

history of America which they do not know. It would be absurd effrontery to pretend that I can tell Americans what they do not know. For them, whatever interest this book may possess must depend upon the value of a foreigner's interpretation of the facts. I know that I should be extraordinarily interested in an American's view of the story of England since the Separation; and I can only hope that some degree of such interest may attach to these pages in American eyes.

It will be obvious to Americans that in some respects my view of their history is individual. For instance, I give Andrew Jackson both a greater place in the development of American democracy and a higher meed of personal praise than do most modern American historians and writers whom I have read. I give my judgment for what it is worth. In my view, the victory of Jackson over the Whigs was the turning-point of American history and finally decided that the United States should be a democracy and not a parliamentary oligarchy. And I am further of opinion that, both as soldier and ruler, "Old Hickory" was a hero of whom any nation might well be proud.

I am afraid that some offence may be given by my portrait of Charles Sumner. I cannot help it. I do not think that between his admirers and myself there is any real difference as to the kind of man he was. It is a kind that some people revere. It is a kind that I detest--absolutely leprous scoundrels excepted--more than I can bring myself to detest any other of God's creatures.

CECIL CHESTERTON.

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE, May 1st, 1918.

A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

## **CHAPTER I - THE ENGLISH COLONIES**

In the year of Our Lord 1492, thirty-nine years after the taking of Constantinople by the Turks and eighteen years after the establishment of Caxton's printing press, one Christopher Columbus, an Italian sailor, set sail from Spain with the laudable object of converting the Khan of Tartary to the Christian Faith, and on his way discovered the continent of America. The islands on which Columbus first landed and the adjacent stretch of mainland from Mexico to Patagonia which the Spaniards who followed him colonized lay outside the territory which is now

known as the United States. Nevertheless the instinct of the American democracy has always looked back to him as a sort of ancestor, and popular American tradition conceives of him as in some shadowy fashion a founder. And that instinct and tradition, like most such national instincts and traditions, is sound.

In the epoch which most of us can remember pretty vividly--for it came to an abrupt end less than five years ago--when people were anxious to prove that everything important in human history had been done by "Teutons," there was a great effort to show that Columbus was not really the first European discoverer of America; that that honour belonged properly to certain Scandinavian sea-captains who at some time in the tenth or eleventh centuries paid a presumably piratical visit to the coast of Greenland. It may be so, but the incident is quite irrelevant. That one set of barbarians from the fjords of Norway came in their wanderings in contact with another set of barbarians living in the frozen lands north of Labrador is a fact, if it be a fact, of little or no historical import. The Vikings had no more to teach the Esquimaux than had the Esquimaux to teach the Vikings. Both were at that time outside the real civilization of Europe.

Columbus, on the other hand, came from the very centre of European civilization and that at a time when that civilization was approaching the summit of one of its constantly recurrent periods of youth and renewal. In the North, indeed, what strikes the eye in the fifteenth century is rather the ugliness of a decaying order--the tortures, the panic of persecution, the morbid obsession of the danse macabre--things which many think of as Mediæval, but which belong really only to the Middle Ages when old and near to death. But all the South was already full of the new youth of the Renaissance. Boccaccio had lived, Leonardo was at the height of his glory. In the fields of Touraine was already playing with his fellows the boy that was to be Rabelais.

Such adventures as that of Columbus, despite his pious intentions with regard to the Khan of Tartary, were a living part of the Renaissance and were full of its spirit, and it is from the Renaissance that American civilization dates. It is an important point to remember about America, and especially about the English colonies which were to become the United States, that they have had no memory of the Middle Ages. They had and have, on the other hand, a real, formative memory of Pagan antiquity, for the age in which the oldest of them were born was full of enthusiasm for that memory, while it thought, as most Americans still think, of the Middle Ages as a mere feudal barbarism.

Youth and adventurousness were not the only notes of the Renaissance, nor the only ones which we shall see affecting the history of America. Another note was pride, and with that pride in its reaction against the old Christian civilization

went a certain un-Christian scorn of poverty and still more of the ugliness and ignorance which go with poverty; and there reappeared--to an extent at least, and naturally most of all where the old religion had been completely lost--that naked Pagan repugnance which almost refused to recognize a human soul in the barbarian. It is notable that in these new lands which the Renaissance had thrown open to European men there at once reappears that institution which had once been fundamental to Europe and which the Faith had slowly and with difficulty undermined and dissolved--Slavery.

The English colonies in America owe their first origin partly to the English instinct for wandering and especially for wandering on the sea, which naturally seized on the adventurous element in the Renaissance as that most congenial to the national temper, and partly to the secular antagonism between England and Spain. Spain, whose sovereign then ruled Portugal and therefore the Portuguese as well as Spanish colonies, claimed the whole of the New World as part of her dominions, and her practical authority extended unchallenged from Florida to Cape Horn. It would have been hopeless for England to have attempted seriously to challenge that authority where it existed in view of the relative strength at that time of the two kingdoms; and in general the English seamen confined themselves to hampering and annoying the Spanish commerce by acts of privateering which the Spaniards naturally designated as piracy. But to the bold and inventive mind of the great Raleigh there occurred another conception. Spain, though she claimed the whole American continent, had not in fact made herself mistress of all its habitable parts. North of the rich lands which supplied gold and silver to the Spanish exchequer, but still well within the temperate zone of climate, lay great tracts bordering the Atlantic where no Spanish soldier or ruler had ever set his foot. To found an English colony in the region would not be an impossible task like the attempt to seize any part of the Spanish empire, yet it would be a practical challenge to the Spanish claim. Raleigh accordingly projected, and others, entering into his plans, successfully planted, an English settlement on the Atlantic seaboard to the south of Chesapeake Bay which, in honour of the Queen, was named "Virginia."

In the subsequent history of the English colonies which became American States we often find a curious and recurrent reflection of their origin. Virginia was the first of those colonies to come into existence, and we shall see her both as a colony and as a State long retaining a sort of primacy amongst them. She also retained, in the incidents of her history and in the characters of many of her great men, a colour which seems partly Elizabethan. Her Jefferson, with his omnivorous culture, his love of music and the arts, his proficiency at the same time in sports and bodily exercises, suggests something of the graceful versatility of men like Essex and Raleigh, and we shall see her in her last agony produce a

soldier about whose high chivalry and heroic and adventurous failure there clings a light of romance that does not seem to belong to the modern world.

If the external quarrels of England were the immediate cause of the foundation of Virginia, the two colonies which next make their appearance owe their origin to her internal divisions. James I. and his son Charles I., though by conviction much more genuine Protestants than Elizabeth, were politically more disposed to treat the Catholics with leniency. The paradox is not, perhaps, difficult to explain. Being more genuinely Protestant they were more interested in the internecine quarrels of Protestants, and their enemies in those internecine quarrels, the Puritans, now become a formidable party, were naturally the fiercest enemies of the old religion. This fact probably led the two first Stuarts to look upon that religion with more indulgence. They dared not openly tolerate the Catholics, but they were not unwilling to show them such favour as they could afford to give. Therefore when a Catholic noble, Lord Baltimore, proposed to found a new plantation in America where his co-religionists could practise their faith in peace and security, the Stuart kings were willing enough to grant his request. James approved the project, his son confirmed it, and, under a Royal Charter from King Charles I., Lord Baltimore established his Catholic colony, which he called "Maryland." The early history of this colony is interesting because it affords probably the first example of full religious liberty. It would doubtless have been suicidal for the Catholics, situated as they were, to attempt anything like persecution, but Baltimore and the Catholics of Maryland for many generations deserve none the less honour for the consistency with which they pursued their tolerant policy. So long as the Catholics remained in control all sects were not only tolerated but placed on a footing of complete equality before the law, and as a fact both the Nonconformist persecuted in Virginia and the Episcopalian persecuted in New England frequently found refuge and peace in Catholic Maryland. The English Revolution of 1689 produced a change. The new English Government was pledged against the toleration of a Catholicism anywhere. The representative of the Baltimore family was deposed from the Governorship and the control transferred to the Protestants, who at once repealed the edicts of toleration and forbade the practice of the Catholic religion. They did not, however, succeed in extirpating it, and to this day many of the old Maryland families are Catholic, as are also a considerable proportion of the Negroes. It may further be noted that, though the experiment in religious equality was suppressed by violence, the idea seems never to have been effaced, and Maryland was one of the first colonies to accompany its demand for freedom with a declaration in favour of universal toleration.

At about the same time that the persecuted Catholics found a refuge in Maryland, a similar refuge was sought by the persecuted Puritans. A number of these, who

had found a temporary home in Holland, sailed thence for America in the celebrated Mayflower and colonized New England on the Atlantic coast far to the north of the plantations of Raleigh and Baltimore. From this root sprang the colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont and Rhode Island, and later the States of New Hampshire and Maine. It would be putting it with ironical mildness to say that the Pilgrim Fathers did not imitate the tolerant example of the Catholic refugees. Religious persecution had indeed been practised by all parties in the quarrels of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; but for much of the early legislation of the Puritan colonies one can find no parallel in the history of European men. Calvinism, that strange fierce creed which Wesley so correctly described as one that gave God the exact functions and attributes of the devil, produced even in Europe a sufficiency of madness and horror; but here was Calvinism cut off from its European roots and from the reaction and influence of Christian civilization. Its records read like those of a madhouse where religious maniacs have broken loose and locked up their keepers. We hear of men stoned to death for kissing their wives on the Sabbath, of lovers pilloried or flogged at the cart's tail for kissing each other at all without licence from the deacons, the whole culminating in a mad panic of wholesale demonism and witchburning so vividly described in one of the most brilliant of Mrs. Gaskell's stories, "Lois the Witch." Of course, in time the fanaticism of the first New England settlers cooled into something like sanity. But a strong Puritan tradition remained and played a great part in American history. Indeed, if Lee, the Virginian, has about him something of the Cavalier, it is still more curious to note that nineteenth-century New England, with its atmosphere of quiet scholars and cultured tea parties, suddenly flung forth in John Brown a figure whose combination of soldierly skill with maniac fanaticism, of a martyr's fortitude with a murderer's cruelty, seems to have walked straight out of the seventeenth century and finds its nearest parallel in some of the warriors of the Covenant.

The colonies so far enumerated owe their foundation solely to English enterprise and energy; but in the latter half of the seventeenth century foreign war brought to England a batch of colonies ready made. At the mouth of the Hudson River, between Maryland and the New England colonies, lay the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam. The first colonists who had established themselves there had been Swedes, but from Sweden its sovereignty had passed to Holland, and the issue of the Dutch wars gave it to the English, by whom it was re-christened New York in honour of the King's brother, afterwards James II. It would perhaps be straining the suggestion already made of the persistent influences of origins to see in the varied racial and national beginnings of New York a presage of that cosmopolitan quality which still marks the greatest of American cities, making much of it a patchwork of races and languages, and giving to the electric stir of Broadway an air which suggests a Continental rather than an English city, but it

is more plausible to note that New York had no original link with the Puritanism of New England and of the North generally, and that in fact we shall find the premier city continually isolated from the North, following a tradition and a policy of its own.

With New Amsterdam was also ceded the small Dutch plantation of Delaware, which lay between Maryland and the Atlantic, while England at the same time established her claim to the disputed territory between the two which became the colony of New Jersey.

Shortly after the cession of New Amsterdam William Penn obtained from Charles II. a charter for the establishment of a colony to the north of Maryland, between that settlement and the newly acquired territories of New Jersey and New York. This plantation was designed especially as a refuge for the religious sect to which Penn belonged, the Quakers, who had been persecuted by all religious parties and especially savagely by the Puritan colonists of New England. Penn, the most remarkable man that ever professed the strange doctrines of that sect, was a favourite with the King, who had a keen eye for character, and as the son of a distinguished admiral he had a sort of hereditary claim upon the gratitude of the Crown. He easily carried his point with Charles, and himself supervised the foundations of the new commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Two surveyors were sent out by royal authority to fix the boundary between Penn's concession and the existing colony of Maryland--Mr. Mason and Mr. Dixon by name. However elated these two gentlemen may have been by their appointment to so responsible an office, they probably little thought that their names would be immortalized. Yet so it was to be. For the line they drew became the famous "Mason-Dixon" line, and was to be in after years the frontier between the Slave States and the Free.

In all that he did in the New World Penn showed himself not only a great but a most just and wise man. He imitated, with happier issue, the liberality of Baltimore in the matter of religious freedom, and to this day the Catholics of Philadelphia boast of possessing the only Church in the United States in which Mass has been said continuously since the seventeenth century. But it is in his dealings with the natives that Penn's humanity and honour stand out most conspicuously. None of the other founders of English colonies had ever treated the Indians except as vermin to be exterminated as quickly as possible. Penn treated them as free contracting parties with full human rights. He bought of them fairly the land he needed, and strictly observed every article of the pact that he made with them. Anyone visiting to-day the city which he founded will find in its centre a little strip of green, still unbuilt upon, where, in theory, any passing Indians are at liberty to pitch their camp--a monument and one of the clauses of Penn's celebrated treaty.

In the same reign the settlement of the lands lying to the south of Virginia had begun, under the charter granted by Charles II. to the Hyde family, and the new plantations were called after the sovereign "Carolina." But their importance dates from the next century, when they received the main stream of a new tide of immigration due to political and economic causes. England, having planted a Protestant Anglo-Scottish colony in North-East Ireland, proceeded to ruin its own creation by a long series of commercial laws directed to the protection of English manufacturers against the competition of the colonists. Under the pressure of this tyranny a great number of these colonists, largely Scotch by original nationality and Presbyterian by religion, left Ulster for America. They poured into the Carolinas, North and South, as well as into Pennsylvania and Virginia, and overflowed into a new colony which was established further west and named Georgia. It is important to note this element in the colonization of the Southern States, because it is too often loosely suggested that the later division of North and South corresponded to the division of Cavalier and Puritan. It is not so. Virginia and Maryland may be called Cavalier in their origin, but in the Carolinas and Georgia there appears a Puritan tradition, not indeed as fanatical as that of New England, but almost as persistent. Moreover this Scotch-Irish stock, whose fathers, it may be supposed, left Ireland in no very good temper with the rulers of Great Britain, afterwards supplied the most military and the most determined element in Washington's armies, and gave to the Republic some of its most striking historical personalities: Patrick Henry and John Caldwell Calhoun, Jackson, the great President, and his namesake the brilliant soldier of the Confederacy.

The English colonies now formed a solid block extending from the coasts of Maine--into which northernmost region the New England colonies had overflown--to the borders of Florida. Florida was still a Spanish possession, but Spain had ceased to be formidable as a rival or enemy of England. By the persistence of a century in arms and diplomacy, the French had worn down the Spanish power, and France was now easily the strongest nation in Europe. France also had a foothold, or rather two footholds, in North America. One of her colonies, Louisiana, lay beyond Florida at the mouth of the Mississippi; the other, Canada, to the north of the Maine, at the mouth of the St. Lawrence. It was the aim of French colonial ambition to extend both colonies inland into the unmapped heart of the American continent until they should meet. This would necessarily have had the effect of hemming in the English settlements on the Atlantic seaboard and preventing their Western expansion. Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, therefore, the rivalry grew more and more acute, and even when France and England were at peace the French and English in America were almost constantly at war. Their conflict was largely carried on under cover of

alliances with the warring Indian tribes, whose feuds kept the region of the Great Lakes in a continual turmoil. The outbreak of the Seven Years' War and the intervention of England as an ally of Prussia put an end to the necessity for such pretexts, and a regular military campaign opened upon which was staked the destiny of North America.

It is not necessary for the purposes of this book to follow that campaign in detail. The issue was necessarily fought out in Canada, for Louisiana lay remote from the English colonies and was separated from them by the neutral territory of the Spanish Empire. England had throughout the war the advantage of superiority at sea, which enabled her to supply and reinforce her armies, while the French forces were practically cut off from Europe. The French, on the other hand, had at the beginning the advantage of superior numbers, at least so far as regular troops were concerned, while for defensive purposes they possessed an excellent chain of very strong fortresses carefully prepared before the war. After the earlier operations, which cleared the French invaders out of the English colonies, the gradual reduction of these strongholds practically forms the essence of the campaign undertaken by a succession of English generals under the political direction of the elder Pitt. That campaign was virtually brought to a close by the brilliant exploit of James Wolfe in 1759--the taking of Quebec. By the Treaty of Paris in 1763 Canada was ceded to England. Meanwhile Louisiana had been transferred to Spain in 1762 as part of the price of a Spanish alliance, and France ceased to be a rival to England on the American continent.

During the French war the excellent professional army which England was able to maintain in the field was supported by levies raised from the English colonies, which did good service in many engagements. Among the officers commanding these levies one especially had attracted, by his courage and skill, and notably by the part he bore in the clearing of Pennsylvania, the notice of his superiors--George Washington of Virginia.

England was now in a position to develop in peace the empire which her sword had defended with such splendid success and glory. Before we consider the causes which so suddenly shattered that empire, it is necessary to take a brief survey of its geography and of its economic conditions.

The colonies, as we have seen, were spread along the Atlantic seaboard to an extent of well over a thousand miles, covering nearly twenty degrees of latitude. The variations of climate were naturally great, and involved marked differentiations in the character and products of labour. The prosperity of the Southern colonies depended mainly upon two great staple industries. Raleigh, in the course of his voyages, had learned from the Indians the use of the tobacco



plant and had introduced that admirable discovery into Europe. As Europe learned (in spite of the protests of James I.) to prize the glorious indulgence now offered to it, the demand for tobacco grew, and its supply became the principal business of the colonies of Virginia and Maryland. Further to the south a yet more important and profitable industry was established. The climate of the Carolinas and of Georgia and of the undeveloped country west of these colonies, a climate at once warm and humid, was found to be exactly suited to the cultivation of the cotton plant. This proved the more important when the discoveries of Watt and Arkwright gave Lancashire the start of all the world in the manipulation of the cotton fabric. From that moment begins the triumphant progress of "King Cotton," which was long to outlast the political connection between the Carolinas and Lancashire, and was to give in the political balance of America peculiar importance to the "Cotton States."

But at the time now under consideration these cotton-growing territories were still under the British Crown, and were subject to the Navigation Laws upon which England then mainly relied for the purpose of making her colonies a source of profit to her. The main effect of these was to forbid the colonies to trade with any neighbour save the mother country. This condition, to which the colonists seem to have offered no opposition, gave to the British manufacturers the immense advantage of an unrestricted supply of raw material to which no foreigner had access. It is among the curious ironies of history that the prosperity of Lancashire, which was afterwards to be identified with Free Trade, was originally founded upon this very drastic and successful form of Protection.

The more northerly colonies had no such natural advantages. The bulk of the population lived by ordinary farming, grew wheat and the hard cereals and raised cattle. But during the eighteenth century England herself was still an exporting country as regards these commodities, and with other nations the colonists were forbidden to trade. The Northern colonies had, therefore, no considerable export commerce, but on the seaboard they gradually built up a considerable trade as carriers, and Boston and New York merchant captains began to have a name on the Atlantic for skill and enterprise. Much of the transoceanic trade passed into their hands, and especially one most profitable if not very honourable trade of which, by the Treaty of Utrecht, England had obtained a virtual monopoly--the trade in Negro slaves.

The pioneer of this traffic had been Sir John Hawkins, one of the boldest of the great Elizabethan sailors. He seems to have been the first of the merchant adventurers to realize that it might prove profitable to kidnap Negroes from the West Coast of Africa and sell them into slavery in the American colonies. The cultivation of cotton and tobacco in the Southern plantations, as of sugar in the

West Indies, offered a considerable demand for labour of a type suitable to the Negro. The attempt to compel the native Indians to such labour had failed; the Negro proved more tractable. By the time with which we are dealing the whole industry of the Southern colonies already rested upon servile coloured labour.

In the Northern colonies--that is, those north of Maryland--the Negro slave existed, but only casually, and, as it were, as a sort of accident. Slavery was legal in all the colonies--even in Pennsylvania, whose great founder had been almost alone in that age in disapproving of it. As for the New England Puritans, they had from the first been quite enthusiastic about the traffic, in which indeed they were deeply interested as middle-men; and Calvinist ministers of the purest orthodoxy held services of thanksgiving to God for cargoes of poor barbarians rescued from the darkness of heathendom and brought (though forcibly) into the gospel light. But though the Northerners had no more scruple about Slavery than the Southerners, they had far less practical use for it. The Negro was of no value for the sort of labour in which the New Englanders engaged; he died of it in the cold climate. Negro slaves there were in all the Northern States, but mostly employed as domestic servants or in casual occupations. They were a luxury, not a necessity.

A final word must be said about the form of government under which the colonists lived. In all the colonies, though there were, of course, variations of detail, it was substantially the same. It was founded in every case upon Royal Charters granted at some time or other to the planters by the English king. In every case there was a Governor, who was assisted by some sort of elective assembly. The Governor was the representative of the King and was nominated by him. The legislature was in some form or other elected by the free citizens. The mode of election and the franchise varied from colony to colony--Massachusetts at one time based hers upon pew rents--but it was generally in harmony with the feeling and traditions of the colonists. It was seldom that any friction occurred between the King's representative and the burgesses, as they were generally called. While the relations between the colonies and the mother country remained tranquil the Governor had every motive for pursuing a conciliatory policy. His personal comfort depended upon his being popular in the only society which he could frequent. His repute with the Home Government, if he valued it, was equally served by the tranquillity and contentment of the dominion he ruled.

In fact, the American colonists, during the eighteenth century, enjoyed what a simple society left to itself almost always enjoys, under whatever forms--the substance of democracy. That fact must be emphasized, because without a recognition of it the flaming response which met the first proclamation of theoretic democracy would be unintelligible. It is explicable only when we

remember that to the unspoiled conscience of man as man democracy will ever be the most self-evident of truths. It is the complexity of our civilization that blinds us to its self-evidence, teaching us to acquiesce in irrational privilege as inevitable, and at last to see nothing strange in being ruled by a class, whether of nobles or of mere parliamentarians. But the man who looks at the world with the terrible eyes of his first innocence can never see an unequal law as anything but an iniquity, or government divorced from the general will as anything but usurpation.