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The GILSON "MAGIC"

THE PRICE OF HATRED

America, Following England, Falls
Heir to the World's Curse

It is a sad thing that both Great Britain and the United States should be objects of an almost world-wide dislike. In the race for universal popularity, we have been easily and of all other competitors, but, at the moment, you seem to be beating us comfortably into second place. It is all the sadder because it does not seem that this ought to have been the result of the part that we both took in the Great War, but the fact is indisputable, and it is worth while for us to try to understand how it comes about.

According to your view, you came into the war from the highest motives. It was your duty. Once in it, you spent money lavishly and gave a heavy toll of precious lives. You helped materially to bring it to a victorious end. You then claimed no share in the spoils, and you have been very forbearing in the matter of debts owing to you.

The British view is much the same. We also think that we came in from lofty motives and that it was properly our war. We paid an extra heavy toll of lives than you, and impoverished ourselves. After the war we took certain mandated territories, some of which are liabilities rather than assets, while those which are good go a very small way to compensating us for our poverty. We also have been conspicuously forbearing in the matter of debts.

But Europe will have none of us. The war, they say, was everybody's war. The German menace was a danger to the world; and our losses were only a portion of the total Allied losses. They were led to believe during the war that afterward there would be a general funding and liquidation of all debts: a sort of common purse. They were further led to believe that the United States and Great Britain together were going to guarantee France against a renewal of hostilities and, again, under the guidance of United States and Great Britain, the League of Nations was to make every thing lovely. Instead of this, there has been no guarantee; you have held aloof from the League of Nations, and both you and we are haggling over the payment of our debts, trying to wring out of them money, spent in a common cause, which they are quite unable to pay.

We may consider this view preposterous, but to the Frenchman it is the only possible view, and it is perfectly futile for us to endeavor to change it. It is the view on which all French reasoning, all conversations, all political writings of the day are based, and on which all their historical writing will be founded. Whatever we may say or do, it will remain the view of Continental Europe to the end of time.

And if this is their view of the war and its fruitage, what of the time since then? For seven years the chief nations of Europe lived with the terror of a new war hanging over them and sedition and unrest at work within. With one hand on the hilt of the sword and with the other trying to hold themselves off the rocks of bankruptcy, they have striven to work back to some sort of peaceful and ordered way of living. The instrument through which they have worked has been the League of Nations, from which the United States, of all the countries of the world, has been the only one to keep deliberately aloof. At last it seemed as if the clouds were breaking. Something had happened—a new atmosphere seemed to have been created—there were rays of hope—a better spirit was surely breathing—nothing very definite, for old fears, old suspicions, old grudges were still at work; but now at last men talked openly of peace, permanent peace, as of a thing, perhaps, definitely realizable. They dreamed of freedom from the black nightmare of armaments, of threat and counterthreat.

Then the United States stepped in and suggested a conference at Washington. Why the United States? Europe asked. Why Washington? What right had America to thrust in and advertise itself as the friend of peace when it was the one country which had ostentatiously refused to share in the labor of attaining it? Washington might be a convenient halfway house between Great Britain and Japan for the discussion of naval armaments, but as for land armaments, it is at Geneva that the work has been done, and to Geneva and the League of

Nations history shall give the credit. This is, brutally put, the Continental European view. I believe it to be approximately universal; and the feeling behind it is intense.

Great Britain has no small cause for gratitude to the United States. For a century and a half or so Englishmen have borne practically alone the special dislike of the other people. For some time back you Americans have been relieving us of some of that dislike; but, after all, you were, until ten years ago, only another variety of us. We were both les Anglais, the "Englishmen of England" and the "Englishmen of America." So that did not help us much. But since the war that has changed. You have become individualized in the world's eyes as yourselves and not merely the other half of us. You are now richer than we are, bigger than we are; and the world dislikes you more. After a while it may even forget that it dislikes us at all. By contrast with you, we shall soon come to be regarded as a harmless, even affable, people.

The more one travels the more one learns how little the people of any one country love the people of any other. One wonders if it may not be a deliberate and wise dispensation of Providence designed to foster patriotism and to make all peoples thereby more contented with the country and the circumstances in which they live. It would be a sad thing if we all thought better of some other country than of our own. As it is, happily, the Greeks hate the Italians, the Italians loathe the French, the French despise the Belgians, who have contempt for the Dutch; and the Dutch—for all that German influence is so overwhelming—powerful in Holland now—call a German boche and mof and other unkind names.

This cheerful unanimity of international distaste does not, of course, extend to individuals. Particular Greeks and Italians, Frenchmen and Belgians, Germans and Hollanders may adore each other, the person who is hated being some shadowy, impersonal unidentified wraith—a figurehead or symbol—compacted of all the supposed national shortcomings. He does not anywhere exist; but in going about the world, life consists largely of surprises at discovering what good fellows the individual inhabitants of other countries are.

The reason, or the excuse, for international dislike is often curious. I had a friend—he is dead now—who was a distinguished naturalist and a great lover of birds, who hated the United States

—your people, your politics, your literature, your art, and all your ways—because you—that is, the first English colonists—had taken the name of the English robin and applied it to what he always called "a great thrush-beast." Technically, he was right. Your American "robin" is scientifically a thrush. To Englishmen the true robin is almost as beloved a thing, as symbolical, as the Union Jack; and to put your "thrush-beast" in its place—place of Chaucer's robin, Shakespeare's robin, the Cock Robin of nursery rhymes—is like casting a mastiff for the role of a King Charles spaniel. To my ornithological friend, outraging all his dearest sensibilities, it was eminently unforgivable.

William Archer, in a delightful book has told how a friend of his hated all America because when he arrived at a New York hotel they did not know how to fold up his towels properly. Ruskin held your country in abhorrence because it had no castles. How many Americans despise the whole British Empire because they once heard a cockney drop his "h's" or have seen pictures of a peer in his coronet and robes. And this interplay of misunderstanding is going on all over the world. Like Charles Lamb, we "hate by misnomers."

In prejudicing the world's view of us, whether British or American, there are, however, deeper and more constant influences at work. Primarily, there is that fundamental difference in character and mentality. How we got it is a matter of argument. Personally, I incline to the theory that it is the fruit of the old Roman strain crossed after the occupation of Britain, on the peoples of northern Europe, working itself out in the climatic temperaments. It is there, a clash of temperaments, a friction, between the Anglo-Saxon and all other races. Second, but perhaps ever more important, is the deeprooted motive of jealousy of our wealth and our success.

The English were the first people to amass wealth on an international scale from industry and commerce. Other states in the past had built up riches and power from trade; but by the limitations of transport in those days the influence of their wealth was more or less localized. When the English made their money, they were able to overrun the world; and they did, making the grand tour and the petty tour, tramping their way from capital to capital, arrogant, open-handed, contemptuous of everything that was foreign to them. The peoples of other countries could not help respecting some of their qualities—though they detested them, they envied their prosperity. It is not surprising; the British tourist is still too often a fearsome thing. But in the world's view he is now being fairly eclipsed, occulted, by the American.

It is your good or evil fortune that, since the days when Britons first began globe-trotting, the facilities of transport have again enormously improved. You are able now to rush about faster, more tumultuously, in greater numbers than we, in our heyday, ever could. We had to travel chiefly by post chaise and diligence where you go in Blue Trains and Oriental Expresses. Where a dozen or a score of English traveled sedately, conducted by Mr. Cook, you come seven hundred at a time in mammoth liners. Few things are more devastating than when a Mauretania or Homeric disgorges its cargo of world tourists on Monte Carlo or Venice.

And there is the modern press. In the old days, newspapers were few and read by few. For the most part, descriptions of the Englishman—his grotesque appearance, his bad manners, his lust for beef, his cold bath, and thick boots—had to be spread laboriously by word of mouth. Today there is no country with any pretense to civilization wherein the majority of the inhabitants is not familiar with cartoons depicting Uncle Sam as a loathly, pot-bellied, spiderlike thing, lolling on his moneybags; and every unusual, scandalous, or evil thing in American life is seized on by the press and magnified.

Millions of articles and paragraphs held up the "Monkeyville" trial to the ridicule of the world; articles as often as not written by men ignorant of the very meaning of the words "Evolution" and "Fundamentalism," and read by masses of people more backward than any Tennessee mountaineer has been for a generation.

You again, have probably no idea how many editorial articles were written, how many sermons preached, on the topic of "Murder for Sport" the lesson being driven home with statistics—of the prevalence of crimes of violence in the United States. All Europe rocked with laughter over the Cathart case; for all Europe believes us both to be gross and lustful peoples, and it finds the spectacle of our bidding against each other in hypocrisy immensely diverting.

And your films: the peoples of the earth crowd to the picture palaces to see your films, to laugh and weep over them; but in every country the intelligentsia, the highbrows, the educated, are teaching that the American cinema is a gross and brutalizing thing. The apology that comes to us from the producers in Los Angeles, namely, that they cannot give us better because they have primarily to consult the standards of taste of the Middle West—the ricks—does not materially improve the case.

Finally, prohibition. Within the last year, hotel keepers in both Italy and France have told me that the only drunkards with whom they have any trouble nowadays are Americans; and I believe it to be approximately true. Most of the peoples of Continental Europe are habitually wine-drinking people: from prince to peasant wine is a staple daily food. They do not get drunk on it any more than they make themselves sick by overeating. To them a people who declare wine-drinking illegal in their own country, and then come to Europe to make spectacles of themselves, can only be hypocrites and fools. And every sensational aspect of prohibition is featured in the press for all it is worth.

Out of all the foregoing you may get some idea of how the great mass of the peoples of the world are regarding Americans today. It is inevitable, of course, that it should always be the exceptional, the offensive, the conspicuous individual of any company that attracts attention.

It is also well recognized in all newspaper offices that virtue, goodness, and decency are not "news." Only wickedness, violence, and catastrophe are worth recording. It is much to the credit of human nature that it is so; for it will be a sad, sad world if the time ever comes when vice and calamity are normal and only virtue and good actions are "news." But things being as they are, the world knows—speaking generally—nothing of all that is splendid in the United States, except your wealth. I repeat what I have said more than once, that the Rockefeller Foundation is the finest thing that has happened to mankind since, at least, the days of Christ on earth; and in a hundred other fields your charities and well-doing are magnificent. For a century or more Great Britain has been the great source of benevolence, the fairy god-mother to all the world. There was never a famine or flood, a fire or war, the sufferers from which did not turn to England for relief; and they always got it. But it has bred no gratitude. Now we are relatively poor and you are stepping into our place, giving more lavishly than we ever could and reaching fields that we could never reach. But you must expect no more gratitude than we received. A certain obsequiousness and lip service, yes, and a grateful appreciation of more favors to come; but no such feelings of kindness as will temper national dislike.

Recently, Frank H. Simonds wrote on the subject of the European hatred of America. He expounded the causes—much as I have set them down. And now read what a witty writer in the Courier Francais said of Englishmen just a century ago.

"They are beloved nowhere, but they nevertheless find their way everywhere: they have even found out the means of making those hate them whom they have enriched. They delivered Spain from the yoke of Napoleon; they have assisted the South Americans to shake off the yoke of Spain; but both in America and Spain they are disliked. What is this to them? They do not seek to be liked by other peoples; foreign praise is not a commodity mentioned in the London Prices Current."

In the foregoing read "Americans"

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for "Englishmen" and the "New York Stock Exchange" instead of "London Prices Current," and you have precisely the same picture: the seeming saviors of the world hated by the world because they are rich and prosperous—and thick-skinned.

So we can, I think, fairly shake. We—the peoples of Great Britain and the United States—are, we are told, no longer of kin. Talk of hands across the sea is now, we are told, what we call "tosh" and you call "poppycock." Blood is no longer thicker than water. But we ought to be able to agree to love each other for the sake of the common enemies that we have made.

—Sir Harry Perry Robinson, in The Independent.

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HUSBANDS LIVE THE LONGEST

Dr. Eugene L. Fisk, the medical director of the world famous Life Extension Institute, of New York, declares that the death rate of single men over thirty is more than double that of married men of the same age. The findings of Professor Walter F. Wilcox, of Cornell University, have also shown that the death rate of married men between thirty and thirty-five is 5.9, while that for bachelors is 12.9.

Bachelors from forty to forty-nine die off at the rate of 19.5, while the married men's figure is only 9.5. The married men, according to the same findings, even at the ripe age of from 70 to 79, still has a notable advantage in the vital statistics.

Dr. Fisk, in his analysis of the comparative death rates, points out that in the first place most bachelors represent "rejected goods" on the matrimonial market. The class includes the mental, physical and financial cripples.

Another reason why bachelors are such relatively bad risks, continues Dr. Fisk, is that they are without that great conservator of health—a nagging wife. It is small wonder that bachelors die off twice as rapidly as their more carefully watched and guarded brethren, says the medical doctor.

"Most bachelors, again, live on restaurant or boarding house food, which is not to be compared with the home product."

"It is not only such material things as untended colds or poor food that send bachelors to early graves. Many of them die of small ailments because they have lost the will to live—because they have no interests vital or vivid enough to keep them bound to the humdrum wheel of daily existence. 'A man cannot repress anything as important as the parental instinct without the risk of damaging his mental machinery.'"

"A certain amount of strain and responsibility is necessary for the good health of the mind. Those who do not have it become apathetic and mentally degenerate, sometimes fading away simply because they have not enough interest in the world to keep them alive."

"The world, however, for years has heaped unnecessary pity on the head of the unmarried woman," continues Dr. Fisk.

"The truth of the matter is that the spinster adapts herself to single life with a readiness that should excite envy from her bachelor brother. The spinster, I find, up to the age of forty-five, has a mortality rate lower than that of the married woman; during the later life her rate is higher, but even then the difference is slight."

"Most spinsters have the knack of making snug little homes for themselves, with good cooking in addition. 'The mortality among widows, however, is appalling, and from the standpoint of the statistics the best thing that a widow can do is to marry again as soon as possible.'"

"The high death-rate among widows is readily understood when we consider how frequently they are left with tremendous responsibilities and with the necessity of facing a severe struggle."

"Widowers also die with great determination and despatch, thus proving what happens when this nagging woman is absent." Dr. Fisk believes that although some men feel obliged to stay single in order to devote themselves wholeheartedly to science or art, there is nevertheless, no career in the world that could not be helped by the right kind of a wife.

The minister of a certain church called upon a woman, a member of his congregation, and, finding no one at home, slipped a card through the letter box, after scribbling upon it the words, "Sorry to find you out." When the woman returned home, Mary, the maid, met her at the door and presented the card with a whispered "Here, mumm, I took charge of this. It would never do for the master to know the minister's found you out!"

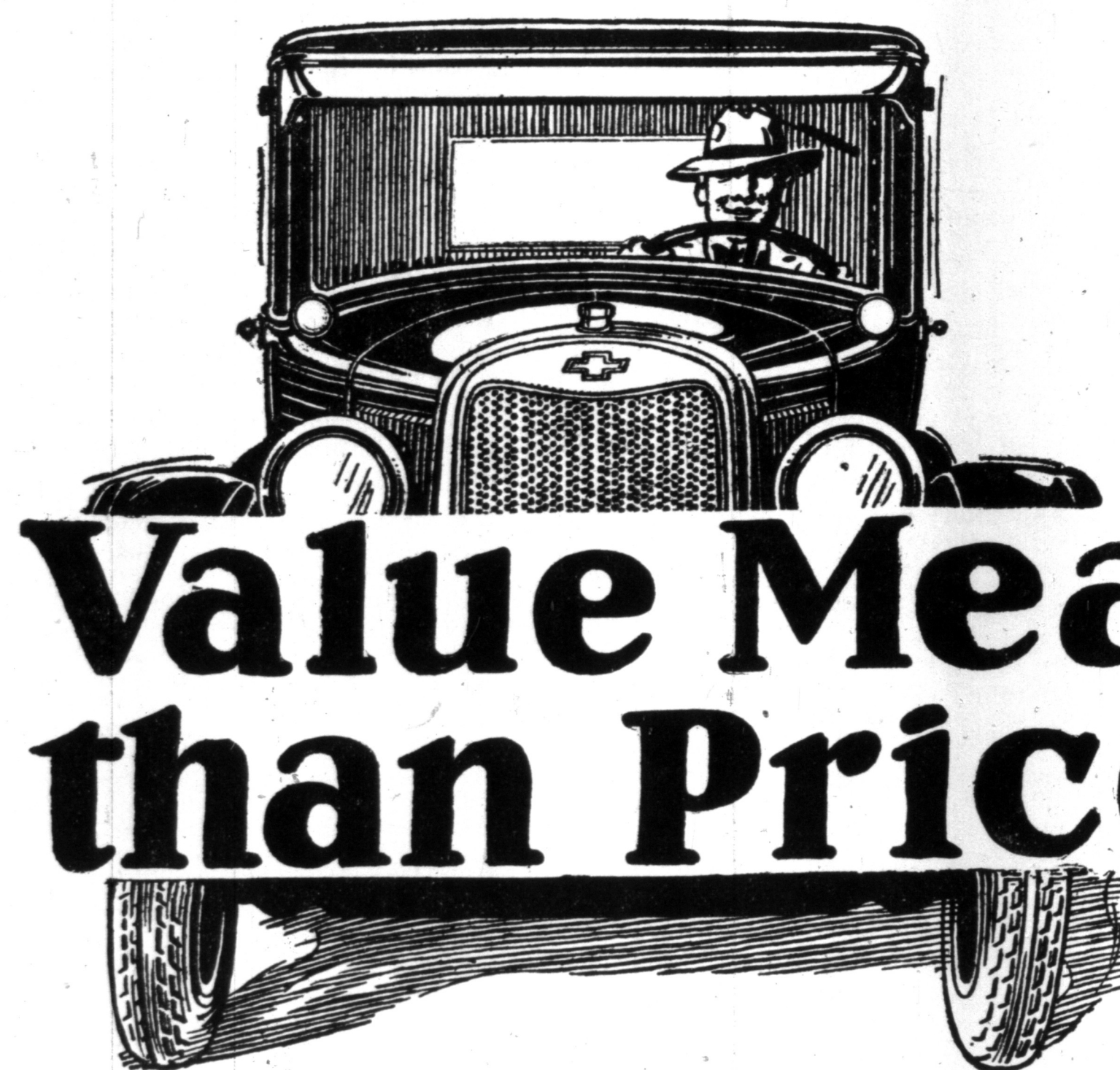
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