What Makes an American?

"To become an American is a process which resembles a conversion. It is not so much a new country that one adopts as a new creed."

By Raoul de Roussy de Sales

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I

It is strange that the only common denominator accepted by all people today should be the one which most assuredly prevents them from living in peace with one another. That denominator is nationalism, the strongest single motive which inspires the action of modern men.

To define precisely what nationalism means to each individual would fill a volume. A Frenchman once said that nationalism is a certain number of illusions shared by a group of men and women concerning their origin, combined with a common hatred for any other group of men and women sharing another set of illusions. To most people, however, it is something much more noble than that because it represents an extension of the natural love of man for the country where he was born. It implies devotion, duties, and sacrifices under the general assumption that there is some sort of sacred link between each man and a definite spot on the planet.

The question whether nationalism, patriotism, the love of the homeland, is beneficial either to the individual or to the human race as a whole is open to discussion. It might be a much better world if this instinct were eradicated. On the other hand, it might be worse. The fact is that the instinct exists, and that, far from losing its grip on us, on all of us, it is becoming constantly more intense, more exacting, more all-embracing.

I have a definite impression that during my own lifetime the French have shown a tendency to become more French, the Germans more German, the Americans more American. Or, to put it another way, there seems to be an increasing desire on the part of all people to assert more strongly what makes them different and even antagonistic to one another. And it does not matter at all that—owing to the shortening of distances and the

facilities of communications—they are in fact getting closer and more alike in all the visible manifestations of their existence.

It may be that modern nationalism is an instinctive defense against a greater peril—a deadly and overwhelming uniformity. It may also be that in one or two hundred years historians will study this manifestation as one of the most extraordinary examples of mass neuroses that the world has known. Nationalism as we know it may pass, but for the moment it is more powerful than any other idea or even than any religion.

There are, of course, many variations of nationalism, and some think that it is dangerous only in its excessive forms, such as those practised by the Germans, the Italians, and the Japanese with their "blood and soil" mysticism, their imperialism, and their racial exclusions. But everywhere we see the same tendency, the same urge to counteract nationalism in one place by more nationalism in another.

II

To a European, no country is more interesting from this point of view than America, and in the seven years I have lived here none has interested me and puzzled me more.

To begin with, it took me some time to formulate to myself an answer to the very simple questions: "What makes an American? How does it *feel* to belong to this nation?"

These questions will naturally sound absurd to an American, and he might retort, "Well, how does it feel to be a Frenchman?" But that is just the point—most Frenchmen can tell you quite clearly what makes them conscious of being French, but I have found it very difficult to obtain from my American friends or from my reading a comprehensive definition of the American nationality.

First of all, it is obvious that the sense of nationality is not less developed in Americans than in any other people. It is quite as real and quite as visible in all its manifestations. But the fact that such expressions as "Americanism," the "American way," the "American outlook," and so forth, have had to be coined seems to indicate that Americans are the first to feel the need of qualifying themselves when they say, "I am an

American." More than that, the American consciousness gives an impression of growth. It is not static, and one feels that it still contains tremendous possibilities of expression.

For the moment, however, there is a very important trait in the make-up of the American nationality which does not exist, I believe, in any other. And that is the fact that America is a permanent protest against the rest of the world, and particularly against Europe.

This attitude has both historical and psychological reasons. Most Americans believe today the following facts concerning their nation: (1) that this continent was peopled by men who rebelled against the tyrannies of Europe; (2) that these men dedicated themselves, from the very beginning, to the purposeful establishment of a kind of freedom that should endure forever; (3) that they succeeded, by a "revolution" in breaking away forever from the oppressive domination and the cupidity of European imperialisms; (4) that in establishing a democratic government they determined forever the course of political perfection, and that whoever followed another course was on the road to damnation; (5) that although European nations were becoming progressively harmless in relation to the increasing power and resources of the ever-growing America, they remained a potential danger to the integrity of this great nation on account of their deplorable habit of wandering away from the true path of civilization, which is democracy, the pursuit of material comfort and more happiness for everybody on this earth as soon as possible.

An Englishman may have doubts regarding the British Empire, a Frenchman may be discouraged concerning the future of France. There are Germans who are not sure that they represent a superior race. All of them, however, remain thoroughly English, French, or German in spite of everything.

The type of American who does not accept America as it is and has misgivings about it—such as Henry James, Edith Wharton, T. S. Eliot, and some others—belongs to a past generation. Today one seldom meets an American skeptic, for the reason that nothing is more assuredly unAmerican than to entertain any doubt concerning the fact that somehow or other this country will come out all right.

There are many who will find such a statement too sweeping, and say, for instance, that President Roosevelt is destroying the national ideal, that he is leading the country to ruin, decadence, anarchy, and so forth. But even those objectors are not skeptical about the future of their country. Even they feel that faith in

America is what makes them Americans. All their irritation would be assuaged if Mr. Roosevelt were removed, all their confidence restored. This kind of skepticism is skin-deep. It does not affect the soul of Americanism.

This faith, like all faiths, does not engender a passive attitude towards the rest of the world. Americans are tolerant to all creeds and to all convictions, but few people express their distrust and indignation with more vigor whenever some of *their* beliefs are offended. Few people are more conscious that ideas may be more destructive than guns. And rightly so, because if any unorthodox creed really implanted itself in America—if the day came when an American citizen could really feel that his country was not following the right course and that a change was due—the political disunion thus produced would have unforetold consequences. The one serious crisis of this kind that America has known, the Civil War, showed the frightful results of a real political conflict. It nearly made two nations out of one. But this experiment in dissension seems to have served as a lasting lesson. It is difficult to believe that it would be repeated. Unity on the fundamental principles of politics is indispensable to the life of this country. The presence of even a small minority who would question the validity of Americanism would attack at the very core the concept of American nationality itself.

III

The crisis that shook Europe in September 1938 once more brought out the fact that 99 percent of Americans distrust Europe as a whole, and that they *must* distrust it to retain the feeling that they are Americans.

This is no place to discuss the events leading up to or the consequences of the Munich peace, but the experience was conclusive. American opinion saw in all this affair one main point: democracy had lost out in the struggle, and something hostile to America had won.

Does this mean that many Frenchmen and many Englishmen do not feel the same way? Certainly not. But even the most ardent opponents of Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier, those who feel most bitterly that democracy and freedom are threatened today, do not think that their national integrity—their conception of what is British or French—is involved. Many of them may have become what Mrs. Anne O'Hare McCormick

appropriately called "spiritual refugees" within their own country, but—unpleasant as this change may be—it does not go any further.

Not so with the Americans. Most of them today have become isolationists. They despair of Europe and are all the more anxious to protect the Western Hemisphere from the anti-democratic plague that is sweeping the world. And at the bottom of their anxiety to preserve their political institutions, their habits of thought, and their form of civilization, there is more than a prejudice against the revolution brought about by the totalitarian doctrines; there is in the heart of every American the positive fear that his existence, as an American, is endangered.

It may seem presumptuous to say that these two fundamental factors—the permanent protest against Europe, and the faith in one definite outlook on life—are the most important qualifications of an American. One could argue that Americans have a deep attachment to the section of the map which they occupy, and that they would still love it much if Hitlerism or Stalinism became the law of the land. This may be so, but it still has to be proved, because for one hundred and fifty years America has known only one form of government, one philosophy of life, and one aim. The elements which make up an Englishman, a Spaniard, or a Dutchman are the same as those that make up an American, but the emphasis is different. For instance, Europeans seem to be more deeply aware of their physical relationship to the place they occupy in the sun than are most Americans.

IV

It may be difficult to make this clear to people who profess such a cult of the home, the hometown, or the state from which they have come. But, although this love of the motherland is genuine enough, it always appears to a European somewhat abstract, as if it were an acquired taste. Moreover, it is in constant conflict with another impulse, typically American—the urge to move and detach oneself constantly all through one's life from any definite surroundings.

This nomadic instinct is too well known to be emphasized. It has historical causes: the pioneer spirit; the very size of the country; the fact that means of communication, such as railroads, were available before there

really was any place to go to; the urban civilization attaining a tremendous development without any marked transition between the village and the big city, and so forth.

But the relative weakness of the physical love of the Americans for their country shows itself most strikingly in very trivial manifestations, which, I believe, puzzle every European observer.

For instance, to travel in America is a psychological experience which cannot be compared with traveling in any other country. Having visited in the last three years approximately one hundred cities for the purpose of lecturing, I find today that I have no memory of more than about ten of them. They are mere names in my notebook connected with a few incidents, but very seldom with any characteristic impression of the places themselves. If I were transported today on a magic carpet to most of these towns, I should be at a loss to identify them.

The explanation is obvious: there is more monotony in American towns than in those of Europe. There is also the question of distances. Landscapes and the general surroundings change very slowly in this huge continent. Someone said that Switzerland would be the largest country on earth if it were not *folded*. America is completely *unfolded*, and gives the impression in some places of being positively stretched out.

The European traveler experiences another strange feeling: that his ignorance of the geography of the country is usually shared by most of his traveling companions, who, moreover, seem to be considerably more indifferent about it than he is himself. This does not mean that the average American one meets in a Pullman lounge does not know where he is, or where he is going. As a matter of fact, he is usually more accurate concerning distances between various points and the time it takes to get from one to the other, either in a train or in a plane, than a Frenchman would be in his own country. But his knowledge is abstract. The railroad timetable and the esoteric map therein seem to give him all the information he requires. What actually *happens* between two given points, what the physical make-up of the land is, interests only a few.

Here again I suppose the question of size intervenes. Human senses cannot focus on a whole continent the way the painters of the Italian Renaissance could depict on one piece of canvas, and with all its details, the whole familiar area around them which was, in fact, their country. The American must be content with a

simplified and purely convenient kind of blueprint of the forty-eight states and the broad outlines of endless plains, tremendous mountains, and gigantic rivers.

However, when one is in an American train, the impression of traveling on nothing more substantial than a network of railroad tracks under which there may or may not be America is very disturbing to the European—as disturbing as the obvious fact that the American male reaches the maximum of happiness when, after a night in a Pullman, he goes into the smoking room to wash and shave in his undershirt, splashing and singing like a morning bird for no other apparent reason than that he is nowhere in particular (except far from home), detached from this earth along which he is being carried very fast with the minimum of awareness of its reality.

V

Nostalgia is not an American feeling. True enough, it has been the luck of Americans never to know all through their history the ordeal of exile from America. At one time or another, practically all nations of Europe have expelled some of their citizens for political or religious reasons, and these unfortunate minorities have known this curious human capacity for longing to "go back" where they came from. In recent years this form of suffering has been imposed on larger and larger sections of human beings. Americans, luckily for them, have been spared this experience. Nevertheless, some of them have had to live abroad for more or less lengthy periods. During the 1920s, for instance, several thousands were established in Paris, but, although they occasionally yearned for "home," this yearning was momentary and generally explainable by some local cause of irritation, such as the difficulty of getting accustomed to French coffee, or the amount of rain which falls in France. The imperfections of Parisian steam heat and the difficulty of obtaining orange juice or cereal at breakfast at the Hôtel de la Poste et du Nègre (although it is marked with three stars in the Michelin guidebook) may indeed give a pang to an American heart and bring sweet memories of the faithful radiator thumping away back home and of the corner drug store; but this is a far cry from the horrors of Biblical exodus.

I never saw the American exiles sit, like the Russians, around the equivalent of a samovar—namely, a pot of real American coffee—and indulge in an orgy of misery, with appropriate songs, over the fact that they were so far away from Buffalo or Omaha.

Speaking of songs, it is strange that most of those which express nostalgia come from the Negroes. “Carry Me Back to Old Virginny” is a good equivalent of the Breton “J’aime mieux Paimpol et sa falaise,” but it does not express a really American sentiment. As a matter of fact, the number of Americans who want to be "carried back" to Old Virginia or to any other particular place is remarkably small. When it comes to retiring from active life and dying somewhere, they would rather move to a nice climate, if they can, like California or Florida, than to the place where they were born.

I fear that many readers will object to this statement. They will point out that nowhere in the world is there such a love of the family and of the home as in America. They will show me innumerable proofs that all representative and popular expressions of the American soul—such as the movies and advertising, for instance—play up constantly the theme of the American's love for the old homestead, for the state from which he hails, for his Alma Mater, and so forth. This is true, but I will confess that this concerted effort to boost sentiments which are taken for granted everywhere else gives one an impression of artificiality. The fact that the word "home," for instance, can be used and abused to the point of having become meaningless makes one suspect that the millions of who use it not only do not know what the word really means, but are actually not very much interested in the thing itself.

There are good reasons for this. One is that few Americans live in or near the house where they were born—that is, in their home in the proper sense of term—because few habitations in America last as long as a man's life. Not infrequently in small towns one sees a single stone building, standing in the midst of less permanent constructions, preserved as a specimen of the home and dedicated to the town as a museum.

Another reason why the home is more a dream than a reality is the survival of early nomadism which in many parts of country has blended itself with the sense of instability produced by industrialism and purely urban life. All modern countries are following the same trend; everywhere in the world men are returning slowly to the stage of the Bedouin—with complications. Home, for an ever-increasing number of men and

women, is simply the place where they find work, and this place changes for most of them with growing rapidity. But in the Old World this trend towards chronic instability is checked by the toughness of the roots which still attach the individual to his province or village.

In France it is rare to find an industrial worker, an employee, or for that matter any *displaced* Frenchman, who has not kept some contact with his relatives who still live in the village or the small town he himself was born. And it is usually his ambition to go back there when he is old.

Such roots exist in America also, but, with the exception of the oldest states, they are not very deep or very important in a man's life. There is also the tremendous fact that there are no peasants in America—a fact which alone would explain the curious impression that there is some sort of missing link in the structure of American society. "Peasant," (from the French *paysan*, meaning the man of a *pays*—that is, a very small area which may not encompass more than a village and its surrounding fields) may be a word which sounds badly to American ears, but it nevertheless represents a type of human being whose unchangeability through centuries, and whose total identification with the place where he was born and where he will die, probably constitute the soundest guarantee that some of the strongest virtues and some of the most useful vices of mankind will survive.

There are no American peasants, and this may be the real reason why to so many Americans the love of the land is little more than a poetic expression. It may be the reason why things pertaining to the soil retain a peculiar symbolic quality which is in marked contrast with the poignant connotation that these things have in other countries.

The nearest equivalent to the European peasant is, of course, the farmer, but it is obvious that his outlook on life is more akin to that of the businessman than to that of the man who tills the earth. He is already urbanized, and in any event his numbers are rapidly decreasing. Not so very long ago farmers constituted 90 percent of the population. Now, according to the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, they make up only 22 percent.

VI

In most countries of the Old World, language creates a bond which is often invoked as a proof of national unity. The national language assumes sometimes a character of sacredness. All through the history of Europe, nations have gone to war for the right to speak and write their own language. It would seem a natural human feeling that, when a man loses the privilege of expressing himself in his mother tongue, something fundamental in him has been destroyed. He feels that he can no longer defend himself against an alien culture and an alien domination. And, in fact, history proves that this is very often the case.

French happens to be an extremely difficult language to speak or write correctly, even for a Frenchman, but the French have for their language a veneration which has probably no equivalent anywhere else except perhaps in China, among the mandarins. A man who speaks or writes well enjoys an impressive prestige. No politician can get anywhere in France (even if he represents the most uneducated parts of the country) if his style is not approximately correct.

Colonel de La Rocque, leader of the once picturesque Croix de Feu movement, failed to achieve real power, not so much because he lacked political ability, but because nearly every day it was possible to pick up a howler in his speeches or in his articles. On the other hand, Léon Blum can address a very tough crowd in the most polished and even precious French and never be criticized for being too perfect.

Many Americans cannot understand why European nations do not stop quarreling and form the United States of Europe; but among the chief obstacles is certainly this matter of the language to which each nation, even the smallest, is passionately attached because it has become part and parcel of the people's sense of nationality.

In America, however, no such importance is attributed to the way a man expresses himself. Nobody requires an orator to speak perfect English. Some do and some don't. But this does not affect their prestige or their power in the least. Indeed, the average American audience has a tendency to resent a speaker whose eloquence is a little too punctilious.

The first reason for this attitude towards the national language is that the American language is still in a vigorous state of creation. It offers vast possibilities of development, and it has already (in my way of thinking) made the kind of English which is spoken and written in England seem as dull and ineffectual as weak tea. Contemporary American writing and the forceful rhythm of good American speech are fast superseding British English. But the whole system of communication used by the Americans between themselves is still as unstable and experimental as was French in the time of Rabelais. And so the American purist has not much chance for another century or two.

Secondly, the language which is supposed to be officially that of the United States cannot be considered with great reverence as long as the millions of nonassimilated or partly assimilated foreign-born or children of foreign-born continue to speak their native tongue. According to statistics, out of 123 million American citizens counted in 1930 there were 53 million divided among the foreign-born and their children. Of course, most of these have learned to speak English, and in doing so have enriched their new language with many words and expressions of their own and even, I believe, with certain intonations and a rhythm which are making the American language what it is. But those who spoke Swedish, Italian, or Polish yesterday cannot be expected to feel that the King's English or General Hugh Johnson's has become part of their blood and that it is an important element in their national consciousness.

VII

A final factor which makes the concept of American nationality so difficult for the foreigner to grasp is the impossibility of giving a unified picture of a nation which does not really occupy a country, but is spread out all over a continent. The Europeans are used to countries which, however diversified they may be, are built more or less on the same pattern. They are historical conglomerations of various smaller people which gradually united under the centralizing domination of a more powerful or more influential conqueror. They are made up of provinces which have retained their original characteristics, but which have in most cases become static. In practically all of them the largest city is the political as well as the cultural capital.

There is, however, no such thing in America, and the more one lives and studies this continent, the greater one's sense of confusion.

An Englishman who has lived here many years said to me: "My job keeps me in Washington, but Washington, of course, does not represent America. When I am in New York, I know also that New York is not America. In San Francisco, my American friends warn me that the Coast is not America. New England is not America; neither is the South. For a while I comforted myself in the belief that America was best represented by the Middle West. But now that I know the Middle West fairly well I have no particular reason to believe that it is more typical of what is really American than any other part of the country. After living ten years in America I

still ask myself: Where is America? And my answer is that I don't know, and that I shall probably never find out.

To look at a map of the United States is not helpful; the rectangular boundaries of the states are very disturbing to a European mind. We know that sectional patriotism is strong in the forty-eight states, even stronger in many ways than the regional idiosyncrasies of France, Germany, or England. But how can the inhabitants of these arbitrary rectangles actually feel a coincidence between one of the most primitive instincts of man—his attachment to his native land—and these geometric boundaries? Again one feels the same sense of abstraction which is so characteristic of America as a whole.

VIII

The truth is that the growth of the American sense of nationality has followed a course inverse to that of older countries. The European first becomes conscious of himself because he lives in a definite place where his forefathers lived before him, because he speaks a language which has always been spoken there, and because he feels a general sense of physical fixity in his surroundings. The *political* consequences of being a Frenchman, an Englishman, or an Italian are, in a sense, secondary manifestations of his nationality. They are superimposed. But the Americans began to be *politically* conscious of being a nation before they felt that the land under their feet was really their homeland. It was only after they had broken off their allegiance to the British that they started—very slowly—to realize that America was the particular section of the planet to which they belonged, where their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren would be born and would die. They began to grow roots after they were already in full bloom as an organized nation.

This—among others—is one of the important reasons why the Declaration of Independence is a certificate of birth not only for the whole American nation but for each American, even today; and why also the Constitution has always had a sacred character, for which there is no counterpart in any other country. It may be a wise political document, but it is even more important as the most genuine and most truly mystical source from which every American derives the consciousness of being himself. If the improbable choice were given to Americans by some great jokester, "Would you prefer to go on living in your country and be deprived of your Constitution and everything that it stands for, or would you prefer to take it with you to some new wilderness?" I am not quite sure what the results of the referendum would be.

Most of the native Americans with three or four generations behind them forget that those who have come after them undergo a process of adaptation. It does not matter whether those who have crossed the seas

are conscious of what takes place within themselves when they decide to be naturalized. It does not matter, either, whether they become Americans merely because they are tempted by better opportunities or because they were thrown out of their native land by persecution of one kind or another. The important fact is this: all those who are coming today and those who will come tomorrow are required first of all to accept a certain outlook on life and certain moral and political principles which will make them Americans. These things must take place in their minds and in their souls. Whether they adapt themselves to the landscape, to the architecture of the towns, to the food and drinks of their new country, is secondary. Whether they can speak its language is also not very important. The main thing is that they should be won over to Americanism, which is a set of moral and political doctrines.

Curiously enough, in a country where material changes are extraordinarily rapid, this moral and political frame has the stability of a dogma. For instance, America is the only country in the world which pretends to listen to the teaching of its founders as if they were still alive. Political battles of today are fought with arguments based on the speeches or writings of men dead over a century ago. Most Americans behave, in fact, as if men like Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, and many others could be called up on the phone for advice. Their wisdom is considered as eternal as that of the Biblical prophets. To show how distinctively American this conception is, one has only to imagine what would happen if Mr. Chamberlain justified his present policy by quoting William Pitt, or if M. Daladier evoked the authority of Danton as a guide.

In fact, to become an American is a process which resembles a conversion. It is not so much a new country that one adopts as a new creed. And in all Americans can be discerned some of the traits of those who have, at one time or another, abandoned an ancient faith for a new one.

This explains, perhaps, the importance of the factor mentioned at the beginning of this article: that, in the make-up of an American, his defiance of the rest of the world, and particularly Europe, is fundamental and unavoidable.

The majority of the people who compose the American nation came from Europe. To uproot themselves and cross the ocean was in most cases a painful operation, but one that was undertaken with hopefulness and courage, because Americanism, as a faith, has a tremendous appeal. But once a man has broken his roots from his native land, the reaction which takes place within himself is not a simple one. It is complex, like the state of mind of a child who has left his home; he may enjoy a sense of liberation while at the same time longing for home, but he also hates that home—because he has left it. America is a nation of prodigal sons who won't go back home—and this accounts for the undercurrent of irritation and bitterness against Europe.

This current is more manifest today than it has been for a long time, and it has now so many obvious justifications that one is tempted to overlook the fact that it is not incidental. Even the Europeans who come here now on a visit breathe a sigh of relief and enjoy the sense of security which they find on this continent. But the national slogan of America, "Thank God for the Atlantic Ocean," is not due to passing circumstances. It is a

prayer which has always been heard, and will be heard again even if the Americans have to cross that ocean once more to go to fight "someone else's war."

Of course an increasing number of Americans are wondering today whether God made the Atlantic Ocean wide enough, and President Roosevelt, with general approval, is giving a helping hand to the Creator by building many battleships and many planes which will reinforce this natural obstacle. But it seems to me that the desire to increase the physical defenses of the United States is inspired not so much by the actual fear of a foreign invasion as by the subconscious panic caused by the challenge launched abroad against what is loosely termed democracy—and the more one thinks of that vague word the more it appears to be synonymous with something specifically American.

The American battleships which are being built now may never fire a shot. They are there to defend American ideals more than to protect American soil.

IX

If the interpretation I have tried to give of what makes an American is not wholly wrong, it explains why the American is in a peculiar position in relation to the rest of the world. His conception of nationality makes him, in a way, better equipped to resist the degrading forces which are now at work in the world than the citizen of any other country. On the other hand, if these forces (which I call degrading because such is my belief) triumph, they will cease to be considered evil. Quite the contrary. They will be glorified as representing the true course of civilization for the twentieth century, and the American will find himself in the curious position of being isolated, not because he wants to be, but because he will be the last representative of a backward type of humanity that will appear completely out of step with this adventurous Europe that may be emerging under our eyes now. America, which we see clinging so passionately to the political and moral concepts of the nineteenth and even of the eighteenth century, will find itself in an even stronger opposition to Europe than it is now.

What will the American do then? Will he carry on the fight single-handed? Or will he try to cultivate within his own soul a sense of nationality less abstract and less doctrinary, as a compensation for the defeat of his ideals?

For the moment the general tendency is to rely on the possibility of maintaining an unchanged course. In fact, there is no question about that, but it is interesting to note that the "Thank God for the Atlantic Ocean" attitude is not as self-assured as it used to be. Doubt is creeping in very fast, and, as always happens when faith is shaken, the natural instinct is to shout even louder that the reasons to doubt are nonexistent. The affirmation that America has been set apart from the rest of the world, that it can and will fulfill its mission, and that it has been *chosen*, is proclaimed with such eloquence and energy that one has sometimes the impression that it was not God who made the Atlantic Ocean, but the genius of the American people.

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In the Progressive Party's platform published last April, for instance, one finds the following statement:

> *We believe that this hemisphere—all of it—was set aside by our Creator for the ultimate destiny of man. Here a vast continent was kept virgin for centuries. Here it was ordained that man should work out the final act in the greatest drama of life. From the Arctic to Cape Horn, let no foreign power trespass. Our hemisphere was divinely destined to evolve peace, security, and plenty. It shall remain inviolate for that sacred purpose.*

This is a lofty conception, and the immigrant, the pioneer, the refugee, or the oppressed, whether he arrived here a century ago or last week, cannot help being heartened by such words. The question is, however, how much longer can the American maintain the posture of a man who stands on tiptoe on the ground because he feels it is his destiny to keep his head above the clouds?