## What G. K. Chesterton Saw in America

The Eminent English Essayist Declares That While in the U. S. He Fairly Longed to See a Sulky Woman-Elderly Women More Beautiful and More Dignified Than Their Daughters-American Sports Not Sportive.

By Professor W. T. Allison.

made two triumphal tours in the United States and was received with lavish hospitality which he failed to appreciate, for in his "American Notes" he made fun of his hosts. ure as a lecturer but received the sleigh half turned about on a frozen text, he proceeds to picture the emopond. He also tried to make a lit- tions of an illiterate peasant who tle extra money by publishing in had been told a great deal about the took form the lecturers who have land of liberty and who, looking up visited American cities. - The ma- at all this nightly glory of Broadjority of English lecturers who have | way, imagined that the electric motvisited America, however, have imi- toes, appearing and disappearing, tated Dickens by registering their were proclaiming the principles of impressions of Uncle Sam's country. the republic. "He would be shrewd So many books of this sort have enough to guess," says Chesterton been published that it would require | in a vein of delicious humor, "that a special alcove to hold them. Some the three festoons fringed with flery of them are worth while, but as a words of somewhat similar pattern general rule they are lacking in stood for Government of the Peosold taste and betray the insular ple, For the People, By the People' prejudice and downright ignorance for it must obviously be that, unless of their makers. And the latest it were 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternivolume to be added to this English- ty.' His shrewdness would perhaps man-across-the-sea library of snap be a little shaken if he knew that judgments is "What I Saw in Am- the triad stood for 'Tang Tonic Toerica," by G. K. Chesterton (Hodder day; Tang Tonic To-morrow; Tang and Stoughton, London and Toron- Tonie All the Time.' He will soon to). As a lecturer, nimble-witted identify a restless ribbon of red let Gilbert was an utter failure, even tering, red hot and rebellious, as the more disappointing to his trans-At- saying, 'Give me liberty or give me lantic readers than Matthew Arnold, death.' He will fail to identify it but his book, while monumental in as the equally famous saying, 'Skyoverbosity, is much better than the line Has Gout Beaten to a Frazusual rapid-fire performance of the | zle.' Therefore, it was that I devisiting English author. In this fat sired the peasant to walk down that book by England's literary Jumbo grove of flery trees, under all that there is some very clever retiocina- golden foliage, and fruits like monstion and, best of all, Americans will trous fewels, as innocent as Adam be able to read it without reviling before the Fall. He would see sights this author as an ingrate and a almost as fine as the flaming sword

All American Hotels Look Alike to not go near the Tree of Know-

Chesterton follows his countrymen who have written books on Amrica by making fun of the hotels remain very long in the country or "Not that I objected to that," depart from the main railway lines observes. "It seemed to me during his lecture tour. "Broadly agreeable break in the monotony; one hotel in America. The pattern engaged in practical business. of it, which is a very rational pat- struck me as curious and interest from each other as the capitals of being the most unbusiness-like per blooms of the warm spring woods of to find I was not the most unpunctu-Nebraska, or whitened with Cana- al person in that company." And dian snows near the eternal noise of what was the impression Chesterton Niagara." He was surprised to formed of the American business find that the hotel rotunda was man? Was it unfavorable? Not at thronged by people who were not all! He declares with an indulgen necessarily guests. The ground smile that the American is too busy floors he points out, are used almost to have business habits, too earnest as public streets, or rather public to have business rules. Business to squares. "My first impression was the American is the romance of life. that I was in some sort of a high Even a meat salesman of Chicago street or market-place during a sells his commodity with a fine po-

The whole of the lower floor is commends itself to G.K.C. In fact thrown open to the public streets he seems behind and beneath the and treated as a public square. But frantic rush after the dollar the above it and all around it runs an- idealism of the American business other floor in the form of a sort of man who is more interested in the deep gallery, furnished more luxuri- game of grabbing it than in the ously and looking down on the mov- money grabbed. "We shall admire ing mobs beneath. No one is al- or deplore this spirit," says Mr. lowed on this floor except the Chesterton in a subtle paragraph, guests or clients of the hotel. As "accordingly as we are glad to see I have been one of them myself, I trade irradiated with so much potrust it is not unsympathetic to etry, or sorry to see so much poetry compare them to active anthropoids wasted on trade. But it does make who can climb trees, and so look many people happy, like any other down in safety on the herds or packs hobby; and one is disposed to add of wilder animals wandering and that it does fill their imaginations

America has been a Klondike for prowling below. Of course many English men-of-letters. A are modifications to it; it is the plan long string of them have come across that seems to suit the social life of the seas to capitalize their literary the American cities. There is genreputation on the lecture platform erally something like a ground in the United States. Dickens, floor that is more public, a half-floor Thackeray, Matthew Arnold, Hux- or gallery above that is more priley, and dozens of authors in more vate, and above that the bulk of the recent times have reaped golden block of bedrooms, the huge hive harvests in the new world. Dickens with its innumerable and identical

The Color and Fire of Broadway. When Mr. Chesterton looked for the first time on the winking elec-Matthew Arnold was a dismal fail- tric signs high up in the Broadway sky, on the long kaleidoscope same generous treatment as his colored lights advertising everything brethren. He had the bad grace to from pork to planos, he said to his go home and write that America was American friends. "What a glorious utterly lacking in beauty; he assert- garden of wonders this would be to ed that the only picturesque thing any one who was lucky enough to that he saw during his travels was a be unable to read." With this as s or the purple and peacock plumage of the seraphim; so long as he did

American Business Is Romance. One of the most amusing chapters which gave him shelter. He tells in Mr. Chesterton's bulky book is the people back home that in the devoted to a paradoxical consideranew world there are "hotels top- tion of the American business man. pling to the stars, hotels covering The English wit notes with delight the acreage of villages, hotels in that the New Yorker is very unmultitudinous number like a moh punotual. The hustling American of Babylonian or Assyrian monu- business man is always late. Chesments," but he complains that there terton first noticed this in connecare no inns in the United States or | tion with his own lectures. He says Canada. Evidently, in his hurried that he could easily understand a visit to Toronto, no one told him crowd of commercial Americans not about the inn at Grimsby, Ontario, a going to his lecture at all, but there resort de luxe for Hamiltonians. All was something odd about seeing American hotels look alike to Ches- them drift in long after the hour terton, a sure sign that he did not advertised for the performance. speaking," he says, "there is only but as a characteristic of a people tern, is repeated in cities as remote ing. I have grown accustomed to European empires. You may find son in any given company; and it that hotel rising among the red gave me a sorrt of dizzy exaltation etic enthusiasm. And this fervor

Rideau Ha Coffee Rideau Hall Coffee Blended and Roasted for Particular People

for them like fairy gold; but the crammed over three hundred pages about fairy gold. Half the financial tonian nonsense. operations they follow deal with things that do not even exist; for in that sense all finance is a fair tale. Many of them are buying and selling things that do nothing but harm; but it does them good to buy and sell them. The claim o fthe romantic salesman is better justified than he realises. Business really is romance; for it is not reality."

Longed to See a Sulky Woman.

During his travels in the United

States Mr. Chesterton was often asked by interviewers to give his opinion of the American woman. He always confessed a distaste for generalisations, for he says that it seemed to him to be almost polygamous to talk of women in the plural, something unworthy of any one not a Mormon. In this volume, however, he hints that the young women of America seemed to him to be too much a creature of laughfer and light, too genial, too kind, He says he often longed to see a sulky woman. The older women. however, pleased him better, not because they were sulky, but because they were good-looking and dignified. He thinks they dress better than the young women and are more beautiful. In his opinion the pupils. United States is a country where a man might almost fall in love with his mother-in-law. Just the same while G.K.C. admits that elderly American women are much to be preferred to the eccentric spinsters and incorrigible grandmothers of England, he does not hesitate to say that he believes that feminism is too strong in the republic, that it is largely responsible for various Puritan fads. As every reader of his works knows full well, Chesterton gnashes his teeth whenever he runs across the trail of a Puritan. He devotes a long chapter to prohibition. which he, a champion consumer of beer, hates most cordially, but in his talk about women he notes with disapproval that their influence in politics has been in favor of restrictive regulations, because they do not really regard men as citizens, but as children. "And as there can be no laws or liberties in a nursery, the extension of feminism means that there shall be no more laws or liberties in a state than there are in a nursery." In satirical mood Mr. Chesterton says that there are not only states which punish the sin of drink but "the equally shameless sin of smoking a cigarette in the open air." He proceeds to give further examples of what he would call legislation for the nursery,-"The same American atmosphere that permits The slant of the hills toward Parprohibition permits of people being punished for kissing each other. In other words, there are states psyman a convict for wearing a blue neck-tie or having a green frontdoor, or anything else that anybody chooses to fancy. There is an American atmosphere in which people may some day be shot for shaking hands, or hanged for writing a post-

Spartan Character of American

Sports. Every English visitor to America and athletics generally in the United States. Perhaps if Mr. Chesterton had been able to see a few ball games he might have been more kindly in his remarks about American sport, but he came in the win- Of ancient plaster firm and mellow ter when both baseball and golf were out of season. What he says about the American athlete, however, has a flavor of truth. "American sport." he writes, "is not in the sportive. It is because it is not very sportive that we sometimes say it not very sporting. It has the vices of a religion. It has all the paradox of original sin in the service of aboriginal faith. It is sometimes untruthful because it is sincere: It What I have taken I mean to hold is loyal. Men lie and cheat for it as they lied for their lords in a feudal conspiracy, or chested for their Forget others' faults by remem- much like thick cream and in flavor chieftains in a Highland feud. We bering your own. mitted treason; but it is equally true that he readily endured torture. So does the American athlete endure torture. Not only the self-sacrifice but the solemnity of the American athlete is like that of the American Indian. The athletes in the States have the attitude of the athletes

among the partans, the great historical nation without a sense of humor. They suffer an ascetic regime not to be menaced in any monastic. ism and hardly in any militarism. If any tradition of these things remains in a saner age, they will probably be remembered as a mysterious religious order of fakirs or dancing dervishes, who shaved their heads and fasted in honor of Hercules or Castor and Pollux. And that is really the spiritual atmosphere though the gods have vanished; and the religion is subconscious and therefore irrational. For the problem of the modern world is that it has continued to be religious when it has ceased to be rational. Americans really would starve to win a cocoanut shy. They would fast or bleed to win a race of paper boats on a pond. They would rise from a sick bed to listen to Mrs. Asquith."

My readers will conclude from the passages that I have quoted that Mr. Chesterton has written an interesting, in fact a highly original book about America. In addition to the topics which I have dealt with he discusses such subjects as "Prestdents and Problems," "The Extraordinary American." "The Republican in the Ruins," "Is the Atlantic Narromance would involve a criticism rowing?" "Lincoln and Lost Causof this historic phase of commerce. es," "A New Martin Chuzzlewit," These people are building on the "The Spirit of America" and "The sand, though it shines like gold, and Future of Democracy." He has world will remember the legend with Gilbertian sense and Chester-

-W. T. ALLISON.

Literary Notes.

Fruit farming in the Niagara peninsula on the shores of Lake Ontario is the theme of a new story, "Possession," by Mazo de la Roche, a Toronto authoress. Derek Vale, the owner of the farm, falls in love with Fawnie, a young Indian girl, whose people come to the farm to pick berries and cherries. This novel, which is more realistic than romantle in tone, is published by the Macmillan Company of Toronto.

After an exhaustive study of data derived from observation, biography. scholastic records and laboratory investigations of the effects of smoking on the intellectual processes, Prof. M. V. O'Shea, in "Tobacco and Mental Efficiency," draws the conclusion that it has not yet been proved that the use of tobacco necessarily prevents the attainment of the highest mental efficiency in matura persons. He does, however, maintain that investigation leads to the conclusion that tobacco is detrimental to the intellectual work of college students as well as of high school

Miss Bathsheba Askowith, who has made an enviable reputation by her artistic productions of Hindu dramas and lyrics, is presenting "Chitra," by Rabindranath Tagore, in Boston this month. Miss Askowith says that each time she gives "Chitra" people come to her and tell her that they have gained from the play a new interpretation of life. She describes "Chitra" as "the greatest love poem of modern times after Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde."

German students are having a hard time these days. Ten thousand of them are employed in the mines and metal factories. A theological work by Dr. Deissmann used widely in German divinity classes costs 36,000 marks unbound and 50,000 marks bound. Imagine Canadian theological student paying \$9,000 to \$12,000 for a single text

Here is a charming poem from 'The Great Dream," a new volume of verse by Marguerite Wilkinson. well-known American poetess:

THE ROBBER IN ENGLAND. I am a robber from over the seas; I have come stealing things like

racombe Town. The look of the sea from Perlock

chologically capable of making a The patchwork of fields with hedges Dividing the new-ploughed red from

> Like a magical quilt-stitched set to Fields upon hills around and be-

I have come stealing the tilt of the thatches Where villages doze among the green patches.

Where each little house as the road winds around goes home to write about baseball Seems to have grown from a root in

With the dull brown thatch above the stone's old gray.

These I have stolen, stolen away To make them mine till my dying

In quiet tones of cream or yellow.

And neither the King in Buckingham Palace Nor the gracious Queen with her

crown of gold Will take them from me, for al

The insignificant often are most to be feared.



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much used in the construction of na- amiss, then may these also speak

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