

(b)

Learning from his angel guide that there was no such race, our statesman would next consider continents.

He would see Africa as a huge, but inert, bulk. No native nation in the whole continent shows an activity or any disposition to enlarge its borders. Or, if so, the natural obstacles are sufficient to inhibit any desire firmer than a hashish-dream.

Africa, then, can only be politically important as booty.

(c)

He next glances at Australia. The distance of the continent isolates it from the rest of the world, and its nature isolates it even from itself. It is little more than a ring of seaboard towns. It is really less a continent than Japan. It has no "interior," but wilderness.

(d)

He turns to South America, and finds it very like Africa. There is the same lack of internal communication. There is the same lack of national initiative. The races, too, are mixed. The elements of political conflict on the grand scale are absent.

(e)

He fixes somewhat more intently his gaze on North America. Here he finds a community of enormous numbers, politically as well as commercially active. He sees it ambitious, proud, touchy. But its members are not homogeneous. The negro race has overrun the South. The Jew has fortified himself in New York and other cities. Another section is overwhelmingly Teutonic; a third contains the dwindling and deciduous Anglo-Saxon. The Irishman has captured politics; the Italian sways labor.

There is no true heart in the country. There is no true family life and no real God; no true social life and no real government. The States are always at loggerheads with the Federal authorities. There is no uniform law, even on so vital a matter as marriage. There is no uniform faith; there is neither head nor heart. America is anarchy.

And the raw material is unpromising. America increases more by immigration than by breeding, and the immigrant as a rule is a weakling forced out of Europe by economic pressure. So instead of one national tradition in religion, ethics, or politics, there are a dozen, all equally respectable. There is a superficial agreement on half a hundred ideas which are really little better than cant phrases, ideas which the first stress of conflict would shatter.

There is no national honor; peace at any price is the instant wish.

There is no national morality; to sell goods is the only aim.

They have all the forms of civilization and none of the essence. Our statesmen would consequently conclude that this country might matter one day, but, for all its activity, not yet. No continent can act as a unity until it has solved its own internal problems; and America has hardly yet begun to formulate them.

(f)

He next sees Asia. Here is the only civilized country in the world, China, with its record of two thousand years of peace. Here, too, is India, a geographical expression as incapable as America of acting as a unity. No other part of Asia but Japan has size and number. India and China are separated by country so lofty and so wild that there are not a dozen white men alive to-day who have made the journey direct by land from one to the other. The same remark

applies to the communications of North and South Asia. The continent is thus inert save for Japan.

(g)

It has been necessary to write these platitudes. People generally do not realize the basis in physical geography, in orography, and in ethnology, of present political conditions.

It is no accident that Europe is the storm centre; for, in casting his eye on Europe and allowing it to rest there, our statesman sees a condition of affairs utterly different from that of any other continent.

Europe is inhabited by active and ambitious races with hardly an exception. Each of these is tenacious of religion, tradition, language, culture, and is unified, patriotic, often aggressive. Each hates all the rest. When I crossed China my Indian servants were much less intolerant of the Chinese than is the average English tourist of the average French innkeeper.

The interior of Europe is mainly a cultivated plain. The Alps and the Carpathians are the only natural frontiers presenting important obstacles; and now-a-days these are traversed in every direction by roads and railways. Nearly all these countries, again, press upon each other by virtue of internal expansion, the increase of their populations.

IV.

Let our diplomatist now regard Europe in detail with his most philosophic eye. He will dismiss certain countries as not dangerous to the common welfare on account of their not feeling the need of expansion.

France, with its falling population; Spain, with its idle population; Greece and Italy, in their flickering decadence, are not to be feared.

Portugal is hemmed in by its big neighbor; Switzerland by its mountain ranges and its tradition, as well as by the certainty of destruction at its first move. Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Norway and Denmark are in the same class. The Balkans are too small and too well balanced both by Turkey and by interecine hatreds to threaten their neighbors. They were only the fuse of the still-exploding bombshell. By a process of exclusion, then, we see only two dangerous forces in all Europe—on one side, Germany and Germanic Austria; on the other, Russia.

And as we look at the map the frightful disproportion of Russia almost shocks us. It is pretty well half of Europe, and this is but the flower; the root is in Asia, and reaches clear across it. Russia is nearer to the United States than Panama is! There is a third great power, a power in a sense more disproportionate still; that is England. But a sane England is not dangerous to the balance of power, for Continental occupation would be impossible for England; it would be suicide. From an honest England, vowed to her own true interests, Europe would have nothing to fear. On the contrary, it is England that should hold the balance of power; and while she is intact she must do so, since geography rules strategy. Sedulous to defend herself, her one aim should be to prevent any predatory power from upsetting the natural order of things.* She might be as predatory as you please, herself, but not in any place where a Continental power could get at her. Henry VI. lost nearly all his French possessions; Mary lost Calais; Charles II. wisely gave up Dunkirk. Gibraltar would be untenable if Spain were an aggressive power. India is only guarded by the Pamirs, and Canada by U. S. A. anarchy. England is really hemmed in by the sea as much as Switzerland by her mountains.

*This is so true and so obvious that today she has to pretend to be doing it, though in reality she is betraying herself to her own worst enemy.