

## CURRENT MAGAZINES

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**The Philosophy of G. K. Chesterton:**—Mr. W. F. R. Hardie, in the *Hibbert*.

**Some Recent Books about Shaw:**—Mr. M. L. Becker, in the *Saturday Review of Literature*.

**The Changing Shaw:**—Mr. Mark Van Doren, in *The Nation*.

**Woodrow Wilson:**—Mr. Claude G. Bowers, in *Current History*.

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AN Oxford don has written in the *Hibbert* on "The Philosophy of G. K. Chesterton." Curiously enough, it is not a bad article. I know not to whom we owe that invaluable epithet "donnish"—so suggestive of a blend for which we have no other word, and in particular of sterile erudition combined with jealousy of writers who produce. But Mr. Hardie is not donnish. He is not among the dull pedants irritated by a successful artist and affecting contempt for literary talent which they do not share. So we are spared the usual peevish complaints,—that Mr. Chesterton is a mere journalist, that he aims above all to be sensational, and that his straining after paradox is tiresome. Mr. Hardie knows that these criticisms, in so far as they are well grounded, have occurred to every reader, and that an article dwelling chiefly on such faults would reveal only the incompetence of the critic.

One must surely admit that an examination of Mr. Chesterton's scheme of thought is now overdue. He has exercised a long, a widespread, and a powerful influence upon his contemporaries. As a "man of letters," in Lord Morley's sense of that term (contrasted alike with the creative poet and the scientific specialist), he has held public attention for nearly thirty years, and there is still no sign of flagging either in the readers' interest or in the writer's talent. The indescribable fecundity of Mr. Chesterton's mind may be guessed from the very partial list of his publications which he allows annually to appear in *Who's Who*. They are, of course, of very diverse merit. He would himself be quick to acknowledge that the hurried travail of journalism gives birth to many a literary monster, and that what was at least excusable in a magazine may be intolerable when republished in a book. George Meredith once invoked the thunders of the Commination Service against "some ghoul" who meant to disinter certain articles he had

written in his youth for *The Ipswich Journal*, and Mr. Chesterton might well seek a like immunity for contributions of his own to *The Daily News*. But it is his later rather than his earlier products which he could with advantage declare purely ephemeral. In his younger days he worked with the utmost care, until growing popularity and increasing fluency made him the victim of temptations to which the average author is not exposed. What a distance, for example, separates the chastened art of the *Robert Browning* or the *Charles Dickens* from the bulky garrulousness of *The New Jerusalem!*

This article in the *Hibbert* is concerned with the "philosophy" of Mr. Chesterton, and its title will provoke many a protest that he has no philosophy at all. No one has ever doubted his wit, his power over language, shown by turns in a *bonhomie* not unlike that of Lamb and a sarcasm that makes one think—at least for a moment—of Swift. Or again, to pursue such daring comparisons, one may recall what a listener said of the conversation of Carlyle: "Words and phrases infinitely picturesque and satiric, marvellous collocations and antitheses!" Mr. Chesterton is indeed such a master of the *callida iunctura* that some of his readers fall a prey to the illusion created by mere aptness of phrase. Others become exasperated by what they call mannerisms, by his recurring tricks of style, and those who admire him most ought freely to admit that he is often the slave of his own artifice. It is not within the power of any man, even of Mr. Bernard Shaw, to coin an effective epigram as frequently as Mr. Chesterton tries to do so, and he must accept the indignity of the attempts which have fallen flat. It is the juggler's risk that an unsuccessful performance will expose the inner mechanism of the promised mystery. But the art which has thus sometimes failed is, at its best, very great art, and it is the brilliancy of the successes that one likes to recall. Mr. Chesterton once said of *The Pickwick Papers* that he didn't know how often he had read them, but that he must have read *in* them about a million times. At least one reader can say something similar about the perpetual joy he has found in a select group—by no means small—of the writings of Mr. Chesterton.

Besides the charm of their style, these books have the charm of an unflinching human sympathy. The writer so obviously loves mankind; not in the abstract, but in the concrete; human beings, not Humanity; and readers are quick to appreciate this difference. He is not like the very irascible gentleman in *Bleak House*, who professed it his mission in life to be everybody's brother, but seemed to be on strained relations with the greater part of his large family.

Mr. Chesterton's anger can indeed be devastating, as some have found to their cost. But its object is seldom the multitude, or the average man. It is commonly some pretender who glories in setting other people right, in correcting the general ignorance by his own wisdom or the general frailties by his own virtue, and who is obviously pleased with the pain he inflicts. Superior persons, superior groups, superior nations are constantly being transfixed by that piercing satire.

This is the key to Mr. Chesterton's fierce Liberalism in domestic politics and to his anti-Imperialism abroad, his championship of British Labour against the capitalists and of Transvaal farmers against the magnates of the Rand. It explains, too, his anti-Puritanism, his attacks on Prohibition, and in general what he has himself called his "crusade in defence of the pleasures of the people." He has somehow persuaded himself that the Middle Ages were a time of boisterous and widespread delight, which the austere superstition of Protestant Reformers went far to destroy; and though his history here invites many a cavil, it is both intelligible and reasonable that one who thinks thus about Mediaevalism should glorify it. No further comment is needed on his remark that while America celebrates the anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, England should celebrate the anniversary of their embarkation. The virtue of those pilgrims was too esoteric, too self-conscious, too censorious for Mr. Chesterton. Perhaps in all his writings there is no more characteristic or revealing sentence than this, from his short paper about conversation in a hairdresser's shop: "If a man love not his barber whom he hath seen, how shall he love the Japanese whom he hath not seen?"

His amiable disposition has closer contact than might at first sight appear with Mr. Chesterton's system of philosophy. The writer in the *Hibbert* has emphasized his respect for average judgment. It is a *reasoned* respect, as remote from mere self-diffidence that fears to be singular as from mere tactical adulation of the plain man. One may be as much alive as Plato, or Dean Inge, to democracy's political failings, and yet one may continue to believe in democracy, because the alternative is still worse. Mr. Chesterton is thus democratic not only politically, but intellectually, not because he is under any illusion about "the herd," but because he has been disillusioned about "the expert." To him, after the usual youthful adventures in free thought, it has become clear that the plain man's beliefs—on fundamental things of life and conduct and destiny—are sound, though the plain man will blunder wildly when he tries to state what his beliefs are. Common

sense is here like the common law, upon whose essential conceptions of justice the most subtle jurist can not improve, but which—nine times out of ten—will be absurdly ill defined even by those who act upon it most shrewdly. Their wisdom, like that of the politician who had been “jobbed” into a judgeship, is shown by giving decisions boldly but assigning no reasons, for the decisions are more likely to be right than wrong, while the reasons will be at least as often wrong as right. To Mr. Chesterton it seems that the plain man should thus, as a rule, translate his beliefs into action without argument, and that his surest guide on the whole is in adherence to ancient social institutions or usages. This may well be true, though it has so strange a ring from the lips of a Liberal. It might call forth tempestuous applause at the Carlton Club. But the applause would have burst forth under a mistake. Mr. Chesterton’s philosophical Conservatism proved consistent with writing and canvassing for the Liberal Party even in “the worst days of Lloyd George.” It has permitted him to say very alarming things; for example, that the Union Jack in Ireland has been the source chiefly of evil,<sup>1</sup> and that Mr. Kipling’s imperial poetry shows a decadent genius<sup>2</sup>; that to mend the constitution of the House of Lords would be like mending a thumbscrew<sup>3</sup>, and that the British aristocracy, so far from preserving the national traditions, in truth preserves nothing but game<sup>4</sup>. “A philosophical” Conservative of that sort is not wanted at the Carlton Club.

It is in the book called *Orthodoxy* that Mr. Chesterton has shown what he really means by extolling Tradition, but it is in the light of his more mature book, *The Everlasting Man*, that both *Orthodoxy* and *Heretics* should be read. The writer is definitely a theist, not in the sham sense of one who has no objection to humoring his pious friends by use of the word “God” as a synonym for the totality of things, but in the genuine sense of believing in a planned universe that expresses the will of a Designer and that moves towards a righteous goal. In the conscious fulfilment of that purpose Mr. Chesterton holds that it is permitted to human beings to share, and such co-operating with the Supreme Will he regards as the unique distinction of the human species. Whether his argument to this conclusion is cogent or not, must be judged by study of it in the pages of *The Everlasting Man*. It is, of course, by no means original. But the familiar reasoning of Christian

1. *Irish Impressions*, p. 103.

2. *What's Wrong with the World*, p. 84.

3. *ibid.*, p. 266.

4. *ibid.*, p. 68.

Apologetic against Naturalism has seldom been presented with such blend of consecutive thought and artistic expression. Mr. Chesterton has rendered to the learned theologians some such service as Mr. Wells rendered to learned historians, when he set forth with crystal clearness in *The Outline of History* so much that they had muddled beyond recognition in the uncouth English of their books.

In such a planned universe, it seems to our critic incredible that mankind should have no surer guide than a precarious talent for discovery. It would be a diabolic rather than a divine order in which common instincts and intuitions should continually mislead, and "the expert" should be one's only hope. Se we are gleefully shown how narrow is the expert's range, how ambiguous his advice,—above all, how likely he is to exaggerate the significance of his own specialism, like the medical specialist upon whom the old-fashioned family doctor must keep constant watch in the interest of his patient. As Mr. Hardie has well put it, these books set forth how "unconsciously subtle" the average mind has often been, and how it has judged far more wisely than it knew. It is a parable of the whole intellectual situation that Mr. Chesterton has given us in *The Innocence of Father Brown*, where a simple parish priest sees further into a crime mystery than the whole force of trained detectives.

Such championship of common sense against the scientist may obviously degenerate into a mere cult of the irrational. Without doubting the fundamental values of the plain man, one may doubt whether the plain man can judge which of his values are fundamental, and it seems clear that in the past he has often unduly extended the list. For example, does private property in land belong to these ultimate sanctities? I confess that *The Outline of Sanity* and *What's Wrong with the World* leave me still unconvinced that Socialism is a denial of the moral axioms, or that the fascinating proposal called "Distributism" is a corollary from first truths of human nature. But, in the words of another satirist, if you don't say things in an irritating way, you may just as well not say them at all; and if *The Outline of Sanity* is thus good reading for Socialists, one hopes that Major Leonard Darwin and his circle have profited by perusing *Eugenics and Other Evils*.

It is to be remembered that the profit, and not the mere entertainment, of readers is always in this writer's mind. The *Hibbert* article lays special and timely stress upon this. In Mr. Hardie's way of reckoning, a man makes *prima facie* claim to be a philosopher when he has "a set of opinions to propagate." This seems a return

to an old classification, for the modern philosophic mind has been rather noted for its systematic hesitancy. Its favourite foible has been either to prove that no set of opinions is really tenable, or to exhibit the absurdity of propagating any one set to the disparagement of the rest. Mr. Chesterton has a different view. Unlike our genial agnostics, he will not pretend to feel exhilarated by the judgment of intellectual bankruptcy, nor will he refrain from at least trying the alternative assumption—that mankind's intellectual estate would turn out solvent if it were judged by a proper method of accounting. How far he has thus succeeded in dissipating a fog, so that "the outline of sanity" may be recovered, this is not the place to argue. But it is a token for good that the pundits are at length aroused to the need of explaining the Chesterton spell.

While philosophers dispute, the general reader—like Wordsworth—will be content to enjoy, and when cynics complain that a profound thinker can never be a popular success, this far-shining figure will long be quoted to refute them. In these sombre days there is a resistless inspiration in our prophet of constant good cheer, bidding defiance, in the name of the radiant faith that is in him, to the very worst bogies of the prevailing gloom. Not that he shrinks from facing painful facts! Who, for example, ever summed up our economic crisis with more painful exactness than he, in the one pungent sentence about employees living on a dole from the State while their employer lives on an overdraft from the Bank? But never far away is the note of reassurance to the England that he loves. Not for him any ultimate despair! Don't tell me, Mr. Chesterton once said, that as I have made my bed so I must lie. If I have made my bed so that it is uncomfortable, please God I will get up and make it again. You may deride that, with some jest about Coueism. But here is the spirit which refreshes us as often as we meet it, and which we meet just now too seldom. It is the spirit which keeps Mr. Chesterton's place, like Mr. Dooley's, ever warm in the hearts of his countrymen.

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VERY different, and yet in some ways fundamentally akin to the spirit of Mr. Chesterton, is that of his friend, Mr. Bernard Shaw, upon whom the constant stream of critical essays has lately given us one by Mr. Becker in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, the other by Mr. Van Doren in the *New York Nation*. Mr. Becker reminds us of the endless variety of interpretation to which the Shavian genius is subject, while Mr. Van Doren suggests that it may be the personality of Mr. Shaw which has changed, rather than

the estimates by his critics which have been discordant. As usual, no doubt, they are both right, and neither is quite right. Mr. Shaw has changed, but not fundamentally, and his critics have contradicted one another, but often verbally rather than essentially. There would be fewer enigmas on this subject if a little more thought were given to the early years of the dramatist's life,—those years which, unless all the psycho-analysts are wrong, supply a key to the years ahead. So far from presenting a tangled skein of change, the picture then becomes one of fierce and even merciless simplicity. Mr. Chesterton has seen this, and shown it with a power that has made his book a masterpiece—perhaps the only masterpiece we have—of Shavian criticism. He summed it all up when he said the central quality to note in Mr. Shaw is that he is an *Irish Puritan*. Strange, but extraordinarily suggestive, when one thinks of that long life of austere propagandism, in which “wag-gery” has been no more than an instrument? Where, then, did the Puritan prophet first meet the objects of his later wrath—the conventional forms of a hollow society, the humbugs of professional etiquette, the pretences of officialdom and of pseudo-science, above all, the abuses of private property in land? What made “G. B. S.” first and foremost a Socialist pioneer, with his dramatic “knack” (as he himself calls it) only an artifice! For answer, we have to turn back to his earliest years in Ireland.

He was born and brought up in Dublin,—the Dublin of the middle of last century, where his father held a small government job, and where the house of Shaw, impoverished, but exclusive, maintained amid growing hardship its tradition of shabby gentility. It was then that the Anglican Church in Ireland, including no more than one tenth of the people, but quaintly describing itself as “The Church of Ireland”, and profusely endowed at Ireland's expense, was in its last years of usurpation. Then was still the hey-day of that extraordinary land system for which Gladstone, as soon as he understood it, declared that Europe supplied no parallel except among the Poles. The horrors of the potato blight and the resulting famine were still as vivid a memory in Mr. Shaw's childhood as the Great War is to us. But, in a country bleeding to death with enforced emigration, the mimic Court at the capital, with the State Church as at once its parasite and its support, kept many a family like that of the Shaws basking in its fitful radiance. Brought up to despise Roman Catholics as belonging to the conquered race, and to think of himself always as one of the conquerors, brought up likewise to look upon those engaged in retail trade as unfit for him and his family even to know, sent to school and church where

such ideas of racial and religious contrast underlay all he heard, at the age of sixteen he became a clerk in the office of a land-agent.

With what thoughts in his mind he entered upon his duties in that office, we have no means of knowing. But he was there for four years, and we have his own word that he never made up a rent account without hoping it would be his last. Under the Irish agrarian system, with so many of the landlords absentees, it may be said that the rent agent was a distinctly more sinister figure in Irish eyes than even the Roman *publicanus* in the eyes of a patriotic Jew. As a child of ten, Bernard Shaw must have heard in 1867 about the abortive rising known as Fenianism, and he can hardly have failed to hear that, fruitless though Fenianism had seemed to be, it was followed almost at once by two measures of reform, the first Land Act and the disestablishment of the Irish Church. His passionate attachment in later life to the project of land nationalisation is usually attributed to his contact with Henry George, followed by hard study of the Marxian economists, and it is indeed true that the glowing rhetoric of *Progress and Poverty* acted upon him like a spell. But the preparation was earlier, in that Dublin rent office. He had been an admirable clerk; and his employer, when he resigned, gave him a handsome testimonial. But this, the recipient felt, was due to his employer's dulness of wit. For once or twice some accident had lifted the veil for a moment, and given that land agent a glimpse which should have been enough to show him what was in his employee's mind. "These hands", Mr. Shaw wrote long years later, "have grasped the hard-earned shillings of the sweated husbandman, and handed them over . . . . . to the mortgagee, with a suitable deduction for my principal who taught me these arts."

In 1876, when twenty years old, he fled to London, without material prospects, but with a fierce resolve to express himself through literature on the social absurdities of his time. For the next six years, supported by the exiguous earnings of his mother, who taught music, he spent his mornings in the Library of the British Museum and his evenings either at the composition of novels which no publisher would accept, or in revolutionary argument at debating societies known to few except their own members and the police. The period, the late seventies of last century, was notable in London for the enterprise of the *Fortnightly Review*, crusading under John Morley against some of the most hallowed sanctities of English life. George Meredith, Cotter Morrison, Frederic Harrison, Algernon Charles Swinburne, were of the same group. Soon came the visit of Henry George, the gospel of the single tax,



and the Socialist revival of the eighties. The word "revival" here is appropriate in more senses than one, and especially in the sense which suggests religious excitement. As he listened to these apostles of radical change, the face of young Bernard Shaw was lit up like that of some convert under an evangelist; and when he thought of the Dublin society from which he had escaped, it was with the sense of a convert's deliverance. "From that hour", he says, "I became a man with some business in the world". Karl Marx supplied him with his Bible, and his prolonged daily devotions—at a desk in the reading-room of the British Museum—can still be recalled by some of the retired officials.

The similitude might indeed be pushed much further. Mr. Shaw did not keep those Socialist convictions in just their original form. Neither Henry George nor Karl Marx was to remain the unquestioned master of his mind. As the neophyte of a creed, he too—like Matthew Arnold—had rigorous teachers who seized his youth and purged its faith and trimmed its fire. Mr. Sidney Webb and Mr. Graham Wallas, he now acknowledges, knocked some of the earliest nonsense out of his head. But is not this, again, a perfect mirror of an intelligent convert's progress! A Modernist revision of the gospel he had first received was what afterwards held his trust and homage, when he came to see that the verbal inspiration of Karl Marx and Henry George was incapable of defence.

But though there was thus a change of form, and considerable revising of the detailed dogmas, there was no abatement of zeal. Mr. Shaw became a tireless writer of Socialist tracts, and a street preacher of the Socialist faith. Like St. Paul, he had a living to earn six days of the week, if he would devote himself, unpaid, to open-air propaganda on the seventh. An inverted box in Hyde Park on a Sunday afternoon corresponded to the river-side at Phillippi, and to the apostle's tent-making the analogue was a perfect slavery to the pen. At a scanty wage he had to make the ceaseless round of new plays, new pictures, new concerts, that he might write notices for the *Star* or the *Pall Mall Gazette*, while always available on call for itinerant Socialist evangelism. Nor did he, during those eighteen-eighties, even as an art critic, forget altogether that he had become a man with a mission.

The *Star*, for example, engaged him to contribute a musical column, and the column was duly labelled "Music," but he interpreted this in a sense to which Platonic usage alone provides a parallel. It meant, he says, that his *causerie* should be "coloured by occasional allusions to that art." Wagner as a musician could

not, of course, be understood without some account of his relations with Socialism in 1848; his later social pamphlets were indispensable data for an exposition of his musical genius; and it was plain that no one could interpret the slavery of the Niblungs, except as allegorical of the capitalist régime. Mr. Shaw's affinities with theological Modernism are indeed not obscure; as a higher critic, he might have been expected to shine. Those articles in the *Star*, signed with the nom-de-plume "Cornetto di Bassetto", are as truly pieces of Socialist propagandism as even the Fabian tracts.

When he criticised plays, too, the apostolic note was not wanting. What aroused keenest attention in those years, before he became himself a playwright, was his persistent decrying of the Elizabethan drama, and his persistent glorifying of Ibsen. The fault he found with the Elizabethans was like what Carlyle found amiss with Sir Walter Scott, the lack of what preachers call a "message". They were purveyors of romance, not enquirers into reality, unlike Ibsen in that they had no living problem either to solve or even to present. Obvious as he held this to be in such as Marlowe or Webster or Greene, he did not hesitate to find it in Shakespeare also, except for a few of the less celebrated plays, such as *Measure for Measure* or *All's Well that Ends Well*. In Mr. Shaw's opinion, Tolstoy was perfectly right when he said it was Shakespeare's fundamental fault never to have faced fairly and squarely the question "What are we alive for?" And in those far-off impecunious days it is recorded that Mr. Shaw resigned job after job in literary and aesthetic criticism because he would never write to order. He would under no circumstances be either bribed or intimidated into distributing praise and blame otherwise than as his critical conscience directed. Not even an editorial interpolation would he tolerate, if it gave the paragraph a shade of different emphasis. Such was his sensitiveness to duty in that apostolic succession to which he belonged,—the succession, he liked to say, "stretching from Aeschylus to myself".

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With this record in mind, one thinks of the great satiric pieces written in his maturity—the plays on education and on the professions, on poverty and the housing problem, on British military and official life, on Churches, on the eternal Irish difficulty. One thinks of *Misalliance* and *The Doctor's Dilemma*, of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *Major Barbara* and *Widowers' Houses*, of *Arms and the Man*, of *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*, of *Androcles and the Lion*, of *John Bull's Other Island*. Is it possible

to miss either the didactic purpose or the unity that brings together pieces even so various as these? What is common to them must be traced back to the special ways of thinking so sure to arise in a youth of dramatic genius and generous impulse, under the strain of the Anglo-Irish spectacle of half a century ago. *The Intelligent Woman's Guide* shows a later stage of the same process. No doubt Mr. Shaw has in a sense changed, though in a far deeper sense he has remained the same. He has changed with his environment. But, as Macaulay once said, a man is not to be called an Oriental traveller because he travels from West to East with the Earth and all things thereon.

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**I**T is a far cry from either Mr. Chesterton or Mr. Shaw to the memory of Woodrow Wilson. But it is not surprising that the name of the War President should now begin to reappear in the table of contents of magazines. The time for "reappraisal" has surely come.

Mr. Claude Bowers begins by observing that there is no *mystery* about Wilson, that causes and consequences in his career are decipherable at a glance, and that no such creature as a psychoanalyst has any business in this enquiry. In a sense that seems quite true. There was a simplicity about his career, which some admired and some blamed, but which hardly anyone could fail to note. Yet it was a career which left behind just such a problem as psychoanalysis alone can solve,—the problem, namely, of his countrymen's changing attitude to Woodrow Wilson. The reasons assigned were so obviously remote from the causes which operated! What Freud has taught us to call the contrast between "manifest content" and "latent content" could not have a clearer illustration.

At all events, we may congratulate ourselves that this problem can now be genuinely discussed, because the atmosphere has been purified of at least its grosser vapours. Seven years have passed since Wilson's death, ten since his disappearance from the international stage, nearly twenty since his heated interchanges with opponents in State government and in university administration. Except among the very vindictive, a petty personal grudge does not endure much longer than that, to blind one's eye to the services of a national leader. We may suppose that the last disparaging word has been spoken by those who fought with Wilson over the clubs at Princeton, by those whose hope of office or of contracts he disappointed in New Jersey, or by those in Washington whose devices of public corruption he was able successfully to thwart.

One may perhaps even hope that by this time he has been forgiven by the Republican Senators who were not invited—with their wives—to share the effulgent glories of the Presidential visit to Versailles.

Reproaches of an objective sort had to be alleged even by those whose real resentment was personal, and the most frequent charges against Wilson formed an extraordinary blend. He was said to be egotistic, impatient of conference with others, a scholar unfitted by his cloudy learning to deal with concrete business. In his own country his opponents called him "the pedagogue of Princeton." Lord Birkenhead lamented that the United States at a world crisis was ruled over by "a dreamy idealist". But, as Mr. Bowers has pointed out, the charge of being unpractical was the very last that could be directed against him with any show of plausibility in the years subsequent to 1916. His first administration had been recognized as "one of the nation's richest in constructive achievement", and all men understood that to the titanic driving power of the President this record was chiefly due.

He came to his high office after an intense scientific study of the American Constitution, for upon politics—in the grand Aristotelian sense of that term—his enthusiasm had been concentrated from his very boyhood. But if anyone supposed that the bookman's knowledge would hinder rather than help the administrator's conduct of affairs, the illusion must have been fast dissipated by the spectacle of Wilson's reform fights in the New Jersey Legislature. At Washington, too, his first presidential period was marked by four triumphs of constructive statesmanship,—the Federal Reserve System, the Federal Trade Commission, the Farm Loan Board, and the Tariff Commission. That in 1919 his errors should have been ascribed to an unpractical idealism, illustrates only to what desperate conjectures men are driven when they decide first and argue later.

But, very fitly, Mr. Bowers insists that Wilson's leadership was indeed idealistic in that sense in which idealism is the most practical thing in the world. He admits that, like every other leadership, it was marred by mistakes,—for example, by the appeal in 1918 for election of "a Democratic Congress," and by the omission of all Republicans from the Peace Embassy. But Mr. Bowers holds it to have been no mistake that he violated both precedent and popular sentiment in going himself to Paris, for the rapturous reception with which he was greeted by the masses "put something of the fear of the Lord into the hearts of the cynical politicians of Europe":

His picture still hangs in the cabins of the humble in the far places. . . . No other American statesman has ever made such a genuine appeal to the Old World nations and people. No other human being in all the tide of time has ever fought so gustily to end the crime of war, or made a more moving appeal to the hearts of men.

Mr. Bowers might have added that Wilson incurred not only the concentrated fury of Lord Birkenhead but also the surly disparagement of Dean Inge, both of which will supply to persons of generous mind a powerful presumption in his favour.

Yet the "mystery", which this critic denied to exist, remains when we have finished his article. How and why, despite such shining gifts and such signal services, did Wilson become so unpopular with the very people one might have expected to adore him? I make no reference to the subtle arguments against his *League* which determined the action of the Senate, but which no one can suppose to have been appreciated by vast multitudes that were so suddenly roused to antagonism. It was something in his personality, not in his programme, that had become so distasteful to the average voter as to make him welcome any plea for voting next time "Republican." Those who remember Bryce's *American Commonwealth*, especially the section on qualities which make a President succeed, will guess what some of his disadvantages were. Bryce points out how it is not a ruler of extraordinary talent, but rather one of dull and commonplace amiability, that will hold the affections of a republic, and every political satirist—from Plato to Anatole France—has explained this advantage of the mediocre. It extends to the relatively trivial features that the public is quickest to observe. Small things, perhaps, but viewed over a wide area and for a long time! Wilson had qualities of high distinction which separated him too far from his critics for the "inferiority complex" to refrain from avenging itself. And perhaps a shrewder, though a less honest, man would have been diplomatic enough to conceal them.

For example, it was assumed abroad that his countrymen must feel great pride in a President of such intellectual culture and such wide learning, whose State papers were the admiration of the Chancelleries of Europe, and whose originality was leading the statesmen of the world in the first real scheme for safeguarding peace. But intellectual culture often arouses in those destitute of it a resentment they cannot indefinitely hide. The dialect of his successor at the White House was more soothing to the *amour propre* of innumerable readers, for the newspaper published at Marion, Ohio, was in language far closer to the reader's own way of

expressing himself. And, notoriously, such ideas as that of a fundamental reform in politics, either by eliminating corruption at home or by removing the sources of war abroad, are received with great impatience by a wide public, because they seem to imply a claim to virtue higher than that of one's neighbour. Thus an eager welcome awaited the next Presidential candidate who declared on a hundred platforms that he and his family were of no exceptional intellect, but "just folks". Thus Warren Harding's English, soon to be followed by "Teapot Dome," seemed, in the new language of the White House, a delightful return to "normalcy." But few will acknowledge that what they dislike in a President is his intellectual brilliance, his literary talent, or the moral elevation of his policies. They prefer to say that they dislike a high-brow, a pedagogue, and a doctrinaire,—just as in ordinary life the revolt against morality expresses itself as a rule in fierce tirades against "clergymen." To a great deal that is strange in our social and political criticism, "sublimation" such as this appears to be the key.

H. L. S.