



What I Saw in America

G. K. Chesterton, with an Introduction by Simon Newman

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Description

An eloquent record of the polymath G. K. Chesterton's experiences on a lecture tour of the US in 1921.

Journalist, novelist, poet, artist and art critic, essayist, theologian, propagandist, philosopher, and creator of the wily old Father Brown – G. K. Chesterton is one of the most beguiling authors of the early twentieth century. When asked to perform a lecture tour in 1921, Chesterton was in a slump of depression. He had recently lost his brother to the First World War and his wavering faith in the face of the horrors of the conflict only intensified his malaise. *What I Saw in America* tells us as much about the author and his particular views as it does about his destination. Indeed, Chesterton's personalised observations – his aversion to imperialism, capitalism, Anglo-Americanism and his commitment to democracy and fraternity – are distinguished by the piercing wit for which he is famed.

Many of Chesterton's reflections are timeless and startlingly prescient. He was highly critical of both the naïve immigration policies and the grinding dehumanisation brought about by the growth of the economy. Nonetheless, he was enthralled by the glorious ideals of the nation – founded on principles of equality, democracy and freedom – even if the essence of these ideals had been lost somewhere along the way. *What I Saw in America* ranks among the finest of Chesterton's works, containing all of the author's virtues and vices: his wry humour, sympathy and intelligence playing devilishly against an irrepressible mischievousness.

Readership: For both students of nineteenth-century literature and history and the general reader alike.

Contents

1. What is America?; 2. A Meditation in a New York Hotel; 3. A Meditation in Broadway; 4. Irish and other Interviewers; 5. Some American Cities; 6. In the American Country; 7. The American Business Man; 8. Presidents and Problems; 9. Prohibition in Fact and Fancy; 10. Fads and Public Opinion; 11. The Extraordinary American; 12. The Republican in the Ruins; 13. Is the Atlantic Narrowing?; 14. Lincoln and Lost Causes; 15. Wells and the World State; 16. A New Martin Chuzzlewit; 17. The Spirit of America; 18. The Spirit of England ; 19. The Future of Democracy

About the Author

G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936) was the author of over 80 books, several hundred poems, 200 short stories and 4000 essays.

Simon Newman is Professor in the Department of History at the University of Glasgow. His research interests focus on the social and political history of early America.

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