was what Wall Street was for—first, to provide the means by which many people could pool their money for purposes of any great capital formation, and secondly, to sell the securities that represented popular participation in the growth and development of the country.

If you say it was wasteful, that may be so; and yet as you look at the prodigious manner in which the country's working wealth did grow you can hardly suppose that a great deal of capital was actually wasted. If you say it was morally bad, that it inflamed the acquisitive spirit and nourished habits of speculation, you are obliged to say how else it might have been done so fast and so effectively, with the result that one day we should wake up to discover that the great corporations were owned, actually owned, not by Wall Street, not by the promoters and bankers, not by the insiders as we say, but by millions of stockholders all over the country. Never had there been such a dispersal of proprietary wealth.

## IV

# A Gilded Conscience

THERE WAS NO DISEASE, NO LEPROSY OF WEALTH, NO IDLE rich class, neither then nor afterward. The men who provided the money that was spent by their women and sycophants on the follies of the Gilded Age were more likely to die of ulcers and high blood pressure from overwork than from any pathology of idleness.

The same men at the same time were making large contributions to colleges and universities for a kind of education designed to fit men not for leisure but for work. They were creating museums and institutes for scientific research, building free libraries and stocking them with books, and setting up trusts called foundations not as simple charities but as organized forethought for human welfare. The richness and variety of these activities amazed the world.

The vanity of monuments is very old. This was something else. In no human society before had so many rich men been moved by the impulse to leave behind them a finer cultural environment than the one they found. Andrew Carnegie was one of them, and his ambition was to give away all of his money before he died; that was his share of the steel money.

At this time too there was the beginning of a new awareness touching what were thought to be the evils of raging industrialism. The foundations were laid for social and humanitarian movements that were to have long consequences.



The college settlement appeared. That would be a place like Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago or the Neighborhood Guild in New York, where ardent young persons from the academic world went, as they said, to share the lives of the poor. That was their romantic statement of it. What they undertook to do was to shock the conscience of the rich by reporting with stark literary realism the wretchedness of the poor. And in that they succeeded.

They made only the mistake of supposing that what they found was chargeable to their own times, to industrialism, or to the callousness of the newly rich American; and upon this assumption they pronounced their moral judgments. It was a common error. When Henry Adams said that until Boston burned he had no idea how meanly the poor lived, although they had been only in the next block, that was true; but it had been true of every big city in the world since Rome, true long before industrialism or laissez faire economy.

He was shocked. His conscience was moved. But no intensity of awakened conscience could abolish poverty—without the means. Nor could it be abolished by dividing among the many the wealth of the few. All that could come of that would be a week's holiday for the poor, and the case then would be worse than before, because the power of accumulated wealth progressively to produce wealth would have been temporarily destroyed. The most that conscience alone could do was to poultice the sores of poverty by ministrations and charity, as it had done always.

What then? Was that the role of the young ameliorists in the college settlements? If so, it was as if they were saying: The business of man's creative will is conquest and it cannot be helped; the business of his conscience is to pick up the pieces. Henry Adams, who hated the ways of money, said almost that in these words:

"A capitalistic system had been adopted, and if it were to be run at all it must be run by capital and by capitalistic

methods; for nothing could surpass the nonsense of trying to run so complex and so concentrated a machine by southern and western farmers in grotesque alliance with city day laborers."

So, since capitalism it was, let somebody solace the poor and make the best of a terrible world.

What they all left out was something that had not yet been revealed—something that had to be taken on faith because it had never happened.

It was this: The only hope of abolishing poverty lay in that American capitalistic system itself.

Why? Because only that capitalistic system could provide the means.

The unique fact about this acquisitive society was not that it had a conscience. Every society has a conscience. The unique fact about it was its passion to create surplus means; and, with that, it could be trusted to act upon poverty, not necessarily for moral reasons, not necessarily on grounds of conscience, but for rational reasons and for its own sake.

Thus, the right thing to have said about bad housing was not that it was the guilt of the rich but that bad housing was bad industrialism. As that fact came to be realized, and then as fast as industrialism could provide the means, the slums would begin to disappear.

If that seems to put the heart in its place, nevertheless so it works. What conscience cannot do intelligence can—and make it pay. And unless it pays even intelligence cannot do it.

One of the very bad spots was a steel mill town, especially one inhabited by Poles, Slavs, Bohemians and other European workers who had never known clean sheets, waiting beds or sanitary dwellings. That was true for a while. Yet when the United States Steel Corporation built its great plant at Gary, Indiana, it put around it a model town for the workers. Not that any law required it. Not that anybody's heart had softened. Why then? Simply for the reason that when it

comes to working the levers of a machine that has cost a million dollars, an ill-housed or unhappy man, who in one moment of sullenness could wreck it, is a very bad risk.

Out of the work of the college settlements and from collaboration between organized labor and those who went to share the lives of the poor, came agitation for laws to make factories safe and sanitary, laws to forbid child labor, laws to shorten the work day, and so on.

Many such laws were enacted, first by the states; and for the improvements that began to take place the law makers took full credit. But again, if industry itself had not been providing the means to make these ameliorations possible, there could have been no magic in the laws. What caused factories to be made over and the practice in them to be revolutionized was not the law but the fact that a bad factory environment wasted labor and hindered production; for that reason it was bad industrialism. Most of the factory laws were in time forgotten, certainly so far as big business was concerned, because no intelligent industrialist would be content to do as little as they required.

As for child labor, notwithstanding any law, the machine that was thought to be enslaving children was itself the thing that set them free; and did it by so increasing the earning power of the adult wage earners that they could afford to withdraw their children from toil.

But the most astonishing and unexpected result of all was the effect of the machine on the length of the work day. A time was coming when industry would be obliged by its own necessity to favor a shorter work day, a shorter work week and more holidays. What was the necessity? Simply, the necessity to sell its products.

With the arrival of mass production the wage earner's relation to industry was radically altered. Whereas before he had been considered primarily as a producer, now suddenly he became indispensable as a *consumer*. And it was not enough that he should have a wage that would enable him

to buy his share of the product if he wanted it; he had to have also the leisure in which to enjoy it, else he might not buy it.

Henry Ford finally expressed it. He was making cheap motor cars for the multitude. The wage earner was a large part of the multitude. Therefore he had to sell his motor car to the wage earner, else he never could sell enough of them to keep his costs going down. Well then, even though he paid the worker a wage that made it possible for him to own an automobile, still if you worked him from sunrise to dark, and no holidays, what would he do with it?

The question is: Would this time have come when it did, or ever, if the hours of labor had been foreshortened by law too soon? Probably not, or as you think; but in any case the seeds of it were there when the sentimental ameliorists were denouncing the rich and the capitalists for the impoverishing evils of American industrialism.

The college settlement was an emotional causeway crossing ugly waters—waters which threatened, as many then believed, to create by erosion a dangerous social chasm. The rich crossed it one way and the poor the other way; and what this did above all for the poor was to give them a sense of belonging. "It is safe to say," wrote Beard, "that few economists grew to maturity in the Gilded Age without some association with a college settlement where first-hand contacts with labor could be made." The sympathies thus established inclined the young intellectuals to social-mindedness; and these, together with the professional social worker who then appeared, carried the torch for the revolt against poverty and gave it a fighting language.

That was perhaps all to the good. If the fervent ameliorist was impatient with the rational and impersonal values of the capitalist, so on the other hand, the capitalist was slow to see how important to his own ends the goads of feeling were. Both were working to the same end. This paradox may not have been true anywhere else; it certainly was true here.

What the capitalist had in his vision was a continuous rise in the standards of common living, considered not personally but statistically, on the principle that if wealth were progressively increased and diffused everyone would get his share. But clearly a people resigned to poverty would be fatal to that vision. What it required for its own fulfillment was a restless, discontented people, whose wants were insatiable and always running ahead of their satisfaction. With no other kind of people would it have been possible for industrialism to multiply and cheapen the things that satisfy human wants, so that today's luxuries, available to only the few, should become tomorrow's necessities for the better living of the many, notably motor cars—to the end that any wage earner could be more and more like the rich, on the highway, in his recreations, in his kitchen, in his comforts, even in his clothes, until at a glance you could hardly tell them apart. Thus you may see that the revolt against poverty was a vital ingredient of the American formula. Its first manifestations, however, were alarming.

Poverty is a relative condition. There was poverty in Europe, but not like poverty in Asia; there was poverty here, but not like the poverty of Europe.

It could hardly have been a poor country that raised in the middle of New York harbor the Statue of Liberty, holding aloft a light, and carved at the base these words, addressed to Europe:

*Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.*

This was a call not for pioneers but for immigrants. It was the song of the melting pot. Here was food, here was work, here was liberty—for everybody. The large idea was that this country could assimilate and ennoble any kind of human material, even the refuse of Europe.

Formerly the migrations of people from Europe to the New World, predominantly English, Scottish, Dutch, German and Scandinavian, had been properly regarded as movements of the spirit or movements of the mind, or both. It was either adventure in the pioneer spirit or it was flight from religious persecution and political tyranny.

But now the economic motive began to come foremost. The immigrant was in flight from hunger (the Irish famine); in flight from the industrial slums of England, or in flight from the peasant wretchedness of eastern and southern Europe. Millions came with only the bundles on their backs. Those who went to the soil were soon quietly absorbed. These were fewer and fewer. Most of them stopped in the cities to perform the menial tasks or sought unskilled jobs on the rough side of industry and with railroad construction gangs.

These were troublesome. The bosses of political machines, like Tammany Hall in New York, adopted them for their votes and mumbled them through the naturalization mill in herds; the demagogue adopted them because they were susceptible.

They were all better off here than they ever were before. Moreover, as we have seen, the welfare of the wage earner was steadily improving. Wages were slowly rising, even the wage of the unskilled worker, and prices were falling, so that the wage dollar bought more and more. Nevertheless, it was at this time that organized labor assumed its militant character. Here for the wage earner was the best living in the world. Why then was the unrest of labor so threatening?

The employer very freely blamed what he called alien labor, referring to the new immigrant. It was true generally that the new immigrant was found on the radical side in every dispute. It was true also that along with the ignorant immigrant horde came a dangerously brooding few who brought with them forethoughts of anarchy and assassination, theories of the class struggle according to Marx and the wicked conviction that capitalism was bound to work oppres-

sively here as they had seen it work in Europe. And it was of course true that none of these immigrants had any understanding of the American context.

Yet it could hardly have been as simple as all that. Many native born wage earners were turning radical. Why? Could they not read the statistics?

A more thoughtful explanation, one with deeper insight, was offered by the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Connecticut, in his report for the year 1887. He said:

“Necessary wants have multiplied, and society demands so much in the style of living that the laboring man finds it almost impossible to live as respectably now on his wages as his father did thirty years since upon his. That is, wages have not kept pace with the increasing wants and style of living demanded by society. The laborer thinks he sees a wider difference between the style in which his employer lives and the way he is compelled to live than existed between employer and employee thirty years ago. He thinks that this difference is growing with the years. Now, as a man’s income is, in general, measured by his style of living, he cannot resist the conclusion that a larger share of the profits of business goes to his employer than employers received in former years; that the incomes of employers have increased more rapidly than the wages of employees. The laboring people are fully alive to the fact that modern inventions and the like make larger incomes possible and right. They do not complain of these larger incomes, but they do believe most profoundly that they are not receiving their fair share of the benefits conferred upon society by these inventions and labor saving machines. In this belief lies the principal source of their unrest.”

This statement is remarkable for its prognostic quality. The three characters of man were in process of fusion.

First, political man. His demands are few and non-arguable, and they do not change—liberty, justice, equality be-

fore the law, self-government. He is more interested in what government should *be* than in what government should *do*. That was the early American.

Secondly, economic man. He is interested primarily in division. His demands are variable and arguable. He will not be content with a fixed division because he sees that the society in which he lives is not stationary but advancing, wherefore it is unjust that anyone's portion should be a rigid allotment.

Thirdly, the social man, whose wants may not be physically measured. They are not physical. Ego enters into them, and though it were only the desire to seem *as-good-as*, still, that too, you would have to reckon with.

The interesting fact is that the successive demands of organized labor have corresponded exactly to that pattern. First its demand was for a living wage, which it got. Then it was for a saving wage—something over living to be invested or put under the rug, and in time it got that. Thirdly it demanded a social wage, that is to say, a wage that would enable the wage earner to maintain his pride and dignity in a civilized community. That was yet not all. A fourth demand evolved, namely, the demand that labor as a class should receive a progressive share of the total national income. We may look at that later.



## V

# Quarreling over Division

HOWEVER, NO EXPLANATION CAN GLOSS THE BITTERNESS OF the first great quarrel over division. It was all the more tragic in view of the fact that American economic theory was just then in the way of exploding the Old World's *iron law of wages*. We had taken our economic book from Europe and the law was there. It said that wages were paid out of profits. If that were true, it followed, as Ricardo said, that whatever raised the wages of labor lowered the profits of capital.

The same law said there was a natural wage; and this natural wage turned out to be that price for labor which was necessary to enable the laborer to reproduce himself—just as the price of an ox might be the cost of reproducing an ox. In that case labor was doomed to receive forever a sustenance wage.

This pessimistic doctrine did not belong here; it would leave the American dream in the ditch, and therefore it could not live in the American air. An American school of optimistic economists, led by Francis Walker and H. C. Carey, challenged it as an illusory dragon, and, lo! it was not there.

They arrived at the true conclusion that wages were paid not out of *profits* but out of *production*. Thus if you increase production wages and profits may rise together.

There was no such thing as a natural wage. What a liberating thought! It meant that whereas the European capitalist found his profit in low wages and high prices, the American capitalist hereafter would find his in low costs and high pro-

duction. The lower his cost and the greater his production the higher the wage he could afford to pay.

This was the revolutionary American contribution to economic thought. You might suppose it would have solved the wage question. The trouble was that it had first to be evolved in the mind as a theory and then proved in practice. Between the idea and the practical demonstration of it there is inevitably a time lag. And during this time lag the struggle between capital and labor over the terms of division became ferocious.

Labor was the weaker party. It had no genius for either organization or leadership, and no solidarity. National unions appeared, grew like mushrooms for a little while, and then collapsed. The Knights of Labor was one. Independent unions flourished and declined and flourished again, with changes in the economic weather. Never during this time did unions of any kind represent more than three or four per cent of the country's total labor force, and some of the time much less.

Public opinion was generally unsympathetic, not because it was anti-labor, which it never was, but because in militant labor's philosophy there was an alien or European content that was much disliked; and then, besides, there was something about the idea of unionism that offended the American's jealous individualism, even as a wage earner.

Freedom to strike was conceded, in law and custom both; but the strikers were expected to take the risk. Labor disputes were trials of economic strength. If the strikers could beat the boss, that was all right; if the boss could beat the strikers, that was all right too. But no violence about it. Labor used the strike and the boycott. The employer used the lockout and the blacklist.

On these terms the strikers were at a disadvantage. The boss had always the bigger pocketbook, and they could not starve him out. That is why they so often resorted to violence; and why also no large employer company was without a private arsenal and armed guards. When it became a fight-

ing matter it did not take a big union to make an ugly situation.

The employers were not organized, nor did they go to one another's aid when trouble came; but they were all on one side and definitely anti-union. Their blacklist, which circulated the names of union agitators, was a powerful weapon; and so was the hiring contract that bound the employee not to join a union on pain of discharge—called the yellow dog contract. Still it would be difficult to say which did the cause of labor more harm—the fighting employer or the fighting labor leader.

There were the Molly Maguires. That was the only name people knew for a terroristic society of Pennsylvania miners, who for a long time intimidated the police power with arson and murder and were at last broken up by a Pinkerton spy who had joined them and made believe to take part in their crimes. The Pinkerton Detective Agency was the name of a private police force that fought for pay on the side of the employer, and so successfully that for many years the sound of the three syllables—*Pin-ker-ton*—was enough to throw any union meeting into a paroxysm of rage.

There were railroad strikes that paralyzed the traffic of the country and led to so much disorder, killing and damage to property that twice Federal troops had to be called upon the scene.

There was the terrible Homestead strike at the Carnegie steel works. There strikers pitched a battle with the mill guards and Pinkerton men, and outfought them, only then to be put down by the state militia. They lost the strike and went back to work on the company's terms.

There was the shocking Haymarket Square incident in Chicago. While trying to disperse an excitable open air labor meeting some policemen were killed by a bomb. The person who threw the bomb was never identified. Eight instigators were convicted. Four were hanged, one committed suicide and three were imprisoned.

After the Homestead strike there was an attempt to assassinate one of the Carnegie partners.

These are only the most remembered pieces of the drama. For twenty years there was never a strikeless day; the average was three strikes a day, and a strike anywhere, big or little, could be explosive.

Labor unionism was not committed to violence as a policy. Nobody could say that. On the other hand, it treated lawlessness with silence and never denounced its own law breakers, at least never with convincing sincerity, and from this the public drew a certain conclusion.

There was no sequel. The duration of this phase of the labor movement was thirty years, and after that it was dimmed out in an ecstasy of new prosperity. The tragedy lay in its utter futility. The effect upon wages was nil.

If you will consult any statistical chart showing the trend of wages (it may be a government chart or it may be chart XXV, p. 219, in "Capitalism the Creator," by Carl Snyder) you will see, beginning, say in 1850, that wages rose almost without interruption for ninety years. They had been rising for twenty years before the labor movement assumed its militant character, just as they have been rising ever since. That is not all. You will see that the curve of rising wages synchronizes almost perfectly with another curve that represents the increased productivity of the wage earner. As more and more machine power was put behind him he produced more per day or per hour, and his wages went up proportionately. Strikes had very little to do with it. That is how the system works.

## VI

# Satan Was Money

THE FUTURE THAT WAS BRINGING ITSELF TO PASS COULD NOT give its reasons. It said: "There is nothing yet. All is becoming."

Reason said: "There is already enough. Only divide it properly and it will go around."

But enough was not enough. There had to be plenty. Reason could not imagine what plenty was because never had any human society had plenty.

In the market place the farmer was more unhappy than the wage earner; and like the wage earner he thought the division was wrong. But the economic plight of the farmer was owing almost entirely to two things, both of them too obvious.

The first thing was free land, which was a public subsidy to agriculture and caused it to expand beyond any possibility of immediate profit. The second thing was the sudden transition to a complete money economy.

This statement requires to be considered.

As it had been in Colonial times, so it was for more than a generation after Washington, that craftsmen were directly and visibly engaged in producing what the economist now calls consumer goods—the blacksmith, the wagon maker, the tailor, the shoemaker, the weaver, the farmer, and so on. It is true that they all used a little money, but the use of money

as everybody could see was to effect the exchange of goods. What they lived by was goods, not money. The shoemaker knew how long it took to make a pair of shoes and he could see how long it took to make a suit of clothes; the farmer knew how much labor there was in a bushel of wheat and he could see how long it took to make a wagon. With no money at all they could have exchanged goods for goods at fair value. Money was a convenience only. You could live without it.

Then with the oncoming of the Second Industrial Revolution, the division of labor, machine production and the wage system, all of that began to change. The shoemaker no longer lived by making shoes; in fact he disappeared. In his place was a man who lived by the money wage he received as a worker in a shoe factory. And so of the wagon maker, the tailor, the weaver, and all the rest of them. Instead of producing consumer goods individually as before they began to perform industrial functions by the hour, and as they did that they began to relate their livelihood not to goods but to a money wage.

And the same thing happened to the farmer. For whereas formerly he had drawn sustenance for himself and his family directly from the soil, selling only a marginal surplus for money or trading it at the general store for calico, pepper and hardware, now he went in for money cropping. What he produced was a money crop and with the cash proceeds of a specialized crop like wheat he bought everything he needed, including the food for his own table. Thus the farmer too began to live by money.

And another thing. Whereas formerly so many people were directly engaged in producing visible consumer goods, now fewer and fewer were employed in producing visible goods, because the factory system had greatly increased the productive power of labor, and more and more of those who were thus released from the task of producing visible goods were strangely employed in producing goods that were *invisible*.

That is to say, they were beginning to be employed in what now we call the service industries, such as transportation, trade, distribution, exchange, banking, maintenance of machinery; and, stranger still, a long catalogue of non-consumable goods, such as the engines and machines that made factories possible and then machines to make machines. And all of these of course worked for money wages.

So now everybody, including the farmer, begins to live by money, and a time comes when, as Spengler says, "in place of thinking in goods we have thinking in money."

There was no difficulty for merchants, traders and bankers, who had always thought in money; but for labor and for the farmer, the farmer especially, the transition was bewildering. It was easy for them to believe that money was a mysterious evil, always turned against them by the money thinkers; and they became obsessed by two ideas—one, that the fall of prices was owing to the scarcity and dearness of money, and, two, that the bankers kept money scarce and dear in order to bleed the people.

Out of this came the commotions of angry feeling that make up so much of the superficial history of the 1880's and 1890's. The Populist movement of the West, spreading like an epidemic, organized a popular demand for fiat money and lots of it, government ownership of the railroads and dungeons for plutocracy. Along with that was the Granger movement, demanding regulation of the railroads and a reduction of freight rates by law. And there was the Silver movement, which more or less united all of them, and made silver a symbol of the poor man's money.

The West had plenty of silver in its own mines. If it could be used as money without limit it would cause the farmer's prices to rise and enable him to pay his debts. Moreover, the spirit of silver was avenging. It would destroy the gold dragon. Gold was the rich man's money.

The question of silver versus gold became a social issue and kept the country in turmoil for more than a generation.

At last in 1896 the Democratic Party embraced silver. Its hero was William Jennings Bryan, who enthralled the convention and won the nomination for President with a single speech, which ended in these words: "We will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns; you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."

The excitement reached a pitch of delirium. Was it about money, really? Perhaps not.

The Republican party elected President William McKinley, who had been a late convert to gold and thought the tariff more important. With that the silver movement collapsed, as if people were weary of it, and for a while nothing happened. The next year prices stopped falling. The gold standard act was not passed until three years later, and by that time so much had been forgotten that the formal event caused hardly a ripple on the waters, even in Wall Street.

Silver money might not have ruined the country. It is doubtful if Bryan could have hurt it much. Anyhow, he lived to become a conservative and somewhat dull Secretary of State in the cabinet of Woodrow Wilson and died in one of the higher income brackets.

Cheap money was an omnibus. The Socialists rode it because it was going their way and they loved to see plutocracy leap for its life to the curbstone and shake its fist. The Socialists were just beginning to crystallize. "The capitalist class," they said, "though few in numbers, absolutely controls the government—legislative, executive and judicial." The Populists, the Bryanites and the radical farmers were loath to go as far as that; and when the Socialists went on to say that therefore the working class would have to conquer government and seize the means of production—that was going too far. But there was not much quarreling on the bus. The cheap money people wanted all to ride who would, in a general direction, and were never as radical as they seemed to be.

*Did the capitalists control the government?*



All the history books say yes, as if it were something that requires no proof, or as if to question it were naive in view of the wicked lobby scandals that ran like a serial crime story through the Washington news of that time.

Well, the wickedest and most powerful capitalist then was the railroad magnate and the railroad lobby was a notorious thing, managed on the theory that a boughten vote was as good as any other, even better maybe if only it would stay bought. It was grimy enough. Nevertheless, this ruthless railroad interest was powerless to defeat a law creating the Interstate Commerce Commission to regulate the railroads. The farmer's lobby was stronger than the railroad lobby.

If you say the Interstate Commerce Commission at first had no teeth and claws and that in any case it was not aggressively enforced, why, so it was. The fact remains that if the capitalist had controlled the government such a law could not have been passed by the Congress. A railroad oracle said: "We could not keep Congress from passing the law because the people wanted it. But in ninety days Congress will be called in special session to repeal it, lest it ruin the country."

Then nothing happened. The reason why nothing happened was that the time had not come. The railroads were not yet big enough. Of those that existed in 1887, when the Interstate Commerce Commission law was passed, hardly a trace existed twenty years later. They had all been built over again, with double tracks, heavier rails, bigger locomotives and equipment. All of that had to be done before the Federal government could afford to regulate the railroads or limit their profits. The work first and then the taming of it. But when the time did come, there the Interstate Commerce Commission was, and it was easy enough to give it all necessary power.

The second most aggressive formation of capital was sudden and startling. The great industrial corporations were appearing, in steel, mining, milling, electric power, oil, meat

packing, and so on. They were growing very fast, the larger ones swallowing up smaller ones, and they were already beginning to be called trusts. People were seized with a new fear. It was simply the fear of bigness.

There were many foreboding rationalizations about it, such as that power was tending to concentrate itself in fewer and fewer hands, that the ends in view were monopolistic and that the logical sequel would be the death of competition. Yet for all the money these capitalists might have been willing to spend to control government and for anything their lobby could do at Washington, the Congress in 1890 passed the Sherman Anti-Trust law, forbidding every kind of contract or combination aimed at the restraint of trade.

This law, like the Interstate Commerce Commission law three years before, had at first no fighting spirit; nothing immediately happened. But that was for the same reason as in the case of the railroads, namely, that the time had not come. Nothing was yet big enough. That was something nobody could prove. It could be known only by intuition. But when the corporations had doubled in size, and doubled again, the time would come, and then as it was needed power could be added to the Anti-Trust law—and it was.

We are supposed to know that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Yet here were two worlds revolving oppositely in the same space, almost without touching. The screaming that is still mistaken in the history books as a sound of terrible friction between them was but the vocal dread of things that were not going to happen. One was the world of apprehensive thought, foreboding disaster; the other was the world becoming—the world not of what people thought but of what they did.

They thought a few predatory corporations were going to devour government and enslave the people, whereas ownership of the great corporations was going to pass to the people and the power of government was going to rise to a point

at which the great problem would be how to save the freedom of business from the beneficent despotism of an executive bureaucracy at Washington.

They thought the corporations were going to kill competition in order to exploit the consumer, whereas the era of titanic competition was yet to come, and the consumer, far from being exploited, would become the petted sovereign of the economic scheme, and his buying power would be insured by credit provided by business itself or by government, or both.

They thought labor was doomed to become a submerged estate, wholly at the mercy of the organized boss, whereas labor was on its way to an undreamed-of eminence of economic and political power.

They thought the future of American agriculture lay between slaves and tenants. The free and independent farmer was disappearing. How could he hope to "wrest his sovereignty back from the capitalist?"

Well, American agriculture not only became the most prosperous that had ever existed in the world, some of the time too prosperous for its own good, but capitalism itself arrived at the idea that the prosperity of the farmer was essential to the well being of the country as a whole, and must therefore be protected, by the use of public funds if necessary.

They thought the rich would get richer and the poor would sink. The rich did get richer and multiplied in numbers amazingly, but the poor at the same time were getting more, and getting it so fast that a fair standard of common living in one decade became sub-standard in the next.

And while the people were thinking these things, and thinking them with that false clarity that makes fallacy more plausible than truth, what were they doing, as if they were not thinking at all about what they did?

It is wonderful. The story is told without words on sheets of quadrupled paper by wavy lines, which the economist calls

curves, to show growth as quantity and movement. Every curve, such as, to wit:

- (a) the national payroll,
- (b) the size of the labor force,
- (c) wages per hour,
- (d) production of metals and minerals,
- (e) production per man hour of labor,
- (f) the output of electric power,
- (g) capital invested per wage earner,
- (h) the horse power of machines behind the worker,
- (i) trade per capita,
- (j) the national income,
- (k) the amount of goods consumed,
- (l) railroad tonnage—

—every curve was rising, steadily, uninterruptedly, in a spectacular manner, no matter what else happened—and rising much faster here than in Europe.

An imperious necessity was acting. Capitalism was working. The terms of division might be in dispute, but each day there was more to divide, and it had to be divided among the people, if only for the reason that there was nothing else to do with it. The rich could not consume it.

The perfect symbol was the apparitional New York skyline, building, unbuilding and building again, as the tallest thing made way for a taller one, and that for a taller one still, until you might have had the fantasy of a ten-minute movie film of the life of a redwood forest for a thousand years. What a force up-thrusting! What a struggle for vertical supremacy! Then at last, where the clouds begin, a kind of dizzy stability, and the steeple of Trinity Church at the head of Wall Street lost from view. Remark, there was never any economic necessity for the skyscraper. It was man's ego externalized.

And so the Giant came of age.

Nearly all the rest of the story turns on this single question: What will he do with his power?

*Marginalia*

But what is it that may be set over power to govern it?

The answer, ultimately, is nothing.

No matter how vast its political consequences may be, power is not a political fact; it is an elemental fact, to which every other fact in the world must somehow accommodate itself. When and if it obeys the law it does so because it will, not because it must.

Its own law is one of inner necessity. The ostensible necessity may be emotional, romantic, economic or unreal, such as a place in the sun or to make the world safe for democracy. Given the necessity, it will make dirty work of a Constitution, trample down liberty and put the civil code to sleep.

In the first phase, as was the case here, it may be formless, dispersed in many hands, fluid and self-augmenting. It may be a power of wealth and banking, a power of technology, a power of engines. That formlessness will not last. The reason why it will not last is that there is a law of history which says that a nation possessing the supreme power in the earth is obliged to put it forth; and formless power cannot put itself forth.

Philosophically it may be argued that a nation owes it to mankind to put power forth, wherefore it becomes a duty, as if in each case the idea that inhabits power must prove itself in struggle. If it is bad it will be overthrown; if it is good it will prevail, and the world will be somehow different. Suppose the Greeks had not put forth theirs, nor the Romans theirs, nor the British theirs. Would the world now be better or worse?

In any case a nation will do it.

People may think they do it for the good of mankind; in fact they do it with intent to change the world, to make it over more to their liking.

But when that time comes government will take command of the national power, organize it from a center, control it, give it a sense of direction and provide it with reasons, slogans and myths. And once government has done that there is no retreat. It will continue to create the occasions of necessity and to exercise the power until another drama of empire is played out.

This is the oldest story in history.

And what at last does this power turn out to be? How finally is it measured? What is the very essence of it?

Absolutely, at last, it turns out to be the *power to kill*. All your wealth, your machines, your knowledge, even your wisdom, will not prevail if when the time comes you have not also the paramount power to kill.

It is understood.

Why else did the civilized states of Europe send friendly ambassadors to the barbaric court of Genghis Khan, the greatest killer of his age?

## VII

# World, Move Over

WHEN THE NEW AMERICAN GIANT CAME TO TAKE HIS PLACE at the head of the world he was awkward about it and stepped on many sacred toes. The powers of Europe of course were resentful at having to move over. Why not? They might fight over a division of it, but there was no doubt among them that the world was theirs by right of discovery and preemption and they had treated it in that proprietary manner for a very long time—all the rest of it even after they had given up the idea of sometime returning to the American continent.

If they had dared they would have refused to move over. Indeed, it was only their incorrigible quarrelsomeness and distrust of one another that kept them from uniting to resist. But since they could not resist they took it out in churlish manners. They said this upstart American was uncouth and dangerous; he did not know the rules of the game; he might upset the caravan.

And there was some ground for their anxiety.

The unique fact about American power was that it came to exist without any external struggle. It was founded entirely upon itself. Thus nobody could say how it would behave. Was not the republican form of government in the American design an experimental thing? Never before had a republic been at the top of the world.

Moreover, who could say it would endure as a Republic?

That was the crucial question. Yet few Americans gave it any thought at all, and none in any case could have guessed how strange the answer was going to be.

Take the year to be 1898. The Republic was then 110 years old; and that was its last proper birthday. It was already beginning to be tired of its old-fashioned clothes. In a little while it would be trying on new garments, some of them cut in the European pattern, and in a few years it would have a new look.

You can hardly suppose that the character of a people will greatly change in the brevity of one generation. Yet this can be—that under altered conditions latent characteristics come through and tend to become dominant while at the same time characteristics hitherto dominant tend to become recessive. It occurs often with the individual, who may no longer be what he was and is yet himself. Why not with a nation?

In any case the change that took place in this period was a political revolution. In the year 1898 an American could have said: "A Republic, a Protestant country, an Anglo-Saxon mentality, free capitalism as an economic system, and, over all, a Constitutional, representative, limited government, with emphasis on *limited*—that is my heritage."

One generation later those words were still in his catechism, and he remembered them, but he could no longer believe them. The word Republic had become strange on the popular tongue. Those who used it still did it as a challenge. The new word was Democracy—and the country would go to war to make the world safe not for republics but for democracies.

In one generation:

The American had learned to walk in the world with a big stick;

He had been infected with the virus of imperialism, which he called Manifest Destiny, or Taking Up the White Man's Burden;



He had rejected the stern parent principle of government—the principle as last expressed by Cleveland, who said it was the business of people to support the government, not the part of government to support the people;

He had begun to take social ideas from Europe, whereas until then the movement of ideas had been the other way, from the New to the Old World, mostly ideas about freedom and government;

He had begun to talk of Social Democracy and of a redistribution of wealth by law;

He had learned that the Constitution was what the Supreme Court said it was.

There had been the regime of Theodore Roosevelt, and the beginning of that rise in the executive power of government, impatient of law, which in the next generation, under another Roosevelt, would destroy forever the traditional relationship between the people and their government;

The struggle between government and capitalism had begun;

There had been Woodrow Wilson, with his evangel of the New Freedom, which was a deification of Democracy, and,

The Constitution had been amended to permit the Federal government to lay a direct, progressive tax upon incomes of every kind, with *no limitation whatever* (precisely Article 2 of the Communist Manifesto)—and this was the instrumentality that would enable the government to seize and control the national power, to redistribute the national income with leveling intent, and to create a dependent people minding no longer the way of their own feet but looking to a paternal bureaucracy in Washington for security, economic welfare and guarantees of the good life.

All of that in one generation.

One of the few who saw it with mantic clarity was John W. Burgess, whose great work entitled "The Reconciliation of Government with Liberty," was published in 1915.

Until 1898, he wrote, one could say that the American people had found almost the perfect solution of that age-old problem. Some adjustments were needed but no radical alterations. Certainly the American solution did not lend itself to an imperial policy abroad nor to a paternal programme at home. Then the change began. "There is nothing now," he said (this in 1915)—"nothing now to prevent the government of the United States from entering upon a course of conquest and empire. . . . We are further away from the solution of the great problem than we were twenty years ago. . . . It is time, high time, for us to call a halt in our present course of increasing the sphere of government and decreasing that of liberty; and inquire carefully whether what is happening is not the passing of the Republic, the passing of the Christian religion, and the return to Caesarism, the rule of one by popular acclaim, the apotheosis of government and the universal decline of the consciousness of and the desire for true liberty. The world has made that circuit several times before."

This was no reading of the crystal ball; it was a rational interpretation of the signs. How true it was may be indicated here. In the next forty years the national debt per head of the population increased 166 times, from \$10 to \$1,664; the cost of government per head of the population increased more than 25 times; the cost of the military establishment alone became 120 times greater than the total cost of government had been before. Why? Because American armed forces and American fighting bases had been scattered over Europe, Asia and Africa; because we were buying and arming military allies abroad, and because our frontier had become the wide, wide world. A war anywhere was our war too.

## VIII

# Going Forth

THE WAR WITH SPAIN FOR THE LIBERATION OF CUBA WAS a wild tribal dance. Much more than Cuba was liberated. A new national ego was released in a bonfire that consumed the old Continental tradition. Suddenly, and almost without meaning to do it, the United States became a world power with colonial problems.

It was not a splendid war. Some of it was starkly educational and some of it was opera. One of its heroes was Theodore Roosevelt, who, with his Rough Riders, made a legendary figure of himself, on horseback, on San Juan Hill—Teddy “alone in Cuba,” said the cruel Mr. Dooley, who could make the people laugh at themselves and at their idols. But later it was Roosevelt himself who put everything in its place when he said to an audience of Civil War veterans: “It was not much of a war, but it was the only war we had.”

The Navy was not entirely ready, but it could shoot straight and its seamanship was beautiful. It destroyed one Spanish fleet in Cuban waters, and another one in Manila harbor, where, under the scowling eyes of an unfriendly German force greater than his own, Admiral Dewey waited two months to reduce the city, until American troops could arrive to occupy it. Thus Spanish sea power was smashed with two blows. Not a single American ship was lost or even seriously hurt.

Taking Manila was a strategic act of war. It occurred to

nobody at the time that we should afterward find ourselves in possession of the Philippine Archipelago, with seven or eight million natives to subdue and govern—Malays, Moros, many tribes and races, some wearing tailored white clothes and some only a g-string.

The Army on the other hand was entirely unprepared and did a very sad job. There was neither a general staff nor any proper organization. Volunteers were moved in Pullman cars over one-track railroads to ports of debarkation and then sent to fight in tropical Cuba without edible rations, with hot-weather uniforms, and no forethought whatever for sanitation. Nine-tenths of the casualties were from disease. Only the individual valor of the untrained soldiers saved the Army from disaster. At a moment when the Spanish forces at Santiago were preparing to surrender, the American commander, weight 300 pounds, sick in a hammock, was asking the War Department for permission to retire.

The war lasted 113 days.

Cuba, "Pearl of the Antilles," had been a sickness on the American doorstep for a long time. The natives were continually rising against Spanish rule; the Spaniard's way of putting them down was repugnant to the romantic American.

However, the insurgents were not always the patriots they pretended to be and not above blackmailing American owners of sugar plantations to buy them off from their depredations; nor were the harsh measures of Spanish repression always quite as brutal as they were said to be by the Cuban Juntas domiciled in this country and by the screaming red-ink press, at the top of which was William Randolph Hearst, boasting that when it came it would be his war.

Furthermore, there was some validity in the complaint of the Spanish government that the Cuban insurgents were nourished by money, arms and sympathy from the American shore, only ninety miles away.

When at last it became evident that Spain could not put out the fire the American government had to face this ques-

tion: If Spain couldn't who would? It was not only that American lives were involved and American capital in jeopardy; there was a moral responsibility.

Only a little while before, in a dispute with Great Britain over how a boundary line should be fixed in Venezuela, the Secretary of State had said: "The United States is practically sovereign in this continent and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition." That was a most extreme extension of the Monroe Doctrine and meant that the American government was the sole fireman in this hemisphere. Now what was it going to do?

Popular clamor for intervention by force was running very high when one night in Havana harbor the visiting U.S. battleship *Maine* blew up and sank. Of the crew 260 were killed and ninety injured. There were signs of two explosions, one external and one internal, but what really happened was never positively determined. Nevertheless, "Remember the Maine!" became a war slogan. Two months later the war came.

President McKinley tried to avoid it. So in fact did the Spanish government, which at the very last proclaimed an unconditional truce in Cuba for a period of six months, during which a peaceable solution might be found. At the same time the American Minister at Madrid sent a cablegram to the State Department, saying: "If you can still give me time and reasonable liberty of action I will get you the peace you desire so much."

It was too late. The President probably distrusted the Spanish word. In any case, the feeling that Spain must be expelled from the Continent by force was too strong for him. Suddenly he gave way and laid a war message before Congress.

For nearly one hundred years the idea had lived that some day the United States would possess Cuba. There had once been a cult of expansionists who wanted to take it by conquest. Nevertheless, in the act of declaring war, Congress

proclaimed that the United States would not take Cuba for its own, but that "the people of the island of Cuba are, and of a right ought to be, free and independent." That gave the war a character the American people loved, namely, the character of an unselfish crusade for liberty. And in the sequel, having created order in the island, and having tutored the Cubans in self-government, the United States did make them free and independent.

What to do with the Philippines was a question that had not yet answered itself when the American and Spanish commissioners met in Paris to write a peace treaty. The American commissioners were divided by it. President McKinley prayed over it. The people debated it with passion.

The moral argument for keeping them was that the natives were unprepared for self-government; if left to themselves they would fall into anarchy and be worse off than they were under Spanish rule. It was a specious argument. In the first place, Spain did not want to give up the Philippines; in the second place, if Spain did not want them Germany stood ready and anxious to buy them.

The exponents of Manifest Destiny were eloquent. How could we decline to play our part in the world? Would it be nice to remember that we had refused to carry the blessing of civilization to these backward people who had been cast into our hands by accident of war, possibly by intent of Providence?

But what decided the question at last was the simple fact that the new national ego could not bear to see the flag come down. So at last, and again suddenly, President McKinley instructed the American Peace Commission to demand all the Philippines, and, if necessary to save the Spanish face, to pay \$20,000,000 for them. This nearly wrecked the treaty. Spain thought of appealing to the powers of Europe to save her from these covetous Americans. In the end she took the dollars and surrendered Cuba, Porto Rico and the entire Philippine Archipelago.

That was not the end of it. Whether or not to accept the treaty became a burning political issue, involving not only the most revered traditions of the American Republic but the integrity of the Constitution. How could the business of colonial empire be made agreeable to the Constitution? As to Cuba there was no problem, since we were pledged to make her free and independent; but Porto Rico and the Philippines—what were they? If they were colonies or dependencies, how were they to be governed? The flag was there but did the Constitution follow the flag? If it did, then perhaps we could not govern them at all, because colonies unfit for self-rule have to be governed by a kind of benevolent despotism, even as the American colonies had been governed by the British crown. How could benevolent despotism be squared with the Constitution?

Excepting only the Hawaiian Islands, which had been quietly annexed during the war with Spain and presented somewhat the same problem—with that exception the expansion of the United States hitherto had been in contiguous areas, sparsely settled if at all; and the law was that as such contiguous areas were settled by American pioneers they became first territories under governors named by Congress and then States of the Union, with constitutions, governors and legislatures of their own. This would hold even for Alaska, which had been bought from Russia and was only constructively contiguous. It was empty and open to settlement by American citizens.

But obviously neither Porto Rico nor the Philippines, nor for that matter the Hawaiian Islands, could be treated in that manner. In the first place they were already populated by alien and backward people; secondly, it was not imaginable that they could ever become States of the Union.

When the Spanish-American peace treaty came before the Senate the debate for and against empire was long and angry. Ratification won by a very small margin. Nowhere would

the flag be hauled down. The people approved by re-electing McKinley with enthusiasm.

It still remained for the Supreme Court to decide the Constitutional questions. This it did in one of the most tortured opinions on record. Each member of the Court arrived at his own conclusions in his own way. No two alike. Did the Constitution follow the flag? It did and it didn't. That was to say, the Constitution with its guarantees of rights and immunities did not extend to colonial possessions; on the other hand it was perfectly Constitutional for the Congress to say how the possessions should be governed, beyond the reach of the Constitution.

The almost immediate sequel was a revolt of the Filipinos against American rule and a long and ugly guerilla war that cost as much as the war with Spain. When order and docility had been restored civil government began. Under American tutelage the Filipinos gradually learned self-government. After sixteen years Congress declared that they should be free and independent as soon as they could manage it, and after forty-six years the American flag was lowered and in place of it was hoisted the flag of a new nation—the Philippine Republic.

This was not quite the end of a colonial enterprise that never paid. An unlimited moral liability remained over. At any time American power could be invoked to defend the Philippine flag.

If you find legal logic tiresome, take it simply that the act of accommodating the Constitution to the idea of empire was like a breaking of chains. It would never again be possible to tie government down by law. Increasingly there would be a willful impatience with the restraints of law, a want of reverence for the traditions of limited government and plaudits for a government of action. The hero of this change was now to appear.

A few months after his second inauguration President Mc-



Kinley was assassinated. His successor was Theodore Roosevelt, an aristocrat born, speaking with a Harvard accent, who had cast himself in the political role of people's champion.

His philosophy was to live the strenuous life dangerously. The first principle of animal dynamism was trapped in him. Wherever he stood, that was the storm area; wherever he fought, that was Armageddon. As a demagogue in shining armor he made the dragons roar; and yet he would sooner tame them than slay them, for he was not really destructive. There were many good dragons. The people loved him, and were wildly delighted when he had outwitted a stupid law that got in his way or was giving Congress the hot foot treatment.

The Navy was his big stick. Once he got the idea of sending it around the world to make an impression. When a disapproving Congress threatened not to appropriate the money for coal, he said that was all right; as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces he had coal enough to send it to the other side of the world, and Congress could either buy the rest of the coal or leave it there. So he did it.

In the same spirit he built the Panama Canal.

The narrowest point of the Isthmus was in Panama and Panama belonged to Colombia. The American government had negotiated with Colombia a treaty by which she was to receive \$10,000,000 cash down and then \$250,000 a year for a strip of land six miles wide across Panama. The Colombian Senate, wanting more money, had secret designs for putting a sting on the rich Americans; and after a long delay it refused to ratify the treaty.

But the people of Panama, who were eager for the canal, got word to the State Department in Washington that they were minded to make a revolution against Colombia and set up a government of their own—a government that would be happy to accept the terms Colombia had rejected. Roosevelt then sent a small naval force to the Isthmus with instructions to keep Colombia's troops away from the scene of trouble,

whereupon the Panama people had their little revolution and set up an independent republic ready to do business with the Americans. The American government recognized it immediately and two weeks later made a treaty with it for a ten-mile canal strip.

Colombia of course was very mad and in this country there was an outcry of righteousness. Whether or not Roosevelt had helped to prepare the revolution, it was evident that he had assisted it. He had used the Navy to prevent Colombia from putting down a revolution in her own country. Then he got what he wanted.

He denied nothing. Later he said: "I deeply regretted, and now deeply regret, that the Colombian government rendered it imperative for me to take the action I took; but I had no alternative consistent with the full performance of my duty to my own people and to the nations of mankind."

And after the fact, which could not be changed, he made this chortling statement: "If I had followed traditional, conservative methods I would have submitted a dignified state paper of probably two hundred pages to Congress, and the debate on it would be going on yet; but I took the Canal Zone and let Congress debate; while the debate goes on the Canal does also . . . Instead of discussing the canal before it was built, which would have been harmful, they merely discuss me—a discussion which I regard with benign interest."

For candor of self-revelation there is nothing like it in the archives.

## IX

# The First Roosevelt

AS SECRETARY OF STATE, THEODORE ROOSEVELT HAD IN SUCCESSION two men of rare ability. They were John Hay and Elihu Root. Yet he took foreign policy into his own hands, managed it with a kind of innocent audacity, and never lost his balance. Once when Germany was flouting the Monroe Doctrine in a dispute about money with Venezuela he waved his big stick in the Kaiser's face. Under pretence of collecting a debt no German force should lay hands upon anything in Venezuela, to hold it even temporarily, and he would send the Navy to see to it. The Kaiser took second thought and accepted arbitration.

The point is that neither Congress nor the public knew anything about it until long afterward. In a similar situation a few years before, the offender then being Great Britain, Cleveland laid the facts before Congress in a message that rocked the chancellories. There was hardly a political crisis anywhere in the world on which Roosevelt did not leave his finger marks, as for example, a quarrel between Germany and France in Morocco, where there was no American interest at all. He intervened in the Japanese-Russian war to bring back the peace, and was acclaimed for it; yet secretly all the time he had such a keen regard for a balance of power in Asia that later both sides came to think they had been short changed.

He had the wisdom to know that international diplomacy

was not a game to be played in the dust of the public square. In most cases the fewer newspaper headlines it got the better it was.

With domestic policy it was very different. There he wanted the headlines; there his tools were propaganda and publicity, and he used them with both supreme craftsmanship and a kind of Machiavellian sagacity.

The times were sulphurous.

The principle of free and unlimited private wealth was on the defensive against the black waters of a popular hostility that were rising like a flood. It seemed to rise of itself and no one controlled it. Those who rode it called themselves all alike Progressives; and they were a strange miscellany—some Republicans and many Democrats who had broken party lines, some sincere radicals and reformers, some of course who were merely opportunists.

And what did they want? Generally they wanted what the people wanted, or what they thought would be good for the people, and that, briefly, was something less like a Republic and more like a pure democracy. Specifically they demanded:

- (1) Laws to limit the power of great wealth;
- (2) Laws to level profits;
- (3) Laws to smash the trusts;
- (4) A law to enable the Federal government to fix railroad rates;
- (5) Greater use of public funds for social welfare;
- (6) Minimum wage laws, which would overturn the principle of freedom of contract in the employee-employer relationship;
- (7) A shift of the tax burden from the poor to the rich by means of a progressive income tax law;
- (8) Direct election of United States Senators in place of their election by the State Legislatures, and
- (9) Such innovations designed to break the political party bosses as (a) direct primaries in place of

nominating conventions, (b) the initiative, whereby people could originate legislation for themselves, (c) the referendum, whereby laws proposed by legislators should be referred to the people, and, (d) the recall, whereby office holders who had made themselves unpopular could be retired, and even the recall of judicial decisions the people did not like.

The trusts survived.

But eventually, as will appear, the Progressives won every one of their other demands, except that experiments with the initiative, referendum and recall, tried out in the States, were soon forgotten.

What should be noted here is that the Progressive movement had a single purpose, which was to bring the sovereign will of the people to bear more and more directly upon government.

Few could foresee, if many cared, where that would come out. Pure democracy cannot govern itself. When it tries it brings upon itself the curse of big government, so big that only a trained bureaucracy can manage it; and the sequel will be the putting up of Caesar and the tearing of him down by fickle popular acclaim.

Under the Constitution the sovereign power resides in the people. That is true. But the first sound axiom of political science is that the sovereign power, be it the king or the people, shall not itself govern. It has other functions. One of them is to say what kind of government it shall be; another is to write its constitution, another perhaps is to act as supreme umpire. But *it shall not govern*, for if it does you have government by will, responsible to nothing higher than itself because there is nothing higher—that, instead of a government of law, limited by the Constitution which the people have imposed upon it.

## X

# The Big Stick at Home

MEANWHILE THERE WAS TAKING PLACE ANOTHER SUDDEN transformation of the economic scene. All the gods of the market place were smiling. Hard times were forgotten. The long heart breaking decline in prices had come to an end. Now prices were rising. And whereas for twenty-five years the industrialist had been obliged to increase his production because prices were falling—that is, to reduce his cost by increasing his volume—now with prices rising he went on increasing it under the incentive of greater and greater profit. It had worked in that curious way—an almost constant rate of growth whether prices were going up or down.

With the ecstasy of great profit came wild speculation. Those who had had the imagination to capitalize the future were working the wine press, and it was *their* harvest. Wall Street built a new temple for the money changers and raised its skyline higher and higher to make housing for the great corporations that were appearing as if by prestidigitation.

The promoter discovered a vineyard of golden grapes. He went to and fro in the land buying up competitive private companies, in steel, barbed wire, matches, tin cans, rope, textiles, anything at all, until in each case he thought he had enough to control the industry; then he brought it all to Wall Street where bankers would form an underwriting syndicate and create a great corporation to buy him out. The capitalization of the new corporation might be two or three times

the actual value of the properties that were turned over to it. Its bonds and stocks were divided as follows: The first part went to those who had sold out, some of them promising not to re-enter the industry; of what remained the bankers took their share, the promoter his and the rest was for sale to the public on the Stock Exchange. The public's appetite for these securities seemed insatiable. Everybody was a little mad. It was named the era of Frenzied Finance.

Thus the trusts were formed—a steel trust, a match trust, a cordage trust, a sugar trust, a tobacco trust, and so on. The principal argument in every case was that by running a number of independent companies together in one great corporation the cost of production could be reduced, for everybody's benefit. That remained to be proved. Sometimes it was true and again it was not.

But this was true. If it was intended that the productive power of the country should go on developing in a prodigious manner, then the time had come for American industry to be reorganized in much larger units—units, for example, such as would be able to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on research laboratories for the further advancement of science and technology. Say the way of doing it was wasteful and ruthless. Still, a better way, if anyone could have thought of one, would have been slower and might have postponed the necessary reconstruction. Again it was as if necessity were acting before people clearly understood what it was.

It was not true, as a few hoped and many feared, that the trusts were going to destroy competition. But the design of competition was going to change. For example, it was going to be competition not between a little steel maker who could not afford a research laboratory and a big steel corporation that could, but competition among very large steel corporations no one of which could afford not to have a research laboratory.

Somewhat the same thing and at the same time was taking place in the railroad world. Under the leadership of daring

men like Harriman and Hill, with of course the assistance of their Wall Street bankers, railroads were buying one another out and consolidating themselves into systems; and if it was true that railroads had a power of life and death over cities, communities and regions, then obviously fewer and fewer men were going to exercise that power.

The people were afraid of it. A railroad monopoly seemed an intolerable thing. That was before anybody could imagine that in one generation more two new forms of competitive transportation would appear—the motor vehicle and aviation—and that the wicked railroads would be crying for relief.

Observe how in a free economy competition, if you let it alone, will come a full cycle and break the monopoly. When the railroad appeared on the scene the old wagon freighter was out of business. As an individual he could never hope to own locomotives, strings of freight cars and a steel right of way of his own. One hundred years later the individual could buy a motor truck, on credit if necessary, take it out on the concrete highway and compete with the biggest railroad system.

Sympathetically, however, you can easily understand how people with a nostalgia for simpler times began to feel as they saw hundreds of small independent companies selling out to the trusts, what it did to them when their local plant was abandoned because the far-away trust that bought it found it inefficient, and with what plausibility they painted their black picture of Wall Street, as a place where a few silk-hatted men, brigands of the skyscrapers, controlled the country's banking, industry and transportation. If you said to them that these men were both good and bad, even as it was among the poor, their answer was that an evil rich man and an evil poor man were not at all the same; the power of a man to do evil was in proportion to his wealth.

The brigands, be it said, had a gift for bad public relations. They might believe it, but what was the good of saying out loud that Providence had very wisely seen to it that



control of the nation's wealth should be in the hands of men who knew what to do with it. The rights of property were sacred. They could not believe they were fighting a losing fight. And to the outcries of the many who thought themselves oppressed they were more than deaf; they were cynical. Who were the oppressed? When before in all history had the common well being of a human society been so high? What was all this, they asked, but the ancient impulse of the many to despoil the few, as had always been foretold of democracy?

This cynicism was not entirely confined to Wall Street. To fix railroad rates by popular vote so offended the principles of one of the high liberals of that day, Godkin of *The Nation*, that he called it confiscation, or ". . . the change of railroads from pieces of private property, owned and managed for the benefit of those who have invested their money in them, into charitable corporations, managed for the benefit of a particular class of applicants for outdoor relief—the farmers."

And long afterward, in "The Rise of American Civilization," the historian Charles A. Beard, certainly no defender of great wealth, said that with their rates fixed by state and federal commissions, acting always under the eagle eyes of the shippers, and with their wages prescribed by trade unions, railroads found it impossible either to increase their charges or cut wages to meet their rising costs of operation. "So, through political action in one sphere and direct labor action in another, a large and important class of American property owners suffered a substantial diminution of their incomes, for the benefit of wage earners, travelers and shippers. In other words, by a gradual and peaceful operation was effected a transfer of economic goods greater in value than the rights shifted from the French nobility to the peasantry by the National Assembly on the night of the famous fourth of August, 1789."

Like that.

Face to face the hostile forces were thus embattled when

Theodore Roosevelt took the stage. His first idea seems to have been not to lead the Progressive movement but to capture it. In good stead for that purpose he had, among others, two singular gifts. He could make a platitude sound like a thunderbolt and he could roar in two keys at once.

Notwithstanding what people thought at the time nor what the history books still say, he was not a trust buster. More clearly than any other statesman of his day he saw that the source of the conflict was a strange contradiction in the American character, namely, a mania for bigness and at the same time a very active fear of it.

The mania was imperious, like a biological principle of growth, and possessed not only the lords of banking, industry and transportation, but also merchants, farmers and organized labor, besides inhabiting the spirit of cities.

On the other hand, the fear of it was a dire foreboding in the heart of the American individualist, whose world was going away. His theme, "The curse of bigness," was a dirge.

In his first message to Congress Theodore Roosevelt took a fighting position between, on the one side, big business, saying "Let us be," and those on the other side who were shouting, "Smash the trusts." He said they were both wrong. Bigness was not the problem. There was an American genius for bigness. Those who would limit it would limit their own country. And for what? Only "to bolster up an individualism already proved to be both futile and mischievous,"—futile, as everyone might see, for the reason that the concentration of power in fewer and fewer hands was but the logical end of extreme individualism, and mischievous because the old *laissez faire* doctrine of anarchial competition could no longer accommodate the facts.

There were good trusts and bad trusts. Why smash them all alike only because they were big? How to save the good and abate the evil, how to reconcile bigness with the national interest—that was the problem. Monopoly was bad. But as for big business he stood not for breaking it but for the regu-

lation of it by the Federal government from the point of view of the public welfare.

Nevertheless he was the first President to invoke the old Sherman Anti-Trust law with vigor. He seemed to be going all out against the trusts, yet all the time he had secret reservations about it, almost as if he were proving his thesis that that was not the right way. In the end it was proved, but not until the mind of the Supreme Court had undergone an evolution, which took several years.

The first notable action was against the Northern Securities Company. This was a trust device in which E. H. Harriman, James J. Hill and J. P. Morgan had buried the Northern Pacific bone, having first quarreled over it to the point of throwing Wall Street into a frightful panic; it held control of the only two competing railroad systems of the Northwest.

In that case the Supreme Court held that although no act injurious to the public had been proved, still the trust had power to do evil and must for that reason be destroyed. That was in effect a decision against bigness as such, contrary to the Roosevelt thesis.

Next the Court dissolved the Standard Oil and Tobacco trusts, on the ground that their behaviour was bad; but to this it added the dictum that to examine *all* restraint of trade, or every little case of it, was more than any law could do, and hence thereafter it would construe the Anti-Trust Act by "a rule of reason." That was coming toward the Roosevelt thesis.

Then, in the case of the United States Steel Corporation, which at that time controlled six-tenths of the entire American steel industry and had been for a long time regarded as the behemoth of trusts, the Court held that although it had the power to do great harm its record was clean; therefore it might stand.

Thus, bigness itself was not evil and the distinction between good and bad trusts was established, fully in accord with Roosevelt's first premise.

That was the end of trust busting. There were no more punitive actions against trusts as trusts, only against those that were accused of wrong doing.

During his 7½ years in office Roosevelt got only half of what he wanted in the way of regulation. By additions to its law the Interstate Commerce Commission was clothed with authority, and began to say what railroads rates should be, that they should be alike to all, and in general how the railroads should conduct their business with one another and with the public.

So the railroads were tamed.

But it was not until six years after Roosevelt, in Woodrow Wilson's administration, that Congress created the Federal Trade Commission, with authority to mind the behaviour of big business, to police it, to say how it should buy and sell, how it should treat big and little customers alike, how it should arrive at the prices charged, how it should write its advertising matter to avoid misrepresentation, to lay down the rules of fair competition and to chastise it when and if it forgot the law.

After that, if all trusts were not good trusts it was the government's fault, and the head of *laissez faire* might have been presented to Roosevelt as a trophy.

He was not at heart a true radical. There was nothing all good or all bad. If his opinion of political bosses was low, still he understood them perfectly and why they were, could generally outplay them at their own game, and was always willing to sup with Satan if it were with a long spoon.

He had a distaste for extremes. When Ida Tarbell was taking the Standard Oil Company apart at the seams and Lincoln Steffens was writing "The Shame of the Cities," and when no popular magazine would think of disappointing its reader millions by going to press without a burning article to gratify the public's preoccupation with the sins of wealth and power—and nearly all the writers in this morbid vogue were his personal friends—Roosevelt suddenly turned on

them and called them muckrakers. Hence the frequent historical allusion to the muckraking era. Even if everything they said were true, still the exclusive emphasis on what was wrong with the country gave a distorted view of it as a whole. Anywhere, anytime you could find filth by looking for it, even in your own backyard.

Such was the man of balance, who rode words with the skill of an acrobat, as to say, justice to the poor man but justice also to the rich man, or, justice to the wage earner but justice also to the capitalist.

Now whether it was that the Progressive movement which he had captured in turn captured him and took him further than he might have wanted to go, or whether the incivilities of Wall Street, going so far as to suggest that his mind was unbalanced, did at last get under his skin, the fact is that toward the end of his regime he began to talk more of the "malefactors of great wealth" (a term he invented), of the anti-social nature of the money motive, and of the necessity to redistribute the national wealth to achieve social justice. With the end last named in view he espoused the popular demand for a progressive income tax.

When his time was up he refused to try for another term and nominated his own successor. That was his personal friend and disciple, William Howard Taft, who was easily elected with Roosevelt's blessing. After the election Roosevelt immediately sailed for Africa on a big game hunt.

Taft was an amiable, obese conservative who thought he was a Progressive, and was mainly distinguished for clumsy speeches. The principal achievements of his administration were all on the Progressive side. It was he who broke a deadlock in Congress on an income tax law by suggesting a Constitutional amendment to make it clearly legal—and that is how it was done. He supported also a Constitutional amendment for the election of United States Senators by popular vote. He doubled the number of suits brought by the govern-

ment against the trusts; and that was before the Supreme Court had ruled that bigness itself was not wicked.

For all of that, the schism in the Republican Party between Conservatives and Progressives continued to widen. On returning from Africa Roosevelt became very dissatisfied with Taft's stewardship and turned against him. The Progressives then importuned him to put himself at their head and lead a third party, to be called the Progressive Party; and saying no he yet consented. The platform of the new Progressive Party had everything, including presidential primaries, the recall of judicial decisions by popular vote, easier ways to amend the Constitution, woman suffrage, regulation of industry, abolition of child labor, minimum wage laws, workmen's compensation and a forethought of unemployment insurance.

The candidates in the next election were: For the Republican Party, Taft; for the Progressive Party, Roosevelt; and for the Democratic Party, Woodrow Wilson. Nearly all of the Progressive Party's votes of course would come from the disgruntled wing of the Republican Party. Roosevelt had the vanity to believe not only that he could get more votes than Taft, which was possible, but that he could split the Republican Party vote between himself and Taft without electing a Democrat. He was wrong. Woodrow Wilson was elected by less than a majority of the total popular vote.

During the first two years of the Wilson regime Democracy cashed in some blue chips. These:

(1) Two of its Constitutional amendments were proclaimed—one providing for the popular election of United States Senators and one giving the Federal government power to levy an unlimited progressive income tax on all incomes.

(2) Congress created the Federal Trade Commission, to police business, and passed the Clayton Act to fortify the anti-trust law.

(3) In the name of monetary reform the Federal Reserve

Bank System was established. That was the beginning of the end of private control of money and banking.

Both the income tax and the new bank system were acclaimed by the people as measures of liberation. Firstly, the tax burden was shifted from the poor to the rich, which was in fact a redistribution of the national wealth, and secondly, never again could greedy bankers manipulate the money supply.

Well, there was liberation, and it was revolutionary, but *it was government that was liberated*, not the people.

And from what was government liberated?

From the simple thing you may call money worry. Since now with one hand it could seize all private incomes, up to the point of confiscation, and since with the other hand it could turn the Federal Reserve Bank System into an engine of inflation, and so create its own money, it was *money free*. The Constitutional provision which wisely sought to limit government by putting control of the public purse in the hands of the House of Representatives—that was not repealed. It was only eviscerated. Never again could government be limited by want of money. Thus big government became inevitable. Against bigness in the economic world there was always some defense; against bigness in government there would be none.

When the income tax was being debated in Congress a Senator who said it might rise to ten per cent was hooted down. In 1914 it began at a nominal one per cent on small incomes and rose to seven per cent on high incomes. One generation later it was more than twenty per cent on small incomes and went from that on up to more than ninety per cent on big incomes—*in time of peace*. And in that period the expenditures of the Federal government increased seventy times.

True, there had been two world wars; but the two world wars, if they had occurred at all, would have been very different if the government had not been money free.

It was the fate of Woodrow Wilson, a pacifist, to take the country through World War I.

### *Marginalia*

If only a nation knew what it was like it might be something else. It almost never does.

One of the noble ideas the Americans have entertained about themselves is that they are a peace-loving people—that they prefer peace but that they are truly unwarlike. Any suggestion to the contrary will bring scandal on your head.

Was not the American Peace Society the first in the world? Was not American diplomacy always on the side of the angels, pleading for arbitration and disarmament? Did it not, in collaboration with France, get sixty nations to sign the Kellogg-Briand Pact, renouncing war as an instrument of public policy? Was it not an American idea that war could be abolished by law? What of the private Americans who gave their millions to the cause of peace? There was the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. There was the Ginn World Peace Foundation. There was ex-President Taft's very eminent League to Enforce Peace. There were school peace leagues and church peace leagues.

There was definitely and uniquely an American peace movement and its errand was to change the world. The curious fact is that it first began to be a political force soon after the close of the war with Spain. As its enthusiasm grew it claimed Theodore Roosevelt as a man of peace.

Its leaders were not a few visionary mystics. They were practical men who got stars in their eyes—industrialists like Andrew Carnegie and Henry Ford, a railroad man like James J. Hill, an inventor like Thomas Edison, President William H. Taft, eminent lawyers, presidents of universities, teachers, publicists and editors.

Preparedness became a tabu word. The arsenals were forgotten. A little army was unhappily necessary as a police in-



strument. War clouds in Europe were invented by the Old World munitions makers, who were supposed to be sick with dismay; and they were probably responsible too for distressing rumors about the German Kaiser. In 1913 the New York Peace Society sent him a lovely medal to attest its disbelief in those wicked rumors. Andrew Carnegie, who knew the Kaiser, assured the American people that he was a peace lord, not a war lord. Nicholas Murray Butler, who also knew the Kaiser, said the same thing.

The disastrous effect of all this was to convince the German War Lord that the Americans had become a nation of pacifists. If he had not got that idea into his head his behaviour might have been different. Certainly the last thing he could imagine was that in five years he should meet two million American soldiers on the battle field in Europe.

When the country at last did get into World War I the peace societies went along—nearly all of them—and put their minds at ease by saying it was a “war to end war.”

But what this war to end war did, besides beating Germany down, was to make the world weapon crazy. The victorious nations, all more heavily armed than they had ever been before and groaning under the weight of their armaments, nevertheless took off at once on a mad race for naval supremacy.

As a naval power the United States now was in first place and very naturally jealous of it. Great Britain wanted back the supremacy she had lost, thinking it was hers by right; and Japan wanted a navy as big as anybody's.

Such was the situation when the American government made a proposal which for chivalry, wisdom and peace mindedness stands all alone in history. The principal naval powers were invited to Washington to discuss a limitation of armaments. The Secretary of State (Charles Evans Hughes), addressed them, saying, in effect:

“The American Navy as you know is incomparably the biggest in the world. We are able to double it and double it

again. Do you think you can overtake us? But this is folly. Let us put our swords side by side on the table. Ours you see is the longest one there. What we propose is, first, that we shall break our sword to exactly the length of the next longest one, which is Great Britain's, and then a ten-year holiday on the building of capital ships."

The delegates were stunned. How could they refuse? A treaty was signed. To bring the American Navy down to the size of the British navy we towed a certain number of capital ships out to sea and sank them and shut up our ship yards. Then after all nothing came of it. Faster than ever the other powers began to build smaller vessels not covered by the treaty and before the treaty expired Japan withdrew because she wanted naval parity.

Yet for all of that on one side, the question remains: Are the Americans an unwarlike people? Before you answer you must look on the other side to see what in its lifetime the nation has done with its sword.

Casting out first the War for Independence, then the many Indian wars and lastly the Civil War, and beginning in 1798-1800 with an undeclared war with France at sea, the record is that in a century-and-a-half the United States has engaged in ten foreign wars, big and little, alone five times and in collaboration with other nations five times.

Between times the American sword was drawn no fewer than 130 times in foreign lands, in every continent of the world—as, for example, to chastise the Barbary pirates, to prize open the door of Japan, to punish slave traders off the coast of Africa, to avenge the murder of American citizens, to chase bandits in Greece, to obtain apology for insults, to protect American lives and property where they were endangered by native uprisings, to rescue a kidnapped American named Perdicaris in Morocco (Theodore Roosevelt's message, "We want either Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead," Raisuli being the pirate), in Turkey for police action by request, to make the president of Mexico salute the flag, in

China many times to quiet the people, in the Latin American republics to restore order, to prevent a bad revolution or to assist a good one, and sometimes here and there just to make a salutary impression.

Certainly we had always been handy with the sword.

The first design for total global war emerged from America's decisive participation in World War I; the terrible completion of it came in World War II, plus the formula of unconditional surrender, which ruined the old civilized pattern of gallant and limited war.

War was scourge enough before the American will, commanding unfathomable American resources, made it hideous by inventing the atom bomb. When its frightfulness had been demonstrated by two that were dropped on the heads of civilians in Japan, not only did the bomb begin to be manufactured in quantity and stockpiled for future use, but vast and mysterious new works were created to produce a fusion bomb that might be a thousand times deadlier than the fission bomb.

And then, in fear of World War III, which might be the last, the nation that still believed itself to be the least warlike among the powers of the earth, proceeded to build the greatest killing machine that was ever imagined, with these features—air bases in four continents from which to launch bombs, American soldiers in forty-nine foreign countries, a frontier that encircled the globe, and behind it all a foreign policy that obliged it to defend the whole anti-Communist world and to fight for it wherever the aggressor might attack it.

Among those who were crying, "Peace! Peace! Ye shall fight for peace or perish," were the daughters of Mars; and their voices sounded like all the rest.

# BOOK FOUR

---

## I

### Mr. Wilson's Crusade

WOODROW WILSON WAS A GAUNT MAN WITH A JUTTING jaw, a Scotch Presbyterian, a teacher of American history, an idealist who dwelt alone on a misty peak whence from time to time he descended with graven tablets in his hand. He made Democracy a capital word and yet by temperament he was undemocratic. His love of humanity was not a love of people. His horror of war was both mental and physical. For a short time his sayings made him the moral leader of the world. The common man in Europe burned candles before his lithographed portrait. Unrealism defeated him. He was deserted by his own people and all his monuments in Europe are now forlorn.

When the European holocaust began the belligerents were Germany and Austria in the middle, against Russia on one side and Great Britain and France on the other. Smaller nations were dragged in. But it was American intervention that made it World War I.

The Americans won the day on the fields of France and

then at the peace table lost everything they thought they had been fighting for. As if that were not enough, the meaning of America was forever changed and mankind turned back on the road to military despotism.

When it began in 1914 Mr. Wilson called on the American people to be neutral in thought and deed. It was no concern of theirs. There can be no doubt that at that moment he expressed the feeling that ruled the American mind. The people were isolationist. They could not imagine being drawn into a European war. They were in fact cynical about it. What was it but just another quarrel among the powers of the Old World? Let them fight it out. Even Theodore Roosevelt, who was then in retirement, said: "It is certainly eminently desirable that we should remain entirely neutral. Nothing but urgent need would warrant breaking our neutrality in taking sides one way or the other."

What followed was a fateful evolution of feeling, partly natural and partly wrought.

Both sides made shameless use of a wicked new war weapon which we have since learned to call propaganda. Every media of mass communication was jammed with books, pamphlets, sermons, lectures, and grossly distorted evidence, including faked photographs.

The British had the advantage. There was first the fact of a common language; secondly, the fact that the British controlled the cables, which meant that the war news as Americans read it was always a little slanted, and, thirdly, the British understood the Americans to be an emotional people, whereas the Germans mistook them to be rational.

Lord Bryce, British historian, author of "The American Commonwealth," was a man whose word had long been par in the United States. The British government put him at the head of a commission to investigate stories of systematic German atrocities in Belgium. His report said they were true. Germany's violation of Belgium's neutrality and her cynical reference to her treaty with the Belgians as a scrap of paper

had prepared the American mind to believe the worst. The effect of the Bryce report was what the British intended. It created in the American imagination the image of a German monster.

After the war Lord Bryce repudiated his own work. The Germans made war in a frightful manner; they did not cut off the hands of little children and the breasts of women. And later still, when it seemed to be a matter of academic interest, Gen. J. V. Charteris, who had been Chief of the Intelligence Division of the British Army during the war, speaking to the National Arts Club in New York, described the technique of manufacturing horrible evidence against your enemy—the same technique the Chinese Communists employed a generation afterward to prove that the Americans had been guilty of germ warfare in Korea.

Great Britain's superior naval power enabled her to throw a blockade around Germany. That was to cut the Germans off from their overseas sources of food and munitions, especially the American source. More than that, all neutral ships approaching Europe were required to stop in British ports, where anything that could be called contraband was confiscated and where their mail was examined. It riled an American to see the British hoist United States mail bags out of the hold of a ship, haul them away to be searched for valuables and information, and return them many hours later with not so much as sorry or by your leave. The American government protested, but not too bitterly, and ended by leaving our bruised neutral rights in the lurch, because, for one reason, American exports to Great Britain and her allies were booming and extremely profitable.

Germany then demanded that the American government forbid its citizens to sell war goods to any belligerent in Europe; if she could not buy them neither should her enemies be able to buy them. President Wilson firmly rejected the idea, on the grounds that as a neutral nation we had a right to sell to whom we pleased; that Great Britain's superiority

at sea was Germany's misfortune and none of our business, and that if we tried to save Germany from the consequences by putting an embargo on war goods to her enemies we should be taking sides. A perfectly sound legal position.

Germany's naval strength lay in her submarines. Now she resolved to use them in a ruthless manner to cut off her enemies from their overseas sources of supply. First she declared all the waters surrounding the British Isles to be a war zone. Then she announced that in that zone she would sink on sight and without notice any enemy merchant ship; that owing to the nature of the submarine she could not undertake to save the lives of passengers or crew, and that neutral ships in that zone would be lucky to escape the same fate. Mr. Wilson addressed an anxious note to the German government, saying it would be held strictly to account for any loss of American life. The German government was silent.

Several weeks later the great British Cunard liner *Lusitania* was leaving New York for the return voyage. The German Embassy inserted in the newspapers an obscure notice, warning people not to sail on her. Nobody was alarmed. The Germans were only trying to scare the Cunard Company's customers. How silly.

Off the coast of Ireland the *Lusitania* was hit by two torpedoes from a German submarine and sank in less than half an hour. More than eleven hundred lives were lost, passengers and crew, and among the lost were 124 Americans, men, women and children.

This dreadful German deed threw the country into a fighting mood from which it never recovered. If the President had been willing it might have gone to war then; but the President's mind was far from ready.

Three days later, and before any word had been addressed to the German government, he made a speech in which occurred the two most disastrous phrases ever uttered by an American President. There was such a thing, he said, "as a

man being too proud to fight;" and such a thing as a nation so right "that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right."

The first terribly humiliated the American spirit. The two together convinced Germany that she had been right in the first place—the Americans had become a nation of pacifists and might safely be treated with contempt.

Six days after the sinking of the *Lusitania* the President sent a note to Germany, demanding a disavowal of the deed and a promise not to do it again.

This was the first of the celebrated Wilson notes. They went on and on until the sound of the typewriter on which he composed them was hateful in the ears of the people. Ostensibly he was writing to Germany. Really he was writing to the world, to the American people and to himself—especially himself.

His trouble was this. He so hated war that he could not reconcile himself to the thought of it unless somehow it could be made to seem a crusade for mankind. Neither neutral rights at sea—the oldest and fightingest American tradition—nor the loss of American lives was enough to go to war about. But for humanity—yes. No matter how much you hated war, still you could fight for humanity; and that was the theme of his notes.

In the first *Lusitania* note he said we were contending for "nothing less high and sacred than the rights of humanity." Again: "America will have forgotten her traditions whenever upon any occasion she fights merely for herself, under such conditions as will show that she has forgotten to fight for all mankind." And again: "The only excuse that America can ever have for the assertion of her physical force is that she asserts it in behalf of humanity."

The notes that may be called the *Lusitania* series began in May and ended in September, when the German government promised not again to sink a *liner* without notice, provided the liner did not resist or try to get away. Mr. Wilson



regarded this as a diplomatic triumph. He had, temporarily at least, written his country out of war.

Three days later German submarines sank a merchant ship without warning and one American life was lost; soon another one, and several American lives were lost. It was evident that the Germans meant to be very dim about what a *liner* was. In any case they went on with their submarine work until within a year Mr. Wilson stood before Congress with a bill of bad faith and suggested that diplomatic relations with Germany be broken off unless she agreed to abandon her "present methods of warfare against passenger and freight carrying vessels." And again he was speaking "not so much for the legal rights of the United States as in behalf of the moral rights of all humanity."

At this the Germans made another promise. No more sinkings without warning and without trying to save human lives, and yet reserving complete liberty of action if Great Britain continued her "illegal" blockade. Another diplomatic victory.

The Germans had a positive genius for stupidity. They were sure the Americans were a supine people, and they got the idea of destroying at the source the American war goods they could not sink at sea. In a letter that was intercepted, the Austrian Ambassador wrote to the Germans: "It is my opinion that we can disorganize and hold up for months, if not entirely prevent, the manufacture of munitions in Bethlehem and the middle west." So they resorted to direct action against American industry. They bought their tools with German gold, and the tools were such as bribery, plottings, sabotage, subterfuge, bombs, arson and high explosives.

As the incredible facts came to light, some by accident but most of them through the brilliant work of the Secret Service and the Army and Navy intelligence bureaus, the anti-war party was overwhelmed.

The elements of the anti-war party were the German-Americans, the Irish, William Jennings Bryan who resigned as Secretary of State in protest against a rising war spirit,

and a little group of western Senators, called the willful men, who could not entertain the thought of war on any account. They were always in the minority and their strength steadily declined. One of the late discoveries to complete their dismay was that the German government had opened negotiations with Mexico for an alliance in the event of war with the United States and had promised her Texas, New Mexico and Arizona as her share of the spoils.

When at last the Germans, saying "If the Americans will fight let's see," suddenly cancelled all their promises to limit submarine warfare, when they announced that they would sink on sight any merchant ship in the waters surrounding the British Isles, and when they had insultingly offered to pass two American ships a week on certain days and under very strict conditions,—after that the least the President could do was to lay his defeat before Congress and ask that diplomatic relations with Germany be broken off. The German Ambassador was handed his passport; the American Ambassador was recalled from Berlin.

That still was not war.

The President said to Congress: "I refuse to believe it. Only actual overt acts on their part can make me believe it even now."

His mind had been changing, slowly, painfully. He had reconciled himself to a war for humanity. He was not sure the world understood him, nor could he decide where humanity's loyal battalions were hiding, waiting only for his call to rise. On both sides, perhaps.

Only a few weeks before the break in diplomatic relations with Germany he had addressed an identical note to both Germany and Great Britain asking them to state their war aims more clearly, for to many people it seemed that they were "virtually the same, as stated in general terms to their own people and to the world." Which of them would say they were fighting not for themselves but to bring to mankind a new order of just and permanent peace?

Germany's answer gave him no comfort. Great Britain's was sympathetic to his ideas in principle, and tactful, concealing the resentment she felt at having been put on a moral level with Germany. Neither one was what he wanted.

His next step was to announce, in a speech to the world from the Senate chamber, what the American people would fight for, if they did fight. They would fight a war to end war, wanting nothing for themselves, wanting only to see peace organized as the major force of mankind—and that meant not a peace to be dictated by the victors, but "*a peace without victory.*"

And now after all, since the rupture of diplomatic relations, it was in the hands of Germany. If she committed those overt acts which the President said would be unpardonable, we should be obliged to go in at once, on the side of Great Britain and her allies, and let humanity wait.

Having just disposed of the Russians, the Germans were reckless. With two more terrific exertions, one by land and one by sea, they were sure they could win. So they provided the overt acts. Their underseas cobras began to strike without mercy. American ships were sunk at the rate of one a week, with no regard whatever for human life.

On April 2, 1917, President Wilson appeared before Congress and asked for a declaration of war. Yet peace was the theme of his war message. "We must put excited feeling away," he said. "Our motive will not be revenge or the victorious assertion of the physical might of the nation. Our object is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world . . . to set up among the really free and self-governed peoples of the world such a concert of purpose and action as will henceforth ensure the observance of those principles." Only democratic nations could do it; autocratic nations could not be trusted. Therefore: "The world must be made safe for democracy."

So World War I began, with American intervention. Other-

wise it would have been only another European war, with the conventional sequel—a temporary realignment of powers and a peace treaty fraught with forethought of the next time.

Only those who understand the miraculous nature of American confusion can comprehend what happened next.

The problem to begin with was one that was big enough to extend the country's power—and there had not been a problem like that since giant-hood. It had three aspects, namely, the Wilsonian, the physical and the military.

You have to remember that the President had just been re-elected by a very narrow margin over Charles Evans Hughes, on the slogan, "He kept us out of war." He was not war-minded. As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces he was not thinking of victory; he was thinking of peace without victory. His secret ambition was to be peace bringer to mankind.

That made him the despair of the Army, the Navy, some members of his own Cabinet and all who were for getting into the war by hot impulse. He became the more or less passive center of a whirling turmoil. The people were furious with impatience. War commissions were created and recreated, the same men shuffled around with no authority; and it was as if the principles of action were paralyzed.

There was no program. The Secretary of War was Newton D. Baker, a pacifist, who said: "The reason why there is no program is that the view is continually changing. We think one day, this is the line, and the next day, no, here it is."

The most exasperating fact of all was that the President was inaccessible. He was loath to delegate power, especially to men he did not already know; resented criticism as a kind of lese-majesty, and repelled suggestions. The saying was current in Washington: "You must not importune the President." Louis D. Brandeis, a war-minded member of the Supreme court, collaborated with the editor of *The New York Tribune* in a series of articles on a design for war, which

were printed on the editorial page, with the idea that Mr. Brandeis could somehow bring them to the notice of the President. Nothing came of that.

What was the President doing? He was composing the Fourteen Points—his design for peace.

Week after week a little group of New York editors went to Washington to make the rounds, asking: "Is there any change?" Week after week the heavy answer was: "None." Then one week Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, the most impatient member of the Cabinet, said to them: "Go home and get some sleep." They asked him what had happened. He said: "You will know tomorrow. All I can tell you now is that the Old Man at last has made up his mind to put his fist in the war."

That night came the Baltimore speech, in which the President said: "There is therefore but one response possible from us. Force. Force to the utmost. Force without stint or limit, the righteous, triumphant force which shall make right the law of the world."

At last he was in the war; at last that time had come which he imagined when he said: "Valor withholds itself from all small implications and entanglements and waits for the great opportunity when the sword will flash as if it carried the light of Heaven upon its blade."

The effect was as if a dam had broken; as if America's physical power had been piling up and up behind a monolithic obstruction, unable to spend itself, and then suddenly the obstruction gave way and the flood came.

Although this country had been the great supplier of war materials, for a war of its own it was in a state of appalling unpreparedness.

It had only symptoms of an army. Somewhat to everyone's amazement the President had immediately and very firmly insisted on a draft law, euphemistically called the Selective Service Act, and got it from a reluctant Congress, which preferred the volunteer method. It was easy enough then to call

up two or three million men, especially as the draft was actually popular; but where were the barracks for them, and the training camps and the uniforms and equipment, and how long would it take? Evidently the President thought they were going to stay in this country as a kind of reserve. If you thought of an expeditionary force, where were the ships? Owing to the destruction of ships by the German submarines and to the fact also that Great Britain and her allies had laid hands on every ship they could find, ships were very scarce.

As for American industry the case was this. It had been running in high gear to produce war goods for Great Britain and her allies, but only such things as they could not produce enough of for themselves, specific things. Thus industry was not prepared to produce the whole range of things the country would need completely to equip a large army of its own.

There was, moreover, a miscalculation for which industry was not to blame. The government's first idea was that America's contribution to the war, at least for a while, would be money, food and war goods of the kind Great Britain and her allies had been buying here, only more, much more, with no longer any worry about money, for now they would borrow it direct from the United States Treasury, any amount of it, instead of having to borrow it from bankers in Wall Street. In the meantime the military establishment in collaboration with industry could be building a war machine. The military people were expecting the war to last at least two more years, maybe three. In that time the unique American art of mass production could be brought to bear upon ships, guns, planes and all the tools of mechanized warfare.

Before the end of the first year this calculation went all to pieces. Great Britain and France were going to lose the war not for want of money, food or guns; they were going to lose it for want of manpower. Their lines were breaking. What they desperately needed was soldiers to mend them with. But our soldiers were not equipped. No matter. France had a surplus of guns.

From then on until the end getting soldiers to France, with or without guns, was the business of top priority.

Fortunately by that time there was an effective war administration at Washington able to command and canalize the country's power. Through the confusion the right men had been coming through.

There was Bernard M. Baruch at the head of the War Industries Board, who, with the power of an economic dictator, the wisdom of a serpent and the manners of an innocent, geared all industry to the war and made it sound like one sweet engine.

There was Herbert Hoover at the head of the Food Administration, who drew food from a bottomless cruse until it was plenty and gave it around impartially with the air of a scowling cherub.

At the head of shipbuilding was Charles M. Schwab, who could turn a swamp into a mighty shipyard while your back was turned. There yesterday was a piece of waste land on the water. There, as if today, is Hog Island Shipyard already making three ships a week. Shipbuilding was an art we had almost lost. Now shipyards appeared everywhere. In all of them on one day ninety-five ships were launched. At that rate the seas would have been littered with Liberty Ships in another year.

Where to put the soldiers if you called them up too fast? Barrack cities appeared as if they had fallen from the sky, complete with water supply, sleeping quarters, mess halls, sewage systems, hospitals, electric lighting, even libraries. Three months after the first draft call there were sixteen of them; in the next three months this capacity was increased ten-fold.

At the same time American engineers with American labor were making over three ports in France, with docks a mile long, besides building enormous supply bases, intermediate depots, hundreds of houses, and railroads with American

locomotives, American equipment and American crews—all for the American soldiers that were coming in numbers far beyond the facilities of France to receive them. It was the Yankee invasion and it was terrifying.

The military achievement was astounding. Within eighteen months, beginning with nothing, the Army put two million men into France. Never before in military history had there been a troop movement like that. British ships carried more than half of them, and charged us for it of course; American ships did a little less than half. The United States Navy provided eight-tenths of the escort, through waters infested with submarines, and there was not one mishap.

The men were inadequately trained, sometimes learning the manual of arms without the arms, and sometimes so raw when they were shipped that they had to be finished in France; but they had youth and guts, qualities of self-reliance and initiative, and above all intelligence.

The perfect commander-in-chief was the one first tried. He was John J. Pershing, not a hero, but a profane and magnificent soldier, who shocked the high military brass of Europe by saying trench warfare was wrong. It would ruin the morale of the American doughboy, whose virtues were individual valor and skill with the rifle. Open warfare for him.

The disbelieving British and French generals insisted that the American soldiers be incorporated in their weary divisions, and for a while Pershing consented, to meet critical situations of great immediacy; but when at last he was able to create an independent American army, which he did against the frantic protest of the French and British generals, who tried to thwart him by going over his head to Washington—then scepticism gave way to astonishment.

For the American army he chose the hottest and most difficult segment of the front, and there, despite some awkward staff work and a few too costly lessons, the unseasoned



doughboy proved the faith of his commander. Living Europeans had never seen fighting like that. The apologetic allies wept for joy; and the Germans, seeing what they could hardly believe and knowing that behind these fighters were millions more, began to break in their hearts.

The end came suddenly.

Before this, on January 8, 1918, President Wilson had published to the world his design for peace without victory, named the Fourteen Points. The first point called for open covenants of peace openly arrived at and no more secret treaties; the second for freedom of the seas in peace and war, the third for equality of trade conditions among peace-loving nations, the fourth for a reduction of armaments, and then, after some vague generalization about territorial and political adjustments, came the fourteenth point, which called for a general association of nations to guarantee the independence, security and territorial integrity of great and small nations alike. This was to be his League of Nations.

The Germans were unresponsive. They were about to hurl against the Western Front the manpower that had been released from the Russian side. The British and French were cool. It was not the kind of peace they wanted.

It was after the Fourteen Points had fallen flat that the President made the Baltimore speech that broke the dam: "Force. Force to the utmost." And it was after that that the number of American soldiers arriving in France began to rise and rose until it was 10,000 a day, or at the rate of more than 3,000,000 a year.

What Mr. Wilson could not do the doughboys did.

Eight months after having treated them with contempt, the Germans suddenly asked for an armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points.

The British and the French were embarrassed. They had never accepted the Fourteen Points; but they were hearing the voice of humanity which now began to be lifted up in all nations demanding a Wilsonian peace. So, taking thought

and with some stated reservations, they agreed to discuss an armistice on the terms of the Fourteen Points. On November 11, 1918, an armistice was signed.

World War I was over.

The war of diplomacy began.

The obstacle to the kind of settlement the statesmen of Great Britain, France and Italy wanted was not the Fourteen Points. Words could be juggled. The obstacle was psychic.

For disillusioned people everywhere Woodrow Wilson had become the symbol of a new world. He had imparted his vision. The emotions it invoked, all running to him, had a kind of wild religious intensity. Many millions would have said: "Let him write the peace in the name of mankind." Moreover, did he not have behind him an incredible nation—a nation that had foresworn beforehand any spoils of war? It wanted nothing for itself—absolutely nothing. What was it now that could not happen? Such a man, such a country, the time—who would say these dead had died in vain.

Well, all of that was going to make it very hard for the cynical Old World statesmen to deal with Mr. Wilson in the peace conference.

## II

# The Wily Old World

BUT THEY WERE WISE AND THEY MADE A PLOT. IF THEY COULD get Mr. Wilson to come in person to Europe for the Peace Conference (an unheard of thing for a President to do), exhibit him there to his adoring multitudes and then maneuver him into making a few speeches touching some of the treacherous sore spots—if they could do that they might be able to dim out his halo. Lord Northcliffe, owner of *The London Times*, came over to sell the idea, first to newspaper editors and then to the President, with the subtle argument that European statesmen had always botched the peace and would probably do it again if the moral leader of the world were not there to keep their eyes to the light.

That argument won. The President decided to go.

He put himself at the head of a Peace Commission that could have but one will, and that was his own. In naming the members of it he ignored both the Senate and the Republican Party, which was a fatal error, because many Republicans, including ex-President Taft, were for something like a league of nations and might have turned the Senate for the treaty when the time came. Along with the Peace Commission went a fine body of economic and political advisers, including Bernard M. Baruch and Herbert Hoover.

What the wily Old World statesmen expected did happen, as they intended, and it was tragic.

In Paris the President was received with tremendous en-

thusiasm—more perhaps than could in any case have been sustained. It followed him to London and Rome and back to Paris. Then his speeches on the realities of peace began to be destructively examined. For one thing, it was soon evident that his formula of self-determination for little nations led to enormous difficulties and that national aspirations were too conflicting to be all satisfied. And why had he refused to visit Belgium and to look at the devastated regions of France? Did justice require him to close his eyes to what the Germans had done?

The cruel treatment was yet to come. On the day the Peace Conference was to have opened the British, the French, and the Italians were not there. For a month they did not come, and sent notes of cool apology; and all that time the President was left to sit alone with his retinue and nothing to do, looking rather ridiculous. Meanwhile the idea was rising that Germany should be made to pay for the war, whereas Mr. Wilson had said no indemnities.

When at last the Peace Conference got to work it was clear that the President's mind was unalterably fixed on one thing, namely, the Covenant of the League of Nations. If he got that he would yield at many points on the peace treaty itself and justify himself with the thought that his League of Nations could in time correct even an iniquitous peace treaty. The British and the French, on the other side, realized that if they gave him what he most wanted they would be freer to make the kind of peace they wanted.

So at the outset they accepted the Covenant of the League of Nations, and he came home with it in his hands, leaving his associates to see the treaty through.

Here he had to face his own people. He felt sure of them. But he had to face also the Senate. There the Republicans now had control.

A few Republican Senators who were for the League of Nations persuaded him that unless the Covenant were amended in certain particulars the Senate would reject it. He accepted

the amendments, went back to Paris with them, and, with certain alterations, got them into a revised Covenant. Thereafter he devoted himself to the one task of so insinuating the Covenant into the body of the peace treaty that it could never be dissected out. Who signed the peace treaty signed also the Covenant and the League of Nations would be saved.

When the Peace Conference surveyed its finished work it had moments of panic. Would the Germans sign? What if they refused? The clock was striking the dead-line hour when they appeared and unwillingly signed, calling upon Heaven to witness that they had been deceived. They had agreed to an armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points. The Fourteen Points had been forgotten.

So that was the Treaty of Versailles—a tryst in writing with World War II.

Mr. Wilson's triumph turned to ashes. He was a fallen hero when he arrived home with the treaty. His struggle with the Senate was foretold. He became obstinate. He would accept neither amendments nor reservations. It had to be what it was or nothing. He appealed to the people and went west on a speaking tour, believing still in the power of words; but the magic was gone out of them. Midway of his tour he was stricken dumb and returned to Washington a shattered man, with only a little while to live, knowing he was beaten.

In the end, after a long controversy that divided the country, the Senate killed the treaty.

The outcome was that the United States never joined the League of Nations. It made a separate peace with Germany. The League of Nations nevertheless was set up at Geneva to keep the peace of the world and its revered and acknowledged father was Woodrow Wilson. It lasted until World War II.

For the United States World War I was a total loss.

It was after all a punitive peace, imposed by the victors; the romantic ideal of peace without victory was sunk without trace.

It did not make the world safe for democracy.

The self-determination of little nations created many new problems and solved none.

Freedom of the seas was not established.

Germany was obliged to give a blank check for reparations and then cheated her creditors by going bankrupt and dragging Europe down with her.

The ten billion dollars loaned to Great Britain and her allies out of the United States Treasury were never paid back. On the contrary, this war debt gave rise to extreme bitterness of feeling, through which the United States emerged in the image of Shylock, our debtors taking the position that it had been our war too from the beginning, and that we should sooner think of paying them for what our tardiness had cost them than to expect our dollars back.

More than all of that, our intervention had broken forever the American tradition of non-entanglement in the quarrels of other nations. Never again would it be possible for Europe to settle her own quarrels. Whether we had signed the treaty or not, we had intervened to defeat Germany. We were morally responsible, therefore, for having restored the old balance of power in Europe. If a time came when Germany might think herself strong enough to take revenge, would we be obliged to intervene again? In any case we did.

### *Marginalia*

*The author finds among his unpublished papers a piece entitled, "Marginal History," done in the first person, on what befell the Covenant of the League of Nations. It was written in the fourth year of World War II, when the project of a United Nations Organization was being pressed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the next Democratic Party President after Woodrow Wilson. It is inserted here because it puts an oblique light upon a fateful moment in American history; and for the moral too, which is that when people*

*are living with the emotions of war they may be moved to do things which they could afterward regret.*

We were to consider ourselves locked up for the night, or until we could make our minds run together,—the editor, the assistant editor, the first and second string editorial writers, and Elihu Root, the magnificent roundhead of his generation. The gaoler was Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, who had that right because she carried the old *New York Tribune* in her pocket for the benefit of her son Ogden. Her worldly wisdom had a kind of Victorian quality, and along with it she possessed a fine journalistic sense,—more of this, I sometimes thought, than all the rest of us as one. She did not always like the kind of paper we made, and yet seldom did she touch the editorial policy; when she did it was more as a faithful reader in pain than as one who could snap the purse.

But here was crisis. The leading Republican newspaper, descended from the hands of Horace Greeley and Whitelaw Reid, was unable to formulate a policy on the Covenant of the League of Nations. In February, President Wilson had returned from Paris with the first draft of it in his hand. The Peace Conference had accepted it. Nevertheless, he was going back to make sure that nothing happened to it; meanwhile the Peace Conference would be going on with the treaty itself and that might be a work of three or four months more.

Until then, as we knew, the idea of a league to keep the peace of the world, of putting in the hand of right a sword so terrible that no aggressor would dare challenge it, had enthralled the American mind. Under the slogan,—“a war to end war,”—what the people were feeling had the mysterious authority of a religious experience. To Mr. Wilson’s pledge that we wanted nothing else out of the war, and would take nothing else, there was almost nowhere a dissenting voice. Indeed, if it had been put to us, the editors of *The Tribune*, as an abstract question,—“Shall there be a league of peace keeping nations to forbid wars of aggression forever?”—the answer would have been a unanimous *yes*.

Yet instantly on reading the draft of the Covenant we began to divide. Why? What had happened? Only this, that now it was in writing; and so far as it had been possible for him to do so, the President had committed his country to that writing. In an ideal world it would have been a perfect moral contract; only, in that

kind of world it would have been perhaps unnecessary. In a world with right always on one side and wrong always on the other, a clear line between, it still would have been a grand commitment. But what did we know to be true of the real world?

It was bad enough for the leading Republican paper to be so divided in its mind and without a policy. Even worse was the fact that the Republican party was in a state of like confusion.

After the death of Theodore Roosevelt the three surviving great elders of the Republican party were ex-President Taft, Charles Evans Hughes and Elihu Root. All three were for something that might be called a league of sympathetic nations to keep the peace of the world. Foremost of the three was Taft, who for several years had been leading a movement calling itself The League to Enforce Peace. This was but one of several kindred organizations and first among them in prestige, from the fact that, besides its great zeal for propaganda, it had a definite plan for a world mechanism to impose peace. Mr. Wilson borrowed its principles and simplified them.

Nevertheless, even Taft was uneasy over some parts of the Covenant. Together with Hughes and Root he persuaded the President to accept certain amendments,—one to hold the Monroe Doctrine out of it entirely and another to establish the right of a league member to withdraw.

With these and some minor other amendments in his pocket the President returned to Paris in March. The night before he sailed he made public boast of his confidence, saying to an audience that filled the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City: "When the treaty comes back, gentlemen on this side will find the Covenant not only in it but so many threads of the treaty tied to the Covenant that you cannot dissect the Covenant from the treaty without destroying the whole structure."

When he arrived in Paris he found his Covenant in the ditch. The Peace Conference, in his absence, had expelled it from the treaty. But in a little while the news was that by a terrific exertion of will he had restored it to its eminent place and that the Peace Conference, moreover, had accepted the amendments. Three months later he returned with the sealed document, treaty and Covenant entwined.

His companions on the homeward voyage remembered a tall and solitary figure standing for hours each day on the deck of the *George Washington*, gazing at the western horizon. He was sailing from triumph to defeat. Some premonition of this may have



occurred to him when he turned to one who had been keeping the silence with him, and said: "I should have to be almost Christ not to fail my people now."

On July 10 he went himself to the Senate, presented the treaty, and made an earnest plea for its prompt ratification.

By this time the Republican party was split to its roots. Taft was making speeches for the Covenant. He was saying that the Taft-Hughes-Root amendments had been made effective in it and that every objection a reasonable Republican could ever have had against it was thereby removed. The League to Enforce Peace was filling the country with propaganda to the same effect.

On the other side was Henry Cabot Lodge, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the President's most adroit and dangerous antagonist, who was secretly and with cold passion resolved to kill the Covenant if he could, although he would never say so, lest he estrange those who only wanted to change it; and behind him were the irreconcilables led by Johnson of California and Borah of Idaho. Among the irreconcilables were Democrats, too, notably Senator Jim Reed of Missouri, but that had nothing to do with the problem of a Republican paper that was absent from the conflict not because it was afraid, only because it could not make up its mind.

And that was where Mrs. Whitelaw Reid came in. She asked us to dinner at her country house. We were four,—Ogden Reid, Allan Dawson, Geoffrey Parsons and I; and Elihu Root would be there.

All that happened during dinner was that Mrs. Reid gave a very simple account of her private feelings. She hoped the angels had been looking away when the President of the United States and his brave young experts in Paris were on their hands and knees, with maps spread over the floor, fitting new nations into the spaces made by redrawing the boundaries of old ones. Her misgivings about the Covenant were many. Nevertheless, it was the one frail promise of a better world that people could hope to get out of the war. They had put too much suffering and prayer and longing into it now to be satisfied with victory regarded as the customary end in itself. If they could not believe they had done something to overcome the evil of war, then victory alone would seem sterile to them and their disappointment would be terrible.

Instead of leaving us at the table she went with us to the door of the library and paused there only long enough to say, "Now

I hope you gentlemen will be able to make up your minds. Good night."

I see Elihu Root, putting his long body in repose for a night of hard work. His hair was still thick and black; under it was one of the fine brain engines of his time. His mind was adventurous. It would go with you anywhere, if you were serious, but never for an instant was it mistaken about where it was or what it was doing, so that if you were in the clouds and spoke of the earth, he would say, "If it's the earth you want to talk about, all right, but let's get back there."

He opened the session by saying: "I understand that we have several opinions here on the Covenant. Let's get them all stated so we may look at them."

Ogden Reid left the statement of his views to Dawson, so that Dawson was double barreled, and it took time. Parsons talked more as if he were writing an editorial. Root sat all the time staring at the ceiling. It was past midnight when they looked at me. I said I had decided to say nothing. The point of all this was to find a policy through compromise, whereas my first objection to the Covenant was beyond compromise and therefore not germane. "All the same," said Root, "let's look at it."

"For all the idealism it represents," I said, "there is a bad light in which the Covenant appears to be a conspiracy on the part of the superior nations to maintain forever, if they can, that state of the world in which they have the present advantage, and to do this by force. Inferior nations, as we speak of them, are thereby fixed in that status, doomed to it in fact; and these may be nations not inferior really. Who knows what an inferior nation is? It may be only that it must live through its appointed hour on the under side of the time wheel. You can imagine, for example, that the people of India might sometime think of fighting it out with England alone. Now you are going to confront them with a League of Nations."

Root looked down from the ceiling at his fingers drumming on the arm of his chair, then back at the ceiling, and said: "I agree with that. It is true. There is that light. Yet, happily, as you say, it is not germane. Our business is with here and now."

With that he got up, stood with his back to the fire, and began to talk. As he talked he was making up his own mind, I thought. Almost you could hear it click.

First, the imperative. That was peace. The world could not go on living under an armistice. Unless it got peace, and got it soon,

the consequences might be dreadful, uncontrollable. The suspense was already so intolerable, and beginning to be so dangerous, that almost one would say a bad peace would be better than no peace. He detested the Covenant and the treaty both. He wished the President had said at Paris: "Gentlemen, all we want out of the war is a league to keep the peace. Give us that. Then as for the treaty, concerning Europe, you make it. You have to live with it. Only let it be one that I shall be able to defend when I get home." But, no. He had done what he threatened to do. He had so wound the Covenant into the treaty that there was no tearing them apart. You had to take the Covenant to get the peace. The problem, then—remembering the imperative,—the problem was how to save the Covenant not for itself but for the sake of the treaty, and, again, the treaty not for itself but for the sake of peace immediately. He thought the Covenant could be saved by certain reservations. These he spelled out then and there. Reservations, unlike amendments, would waste no time. The difference was legal. An amendment to the treaty would have to be ratified by all the signatories separately and that would delay the peace, whereas a reservation had only to be filed with the papers of ratification and required no further action.

He came to the end suddenly and sat down. So far as we knew he had not said any of this before, certainly not in public. We wondered why he hadn't, in view of the effect it might have in his party's councils, and his answer was that he had not been sure of it for long; he had arrived at it slowly and not without many misgivings on the way. I said that as one who spent a good deal of time in Washington and had just returned from there I was sure his position was not understood. By his leave, therefore, I should like to make notes of what he just said and take them to Washington. He said, simply: "I wish you would."

The next afternoon I sat in Senator Lodge's library, telling him the story more or less as I tell it here, only with much more of Root,—his imperative first premise, his reasoning step by step from there, his reservations in place of amendments. Lodge listened with rigid attention.

When I had come to the end and stopped he said, very coldly: "If Mr. Root wants to read himself out of the Republican party, that is his own business. Tell him we are not interested."

As I came up for air I heard myself saying: "But I must have

done it badly. Let me try again." I got out my notes and did it all over, this time with pains, and he regarded me steadily with the same icy attention as before. When I was through he said again: "If Mr. Root wants to read himself out of the party there is nothing we can do about it."

"It's no use," I said. "I've bungled it."

"You haven't," he said. "You have done it very well, almost too well."

From there I staggered over to Senator Brandegee's house, told him everything that had happened, and so concluded: "There is evidently something here that I don't know."

"There certainly is," he said; and then went on to tell me: "When Taft and his minute men began to go up and down the country saying that the amendments Wilson put into the Covenant when he got back to Paris were really the Taft-Hughes-Root amendments we waited for Root to say it wasn't so. We waited a week, a month, and then we asked him why he was silent. He said he needed time to clarify his mind. We gave him time. After a while we said to him, 'If you are still in doubt we will prove it to you.' He said, 'All right. Prove it to me.' So we briefed the case. George Wharton Pepper wrote the brief. Then we went to Root's office. He sat as judge, jury and defendant, and we read to him Pepper's brief. He was convinced, if that was what he wanted.

"He said, 'Gentlemen, you have proved it. Taft is wrong.'

"We said, 'Well, then, when will you make a public statement to that effect?'

"He said, 'Give me just a little more time.' That was the last we heard from him. We have been waiting ever since. Now on a sunny afternoon you come toddling in here with the news that for the sake of the treaty he wants to save the Covenant with reservations. How would you expect to be received?"

Will Hays was then Chairman of the Republican National Committee. Before leaving Washington I led the sore elephant around to him. "Anything you can do for it," I said, "will make it easier to conduct the editorial policy of a great Republican newspaper." He desired suggestions. One I offered. "Get Root down here," I said, "and let him just sit there in the Senate chamber for an old-home week. His presence will produce an effect. It will do something to Lodge. Where Lodge now stands Root stood when Lodge regarded him as his mentor."

All that came of that was that Lodge embraced the idea of reservations in place of amendments. Reservations could be fatal, too.

Senator Jim Reed, a Democrat, was one of the last ditchers. He was not a demagogue, but he possessed the temperament, the high-decibel voice and the quick crowd sense of a rouser. It was he who discovered where to hit the Covenant in a way to do it the most harm, and that was not below the belt but over the heart. Article X was the heart of the Covenant. That was the paragraph binding the members of the League of Nations to guarantee and defend with force one another's territorial integrity.

One day Reed returned to Washington with a gleeful account of his discovery and how it worked. He had been out in the country tailing Taft. Where Taft had spoken one night and had carried his audience for the Covenant, there Reed would speak the next night, and so far as possible to the same people, inviting them that way as a challenge. Then, paraphrasing Taft, he would ask: "How many of you believe that the peace-loving, God-fearing nations of this earth should form themselves into a league to chain the aggressor down, whoever he may be, and put an end to war? Hold up your hands!"

Nearly all the hands would go up.

Then he would ask: "How many of you are willing to send your sons to the Balkans to defend the boundaries of Czecho-Slovakia in battle? *Up* with your hands!"

And not another hand would go up.

That was putting it in writing they could read.

After that, Article X was the point upon which all lines of attack converged. The President called this the knife thrust.

Sometime in August he seemed to realize that the fight was going against him, even that the treaty might be defeated. Believing still that the people were with him he resolved to take it to them. In September he set forth on his last speaking tour. He was followed by Johnson and Borah, both members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, who trailed him as Reed had trailed Taft, using more or less the Reed technique,—hitting the Covenant over the heart.

After thirty speeches the President collapsed, from a stroke of partial paralysis, affecting first his power of speech, and returned to Washington a broken hero. For the remainder of the struggle he had only strength enough to resist any compromise.

The vote in the Senate was on a resolution to ratify the treaty, subject to the reservations; and a very curious vote it was, some of the President's supporters and the last-ditchers voting *no* together, the former because the President would not have the reservations and the latter because they wanted to kill the Covenant, with or without reservations. The treaty was then returned to the President with formal notice that the Senate had failed to ratify it. The sequel was our separate peace with Germany.

Writers of this history, trying to account for what happened, have generally distributed the cause, the blame and the responsibility all around. Mr. Wilson himself, they say, was partly responsible for the defeat of the treaty because he was obstinate, politically very tactless, and estranged the Senate to begin with by excluding it from the peace table, asking it in the end only to cross the *t*'s and dot the *i*'s of his Covenant, and refusing most doggedly to accept anything less. For the rest, it was Lodge, with his deadly parliamentary skill and his devouring hatred of the President; it was that impulse which does sometimes seize a democracy to smash its idol, and, lastly, it was the innocence of the people concerning the profound problems of a world that still seemed to them far away even though they had been fighting in it.

It is a fact, however, that neither in the next election nor in the after course of political events was there ever the slightest sign that in rejecting the treaty the Senate of the United States had mistaken the will of the people.

It is probable that in his Metropolitan Opera House speech, on the night before his second departure for Paris, the President was right. The people then were behind him. It is even more probable that six months later he was wrong. Simply, the American public, taking time to think, had changed its mind. Whether it was right or wrong is another matter.

### III

## Strange Normalcy

AFTER WOODROW WILSON CAME PRESIDENT WARREN GAMALIEL Harding, a very grand man to look at, much beloved for his amiable frailties. Wicked politicians surrounded him, took advantage of his easy nature, made too free of the public purse, and brought his administration into disrepute.

He had been editor of a small town newspaper in Ohio and his contribution to the ideology of government was to invent the word *normalcy*. Nobody could say what normalcy meant. It seemed to mean a return to something—to individualism, to limited government, to the native grass of *laissez faire*, if there was any left, or, as the Wilsonian Democrats said, a return to the flesh pots.

But the nineteen-twenties were far from normal.

As an individual looking back on his life may wish that a certain segment of it, which seems after all not to belong to him, could be blotted out, so the nation, remembering these years, might wish they could be expunged from its history as if they had never been.

The nation was mentally ill. In good psychic health it might not have developed the symptoms of a cleft personality, stretched between emotional extremes of pessimism and optimism.

The pessimism was moral.

National prohibition, that noble experiment that had been written into the Constitution like an alcoholic's pledge, was defeated by mockery, derision and social disobedience. Ef-

forts to enforce the law against a nation of conscienceless law breakers were absurd. Consumers of alcoholic beverages were not punished; only the purveyors of them. The result was that bootlegging, with public connivance, came to be organized on the lines of big business, attended by the evils of gangsterism, violence and political corruption, all the way up to the enforcement authorities at Washington.

The effect of this universal example on the minds of the young was disastrous. Petted youth, with no place to go, nor wanting to go anywhere, named itself the lost generation and tried to sink its sense of frustration in bootleg liquor and bath tub gin.

Intellectualism turned cynical and destructive. The foundations of belief began to erode; all the admirable myths with which the people had lived happily from the beginning of their national life were submitted to objective treatment, the question being not whether they were good or bad, but whether they were factually true. Heroes back to Washington, the motives of the Founding Fathers, the story of the Constitution, the legends of patriotism, were all alike, as the word was, *debunked*.

Finally was the devastating fact of disillusionment concerning the meaning of World War I. Historians of the revisionist school were at work. Their revelations were painful and humiliating. Almost nothing was what the people had been persuaded to believe, save only the wonder of America's physical achievement and the valor of her soldiers.

There could be no doubt that to beat Germany and save themselves, Great Britain and her allies had exploited not only the American crusading spirit, which they dimly understood, but also American prodigality, which they did not understand at all; nor that when Germany was defeated they sabotaged Mr. Wilson's Fourteen Points, divided the spoils in their own way and wished the Americans to go home and mind their own business again. Even Mr. Wilson before he died became very bitter about it.



Oppositely at the same time the extravagant optimism, besides being as irrational as the pessimism, exhibited American character at its worst. It was inspired entirely by the acquisitive motive, which swelled and swelled until it seemed to have the dimensions of national paranoia. Its vehicle was speculation. Wall Street became the center of a mad world.

President Harding died before his first term was up and was succeeded by Calvin Coolidge, who had been Vice-President. He was a little New Englander, full of old-fashioned sayings, who believed in all the copy book maxims of thrift, and had the rare wisdom to know that a lot of things will solve themselves if you let them alone, and that if you are not sure what to do it is generally better to do nothing.

The areas of speculation widened.

Coolidge was elected for a full term of his own and then did not choose to run again.

He was succeeded by Herbert Hoover, who had the mind of an engineer, the character of a Quaker and the innocence to believe that facts would move mountains. He perfectly understood what was taking place, he could read the signs in shorthand, and he acted upon them with original courage; but his star was in the wrong firmament. A decade earlier or a decade later he would have been known as one of the greater Presidents. His authentic image was cut down by hired assassins; yet for all of that, he lived to become a revered elder statesman.

Wall Street's inverted pyramid whirled faster and faster.

Month after month prices on the New York Stock Exchange advanced in a perfectly fantastic manner. It was easy to get rich—too easy. Any bootblack could do it, and many a bootblack did. He had only to give his broker a shoe string to hang on the Upas tree, where one grew to be ten and ten to be a hundred—and this of course was bad for the shoeshine business because nobody wanted to work any more.

Everybody was doing it, including the cold-blooded money changers in the temple, who began to believe it themselves—

like the Cape Cod fisherman who wanted a place by the stove at the country store and announced that there was a whale on the beach. When someone went out to see he sat down. One by one everybody else went out to see and he sat there alone. Then he heard footsteps outside, all going toward the beach, and at last he said to himself, "Maybe it's true," and went out himself in the cold to see.

The magic form of wealth was a credit with your broker. It would build mansions and buy yachts and was inextinguishable. The more you drew upon it the more there was.

At last Wall Street said: "This is the New Economic Era. It can go on forever."

President Coolidge, the man of thrift, said prices were not too high. They represented the great wealth of the country. The Secretary of the Treasury said prices were high because profits were high and this prosperity might be unlimited.

There was a delusion of stability in it—the stability of a plane that goes higher and higher, the faster the higher, and might go on to infinity if it never had to land.

Eminent economists, using their measuring devices and divining rods, proved that although the speculative value of stocks had doubled again in one year, stocks had never touched what they were really worth; all this inverted whirling pyramid was perfectly safe; the law of gravitation had been superseded by the dynamic law of rotating bodies. Delusion became mania. There had been nothing emotionally like it since John Law's Mississippi Bubble broke France in the eighteenth century.

The behaviour of the banking world was such that people's respect for it could perhaps never be wholly restored. The most charitable thing to be said was that it lost its head. It forgot every maxim of solvent banking, it forgot its depositors, it forgot the country. It took money away from business and loaned it out on the gambling counters of Wall Street.

Bank loans to Wall Street brokers is a rough measure of

what speculators are drawing out of the country's common money reservoir. In two years bank loans to Wall Street brokers rose from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  billions.

The New York banks were the worst offenders. Their example crazed the entire world of banking. What were they thinking? They were under the spell of the fool's idea that the new Federal Reserve Bank system had made the country panic proof. They said panics were now impossible. Never again could financial panic come to the American people. Why not? Because there would always be plenty of money. The Federal Reserve System would see to it.

One evil genius was Montagu Norman, governor of the Bank of England, who came twice to this country to expound the wonders of a cheap money policy for the only country that had ever made itself free from fear of financial panic. Norman was trying to save England; he wanted cheap dollars. However, the Federal Reserve Board at Washington, which controlled the money supply, was enthralled; and whereas the Federal Reserve Bank System had been an engine of inflation to finance World War I, it now undertook to supply the money to keep the fictitious debt structure created by speculation from breaking down.

The voices of warning were few. The strongest one was the voice of Herbert Hoover, who raised it first from the house top of the Department of Commerce and then became the Jeremiah of Presidents. It made him unpopular and did no good whatever. When at last the Federal Reserve Board saw the abyss and tried to put on the brakes, it was defied by the New York banks, and anyhow it was too late.

So then it was an empty delusion? There was no basis for optimism? Oh, but there was—and all the more tragedy for that reason.

If the bankers had not forgotten their moral responsibilities, if the Federal Reserve Bank System had managed the credit supply with a little wisdom, and if free enterprise had not forsaken its first principle, which is that as a lusty ever-

green may smother itself by overgrowth, so great profit may defeat itself unless it is shared with the consumer by a cheapening of the goods that satisfy human wants—if these mistakes had not piled up this country's experience in the world-wide disaster called the Great Depression might have been much less heart breaking.

Long after it was too late one who spoke for industry said: "We shall never make that blunder again. Instead of permitting our profits to be capitalized in Wall Street we should have put more of them into the pay envelopes."

That was fallacy still. To share profit with labor alone is a two-way division. The proper division is three-way—to the property its share, to the wage earner his share and to the consumers their share. The consumers receive theirs in the form of lower prices. Thus American industry was built.

In this case the fact was that wages had been rising. Industry had been putting a lot of its profit into the pay envelope. But because this was a two-way division, with the consumer left out, the result was of this character—that as wages increased the wage earner went more and more into debt, pawning his future earnings to buy things on the installment credit plan, thereby tending to hold prices up against the consumer, the consumer being everybody, himself included.

But how came the great profit? This we shall see.

From World War I the country emerged with a very large addition to its industrial capacity; and with better machines, more cunning technology, more power behind the industrial worker and more know-how than it ever had before. Owing to this combination of cause the productivity per hour of labor increased nearly one third in a decade. Therefore the cost of manufacturing goods declined in an extraordinary manner. Given that your selling prices stay up and your costs fall your profits increase. That is how it happened. That is where the great profit came from.

Technically regarded it was another marvel; and as free

enterprise could say, "This we have done," so it thought it was entitled to the harvest.

It was on its own. It had made the transition from war to peace with no help from government. On the news that the Armistice was signed all the business executives who had been working as dollar-a-year men at Washington reached for their hats, slammed their doors and went home.

President Wilson firmly refused to set up any reconversion programme. He said: "Our people do not want to be coached and led. They know their own business. While the war lasted we set up many agencies to direct the industries of the nation. But the moment we knew the Armistice had been signed we took the harness off."

He was right. Reconversion took place with astonishing ease. There was one bad year and then the most productive industrial machine on earth was in high gear again, on civilian duty. Indeed, the danger was that unless prices fell it would soon overtake the buying power of the people.

The railroads had been operated by the government during the war. They had to be rebuilt when the owners got them back. The automobile had become one of life's necessary possessions; and for its wheels a vast system of concrete highways had to be built. The radio appeared. There was a serious shortage of dwellings, schools and hotels, because during the war building for civilian uses had been suspended. All of that had to be made up. At the same time the tallest building in the world began to rise on Fifth Avenue and new towers pushed their way through the New York sky line. There was so much to do and so much of it urgent that three million demobilized soldiers were easily absorbed in the civilian economy.

Nevertheless, the productive power of the country now was so immense that it did soon begin to overtake the people's buying power—at prices current. For a while this fact was obscured by an enormous foreign demand for the American surplus—food, machinery, manufactures and materials.

After World War I this was the principal creditor nation of the world, the only surplus nation, the only nation where the international borrower could find easy capital.

It was a role for which American bankers were ill prepared, wanting both the experience and the judgment for it. Nevertheless they embraced it with avidity. Wall Street syndicates were not content to bring out bond issues for foreign countries that applied for loans; they sent agents abroad to solicit borrowers and urge dollars upon them.

Meanwhile the American public had to be educated. Its happy days of financial illiteracy were gone. It was told that America had now to take the place of Great Britain as the great creditor and banker to the world, and that by restoring the post-war world, especially Germany, with American dollars—at a high rate of interest—we should acquire merit in the memory of mankind. Honor and glitter in one bond. But it was the high rates of interest that made the bonds so easy to sell to individual investors and to the banks, particularly the banks as it turned out, for when the bleakness came bank portfolios big and little were found to be stuffed with them.

At the height of this adventure with creditorship American capital was going abroad at the rate of two billion a year, mostly to Europe and Latin America. When the proceeds of a foreign loan were spent in this country the borrowers were also customers, and our exports went up—as why not, when you are lending your customers the money to buy your goods and calling it foreign trade?

But a great deal of the money was wasted by countries that knew they never could be made to pay it back. Germany, for example, had already made up her mind to beat her creditors by going bankrupt, and yet—or perhaps for that reason—the Germans were the heaviest borrowers. They used the money to build town halls and stadiums and to pay war reparations to Great Britain, France and Italy. They borrowed enough American dollars to pay all the war reparations they ever did pay.

When Germany had deliberately inflated her currency until it was utterly worthless she repudiated it and said to her creditors, "Now what are you going to do about it?" After that American banks loaned her gold to start a new currency in place of the one she had destroyed—on her promise to pay reduced reparations if she could.

Some of the foreign loans were so brazenly bad that Mr Hoover at the Department of Commerce, in collaboration with the State Department, set up a kind of silent censorship, all extra legal. Wall Street bankers were asked to confer with the government before floating a new foreign loan. If it was good the government would say nothing; if it was bad the government might say so publicly, as a warning to investors. But almost nothing came of that. The government had no right to interfere.

So it went on until the boom devoured itself and the reckoning came.

The wanderlust of American capital was a bad timber, but the house did not rest upon it, and the loss might have been charged to experience. The weakest structural member was agriculture. It was in trouble again. During the war grain acreage had been expanded to the utmost to provide food for Europe; and now as Europe's own agriculture recovered the foreign demand for America's food surplus slumped, and farm prices began to fall. In the whole economy only farm prices fell and the farmer's buying power was hurt.

One of the first acts of the Hoover Administration was to shore that timber up with a Federal Farm Board and a fund of half a billion out of the Treasury to help farmers hold their crops for better prices; also a Grain Stabilization Corporation to buy and remove surplus wheat from the market. That was the government's first direct attempt to uphold agricultural prices for the farmer's good, and the results were both costly and very disappointing, because, for one reason, it ran at once into terrible economic weather, like everything else.

To take it all in the round, what now appears to be true is that on the eve of the Great Depression the American machine—the machine itself—was essentially sound. What stalled it was not breakage but malfunction. Even the dollar, for all that had been done to it, was still a good gold dollar, the finest and most esteemed piece of money in the whole world. But speculators could ruin a pot of pure gold.



## IV

# Abyss

AS AT SEA A FREAK WAVE 100 FEET HIGH MAY BE CAUSED BY the accident of several big waves colliding and then running in a train, faster than the wind, so the Great Depression was a series of catastrophes coincident in time, each with its own over-running fury. That is why it was so difficult afterward to isolate the cause. There was no one cause.

One beautiful October day in 1929 the bottom dropped out of the stock market. It was the beginning of panic?

Well, so a panic on the Stock Exchange? Had that not happened many times before?

But this was different. There was never going to be another panic. It was impossible. Wall Street had said so. You couldn't believe Wall Street. Bankers had said so. You couldn't always believe bankers, either. But the government had said so. Yet here it was. The broken delusion was like a shattered vase.

It was different in another way. Both the wise and the foolish were caught, the financiers themselves, the broker and his customers together, the artist whose Wall Street friends had made him rich enough to buy a country estate and the bootblack who had given away his shoeshine business. All that magic wealth which was a credit balance with your broker had vanished away. The money wizards, the Rockefellers and the Morgans, spoke to the people. This was nothing serious; they were buying stocks, not selling them,

and the public would do well to follow their example. *The New York Times* said the financial structure was sound. Distinguished economists who had spread the evangel of the New Era said stocks were a bargain.

All these voices died on a fiendish wind. Day after day it went on. The bottom—where was the bottom? Panic was like a live thing. Did they think they had chained it down? Well, now it was free and taking revenge.

One immediate effect was that the torrent of dollars that had been running to Europe suddenly dried up; and that would make trouble in Europe, where ominous clouds had already appeared.

Then the wheels of industry began to slow down and stop, at rates of deceleration that caused many of them to fly apart. The appalling thing that had happened to private fortunes would ruin many markets, as every merchant and manufacturer knew, and they behaved accordingly.

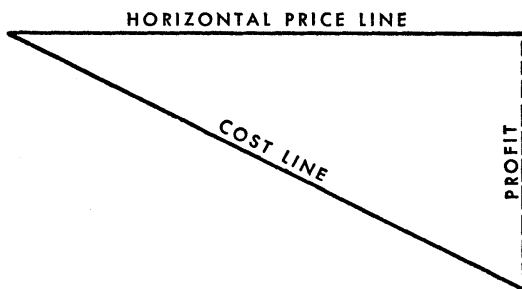
One remembers a dreary week-end at the White House with Mr. Hoover. He had asked the magnates of industry to confer with him on the possibility that with one mighty heave all together they could start the wheels again, and on what the government could do to help. They were coming Monday. The task was to prepare for them what he called a balance sheet—all the favorable factors on one side and all the unfavorable on the other.

Number One on the favorable side was the singular fact that there had been no speculation in commodities. For eight years the commodity price line had been horizontal. Always before, a great speculative rise in the stock market had called forth a speculative rise in commodity prices, too, so that liquidation on the Stock Exchange was bound to be followed by a corresponding liquidation in the commodity markets. But this time no. It was only Stock Exchange prices that had gone up and come down. So for once it was absurd for the managers of industry to say, "We shall have to wait for commodities to come down." They could start the wheels im-

mediately; what had happened in Wall Street could be written off and forgotten.

All day long Number One stood there like a bronze guardian. And one remembers vividly the dismay when, as a final test, it was stood on its head and turned out to be clay. It went all to pieces.

It was true that there had been no speculation in commodities and that for eight years the line to represent average commodity prices had been horizontal. But that horizontal price line was *itself the dam*. You could make a diagram to prove it. For look. There was another line. That was a line to represent the cost of manufacturing goods. While the price line had been standing still the cost line had been falling, steeply falling; and the difference between the horizontal price line and the falling cost line represented the extraordinary profits that Wall Street had capitalized in the stock market, thus—



On that horizontal price line the productive power of industry had at last overtaken the buying power of the people. Proof? Before the collapse of the stock market every manufacturer had been complaining of one thing. In every direction he was touching what he called points of saturation. It was harder and harder to sell goods, at prices current. Suppose now you started the wheels at full speed and restored production to what it was before, what would you do with the goods?

"Now we've done it," said Mr. Hoover, as he ruefully picked up the pieces.

Now what was he going to say to the magnates? The price dam had to break. But the government had not the power to break it nor could it command industry to break it. The magnates came, made brave sounds to the reporters on the White House steps, and went away. Henry Ford said his contribution would be to raise wages to \$7 a day, which he did; the trouble was he could not sell enough cars to keep his people employed at that wage.

The next wave was the most frightful fall in the price of commodities since the beginning of statistics—copper, tin, rubber, all metals, fibres, leather, chemicals, everything. It shook the whole world and greatly increased the rising economic distress in Europe. Suddenly the value of goods stored in warehouses everywhere and of stocks on the shelves of merchants—the inventory, that is—was reduced one half or more.

Twenty years later Mr. Hoover wrote the authoritative history of the Great Depression.\*

As he saw it there were six waves—the first one in this country, two in Europe, the last three rising here.

The first was the downfall of the American speculator when his gorgeous bubble burst. That was a price panic; not a bank panic. There is a difference. Under right leadership a terrific deflation of Stock Exchange prices, commodity prices and profits may take place without involving the banks in general ruin. The country really was very rich and could stand a bad hurt.

Almost the first of President Hoover's acts was to engage the leaders of industry in a general agreement (1) not to cut wages, and (2) to spread the work by a shortening of the work week and a staggering of the days, instead of to work fewer men at full time and cut the others off with no income at all.

\* *The Great Depression*, by Herbert Hoover, Macmillan.

This was a new thing. Always before the first way of reducing costs to meet a depression was to cut wages. Now Mr. Hoover was saying: "This time we shall not take it out of the hide of labor."

And it worked. Industry was responsive. An employer who had tried to save himself by cutting wages would have been ashamed to mention it in his club, whereas formerly he might have boasted of it. Later there was some decline in wages but at no time did they fall faster than the cost of living, and that was the point. To protect its labor force industry as a whole went 3 billion dollars in the red during the next three years.

To prevent additions to a labor force that could not be fully employed the President stopped immigration. The first census of the unemployed was taken, house to house. There was created the President's Committee for Unemployment Relief, which set up 3,000 volunteer committees through the country to stimulate and overlook state and local relief. To a rising clamor for direct relief out of the United States Treasury the President answered with a pledge that if state and local relief failed, then he would be for it. Locally administered relief did it for a while. During the first and second winters there was much hardship but no hunger. In the springtime of the second year 120 cities could discontinue emergency relief.

A bank panic had been averted and there was a feeling of ground underfoot—when the next wave hit.

Europe was in desperate trouble. By one means or another, such as inflation, sleight of hand monetary practices, borrowing, note kiting and enormous drafts on the United States for dollars, Europe had so far been able to postpone the economic consequences of World War I. Now they were upon her. Austria's principal bank failed. Hungarian banks were under seige. Germany's creditors, especially France, were demanding that she pay her IOU's. President von Hindenburg of the new German Republic appealed to Mr. Hoover, saying

the Reichsbank was running out of gold and might have to shut its doors. American banks held very large amounts of the German and Austrian IOU's.

It was then that Mr. Hoover proposed a one-year moratorium on all international war debts. That meant not only German war reparations to Great Britain, France and Italy, but also their debt to the United States Treasury for money borrowed during the war. Ostensibly he was saving the Reichsbank, which really did not want to be saved; actually he was thinking the American banks might not be able to stand the shock of seeing their German and Austrian IOU's turn suddenly worthless.

Hardly was the ink dry on the moratorium agreement when, to the dismay of the whole banking world, a belated check-up disclosed that what Germany, Austria and Hungary had borrowed on their kited IOU's was perhaps ten times more than anybody had guessed. It was something like 10 billion dollars. If the creditors pressed for payment all of Central Europe would be bankrupt. Mr. Hoover then proposed the famous "standstill" agreement under which the creditors should hold their claims on ice, for a period of grace. All the creditors would have to agree or it would not work. Also it would be necessary to create a very large emergency fund, to stand in the vacuum, to provide distress money and to guard the situation generally. That was a job that belonged naturally to the international bankers. They would be only saving themselves. But they balked. What they wanted and what all the creditors wanted was a large loan from the American government to Germany. Dollars to the rescue again. Mr. Hoover would not consider it. At this point in his memoirs, page 78, "The Great Depression," occurs the following grim paragraph:

"A group of New York bankers informed me that they could not agree to the standstill plan and that the only solution was for the American government to participate in a large international loan to Germany and the other countries.

My nerves were perhaps overstrained when I replied that if they did not accept within 24 hours I would expose their banking conduct to the American people. They agreed."

So the second wave passed and there was a breathing spell. The third was right behind.

After having borrowed 650 million dollars from American banks to support the pound sterling, the Bank of England failed.

The effects were dire, and one of them was that Europeans started a gold run on the United States, thinking that this country alone could not uphold the gold standard. The gold they took away caused the base of American bank credit to shrink. Just then the American Legion demanded a bonus payment of \$3,400,000,000 out of the United States Treasury. President Hoover went to their convention and talked them out of it.

There now was real danger of a bank panic. The one idea on which Mr. Hoover acted from this time on was that the time to be daring with credit is when people are in trouble, not when they are riding a boom. He induced private banks to form a National Credit Association, with a capital of half a billion, to stand behind weak banks; he caused the Federal Reserve Bank System to loosen the purse strings, proposed to Congress a system of mortgage discount banks to take up good mortgages on which payment was in default, and gave farmers more help from the Federal Farm Board.

Symptoms of confidence began to appear. The flight of gold to Europe tapered off. Gold hoarding in this country almost stopped. There was another breathing spell.

The next wave was different. You might call it the wave of despond. The great bankers' credit pool lost its faith and withered out. The government was running at a deficit. Taxes would have to be increased to balance the budget. Unemployment rose to more than 12 million, and at last direct relief had to be provided out of the United States Treasury.

The Congress had gone Democratic and was reluctant to

support Republican recovery measures. Gold hoarding was resumed. The gold reserve fell to a dangerous point. Bank failures increased.

Worst of all, Wall Street speculators now had turned around and were selling the country short. It was easier to depress stock market prices than to advance them, and the spectacle of stocks going daily into spasms of weakness, after all that had already happened, was very hard on the country's morale.

This situation became at length so bad that Mr. Hoover moved for an investigation of the Stock Exchange and its practices. Just then a committee of bankers had been formed in Wall Street to support the bond market, which was extremely and irrationally weak. This committee sent word to Mr. Hoover that it could not get the right people to go along unless he would agree to abandon the investigation. He was dogged and went on with it; and the sordid revelations, involving the heads of Wall Street's two largest banks (one resigned and one went to jail) were hardly calculated to improve the people's confidence in the integrity of the country's financial leadership.

The Democratic Congress at the same time was playing with ideas of fiat money. That made everything worse. Gold hoarding increased. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation was created, with a large revolving fund out of the public purse. Its functions were such as to stand between the railroads and their Wall Street creditors, to help banks out of trouble, to lend money on worthy but risky assets, and to provide money for public works. The next time you lose your breath at the sight of the San Francisco Bay bridge you may like to remember that it was fathered by Mr. Hoover's Reconstruction Finance Corporation; also the great aqueduct from the Colorado River to Los Angeles, the Mississippi River bridge at New Orleans, and the Jones Beach playground in New York city.

Unfortunately public works alone could not absorb 12 mil-



lion unemployed, nor could slum clearance or subsidized housing. Only a general revival of activity could do it, and that was what everybody at this point seemed to have dispaired of.

## V

# A Treacherous Dawn

TRUTH HAS A LOVELY WAY WITH PROVERBS. IN ONE OF THEM it says that darkness deepens just before dawn. So it was.

In retrospect, if you think of the Great Depression as chain phenomena on a world-wide scale, which it was, then it will be clear that by the middle of 1932 the worst had happened. For other countries recovery began there, and continued. It began here, too, but stopped; and for six years more this country was laggard. Why this was will appear.

Moreover, looking back, Americans may well be proud of the way they handled their share of a universal catastrophe, until what should have been for them, as it was for other people, the end of a long black night. The standard of living did fall, of course, and yet it was always higher here than in any other country; and if you look at what the statisticians call the health curve you will see that it did not fall at all. Amazingly, it rose. On January 2, 1932, Surgeon General Cumming, of the Public Health Service, reported as follows:

“Mortality at the beginning of the winter of 1931-32 has continued on a very favorable level, the rate being only 10.7 per 1,000, as compared to 11.5, 12.0 and 13.2 in the last quarters of 1930, 1929 and 1928, respectively. Infant mortality was definitely lower, the rate being 55.8 per thousand against 58.1.”

No hunger there. No undernourishment. No malnutrition. Evidently many people on relief had received a better diet.

and better medical care than they had been wont to provide for themselves in prosperous times. Yet relief had been so managed that the American spirit of self-reliance had been largely unimpaired.

And the dollar—it was a gold dollar still, the only true-ringing piece of money in the whole world.

The next two waves destroyed these values. Neither wave was necessary and both were American made.

Nineteen-thirty-two was an election year. Mr. Hoover was renominated by the Republican Party. The Democratic Party's candidate was Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

A President whose administration runs into bad times is like a captain who loses his ship. It may not be his fault and yet he will be set down for it. That is a kind of folk law. Therefore it was natural enough that the Democrats should treat the depression as a Hoover sin. They never referred to it but as the "Hoover Depression," and so distorted the facts as to make them seem morally ugly and sinister.

They hired a Machiavellian journalist named Charles Michelson and set him up in Washington with a staff of highly trained writers; his job was to poison the air with forebodings of worse disaster and to besmirch Mr. Hoover's motives and character. He did it by writing thousands of speeches, articles and press interviews for the Democratic leaders, who pretended they were speaking for themselves. The effect was wicked. Well, fair or unfair, that was politics. It was not the wave.

\*

Mr. Hoover was magnificent in defeat.

A silhouette of his fame on the screen of history would assume somewhat the shape of an hour glass. The squeeze in the middle is a distortion produced by a conspiracy of disparagement. It represents what the New Deal's propaganda machine did to him during the Roosevelt-Hoover campaign of 1932. By its mendacity and skill of slander it did

astonishingly cut down the Hoover legend; it could not and did not destroy it, for it had a second growth. This is curious. Mr. Hoover's hold on the esteem and affections of the people was greater as a citizen, both before and after, than as President, owing largely to the tragic circumstances in which his administration was involved and partly to the fickleness of the agglomerate political mind under conditions of popular suffrage.

The charge that hurt him most was that through the Great Depression he was indifferent to the spectacle of human misery and was unwilling to use the powers of government to relieve it—this about a man who during and after World War I had been the Hercules of relief, beginning with the relief of the starving Belgians, which he organized single-handed, and going on from there until he was food bringer to all the distressed people of Europe, with his own flag, his own ships, and a kind of private government working independently of war and chaos, issuing its own passports, honored by all belligerents.

The fact is that he did much more, directly and indirectly, to mitigate human distress than any President before him had ever thought of doing in time of extreme depression. He rejected the advice of the grim economists and of men like Andrew Mellon, his Secretary of the Treasury, who said let nature take her course. Let the debt structure fall of its own weight. Let wages be liquidated, and farmers and debtors and commodities and real estate. Let the bankruptcy courts and the sheriff do their work. Then it would soon be over. That would have worked, of course, as everybody knew. It had worked always before. Economists had a name for it. It was the classic medicine.

But it was brutal and Hoover would have none of it. A great deal of liquidation would in fact be necessary. But in the modern case, he believed, it was a proper function of government to cushion the shock of it. This, he thought, it could do without violating any of the ancient principles. For

one thing, it could mobilize all the latent resources of self-helpfulness in the people themselves. Thus it was that instead of trying to save wages by law or edict he engaged the leaders of industry in a moral undertaking not to cut wages, at least, in no case faster than the fall in the cost of living; and to spread the payroll by working more men fewer hours a week.

He stood against direct relief by the Federal government except in the last extremity, that is, not until the states, the cities and the local communities had done their utmost—this on the ground that once people as individuals began to be fed and clothed and housed out of the Federal Treasury, or on Federal credit, there would follow a “train of political corruption and waste such as our nation has never witnessed.” Above all, he insisted that the ameliorative powers of the Federal government should be so exercised that “once the emergency is passed, they can and must be demobilized and withdrawn, leaving our governmental, economic and social structure strong and wholesome.”

These were bedside sounds the people did not want to hear. They wanted pain-killing drugs, such as inflation, printing press money, repudiation of debt and the dole; and these drugs they could get by changing doctors.

But unfortunately, and notwithstanding his stern precepts, some of Mr. Hoover's own remedies were habit forming.

One of them was the Federal Farm Board, which stood in the Chicago wheat pit, with the public purse in its hand, buying grain from all speculators, to keep the price from falling. It fell anyhow.

Another was the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which loaned public money to private debtors, to bail them out.

Mr. Hoover seemed not to realize that once the farmers and certain debtors had been permitted to crash the Treasury its doors could not be slammed on anybody. Politically, it would not be feasible; physically, it would be impossible

without the mangling of many arms reaching through the crack.

\*

The Democratic candidate was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He gathered around him what came to be known as his brain trust, composed of ardent intellectuals, in hasty pants, all on a glee-ride to political power. They wrote Mr. Roosevelt's campaign speeches, and very cleverly kept them in tune with the party platform, which was a conservative platform, calling for sound money and a limitation of the powers of government.

It came to be well known, however, that privately they entertained other ideas, especially about money. Mr. Hoover challenged them to repudiate a printing-press money bill that had been passed by the Democrats in the House of Congress, and to say what they meant by "sound" money. Did they mean gold standard money or something just then beginning to be heard of, called managed currency.

For a while they were evasive, and then they put forward Senator Glass to deny that the gold standard was in peril, or ever had been, as Mr. Hoover said. Next came a speech by Mr. Roosevelt, who said:

"Senator Glass made a devastating challenge that no responsible government would have sold to the country securities payable in gold if it knew that the promise—yes, the covenant embodied in these securities, was as dubious as the President of the United States claims it was."

A masterpiece of subtlety, in view of what the brain trust was intending to do to the dollar. A few months later, aghast at the Roosevelt administration's repudiation policy, Senator Glass rose in the Senate to say that he had been willfully deceived, and apologized to Mr. Hoover.

As the campaign went on faith in the dollar waned; after the election returns were in anxiety about its future became acute.

Mr. Roosevelt was elected in November. Mr. Hoover's administration would continue until March.

This awkward interim, dating back to a time when it took Congress many weeks to assemble on horseback, was in this instance heavy with peril. The prestige of the outgoing administration was zero; the policies of the incoming administration were unpredictable.

The possibility that the dollar would be devalued in the European manner caused hoarding to be resumed. In the hands of international speculators there was a mass of refugee gold that for several years had been running a rat race from one country to another, to escape confiscation or entrapment. Its last flight had been from Europe to New York. Now it began to vanish, some of it going back to Europe, some of it into vaults. Thus again a shrinkage of gold reserve in the banks, which was bad for loans, and the difficulties of the banks were thereby increased. Areas of desperate trouble developed. Detroit was one.

The bank panic, which through all the depression had been averted, now was imminent.

Immediately after the election President Hoover asked Mr. Roosevelt to collaborate with him in a joint statement designed to assuage the fear that was rising both here and in Europe—a statement that would commit the new administration both to the International Economic Conference that had been hopefully arranged and to the integrity of the dollar.

They met once. Mr. Roosevelt took the position that he could not assume responsibility for anything that might happen before he took over control of the government. News that the conference had failed had a bad effect. The banking situation grew steadily worse. Again President Hoover importuned Mr. Roosevelt to join with him in making such a statement, asking at last that it be only a statement to say the value of the dollar would be maintained. Mr. Roosevelt

made one excuse after another, one being that a letter had been mislaid; and meanwhile it became known that Senator Glass, who was to be Secretary of the Treasury, had refused to take the office because he had discovered that the ideas of Mr. Roosevelt and his brain trust about money were not what they had led him to believe they were.

That was almost the breaking point. Bank depositors everywhere were demanding cash at the teller's window; the tellers were slamming their windows shut. If faith in the dollar could not be restored the worst bank panic in the nation's experience was inevitable. Mr. Hoover's appeals to the President-elect, by telephone and telegraph, became almost frantic; Mr. Roosevelt's replies became more evasive. Why?

A strange message arrived at the White House from an eminent industrialist. The message was this: "Professor Tugwell, adviser to Franklin D. Roosevelt, had lunch with me. He said they were fully aware of the bank situation and that it would undoubtedly collapse in a few days, which would place the responsibility in the lap of President Hoover." Professor Rexford G. Tugwell was one of the brain trust.

Another member of the brain trust, who afterward repented, was Raymond Moley. Years later Mr. Hoover asked him why Mr. Roosevelt had refused to cooperate in the banking crisis. Professor Moley replied: "I feel when you asked him on February 18 to cooperate in the banking crisis that he either did not realize how serious the situation was or that he preferred to have conditions deteriorate and gain for himself the entire credit for the rescue operation. In any event, his actions during the period from February 18 to March 3 would conform to any such motive on his part."

In February, a few weeks before the inauguration of Mr. Roosevelt, the crisis came to a head. The Detroit banks went down. In several states all banks had closed. Mr. Hoover was urged to stop the run by closing all banks everywhere. This he firmly refused to do, on the ground that it was doubt-



ful whether he had the legal power to do it; and on the ground, secondly, that it was the business of solvent banks to stay open.

Generally the banks were solvent. Proof of it was that eventually nearly 99 per cent of the depositors were paid in full. But no bank by itself can stand a run for long. It cannot convert its assets fast enough to pay its depositors all at once in cash. It needs help. Where was the help to come from? They were unable to help one another, so many of them being in the same trouble; only the government could have helped them.

Mr. Hoover had two ideas. One was that each banking region should help itself by pooling its resources and issuing a temporary kind of money called clearing house certificates. That would have worked. It had worked before. But it would have required the cooperation of the Federal Reserve Board, which was not forthcoming. His other idea was that the Federal Government should guarantee deposits in all banks that were found to be solvent, and only short of cash. That also would have worked, only it was too much of an innovation, and Congress would not consent.

On this perfect design for total panic the Administration of Herbert Hoover ended and that of Franklin Delano Roosevelt began.

The next was a long, low wave. It lasted six years and was swallowed up by World War II.

### *Marginalia*

The enmity between business and government is mortal and acts with the certainty of instinct. They are rivals for power.

Business wants two things—to be supreme in its own world and to be let alone. Its ideal of government therefore is one of limited powers—especially limited in the economic sphere.

On the other hand, as if it were a biological law, there is in government an imperious urge to extend its powers; and since in the modern case government cannot enlarge its own sphere without diminishing the free sphere of business, conflict begs only time and occasion.

The decisive moments are not appointed. The struggle has manifold aspects; and it may be that people will not know what the issues were until a long time afterward.

For example, who can say when and how *laissez faire* died or where it is buried? There were no obsequies and there is no tombstone.

In the same way its nativity was obscure. There was no birth certificate. There never was a time when government said to business: "Now you are free. You will be let alone." Nor was there ever a time when business rose in revolt, broke its chains and declared itself free. Yet *laissez faire* ruled the economic world for more than 150 years; while it ruled, the power of business was greater than the power of government.

*Laissez faire* grew naturally out of the shape of unpremeditated events. When foreign trade was a kind of piracy, when industry was handicrafts under the ancient guild system, when artisanship was low caste and agriculture was peasantry, then business was simple and government understood it. Edicts, rules and regulations were imposed upon it, by trial and error, and there was no theory. There was no book of economics.

Then in rapid succession came machines, factories with their division of labor, credit banking, and Adam Smith, who wrote the first elucidation of a free economy, to show that every man seeking his own selfish ends was bound to promote the general welfare whether he meant to or not. The word *business*, comprehending all the activities that arise from the production and exchange of wealth, was yet unknown.

The medieval world of guilds, peasantry, the just price and

the merchant prince—a way of life it was—sadly and miserably collapsed. The modern world of business began. Its methods and tools, especially its credit banking, were all so strange that government, seeing only that it multiplied wealth in a prodigious manner, was afraid to touch it. That is how business got free. Never did government willingly surrender control of business. It was only that the kind of business it did control withered out of its hands. Business in the new sign ran away with its own world.

Well then, government set out to overtake it. Where before it had studied diplomacy and statescraft, now it began to study economics; it elevated the economist to the rank of priesthood because he could penetrate the sorceries of business. So it began.

The one thing that business lacked, and had never felt the want of, was a philosophy. Its laws were derived from experience; a thing worked or didn't work and that was that; but as for any social theory of what it was doing, it had none. After a while therefore it was that the academic economists who belonged to government knew more about business than business knew about itself—theoretically. Still they were afraid to touch it, and business held them off for a long time by saying: "All you know you get out of books. Business is business. Let it alone."

But theory is dangerous. Unerringly government and its economists perceived that the key to the whole complex matter was control of banking and credit—that is to say, money. Let government exercise its sovereign power to seize control of credit and banking, and the rest would be easy; the independence of business could be overcome, its rivalrous power could be limited.

It took more than a century-and-a-half to do it; and yet anyone might have foretold the ultimate victory of government because it had always the skill and the means to keep the people on its side. The wealth created by free enterprise belongs ultimately to all of society, but it reaches the people

by a process of osmosis; whereas when, in the final act of the struggle, the government sets up the Welfare State, its benefactions are immediate and direct—that is, until there may be nothing left to distribute.

These are generalizations. It had happened everywhere else. Then it happened here.

## VI

# The Roosevelt Revolution

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT WAS AN ARISTOCRAT who broke caste to make friends with the populace. He could begin a homely speech with "My good people," and make them like it, whereas until then anyone who remembered the log cabin tradition would have said that a country squire manner would be politically fatal. On the radio his voice had a rare hypnotic quality. He made the sound of a benign father.

In middle life, before he was President, he became a polio cripple and walked thereafter in braces. A visitor once said to him: "Mr. President, I marvel that you can make these momentous decisions with such lightness of spirit." To which he replied: "If you had spent several years of your life in bed trying to wiggle your big toe these decisions might not seem so momentous to you."

Many believed that his way with public affairs was conditioned by his physical experiences. His experiments were colossal and reckless, as if he might be saying to himself that even if they failed things could be no worse than they had been; and some accounted for the almost superhuman scale of his activities by saying that the energy that was once in his legs had surged upward and expended itself with double zest.

Alice Longworth, who, being the daughter of Theodore,

was one of the Roosevelt clan, made this observation: "When Franklin talks of recovery the word does not mean to him what it means to us. He is thinking of the kind of recovery he had in his own legs. He does not expect people to rise and walk as they once did. He would put them in braces; he would build a tank for them to swim in, as he does."

There never had been a President remotely like him.

Before him no President could be elected for a third term. The tradition against a third term was believed to be insurmountable. He was elected four times.

Power flourished in him, and multiplied itself, until he had more than any other President ever possessed or wanted. Some of it he got from a spell-bound Congress that had lost the soul of the parliamentary principle and for 100 days passed all the laws he sent to it from the White House, without debate, sometimes without even reading them. Some of it he seized, some of it he got by outsmarting the law, and some of it by thinking of things no law had had the forethought to forbid.

And yet you could not say that he had an evil lust for power, like Lenin, Mussolini or Hitler; it sometimes seemed more as if he enormously enjoyed playing with it, just to see what would happen. He was not cruel; he was perhaps too civilized to be sinister.

Many accused him of wanting to be a dictator. He took it naively and answered that he had neither the inclination nor the qualifications to be a successful dictator; and, moreover, he knew too much history.

And then in the third year of his reign he could say such a thing as this: "In 34 months we have built up new instruments of public power. In the hands of a people's government this power is wholesome and proper." But, he added, in other hands, "such power would provide shackles for the liberties of the people."

The classic *cliche* of the dictator. What *he* has done to the people is good for them. Did he know better? Did he know

what he was doing to the philosophy of American government as it was expounded by the first great democrat? That was Thomas Jefferson, who said: "In questions of power, let no more be said of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution."

But no Constitution that had ever been written could chain this Roosevelt down.

Recovery with a big *R* was his First Reason. That is to say, the problems he faced in the beginning were economic problems. Yet to this day it may be debated—and debated on the evidence,—whether he was an economic illiterate who had never learned the primer of that subject, or whether his ideas were such as that two times two make five, which may be argued by either an idiot or a savant.

If you hold that he did not know, that he did one thing at a time, experimentally, without seeing the bearing of it, then you are obliged to account for the fact that in the New Deal's monetary strategy there was a precision of timing, an order of sequence, a forethought of progression and sequel, all tending to socialize money, banking and credit, and all so perfect, that you cannot imagine it was improvised. The design was complex. One piece out of place or one step out of time would have been fatal. This we proceed to see.

Now these are the things that happened to the dollar.

President Roosevelt's first act, after his inaugural address, was to close all banks by executive decree. That stopped the runs. The same decree forbade, under pain of fine and imprisonment, any dealing in foreign exchange or any transfer of credit from the United States to a foreign country. That slammed the door. Nobody could run out of the country with his wealth. Even the speculators were trapped.

Several days later Congress assembled in special session and found on its desk a law that had come down from the White House to be rubber-stamped. This law, firstly, legalized what the President had already done without a law; secondly, it provided that no bank in the Federal Reserve

System should reopen but under license from the government; thirdly, it gave the President absolute power over foreign exchange, and, fourthly, it authorized the President to call upon the private owners of gold to surrender it. That was the second step.

The President then issued a decree requiring all persons and corporations, under penalty of fine and imprisonment, to bring their gold to the Federal Reserve Banks and exchange it for paper money. By this time a plentiful supply of paper money had come from the printing press. The Treasury added a persuasive statement, saying the government needed possession of the gold as it were in trust, that it was the patriotic duty of private owners of gold to give it up, and that anyhow the paper money they would get in exchange for it was equivalent to gold.

The people made no difficulty about parting with their gold. They thought it was for the emergency only and that they would get it back later. There had been as yet no sign that the government intended to debase the dollar. Indeed, at that very time the Treasury was offering small investors a new lot of government bonds, payable principal and interest "in United States gold coin of the present standard of value." Would it be doing that if it intended to betray the gold standard? Everybody remembered something Mr. Roosevelt had said during the campaign. No responsible government, he said, would sell securities payable in gold if it knew that the promise, yes, the covenant, embodied in those securities was dubious.

Nobody knew, of course, that a law to repudiate the gold covenant was then in writing at the White House. To get physical possession of the gold was a ticklish business, and yet vital to the design, because free gold in the hands of the people might turn out to be very embarrassing. But when at last all of it was locked up in the Federal Reserve Bank vaults, and when it had been made a crime for a private person to have in his possession so much as a five-dollar gold



piece, then the planners could sigh with relief, for the third step had been safely executed.

The fourth step revealed part of the design. It took the form of an amendment to a farm relief bill, called the Thomas amendment. The story of it is this.

One evening at a casual meeting of the Brain Trust in the White House the President handed a copy of it to Raymond Moley, saying: "You might like to read this. It will be introduced tomorrow and I am supporting it." In the words of Professor Moley: \* "Hell broke loose in the room. Douglas, Warburg and Feis were so horrified that they began to scold Mr. Roosevelt as though he were a perverse and particularly backward schoolboy."

James Warburg tells it the same way. The President was amused. "Take it home," he said, "and try your hand at re-writing it if you want to."

They went to their hotel to struggle with it. The Secretary of the Treasury walked with them, saying: "What are you all so excited about? He knows what he is doing." They pushed him into his room and then sat down to study the amendment. The night was nearly gone when the Secretary of the Treasury, in his pajamas, burst in on them, saying: "Do you know what this means? It means we are going off the gold standard." He had just seen it.

They could get him back to bed but they could not rewrite the amendment. It was what it was or nothing.

The outcome was that the amendment was enacted at the tail of the farm relief bill and became law. This is what it did:

It authorized the President (1) to devalue the dollar by reducing its gold content one-half, (2) to go on the open market and buy \$3 billion of government bonds with paper money, (3) to issue \$3 billion of fiat paper money, secured by nothing, and make it legal tender, (4) to coin an unlimited amount of silver dollars, (5) to issue an unlimited amount of

\* *Seven Years*, by Raymond Moley.

paper silver certificates, and (6) to fix the values of gold and silver in relation to each other.

Thus the power of the President over money was made absolute—or, if not absolute, at least greater than that of any Caesar.

Of its potentialities, Senator Thomas, the author of the amendment, said: "It may transfer from one class to another in these United States value to the extent of almost \$200 billion. This value will be transferred first from those who own the bank deposits; secondly, this value will be transferred from those who own bonds and fixed investments. If . . . the powers are exercised in a reasonable degree, it must transfer that \$200 billion in the hands of persons who now have it, who did not buy it, who did not earn it, who do not deserve it, who must not retain it, back to the other side, the debtor class of the Republic, the people who owe the mass debts of the nation."

This at a time when a very sick patient named Confidence was only slightly convalescent.

The fifth step was the act of repudiation. By another law sent down from the White House Congress declared that the gold redemption clause engraved upon government bonds and on the face of United States paper money was void, and that these obligations should be redeemed in any kind of money the government might see fit to provide, paper money of course; and the law went still further to say that the customary gold redemption clause in all private obligations, such as railroad and other corporation bonds,—that also was void, and moreover it would be unlawful thereafter to make a private contract payable in any kind of money other than the paper money current. Thus, the only kind of money left was the irredeemable paper dollar, meaning a paper dollar redeemable in nothing but itself.

Senator Glass, who was to have been Secretary of the Treasury, left a sick bed and rose in the Senate to say: "With nearly 40 per cent of the gold supplies in the world, why

are we going off the gold standard? The suggestion that we may devalue the gold dollar fifty per cent means national repudiation. It means dishonor. It is immoral."

Mr. Roosevelt and his planners evidently thought that when it had been cut loose from gold and made subject to devaluation the dollar would fall headlong of its own weight, and that as the dollar fell prices would rise.

How does the dollar fall? In buying power, simply. If it takes two dollars to buy what one dollar bought before you say the value of the dollar has fallen one-half.

Well, the dollar did fall. It would buy less gold than it did before, or it took more dollars to buy a pound sterling on the foreign exchange market; but it fell slowly, and much less than was expected, because after all it was still the best piece of money in the world. Whereupon the planners decided to club it down; and the club they used was gold.

The President announced that the government would buy, with paper dollars, all the gold the world would sell. Each morning thereafter the United States Treasury published the price it would pay in paper dollars for gold—one day 30 paper dollars for an ounce of gold, the next day 31 paper dollars, the next day 32—and so up to 35 paper dollars for an ounce of gold, which was a rise of more than 14 dollars an ounce from where it started.

The price—the paper dollar price for gold—was fixed each morning with the Secretary of the Treasury in Mr. Roosevelt's bedroom. It was great fun. One evening the Secretary of the Treasury wrote in his diary: "If anybody ever knew how we really set the gold price through a combination of lucky numbers, etc., I think they would be really frightened." He was himself frightened at that time. Later, in his published memoris,\* he wrote:

"F.D.R. was in a grand humor. 'I have had shackles on my hands for months now,' he said, 'and I feel for the first time as though I had thrown them off.' He rather enjoyed the

\* *The Morgenthau Diaries*, by Henry Morgenthau, Jr.

shock his policy gave to the international bankers. Montagu Norman of the Bank of England, whom F.D.R. called 'old pink whiskers,' wailed across the ocean: "This is the most terrible thing that has happened. The whole world will be put into bankruptcy." The President and I looked at each other, picturing foreign bankers with every one of their hairs standing on end with horror. I began to laugh. F.D.R. roared."

The fun stopped at 35 dollars for an ounce of gold. It stopped there probably because the effects had been disappointing. At that point the theoretical gold content of the dollar had been reduced more than four-tenths—theoretical, because by this time the only money current was an irredeemable paper dollar on which nobody could get any gold at all. So far as the holder of a paper dollar was concerned its gold content was imaginary.

The last step was to confiscate the gold. The government already had possession of it, since it was locked up in the Federal Reserve Bank vaults; but possession was not title. Now came another bill from the White House, which Congress immediately passed, vesting in the government absolute title to all the gold. The government took it and buried it at Fort Knox. That was confiscation, and bad enough; but there was one more trick. The government said: "When the Federal Reserve Banks took possession of this gold it was worth only \$20.67 an ounce. Now it is worth \$35 an ounce. The difference is profit and it belongs to the United States Treasury." It was not profit; it was bookkeeping. Nevertheless, the Treasury set it up in its books as profit, converted it into paper dollars, and spent the money. It was a sum of nearly \$2 billion.

To reduce the gold dollar to a piece of irredeemable piece of paper took fourteen months. In the process the President got physical possession of the public purse. How?

Seeing that inflation had been adopted as an instrument of public policy, so that the supply of dollars might be infinite, the Congress made enormous appropriations, \$3 billion and

\$4 billion at a time, and put the money in the President's hands to do with what he would. The ancient pork barrel was rolled into the cellar. States, cities and counties wanting Federal aid went no longer to their Senators and Representatives but direct to the President, who was saying: "Your government has the money. Bring on your projects."

## VII

# Prolapse

### MEANWHILE WHAT OF RECOVERY?

You enter now an area of controversy in which opinion rejects evidence and evidence disembowels opinion.

With the President saying that he could not foretell where he would stop the gyrations of the dollar, and with its daily value being published every morning by the United States Treasury like a lottery number, there could be no normal borrowing and lending of money. Senator Glass said: "No one outside of a lunatic asylum will lend his money today on a farm mortgage." Yet one of the acute problems of the moment was how to save farm mortgages from wholesale foreclosure for want of new lenders.

The effect was this—that when, by its manipulations of the dollar the government had made it absurd for private lenders to lend, it became itself the universal lender. Its money cost it nothing; it did not have to consider risk because the losses could be charged to the taxpayer. At rates of interest with which private lenders could not in any case compete it loaned public money to anybody for almost any purpose—to banks and railroads, to big business and little business, to persons wishing to start in business, to snake farms and beauty parlors, for scenic highways, for turning the Tennessee Valley into a Federal province, to municipalities for 1,643 school houses, 105 airports, 3,000 tennis courts, 3,300 storage dams,

103 golf courses, 5,800 traveling libraries, 1,658 medical and dental clinics, 36,000 miles of rural roads, 1,500 amateur theatrical productions, and so on and on.

Two ideas were running parallel—the idea of Recovery and the idea of Revolution.

“If it is a revolution,” said Mr. Roosevelt, “it is a peaceful one.”

Again: “The almost complete collapse of the American economic system that marked the beginning of my administration called for the tearing down of many unsound structures, the adoption of new methods and a rebuilding from the bottom up.”

Again: “It is to the extreme credit of the American people that this tremendous adjustment of our national life is being accomplished peacefully. . . . They have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. . . . We have demanded of many citizens that they surrender certain licenses to do as they please in their business relationships; but we have asked this in exchange for the protection which the state can give.”

And again: “It was an emergency that went to the roots of our agriculture, our commerce and our industry. . . . It could be cured only by a complete reorganization and a measured control of the economic structure.”

The voice was the voice of Roosevelt. Whether or not these were his own words, or even his own thoughts, the people never knew. He was surrounded by a cabal of intellectual revolutionaries who hated capitalism and named the capitalist the brigand of the skyscrapers. Publicly they talked of expelling the money changers from the temple and rebuilding the American house from the sills up. Privately they spoke of Mr. Roosevelt as the Kerensky of the American revolution.

In “The Revolution Was,” written by this author in the fifth year of the New Deal, you will find the following bit of analytical comment:

“Revolution in the modern case is no longer an uncouth

business. The ancient demagogic art, like every other art, has as we say, advanced. It has become in fact a science—a science of political dynamics. And your scientific revolutionary in spectacles regards force in a cold impartial manner. It may or may not be necessary. If not, so much the better; to employ it wantonly, or for the love of it, when it is not necessary, is vulgar, unintelligent and wasteful. Destruction is not the aim. The more you destroy the less there is to take over. Always the single end in view is the transfer of power.

“There was a prodigious literature of revolutionary thought concealed only by the respectability of its dress. Americans generally associated dangerous doctrine with bad printing, rude grammar and stealthy distribution. Here was revolutionary doctrine in well printed and well written books, alongside of best sellers at your bookstore or in competition with detectives on your news-dealer’s counter. As such it was all probably harmless, or it was about something that could happen in Europe, not here. A little communism on the newsstand like that might be good for us, in fact, regarded as a twinge of pain in a robust and somewhat reckless social body. One ought to read it, perhaps, just to know. But one had tried, and what dreary stuff it had turned out to be!

“To the revolutionary this same dreary stuff was exciting. It was knowledge that gave him a sense of power. One who mastered the subject to the point of excellence could be fairly sure of a livelihood by teaching and writing, that is, by imparting it to others, and meanwhile dream of passing at a single leap from mean obscurity to the prestige of one who assists in the manipulation of great happenings; while one who mastered it to the point of genius—that one might dream of becoming himself the next Lenin.

“A society so largely founded on material success in a system of free competitive enterprise would be liable to underestimate both the intellectual content of the revolutionary thesis and the quality of the revolutionary mind that was evolving in an envious academic world. At any rate, this so-



ciety did, and from the revolutionary point of view that was one of the peculiar felicities of the American opportunity.

“The revolutionary mind that did at length evolve was one of really superior intelligence, clothed with academic dignity, always sure of itself, supercilious and at ease in all circumstances. To entertain it became fashionable. You might encounter it anywhere, and nowhere more amusingly than at a banker’s dinner table, discussing the banker’s trade in a manner sometimes very embarrassing to the banker. Which of these brilliant young men in spectacles was of the cult and which was of the cabal—if there was a cabal—one never knew. Indeed, it was possible that they were not sure of it among themselves, a time having come when some of them were only playing with the thought of extremes while others were in deadly earnest, all making the same sounds. This was the beginning of mask and guise.”

For purposes of the Revolution, which altered perhaps forever the relationship between government and citizen—for the creation of what now we call the Welfare State in which the government becomes responsible for people instead of people being responsible for government—everything the New Deal did was right. Never again would it be assumed that the richest, the freest and the most self-resourceful people in the world until then, were able to house and clothe and feed themselves and to provide for their own old age without the aid of the Welfare State.

For Recovery, on the other hand, nearly everything the New Deal did was wrong or self-defeating.

Its three principal aims were (1) to restore prices, (2) to cheapen money for the benefit of debtors, and (3) to redistribute the national wealth in favor of low income people, especially the wage earners.

It is now to look at the means.

First, how to restore prices. The debasement of the dollar and a flood of irredeemable paper money would cause prices to rise, only perhaps not fast enough; but there was another

way to do it: That was to limit production and restrain competition.

Over-production and competition were Siamese twins of evil. The New Deal planners were sure of this; it became their fixed idea.

The President said: "We found ourselves faced with more agricultural products than we could possibly consume ourselves and surpluses which other nations did not have the cash to buy from us except at prices ruinously low. . . . We found our factories able to turn out more goods than we could possibly consume and at the same time we were faced with a falling export demand. We found ourselves with more facilities to transport goods and crops than there were goods and crops to be transported. All of this has been caused in large part by a complete lack of planning . . . The people have been erroneously encouraged to believe that they could keep on increasing the output of farm and factory indefinitely and that some magician would find ways and means for that increased output to be consumed with reasonable profit to the producer . . . *The cure is not to produce so much.*"

Fewer goods and higher prices.

Yet when it came to moving Social Security laws, such as unemployment compensation, old age pensions, old age insurance and general welfare, the President could say that one-third of the people were ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed. That became one of the New Deal's fighting statements. How the cure for that could be not to produce so much was never explained.

Two great braking mechanisms were invented, each with treadles for the government's feet; the treadles were *permission, coercion, compulsion*. One braking mechanism was the Agricultural Adjustment Act, called the AAA; the other was the National Industrial Recovery Act, called the NRA.

The AAA was set up in the Department of Agriculture. The Secretary of Agriculture was Henry Wallace, a fantast from the Corn Belt who lived in a non-existent world, be-

lieved every strange thing, and played with the boomerang.

It was already the middle of Spring; too late to stop planting and breeding. The alternative was to destroy growing crops. The AAA paid farmers to plow down as much as one-fourth of their cotton, wheat, corn and tobacco and to slaughter millions of little pigs before they could grow into pork—provided they would sign up to take orders from the government next year.

It was expected of course that this assault upon the nation's food supply would cause farmers' prices to rise. The effect was disappointing. For a while nobody could understand why. Then it appeared that there was going to be a surplus anyhow, because farmers all with one impulse cultivated their remaining acres more intensively and used much more fertilizer.

Next, by executive decree, the President created the Commodity Credit Corporation, provided it with \$3 billion of capital out of the public purse, and directed it to impound and store the surplus by lending farmers more on their crops than the crops were worth in the open market. If the price went up the farmer could pay off his loan, sell his crops, and keep the profit; if the price went down he laughed and the Commodity Credit Corporation was stuck.

For the next year the program of restriction was planned in time. The AAA determined how many acres should be planted to the basic crops, like cotton and wheat and corn, and allotted to each county in the country its share, according to its crop history. Then in each county was a committee of conforming farmers, acting as paid agents for the AAA, to hand allotments around to individual farmers and to see that nobody cheated. A Federal tax was imposed upon the processors of food and fibers,—the millers and meat packers and cotton ginners,—and out of this tax the farmers were paid for not producing.

The AAA said this was a democratic process because in

every county it was done by a majority vote of the farmers themselves. That was true. Yet what happened to the independent farmer who did not conform? He got no check from the United States Treasury for the time he passed in the shade of the apple tree instead of working, and he was denied access to loans from the Commodity Credit Corporation.

On these terms it was difficult for the independent farmer, called the non-signer, to compete with his subsidized neighbor; but if, by working harder than his neighbor he did compete successfully, then he learned that a beneficent government can be ruthless with those who scorn its blessings. A farmer sending cotton to the gin had to prove that it was lawful cotton and within his quota; if he exceeded his quota the excess was taxed at one-half its value and he could be fined and imprisoned. On potato growers, signers and non-signers alike, was imposed a control law that put a prohibitive tax, like a liquor tax, on potatoes exposed anywhere for sale, the trick being that the tax was rebated to farmers who had proper quotas to begin with and did not exceed them.

If only it had worked there would have been that to say for it. But it did not work. Total farm income was increased by the millions of mechanically printed checks that went from the U. S. Treasury to obedient farmers; the farm problem itself was hardly touched.

When a subsidized farmer retired acreage from production, under contract with the AAA, he naturally retired his poor acres. On the better acres he grew more than ever before, and although he might be producing a surplus, that was now all right because if he couldn't sell it at a profit in the open market the government would buy it at a *fair* price.

A fair price was one at which the farmer's buying power would remain constant. For example, if before the depression it took 100 bushels of wheat to buy a piece of farm machinery, then the price of wheat must be such that the same number of bushels would buy the same piece of farm ma-

chinery. That was called *parity* for the farmer; and once the government had undertaken to maintain farm prices at or near parity it never could stop.

The first AAA was overturned by the Supreme Court; a new one rose in place of it. But through all vicissitudes the formula, *parity prices for the farmer*, sustained by public subsidy, survived as a political imperative—with the result that for the benefit of agriculture food consumers were taxed twice, once on their income tax sheets to provide the money the government lost in its price-supporting operations and again at the grocery store, where they paid the prices.

The AAA created new problems. Big farmers with many acres to juggle fared much better than little farmers with only a few acres. The size of the checks that went to very big farmers was a scandal. Secondly, the planners had ill-considered the fact that taking millions of acres out of production would cause many tenant farmers, share croppers and farm hands to be expelled from the soil.

To take care of these the AAA evolved grand rehabilitation and resettlement schemes. It bought large tracts of land, built on them dwellings and barns and community halls, provided the seed and the tools and the supervision, and thus restored to the soil an uncounted number of farm families who would otherwise have been on the county relief rolls. Many of them were better off than they had ever been before; but the better these schemes worked the worse it was, because what the salvaged families produced was an addition to the agricultural surplus which the AAA was trying to kill.

\*

The other great braking mechanism was the National Industrial Recovery Act—called the NRA. The idea was that if *all* industry agreed to limit production, restrain competition, advance prices to a level where everybody would make a reasonable profit, abolish child labor, shorten the work week

and advance wages faster than prices, the Dragon Depression would lie down and die. Industry alone could not do this, because, first, if prices were going to be fixed by agreement the anti-trust laws would have to be suspended, and, secondly, industry could not trust itself to keep such agreements, even if it were legal, since it had no power to punish those who might break them.

That was what the NRA was for. The government would sanction price-fixing agreements and then police them; so also agreements to limit production, to freeze competition and not to build any new plants without a license. Simply, government would plan the activities of business and industry and control them.

The President said: “. . . in some respects government sits down at a table of partnership with business; but in others it exerts the superior authority of police power, to enforce fairness and justice as they should exist among the various elements in economic life . . . if an industry fails voluntarily to agree within itself, unquestioned power must rest in the government.”

All the consequences were grotesque.

Business embraced the idea with enthusiasm. It was sick; it had been without profit for a long time. All it could see at first was that each industry, each trade, each segment of business, was going to be asked to write its own agreement—to be called a Code—and the government was going to seal it. True, it might be putting itself into a strait garment; at least it would be a garment with pockets in it. Popular demonstrations were organized in the cities. In New York City a quarter of a million people marched to celebrate the obsequies of depression.

To administer the NRA the President appointed Gen. Hugh Johnson, retired—an Oklahoma soldier with a genius for extensive organization, a little law, a little economics, a fury of invective, a passion for hippodrome and a weakness for blowing his fuses. Power was his firewater.

Nearly every business, from steel and motor car makers down to butchers, had some kind of trade association; if not it could get one up in a hurry. Johnson summoned the trade associations to appear before him in Washington, received their genuflections coldly, lectured them, bullied them, rode them hard as they wrote their Codes and knocked their heads together if he caught them trying to put something over on the government; then he sent them home with their Codes in one hand and lithographs of the Blue Eagle in the other. Your Blue Eagle, whoever you were, was to show that you had signed with NRA to do your part, and, above all, that you were not a chisler. A chisler was one who charged less than the Code price; and he was a public enemy.

Suddenly the Blue Eagle was everywhere, like something that happens to the landscape in the night—in every store window, in the barber shop, on the bank door, on office walls, at the factory gate, over the news-dealer's stand.

Its significance was that of the brass serpent held aloft by Moses. If you looked upon it and believed you were saved from the fiery serpents sent by God to scourge a willful people. The fiery serpents in this case were little bands of NRA workers, with NRA pencils and paper in their hands, going to and fro in the streets and through public places, aggressively demanding that people stop in their tracks and sign a pledge to boycott any place of business that did not display the Blue Eagle. That was Johnson at his worst and best.

He proclaimed: "May Almighty God have mercy on anyone who attempts to trifle with that bird."

A little tailor in Jersey City did. He pressed a pair of pants for five cents less than the price fixed by the Tailor's Code. For that he was haled to Court, fined and sent to prison. The storm of derision and ridicule that broke upon the NRA's head got him out of jail; but he had learned his lesson, and promised thereafter to keep the Code.

Nevertheless, Johnson succeeded in creating a kind of mass hysteria for the Blue Eagle. Those who refused to sign up

were denounced as chislers and social hyenas and were boycotted, besides. Very few could withstand the pressure. One who did was Henry Ford, standing alone in the motor industry and alone against his own associates. Another was Senator Carter Glass, who said that sooner than see the Blue Eagle in its window he would happily watch his Virginia newspaper plant burn down.

Organized labor was friendly to the Blue Eagle because, in the first place, the NRA plan was that wages should rise faster than prices, and because, secondly, the National Industrial Recovery Act contained a charter for unionism. That was the famous Section 7a, which had to be included in every Code; and it provided that labor should have the right to bargain collectively through representatives of its own choosing, touching such matters as minimum wages, minimum hours and conditions of work. To administer that part of the law the President created a National Labor Relations Board which was much more sympathetic to the wage earner than to the employer.

Thus the three great divisions of economic life—agriculture, business and labor—had been brought within the sphere of planned benefaction. The AAA was to give the farmers a larger share of the national income. The NRA was to guarantee business a reasonable profit. And this charter for unionism was intended so to strengthen the bargaining power of labor that it would be able, by its own exertions, to increase its share of the national income.

One by one these New Deal measures had to come before the Supreme Court, on one question—were they Constitutional?

The gold cases arrived first. A majority of the Court held that although it was immoral and illegal for the government to repudiate the obligation to redeem its bonds and its money in gold, and conscienceless, still there was nothing to be done about it. The sovereign power had no conscience. Moreover, it was too difficult for any individual to prove his loss.



In a dissenting opinion three Justices said: "The loss of reputation for honorable dealing will bring us unending humiliation; the impending legal and moral chaos is appalling."

Justice McReynolds read the dissenting opinion and added orally: "This is Nero at his worst. The Constitution is gone."

By the time NRA came before the Court the Blue Eagle was dying of intestinal obstruction. The Court cut off its head.

Then came the AAA and that was struck down.

The legal objection in both cases was that the powers delegated by Congress were vague and undelimited; underlying them, however, was a deep traditional feeling against Big Government, against extending bureaucratic Federal power over the economic life of the nation, against the encroachment of this power upon the sovereignty of states. Simply, the Court was Conservative.

This was the beginning of a feud between the President and the Supreme Court that rocked the country.

First, Mr. Roosevelt attacked the decisions, saying they belonged to the nation's horse and buggy days, that they ruined the New Deal, that now the chislers and exploiters of labor would return to the feast, wages would fall, hours of labor would lengthen, and so on and on—none of which happened.

Then he attacked the Court itself, saying its reactionary members had apparently resolved to stay on the bench so long as life continued for the sole purpose of blocking any program of reform; and he went on to invoke against it a bitterness of class feeling that had reverberations all the way down to the striking automobile workers in Detroit, who, having seized physical possession of the plants, sat there day after day derisively chanting: "*Nine Old Men. Nine Old Men.*"

Mr. Roosevelt had so represented it. Laws for the people which he had promised and which Congress had passed were being nullified by a Court of nine old men.

His argument drew plausibility from the fact that the Supreme Court was itself divided. There was a minority of three, sometimes four, that held for so construing the Constitution as to enable the government directly to intervene more and more in the social and economic concerns of the country; and this minority had again and again denounced the conservative majority for usurping the policy-making power of Congress. How? By deciding first whether a law was good or bad and then construing the Constitution in support of that opinion.

Thus it was that on a bench of nine Justices, if two conservatives, or perhaps only one, could be replaced by a New Deal thinker the mind of the Court might be changed. Since the beginning of his term Mr. Roosevelt had been unable to appoint one Justice. The old ones held on; no one died and no one retired. He had been saying nevertheless that he would find a way out.

The idea was perhaps his own. Suddenly he asked Congress to pass a law providing as follows: That when a Justice reached 70 and refused to retire on full pay the President could appoint an additional Justice, until if necessary there might be a bench of fifteen instead of nine. Four of the Justices were already past 70; therefore he could appoint four at once, and these four of course would be friends of the New Deal.

The reactions to this proposal were all unexpected.

First, nine Justices who had been divided on questions of Constitutional construction united as one to defend the political independence of the Court as a co-equal arm of government.

Secondly, there was a roar of popular disapproval. Even to people who had disliked many of the Court's decisions the thought of its being packed by the political party that happened to be in power was intolerable. Party lines broke down. After several gloomy conferences with the President his own leaders in Congress told him bluntly that they could

not pass his law if they wanted to; they didn't have the votes.

The President was obstinate and angry. To what extreme he might have pushed his case will never be known, for just then, to everybody's astonishment, the Supreme Court began to change its way of thinking.

As the nine Justices had presented a solid front against Mr. Roosevelt's Court packing plan, so now they united to execute a policy of retreat, under the leadership of the Chief Justice, Charles Evans Hughes, who came to be less hopeful that the power of Executive Government could be limited than fearful that the wind that was rising would blow the Court down. It was Mr. Justice Hughes who had said: "The Constitution is what the judges say it is." Thus, the difference between a liberal and a conservative interpretation of the words of the Constitution might very well alter the nature of government.

For example, the Preamble of the Constitution says the purpose is to "provide for the common defense and promote the general welfare," etc. Then Section 8 says the Congress shall have the power to levy taxes to "provide for the common defense and the general welfare of the United States," etc. Which word will you take—*promote* or *provide*? If you say that to *promote* the general welfare is the same as to *provide* for the general welfare, then you are bound to concede that a Welfare State may rise within the Constitution. But until now these words had never been so construed. The function of government had been to promote the general welfare; not to provide it.

The Court's first step in retreat was to reverse itself in order to uphold a minimum wage law for women in the State of Washington. Then for four years it did not again declare an act of Congress unconstitutional. One by one it upheld slightly revised versions of the laws it had struck down, including a new AAA and a new Labor Relations law that was much more favorable to organized labor than the one that went down with the NRA. This one made unionism in ef-

fect compulsory. To administer it the President appointed a Board that consistently favored the radical Congress of Industrial Organizations over the conservative American Federation of Labor. That was before the C.I.O. had purged itself of unions that were dominated by Communists. One member of the Board turned out later to be a registered agent of Soviet Russia.

Parts of the original NRA law were re-enacted, such as a little NRA for the soft coal industry, and were upheld by the Court.

For the New Deal's purposes the most useful piece of elastic in the Constitution was the interstate commerce clause, which gave Congress the power "to regulate commerce among the several states." This the Supreme Court now stretched to give the Federal Government hitherto unimagined power over the country's economic life. The government did not have to say to the citizens of the several states that certain things were unlawful and therefore forbidden. It had only to say, "Unless you fulfill certain conditions your goods shall not move in interstate commerce."

Came then the Fair Labor Standards Act, fixing minimum wages and maximum hours, nationwide; a punitive law called Tax the Wealth Act, in which for the first time taxation was employed not to produce revenue but as an instrument of social policy to redistribute the national wealth; and the Social Security Act, which introduced the principle of compulsory thrift by means of a pay roll tax to provide for unemployment compensation and old age pensions.

The wage earner would no longer find in his pay envelope the full reward of his labor to do with what he would. The government would put its fingers in the pay envelope first to extract a portion of his wage to be saved for his benefit, on the simple ground that he was probably improvident and could not be trusted to do his own saving. The pay roll tax was divided between the employee and the employer, except of course that the employer would add his share of it to the

selling price of his goods; the entire proceeds of the tax were payable to the Federal Government, which would hold the money in trust. Actually, as the money came in the government would spend it for general purposes and put in place of it its own IOU's, to be redeemed when the benefits came due; so that in the reserve fund, which presently amounted to many billions of dollars, there was no money at all but only more government debt—a debt owing to the beneficiaries of the Social Security scheme. To pay that debt ultimately the government would have either to increase taxes or borrow.

Social Security was the New Deal's most tempting red apple. But as the government held it out to people with one hand it introduced with the other hand the worm that would devour it. The worm was inflation. In any case, it was a specious fruit. The employed would continue to support the unemployed and the young would continue to support the old, as they always had done, since there is no one else to do it; so that all the government was in fact saying was this: "Yes, you have always done it, but you have done it very badly. Now your government will see that you do it well. It will tax you while you work and tax you while you are young, and give you back the money when and as you need it."

The employer's contribution to the pay roll tax was illusory because of course he added it to the labor cost of producing goods and passed it on to the consumer. Otherwise wages might have been a little higher or prices a little lower. Thus, after the Social Security system had been set up it was still as it was before. Out of their wages and earnings people continued to provide their own security against the vicissitudes of life, but with these two differences: (1) that thrift now was compulsory, and (2) that their savings passed from their own hands to the hands of government and would be used to support not only the unemployed and the old but to support also a vast administrative bureaucracy.

In all these New Deal laws there was infringement of the individual's liberty. The employer was no longer free to hire and fire whom he would, nor to buy labor below a certain price; neither side to the labor contract was free. An American boy, with a tear in his eye and adventure in his heart, was no longer free to steal away over the kitchen roof at night and go forth to meet the world; there was no work for him in the world out there because the law said he was child labor and any employer who hired him would be forbidden access to the channels of interstate commerce. The wage earner had to have a union card and a Social Security number. The farmer was no longer free to do what he would with his own ground or his own wheat. No wage earner was any longer free to be so improvident as to consume the whole of his own earnings and forget his old age.

To enforce these laws it was necessary to create new agencies of government. Each new agency issued its own rules and regulations, having the force of law; and in a little while these administrative agencies were passing ten times as many laws as Congress, all binding on the people.

So bureaucratic authority developed and became not only aggressive but indispensable—indispensable, that is, if the hand of government was going to touch every kind of human activity. Congress, the only elective law-making body, could pass only general laws, and then only after long debate; whereas the administrative agencies could pass specific laws, which were sometimes not printed at all but only mimeographed, and often got mislaid at the source. The confusion was unbearable until they were required to publish their laws in a bulletin called the *Federal Register*. After that anybody who wanted to know what the law was—even a member of Congress—had to read the *Federal Register*.

And not only did the administrative agency make its own laws—that is, rules and regulations having the force of law—but when it came to the enforcement of them it acted as prosecutor, jury and judge, all three in one, and appeals from

its decisions to regular courts of law were, for technical reasons, costly and difficult.

All of this took place in the executive sphere of government, with its axis in the Office of the President. Never before had the executive principle of government been so exalted—over the parliamentary principle, which is the Congress, and the judicial principle, which is the Supreme Court.

But this was a new time. Jealous individualism was waning. These New Deal laws were popular with the people; and the Supreme Court, after having liberalized itself, consistently upheld them. Two of the conservative Justices retired. In their room Mr. Roosevelt appointed men to his own liking. Then Chief Justice Hughes, who apparently thought he had saved the Court from disaster, resigned, and that was the end of the feud. The President had won. As it turned out the Supreme Court did the New Deal no harm at all. It got all the laws it really wanted.

## VIII

# Unplanned Debacle

AFTER THE ENACTMENT OF THE TAX THE WEALTH ACT—a law that taxed wealth as such and was frankly designed to shave big incomes and bring about “a wider distribution of wealth”—Mr. Roosevelt announced that the New Deal program “has now reached substantial completion,” and that business could have a “breathing spell.” Revolution would nod for a while. Now Recovery, come forth! That was toward the end of the third year.

Owing a little no doubt to this gesture of conciliation, but much more to the inflationary effects of the New Deal’s freedom with the public purse and its deficit spending and all those emergency measures called priming the pump, and owing somewhat also to an aching resilience in the economic system, there was a false recovery. It lasted eighteen months and enabled Mr. Roosevelt to go into the next Presidential campaign with the question, “Are you better off?” and the exulting assertion, “We planned it that way,” and a gleeful book entitled, “On Our Way.” The rate of deficit spending was reduced, there was talk of balancing the budget, the hours of labor were shortened at the pump which had been forcing paper money into the nation’s monetary arteries. It might be that in a little while the pump could be honorably enshrined, or better still, it might be used to mark the grave of *laissez faire*.

The planners were wonderfully excited. They had done it.



Perhaps they had done too much. This might turn into a boom. They didn't want a boom. Their next job, therefore, might be to demonstrate that as they could cure a depression so they could stop a boom. Their new theme was equilibrium.

Then suddenly everything flattened out. It had been only a little whirlwind of prosperity. It came and danced away. In the fifth year it was bitterly evident not only that the wheels of Recovery had lost their traction and were spinning in the sand, but that depression had returned.

Steel production fell to one-fifth of capacity.

Nearly one-third of the country's railroad mileage was in receivership.

The New York Stock Exchange had seizures of panic, almost as bad as in 1929.

Commodity prices fell headlong.

Industrial production declined more than one-quarter.

Unemployment rose again, until it was almost as bad as it was at the very worst of the Great Depression.

More than one person in ten through the whole population was on relief.

The Secretary of the Treasury wrote in his diary: \*

"Seven million shares changed hands while prices skidded amid an hysteria resembling a mob in a theatre fire . . . The production index started to decline. Panic overcame the business community."

What was wrong?

For the other principal countries of the world the year 1932 had been the low point of the Great Depression. They had been steadily climbing out of it since—all save France, which had a New Deal of her own, and Canada, which in spite of herself was tied to the American economy.

Why was this country's national income only three-quarters of what it had been in 1929 while the national income of Great Britain had not only fully recovered but was higher than ever before?

\* *The Morgenthau Diaries*, by Henry Morgenthau, Jr.

Why was unemployment chronic and irreducible in this country, the richest in the world, while elsewhere it was falling?

Why was the United States the great laggard?

There could be only one answer. Revolution was not the right medicine for Recovery. This the planners would not believe, least of all Mr. Roosevelt, who said big business was wrecking recovery in a spirit of revenge.

James A. Farley tells of a Cabinet meeting at which the President was urged to say or do something that might allay the fear neurosis that controlled the mind of business; to which Mr. Roosevelt said: "I know who is responsible for this situation. Business, particularly the banking industry, has ganged up on me."\*

The Secretary of the Treasury tells how on the telephone one night the President, "very excited and disagreeable," said "a wise old bird" had just told him that "business was deliberately causing the depression in order to hold a pistol at his head and force a retreat from the New Deal."

Well, but no matter whose fault it was, what were they going to do about it—the planners? There was only one thing they could think of to do—only one thing they knew how to do. That was to start the money pump again at high speed. More deficit spending, more inflation, more debt.

The Congress threw another \$5 billion into the public purse, to be spent—for what? For Recovery?

No, not for Recovery any more. The old idea of Recovery had to be reconsidered in the light of a new theory. Solemnly expounded by the New Deal economists, with charts and diagrams and slide rules, and in many tomes of economic dialectic from the Public Printer, the new theory was as follows.

What happened in the dire year 1929 was after all not entirely Mr. Hoover's fault. The fact was that in that year the expansion of the American economy came to an end. We

\* *Jim Farley's Story*, by James A. Farley.

had arrived at a finished economy. Never again would it be able to provide the people with adequate buying power; never again would there be jobs enough to go around; unemployment was not a temporary evil, calling for emergency measures; it was a permanent disability inherent in a static economy that could not expand any more.

So then what? Well, so then the duty of the government was clear. If the free economy could not provide people with enough buying power, the government would have to do it; if the free economy could not provide enough jobs, the government must create jobs. That would mean, maybe, continuous and unlimited deficit spending by the government, not as an emergency matter but as a matter of settled public policy. It would mean also a progressive increase of the national debt. But what of that? The national debt was only something we owed to ourselves—everybody to everybody else—and it might safely increase to infinity—and, besides, it was never going to be paid.

This was probably the low point of economic intelligence for all time; and in view of what happened in the next twenty years, during which the country increased its industrial power to approximately one-half of that of all the rest of the world together and scattered tens of billions among foreign nations for war and post-war recovery, many eminent economists would like very much to forget it.

On that dirge for a nation that was finished the New Deal came to an end.

It never did restore employment.

It never did restore the national income.

It failed to bring about a recovery comparable to that of other nations.

What saved it from a sequel of total failure, so far as Recovery was concerned, was first a great Defense Program and then World War II.

The Defense Program, moved by fear of Hitler's Germany, had a kind of miraculous timeliness. Work projects on which

to spend government money were being used up. Many communities were refusing schools and stadiums and airports because the cost of supporting them after they were built would be too much for the local taxpayers. But a Defense Program—that was national and unlimited. And that is why at first it was regarded as a vast boondoggling project. The idea was not how to get the most defense for the least money but how to spend the money with inflationary effect and produce the maximum number of jobs.

If the New Deal did not bring about Recovery, what did it do?—what did it buy with its billions? It did what Aristotle was thinking of more than 3,000 years ago when he wrote: “. . . it is by small degrees that one thing takes the place of another; so that the ancient laws will remain, while the power will be in the hands of those who have brought about a revolution in the state.”

Revolution within the form.

Mr. Roosevelt himself said it this way: “It is the first time in our history that the nation as a whole and regardless of party has approved drastic changes in the methods and forms of the functions of government, without destroying the basic principles.”

Revolution within the form. The Constitution was not rewritten; not a line of it was changed. Only the words were reconstrued.

Like a hagfish, the New Deal entered the old form and devoured its meaning from within. The revolutionaries were inside; the defenders were outside. A government that had been supported by the people and so controlled by the people became one that supported the people and so controlled them. Much of it was irreversible. That was true because habits of dependence are much easier to form than to break. Once the government, on grounds of public policy, has assumed the responsibility to provide people with buying power when they are in want of it, according to a minimum proclaimed by the government, it will never be the same again.

In the statement quoted above, from Mr. Roosevelt's book "On Our Way," he says the nation approved. It is true that in 1936 he was re-elected by a very large vote; but by that time the beneficiaries of the Welfare State were many millions, whereas the number that had so far been hurt was relatively small. So it will be in the first few years of inflation.

Nevertheless, this approval was after the fact. The people did not vote for a New Deal in the first place, nor anything remotely like it. The Democratic Party platform in 1932 was a conservative platform. First of all it promised a drastic reduction of government. To limit government had been a sacred party tradition—since Thomas Jefferson, who said the ever-present danger was that government would advance and liberty recede, or since Woodrow Wilson, who said: "The history of liberty is a history of the limitation of governmental power, not the increase of it."

Furthermore, the Democratic Party platform of 1932 promised an end to deficit spending, a balanced budget and sound money.

During the campaign Mr. Roosevelt protested that he accepted this platform not in the cynical manner of many other candidates but literally and as a covenant, and he would have no man in his Cabinet who did not first pledge "absolute loyalty to it."

That is what people thought they were voting for when they elected Mr. Roosevelt the first time.

What they got was—

(1) A multiplication of the bureaus and agencies of government so fast that the Controller in the Treasury sometimes lost track of them;

(2) An extension of the interventive, punitive and ameliorative powers of government so extraordinary that no citizen could know for sure how to walk within the law—and over it all a doctrine of *unlimited* government;

(3) Deficits so large as to make the Hoover deficits look

like an insolvent piggy bank. Hoover's deficits were owing to a fall in revenues; the Roosevelt deficits were owing to a prodigal way with the public purse, the defense of it being the doctrine that deficit spending must be a permanent fact of public policy, necessary to keep money in the pockets of the people, and that national solvency was a fetich, and,

(4) In place of sound money, an irredeemable paper currency.

In the words of Professor Walter E. Spahr: "So long as a government has the power over a people that is provided by an irredeemable currency, all efforts to stop a government disposed to lead a people into socialism tend to be, and probably will be, futile. The evidence seems overwhelming that a defender of irredeemable currency is, wittingly or unwittingly, an advocate of socialism or of government dictatorship in some form."

## IX

# The Red Snake

WHEN THE CONSERVATIVE PLATFORM CAME BACK TO HAUNT Mr. Roosevelt, he said: "I was able conscientiously to give full assent to this platform and to develop its purposes in campaign speeches. A campaign, however, is apt to partake so much of the character of a debate and the discussion of individual points that the deeper and more permanent philosophy of the whole plan (where one exists) is often lost."

In his second campaign (1936) the Democratic Party began to split. The defection of its conservative elements, however, was more than made good by the running together of all radicals in his support. No President had ever catered to this radical vote before.

Here are strange lights and shadows. The lights are dim and the shadows run into darkness.

Although it was very strong in the cities—strong enough in New York perhaps to hold the balance of power between the two principal parties—it was never possible to give a precise description of the radical vote. It wore generally a democratic garment over coats of many colors. The Communists provided it with its brains and armed it with the sweet vials of class hatred. Then came the fellow-travelers, the sultry side of labor, the enemies of the capitalistic system, social rebels, disaffected intellectuals, and those calling themselves liberals who had turned the old liberalism upside down and

thought the blessings of the Welfare State were more important than liberty.

To many of these—to the Communists especially—Mr. Roosevelt had endeared himself by extending recognition to Soviet Russia—a thing four Presidents before him—Wilson, Harding, Coolidge and Hoover—had refused to do on moral grounds. After that the New Deal presented a porous surface to sinister infiltration by Communists, both native born and aliens, all holding allegiance to a foreign power. They were very intelligent, schooled in intrigue, secretly conspiratorial and organized in cells; and rapidly advanced to policy making levels in every department of government, especially the State Department, the Treasury and the new administrative bureaus and agencies that were being created.

The American people are temperamentally disqualified to comprehend intrigue. For a while they were either blind to what was taking place or unaware of its meaning. Cries of alarm were treated with derision. Was not the Communist Party a legal political party, entitled to its own ticket at election time? It was. The President kept saying that his enemies, who of course were the people's enemies too, were using Communism as a red herring to harass him. Mrs. Roosevelt was openly entertaining young Communists at the White House.

When the House of Representatives set up the Un-American Activities Committee to explore subversion in high office it was ridiculed by the radicals of course, and also by the entire cult of neo-liberalism; more than that, it was hindered by the government. Evidence existing in executive files was withheld from its examination and some of it was mysteriously destroyed. One day the leaders of a Communist front organization named the American Youth Congress appeared before the Committee. Their chaperon was the President's wife. They treated the Committee to a show of adolescent insolence, and when they were through Mrs. Roosevelt took them directly to a White House party. The next day in her



daily newspaper column she expressed her disesteem for the Committee. Years later she confessed that she had been deceived.

The Un-American Activities Committee went doggedly on. Little by little the evidence was drawn forth. It was so incredible that for a while people could hardly believe it. There were rings within rings of espionage and treason; there was a continuous traffic in secret documents, and the trail of guilt led up and up until high officers of government were involved, in the State Department, in the Treasury, in the Department of Commerce, in the Department of Agriculture, even in the White House. They became men of prestige, who acted upon foreign policy, and had legal access to the secret files.

Before they were suspected they were already so widely and deeply entrenched that they could be self-protecting. As workers for the government they all talked the New Deal language and wrote a great deal of its propaganda; that was their protective coloration; as agents of a foreign power they were invisible in the light. The State Department's most distinguished career man was the charming Alger Hiss, who wore a perfect mask and defied suspicion. It took several years to expose him and get him into jail, and that was the work of the Un-American Activities Committee, with no assistance whatever from the State Department.

Why these Communists enjoyed for so long a kind of immunity in high places is a question that was not answered at the time, nor at any time since. It is not enough to say that in the New Deal there was a natural sympathy for social rebels, and that it included Communists. No quality of sympathy could cover espionage and treason. Nor would it be much of an answer to say the government might have thought that if it could save the Communists from exposure it would be able to hide the innocent stains on its own garments.

If Mr. Roosevelt had been at heart a Communist, that

would explain everything; but the evidence altogether is that he was not. In fact, the strange probability is that he never did comprehend the Marxian thesis and that he had no philosophy of government at all. Nowhere in his speeches or writings will you find it; you will find only discontinuous ideas about government. He was a font of action; not a source of thought. He loved the daring and immediate solution, one problem at a time, like dragon killing. Nevertheless, out of the New Deal's acts a pattern did emerge—a very definite pattern,—as if there had been a master mind. Yet it could not have been his mind. It was not that kind of instrument.

His true character was a riddle to the end. He surrounded himself with young intellectuals who did his abstract thinking for him. That was his brain trust. They knew him perhaps better than he knew himself. They were brilliant theorists who had nothing to lose, all a little drunk with a sense of power, and all—or nearly all of them—imbued with a thesis of scientific revolution. This was their chance to make a new world.

Now, it is probable that as they handed up to him their solutions, for one problem at a time, he accepted them and understood them only as specific remedies, whereas one who had known more about the science of government would have been able to see that when you put several of them together they had a certain trend, which was toward a dictatorial Welfare State, with great power over people's lives. There was that trend; there was almost certainly that intention. Did the President know it? It might have been somewhat like the game of tick-tack-toe, where two players alternately make marks, anywhere they choose, in a figure of nine squares, and you win if you can get three marks in a row—in the horizontal, the vertical or the diagonal.

At different times several men—Senator Glass for one and a worried Director of the Budget for another—went to Mr. Roosevelt saying all of them in effect the same thing: “Mr.

President, we urge you to open your mind to the possibility that some of the young men around you have a design you are not aware of, and advise you accordingly."

And to each of them Mr. Roosevelt said the same thing: "Now you! Are you seeing things? Whom do you suspect? Where are these Machiavellian people you speak of? Maybe they are listening. Do you want to look under the bed?"

### *Marginalia*

Coincidence is straw for the bricks of history. Unless you suppose it is ground in the mills of the gods you are lost for an explanation of many historic ruins.

Was it coincidence that when the New Deal was in the slough President Roosevelt turned his mind, and the mind of his country, to foreign affairs? That would be the old, old device of statesmanship.

Therefore, my Harry  
 Be thy course to busy giddy minds  
 With foreign quarrels; that action hence born out  
 May waste the memory of former days.

—*Henry IV*, SHAKESPEARE.

On the verge of the Civil War, Lincoln's Secretary of State, William H. Seward, prepared an argument for picking a fight with France and Spain; the distraction of a foreign war, he believed, would unite the North and South in martial fervor and absorb their angry passions.

The motive is classic. Indeed, it is so common in the long story of willful government that historians do not permit themselves to be scandalized by it. Thus, in the "Rise of American Civilization," by the Beards, you may find this gentle passage: "That a great campaign of education, or a foreign war, or both, was required to allay the distemper of the time was now apparent to persons of conservative inclination."

Coincidence or not, the fact is that the New Deal was in serious trouble and the planners were in a mood of funk, when on October 5, 1937, in Chicago, Mr. Roosevelt made his ominous Quarantine Speech.

First he drew a terrifying picture of the state of the world. A reign of terror. A haunting fear of calamity. The aggressor abroad on his murderous occasions. It was perhaps as someone else had said, that "we foresee a time when man, exultant in the technique of homicide, will rage so hotly over the world that every precious thing will be in danger . . . all will be lost or wrecked or utterly destroyed."

Then in his own words Mr. Roosevelt said: "If these things come to pass in other parts of the world, let no one imagine that America will escape; that America may expect mercy, that the Western Hemisphere will not be attacked." Therefore, peace loving nations must unite to stop world lawlessness; they must join together to quarantine the aggressor.

He could not risk pushing that thought to its logical end; it grew a bit fuzzy and he finished it with these words: "When an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread, the community approves and joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease."

No appalling thing had suddenly occurred in the world. Hitler was still raging at the Versailles Treaty, Mussolini was trampling the Ethiopians, there was civil war in Spain and Japan was overrunning China—but all of this was already old in the headlines; and to help chain the aggressor down was the most irrelevant thought that could have been presented at that moment to the American people.

They took the Quarantine Speech badly. It scared them. Also, they were confounded, because until then Mr. Roosevelt, by his own words, had been an isolationist. For four years he had been saying so, with such utterances as these:

(1933) "The definite policy of the United States from now on is one opposed to armed intervention."

(1934) "I have made it clear that the United States cannot take part in political arrangements in Europe."

(1935, to a graduating class at West Point) "As a nation we have been very fortunate in geographic isolation, which in itself has partially protected our boundless resources."

(1935) "The American people can speak but one sentiment: despite what happens in continents overseas, the United States of America shall and must remain, as long ago the Father of our country prayed that it might remain,—unentangled and free."

(1936, after Hitler had marched into the Rhineland and after the fall of Ethiopia) "We have perhaps a kind of sympathy for their problems. We want to help them all we can: but they have understood very well in these latter years that the help is going to be confined to moral help, and that we are not going to get tangled up with their troubles in the days to come."

(1936) "We shun political commitments which might entangle us in foreign wars; we avoid connection with the political activities of the League of Nations. We are not isolationists except in so far as we seek to isolate ourselves completely from war."

The reaction to the Quarantine Speech was at first so hostile that Mr. Roosevelt returned to the theme of peace, but with diminishing accent on absolute neutrality. Peace by all means. Peace if humanly possible. Peace as the one constant aim of "your government," but with now and then an in-phrased *but*.

That was true of his broadcast speeches only. In other communications more or less protected, as in briefing sessions with groups of editors or sometimes at a press conference where no direct quotes were permitted, the *buts* were more frequent and sharper, doubts and misgivings were discovered, the aspect of the aggressor became more and more fearsome, and America's danger all the time rising.

Later it became known that the first Industrial Mobiliza-

tion Plan was prepared in the year of the Quarantine Speech.

There began the path to war. It was a tortuous path, in which, for its false and hypnotic twistings, it was easy to lose your sense of direction. There was probably only one man who knew for sure where it would come out, and he was followed by 150 million unwitting people.



# BOOK FIVE

---

## I

### Stalking a War

WHEN CONGRESSWOMAN CLARE BOOTH LUCE SAID, "PRESIDENT Roosevelt lied us into war," people were shocked. It was a scandalous thing to say; it was more than people were willing to believe of the President of the United States.

Then later, when the evidence was overwhelming, Mr. Roosevelt's ardent defenders shifted their ground. They no longer denied it. They said in effect: Well, suppose he did. To save the country he had to do it.

The clearest statement of what the members of Mr. Roosevelt's cabinet learned to call the great dilemma was written by a professor of history who afterward wished not to be quoted apart from the context of his book. What he said was that during the period before Pearl Harbor the President repeatedly deceived the people. Why? Because, when he warned them against the aggressors he was branded as a sensationalist; when he pointed to the perils of storm-cellar neutrality he was branded an interventionist; when he urged adequate armaments he was branded a warmonger. He faced



a terrible dilemma. If he let the people slumber in a fog of isolation they might fall prey to Hitler. If he came out unequivocally for intervention he would be defeated in 1940 or shelved for a candidate more willing to let the masses enjoy their fool's paradise. If he was going to induce the people to act at all he would have to trick them into acting for their best interests, or what he conceived to be their best interest.

What if the people had been told the truth?

The dire thought is explored by Robert E. Sherwood, in his book, "Roosevelt and Hopkins." Sherwood's status was that of court historian. He was an intimate of Roosevelt's alter ego, Harry Hopkins; he was an active member of the last brain trust and one of Mr. Roosevelt's ghost writers. Of the early Lend-Lease days—that was while people still believed that Mr. Roosevelt was intent upon keeping them out of war—Sherwood writes: "The very existence of any American-British joint plans, however tentative, had to be kept utterly secret. It is an ironic fact that in all probability no great damage would have been done had the details of these plans fallen into the hands of the Germans or the Japanese, whereas if they had fallen into the hands of Congress and the press, American preparation for war might have been well nigh wrecked and ruined." He defines as a common-law marriage the "alliance which existed between the United States and Great Britain," and goes on to say: "It was certainly not recognized as such in such jurisdictions as the Congress, and if the isolationists had known the full extent of it, their demands for the impeachment of President Roosevelt would have been a great deal louder. But it was a fact of incalculable importance in the whole process of American preparedness for war."

How to take a free nation into war against its will. That was the problem.

The people, if not resolute, were obstinate. Mr. Roosevelt himself said:\* "There can be no question that the people of

\* Marginal annotation on the 1939 volume of his *Public Papers*.

the United States in 1939 were determined to remain neutral in fact and deed." They had passed laws about it—laws forbidding the shipment of arms to any nation at war, and to outlaw loans and credits to belligerent nations, and to keep American citizens and American vessels from where war was. Almost they were willing to abandon the old American doctrine of freedom of the seas for neutrals. Also they were debating an amendment to the Constitution to say the country could not go to war without a vote of the people, i.e., a referendum; and that would have removed from Congress its Constitutional power to declare war.

To wend his contrary way toward war without a single false step and at the same time to keep an unwilling people with him was a feat of statecraft for which Mr. Roosevelt was peculiarly qualified in mind and character. It took daring, rare subtlety, an intuition for right timing and the entirety of his power to cajole the mass mind. That was an extraordinary power, beyond reason or analysis, and almost infallible.

From this time on there was a Roosevelt nobody knew. His old brain trust melted away, some of its members feeling that he had betrayed the future of the New Deal for the role of world leadership. What succeeded it was not a new brain trust but a retinue, to whom his will was instant law. He arrived at momentous decisions by a process nobody understood and then announced them in a casual manner, as if he had just thought of them, which was not the case. He had long periods of incubation during which he might seem exasperatingly carefree and jovial.

It was as if he worked behind a one-way screen. Those inside could see out; nobody outside could see in; and within that screen another one for himself alone, so that even his retinue could not see what he was doing.

One who sat inside the first screen was Robert E. Sherwood, who writes: "Roosevelt never overlooked the fact that his actions might lead to his immediate or eventual impeach-

ment. Having taken the oath of office as President three times, he knew it by heart, and was well aware that he was sworn not only to *uphold* but to *defend* the Constitution of the United States. It was a matter of his own judgment—and the judgment of his advisers whom he was empowered to appoint—as to where that defense should begin.”

One effect was that the sanity of communications was threatened. Simple understanding was sunk in a kind of purposeful confusion. The integrity of language was impaired when something could equal nothing and *yes* and *no* were cannibal words, self-devouring.

There was of course a war party. There always is. This one, pretending to be a peace party, created for itself a most ingenious facade. It worked as the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, under the highly respectable chairmanship of William Allen White—one of the innocents, a Kansas editor and a Republican whom no one could suspect of being a warmonger, an interventionist or an internationalist. When it was too late he became disillusioned and retired, with bitter regrets at having been involved in a “war dance.”

The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies organized chapters in every state, and drew in its wake many eminent persons who took literally and in good faith its most disarming slogan, which was—*Measures Short of War*. It was rich and put forth an enormous amount of propaganda, in full-page newspaper advertisements and radio broadcast, all intended, as Alciabiades said, to turn people to war by making their blood run cold.

It fairly exhausted its powers of publicity to move through Congress the Lend-Lease Act, insisting that it was designed to keep the country out of war. Later a brutally honest member of the Committee, Herbert Agar, said: “Our side kept saying in the press and in the Senate that it was a bill to keep America out of war. That is bunk. I think this failure to say exactly what a thing means is an illustration of why our democratic world is being threatened now.” Lend-Lease, he added,

was exactly what Senator Wheeler had said it was, namely, an act "to enable the President to fight an undeclared war against Germany."

(The subject of Lend-Lease is out of place here. We shall come to it further on.)

Mr. Roosevelt's dilemma arrived at its crucial phase in 1940.

In that year he was going to defy a root-fast American tradition and run for a third term.

And in that year also came the Blitzkrieg in Europe, the pitiless mutilation of Holland and Belgium, the epic of Dunkirk, the fall of France, and all the terror that clutched the heart of the world at the spectacle of Hitler's Germans doing in a few weeks what the Kaiser's Germans had been unable to do in four years.

At Dunkirk, on the coast of France, the British heroically rescued a third of a million soldiers, who had been fighting with the French; but when they were home across the Channel they were not an army any more. They had left their arms behind. So, for purposes of land warfare, Great Britain was prone. She would have had to fight with clubs. Nevertheless, instead of then invading England, Hitler decided to bomb her down. Thus began the Battle of Britain in the air. At that Mussolini leaped in, with the cry of the have-nots—*they take who can*—and there was the Berlin-Rome Axis, which was later to be the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis.

These bodements of evil, moving on the waters of American feeling, produced a mighty turbulence; but the currents were not changed. The interventionists were for intervention still and the isolationists were for isolation still, only both much more so.

On the one hand, England down, fighting for her life and calling for help, was a lurch of history that was bound deeply to move the hearts of a people whose racial foundation was Anglo-Saxon.

More than that, sounds of terror coming from Europe with

the speed of light created a sense of nearness and caused the wells of fear to rise and overflow. The war party effectively deployed the myth of a German superman who would set his heel on the neck of the world. The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies produced and widely published a cartoon that showed Hitler stepping across the Atlantic to attack the Western Hemisphere. President Roosevelt made a speech saying the aggressor could reach Omaha and Kansas City in five steps, and it would take him only 17½ hours. What if England should surrender? Would not Hitler then have the British Navy?

At this time the thesis was developed that was going to govern American foreign policy for many years—the thesis, namely, that never again would the United States be able to stand alone in the world. It had to have allies. Defense of Great Britain, therefore, was vital to the security of the United States.

On the other hand, the more horrible the war in Europe was the more resolved the isolationists were to keep this country out of it. They denied the war party's first premise. If Hitler had been unable to cross the British Channel to finish England when she was prone on the ground, how was he going to cross the Atlantic to attack America? It was Europe's war, not ours; we had learned our lesson in World War I.

And when, by no leave of Congress, but under the war party's slogan, *measures short of war*, the President, to rearm England's weaponless army, stripped American arsenals of half a million rifles, 30 million rounds of ammunition, eighty thousand machine guns, artillery and shells and bombs and TNT, the isolationists were frantic with alarm. Was that not getting into the war?

The President did this over the protest of many of his most intimate advisers, who said it would ruin his third term campaign.

But he went even further. War planes were diverted from the Army and Navy and sent to England.

At the same time Mr. Churchill was begging for destroyers for defense against the German submarine menace. One day the Naval Affairs Committee of the Senate heard a rumor that some American destroyers were going to be transferred to the British Navy. The Navy denied it, saying that only some motor torpedo boats and some submarine chasers had been transferred. Thereupon, to the Naval Appropriations Act of that year, a section was added forbidding the transfer of naval vessels to a foreign power.

Nevertheless, Mr. Churchill went on calling for destroyers, and in September the isolationists were stunned by the announcement that fifty destroyers were not going to be *but actually had been* transferred to the British Navy. At the same time it was announced that England had leased to the United States eight naval-base sites on this side of the Atlantic and had promised that the British Navy would never never be surrendered or sunk. At a press conference the President insisted that each of these three matters was separate and only happened to come all at the same time; there was no bargain at all, no *quid pro quo* for the destroyers. This can be understood only on the ground that an agreement or a bargain in the form of a treaty would have had to be ratified by the Senate, and Mr. Roosevelt was by-passing the Senate. He said, simply; "It is all done."

After the business of the fifty destroyers the political signs turned against Mr. Roosevelt, indicating that he might be defeated for a third term.

His Republican opponent was Wendell Willkie, whose stock, which had been low at first, took a sudden rise when he began to play for the anti-war vote. He was saying: "If I am President I shall never lead this country into war. . . . If you elect me President I will never send an American boy to fight in any European war." And then: "On the basis of

his past performances with pledges to the people, you may expect that we will be at war by April 1941 if he [Roosevelt] is elected."

The leaders of the Democratic party were in a panic. They implored Mr. Roosevelt to say or do something to weaken Willkie's hold on the isolationist vote, which everybody knew was going to be large. And more than the isolationist vote was at stake. To that had to be added the radical vote—Communist and Communist-infected—because at that time Russia was allied with Hitler and for that reason the Communists were screaming that defense of England was defense of imperialism. The anti-war vote, therefore, would be both radical and conservative.

It was then, late in the campaign, that Mr. Roosevelt began to pledge himself against war.

He said: "Your President says this country is not going to war."

He said: "I give to you this most solemn assurance: There is no secret treaty, no secret obligation, no secret commitment, no secret understanding in any way, shape or form, direct or indirect, with any other government or any other nation in any part of the world, to involve this nation in war."

He said: "I have said this before, but I shall say it *again* and *again* and *again*. Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign war."

At that time more than half of American industry's total production of arms and four out of every five new warplanes were going to England and officers of the American and British navies were already discussing plans for joint operations in case of war.

The popular vote was fairly close. Mr. Roosevelt got fewer votes than in the preceding campaign and the Republican vote increased nearly six million. Nevertheless, Mr. Roosevelt was the first President to be elected for a third term.

His first public utterance after election was the "arsenal" speech. American civilization, he said, was in extreme dan-

ger. If England should fall the Axis Powers would control Europe, Asia and Africa, and all the oceans, and after that Americans would be living at the point of a loaded gun. Then: "We must be the great arsenal of democracy. We have furnished the British great material support and we will furnish her far more in the future."

A few weeks after that came Lend-Lease.

It is supposed that this immense idea began to take form in Mr. Roosevelt's mind on the day, December 9, 1940, when a long letter from the British Prime Minister was delivered to him on board a cruising yacht in the Carribean. The letter reviewed American commitments so far,—(to equip the entire British army in 1941 and ten divisions more for the 1942 campaign)—then listed Great Britain's further requirements, which might amount to fifteen billion dollars, and ended by saying that England was out of money. She could no longer pay. The Americans would have to think of a way out of that difficulty.

At his next press conference Mr. Roosevelt gave the first preview of his idea. England was already getting everything we could possibly spare—guns, planes, ships, food, and so forth—and she had to have a lot more, only now the trouble was that she could no longer pay for it. Imagine that your neighbor's house was burning down and he needed your hose. Would you offer to sell it to him for a few dollars or would you just let him have it and forget the dollars? That was his new thought, something nobody had thought of before—to forget the dollars. He wanted to abolish the miserable dollar sign.

When Congress received the Lend-Lease Bill it bore the memorial numerals—1776. The American Republic was born in the year 1776.

What the Bill did was this: It obliged Congress to appropriate billions of dollars—any number of billions—and then authorized the President to use the money in his own discretion to aid any country whose defense he might deem



vital to the security of the United States. Thus the President would have the power not only to fight an undeclared war against Hitler but to *make* war anywhere.

The debate in Congress was extremely bitter. The isolationists were making their last stand. Selling munitions to England, even under the rubric *measures short of war*, could somehow be defended as the right of a nation that was nominally neutral; giving or lending them to her was a very different thing.

In a post-war paper on foreign policy, years later, the State Department said: "With the passage of the Lend-Lease Act on March 11, 1941, the United States openly allied its welfare with that of the United Kingdom and other countries fighting the Axis."

Yet those who said even as much as that at the time were cried down as non-patriots; and such was the bemusement of mind, partly from wishful thinking and partly from what had happened to the meaning of words, that many people did sincerely believe that Lend-Lease was a device for keeping the war away.

This delusion was strengthened by a perfectly timed broadcast from England. The British Prime Minister said England would not need any gallant American armies, as before, but—"Give us the tools and we will finish the job."

The President said at a press conference that he was not anxious to receive the power that was about to be conferred upon him, yet somebody had to possess it, so that in a crisis action might be prompt.

## II

# Backing Into It

THE DAY AFTER THE PASSAGE OF THE LEND-LEASE BILL THE President proclaimed the defense of Great Britain and Greece to be vital to the security of the United States; a few hours later he added China. Thereafter events moved at goaded speed, many of them in a twilight zone, owing to a self-imposed press censorship, and some of them in total blackout for security reasons, as follows:

(1) Five minutes after the Lend-Lease Act became law the President transferred from the Army and Navy to England and her allies an undisclosed quantity of military equipment.

(2) To spend the \$70 billions that Congress appropriated for National Defense and Lend-Lease together it was necessary to impose war-time conditions upon the American economy, such as price controls, priorities, allocation of materials, restraint of exports, longer hours of labor, an arbitrary division of things between the military establishment and the civilian population, i.e., between guns and butter.

(3) The President declared an "unlimited emergency," which gave him what were in effect war-time powers over management, property and labor relations.

(4) Besides commanding the resources of private industry, the government itself undertook a vast construction program, under which in an apparitional manner appeared many

new war plants and arsenals and emergency housing for war workers.

(5) The draft was stepped up; and for men already in the army the period of service was extended.

(6) Missions of military and civilian experts were dispatched abroad.

(7) An exchange of military secrets was begun with England.

(8) An undisclosed number of Army, Navy and Air Force bases were established off-shore and overseas.

(9) For strategic reasons American troops occupied Iceland, by permission. This was for better protection of the sea lanes between the United States and England.

(10) American troops were sent to British Guiana.

(11) All German and Italian ships in American ports were seized.

(12) The President called for 50,000 war planes and 8 million tons of ships to replace the ships the German submarines were sinking at sea.

(13) Ten big coast guard cutters were sent to England.

(14) In a world-wide broadcast the President announced that American aid to the "embattled democracies" would "be increased and yet increased until total victory has been won."

(15) In June Hitler turned on his ally Russia. If Hitler and Stalin had been left to fight each other down to the knees history now might be telling a very different story. But the myth of the German superman had affected the wits of all the military experts; they agreed that Russia could last only a few weeks. Harry Hopkins, acting as the President's vice-regent, went to Moscow to see. He returned with the conviction that Russia could fight for a good while; and with the fatal opinion also that the Soviet Dictator would be a trustworthy ally. England had already embraced him. Thereupon an American mission was sent to Moscow to get a list of the things Russia needed, and thereafter to the end of the war American aid was delivered to her in prodigious quantities.

(16) In August the President and the British Prime Minister, each with a retinue of experts, met at sea, to discuss joint plans for the destruction of Hitler and what to do with the world after victory. The President came home with the Atlantic Charter, in which there was a statement of "common principles," or war aims, namely, no territorial aggrandizement in the shape of war spoils, no territorial changes but by desire of the people concerned, and the restoration of the rights of self-government to people who had been deprived of them; and then—"after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny," a beautiful peace, freedom of the seas, disarmament, and, so far as possible, free and equal access of all nations to the raw materials of the world.

That was all the American people knew of what had happened at the famous meeting until the British Prime Minister, on his return home, reported to the British House of Commons, saying:

"It was somewhere in the Atlantic. There for three days I spent my time in company, and I think I may say it comradeship, with Mr. Roosevelt, while all the time the chiefs of the staff and naval and military commanders, both of the British Empire and the United States, sat together in continual council. . . . You will perhaps have noticed that the President of the United States and the British representative in what is aptly called the Atlantic Charter have jointly pledged their countries to the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny. That is a solemn and grave undertaking. It must be made good. It will be made good. And of course many practical arrangements to fulfill that purpose have been made and are being organized and set in motion. The question has been asked, 'How near is the United States to war?' There is certainly one man who knows the answer to that question. If Hitler has not yet declared war on the United States it is certainly not because he could not find a pretext. He has murdered half a dozen countries for less. If he can succeed in beating the life and strength out of us . . . then he will settle his account, and

it is already a long one, with the people of the United States."

(17) But the most daring thing Mr. Roosevelt did was to move the line delimiting the territorial waters of the United States. He pushed it out to the middle of the Atlantic and then at the north bent it sharply around Iceland. All of that was proclaimed to be the "defense waters" of the United States; it would be patrolled by the United States Navy, and let German war vessels beware.

The purpose of this of course was to protect against Hitler's submarines the Lend-Lease cargoes on their way to England. Did anybody suppose we were going to permit American aid to be sunk at sea as fast as we could send it forth?

It was well known that American patrol boats, on sighting a German submarine, reported it by radio to the nearest British naval unit and then followed it until the British could arrive for the kill. Nevertheless, for several months both the President and the Navy insisted that we were simply patrolling our own "defense waters." From the beginning it had been stoutly denied that the United States Navy was going to convoy Lend-Lease cargoes, for if it did there might be shooting. *Convoy* was a scare word. But could not people *patrol* their own waters without going to war?

Gradually, as the sinkings increased, this verbal refinement was forgotten. Incidents did occur. Between the United States Navy and the German submarines there was shooting; but in every case there was a dispute about who started it. Did the Germans shoot in self-defense? If so, that was not attack; and it was known that Hitler had ordered his navy to shoot only in self-defense; not to attack.

Suddenly Mr. Roosevelt said in a world-wide broadcast: "These Nazi submarines are the rattle snakes of the Atlantic. They are a menace to our sovereignty. It is not an act of war on our part when we decide to protect the seas which are vital to American defense. But let this warning be clear. From now on, if German or Italian vessels of war enter the waters, the protection of which is necessary for American defense,

they do so at their own peril. There will be no shooting unless the Germans continue to seek it.”

This was followed by an announcement from the Secretary of the Navy. He said: “Beginning tomorrow the American Navy will provide protection as adequate as we can make it for ships of every flag carrying Lend-Lease supplies between the American continent and waters adjacent to Iceland. These ships are ordered to capture or destroy by every means at their disposal Axis-controlled submarines or surface raiders.”

After that, more incidents, more shooting, more disputes about who started it—but no clear case of *attack* by the Germans.

So the year 1941 wore on. The country was at war but not in it.

Twenty days after the passage of the Lend-Lease Act, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Stark, wrote a top-secret letter, saying: “Staff conversations with the British have been completed and a joint United States-British war plan drawn up. . . . The question as to our entry into the war now seems to be *when* and not *whether*.” And in October he sent this message to all fleet commanders: “Whether the country knows it or not we are at war.”

How could a country be at war and not know it?

For the key to all this ambiguity you need only one fact. The fact was this. The dread of becoming involved in a shooting war was still so strong that Mr. Roosevelt knew he could not get a declaration of war from Congress—*unless the country was actually attacked*. And it would take nothing less than a declaration of war by Congress to release him from his pledges—*again and again and again*—not to take the country into another foreign war.

Robert E. Sherwood, in “Roosevelt and Hopkins,” says that at this time Harry Hopkins made the following note: “Both Stimson [Secretary of War] and Marshall [Chief of Staff] feel that we can’t win without getting into the war, but they have no idea how that is going to be accomplished.” And

Sherwood's own comment on the state of the dilemma at that time was this: "As the limitless peril came closer and closer to the United States, isolationist sentiment became ever more strident in expression and aggressive in action, and Roosevelt was relatively powerless to combat it. He had said everything 'short of war' that could be said. He had no more tricks left. The hat from which he had pulled so many rabbits was empty."

### III

## Whence the Attack Came

ONE MUST TURN NOW TO JAPAN, FROM WHOM THE *attack* came; and this is a very tangled story.

Japan was the aggressor in the Pacific, pursuing conquest under the evangel, "Asia for the Asiatics," which would mean Japanese rule and the end of the white man's power in the East.

Americans liked the Japanese and felt a kind of paternal interest in them, from the fact that in 1853, acting on orders from the President of the United States, Commodore Perry of the United States Navy, with the first guns the Japanese had ever seen or heard, persuaded them to open their Hermit Kingdom to the blessings of Western civilization.

But for the Chinese, on the other hand, Americans had a kind of romantic affection, inherited from Colonial times; and when Japan set out to conquer China, beginning with Manchuria, American sentiment turned against her.

She seemed never to understand why. The West had exploited Asia, Japan included; and now if she were strong enough to rule Asia and to exploit it in her own way for raw materials and living room, why should the West object? On moral grounds? If Japan had been willing, as she was, to say to the United States, "You keep order in the West and we will keep order in the East and then let us exploit Asia together for mutual profit," and if the United States had said, "That would be against our principles," the Japanese could have believed only that the Americans were hypocrites. Had



they not exploited Japan until she became strong enough to stop them and take control of her own affairs? They had, of course; and now they could hardly say, "It is true, we did, but our moral sense has been improving."

There can be no doubt that Japan thought she was behaving in a Western manner and that Western nations now were defending, not China, but their own imperialistic interests in Asia. And how had they acquired those interests? By force, just as now Japan proposed if possible to transfer them to herself.

After the outbreak of Hitler's war in Europe the Japanese joined the Berlin-Rome Axis, whereby they allied themselves with the European aggressor; yet they did this cautiously and with reservations, and not until the relentless hostility of the American government had made them desperate. There is no evidence that Japan ever meant to enter the war in Europe. But she did mean to take advantage of it in Asia. It was her opportunity. She could imagine expelling the British from Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaya; the French from Indo-China, and the Dutch from Indonesia. Ultimately, no doubt, she would have been tempted to take the Philippines, too, but in the record there is no evidence that she would have thought them worth a war with the United States. She had the good sense, in fact, not to want a war with the United States at all.

Even so, if the war went on a collision was almost certain to occur, for if the United States was going to defend England, France and the Netherlands from Hitler in Europe it was somehow obliged to defend their Asiatic possessions against Hitler's ally in the Pacific. That was especially true as to England. For her, the loss of Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaya would be a terrific blow. Thus, the very first Anglo-American plans for joint military and naval action in the extreme case included the idea of stopping Japan, although Japan as yet was at war only with China.

From the beginning the American government regarded

Japan's adventure in China with a baleful eye, and pursued an anti-Japanese policy that was a composite of wheedlings, warnings, threatenings and economic pressure. The first step was to send military aid to China; the second was a moral embargo on war planes to Japan, by understanding between the government and the plane makers. Then the American-Japanese trade treaty was abruptly annuled, whereupon a positive embargo was laid upon sales of steel, scrap iron and oil to Japan. Oil was a vital matter. If Japan could not buy oil she was lost unless she could seize a source she could control. There was such a source in the Dutch East Indies.

Ambassador Grew telegraphed from Tokyo that war could not be averted by economic measures, for if the Japanese were pressed too far they would risk "national hara-kiri" (ritual suicide) sooner than submit to foreign pressure. The American government did not believe him; moreover the military power of Japan was greatly underestimated.

The record shows that the Japanese were diligent, even importunate, in trying somehow to mend their relations with the United States, if only by temporary patchwork, and were willing at last to go very far, if they could but save their face. They proposed a conference between the President and the Japanese Premier somewhere in the Pacific, as the President had met the British Prime Minister somewhere in the Atlantic; the American government at first entertained the idea, then put it off, and it lapsed in maybe. The Japanese kept asking the American government what it wanted. Specifically, what would it settle for?

In the State Department, Secretary Hull believed that all Japanese were congenitally perfidious. The least he wanted was an undertaking by Japan to stop expanding in Asia; the most, that it should abandon its conquest of China, make peace with the Chinese and go home. In the War Department, Secretary Stimson was allergic to the word Japan. The least he wanted was the total destruction of the Japanese menace.

Where did Mr. Roosevelt stand?

The British were begging him to hold Japan off as long as possible, even to make some concessions if necessary; they had war enough on their hands. They knew and Mr. Roosevelt knew and everybody knew that war between the United States and Japan would cause the cauldron to boil over. Japan would invoke the terms of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis pact and ask Germany and Italy to declare war on the United States. Japan would attack all British, French and Dutch possessions in Asia. The United States would be then in a very perilous military position, fighting two wars at once, one in Europe and one in Asia, nearly 15,000 miles apart.

Nevertheless it was possible that in Mr. Roosevelt's mind the political necessity for an *attack* upon the United States in order to get a declaration of war out of Congress would outweigh every other consideration. In that case the thing to do was to provoke Japan to commit an overt act.

Here the record wickedly opens and closes its shutter for an uncontrolled exposure.

On the evening of November 25, 1941, the Secretary of War, Mr. Stimson, set down in his diary his recollections of a Cabinet meeting at which only the Japanese were discussed; and he wrote: "The question was how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much damage to ourselves."

Six days later, after a very secret meeting at the White House of Roosevelt, Hull, Stark and Harry Hopkins, the following message was sent by Admiral Stark to Admiral Hart, commander of the Asiatic Fleet in the Far East at Manila:

"President directs that the following be done as soon as possible and within two days if possible after receipt this dispatch. Charter three small vessels to form a 'defensive information patrol.' Minimum requirements to establish identity as U.S. men-of-war are command by a naval officer and to mount a small gun and one machine gun would suffice.

Filipino crews may be employed with minimum number naval ratings to accomplish purpose, which is to observe and report by radio Japanese movements in west China Sea and Gulf of Siam. One vessel to be stationed between Hainan and Hue, one vessel off the Indo-China coast between Camranh Bay and Cape St. Jacques, and one vessel off Pointe de Camau. Use of *Isabel* authorized by President as one of the three but not other naval vessels. Report measures taken to carry out President's view."

The *Isabel* was not a regular naval vessel. She was a converted yacht.

The specified placement of these three defenseless, expendable, make-believe "men-of-war" was directly across the path along which the Japanese navy was supposed to be advancing. The chances for an incident, therefore, were excellent, since a navy on its war occasions will almost certainly destroy a patrol that has been set to spy out its movements. However, nothing came of it; the Japanese navy was not going that way. It was already on its way to Pearl Harbor.

The diplomatic struggle with Japan came to a deadlock in November. Before the end of the month the Secretary of State was saying that he threw up his hands and let the Army and Navy take over, all White House discussions were turning on not whether but when and where the Japanese would attack, and the President was already working on his war message to Congress.

And they were not guessing. The cryptographer had broken Japan's most secret code. Every message from the Japanese government to its Ambassadors in Washington was intercepted and read. One has said it was like playing poker with a mirror behind your opponent's back. They knew even how the last fatal signal would come, in the form of a wind message—war with the United States, "east wind, rain;" war with Russia, "north wind, cloudy," and if it were the Dutch East Indies and Malaya, then "west wind, cloudy."

For all of that, there was a serenity of fatalism in Washington, as if there was nothing now to do but to wait. The messages that went out to the Army and Navy commanders to tell them that diplomacy had failed and that anything might happen, ended in every case with the notice that "the United States desires that Japan commit the first overt act." The commander of the Asiatic Fleet in the Philippines construed this to mean that he could not in any case attack, whereupon he sent his ships into hiding and saved them. The commander at Honolulu let his ships lie at anchor in Pearl Harbor, where they were as helpless as sitting ducks.

The story of the last day is like a dream in which the actors move with irrelevant and leaden gestures.

On December 6, which was Saturday, came a report from Budapest that the British government had said war in the Pacific would begin on the 7th. Nothing was done about that. Then a Japanese message was intercepted which said the 7th was the day. That message was somewhat garbled in transmission, and the cryptographers who had broken the Japanese code were two days making it out.

But by this time it was known that a very long message, one of fourteen parts, from the Japanese Foreign Office to the Japanese Ambassadors in Washington was being intercepted. When the first thirteen parts of this message had been decoded it was discussed by Secretaries Hull, Stimson and Knox, who arranged by telephone to meet at ten o'clock the next morning in the State Department.

The President had been giving a dinner party. At half past nine, in his study with Harry Hopkins, he received the long, intercepted message from the hand of a naval officer. He read it, handed it to Hopkins, and said that seemed to mean war. He supposed he ought to communicate with Admiral Stark, the Chief of Naval Operations; but when the telephone operator reported that Admiral Stark was at the theatre Mr. Roosevelt said not to call him out, for fear of creating an

alarm; he would telephone the Admiral later at home, which he did. Admiral Stark said to his guests that the Japanese situation was very serious, and went to bed. Everybody went to bed. No warnings were sent out.

The next morning General Marshall, Chief of Staff, went for a horseback ride. Admiral Stark spent some time in his greenhouse. Everybody was late for the ten o'clock conference at the State Department. At the White House the President decided to give a dull morning to his stamp collection and Mr. Hopkins was lounging about in his pajamas.

The conference of the three secretaries at the State Department, beginning late, lasted an hour. Mr. Stimson's recollection of it was that "Hull is very certain that the Japs are planning some deviltry and we are all wondering where the blow will strike." An excited Military Intelligence officer who had been trying since nine o'clock to reach the Chief of Staff with the last of the Japanese message got to him at eleven twenty. Somebody thought the commanders ought to be warned. Somebody else thought it might confuse them. At last a message to the Honolulu commanders was written. Then a question as to how it should be sent. By a "scrambler" telephone there on the desk it could go instantly. Instead it was sent as a regular telegram and got to Honolulu while the Japanese were bombing Pearl Harbor.\*

When the news came to the Secretary of the Navy he said: "This can't be true. It must be the Philippines." The Secretary of War was at lunch. The President got him on the telephone, and asked: "Have you heard the news?" Mr. Stimson

\* When later General Marshall appeared before a Joint Congressional Committee, investigating the Pearl Harbor disaster, he was asked why he had been so tardy with a warning message to the Honolulu commanders. Why, specifically, had he not used the fastest means of communication, namely, the "scrambler" telephone, instead of sending a slow telegram. His vague but astonishing explanation was that perhaps he had been thinking that if the American forces in Hawaii were alerted the Japanese might construe it as a hostile act.

thought it would be the Gulf of Siam. The President said: "Oh, no. They have attacked Hawaii. They are now bombing Hawaii."

Eleanor Roosevelt, the President's wife, wrote: "We clustered at the radio and waited for more details, but it was far from the shock it proved to the country in general. We had been expecting something of the sort for a long time."

And to a group of Senators and Representatives who appeared at the White House the President said: "Well, we were attacked. There is no question about that."

An attack was expected. It was the wished-for solution. That the Japanese would cross the Pacific to commit their first overt act at Pearl Harbor was unexpected. And the loss\* of a mighty fleet and more than three thousand lives in one hour was perhaps much more than the war party would have been willing to pay for a declaration of war by Congress.

\* The final accounting by the Army and Navy for the loss at Pearl Harbor was as follows: Destroyed or sunk—five battleships and three destroyers. Damaged—three cruisers, a seaplane tender, a mine layer, a repair vessel, a floating dry dock. Officers and men killed and missing—3,313.

## IV

# The Tools of War

CONGRESS DECLARED WAR AGAINST JAPAN ON DECEMBER 8, 1941. Great Britain did likewise on that same day.

Three days later Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

That made war practically unanimous.

By this time there were altogether seventy-seven declarations of war in the world, besides the wars that began without any declaration. Russia was not yet at war with Japan; that came later. The neutral countries were Switzerland, Sweden and Spain. Switzerland had been neutral in World War I. Neutrality had been her historic role, and both sides respected it, not for love of Switzerland but because at least one neutral nation, especially one that has no military significance, is a necessary asylum of sanity.

After having got into it directly it took the United States a little less than forty-five months to win the war.

What won it was not four million Americans overseas, nor the fighting qualities of the Army, Navy and Air Force, which were sublime, nor yet the character of American generalship which was heroic and almost without flaw; all of that will glow forever on the pages of American history. But behind that glow is the wick of a miracle that everybody took for granted and takes for granted still—everybody, that is, except the enemy, who saw it, was destroyed by it, and never quite believed it. And what was that? It was the outrageous



speed with which American industry first made itself ready and then actually produced the tools of war—the planes and ships and guns and shells and a thousand and one precision instruments.

A new dimension of productivity was discovered. By the end of the first year the American production of all things essential to modern war was greater than that of Germany, Italy and Japan put together. Four-engine bombers were rolling out of a plant where on Pearl Harbor Day there was nothing but corn stubble. That was less than one year. Tanks had displaced automobiles on the assembly lines of Detroit. Merchant ships were building faster than Hitler's submarines could sink them. One of the spectacular ship building operations—launching a ship every four days after laying the keel—was conducted by a construction outfit whose engineers had never seen a ship-yard before. Seven months from the day they started to build a yard to their own notions on a mud flat they were launching ships.

The new marvel of the American know-how was that anybody could build anything anywhere, given only the blue print and the machine tools; and the machine tool makers were building lathes by the moving line method, for the first time. Always before a lathe had stood still in one place on the floor until it was finished by hand.

A burial vault maker found that he could make bombs. A textile mill found that it could make anti-tank gun carriages. A bedding manufacturer made machine gun belts. A toy company made canisters. A refrigerator company made aircraft wings and propellers. Railroad car builders made tanks and armor plate and shells. A carousel maker turned to gun mounts, dies and jigs, and movable towers for men who serviced bombers.

Until then the makers of airplane engines thought they had a monopoly of the extreme precision work necessary to make that kind of engine and scorned the automobile engine makers as mechanical butchers; but the motor industry soon

proved that it could make aircraft engines as fine as any and very much faster; and otherwise the enormous output of planes would have been impossible. Indeed, without the technical knowledge, the production genius and the time-bearing experience of the motor car industry, the miracle could not have been performed. One of its production managers dumbfounded the military authorities by laying before them one day a blue print twenty feet long. That would be the famous Willow Run plant. "If you will let me do this," he said, "I will guarantee to slice you off one complete bomber an hour." And before the war ended he did it.

By millions of tons American military equipment went all over the world. Never anywhere was a battle won without it. When the Russians marched through Bucharest a correspondent noticed that every moving vehicle was American-made—jeeps, amphibious vehicles, command cars, trucks, even a blue Ford sedan under camouflage.

When the war ended the amount of American equipment left over, in Europe and Asia and Africa, was embarrassing. Some of it was sold for the price of junk, a great deal of it was dumped in the sea or otherwise destroyed, and some of it was not too carefully stored. And all of it had been provided free to anybody who would use it against the enemy. It is not imaginable that the war could have been won without it. Nor was it to be unexpected that millions of people, seeing this outpouring of American aid, would get the idea that American resources not only were inexhaustible but that they were disposable in any amount for the good of mankind.

Now to follow the equipment.

In the war theatres, especially the Pacific theatre, our first five months were full of disaster. The Japanese spread fan-wise over the whole southwest Pacific, taking Hong Kong, invincible Singapore, Malaya, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, Guam and the Solomon Islands on the very threshold of Australia; and in Europe Hitler was cutting through Russia as if it were cheese.

*In the third month* the loss of the Philippines was so probable that the War Department ordered General Douglas MacArthur to leave them and take up headquarters in Australia. With his wife and baby he made most of the journey in an open boat.

President Roosevelt said: "We have been compelled to yield ground but we will regain it."

As he was speaking a Japanese submarine rose out of the Pacific and shelled the coast of California.

*In the fourth month* German guns were shelling Leningrad and German planes were bombing Moscow.

*In the fifth month* 35,000 embattled American-Filipino forces surrendered in the Philippines. This had been expected.

The shock was somewhat softened by the news that a squadron of American planes, led by Brigadier General Doolittle, had daringly raided the Japanese mainland, including Tokyo. It was thrilling but unimportant.

*In the sixth month* the Japanese reduced the last of the forts in Manila Bay and the Philippines were lost. In this month, however, occurred the battle of the Coral Sea, in which for the first time on fairly equal terms American naval and air forces met the Japanese and out-fought them. In this month also British bombs destroyed eight square miles of Cologne in Germany.

The balance of air power was shifting.

*In the seventh month* the repulse of two Japanese attacks, one on Midway Islands and one on Wake Island, both United States possessions, proved again that the Americans could outfight the Japanese. In Europe, on the other hand, the Russians lost Sevastopol, their citadel on the Black Sea; and across the sands of North Africa Rommel's German army was pushing hotly toward Egypt against the British, who were in serious trouble and fearful of losing Cairo and the Suez Canal, and thus control of the Mediterranean route to the East.

*In the eighth month* Hitler was still claiming victory in Russia but the Russians were counting the German dead and the number of them was staggering. Fighting everywhere was intensified, especially in the air; 600 British planes bombed Hamburg for the 91st time.

*In this the ninth month* the Office of War Information said the nation was yet only ankle deep in the war. But from his base in Australia General MacArthur had already started to fight his way back across the Pacific, leap-frogging from island to island, beginning with the Solomons.

The Japanese had dug themselves in and fought with suicidal frenzy. They had literally to be killed in their holes. This jungle fighting was the ugliest that American soldiers had ever known. The ferocity of it may be read in a Solomon Island incident. One evening after dark the Japanese landed from speed boats 700 of their toughest men, with orders to rescue what was left of their own and to expel the Marines. Hand to hand fighting went on all night and when it ended in daylight there were 30 Japanese prisoners out of 700; all the rest were dead. The Marines' loss was 28 killed and 78 wounded. So it was proved that even in hand to hand combat the Americans could outfight the Japanese. Thus American morale began to build up. Yet getting back the Pacific islands was a desperate business. To get the Marshall Islands back the Marines had to kill more than 8,000 Japanese. Their own casualties were 1,436. In the first 48 hours of fighting for Iwo—an extruding volcano top of less than eight square miles—the Marines lost 3,650 men, *and took one Japanese prisoner*. . . . In Europe Soviet planes, probably American made, bombed Berlin, Königsberg and Danzig.

*In the tenth month* there were more than half a million American fighting men and technicians overseas. On Labor Day 174 war vessels were launched and keels laid for 49 more. In Europe the battle of Stalingrad was beginning.

*In the eleventh month* the signs began to change. A large scale offensive by the Japanese against the Americans in the

Solomons, by land and sea and air, was absorbed. It was evident that the British and Americans together were gaining air supremacy over the Germans. The siege of Stalingrad reached its 67th day and Hitler's vaunting bulletins began for the first time to sound hollow.

*In the twelfth month* the enemy began to lose his first momentum. In a 2-day battle in the Solomon Islands the Japanese lost a battleship, three heavy cruisers, two light cruisers, five destroyers, eight transports with 30,000 men and four cargo vessels—altogether 26 ships—besides one battleship and six destroyers damaged. The American loss was two cruisers and six destroyers. . . . In North Africa the British had turned the Germans back from Egypt. . . . Then American forces, with 500 transports and 350 naval vessels, made amphibious landings on the Atlantic and Mediterranean shores of North Africa. Until then this was the most notable invasion from off shore in military history. The strategic idea was to take Rommel's German army in the jaws of a pair of pincers—that is, the Americans on this side and the British on the other, and Rommel in between on the sands of Libya. Three days after the landing, Casablanca, Morocco and Algeria were in American hands. On this invasion of North Africa the British Prime Minister said: "The President of the United States is the author of this mighty undertaking. It is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it may be the end of the beginning." Mr. Roosevelt said: "It would seem that the turning point of this war has at last been reached." . . . Meanwhile the most improbable epic of the war was enacting itself at Stalingrad.

*During the thirteenth month* the whole anti-Axis world held its breath. Fighting everywhere else was give and take, and nothing decisive; but at Stalingrad the Russians were refusing to embrace their doom. Day after day Hitler announced victory tomorrow; day after day a brief, non-exulting communique from Moscow simply counted the German dead—one day, 1,000; the next day, 900; and then on a good

day more than 5,000. Presently it was noticed that the German communique was forgetting to mention Stalingrad, speaking instead of a submarine exploit or a little victory somewhere else, while Moscow went on counting the dead. The fighting was hand to hand in Stalingrad; gains and losses were measured by yards and doorways. Suddenly the Russians took the offensive, and the toll of dead Germans began to rise—in six weeks 175,000 Germans killed, 137,000 captured alive.

*In the fourteenth month* it became evident that Hitler's invasion of Russia would turn into a Napoleonic disaster. The Russians' Red Army lifted the siege of Leningrad, began pushing the Germans back on a very wide front and trapped the German army at Stalingrad. During the last twenty days of the fighting for Stalingrad the Russians killed 100,000 Germans. The end of it was that they captured a German field marshal, his chief-of-staff, ten lieutenant generals, two major generals, a brigadier general and 46,000 prisoners. The booty was 744 war planes, 1,517 tanks, 6,523 guns, 1,421 mortars, 7,489 machine guns, 76,887 rifles, 60,464 trucks, 734 motorcycles, 304 radio stations, 575 armored railway cars and 48 locomotives. . . .

## V

# Comrades All

THE MILITARY IMPORTANCE OF THE RUSSIANS' TRIUMPHANT defense was of course tremendous. The political effects, especially in the United States, assumed aspects that were sometimes unreasonable and sometimes sinister. The Americans are a sentimental people. The spectacle of an heroic last-stand fight would move them deeply. They fell in love with the Russians. What wonderful allies they had turned out to be! Our Lend-Lease investment in them, when they were down, had already paid a handsome dividend. What was the purpose of Lend-Lease to begin with? It was to help those who would assist to overthrow the German aggressor. Well, certainly the Russians had assisted. Therefore you could say—or could you?—that they were fighting with us for the free world.

The logical absurdity of supposing that a dictator like Stalin would be fighting for a free world was drowned in tides of emotion. Forgotten was the fact that Stalin had been Hitler's partner in aggression and had shared in the mutilation of Poland. Forgotten was the fact that while Stalin was Hitler's partner every Communist and fellow traveler in the United States said it was an imperialistic war and tried in every way to sabotage it and had picketed even the White House with banners bearing disloyal slogans. One hour after Hitler attacked Russia all of those banners were out of sight and every Communist was parading himself as a loyal Ameri-

can, calling for a greater and greater outpouring of Lend-Lease to defeat the German aggressor, and save Russia. That made everything sweet. Communists and Americans were comrades in arms. Anyone who suggested that the Russians were fighting for Russia and had no interest in the free world—that Communists were Communists still—was denounced as a Fascist. Americans can be very maudlin. They were at this time.

The sinister thing was that American Communists, who secretly and always were Communists first, holding allegiance to an alien power, took advantage of the American's sentimental folly to insinuate themselves into government at all levels. They got themselves into the army, into the secret intelligence services, into administrative bureaus, and rose to offices of policy-making power. This was not for the duration of the war, in which they might have been helpful and probably were; it was with foresight and with long intentions. One of the intentions was to conduct espionage for Russia, both during the war and afterward. They began at once to smuggle out military secrets with their highly privileged Lend-Lease goods—blue prints, photostats, scientific documents and fissionable material for the atom bomb. The total result was that when the war was over the government, from the White House and State Department all the way down to information bureaus, was found to be weeviled with concealed Communists, organized in cells and spy rings, all taking orders from Moscow.

For a while they were protected by the Roosevelt regime, which resisted and tried to discredit the efforts of Congress to dig them out. Mr. Roosevelt, whose most serious political error was to think he could handle Stalin, said the anti-Communist issue was a red herring, meant to embarrass him. Mr. Truman, who succeeded him, said the same thing, and added: "I like Old Joe Stalin. He is a decent fellow."

Since the French Revolution, when there was a fanatical pro-French party, there had been nothing in all American



history to equal this infatuated regard for an alien power. Two members of the Supreme Court stepped out of their robes to appear as character witnesses for a darling career man of the State Department named Alger Hiss, who at last was sent to jail for denying under oath his Communist affiliations. Gradually, as the incredible facts were squeezed out, the conspiratorial infiltration of government by Communists became a scandal that painfully divided the country. On one side were the Anti-Communists, very aggressive with blunt weapons; on the other side were the Communists, the Pro-Communists and a diluted brand called the Anti-Anti-Communists, all very adroit at invoking the very laws of freedom and immunity which at heart they despised. . . .

\*

From this digression on Communism we return to note another fateful event in this the fourteenth month of America's direct participation in the war. At Casablanca President Roosevelt and the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met to discuss the war and evolved between them the formula of "unconditional surrender," which was announced as a policy and became a shibboleth. This was a new thing in war between nations since Genghis Khan. It was certainly not calculated to shorten the war. What it meant was that every enemy government would be utterly destroyed; and since the American is not Genghis Khan—not in time of truce or peace—it meant furthermore that in the sequel he would have to lift up the vanquished people—the Germans and Italians and Japanese—brush them off, bandage their wounds and keep them alive until they were able again to provide for themselves. It was the American who would have to do this, not only because he would but because there was nobody else who could afford to do it.

## VI

# On His Feet

*In the fifteenth month* BERLIN ANNOUNCED: "FIGHTING AT Stalingrad has ceased." A four-day period of mourning was ordered. More than 100 two-ton bombs and many thousands of fire bombs were dropped on Cologne. Dwight D. Eisenhower was made General of the Army and supreme commander of all Allied operations in North Africa. In a final offensive in the Solomon Islands the Marines killed 6,066 Japanese and took 127 prisoners. Stalin announced that since the beginning of the war with Hitler the Red Army had killed more than 4 million Germans in battle. The fierce fighting in North Africa began to turn against the Germans.

*In the sixteenth month* General MacArthur reported from the Pacific: "The battle of the Bismarck Sea has now been decided. We have achieved a victory of such completeness as to assume the proportions of a major disaster to the enemy. His naval component consisted of 12 transports and 10 warships. All are sunk or sinking. His ground forces, estimated at 15,000 destined to attack New Guinea, have been sunk or killed almost to a man." . . . Hitler announced the loss of 540,000 men in the Russian campaign. . . . The American Ambassador in Moscow said to the American correspondents that the Soviet government had been withholding knowledge of Lend-Lease Aid from the Russian people, leaving them to believe that Russia was fighting alone. . . . Rommel's German army was on the defensive in North Africa.

*In the seventeenth month* the Japanese government admitted having executed aviators who fell into their hands out of the Doolittle bombing squadron and said it would continue to punish members of aircraft crews found guilty of cruel and inhuman acts. President Roosevelt said this was a return to barbarism.

*In the eighteenth month* American soldiers, fighting on icy mountain slopes and in ravines, with bayonets, rifle butts, knives and bare hands, wiped out the Japanese on Attu, the most westerly of the Aleutian Islands. This was the first piece of American soil to be recovered from the enemy. . . . In North Africa the German army was cracked between the jaws of the Anglo-American pincers. Before the end Rommel had been called home. The German-Italian casualties in the North African campaign were more than 600,000. . . . Germany began to disperse her war industries and hide them underground, in flight from British and American bombers, who had them pin-pointed where they were. . . . Allied air forces began a continuous bombing of airfields in Sicily and Italy—a prelude to invasion.

*In the nineteenth month*, the British Prime Minister told the House of Commons: "The mellow light of victory begins to play over the entire expanse of the world war," and indicated that an invasion of Europe was imminent. But the end was still a long way off. . . . The Italian island of Pantelleria surrendered unconditionally; also the little islands of Lampedusa and Linosa. These were stepping stones to Sicily. . . . In an air battle over Guadalcanal 94 Japanese planes were shot down.

*In the twentieth month* the government announced that since Pearl Harbor Day 2 million men and 20 million tons of war cargo had been moved from the United States to fifty different countries. . . . Sicily, on the toe of Italy, was invaded and partially occupied by American and British forces, who from there would invade Italy; and the Italians were asked to surrender. If they did they would be treated gently

and the Germans would be expelled from their country.

This was a complicated situation. The Germans, who had never trusted the Italians to hold Italy, had occupied it themselves and were there to keep the Allied armies out, for if once the Allied armies got in they would be on their way to reach what Winston Churchill called the soft under belly of the Axis beast. President Roosevelt and the British Prime Minister beamed messages to the Italians, asking them if they would die for Mussolini and Hitler or live for Italy and civilization. The Germans would not let the Italians surrender. Nevertheless, the Dictator Mussolini was finished. The hitherto submissive King Victor Emmanuel cast him out, and named as premier one Badoglio, who said the war would go on. Then the American Air Force began to bomb military targets in Rome, after notice and carefully trying to spare revered objects. The Germans had refused to declare Rome an open city and were entrenched there.

*During the twenty-first month* American and British forces were mopping up in Sicily. All the Germans who could fled from the island to the mainland, with as much equipment as they could carry, leaving their Italian allies in the lurch. American warships made the first direct attack on Italy, in the Gulf of Groia, at the toe of the Italian boot. Rome at last was declared an open city, which made it immune from further bombing. . . . Hitler still had 300 divisions to lose and went on fighting desperate battles in Russia, always giving ground. . . . In the Southwest Pacific the Japanese continued to fight fanatically; the Solomon Islands were not yet clear of them. . . . Anglo-American strategy was holding fast to the point that Hitler had to be beaten first; and all the Pacific commanders were complaining of neglect.

*In this, the twenty-second month*, the reduction of Sicily was completed; it surrendered unconditionally. Then by starlight British and Canadian troops crossed Messina Strait and landed on the Italian mainland. American landings followed. Hardly had the invasion begun when the Italian government,

such as it was, surrendered unconditionally. Thereupon the Germans took over entirely. They rescued Mussolini, whom the Italians had impounded, and took him north, where they named him President of Fascist Italy and gave him a cabinet. The Italians began to turn against the Germans openly. Nevertheless, they were generally disarmed and surrendered to the Allied Forces 80 war vessels, including five battleships. In the north it was the Germans who disarmed the Italians, and Berlin said: "The Italian armed forces no longer exist. What however will exist for all time is the world's contempt for traitors." . . . The United States Navy reported that in three years it had become the greatest sea power in history. . . . On the Pacific scene MacArthur, stalking the Japanese island to island, moved his headquarters from Australia to New Guinea.

*In the twenty-third month* the King of Italy declared war on Germany. That made very little difference. The Germans were in possession of Italy from Rome north and deeply dug in. In a month of fighting the Allied Forces had done hardly more than to cut off the heel and sole of the Italian boot. They had taken Naples, where the retreating Germans left a delayed action bomb in the cellar of the post-office to kill civilians. . . . At a conference in Moscow the foreign ministers of the United States, Great Britain and Russia discussed the broad principles of a post-war organization of all peace-loving people—first adumbration of the United Nations.

Now the United States had been at war for two years.

*In the twenty-fourth month* the United States Senate resolved in favor of a post-war organization of nations to keep the peace of the world—vote eighty-five to five. At Cairo President Roosevelt, the British Prime Minister and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek met and agreed that Japan should be entirely shorn of her conquests and reduced to her pre-war boundaries. In the Southwest Pacific the Marines arrived in the Gilbert Islands and bit a piece out of Japan's fan.

"An hour long parade" of British bombers (775 of them) rocked Berlin. Two days later they came again (1,000 of them) and dropped more than 1,000 tons of bombs in twenty minutes. The going in Italy was still very hard. In the North of Italy Germany's hero Rommel was punishing the Italians who had deserted Mussolini. . . . In Washington President Roosevelt told Congress that Great Britain had agreed, in view of what she was receiving from the United States in the way of Lend-Lease, to stop charging dollars for the raw materials the Americans were getting from the British Empire.

*In the twenty-fifth month* President Roosevelt, the British Prime Minister and Dictator Stalin conferred at Teheran and afterward announced that they had shaped a common policy for a peace "which will banish the scourge and terror of war for many generations." . . . More than 1,300 American aircraft bombed German rocket gun installations on the French coast—the largest single bombing mission of the war so far. American planes dropped 1,200 tons of explosives and fire bombs on Bremen. That night the British delivered 2,500 tons of the same affliction upon Frankfort and Berlin. By this time one-third of Berlin was rubble and 6 million Berliners were homeless. Hamburg, Dortmund, Cologne and Nuremberg were completely out as industrial centers.

*Twenty-sixth month of America's participation:* Italians shoot Count Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law, and others, for treason as Fascists. Germany's military installations in Rome have to be bombed again. British, American and Greek troops wade ashore and make a beachhead on the west coast of Italy, thirty miles from Rome, beginning the nightmare of Anzio. . . . Political straws. Russia refuses to discuss the post-war boundaries of Poland and Moscow starts a rumor that Great Britain is discussing a separate peace with Germany. . . . Marines storming New Britain kill 2,917 Japanese. Battles begin for Wake and Marshall Islands on the middle periphery of the Japanese fan.

*The twenty-seventh month:* The British Prime Minister says victory will not come this year. Temporary stalemate in Italy. On one Russian battlefield 52,000 dead Germans are counted; 11,000 surrendered. . . . In the Pacific area the Japanese are badly beaten at Truk. Military government is established in the Marshall Islands, where the American casualties were 1,516 and the Japanese casualties more than 8,000.

*The twenty-eighth month:* Heavy slogging in all arenas. In the Southwest Pacific the Japanese were slowly losing their islands to MacArthur and had lost a quarter or more of their sea power, and yet at the same time they were pushing aggressively into India. The Russians in a two-weeks campaign recovered 3,500 villages and places from Hitler, and at the same time Hitler was opening a campaign in Hungary. In Italy the Allied Forces were inching toward Rome but very slowly and at harrowing cost. . . . Invisibly at this time the Allies were preparing the mightiest invasion in all the history of warfare.

*Twenty-ninth month:* Signs. Terrific bombing of that part of the French coast where the invasion will take place, but so widely scattered that the Germans will not be able to guess exactly where. Great Britain forbids foreign diplomats to go home or to send code messages; all overseas travel is suspended.

*Thirtieth month:* A lull. London has the first full month of freedom from air raids since 1942. In Italy British and Polish troops at last capture Cassino, which has been one of the principal barriers on the way to Rome. The Japanese are stopped in India.

## VII

# Might

JUNE 6, 1944 (*the thirty-first month of America's participation in the war and the fifty-seventh month since its beginning in Europe*). On this day the stupendous event of military history began to unroll on the Normandy coast of France. On the tail of a storm, along sixty miles of open beach and against coastal defenses the Germans had been preparing for more than four years, moved an armada of 4,000 ships and 11,000 planes, together with things that had never been seen in warfare before, such as mechanical whales that spewed men out of their bellies into the surf, vehicles that could swim, masses of floating concrete to be towed into place and sunk to make artificial harbors.

Here a million men waded ashore, followed by their equipment, ammunition and food; and when they had secured a beachhead and cleared some landing strips their supplies began to come to them by sky-trains. On news of the invasion President Roosevelt by radio led the nation in prayer; the cracked voice of Liberty Bell was heard in Philadelphia.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower was supreme commander of the Allied Forces. Their first purpose, after having secured a beachhead, was to cut across the Cherbourg peninsula and capture the port of that name. This they accomplished in three weeks; and then they stood encircled by the Germans, as they expected to be. Their next task was to break out. The Germans fought savagely. They had been caught



by surprise; they had not expected the Allies to land just there, nor in such weather. A storm came. It wrecked the artificial harbors and piled 300 ships up on the beach; but such was the power of supply and replacement behind the invaders that even this was a minor disaster. At sight of it General Eisenhower paused to marvel at the enabling miracle that he, like everybody else, had been taking for granted.

He said afterward: "There was no sight in the war that so impressed me with the industrial might of America as the wreckage on the landing beaches. For any other nation the disaster would have been almost decisive; but so great was America's productive capacity that the great storm occasioned little more than a ripple in the development of our build-up." . . .

In that same month the Germans began to fail in Italy; the Allied Forces took Rome. But also in that same month—six days after the invasion started—Hitler launched against England his new secret weapon, called the V-1. It was a robot plane, twenty feet long with a wing spread of sixteen feet; it travelled 300 miles an hour, directed itself, and dropped its bomb automatically. It not only did terrific damage; it put the morale of the British to its most extreme test, because somehow this was worse than the old kind of bombing, against which some defense had been found and which anyhow had recently been subsiding.

The V-1 was followed by the V-2, which was a rocket thing, moving faster than sound, so that it arrived silently.

In his book, "Crusade in Europe," General Eisenhower afterward wrote: "It seemed likely that if the German had succeeded in perfecting and using these new weapons six months earlier, our invasion of Europe would have proved exceedingly difficult, perhaps impossible. I feel sure that if he had succeeded in using these weapons over a six-month period, and particularly if he had made the Portsmouth-Southampton area one of his principal targets, Overlord might have been written off." (Overlord was the code name

for the invasion.) . . . Meanwhile, for one more Pacific island, Saipan, 1,000 miles from Japan, the Marines paid the very dear price of 9,752 men.

*Our thirty-second month:* In fighting their way off the Cherbourg peninsula the Allied Forces were frustrated by the ancient French hedgerows and their ditches, which, besides affording the enemy ideal cover, caused a tank to rear up on its tail and expose its soft belly to gun fire. An American sergeant thought of fitting heavy steel cutting blades to the nose of a tank. It was tried and it worked. The idea was adopted on the spot and steel for the blades was salvaged from the Germans' tide water defenses. After that American tanks, pushing sections of hedgerow in front of them, were a terror to the Germans. . . . In Berlin some army officers, representing a secret cabal of disaffection, tried to kill Hitler by throwing a bomb at him in a closed room. But his evil angels saved him for a more suitable end.

*Our thirty-third month:* Allied Forces break out of the Cherbourg peninsula. General Patton, with his mad Third Army, explores the suburbs of Paris, and then veers off toward Germany, making ten, fifteen and twenty miles a day. Paris is liberated. After the Germans had surrendered it they bombed it. Rumania quits the war. Russia has entered Poland and is killing Germans on a 1,000 mile front. . . . Southern France is invaded. This is a piece of postponed strategy, and nothing much comes of it because the Germans are going to pieces too fast. . . . Hitler's robot bombs are knocking down 17,000 houses a day in England, any kind of houses, including hospitals. . . . In the Pacific the island of Guam, another piece of American real estate, is recovered from the Japanese.

*Our thirty-fourth month (fifth anniversary of the beginning of the war in Europe):* Now for the first time the war touches German soil, as it never did in World War I. Allied Forces cross the frontier and get to within 25 miles of Cologne, Patton's Third Army setting the pace. They enter Bel-

gium, rolling their tanks through Brussels and Antwerp, and begin to gouge Germans out of Holland. Where at first they had no port at all, landing on a tide beach, they now have four—Cherbourg, Brest, Havre and Antwerp; so that problem is solved. The Germans, though fighting hard when they fight, are everywhere off balance and dazed. They thought they had invented lightning war.

*Thirty-fifth month:*

After an absence of thirty-two months General MacArthur returned to the Philippines, wading ashore at Leyte, in the waist of the Archipelago. The portent of this event was much more than the recovery of lost ground. From the Philippines, if he could establish himself there, MacArthur would be able to cut Japan off from her stomach—that is, from her sources of food, raw materials and oil in the Dutch East Indies, Malaya and Burma. Moreover, in those regions were half a million Japanese who could then be extinguished at leisure. In MacArthur's command on this adventure was every able bodied man who had escaped from Corregidor before that fortress in Manila had surrendered 2½ years before.

The Japanese were bound to fight desperately for the Philippines.

In a three-day battle in Leyte Bay they lost two battleships, six heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, three small cruisers, four airplane carriers and six destroyers; besides one battleship, four heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and seven destroyers badly damaged. Only two days before this the United States Navy had attacked Ryukyu Island, less than 600 miles from Japan's doorstep—the closest point yet—and in that fight the Japanese lost fifty-eight ships, including three battleships. This was the beginning of the end of Japan's sea power; and her vital merchant marine, already badly crippled, now would disappear very fast.

*Our thirty-sixth month:*

It now became evident that Germany was an animal at bay, fighting in pain and rage. There was no longer any

pattern of grand strategy. The superman myth had withered at the heart, and there was nothing to take its place. The Siegfried Line was crumbling; the Faustian soul was in despair. The name of Patton's Third Army was Nemesis. Its fury for retribution was insatiable. It reduced the great forts at Metz and handed the place back to the French. Then it moved on and was presently standing on the banks of the Rhine. Strassburg was taken by hand to hand combat in the streets. German soldiers began to surrender in large numbers of their own will. Nevertheless, as the war began to gnaw at German soil, what survived of the spirit of resistance became murderous. . . .

Stalin announced that the last German had been expelled from Russian soil; at the same time he called Japan an aggressor, which was to indicate that the Russians were about to break their incongruous non-aggression pact with Japan. Hitherto neutral as between the United States and Japan, Stalin now was anxious to take a come-lately part in the defeat of Japan, for that would enable him to claim spoils in Asia. . . .

Hitler was still launching his rocket bombs, but fewer of them, for they were dying too. The Allied Forces had destroyed some of their nests. . . .

The size of the total Allied Force in Europe could not be exactly reckoned. It had been building up too fast. The British Prime Minister estimated it at between 2½ and 3 million men; and as between the United States and Great Britain the ratio was three American soldiers for every two British.

*Our thirty-seventh month (third anniversary of Pearl Harbor):*

In reserve for the death struggle Germany had the vitality of a rattlesnake cornered. The news had been generally good. In the Philippines MacArthur had landed on Mindanao Island, 155 miles from Manila. In Europe Patton's Third Army was taking the Saar Valley yard by yard and at the same time was poking holes in the Siegfried Line.

Suddenly, with three armies, which included the last of their reserves, the Germans rushed forth from their fixed defenses and attacked the Allies on a wide front. It was winter; the weather was terrible. Clouds hiding the mountain tops and fog in the valleys tied the allied air force down. The fighting was in mud and snow. Hitler's general for this offensive was Von Rundstedt, who four years before had led the Germans this way to Paris and knew the terrain perfectly; he knew also where the Allied lines were thin. He broke through them and pushed the Americans back into Belgium and Luxembourg. In many towns that had just been liberated the Swastika went up again.

On the Allied side the generalship was fine. Instead of trying to stand rigid, thereby to risk his forces piecemeal in situations of tactical disadvantage, Eisenhower decided to roll with the punch until he could gather his strength for a maximum counter-attack. While he was doing that the Germans advanced fifty miles.

This came to be known as the Battle of the Bulge. It was Hitler's last insane throw with fate. If it had been a gamble for all or nothing it might have made some sense. But it lacked even that claim to be an intelligent act of desperation. He had lost more than could be retrieved by one lucky cast of the dice. It couldn't be all or nothing; there was not that much on the table. He could not have saved Germany by winning the Battle of the Bulge.

*Our thirty-eight month:*

General Eisenhower said: "I was convinced that in the Battle of the Bulge the enemy had committed all of his remaining reserves. I counted on a greatly weakened resistance from that moment onward."

So it turned out to be. The climax came suddenly. Never during the Battle of the Bulge did the Allies change their over-all strategy. Two weeks after the German offensive had been stopped the Allied Forces were re-entering Germany—Patton's Third Army in three places—fighting their way

through snow storms, through drifts four feet deep, across icy streams and through thick forests from tree to tree. . . .

On the other side, five Russian armies, advancing a mile an hour, were already on German soil in East Prussia and only 63 miles from Berlin. In fifteen days they had killed 195,000 Germans. Hungary quit the war and gave her armies to the Allies. Churchill called on the Germans to surrender. . . .

MacArthur arrived on Luzon, the principal island of the Philippines, and announced: "The decisive battle for the liberation of the Philippines and control of the Southwest Pacific is at hand." He was then 50 miles from Manila.

*Our thirty-ninth month:*

In the west, bald eagles were wheeling in the sky; in the east, a false sun was going down. Four American armies stood on the banks of the Rhine, with a bead on Germany's heart. The sound of marching Russian boots could be heard in Berlin. Budapest had fallen. MacArthur was back in Manila. United States warships were shelling Tokyo and Yokohama. For Iwo Island the Americans could afford to pay the price of 19,938 casualties. Japanese naval power was at the bottom of the sea and Japanese airpower was reduced to suicide squads.

## VIII

# Suicide of Victory

WHAT NOW MUST INTERRUPT THE CHRONOLOGY IS A POLITICAL event.

The countenance of victory that had been so lovely in the dimness began to change as it came near; its alabaster mask began to slip. It was time for political considerations to impinge on military imperatives. It was time also for American diplomats to begin losing the peace. This they proceeded to do at Yalta, where in early February, 1945, the Russian Dictator, the British Prime Minister and the President of the United States, each with a retinue of advisers, met to consider the shape of the post-war world.

Is it cynical to say the Americans were there to lose the peace? Not unless you mean it to be. They did not intend to lose it. Nevertheless, it was somehow inevitable that they should and they did when they signed the Yalta Agreement, which altered the course of history more than the fall of Hitler could have altered it and plunged the whole world into darkness.

Apologists for the Yalta Agreement have said these three things about it—first, that President Roosevelt was a dying man and unable to cope with Stalin; second, that everything would have come out right if only the Russians had kept their word; and, third, that in any case Stalin got no more than he would have been able to take by force.

Underlying it all was a natural truth—the same truth that

explains why the Americans were bound to lose the peace.

They wanted nothing—that is, nothing that was any more touchable than the Holy Grail.

Now considering what war is and that the rational world is incurably selfish, it is clear that if what you want to get out of war is some unattainable good, such as in World War I a world made free for democracy, or in this war, the liberation and happiness of mankind; and if your allies say, "Yes, yes, you are magnificent; only here and now are some realities to be faced," how are you going to trade? What will you trade with? What you want cannot be delivered; it can only be framed in words that may turn out to mean nothing. What they want is specific and tangible; they can define it precisely and if they get it they can hold it. If you say no to what they want they may refuse to go along with your millenium. You cannot bring your millenium to pass without their willing cooperation.

Two more complications may be added—one psychic and one gross. The psychic fact will be that your allies either think you are a little mad or suspect you of selfish designs beyond their comprehension. The gross fact may be that your allies are afraid of your power and secretly wish to frustrate it in any way they can. That was certainly true.

What were the weights and measures at Yalta?

The Americans had won the war, not by their industrial power alone but with their manpower too. They had won it in the sense that the British Empire owed its survival to them, certainly; and the Russians probably, except that they might have taken refuge in a frozen climate that even the Germans would not covet. More than that, there was hardly a nation in the world, certainly not one in Europe, that could contemplate recovery without American aid. Briefly, at Yalta, the actualities of American might were such that the American word might have been laid down as naked law. There was none to gainsay it. Yet so far from trying to exploit the amazing realities of this situation the Americans were mor-



bidly self-deprecating, appeasing, very mindful of the feelings of other nations, like a giant that might submit to be shackled to allay the fears of his neighbors and prove his good will.

And still the story of Yalta cannot be understood without reference again to the strange infatuation of the Roosevelt regime for Russia. It was as if Mr. Roosevelt had taken it upon himself personally to overcome the Russian Dictator's distrust of the Western World and convert him to the cause of freedom. To do this he thought it necessary to placate Stalin, to give him, or seem to give him, everything he wanted, thereby to engage him in bonds of gratitude and win his collaboration. However, the fact cannot be omitted that one of Mr. Roosevelt's intimate advisers at Yalta was Alger Hiss of the State Department, who years later was found out to be affiliated with a Communist spy ring in Washington and sent to jail for denying it under oath.

Lastly, at Yalta, the Americans were influenced by a military assumption that turned out to be wrong. The assumption was that the task of defeating Japan was too much for the United States and Great Britain; Russia's help was greatly needed there. General MacArthur was saying no. He thought the United States alone could do it. His opinion was that Japan was on her knees and ready to ask for peace. Nobody at Yalta believed him and not until long afterward was it known how right he was.

The irony of it was that Stalin did not have to be bribed to enter the war against Japan. He was anxious to get into it, for his eyes were on Asia; his only worry was that the war would end before he could get there.

The Yalta Agreement was a dragon's mouth, with teeth canted inward, that swallowed everything and disgorged nothing.

It was never honestly revealed.

The published text was a beautiful gloss. In Great Britain the Prime Minister said to the House of Commons that it

laid the foundations of peace "for generations to come." President Roosevelt, in a wheel chair, brought it to Congress and said it was exactly what it seemed to be—a three-power covenant to keep the peace of the world—and positively there was nothing up anybody's sleeve, no secrets, no reservations of any kind. It was all there.

But there were secret protocols. Even the Secretary of State did not know what they were. They were locked up in the White House safe. They came to light after Mr. Roosevelt's death. One of them, marked top secret, was a record of what Stalin was to be paid for coming into the war against Japan, when it had not been necessary to bribe him at all, since he was anxious to do it in order to be in at the kill.

Under this secret protocol Stalin promised to move against Japan three months after the defeat of Germany, on these conditions, namely: (1) that Russia should have special economic rights in Manchuria, including operation of the Chinese Eastern and South Manchurian railroads jointly with the Chinese, whose property they were; (2) that Port Arthur, also Chinese property, should be leased to Russia as a naval base; (3) that the Chinese port Darien be internationalized, and (4) that if it so happened that Chiang Kai-shek, who had not been consulted at all, should demur at these violations of Chinese sovereignty, the President of the United States would take measures to obtain his "concurrence."

The last sentence of the protocol read: "The heads of the three great powers have agreed that these claims of the Soviet Union shall be unquestionably fulfilled after Japan has been defeated." They were, and Russia got some strategic island property besides; but Russia was in the war against Japan *only six days*. Her contribution to the defeat of Japan was immaterial.

Under the Yalta Agreement the Russians did what they pleased in Europe, and when their behaviour was complained of they seemed to enjoy writing interminable notes of injured innocence. For anything they did they could find justi-

fication in the Agreement—in the text as they understood it, in their own records of verbal agreements that nobody else could remember, or in the booby-trap phrases.

Shortly after Mr. Roosevelt's death it seemed necessary to have another conference of the Big Three—this one in occupied Germany. The Russian Dictator, the British Prime Minister and President Truman met at Potsdam and got on very well. That was when Mr. Truman got the idea that "Uncle Joe" was a good fellow. They all went home happy. Unity had been cemented.

But after that it was worse—much worse.

The truth came out slowly—not all of it under two years. Then it was possible to say what had happened at Yalta, and what the consequences were, *videlicet*:

*One*: China, a desperately wounded and gallant ally, with a life-time history of American friendship, was secretly sold down the river to the Russians. All alone for four years, and then as an ally in the World War receiving some American Lend-Lease aid, China had been fighting the Japanese aggressor with her right hand and the Communist rebels with her left. Now she was delivered to a worse aggressor; her northern gates were thrown open to the Communists. The sequel was that the Communists, with Russian aid, over-ran China, took her behind the Iron Curtain, and alienated her from the West. Chiang Kai-shek and his loyal forces took refuge in Formosa.

*Two*: The Russians were permitted to take nearly one-half of pre-war Poland and Poland was partly solaced by a slice of German territory—this without any reference to the millions of Polish and German people who had either to accept a change of sovereignty or be dispossessed. Thus the Atlantic Charter, which said that no territory should change hands but with the free consent of the people concerned, became a burnt offering on the rickety altar of Unity.

*Three*: The Russians were left in complete military control of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria and

Yugoslavia, and proceeded in a ruthless manner to set up their own puppet governments in those countries. When Great Britain and the United States protested and reminded the Russians that they had promised to hold free elections everywhere, all the Russians had to do was to make an ugly face and threaten to kick over the altar of Unity.

Both the British and the Americans had made a fetish of Unity; their policy was to yield to the Russians rather than let the world see that Unity's pedestal was a two-legged stool. In his last message to the British Prime Minister, written two hours before he died, answering a request from the Prime Minister for advice on a speech he was going to make to the House of Commons, President Roosevelt said: "I would minimize the general Soviet problem as much as possible."

So hegemony over all of Eastern Europe passed by default to the Russian Dictator, and over it all the Iron Curtain fell. Still not content with what they had got, the Russians asked for a slice of North Africa's Mediterranean shore, a share in control of the Dardanelles and a naval base there. At that the British threatened to blow up, and Unity be damned, whereupon the Russians said they could wait. Afterward James F. Byrnes, the Secretary of State, who was there, set this down in his book: "The Atlantic Charter was a forgotten pledge. He [Stalin] wanted territory." The Atlantic Charter bound all its adherents, including Russia, to seek "no aggrandizement, territorial or other."

*Four:* The institution of human slavery was restored in the world—not political enslavement but actual physical slavery, by the agreement that reparations could be paid, in part, by the forced labor of captives in the hands of the victors. James F. Byrnes says that at Yalta the only reference he heard to forced labor was a casual remark by President Roosevelt that the United States "cannot take manpower as the Soviet Republics can." On their own initiative the Russians wrote the use of slave labor into the Yalta Protocol and everybody signed it. Mr. Byrnes did not know it until later.

*Five:* Germany was divided into zones of occupation—at first three, one for the Russians, one for the British and one for the Americans, and then four, when France demanded a zone, only that the French zone had to be carved out of the American zone and the American zone before that was what was left after the Russians and the British had marked out their own. The Russian zone included Berlin, and it was agreed that Berlin also should be divided into occupational zones. So Russia, Great Britain, the United States and France each had a zone in Berlin, but for some unexplained and stupid reason (if it were only stupid) no land corridors were provided whereby the British, the Americans and the French, from their respective zones in Germany, could reach Berlin. They could not enter Berlin at all but by grace of the Russians, because from any direction they had to cross Russian occupied territory.

In the name of Unity it was agreed that Germany should be treated as one economic whole. Nevertheless, the Russians dropped the Iron Curtain around their zone, and a time came when they tried to starve the Americans, the British and the French out of Berlin by blocking all the railroad lines, highways and canals leading into it. It looked as if the Americans, the British and the French would either have to fight their way into Berlin or bring their nationals out, if the Russians would let them out—until the Americans undertook to move in food, fuel and other supplies by air. It was a fantastic idea and humiliating. Yet it was done. For several months the vital needs of the American, the British and the French zones of Berlin were entirely supplied by air. This operation came to be called the Great Air Lift. The Russians did not think it was possible—a box-car plane landing every five minutes day and night on the air strip in the American zone. When they saw it could be done the Russians opened “negotiations” for lifting the blockade. What they would have done if the Americans had attempted to fight their way into Berlin will be always a matter of speculation.

*Six:* At Yalta the timbers for the United Nations Organization were rough-hewn, morticed and numbered. Every nation that had declared war against Germany and Japan would be invited to the raising bee at San Francisco in April. The Americans were so moved by Stalin's gracious endorsement of the project that when he demanded three votes to one for the United States he got them.

The United Nations Organization was to consist of a General Assembly, in which each member nation should have one seat, and above that a Security Council of eleven members, six to be rotating and five to be permanent. The five permanent members of the Security Council would be Great Britain, the United States, Russia, France and China, and each of these five would have a positive right of veto. This veto arrangement would give any one of the five permanent members the power to make the United Nations impotent, which the Russians immediately proceeded to do.

*Seven:* When the Yalta Agreement was signed the number of people in the Communist world was hardly more than 200 million. Five years later it was 800 million, spread over nearly one-third of the globe. Such was the speed at which the Russians moved to fill the areas of political vacuum that existed after Yalta.

The calculated effrontery with which the Russians violated the Yalta Agreement at last exhausted the innocent good will of President Truman. He said: "I went there [to Potsdam] with the kindest feelings in the world toward Russia, and we made certain agreements. . . . I got very well acquainted with Joe Stalin. I like Old Joe; he is a decent fellow. But Joe is a prisoner of the Politboro. He makes agreements and if he could he would keep them, but the people who run the government are very specific in saying he cannot keep them."

In a less naive mood he said: "The power of the Kremlin is more effective, more violent, more far-reaching than the power of the czars, or the power of Genghis Khan or the power of other tyrants of the past." He added that agree-

ments with Russia were not worth the paper they were written on.

He was in that state of mind when he announced what came to be known as the Truman Doctrine. The short story of the Truman Doctrine is as follows. With an eye still on the Dardanelles and the Mediterranean, Russia was bearing down on Greece and Turkey. Great Britain had been defending Greece. Suddenly she said to the United States: "This is your baby too and we cannot hold it any longer." With that she rolled it onto the American lap. President Truman accepted it and got from Congress a large appropriation of money to help the governments of Greece and Turkey resist the Communist pressure, and then he said it would be America's foreign policy from that time on to help any democratic country to defend itself. That was understood to mean that the United States undertook to stop the further spread of Communism. Russia took it that way and was of course enraged. That was the beginning of a series of badgering gestures, reprisals, excursions and alarms, called in general the Cold War between the United States and Russia. It led to the Korean war directly.

When the Communist North Koreans, backed by the Chinese Communists, invaded South Korea, Mr. Truman, according to his Doctrine, felt obliged to go to the aid of the South Koreans. Without a declaration of war, without the consent of Congress, he sent armed forces into Korea to push the Communists back. He called it a police action. It turned out to be an ugly and costly war. If the North Koreans had not had the Chinese Communists behind them they probably never would have invaded South Korea, and if the Yalta Agreement had not sold China out to Russia, China would not have been a Communist country.

One day when the Russians were maliciously absent the United Nations voted to support Mr. Truman, called the North Koreans aggressors, and formally adopted the war. When the Russians returned to their seats they were derisive

and insulting. They admitted that Russia was giving the North Koreans military aid—and what did anybody wish to do about it? As a member of the United Nations, Russia then was in the position of supporting a war against the United Nations.

So much for the Yalta Agreement. We now return to the interrupted chronology.



## IX

# Chronology Continued: The Bomb

OUR *fortieth month* (MARCH, 1945):

President Roosevelt said the Yalta Agreement meant the end of unilateral action (action by one nation alone), of exclusive alliances, of spheres of influence and of balances of power, and all the other expedients which had been tried for centuries and failed. . . .

Germany was on her back, fighting with her claws. Six Allied armies were over the Rhine. The Ruhr Valley was isolated. American military government was set up in Frankfurt A/M. . . .

The Stars and Stripes were raised on Corregidor in Manila Bay. The rebuilding of Manila was begun. An area of fifteen square miles in the heart of Tokyo was laid waste by American bombers.

*Forty-first month:*

On the twelfth day of this month, April 1945, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt died of a brain hemorrhage. He was 63. . . .

His war against Hitler reached its climax in this same month. American and Russian troops met on the river Elbe in Germany. After a march of 1,000 miles from the gates of Moscow the Russians entered Berlin and raised their flag on the ruins of the Reichstag. Allied forces captured several

prison camps in Germany and the liberation of prisoners began. Heinrich Himmler, chief of the German secret police, to whom Hitler had delegated extreme powers, surreptitiously offered to surrender Germany to Great Britain and the United States. His offer was ignored. Patton's Third Army, having bisected Germany, marched into Czechoslovakia. In Italy one million Germans surrendered. . . .

Benito Mussolini, the deposed Fascist Dictator whom the Germans had rescued out of Italy, was captured by anti-Fascist Italian partisans at Dango on Lake Como. They tried him on the spot and shot him, together with his mistress and a body guard of sixteen. Mussolini's body was taken to Milan and thrown down on the pavement to be kicked around. Then it was put on exhibition in a garage, hanging upside down by the feet like a pig. Later it was buried in a potter's field and the grave left unmarked. . . .

Mussolini was a much more intelligent man than Hitler. He evolved in Italy a pattern of totalitarian government called the Corporate State which at one time was much admired by New Dealers in Washington. In the early days of the Rome-Berlin Axis Mussolini appears to have been Hitler's mentor. Hitler knew very little about the theory of government. His Nazism was crude and terroristic.

*Our forty-second month in the war, May 1945:*

On May 1 the German radio announced that Hitler had died in the line of duty at his operational headquarters, in the Reich Chancellery. The real story, pieced together afterward from the testimony of survivors, was somewhat different. In his elaborate underground bomb-shelter at the Chancellery, Hitler was married to his mistress. After the wedding feast groom and bride retired to their bed chamber and committed suicide. Their wrapped-up bodies were carried out to the garden, soaked with gasoline and set on fire. However, the charred remains were never positively identified, and for a long time there was a rumor in the world about Hitler, like the rumor that survived Nero for a generation,

namely, that he had escaped and was in hiding and would sometime reappear in the role of anti-Christ. Stalin believed this. . . .

The day after Hitler's death Berlin surrendered. The terms of capitulation were signed in the basement of the Reich Chancellery while the top floors were burning. There was then no German government; there was hardly anything you could call Germany. Grand Admiral Doenitz announced that he was Hitler's successor by appointment, but there was only his word for it. Anyhow, he fled at once to Copenhagen and pretended to take the German government with him. From there he called on the German people to go on fighting, for if they surrendered unconditionally German heroism would be a word of mockery forever.

Since there was no one who had any clear authority to accept the Allies' terms of surrender the final transactions were somewhat confused. Pockets of trapped Germans did as they pleased. Some gave up and some went on fighting. At last in a little red school house in Reims, where General Eisenhower's headquarters happened to be, the German Chief of Staff, Gustav Jodl, signed for Germany an acknowledgement of unconditional surrender. Heinrich Himmler, Germany's infamous killer, committed suicide in the hands of his captors, by crunching a vial of poison in his mouth. On May 8, President Truman announced the end of hostilities in Europe, and that night floodlights played on the capital dome in Washington for the first time since Pearl Harbor.

*Our forty-third month:*

Now the United States could put both fists into the Pacific war. The army was seven million. President Truman announced that Japan's military power would be simply annihilated and called upon the Japanese to surrender. The effect was to intensify Japan's suicidal frenzy. Now by routine her flyers, instead of dropping their bombs, went with them and deliberately crashed on the decks of American warships. It was awesome. On Okinawa Island a Japanese

force of 85,000 had been reduced to 15,000; but these fifteen thousand fought as if possessed. They encysted themselves in stone crevices on vertical cliff sides, and marines, going up ropes hand over hand with flame throwers, had literally to burn them out. When at last the battle of Okinawa was lost the Japanese commanders committed hara-kiri. The American casualties there were more than 44,000; the Japanese more than 94,000. For one island. But it was a perfect base from which to bomb Japan around the clock.

*Our forty-fourth month:*

There had to be another meeting of the Big Three. It took place at Potsdam in Germany—President Truman, the British Prime Minister and the Russian Dictator. Mr. Truman took with him and guardedly imparted the news that the Americans had the atomic bomb in their hands. In a Berlin speech he said: "There is not one piece of territory or one thing of a monetary nature that we want out of this war. . . . We are fighting for peace and for the welfare of mankind."

Japan was cracking. . . .

American warships were shelling Tokyo and Yokohama. The Air Force, looking for targets, was prowling over Japan at will and calling its shots—that is, naming beforehand the cities that were marked for destruction and giving the order in which they would be visited. . . .

The Tokyo radio began to plead for leniency. If the Americans, instead of demanding unconditional surrender, would sincerely apply the Atlantic Charter, the Japanese war lords as well as the Japanese people would respond with a desire to end the conflict. Moreover, it said there was no real problem between liberal America and liberal Japan.

The answer to this was a proclamation by President Truman, the British Prime Minister and Chiang Kai-shek calling upon Japan to surrender unconditionally or face "prompt and utter destruction."

*Our forty-fifth month:*

On the sixth day of August, 1945, Hiroshima, the seventh

Japanese city, was destroyed by one atomic bomb. When President Truman announced it he said: "We have spent two billion dollars in the greatest scientific gamble in history—and won. We are now prepared to obliterate more rapidly and more completely every productive enterprise that the Japanese have above the ground." . . .

What the President meant was that it had cost two billion dollars to make the atomic bomb, Congress appropriating the money secretly and blindly, with nobody sure the thing would work—and Hiroshima was the first pay-off. Later a group of scientists, engineers, doctors and trained observers was sent to Japan to study the pay-off for the information of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey—that is, to study the killing power of the bomb, its destructiveness in general, its effect on public morale (its effectiveness as an instrument of terror), and its political consequences if any. The report was published as an official document. In it you may read:

"A single atomic bomb exploded over the city of Hiroshima at 0815 on the morning of 6 August. Most of the industrial workers had already reported for work, but many workers were on route and nearly all the school children were at work in the open on a program of building removal to provide fire breaks. The surprise, the collapse of many buildings and the conflagration (a fire storm) contributed to an unprecedented casualty rate. . . .

"The exact number of dead and injured will never be known. The Survey believes the dead at Hiroshima to have been between seventy and eighty thousand, with an equal number injured. Of women in various stages of pregnancy who were within 3,000 feet of ground zero, all known cases have had miscarriages.

"Treatment of the victims by the Japanese was limited by the lack of medical facilities. Of more than 200 doctors in Hiroshima 90 per cent. were casualties. Out of 1,780 nurses,

1,654 were killed or injured. Only three out of 45 civilian hospitals could be used, and two large army hospitals were rendered unusable. Those within 3,000 feet of ground zero were totally destroyed and the mortality rate of the occupants was practically 100 per cent. Two large hospitals of reinforced concrete were located 4,900 feet from ground zero, but neither was able to resume operations for some time and the casualty rate was approximately 90 per cent. With such elimination of facilities and personnel the lack of care and rescue activities is understandable. Father Siemes reported that thirty hours elapsed before any organized rescue parties were observed."

Father Siemes was a German born Jesuit who was teaching in Japan and happened to be in Hiroshima. He said: "Everything was lacking, doctors, assistants, dressings, drugs, etc. Iodine was applied to the wounds but they were left uncleaned. Those that were brought in were laid on the floor and no one could give them any further care." The water failed; there was no sewage disposal. . . .

Two days later Russia declared war on Japan and on that same day a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, where all the horrors of Hiroshima were repeated on a somewhat smaller scale—smaller owing to the topography of the city. The Survey estimated the Nagasaki dead at 35,000, and again that many injured.

President Truman's decision to loose the atomic bomb on Japan proceeded from the idea that the war could be shortened by terror. His military advisers were telling him that the final conquest of Japan by invasion might cost a million American casualties.

Did the use of the bomb in fact shorten the war?

The Bombing Survey Mission explored that question and could not arrive at a positive answer. It found that the morale of the Japanese people was already very low; terror of the atomic bomb did not seem to worsen it.

The report said: "It is apparent that the effect of the atomic bombings on the confidence of the Japanese civilian population was remarkably localized."

But there was another question. What was the effect on the Japanese government? As to that the Survey Mission said: "As early as the Spring of 1944 a group of former prime ministers and others close to the Emperor had been making efforts toward bringing the war to an end. The decision to seek ways and means to terminate the war, influenced in part by the knowledge of the low state of popular morale, had been taken in May, 1945 [three months before the first bomb fell] by the Supreme War Guidance Council. . . . The bombs did not convince the military that defense of the home islands was impossible. It did permit the government to say, however, that no army without the weapon could possibly resist an enemy who had it, thus saving face for the army leaders."

In any case, on August 10, two days after the Russians invaded Manchuria and two days after the bombing of Nagasaki, the Japanese offered to surrender according to the terms of the Potsdam declaration, if only their Emperor could stay on his throne. Four days later Mr. Truman, for the Allies, accepted their surrender—and World War II was ended.

# BOOK SIX

---

## I

### Face of Empire

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT DIED ON THE eighty-third day of his fourth term.

The Vice-President was Harry S. Truman, a sudden, brittle little man, who then became President. His notable qualifications were quick pugnacity, valor of prejudice, heroic mediocrity and an easy way with the words *yes* and *no*. As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces he could say: "All right. Let them have the atomic bomb." That decision seemed to involve him in no prayerful anxiety. He had no capacity for awe. His coat of egotism made him impervious to both intellectuals and angels. He knew who was President.

He had a small military record. His rise from haberdashery to a seat in the United States Senate was owing to the fact that a corrupt and cynical political machine in Kansas City picked him to be its homage to civic virtue. His philosophy of government was that if you were for the people and your intentions were good everything would come out all right;



and if it came out to be a Welfare State, all the better. Could you have too much human welfare?

Foreign affairs were simple too. With just common sense you could learn nearly all you needed to know about them in a few lessons, and for the rest you could ask the Secretary of State. The world's post-war problems were big but not terrifying. If you had in your heart a true love of mankind and in your hand the magic wand of American billions you could act on them pretty well. Mankind was no abstraction to him. Mankind was an image—the image of an underprivileged man in strange and scanty clothes who never had enough money to take home on Saturday night and no way to vote the Democratic ticket.

He was not a Caesar, not a dictator, not a conscious demagogue, only a haberdasher who would think nothing of including in the price of a necktie a formula for putting down aggression in the world and giving people a chance to live with one another in a state of amity and good feeling.

Nothing could ever have been more improbable than that under the leadership of a man like that the American nation was launched on a career of global empire from which there could be no return short of capital disaster. Let the features of empire be—

- (1) The executive principle of government uncontrollably ascendant,
- (2) The parliamentary and judicial principles recessive,
- (3) The military authority in escape from civilian control,
- (4) Foreign policy supreme over domestic policy,
- (5) A system of subsidized allies and satellites all over the world,
- (6) The paramount war machine upon the earth,
- (7) A Treasury devouring more than a quarter of the nation's income and wanting more,

—and you will see them all.

The rest of this history is the story of a crusade that lost its way.

After victory the war machine was scrapped as if it were junk. There was never going to be another war. The United Nations would see to that. But government was not demobilized. It went on growing; it grew faster than ever before in time of peace; and its growth was almost entirely on the executive side. For a measure take this:

President Hoover had an executive staff of . . . . .	42 persons
President Roosevelt fought World War II	
with an executive staff of . . . . .	597 persons
President Truman's executive staff increased to . . .	1,178 persons

In the Truman regime Federal government became so vast and shapeless that people could no longer comprehend it, and as they were unable to comprehend it, so of course, they were unable to control it, although more and more it touched to the quick the everyday transactions of private life. That was not the worst. A time came when the Federal government was aware that it had lost control of itself. The whole did not know its own parts, and the parts in many cases were self-growing and self-governing, like cancerous cells.

So at last the Congress asked former President Hoover to form a commission of experts to study government—literally to stalk it, to find out what it was and where it was and how it worked, with the hope that some kind of form could be imposed upon it. The report of the Hoover Commission was a document of many volumes; the briefest possible summary of it made a book of more than 500 pages that could hardly be called popular reading.

It found the Executive Branch of Government (government from the White House) to be “a chaos of bureaus and subdivisions.” It found agencies of government that were bigger than the whole of government was only twenty years before. It found agencies that had their own independent sources of income; agencies that in their own way administered systems of subsidy at a loss, getting money at one rate of interest from the Treasury and lending it to people at a

lower rate; almost forgotten agencies that exercised powers of government over regions, with their boundaries overlapping. It said: "The present regional districts of Federal bureaus and agencies, if superimposed one on the other on a map, would show an unbelievable spider-web pattern of regional boundaries."

It found that the government could not give a coherent account of its expenditures.

However, the idea of reorganizing the government moved very slowly against many obstacles, some of them politically impassable; and that was because the bureaus and agencies were deeply entrenched and had acquired powers of self-defense. The thought of demobilizing government, that is, the thought of less government, hardly got through at all. For all the chaos, these bureaus and agencies did one thing with zeal. They scattered money out of the public purse to millions of people, who, having once become dependent, could not easily be cut off. How, for example, could the government stop supporting farm prices out of the public purse, to keep farming profitable, without throwing into bankruptcy perhaps millions of farmers who had become accustomed to that kind of aid?

It was the same in foreign affairs.

After victory Lend-Lease was stopped, as the law required, and immediately the countries that had been receiving Lend-Lease goods without price, especially Great Britain and Russia, who had been the principal beneficiaries, bitterly complained, as if they were hurt.

You may think of Lend-Lease as a great pipe line, 3,000 miles long, delivering food, fuel, raw materials, machinery, motor vehicles, guns, ammunition, anything a country at war could use, and all of it for the asking to any country whose defense the President might deem essential to the security of the United States. It took some time to fill the pipe line; once it was full the goods moved in a continuous flow under pressure, as in a water main.

Now, if you are going to stop the flow, the question is, will you stop it at the outlet in Europe or at the source in this country? If you stop it at the outlet, then what will you do with the goods already in the pipe line? Well, at first it was closed at the outlet in Europe; hence the protests from Great Britain, Russia, France and others. They wanted at least what was left in the pipe line. The American government relented and closed the valve at the source. That is to say, the pipe line was permitted to empty itself, and that gave Europe a great quantity of goods that could be used in peace as well as war.

From beginning to end, the value of Lend-Lease goods delivered to foreign countries—two-thirds of it to Great Britain, one-fourth of it to Russia and nearly all the rest divided between France and China—was more than \$42 billion. And if you want to know what \$42 billion represents, it is roughly equal to the total assessed value of all property, real and personal, in the three states of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

In the charted curves of comparative statistics, war billions are as mountains that are not there. You cast them out. But peace time billions are supposed to be subject to the realities of arithmetic.

No one could have imagined that in the next eight years (post-war years) American aid to foreign countries, all of it unrepayable, would amount to three times the total assessed value of all property in the six New England states. This was simply a sharing of American wealth with other nations. Such a thing was unique in the world.

The impulsion to do it was a complex of motives. The American mind was in one of its apocalyptic moods. The evangel of a fraternity of nations to keep the amity of the world was hypnotic. The idea was romantic, sacrificial, aggressively anti-nationalistic, and very intolerant of the kind of patriotism that said America first. With a fervor like that working in its heart, how could the richest nation in the

world isolate itself from the miseries of other nations? For the hard-thinking realist there were other arguments, such as that no one nation could hope to prosper in an unprosperous world, wherefore, beyond sentiment or any moral obligations, it behooved this nation to help the war stricken nations of Europe to regain their feet. Nor is the fact to be omitted that in the American folk-heart there was a sense of guilt at being so rich in a wretched world.

But even so, if the people had known what it was going to cost they might have been reluctant. Therefore, it had to be done one wedge at a time.

First was \$1½ billion for a United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Fund. Then \$1 billion for relief to be administered by the Army in defeated countries. After that, \$2¾ billions for the International Monetary Fund, which was going to restore faith in everybody's haggard money. Then more than \$3 billion for the International Bank, which was to make loans for reconstruction works in the wrecked countries, and \$3½ billion for the American Export-Import Bank to make loans for the restoration of the international trade, and \$2 billion to empty the Lend-Lease pipe line.

For each of these appropriations the White House, the State Department and the Treasury put forth a spate of emotional propaganda, calling upon the people to save the world or perish with it, and this propaganda reacting upon Congress, produced there a state of sentiment that was almost maudlin. During the debate on what was called the Bretton Woods proposal, which provided for the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank, one Senator said: "I will cast my vote in the hope and in the prayer that man will be different in the future." Another: "There is a deep feeling that something must be done in the world. The nations need each other as never before. They are yearning and hungering for something. So far as I am concerned, we are going to give it to them." In the House of Representatives one said: "If the voice of the people is the voice of God we have irrefutable

testimony in behalf of this legislation." And another: "This is a bill to regulate selfishness and restrain greed among nations." Another: "Everyone is in favor of this legislation except those who would vote against the Ten Commandments."

So these billions were voted by very large majorities in both the Senate and the House.

The American government seemed to find the first few billions in its vest pocket. But to save Europe it would have to dig much deeper.

The Treasury was already at work on a plan to rescue Great Britain with a loan of \$4.4 billion, on the ground simply that the world could not afford to let Great Britain go bankrupt and only the United States could prevent it. Nominally it was a loan. Actually the thought of repayment was not seriously entertained, least of all by the British, who thought it should have been a gift.

This loan to the British made the Russians very mad. They had been expecting an American loan of \$5 billion and it was not forthcoming. That is one of the hazards of loans or grants from one government to another. They are political to begin with and give rise to bitter political jealousies.

In one year Great Britain used up her American loan, which was supposed to keep her afloat for three, and was going aground again. Not only Great Britain but Europe as a whole was worse off than she was when she began to receive post-war American aid.

Then the Marshall Plan, so called because it had its origin in a mid-summer's night speech by George C. Marshall, the Secretary of State. He addressed himself to the countries of Europe, saying, in effect, as follows: "Just to spill American billions all over the place gets us nowhere. You have no plan. Agree among yourselves on a European recovery program to run over several years, calculate the cost of it, then estimate what you can do toward helping yourselves, and send us the bill for the difference."

The speech got no big headlines in this country; in Eu-

rope it electrified the air. The British Prime Minister said it was an event without precedent in history—one nation offering to pay the deficits of other nations for a period of years—and rushed off to Paris to arrange a grand European conference on how to make the most of it. Everybody was included. Russia and her satellites were invited. They came, bringing their worst manners, and churlishly went home. Why? Probably because they did not want Europe to be owing her salvation to capitalistic dollars.

This was a tricky moment in world politics. Europe was going to be split between sixteen Marshall Plan countries in the west and the Communist countries of the east. Czechoslovakia was on the line until the Russians seized her from behind and dragged her behind the Iron Curtain, wanting control of her industrial resources.

The Marshall Plan countries were Great Britain, France, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Iceland, Luxemburg, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. They figured fast and came up with the conclusion that for a four-year recovery program they would require American aid in the sum of nearly \$30 billion. They were persuaded to scale it down to a little less than \$22 billion. Congress passed the necessary legislation.

To administer Marshall Plan aid there was created and euphemistically named the Economic Cooperation Administration, with Cabinet rank, with a law of its own, an ambassador-at-large, an administrator with power over the destinies of sixteen European nations, and command of American resources figuratively represented by the continuous labor of two million Americans. As there had been a Lend-Lease pipe line, so now there was a Marshall Plan pipe line, full of machinery, raw materials and means of sustenance.

The Marshall Plan idea had at first no political character. Secretary Marshall said: "Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine, but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos."

However, owing to the unfriendliness of the Russians on every scene and to the systematic revival of their subversive and anti-capitalistic activities in western countries, especially the United States, American foreign policy was painfully disillusioned. How to stop the spread of Communism became its No. 1 problem. One way to slow it up would be to give economic support to the anti-Communist countries of Europe.

On signing the Foreign Assistance Act, that implemented the Marshall Plan, President Truman said: "This is the answer to the challenge that faces the world"—meaning of course the Communist challenge.

After that, not only the Russians but Communists everywhere denounced Marshall Plan aid as a new kind of imperialism, or as dollar enslavement, or as the exploitation of the world's misery with sinister capitalistic intent.

Now everyone could see that the world was dividing dangerously. On one side the American power and on the other side the Russian power, and nowhere in the earth a third power strong enough to stand between these two.



## II

# Buying Allies

THE FATE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, WHICH WAS CONQUERED BY a Communist fifth column, caused fear of Russia in western Europe to rise to the pitch of panic. The western European countries said economic aid alone would not save them. Suppose that with American aid they were able to carry through their reconstruction works. How could they defend them against the consuming Russian horde, which, as all the military authorities agreed, could march across Europe in two weeks?

Out of this fear rose the thought of collective security. President Truman said: "The heart of our support is economic assistance. To be effective, it must be coupled with sufficient military strength to give the free peoples of the world some sense of security while they rebuild."

There had been formed what was called a Western European Union; but its total military strength was not equal to the strength of Russia. Now suddenly the principal members of that Western European Union asked the United States and Canada to join them in a North Atlantic Pact which would guarantee the security of these ten western European countries, namely: Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Portugal.

President Truman and the State Department embraced the idea with instant enthusiasm. Within nine months from

the time it was proposed the North Atlantic Treaty was signed by all twelve nations and ratified by the United States Senate, and President Truman was calling for the rearmament of western Europe with American dollars.

With such haste, and with no profound debate in the press, in the forums or among the law makers, the first book of American history was violently closed and the second one opened with a global flourish.

The heart of the North Atlantic Treaty is this: The twelve signatory nations—the United States, Canada and ten European nations—severally and collectively agree, and so bind themselves, that an armed attack upon any one of them shall be considered an attack upon all of them, and they shall conduct themselves accordingly. Thus an attack upon Portugal or Norway, for example, would be deemed an attack upon the United States. Turkey and Greece signed later.

By this treaty the United States assumed an *unlimited obligation to go to war under circumstances it could not foresee; under circumstances it could not control.*

The Marshall Plan came to an end in four years, as required by law, but nothing happened to the pipe line. It was handed over to another euphemistically named organization, the Mutual Security Agency, which continued to administer foreign aid at the rate of \$6 to \$8 billion a year. Only now foreign aid began to be militarized. Less and less of it was for economic reconstruction, which in Europe had been very successful, and more and more of it to subsidize armies and armaments. The Marshall Plan countries now were the North Atlantic Treaty countries. They organized what they called the European Defense Community, in which they were going to pool their entire military strength. To this European Defense Community the American government contributed air power, naval power, a great atomic bomb base in England with the bomb stock-piled around, military structures, ground troops, enormous quantities of armament and a supreme commander—all of this besides

helping the North Atlantic Treaty countries with money to pay their pro rata share of the cost of creating a defense system that might scare the Russians.

Undisguisedly and with avowed intentions, the American government was arming 225 million people in western Europe. Against whom? Against the Russians.

In the American press, in the debates of Congress, in official statements from the executive heads of government, the enemy was no longer referred to in oblique diplomatic language. He was identified by name and warned what would happen to him if he started anything. And when, besides arming western Europe, the Americans began to build themselves a new war machine in place of the one they had scrapped at the end of the war—this one to be the most terrible in the world—it was aimed straight at Russia.

The Russians retorted by using the United Nations as a forum from which to denounce the Americans as capitalistic war mongers, who, in order to destroy Russia, would bring on World War III and fight it with atomic weapons. Then behind the Iron Curtain they produced an atomic explosion, which could be heard outside, and that was to prove that they, too, had the atomic bomb.

But their formidable answer was strategic. They moved the axis of the cold war from Europe to Asia, where they incited the Chinese, who incited the North Koreans, who invaded South Korea, intending to take the whole of Korea behind the Iron Curtain.

What the military theorist already knew, now was realized in fact, namely this: that by reason of occupying the heartland of the world, reaching from the Baltic Sea in Europe all the way around to Alaska in the Northern Hemisphere, Russia and her satellites were able to choose both the time and the battlefield. For the Americans and their kind of warfare Korea was the worst battlefield there was, and on the other side of the world.

Under the Truman Doctrine, which pledged the United

States to resist further Communist aggression anywhere, the Americans were morally obliged to go to the aid of South Korea, alone at first, when President Truman immediately ordered General MacArthur to move in from Japan. A few hours later the United Nations, in the willful absence of the Russian delegates, denounced the North Koreans as aggressors and adopted Mr. Truman's war. That made it nominally a United Nations war, and it was fought under the United Nations flag; actually it was America's war. Only sixteen of the fifty-five non-Communist members of the United Nations contributed anything, and that very little; the Americans bore 90 per cent of the cost and roughly that proportion of the casualties, save only the South Koreans, who were the victims and fought heroically and suffered relatively the heaviest casualties.

It was an absurd war. American power became imprisoned in it. The Americans could not afford to lose it; neither could they afford to win it. If they lost it, or abandoned it, they would lose face forever in Asia. On the other hand, to win it they might have had to conquer China, which was an appalling task to contemplate, besides at the same time alienating their United Nations allies, most of whom, and especially Great Britain and India, were for confining the war to Korea and coming to terms ultimately with Communist China.

It lasted three years and came to a stalemate, called a truce—a very uneasy truce, with Korea divided across the middle as it was before—Communists entrenched in the North, bitter anti-Communists entrenched in the South. It was the first foreign war from which the Americans ever came home without victory. For the Russians it was a cat's paw game. They had no casualties; the Chinese and the North Koreans did all the dying on the Communist side; and the Russians could gloat over the hole it made in the American purse.

Meanwhile the political climate of Europe had been changing. The European Defense Community had begun to look

like a large real estate development, not going very well—the streets laid out, the signs up, an unfinished town hall, a barracks, great piles of building material lying about, a boiler rusting on the ground, but nothing like a live community beginning to take place.

The explanations were various. First of all, people were groaning under their share of the cost; and they were resenting it that the rich Americans kept exhorting them to produce, produce more, and hurry! hurry! before the Russians could get them. The British had refused to put their troops into one big army. The French were afraid to include West Germany, lest German militarism be revived. The theme of Russian propaganda—peace, co-existence and a revival of east-west trade—had made an impression in Western Europe, whereas in the United States it was discounted. Moreover, in each of the principal North Atlantic Treaty countries there was a Communist party, reminding the people that if war came Western Europe would be the battlefield. Although ultimately perhaps the Americans would liberate them, they had been liberated before; and did they remember what that was like? Fear of the Russians was subsiding. If the Russians were going to attack Western Europe, why hadn't they done it already? Why were they waiting for Western Europe to grow stronger?

At the very source of all this feeling and rationalization were two poisonous springs. One was dislike of the rich Americans and one was distrust of American leadership in the affairs of the world.

The dislike could be easily understood. The Americans were everywhere, exercising the preemptive power of their dollars, in many places so numerous and so established that one might be confused as to which was the foreigner, the American or the European. Who were these Americans? They were ambassadors-at-large and superfluous ministers, sometimes three or four in one capital. They were special representatives of the President and of governmental agen-

cies and processions of Very Important Persons, and, in train with these, experts, observers, economic advisers, delegates, sponsors, survey committees, social scientists, research teams from private American Foundations, and so on, all anxious and competent to tell West Europeans what they should do and how they should do it and ready to impart, at no cost whatever, the sorcery of American know-how. Then generals and the brass that goes with generals, and soldiers, sailors, aviators and service forces, with their own hotels and playgrounds and recreational resorts, all of them spending dollars in a manner to make the native people feel inferior in their own cities and streets and waysides.

European distrust of American leadership lay in another dimension.

For a generation or more the American ego had been swelling on such phrases as "America's turn to assume world leadership," or "Americans now must accept their world responsibilities." And what did these phrases mean? Nothing. World leadership, like world dominion or world conquest, is one of the fatal delusions. At any given period of time several great powers will be acting in the world, competitively perhaps, and each one is bound for good or evil to put forth its strength. In each case little powers, seeking protections and advantage, fall into the orbit of the great one and revolve around it, as if by a law of celestial mechanics. If the great power puts forth its strength in a manner to keep the equilibrium in its own sphere its system may hold together, not forever but for a long time. It is always subject to astronomical disaster. If it grows too fast by accretion it will explode; if it interferes too much in the affairs of the little powers that rotate about it, then it will suffer internal convulsions.

But where in this stable planetary arrangement, even when it works, do you find any sense of direction, any meaning of towardness? When you speak of world leadership you must imply that one great power has the wisdom to know where the world ought to be going and is resolved to take it there.

Then its system begins to collide with other systems and there is chaos in the heavens.

In World War I the Americans exerted their strength to make the world safe for democracy. That was an unattainable object because, first, democracy was something nobody could define, and, secondly, half the world did not want it. However you define it, the life of democracy in the world was much less safe afterward than before.

In World War II they exerted their strength again to put down aggression in the world and to confer upon mankind the four freedoms, especially freedom from want and freedom from fear. What was the result? They put down one aggressor and raised up a worse one, the old spectre of famine returned and fear became the controlling emotion of the whole world, even the fear that civilization might perish.

It was only when Europe was in trouble that her statesmen intoned American slogans and acclaimed American leadership. What they wanted, as it always turned out, was not American leadership but American billions with no strings attached. The British view was that the Americans were to be cajoled, not followed. They were censorious of American capitalism while eating the bread of capitalistic dollars. Actually they used American dollars to support the second largest socialistic experiment in Europe, and then, as a challenge to American foreign policy, they threw their diplomatic weight to the side of Communist China; and this was a source of acute embarrassment to the Americans in their conduct of the Korean war. But if for any of these reasons the United States had cut Great Britain out of its scheme of foreign aid, that would have been dollar aggression.

### III

## The Top of the World

BUT THERE IS ALWAYS THE TOP OF THE WORLD, WHERE MANY proud people have passed in unpredictable succession, some of them leaving faint ruins, some of them nothing, not even foot prints. A nation arriving there is like the measuring worm that has climbed to the end of the stem and feels slowly around and around in space. There is no place to go from there; so he turns around and climbs down again, as if even the view had been disappointing.

Let the year be 1953. If that was not the top of the world for the Americans, it was very near to it; the view was magnificent and frightening.

What was in it, so frightening?

First the spectacle of a richest country in the world with no frontier—geographical edges, but no frontier. Or if there was a frontier, where was it? In the middle of Germany or in the Pyrenees? In Korea, Formosa, Indo-China or Persia? The Americans could not say where it was. It was wherever the Russians or the Communists might threaten to commit a new act of aggression.

American armed forces were stationed in forty-nine foreign countries, scattered over six continents. A quarter of the American army was in Germany.

What were these armed forces doing all over the globe?

They were defending the free world, on the ground that defense of the free world everywhere was vital to the security



of the United States. The difficulty was that nobody could say precisely what the free world was. What were its boundaries and who were its people? If you supposed the free people of the world were those who were free from dictators, then you had to account for Mr. Tito, the Communist dictator of Yugoslavia, who was counted on the free side and was receiving American aid, on the ground that he had turned his face from the east to the west.

Then was it east versus west? Were Americans defending the west against the east? In that case, what were they doing in Asia? Defending Asia against Asia? And as if they had forgotten what World War II was about, they were defending also Germany and Japan and urging them to rearm to resist aggression who only a little while before were themselves the aggressors.

What else was in that view from the top of the world?

A people alternating between moods of megalomania and seizures of fear.

In one state of mind, by treaties and pacts outside the United Nations, the United States had pledged itself to defend forty foreign countries—not contiguous countries, not countries arranged in any system of common interest, but countries spread over the whole world—Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, North and South America.

The alternating fear was irrational.

When the American Colonists fought for their independence they were fewer than four million, with no industry, almost no arms, and no money; and their enemy was mighty Great Britain, then at the top of the world.

A generation later the same Americans were ten million, but still with no military or industrial resources; in that condition they defied a coalition of European powers, saying: "We are sovereign on this hemisphere. Stay away." That was the Monroe Doctrine. They did not propose to meddle in the affairs of Europe; neither should Europe meddle in theirs, on pain of war.

Now that they were 160 million, with roughly half the industrial power of the world in their hands, with a navy equal to the next largest two, the paramount air force and the atomic bomb in stockpiles—now suddenly they were afraid to stand alone in their own hemisphere. Was it vertigo? It was at any rate the official theme. Their Presidents and their statesmen were telling them publicly that they could not stand alone. They must have allies, even if they had to buy them. They had won two world wars and they were committed to defend the whole free world, whatever that was, but alone they could not be sure of saving themselves.

By this fear American foreign policy was conditioned. It followed that the Americans lost control of their own foreign policy. Control of it passed into the hands of allies and enemies—into the hands of allies, since if they were vital to the security of the United States, as they were told, they found themselves in a strong trading position and could demand to be appeased; and into the hand of the enemy, since by act of aggression, or by threat of it, he could oblige the Americans to make new political commitments, as in Korea.

Thus by their own thesis the Americans had put their country's security, maybe even its life, in the hands of foreign countries. All the more for that reason their statesmen exhorted them to hold fast to that jerry-built system of collective security called the United Nations, where they were out-voted, where they were obliged day after day to receive insults from the Russians, who held a permanent seat in the supreme Security Council, and where, like a sickening fog, there was one all pervading hostility, which was the natural hostility that all other nations feel toward the one that happens to be at the top of the world.

What of peace?

It was not there. The thought of imposing peace on the world by force is from the Book of Empire. Pursuing it for more than 40 years the Americans had arrived at a permanent war economy.

What of friendship?

There is no such thing as friendship among nations. In eight post-war years the amount of American aid delivered to foreign countries was \$40 billions. It was for everything you could imagine, including baby food, and in one case an increase in the American national debt to enable Great Britain to pay off part of her national debt, on the ground that that would be good for her credit. Yet there was probably not a country in the world that had consumed American aid where you could not see on the city walls, in crude lettering: "Americans, go home!"

During all that time the Americans' prestige had been steadily declining. In Europe they were tolerated. In Asia they were hated. And if you had asked an Asian to say what the Americans were fighting for, he would have said: "For the white man's supremacy in the world."

So it was that in the year 1953 the American was probably the most misunderstood political animal that ever lived in the world.

His idealistic intentions were besmirched. He had shared his wealth with other people, prodigiously, and his motives were suspect. In every cooperative undertaking among the nations he willingly took the heavy end of the burden, and it was never enough. He tried to take ideas of freedom to people who could not understand them; who cared much more about something to eat.

Seeing this, under a program called Point Four because it happened to be the fourth point in one of Mr. Truman's statements of benign foreign policy—under that program he adopted all the backward people of the world, meaning to bring them toward the American way of life by teaching them American know-how and training them in it. To thirty-five backward countries in the Middle East, in Africa, Asia and South America, the American sent at his own expense missions of experts, engineers, agronomists, geologists, sociologists, medics and sanitationists; he would teach them how to

save their babies, how to water their arid lands, how to produce more food, how to catch more fish, what to do with their sacred rats, how to use tractors in place of wooden plows; and along with this education, the tools, better cows, better chickens and mules in place of donkeys.

These missions, generally expecting to be happily welcomed, were amazed at the difficulties they met, ranging from superstition to active hostility. The results were dim and very uneven.

Backward people have one thing in common with forward people. That is pride. They do not like to be called backward. Moreover, even those who were intelligent, some educated in western universities, were troubled by the thought of what might happen if suddenly the immemorial balance of life were upset. Suppose, for example, the sanitation engineers and the medics reduced the death rate faster than the agronomists could increase the food supply. You would have then a problem of over-population, and nobody would know what to do about that.

Briefly, the kind of world this romantic American believed in had no reality. Therefore as he tried to act upon it he was bound to be frustrated, and was often more ridiculous than heroic.

The one thing he succeeded to do—and it was the last thing he meant to do—was to impose upon it a pattern of total war.

Until he put forth his endless billions and his incomparable industrial power, war had been a limited business—limited, that is to say, by the amount of manpower and material the countries immediately concerned could afford to put into it, and ended always short of unconditional surrender in some kind of negotiated peace under which people went on living again, with only a big debt to pay. What the American did to that pattern was defined by General J. F. C. Fuller, a British writer on military solutions, who said:

“We Europeans are a truculent congeries of nations who

have been fighting each other for upward of 2,000 years, and we dislike outside interference. In 1917 had you [the Americans] not stepped in, we should have been forced to come to terms between ourselves by a negotiated peace that could not have been worse than the one established. Again in the last war you got entangled in the European brawl. But for Lend-Lease the war could not have continued for long. Again there would have been a negotiated peace, which could not have been as bad as the present so-called one.”

In World War I and again in World War II the American's idea was one last big war to end war. What his contribution did was to make war so much more terrible and costly than before—unlimited war—that powers of the second and third magnitude were made helpless, and the world was divided between the only two that could contemplate war or afford to maintain a modern war machine.

## IV

# Looking Back

FOR ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS THE AMERICAN omen was splendid in isolation. What it signified was nothing already known. It was not a continuation of anything. It came from nowhere. It was original, improbably born, improbably nurtured, and did not belong to this world; deriving its luminosity from these words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." (From the Declaration of Independence.)

Man was free in the device of his own being. He was born that way. Always before it was government that conferred freedom. Now for the first time man did not owe his freedom to government; he owed nothing to government, because government was his own instrument and he could do with it what he liked.

Then in one generation three events worked a metamorphosis.

The first was World War I, which shattered the tradition of non-entanglement in the quarrels of foreign countries. It was a precious vase and could never be restored.

The second event was the Great Depression, the severity of which was owing partly to the giddy behaviour of this country in its first experience as the world's banker, and

partly to the fantasy, largely supported by American credit, that World War I would never have to be paid for.

During the Great Depression the imperious tradition of *limited* government was sacrificed, and the ground principles of free, competitive enterprise were compromised beyond redemption.

The people were willing. They were not coerced. They were writhing in economic pain. Many forgot and many more seemed no longer to care that unless they absorbed their own troubles instead of unloading them on a paternalistic government they would never again be as free as their fathers were.

If the government intervened to increase the bargaining power of labor, in order to keep wages rising, it would thereafter control the labor contract by law. If it took extraordinary measures to restore the farmer's profit it would have to mind his sowing and reaping. If it undertook to provide social security it would have to make thrift compulsory. And so on.

Nevertheless the clamor for relief became a frenzy. There had been bad depressions before and always the people had demanded relief; but always before the government—limited government—had said *no*. Now it was saying *yes* and making political capital of it.

It is hard for the government to say *no*. On the other hand, relieving everybody out of the public purse is but a postponement of evil. That is why the New Deal was never able to bring about Recovery.

The government has no money of its own. Its resources are two. By exercise of the tax power it can take from these and give to those. That it did. Secondly, it can print money and scatter it. That also it did.

The public purse, continuously so replenished, was opened for unemployment relief, for the relief of agriculture and for the relief of those called the underprivileged, who are always poor and who suffer extremely in bad times. Many of these were set up in ideal villages and on farmsteads under direc-

tion of Federal bureaus, thus becoming wards of the government, and were never so well off before.

Farmers accepted regimentation and marketing control in return for guaranteed prices; if nevertheless they produced a surplus which might cause prices to decline the government would take it off their hands.

The banking world, sooner than take its own losses, accepted government control of banking and credit.

Public credit was invoked to save millions of private debtors from the sheriff's hammer. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation loaned public money to railroads to pay off their debts in Wall Street.

And business generally, meaning private enterprise as a whole, in return for illegal permission to limit competition and raise prices, embraced the principle of a Planned Economy.

The debacle was complete.

*Laissez faire* was dead. But the formal obsequies were postponed for ten years. In 1946 Congress passed the Employment Act. This was not an emergency law. The enactment of it caused no furore. Yet it was a law of revolutionary purport and delivered into the hands of government ultimate control of the American economy. Under this law the government assumes the following responsibilities:

- (1) To maintain full employment in the nation;
- (2) To keep the economy in a state of equilibrium;
- (3) To see that people have at all times plenty of buying power;
- (4) To save the country from depressions, and,
- (5) To use its total power to these ends.

Whether or not with all its power the government can do these things had never been proved; yet it was certain that it could not attempt to do them without touching much more deeply all the ways in which people make their bargains, sell their labor, produce and exchange wealth with one another. Free markets would survive, if at all, only by



bureaucratic sanction. Without free markets people could not be free, or free only to charge and pay what prices the government permitted and to conform production to an official pattern.

Of the three events that worked the metamorphosis, the third was World War II. We are not yet far enough away to comprehend that this was the incomparable disaster since the Fall of Man, and a penalty perhaps for the same sin, namely, vanity of knowledge. The temptation was power, and the last form assumed by the illusion of power was the atomic bomb.

All that we can see from here is that World War II launched the American on a career of empire—in one way the strangest empire that ever existed, with everything going out and nothing coming in. Even if it were only to police the world, that is a service for which the world should pay. Policing is a costly business. The Romans policed the world and kept the *Pax Romana*, and got the cost of it back in taxes; the British policed it and kept the *Pax Britannica* and got theirs back in the terms of trade. The American pays for the privilege and rationalizes it by telling himself it is for the security of the United States.

The three experiences that changed so many ancient signs had no shape of necessity. The American went forth to meet them. Why? What was new in his thoughts and passions that moved him to trample down his traditions? Why, for example, did the people willingly embrace the New Deal, seeming not to care in the least that it infringed their liberties? To do this they had to overcome the strongest political instinct they possessed, namely, fear of big government. Economic pain does not explain it entirely; moreover, the New Deal continued to be popular after the pain was gone.

The seeds of statism, socialism, Fabianism, Marxism, and anti-capitalism had been blowing this way from Europe for a long time and had never produced here a crop larger than an anarchist's beard—not until the gardeners appeared.

The gardeners were a cult of intellectual disaffectionists, rising out of the academic world, all owing much, perhaps too much, to the capitalist dollars with which education was more richly endowed here than anywhere else in the world.

They were teachers, writers of text books, doctors of political science, and believed nothing good of American capitalism, which they never understood, supposing it to be like European capitalism, which was not so. They thought the poor were poor because the rich were rich, and adopted the poor not for love of them but out of hatred for the rich. They were academic revolutionaries, in revolt against their natural and historical fathers. They had nothing to offer capitalism; therefore, capitalism had nothing to offer them. Revolution would be their opportunity, if a leader came to make it; meanwhile their business was to destroy the old Copy Book Maxims and erode away all traditional American values. Patriotism was a racket. Nationalism was but an arrogant assertion of one people's superiority. Individualism was anarchy. And freedom—what was that? The idea of freedom had been imposed by the strong on the many, and sometimes it meant the freedom to starve. Not one of them could have understood the emotions of the returned native whose first act on debarking from a ship in South Street was to kneel and kiss the cobblestones, for joy at being in his own free land again.

Their philosophy was pragmatic, derived from their hero John Dewey. Anything that worked was right because it worked, except of course capitalism. Their morals were worse. The law of expediency was higher than any principle. If in the name of social justice, as they might define it, private property were confiscated and the integrity of contract destroyed, that was all right. And they hated above all else the profit motive.

Then came the Russian Revolution. The Bolshevik, no matter what else, was a man of strong entrails. He did not mind spilling blood to bring his world to pass. Moreover, he had

the scientific technique of revolution. His appeal to the intellectual disaffectionists, too pale to start a revolution of their own, was irresistible. It immediately reddened the text books they wrote, their teaching, and their contributions to the academic literature of economic and political science.

Before the Great Depression, four student generations had been exposed to the alienating influence of this new education; and the disaffected intellectuals, all with one voice, acclaimed the Depression as proof of their thesis that the profit motive could lead only to disaster and that capitalism was morally and economically bankrupt. The curious fact was that the leaders of capitalism, all in a panic, behaved as if they were guilty.

But for all of that, it was no activity of the intellect that moved the American to return to Europe with his sword—to the Europe from which his forefathers fled. After the first time his disillusionment was so bitter that he vowed never, never to do it again. The fathers had been right. Americans should have nothing to do with the quarrels of Europe. Then, within one generation, he did it a second time.

Why? The spectacle is one that will not easily dissolve in the generalizations of history. There was no profit in it. There was nothing he could get out of it, and in each case he made it a stipulation that he would take nothing for himself.

It is a familiar saying that leadership was the decisive factor. It is undoubtedly true that if either the Wilson Administration or the Roosevelt Regime had been resolute against war the country could have been kept neutral. There was not only a strong habit of isolation; there was a powerful tradition behind it. That could have been built upon to almost any point, in place of the war fever; but in both cases *isolationism* became a word of reproach and a political liability.

On the other hand, if the people had been resolute against war they could not have been pushed, led or lied into it.

This holds notwithstanding the fact that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor instantly united the people for World War II. That was a simple reflex action. Yet anyone who will read the diplomatic history of American-Japanese relations must realize that the Japanese were goaded into making the attack. If the Roosevelt Administration had not been looking for the perfect pretext to enter the war against Hitler the attack on Pearl Harbor might have been averted—even afterward Hitler was the No. 1 enemy.

Many forces were acting. Not all of them visible. That would be so. But one may well believe that the controlling truth was romantic.

Both Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt were Messiahs, one by temperament and the other by evolvment. Thus in each case there was the messianic voice of a President calling to something in people that was stronger than reason. The only name for it would be the crusading spirit, which was latent then and always had been.

Since the Colonial Revolution, *liberation* had been the most evocative word in the American language. In neither World War I nor World War II was there a single selfish or self-regarding slogan. For what was written on the banners? *Peace Without Victory. The Armageddon of Right Against Might. A New World for Mankind. Down with Aggression.* It was not art of title making that caused General Dwight D. Eisenhower to name his book "Crusade in Europe." That is what he thought it was.

You could make a list of slogans derived from fear; but they were afterthoughts and, anyhow, the fear was unreal.

From the point of view of a cynical world the American who entered two world wars and won them both, when his own interest was not paramount, was either an inscrutable hypocrite or an unbelievable romantic, and in either case a dangerous possessor of the world's ultimate power. And afterward, unconsciously perhaps, the only symptom of a unifying thought in the world was distrust of that American power.



## APOSTROPHE

How now, thou American, frustrated crusader, do you know where you are?

Is it security you want? There is no security at the top of the world.

To thine own self a liberator, to the world an alarming portent, do you know where you are going from here?

In six generations, by your own exertions, you have arrived at this eminence. People before you have spent that length of time in their swaddling cloths. Does it occur to you that by reducing centuries to decades you may have telescoped your destiny?

Be that as it may be, how now do you project yourself? Will you go on crashing the barriers of time and space? And when you can travel so fast that you arrive ahead of your own sound, what will you bring to the world at that speed? Not peace. Peace would be happy to fly no faster than a dove.

At home will you raise the standard of living to the point of boredom? Is life a door that opens by grace of an electronic eye, a key to a model house in the shade of a television aerial, labor-saving gadgets that only technicians can mend, there on the table what every woman should know in *The Ladies Home Journal*, two cars like sardines in the garage—all of this for so much down and so much per months, and a Social Security number at Washington?

And since you have invented the amazing trick of punching questions on cards and feeding them to a thinking machine that will give you the mathematically perfect answer, perhaps you will give it this question:

Who am I?

You are not the American who inherited the New World. As you changed your environment you were bound to change with it. But your very blood has changed, according to the invocatory words inscribed on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor, addressed to Europe, as follows:

*Here at our gates shall stand . . .  
A mighty woman with a torch . . .  
And her name Mother of Exiles.*

*Cries she with silent lips,  
Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me.*

The author of these lines was Emma Lazarus.

The idea of the Statue of Liberty originated in the mind of a French sculptor named Bartholdi, who designed it. He came to this country in flight from the Paris Commune of 1871. Later he solicited funds in France to pay for it. Many French cities combined to gather popular subscriptions. Americans contributed only the site, the foundation and the cost of perpetual maintenance. President Cleveland presided at the dedication ceremonies in 1886.

This heroic Copper Woman, standing at the gate, holding a torch 300 feet aloft, is the great symbol of the immigration that changed the blood of America, maybe not for worse but certainly for better or worse.

The American Colonies were British. For nearly 100 years American blood was dominantly Anglo-Saxon. The United

Kingdom was a greater source of immigration than the whole of continental Europe. Then came a flood of Irish, in flight from poverty and famine. They earned their way with pick and shovel, and were socially saved by their gift for factional politics. Next the Germans in flight from political oppression; they were intelligent and resourceful and made no slums. After them the Scandinavians, who passed through the cities and settled on the land, which made them very desirable. All of this was voluntary immigration from western and northern Europe.

But after the Statue of Liberty was raised the country went immigration mad. Western railroads with land to sell, industries wanting plenty of cheap labor, and steamship companies with steeage space to fill, scoured Europe for emigrants who had nothing to bring but bundles. This was induced immigration and it came principally from eastern and southern Europe—Italians, Portuguese, Greeks, Hungarians, Balkan Slavs, Poles and Russians. The Russian tide was heavily loaded with Jews; and this Jew was not like the one that came with the Germans.

It was one of the great migrations in human history. It rose to a peak of more than a million people a year. During thirty years it amounted to more than one quarter of what the country's total population was when it began.

Then the gates were slammed, but not until some of the largest Italian and Polish communities in the world were here in this country, nor until the foreign slums of American cities was a national disgrace, nor until American politics had become bedevilled by the existence of racial pressure groups.

Most of them have been physically assimilated; ultimately all of them will be.

It seems hardly arguable in common sense that the American character must have been somehow altered by this racial admixture. But two questions will perhaps be permanently obscured by emotional bias. The controversy between the racialist and the anti-racialist is endless.



The first question is: What was the effect on the average of American intelligence?

Carl C. Brigham, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Princeton, made a scientific analysis of army intelligence tests and wrote a book on the subject, entitled, "A Study of American Intelligence." In conclusion he said: "Our study of the army tests of foreign born individuals has pointed at every step to the conclusion that the average intelligence of our immigrants is declining. This deterioration in the intellectual level of immigrants has been found to be due to two causes. The migrations of the Alpine and Mediterranean races have increased to such an extent in the last thirty or forty years that this blood now constitutes 70% or 75% of the total immigration. The representatives of the Alpine and Mediterranean races in our immigration are intellectually inferior to the representatives of the Nordic race which formerly made up about 50% of our immigration."

The other question is: Was Thomas Jefferson right 150 years ago when he wrote against free immigration from Europe on the ground that it was baneful. He said: "In proportion to their numbers they will share with us in the legislation. They will infuse into it their spirit, warp and bias its direction, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass. . . . Is it not safer to wait with patience for the attainment of population desired or expected? May not our government be more homogeneous, more peaceable, more durable?"

On the other hand, the anti-racialists, who may be called the melting pot people, say, first, that race is a myth, and secondly, that in any case the superiority of one race over another cannot be proved. They say, furthermore, that racial and cultural admixture was something America very much needed to keep its soul from turning inward.

As for the political consequences foreseen by Jefferson, the fact is that since the Copper Woman did her work any candidate for public office, in the cities at least, who could

be cartooned in the foreign language press as holding the gate against an immigrant horde took his political life in his hands.

Before the Statue of Liberty an American would have said: "Mine is a Protestant country, racially Nordic, under a Republican form of government that is Constitutional, representative and *limited*, and lives by a system of free, competitive capitalism.

Fifty years later *Protestant* had the sound of bigotry, *Nordic* was racist and intolerant, *limited* government was a memory, and free, competitive capitalism had been strangled.

What happened to you, thou American, in these fifty years?

That question also is fit for your thinking machine; and if the science of Cybernetics cannot tell you who you are and why you are who you are and where now you are going, no other science can. But your science can give you more deathly bombs and missiles and tell you how in the end to solve all of your problems by blowing the earth out of its orbit.

Wisdom is not a science.



## APOLOGUE

*The Advocate of Mankind was idly calculating how many times the Dipper had been full and empty again. It was empty now. From time to time he regarded the Saint, who was reading the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD backward and seemed not very friendly.*

*Is that your job?* asked the Advocate of Mankind, gently.

*That, said the Saint, putting the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD down on his knee. And this, indicating with distaste a small pearl object that would fit the ear. Think of having that HERE! And all on your account.*

*Then you make reports on us?* asked the Advocate of Mankind.

*One continuous report, said the Saint. Always up to date. Is it favorable?* asked the Advocate of Mankind.

*It is vicious, said the Saint, happily. With that he picked up the pearl object and held it to his ear. As he put it down he said, Busy still. You ought to know what that means.*

*How long do you think I might have to wait?* asked the Advocate of Mankind.

*I've told you I don't know, said the Saint. And anyhow, it's no good waiting at all. There is no conclusion yet.*

*I can't understand indecision here, said the Advocate of Mankind.*

*It isn't indecision, said the Saint. It's a point of honor. Do you know the Bible?*

*Imperfectly, said the Advocate of Mankind.*

*Of course, said the Saint. You have not comprehended the story of Job. Out walking one day the Lord met Satan.*

*The Lord said to Satan, What are you doing here?*

*Satan said, Just going to and fro in the earth.*

*The Lord was optimistic that day, and he said to Satan, Behold Job! He is my good and faithful servant and incorruptible.*

*Why shouldn't he be? said Satan, sneering. You have made him rich.*

*That has nothing to do with it, said the Lord.*

*Satan said, But give me the power to deprive him of his worldly goods and put sores on his skin and he will curse you.*

*The Lord was piqued. Then and there they made what you call a bet. Satan afflicted Job and made him both poor and extremely miserable. The Lord won, but it was a close thing, and in honor both the Lord and Satan had to wait until Job himself decided it.*

*I don't quite see it, said the Advocate of Mankind.*

*You wouldn't, said the Saint. It isn't in the Bible yet. One day the Lord was walking to and fro in the New World and met Satan again.*

*Satan said, What is all this?*

*The Lord said, This is a New World and these are my new people. They are good and faithful. They walk in my hand.*

*Satan said, Besides a New World what are you going to give these new people?*

*Knowledge, said the Lord.*

*What kind of knowledge? Satan asked. Not knowledge of good and evil. They took that from me and you punished them for it.*

*They have never been happy since, said the Lord. But now they ask for access to the secrets of nature, whereby to arrive at truth by demonstration; and I will give it to them.*

*How much, asked Satan.*

*Enough, said the Lord, to give them dominion in the whole earth, for they are my new people.*

*I lost on Job, said Satan. Now I give you another dare. If you will let me erase from the mind of these new people a single word, so they shall not know they ever had it, in a little while they will leave your hand, they will walk in a willful manner, they will remember you as a myth and they will never stop until they have discovered the ultimate secret.*

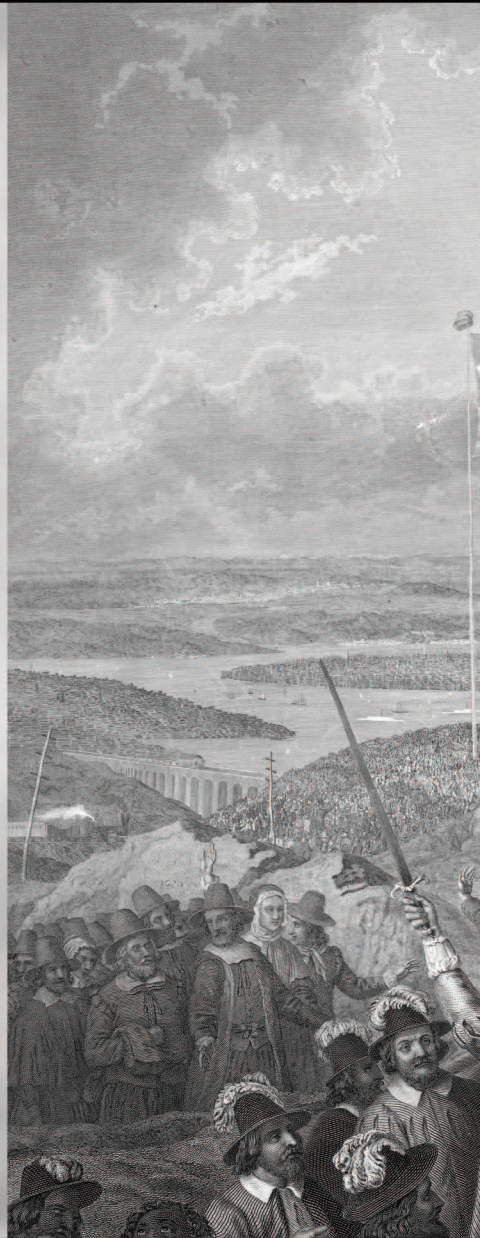
*In that instant, said the Lord, I should have to destroy them. But what is the word?*

*The word I will take from them, said Satan, is the word*  
ENOUGH.

*So between them, the Saint went on, there was again what you would call a bet. You asked for it, do you remember? You were their agent and you wanted for them this knowledge, which now they worship as Science. There you sit, with nothing more to suggest unless it be to undo the whole thing, which is impossible; and here am I very sick of my job, which is to watch you; and the instant has not arrived. Shall I call again? I'm sure the line is still busy.*

*No thank you, said the Advocate of Mankind, and went very softly away.*

One generation of Americans, with their fierce jealousy for freedom of enterprise and their philosophy of laissez faire, had created here the most powerful industrial nation on earth. It was not what they possessed in land and treasure and knowledge; other people had as much of these or more. It was what they did with what they had; and they were bound to go on until they should have in their hands, of their own making, half the industrial power of the whole world and no rational idea of what to do with it.



Ludwig von Mises Institute | [Mises.org](http://Mises.org)

ISBN 978-1-61016-176-3



9 781610 161763

90000 >



SKU SS480