VOLUME 13 NUMBER 4, JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010 $5.50

Outlining Sanity
GILBERT MAGAZINE

When we have given up valuing life for every other reason, we can still value it, like the glass stick, as a curiosity.
—G.K.CHESTERTON





THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT

The Best of Thomas Howard

Thomas Howard was a renowned Professor of English and Literature for over 30 years. He is a popular author of numerous books, and a regular contributor to various literary & spiritual journals.

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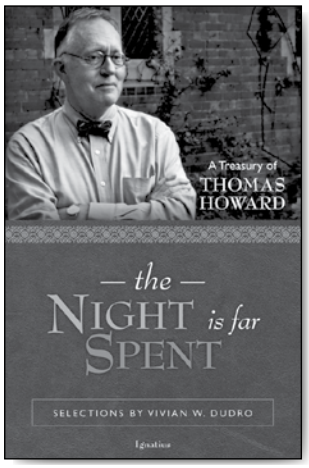
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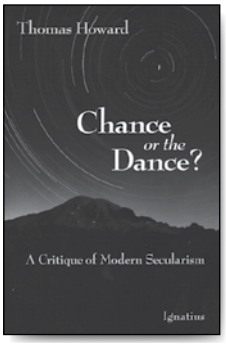
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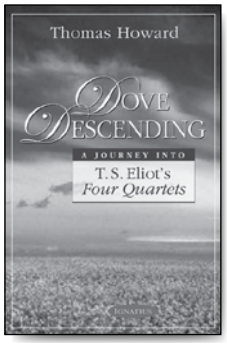
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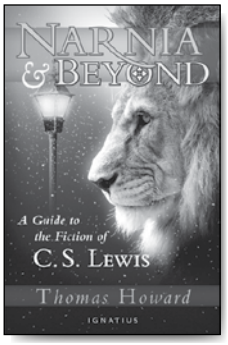
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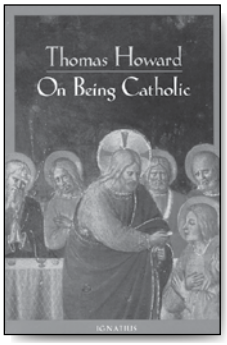


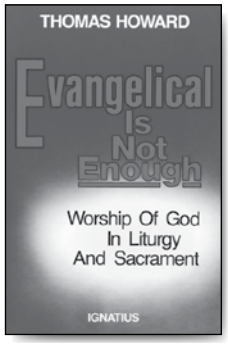
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TREMENDOUS TRIFLES

by Therese Warmus

The UK's *Catholic Herald* has printed an interview of Aidan Mackey, "The Man Who Was GKC's Champion"—our only objection to the title being that the revered Mr. Mackey, now 87 and self-reportedly "crumbling by the minute," is still very much with us. In it, Jack Carrigan runs the gamet of Aidan's eventful life and his deep love of G.K. Chesterton, the man and his writings; from the modest house of his youth in Manchester, to a stint during the war as an RAF radio operator, to hitchhiking to the Chesterton home in Beaconsfield, where "I did not dare to ring the bell." "I began a Distributist Association in Manchester in 1948, to spread his ideas on self-sufficiency, social justice and the rights of families," Mackey explained. See the interview online at http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/features/f0000512.shtml

The revolution continues: Jim O'Neill, writing for the *Canada Free Press* online, had this to say: "The first deep rumblings—as if from a distant cannonade—came last November, with conservative victories in Virginia and New Jersey. Now, Scott Brown's 'Massachusetts Miracle' has trumpeted a clear blast that has shaken America awake—finally, and irrevocably...G. K. Chesterton once said, 'the need here is a need of complete freedom for restoration, as well as revolution.' Restoration and revolution—America has need for both."

The Saints and Sleuths series of dramatic readings, performances, and commentaries takes place each year at Seton Hall University, co-sponsored in part by the Celtic Theatre Company and the G.K. Chesterton Institute for Faith and Culture. This year's celebration included three fictional priests and three real priests: Fathers Ian Boyd, Joseph Reilly, and Douglas Milewski. The programs, held the last weekend in January and the first weekend in February, feature dramatic readings followed by conversations that begin with scholarly commentary and end with refreshments on stage. For more information, contact the Center for Catholic Studies, danute.nourse@shu.edu, or call (973) 275-2525.

The Guardian's Stuart Walton posits Chesterton as Nietzche as an English gentleman in his review of *What's Wrong With The World* on its one-hundredth anniversary: "The cumulative impact of the book is a little like reading a supremely elegant, aphoristic Nietzsche," he writes, "but one domesticated for the English gentleman's study." Walton finds much in the section on women "would take a lot of swallowing today," and observes that modern man, sinking in the ship of his obsessions and "half-realized ideals," has pinned his hopes on an unknowable future: "Has the Enlightenment ideal of continual social progress been a reality, or has it all been a piece of western myth-making?"—and finds Chesterton's Edwardian defense of public schools a bit "flared-nostrilled." "But for its sober humanism, as much as its infuriating patrician conservatism," Stuart Walton concludes, "it deserves to be read." We think he's starting to get it.

100 YEARS AGO Chesterton's third novel, *The Ball and the Cross*, was published. It was called "a philosophic romance," "a theological farce," "another product of Mr. Chesterton's prodigal imagination," and "a splendid mixture of Mr. Chesterton's two enthusiasms, fighting and religion." While the *Times* reviewer scratched his head and the *Punch* reviewer wished for more "pure romance, devoid of symbolism," James Douglas of *The Star* pulled out all the stops in recommending it as "the most obstreperous, stupendous, boisterous, exuberant, grotesque, fantastical, flamboyant, iridescent, allegorical, metaphysical, ironical, whimsical, nonsensical hotch-potch of symbolism you are likely to come across in a year of Sundays."

In her non-fiction survey of detective literature, *Talking About Detective Fiction*, author P.D. James credits none other than G.K. Chesterton with blazing the trail for her works with his Father Brown series. Michael W. Higgins in an online *Telegraph-Journal* review writes: "G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown stories have special appeal for her—quite independent of their whimsical delight in paradox. It is an appeal which she identifies with Chesterton's observation that 'the only thrill, even of a common thriller, is concerned somehow with the conscience and the will.' She writes apropos this clever insight that 'those words have been part of my credo as a writer. They may not be framed and on my desk but they are never out of my mind.'"

Have a Trifle? Send it to editor@gilbertmagazine.com

Parting Trifle: Dale Ahlquist writes: "We are always pleased when a new edition of a Chesterton book is published, but sometimes we have to scratch our heads at how badly publishers miss the point. Hesperus Press in Chesterton's own London has just released a handsome edition of *Tremendous Trifles*...except they've given it the wrong title. They've added a preposition for no reason, calling it *On Tremendous Trifles*. They give the wrong dates for the original columns from the *Daily News*, and on the jacket they list Chesterton as a columnist for *The London International News* (instead of the *Illustrated London News*). But these are truly trifles. The really tremendous error comes in the introduction by one Ben Schott: 'There are kernels of profundity within *On Tremendous Trifles*—alongside elegantly turned logic and phrases. Yet the collection might best be appreciated now as a period piece—one that casts light on the texture of Edwardian Britain,' and so on. Apparently they want to warn their readers not to get too close to this writer. View from a safe distance."

LUNACY & LETTERS

from Gilbert Magazine *Readers*

My name is Santo. My name is not Chad.

Santo is Italian. Chad is English.

Santo means Holy. Chad means Warrior.

Santo is from Sanctus. Chad is from Chadwick.

To call me Chad causes severe heart arrhythmia, blurred vision, and trembling.

Santo Aramini
Parish, New York

More fallout from our mailing mix-up. Sorry, Santo. And our apologies to Chad, whoever he is. —Ed.

✸ ✸ ✸

Hurrah for Aidan Mackey, who at last finds a place in your regular features. I've enjoyed his pithy, self-deprecating humor for years on your "Letters" page.

Eldon Zeller
East Grand Forks, Minnesota

✸ ✸ ✸

I was pleasantly surprised to see the inclusion of Garth Snider's article "Franchising as a Distributist Ideal" in your December 2009 issue. I have pondered the idea myself, but had come to a very different conclusion.

While franchising does involve making business smaller, more local, and creating franchise "owners," it is far from the ideals of Distributism. The company only licenses the right to market and sell their product; the franchise "owner" has no ownership of the brand, the intellectual property, or the business property. He cannot innovate new products and sell them without approval from the corporation, and must rigorously follow guidelines of how to price or how to advertise the brand. If the corporation collapses, cancels its franchising program, or simply wishes to do otherwise, it can terminate the franchise owner's right to sell their product, leaving him out in the cold as much as a fired employee. Even worse, the franchisee is expected



to provide proof of economic stability and a fee (usually in the form of a lump sum of as much as six figures). The franchise model is not unlike that of a salesman on commission; the franchise owner is expected to be an investor of both his labor and his money for a company, brand, products, and land he does not and cannot own.

Put another way, the franchise owner is a colonist, and franchising is a form of imperial capitalism–a beastly chimera of two ideas about which GKC wrote volumes.

Paul Nowak
Greenville, Michigan

✸ ✸ ✸

I'm really enjoying the December issue of *Gilbert Magazine*, especially the interview with Dean. (Many of his replies about writing reminded me so much of what Flannery O'Connor said).

Chesterton for Today

✸ The human race is always trying this dodge of making everything entirely easy; but the difficulty which it shifts off one thing it shifts on to another. ("The Orthodox Barber," *Tremendous Trifles*)

✸ America is a conflict between two incompatible and intensely antagonistic things: the faith of republican citizenship, and the fact of industrial capitalism. All the ideals, even all the ideal figures, of pure democracy have been inherited from a simpler past, closer to the earth and the sky. (*English Life*, March 1924)

✸ Men talk of the noise and unrest of our age; but I think that all that age is really very sleepy; all the wheels and the traffic send one to sleep. ("Reading the Riddle," *The Common Man*)

✸ At this moment modern men are monstrously over-stimulated, and are therefore stale. News and novels and films and fashionable stunts are perpetually playing on their emotions. And where they still have any emotions, they have no emotions remembered in tranquility, which is the definition of poetry, because they have no tranquility. (*New York American*, Aug. 20, 1935)

✸ Advertisement is aggression; it is in its nature an attack upon the eyes and ears, the senses and the soul. (*G.K.'s Weekly*, Aug. 7, 1926)

✸ The only excuse of literature is to make things new; and the chief misfortune of journalism is that it has to make them old. ("The Root of Reality," *Irish Impressions*)

✸ It is a very queer feature of current poetry that there is hardly anywhere such a thing as a love poem. The poetry is about something that they call sex. (*Illustrated London News*, Aug. 19, 1933)

✸ There is no Materialist, that is, there are no people who act on practical and economic principles only...There are no men who have no idol; there are no men who have no god. They may have a wrong idol, or a wrong god. Idolatry, heresy, believing the wrong thing, that there is, if you like, but there are no men who do not believe or admire at all. ("The Citizen, the Gentleman, and the Savage," Lecture, March 30, 1905)



But one story really baffled me, even after reading it twice: the one by John Peterson about the man who evidently kills his wife and then is found, after his death, to have the "branding" on his chest. What am I missing?

Your "12 Days of Distributism" was very helpful. It's a concept that I've had trouble understanding, but your suggestions gave flesh to the ideas.

Lorraine V. Murray
Decatur, Georgia

✸ ✸ ✸

The review of Professor Rice's book about Notre Dame precipated thoughts that have rolled about in my mind. It finally comes up with the thought that the presidents of that college, as well as the presidents of other colleges in the Catholic or Jesuit tradition, have an envy of bishops.

Is it not curious that a simple priest [heirarchically simple] puts himself above a bishop? Talk about o'erweening pride! It was such blindness that almost cost Notre Dame its accreditation in the mid-1970s. So busy was the then-president of the college, running about joining "presitigious" secular boards [the abortion-promoting Rockefeller Foundation, and such] that he took his eye off the college ball and, *inter alia*, neglected the library.

The inadequacy of the library almost cost the college its accreditation–imagine you were a student and discovered your diploma to be worthless; that you had done better to have gone to South Bend Community College.

Interesting in the proceedings of the trial about the ND protesters is the discovery that the judge is married to a Notre Dame professor who supports abortion.

O tempora! O mores! (For those miseducated at Notre Dame, that is a quotation from Cicero, Roman statesman, etc., etc.)

Gabriel Austin
Los Alamos, New Mexico

✸ ✸ ✸

I am finally getting to read the December issue of *Gilbert Magazine*. My elder son, Buck (age 21), confiscated it and read every page before returning it to me. It took him a few weeks.

In the final comment in that issue's "Tremendous Trifles," we find clothing manufacturer Abercrombie & Fitch quoting Chesterton in their ad: "It is a shining and affirmative thing, as fierce as red..." Did you recognize where this quote is from?

It is from the essay "A Piece of Chalk" in *Tremendous Trifles*, which is posted on Chesterton.org. That "shining, fierce thing" is the color of *white*.

I can only assume that someone at Abercrombie's ad department has been secretly trolling around your Web site.

Del Teeter
Madison, Wisconsin

✸ ✸ ✸

Dorene and I went to Headington today to do some measuring at what will soon (not later than February 22nd) be our new home. There, awaiting me, were two issues of *Gilbert Magazine*, and in the December issue was my "Ballade of Practical Distributism"—beautifully set out! Your footnote, howcomesomever, has the date utterly devoid of accuracy; the verse was written for the issue of *The Defendant* for October 1953.

As an indication of the revival of interest in G.K.C.: just compare that tiny journal with the *Gilbert Magazine* of the present day—but I make no apology, for my means were excruciatingly limited, and it was some kind of re-start.

Aidan Mackey
Headington, Oxford, UK

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EDITORIAL

The Words of Politics, The Politics of Words

> Mild constitutionalists in our own country often discuss the possibility of a method of protecting the minority. If they will find any possible method of protecting the majority, they will have found something practically unknown in the modern world. The majority is always at a disadvantage. ("The Shadow of the Problem," *The New Jerusalem*)

As this issue goes to press, and Americans watch in disbelief as their "representative" government attempts to cram an unpopular and unwanted health care bill down their throats, our neighbors to north watch with greater shock as their government seems bent on establishing what was once known as the sin of sodomy as a new universally protected right. A perversion of passion has led to a perversion of power. Along the way it has made use of a perversion of language.

It is not merely that good old words like "gay" have been stolen to further an agenda, but twisted new words like "homophobia" have been summoned to villainize the normal. Humanity throughout all cultures and all of history has regarded the love between a man and a woman as normal, the basis for healthy romance, the spark that creates a family. It has been so obvious, so basic, even so biological, that it has not ever have had to be defended. This same normal mentality has also typically regarded homosexual desires not merely with disapproval, but with natural revulsion, as something perverse and antithetical to human dignity, or, as the Catholic Church has simply stated: "disordered."

But now this normal mentality has officially been labeled "homophobic," so that what had been natural is now suddenly unnatural, and vice versa. Anyone caught keeping the previously normal mentality is now charged with "heterosexism." A new document, published by the Province of Quebec this past December, lays out the government's "strategic guidelines for the fight against homophobia." It proposes to put the full power of the state behind protecting the rights of "victims of homophobia." Don't like it? Potentially, even to speak out against this policy is a criminal offense.

In making its case for such Stalinesque statutes, the document states: "Homophobic attitudes and behavior may even lead, in some cases, to suicide." It doesn't say whose. But we will say that there is very genuine threat of self-destruction at work here. We are systematically destroying our own society.

Perhaps the greatest abuse of the language in the Quebec document comes at the outset, with the use of the word "democracy." That noble word, of course, is as badly misused by politicians in this country as by their Canadian counterparts, and so it would be useful to be reminded what the word means. And who better to remind us than the greatest defender of democracy in the last century: G.K. Chesterton.

Perhaps the greatest abuse of the language in the Quebec document comes at the outset, with the use of the word "democracy." That noble word, of course, is as badly misused by politicians in this country as by their Canadian counterparts.

Democracy, quite simply, quite literally, is the rule of the people. It is politicians who impede democracy.

Size is a problem: "Democracy is never quite democratic except when it is quite direct; and it is never direct except when it is quite small." Chesterton says that all centralized systems mean the rule of the few (which is as true of commerce as it is of government). Since large countries cannot really be purely democratic, they can at least practice the principal of subsidiarity and not interfere with the right of people to rule themselves in the matters closest to home, or, more importantly, in the home itself. For the government to interfere with marriage, an institution older than itself, is a blind and blundering misuse of power.

In electing politicians to represent us, we are supposed to be exercising our rights, not giving up our rights. When our elected government turns around and takes away these rights, we may at least begin by un-electing them. But we also need to see the size of government reduced when its legitimate branches have been overrun by bureaucratic undergrowth. Chesterton is not a libertarian. He believes that while government is an ugly necessity, we are not supposed to live in panic of any form of government.

While we need to reduce the size and reach of the State, which is out of control, we also need to change our attitudes about our responsibilities. We have abdicated our own authority by trusting the specialists and the experts. The experts, says Chesterton, are the exception. We don't need them to explain to us what us what is normal. "We live in an undemocratic age," he tells us, "when the great masses of men are assumed to be wrong." Chesterton says, "The case for democracy is that it is common-sense. It does not progress towards or tend to produce or ultimately evolve common-sense; it is common-sense."

> The trouble with democracy is not democracy. It is certain artificial anti-democratic things that have, in fact, thrust themselves into the modern world to thwart and destroy democracy.

The one great weakness of democracy, says Chesterton, is that it can lead to tyranny. We will certainly have a taste of that tyranny if we are forced to swallow state-controlled "health care" and homosexual "marriage." If we are not allowed even the privilege of debating about it, perhaps it is time to start fighting for it. As Chesterton says, "Thousands of men died to defend democracy, before it was established. And hardly one human being has really done a stroke of work to defend it after it was established."

STRAWS IN THE WIND

An Essay by G.K. Chesterton



The Glass Walking Stick

Practical politics are in this world continually coming to grief, for the truth is that practical politics are too practical for this world. This world is so incurably romantic that things never work out properly if you base them on the sound business principle. For instance, it is always assumed in modern social philosophy that ornaments, curiosities, *objets d'art*, etc., are things that people add to their lives when they have procured all that is solid and sensible. The actual fact is quite otherwise. The savage wears an *objets d'art* in his nose before he discovers that clothes are of any use at all. Man discovered that dress was a luxury before he discovered that dress was a necessity. It is not only true that luxuries are more noble than necessities; it really seems as if they were more necessary than necessities.

I see that the vicar of a very poor district has made an experiment of quite extraordinary interest. He suggested that the poor should bring out all the objects of interest that they had in their houses; and he undertook to see that they got the best possible price for them, if they cared to sell. There is a wonderful irony and significance about his offer. He asked the poor to produce expensive things; and they did. He demanded diamonds, so to speak, from the men who had no bread. He asked the starving what treasure was hidden in their houses. He knew human nature. The incredible fact fell out exactly in accordance with his demand. The people who could hardly keep the rags together on their backs brought out of their houses things which were not only genuinely worth study, but were genuinely worth money. They were all curiosities, numbers of them were expensive curiosities. Several of them had that unique quality which more than either use or beauty draws out money in torrents and maddens the hearts of millionaires.

One poor woman, for instance, had a patchwork quilt made out of fragments of the French and English uniforms at Waterloo. Words are absolutely inadequate to express the poetry of such a quilt as that; to express all that is involved in the colours of that strange reconciliation. The hope and hunger of the great Revolution, the legend of isolated France, the starry madness of the Man of Destiny, the nations of chivalry that he conquered, the nation of shopkeepers that he did not conquer, their long and dull defiance, the last agony of Europe at war with a man, the fall that was like the fall of Lucifer—all those things were on that poor old woman's quilt, and every night she drew over her poor old bones the heraldry of a thousand heroes. On her coverlet two terrible nations were at peace at last. That quilt ought to be strung up on to a great pole and carried in front of King Edward and President Loubet in every celebration of the Entente Cordiale.

That quilt is the Entente Cordiale. But a poor householder owned it and never thought of its value.

The other exhibits had, in one way or another, this same quaint and picturesque and unexpected character. One man had a walking-stick made of glass and filled with sweets. If there were children in the house, the preservation of that glass stick has something of the insane sublimity of a religion. Many had weapons of undoubted antiquity. Several had weapons with definite and ascertainable historical associations. A boot of the Duke of Marlborough was (I think) one of the exhibits. I do not know how this boot became detached from its fellow; but when I recall the clear intellect and fine financial genius of the Conqueror of Blenheim, together with that liberal disdain of the pedantries of personal dignity which also distinguished him—in short, when I reconstruct the whole moral character of Marlborough, I think it highly probable that he sold one of his boots for threepence, and hopped home. Another of the vicar's parishioners had an old picture of the Flood, so old that quite competent authorities described it literally as "priceless." I do not know how old this picture of the Flood really was (perhaps it was a water-colour sketch taken on the spot), but it is a mere matter of fact that the owner received for it a sum such as he had never seen in his life. Yet he had let the thing hang on his walls quite undisturbed probably through many periods of acute economic distress. Some of the exhibits were entirely wild and odd; but I am not sure that I did not like them as well as any. One was a stuffed lamb with an unnatural number of heads or legs or something, which had really been born on some country estate. Simple and uneducated people have no horror of physical monstrosities; just as educated people have no horror of moral monstrosities. But the broad characteristic of all the things



Our Mr. Chesterton

In the introduction to *The Glass Walking Stick*, Arthur Bryant, wrote: "I never met a more generous man, and I never saw a happier. I do not believe there is anyone who had the inestimable privilege of knowing Gilbert Keith Chesterton who would not say the same."

described was emphatically the fact that they were interesting things. And this is particularly a quality of them as things collected by the poor. The cultivated classes go in for what is beautiful; but the uncultivated for what is interesting. For example, the more refined people concern themselves with literature—that is, with beautiful statements. But simple people concern themselves with scandal—that is, with interesting statements. Interest often exists apart from beauty; and interest is immeasurably better and more important than beauty. I myself know a man who is beautiful and remarkably uninteresting. The distinction is one that affects religion and morals and the practical philosophy of living. Existence often ceases to be beautiful; but if we are men at all it never ceases to be interesting. This divine creation in the midst of which we live does commonly, in the words of the good books, combine amusement with instruction. But dark hours will come when the wisest man can hardly get instruction out of it; but a brave man can always get amusement out of it. When we have given up valuing life for every other reason, we can still value it, like the glass stick, as a curiosity. For the universe is like the glass stick in this, at any rate: it is unique.

But the important point is this, that the uneducated are, by their nature, the real conservers of the past; because they are the people who are really not interested in beauty, but interested in interest. The poor have this great advantage over the ordinary cultivated class, that the poor (like a few of the best of the very rich) are not affected by the fashions: they keep things because they are quaint or out of the current line of thought. They keep Old Masters because they are old, not because they have recently been "discovered." They preserve old fashions until the time when they shall become new fashions. For the man who is ten years behind his time is always ten years nearer to the return of that time. You go into the poor house in the vicar's poor parish and find a picture of the Flood which is really ancient. It is daily becoming darker and older and more remote from the modern world; and it is daily becoming more important. You go into the average house of the average cultivated gentleman in the same parish, and you find—what do you find? Not an unfashionable picture which grows more priceless as it grows older, but a fashionable picture (or rather a brown or green photogravure reproduction of a fashionable picture), a fashionable picture which does nothing of the kind, a fashionable picture which, whatever its technical merits or the temporary interests attaching to its artistic school, is actually growing more worthless every instant that it remains in existence. The people who own it are people who always want the best art that one can get for money at a given moment. And the best art that one can get at a given moment is always—the most fashionable art. They can never dare to be behind the times; that is, to be independent of the times. In such an educated household you will always find the brown print of Burne-Jones's "Golden Stairs," and the grey-green print of G.F. Watts's "Hope." You will not find the "priceless" picture of the Flood, except under the careless keeping of the very rich—or of the very poor.

Dark hours will come when the wisest man can hardly get instruction out of it; but a brave man can always get amusement out of it. When we have given up valuing life for every other reason, we can still value it, like the glass stick, as a curiosity. For the universe is like the glass stick in this, at any rate: it is unique.

It is the same with all the other examples which I have offered above. The upper middle-class family would not have preserved the glass walking-stick full of sweets. The family would have bought the walking-stick while the fashion was on; but the upper middle-class family would have eaten that walking-stick long before the fashion was over. The upper middle-class family would not have preserved with that perfect simplicity even so fine a thing as the patchwork of Waterloo. Ten to one they would have valued a cartridge-belt of the City Imperial Volunteers more than those rags red with the sacred blood of the last battle of Napoleon. The upper middle-class people would not have been content with keeping the boot of a dead Duke, being more happily engaged in licking the boots of a live one. The thing alive, the thing of the moment, must always be overpoweringly attractive to the fashionable class; and with the exception (as I have said) of some of the best and simplest and most patriotic of the aristocrats, it is heavily doubtful whether the sudden pillage of all the houses of the educated classes would reveal possessions strictly of the same interest as those revealed in that insane museum which the adventurous vicar set up. A sudden pillage of all those houses would probably reveal that what they considered their individual good taste was; in fact, the fashion of the whole of their class. The uncommon poets would be common to all of them. The uncommon bindings would be common to all of them. The uncommon panels and wallpapers would be common to all of them.

Hardly one of them would have the moral magnificence to have in their houses a thoroughly inappropriate thing—such, for instance, as a stick full of sweets. That is a treasure only found in the homes of the humble: but it is the inappropriate thing which is interesting forever. Nobody ever understood the romance of humble life so well as Dickens—its patience and its extravagance, its endurance of ancient evil, its love of fitful festivity, its disorderly and yet kindly methods, its uncomfortable love of comfort, its dark and almost maniacal respectability. Dickens felt all this in his very bones, and the very names of his books often express the enduring elements in the life of the poor. The poor all have Hard Times. The poor all have Great Expectations. But in no name did he more certainly strike the note of what makes the poor streets fascinating than in the three words, the "Old Curiosity Shop."

From *Illustrated London News,* December 16, 1905. An edited version of this essay is the title piece of the posthumous collection *The Glass Walking Stick.* (See page 41.)

SCHALL ON CHESTERTON

Timely Essays on Chesterton's Timeless Paradoxes



The Mind Poisoned with Paradoxes

By James V. Schall, S.J.

In 1914, J.M. Dent & Sons republished Chesterton's *The Defendant*, originally introduced in 1901. For this edition Chesterton was persuaded to write a new introduction, entitled, naturally, "In Defence of a New Edition." Chesterton's introduction begins with his wondering why anyone would republish these such essays. It seems the best reason to republish them would be that the earlier edition was completely forgotten, that new readers might look on the text as something never before seen.

Chesterton imagines that Shakespeare or Balzac moved to prayers would prefer not to be remembered. Why? They would be pleased with this very thought, that they were suddenly unknown to a new generation of readers. So good are they, that if they were forgotten they would be everlastingly re-discovered and read. After all, no one writes unless he hope that he will be read—even though no one knows, on writing anything, whether he will be read or not, or in what era. Many a book became much read only after the death of its author. Chesterton then asks why is it that we ourselves do not see the wonder of Shakespeare or Balzac? He states the principle: It is a monotonous memory which keeps us in the main from seeing things as splendid as they are.

If there is any phrase that better sums up Chesterton than any other, I think, it is this one, his admonition to us to see things as splendid as they are. We can sometimes, but not always, see this splendor in things on seeing them for the first time. But, and this is peculiar to Chesterton, we can see it, perhaps ever more clearly, by seeing things again in their original splendor. God delights, as Chesterton wrote in *Orthodoxy*, by doing and seeing things again and again, because of their wonder.

Chesterton, surprisingly, tells us that he is a bit concerned about the title of the book *The Defendant*, which is a series of short essays defending marvelous things like rash vows, skeletons, nonsense, ugly things, detective stories, baby-worship, and slang. Chesterton's worry is that the book's title is, properly speaking, inaccurate. A defendant refers to the law; a defendant is concerned primarily to defend himself; whereas Chesterton is concerned to defend the character of King John, or the domestic virtues of the prairie-dog—in short, everything but himself.

Someone, evidently C.F.G. Masterman in *The Speaker*, had attacked Chesterton's book. He said that Chesterton displayed a mind poisoned... by paradox. For those of us who love Chesterton, we are as eager as Socrates to drink this same poison. Chesterton is not annoyed by this accusation about his mind and does not intend to defend himself against it. Paradox is not his poison but his delight.

Masterman, whom he calls "my excellent friend," had also accused Chesterton of the vice of optimism. This finding of good in ordinary things, Chesterton's penchant, Masterman thought, prevented us from devoting our energy to reforming things. Chesterton confessed that the reason he wrote this new introduction was ethical, not literary; that is, it was necessary to defend what he thought true. Pessimism, evidently, should be the source of improvement, Chesterton argued, because if things were bad, people would want to change them. But it did not seem to work that way. The reason is, if you think that something is bad, as a pessimist does, you can

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have no desire to improve it because you do not, according to your theory, think it capable of improvement. To change bad things to good, or ugly things to beautiful, there must already be in them some germ of good to be loved, some fragment of beauty to be admired. This passage recalls Chesterton's remark, again in *Orthodoxy*, I think, that Rome did not first become great then men loved her. Men first loved her, therefore she became great.

What prevents progress? Chesterton's answer is properly metaphysical: [It] is the subtle scepticism which whispers in a million ears that things are not good enough to be worth improving. If the world is already good, we are some odd sort of revolutionaries to want to change it. But if it is evil, we must be conservatives. I presume he meant by this that to conserve what little good there is in an evil world, we cannot change much lest we are left only with evil.

Finally, Chesterton gives his ultimate reason for republishing such wonderful essays, even in 1914, such a symbolic year—the Guns of August, World War I, surely a time that ended two centuries of optimistic progressive theory. These essays, he thought, may or may not he considered serious literature. But they are ethically sincere. Why so? Because they seek to remind men that things must be loved first and improved afterwards.

This is the mysterious truth, isn't it? If I say I will not love you until you improve to be worthy of my love, the consequence is that I will never love you and you really have no reason to improve. In order to improve things, we must first love them. It is no wonder that we read in Scripture that God first loved us. Unless we do what God does, we will never understand what God is, or why he loves us. Unless someone first loves us, we will never know that we are loveable. But if someone has first loved us, we know that this love could not have been because we were already perfect. This is why God loves sinners, because He sees in them what is beautiful and what is good. We can reject God, no doubt, but in doing so, what we reject is our opportunity of seeing that the splendor of what already in us is beautiful and good.

THE FANTASTIC FICTION OF GILBERT CHESTERTON

BY MARTIN GARDNER

Foreword by John Peterson
Introduction

1. The Napoleon of Notting Hill
2. The Club of Queer Trades
3. The Man Who Was Thursday
4. The Ball and the Cross
5. The Innocence of Father Brown
6. Did Sherlock Holmes Meet Father Brown?
7. Chesterton's Manalive
8. Chesterton's Flying Inn
9. The Poet and the Lunatics
10. The Man Who Knew Too Much
11. The Trees of Pride and Other Tales
12. Tales of the Long Bow
13. The Return of Don Quixote
14. Four Faultless Felons
15. The Paradoxes of Mr. Pond

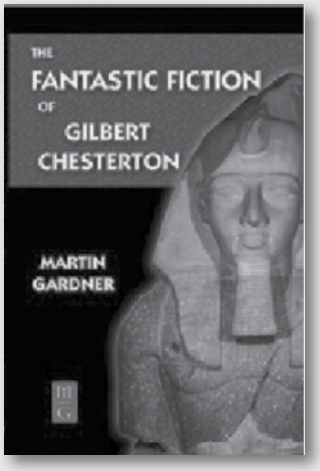
Afterword by Pasquale Accardo

"I read Martin Gardner's manuscript and really enjoyed doing so. It's quintessential Gardner, which means it is gracefully written, well-argued, extremely informative, quite convincing, already a classic. He certainly writes in an agreeable fashion. I knew from the first page I was reading an MG book. It is, of course, a collection of columns, chapters, essays, forewords, etc." —JOHN ROBERT COLOMBO

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The Road Was A Ribbon of Moonlight

Alfred Noyes 1880-1958

By Dale Ahlquist



When Alfred Noyes was an undergraduate at Oxford, he often spent his weekends in London. While standing in the library of his host, he met a young writer quoting the poetry of William Morris. At dinner, the writer produced from his pockets little brass figures of Pickwick and Sam Weller and Micawber and other characters from Dickens. It gave everyone, said Noyes, "an almost uncanny sense that Gulliver held them alive in his hands." This was 1902. The following year, Noyes reviewed this writer's first major book, and called it "a little Apocalypse...sensationally significant and profound. His...cry throughout is, 'I intend to get to God', and that, in brief, is what he wishes the rest of the world to do."

Half a century later, Noyes would say that he felt some pride in the fact that he was one of the first to proclaim the genius of G.K. Chesterton. He would always be an admirer of Chesterton's poetry. Once at a literary society when Chesterton was asked to recite some of his own poems, he claimed he could not remember them. Noyes stood up and said that he knew them and proceeded to recite. On another occasion, when Belloc praised *Lepanto* to Noyes, he assumed that Noyes did not like it "because all poets are jealous." Noyes' response: "Then I'm not a poet."

But he was a poet.

Alfred Noyes never bothered graduating from Oxford. He had written a volume of poetry called *The Loom of Years*, which was a bestseller, and he left the university to become a fulltime poet. He wrote a 200-page epic on Sir Francis Drake and several other books of poems, with a few novels and essays that also made their way out of his pen. He was invited to be a professor of modern English literature at Princeton and remained there for almost a decade. After the untimely death of his first wife, he returned to England, remarried, had four children, and eventually retired to the Isle of Wight.

He also turned out to be a fan of Chesterton's religion. In 1927, Noyes was received into the Catholic Church.

The Anglican Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, W.R. Inge, wrote dismissively of "the curious fashion which has led about a dozen men of letters to join the Church of Rome," but he lamented the "sad loss" of Alfred Noyes. Chesterton was amused by the reaction of "the Gloomy Dean" to Noyes' conversion. It was as though the poet had suddenly cut his own throat.

Shortly after his conversion, Noyes was also taken to task by the literary community for his defense of traditional poetry. Suddenly he was considered "old-fashioned." But when poetry is a matter of fashion, so much the worse for poetry; there is no originality when anything follows a fashion. Noyes wrote a brilliant critique of modern poetry called *The Opalescent Parrot*, arguing that the modern poet might seem exotic and colorful, like a parrot, but he also has the characteristic of always saying the same thing because that is what he has been taught to say. The main phrase parroted from the mouths of the modern poets was the dismissal of the great old poets, and even the great recent poets. They praised only the old poets who seemed modern before their time.

Noyes not only defended rhyme and meter, he continued to write in it. While free verse has prevailed for the time being, there is one sense in which Noyes has emerged the victor over his adversaries. His poetry is still read and recited and enjoyed, while the works of most of his modern contemporaries sit unread, unquoted, and unremembered. "The Highwayman" still thrills as he comes riding, riding, up to the old inn door. (Pop singer Loreena McKennitt recently put this poem to music.) It is also interesting to note that one of the last people ever to make his living writing poems was Alfred Noyes. Free verse certainly does not put bread on the table.

THE wind was a torrent of darkness
among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon
tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight
over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding—
Riding—riding—
The highwayman came riding, up to
the old inn-door.

II

He'd a French cocked-hat on his
forehead, a bunch of lace at
his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and
breeches of brown doe-skin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle: his
boots were up to the thigh!
And he rode with a jewelled
twinkle,
His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the
jewelled sky.

—from *The Highwayman* by Alfred Noyes

An Apology For A Letter Unposted

(For Clare Nicholl)

He thought he saw the Unicorn, the horned and holy horse,
He looked again and saw it was a Subject for Remorse,
He rushed for what he meant to post—
and didn't post, of course.

He thought he saw the Unicorn, her mane a wind of pride,
He looked again and tried again, and worked until he died;
He ordered a Pantechnicon—
that's waiting still outside.

He thought he saw the Unicorn, the Virgin's wildest pet,
He looked again and saw it was a Long Outstanding Debt.
He wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote—
and hasn't written yet.

He thought he saw the Unicorn, that breaketh curb and bond,
He looked and saw a girl of whom he was extremely fond . . .
The floods rose to the Chilterns when
they found him in his pond.

He thought he saw the Unicorn, crowned of the Silver Spear,
He wondered if it was a Stag and saw it was a Dear—
And so he drowned himself—
some say in Water—
some in Beer.

—G. K. Chesterton

Chesterton Rewrites the Classic Lines – 3

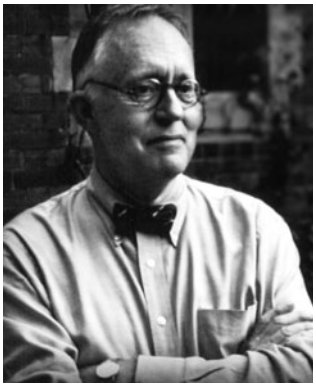
- Be it ever so ghastly, there's no place like home. (Quoted in Titterton, *G.K. Chesterton*)
- The romantics tried to make sex as sacred as they thought good and as free as they found convenient. They wanted to eat their wedding-cake and have it. (*Illustrated London News*, Aug. 27, 1932)
- There is more faith in honest doubt than in those nasty creeds. ("The Road to Roundabout," *The Flying Inn*)
- Modern democracy was born free, and everywhere it is in chains. (*Illustrated London News*, April 11, 1936)
- The Universe repeats itself, with the possible exception of history. (*Commonwealth*, January, 1902)
- People in the Liberty Hall Club, those vultures of the air, have nests; but man has nowhere to lay his head. ("The Conversion of an Anarchist," *G.K. Chesterton, Collected Works, Vol. XIV*)



- Third thoughts are much better than second thoughts. ("Third Thoughts are Best," *The End of the Armistice*)
- Two worlds are better than one. ("The Eye of Death," *Manalive*)
- If our social dogmas are not true, then are we, of all men, the most miserable. (*The Nation*, March 23, 1907)
- No man shall see life and live. (*Illustrated London News*, Mar. 12, 1910)

An Interview with Thomas Howard

By Dale Ahlquist



Thomas Howard is a highly acclaimed writer and scholar noted for his studies of Inklings C.S. Lewis (*Narnia & Beyond: A Guide to the Fiction of C.S. Lewis*) and Charles Williams (*The Novels of Charles Williams*). He was a featured speaker at the Rochester Chesterton Society Conference in September, 2009, where unfortunately he found himself cornered by Dale Ahlquist.

GM: Sorry to begin with an obvious question, but how did you get to know C.S. Lewis?

TH: I met Lewis at The Kilns in 1963 as a result of having exchanged letters and postcards with him over a couple of years. The exchange began when I was a soldier at Ft. Benning, Georgia, in the late 50s. He had answered a letter that I, in an excess of youthful zeal, had fired off to him at Magdalen College about *The Hobbit*, which no one had heard of back then but which a friend had sent to me. Lewis wrote back, "Oh, but believe me, you are still only paddling [English for "wading"] in the glorious sea of Tolkien. Go on at once to *The Lord of the Rings*—three volumes as long as the Bible and not a word too long (except for the first chapter which is a botch; don't be put off by it)." I was living in England in the early sixties, and happened to be in Oxford at Easter. I had asked him if I might pop in and see him, and he acted as though there was nothing he'd like better (this was his habit; he hadn't been waiting on the edge of his chair for me).

GM: What was it like, meeting him?

TH: He had given me instructions as to which bus to take from Oxford out to his house in Headington, and told me to come along a wooded lane to the house. (That lane is no more, and his former property, I hear, is all developed.) He came to the door himself, and looked the way one had hoped: rubicund face, bald, baggy tweeds, twinkly eyes, and a booming, jolly, bell-like voice asking, "Mr. Howard?" We sat in a small parlor that would have given the vapours to an interior designer. Chocolate-colored overstuffed velveteen chairs, a small gas fire, and no "decoration" at all. We talked for perhaps forty-five minutes (I didn't want to overstay). I could not bring myself to take notes, and this was before the days of tiny recording devices, which, in the interest of courtesy I would not have used in any event. The talk was of his own work, Tolkien, Purgatory (he said, "There might be such a place"), and so forth. I ventured timorously at one point that *Till We Have Faces* was my favorite of his books. He looked pleased, and said that it was his own favorite.

GM: Did you have any idea at the time that his reputation would rise through the stratosphere?

TH: I don't think anyone, least of all Lewis himself, visualized the mountainous eminence that would collect around his name eventually. Nevertheless, I knew he was a "figure." He had come to enormous prominence in the 1940s with *Screwtape* and *Mere Christianity,* and of course his books had been pouring out since then.

GM: So, in your written and spoken discussions with C.S. Lewis, did the subject of G.K. Chesterton come up, or was this great opportunity wasted?

TH: Alas, the great opportunity was wasted—not because Lewis was not a reader (and lover, as far as I know) of GKC, but because at that point I had read only *Orthodoxy*, and wasn't in any position to moot the topic in that short interview.

GM: What do you think are the main connections between Chesterton and Lewis?

TH: Surely the fact that their work, whether "fanciful" or expository, bespeaks The Permanent Things. Their style was different. But holiness is there, and an unremitting insistence on plain common sense and well-ordered thinking. And of course they both make the Truth a pure delight, which it is, of course.

GM: You are an acknowledged scholar of one of the other famous Inklings, Charles Williams. How did you get started down that track?

TH: The same friend who sent me *The Hobbit* at Fort Benning sent Williams's *The Place of the Lion.* It blew me out of the tub (to coin a whole new phrase), but I had no idea what on earth was going on in that novel. I felt like W.H. Auden, who remarked, "When I first started reading Williams' poetry, I couldn't make head or tail of it." And then I found that Lewis was both a friend and an *aficionado* of Williams and his work. In fact, it was *The Place of the Lion* that first flagged Lewis down. I went on to write my doctoral dissertation on Williams' novels.

GM: Charles Williams is the only one of the Inklings who may have met Chesterton, since Williams contributed a few reviews and poems to *G.K.'s Weekly*. Do you recall anything in particular that Williams said or wrote about Chesterton?

TH: I wonder whether Williams *ever* said anything about Chesterton. He didn't tend to mention other writers in his own work. His approach, vision, and style were so crotchety, and so bizarre (but bang on the same bull's-eye at which Chesterton and Lewis aimed their arrows), that he tended

simply to pursue his own themes in solitude. But I brought back to the U.S. many years ago in a large canvas zipper bag a huge bundle of Willliams holographs (this is a real cloak-and-dagger story) that are now in the Marion C. Wade Collection at Wheaton College. As far as I know, there they sit, still untouched. So interested readers may rummage into that trove and no doubt find Chesterton. There may well be letters.

GM: And I was right there at the Wade Center, a few months ago! Talk about wasted opportunities! Oh well, another day. Do you see any connections between Chesterton and Williams?

TH: It's a case of "everything that rises must converge." As I indicated before, Chesterton, Lewis, Williams, Tolkien, and company all saw themselves to be in the service of Truth, which they understood to be found in catholic (small c) orthodoxy, and since they all had fertile, agile, and inexhaustible imaginations, it follows that one could draw a line from almost any sentence in Chesterton to any sentence in Lewis, Tolkien, and Williams and find a glorious connection.

GM: Okay, enough fluff. Let's get to the meat. How did you come upon Chesterton?

TH: I read *Orthodoxy* (as an Evangelical) undergraduate and loved it. The sheer ebullience of Chesterton's mind regaled me. Then, some years later, I forget just when or where, I read *The Everlasting Man.* This had a strange, and lasting, influence on my imagination and thinking, but I would have to go back now and read it again, and underline it all in order to be able to retell specifics here. I think that it started to nudge the very unwitting me towards the Ancient Church, although I would have been appalled to have thought so then.

GM: Have any other Chesterton books been particularly meaningful to you?

TH: Other than the two I've mentioned, *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man,* I am one who has read comparatively little of Chesterton, at which I blush in the pages of *Gilbert Magazine.*

GM: All is forgiven. The Chesterton revival is upon us. What strikes you most about this revival?

TH: Such a revival can only be good. I wish it would become a tsunami and swamp everyone, or at least bring them to their senses. Chesterton's work is a case in point of what Lewis hinted at in his "Weight of Glory" sermon: "Do you think I am trying to weave a spell? Perhaps I am; but remember your fairy tales. Spells are used for breaking enchantments as well as for inducing them. And you and I have need of the strongest spell that can be found to wake us from the evil enchantment of worldliness which has been laid upon us." Chesterton is a weaver of such salvific spells, surely?

GM: Surely! But Thomas Howard weaves a few spells himself. I know that he has enchanted me. Thank you so much.



CHESTERTON IS EVERYWHERE

(From *The Wall Street Journal*, January 23, 2010)

The Kids Will Be Alright

The coming U.S. population boom will bring new economic vitality

by Joel Kotkin

Excerpt: "The very diversity of the emerging America makes many wonder what ultimately will hold the country together. Ultimately, this unique society will find its binding principle in the notions that have long differentiated it from the rest of world: a common belief system, a sense of a shared destiny and an aspirational culture.

"As the British writer G.K. Chesterton once put it, the U.S. is 'the only nation…that is founded on a creed'. This faith is not, and was not initially meant to be, explicitly religious; rather, it is a fundamentally spiritual idea of a national raison d'être."

(From *Watertown Daily Times.com*, January 19, 2010)

Wordsmiths Distort Abortion Debate

by Donna Marek

Excerpt: "...the '60s and the sexual revolution came along. We were now ready for Planned Parenthood's so-called 'gift' of birth control/abortion; then the 'pro-choice' (pro-death) movement; then 'legalized' abortion (baby killing). G.K. Chesterton put it in perspective by stating, 'They insist on talking about birth control when they mean less birth and no control.'

"Wordsmiths are hard at work in our daily lives. 'Choice' means kill; 'no' equals yes; 'right' is wrong, and on and on. Word games do take lives, and as George Orwell said, 'If thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought.' Ironically, we can be arrested, jailed and/or fined for killing cats, dogs, darters, birds, elephants, seals, snails and whales, but we are vindicated for killing babies.

"America, what a country."

TALES OF THE SHORT BOW



Haunted

By John Peterson

I'll be frank," Mr. Abernathy said. "I would love to have a year-round tenant. This place is almost impossible to let during the off-season."

"Well, give me the papers then," Marvin said. "I'll sign right now."

Marvin had turned the family business over to his brother, who was also his partner, and retired at the age of forty. Commerce bored him, and he had enough money to retire. At least that was the opinion of his financial advisor.

"Even with your profligate ways," the man had assured him, "your nest egg will double every ten years. Now stop bothering me and go buy a yacht or something."

Marvin settled down to life in the large house he bought for himself in a wealthy suburban community and began to enjoy new friends and the fun of parties, dinners, luncheons, bridge, and golf; but after a few years of this routine, he realized that, once again, he was bored. He was bored with the same friends, the same stories, the same jokes, and the same *foie gras* before and the same *crème brulée* after. When asked why he didn't get married, his standard answer was that he didn't want his new social life to be stretched out to twenty-fours a day.

Then everything changed. It was love at first sight.

An enormous old mansion on a beautiful lake had caught his eye, and he drove up the driveway thinking to ask the owner if he might have a look inside. No one was there. Then he saw a sign that announced, "Owner will lease to qualified tenant." The owner was Abernathy.

"I'd better tell you first," Mr. Abernathy said, "or you'll soon hear it from the villagers."

"Hear what?"

"They'll tell you this place is haunted."

"I'll sign," Marvin said.

"For a year?"

"For forever."

* * *

Marvin had never dreamed that solitude could be enjoyable. Or so easy. The kitchen pantry and the wine cellar were well stocked, and Abernathy simply billed him for what he used. For perishables, Gordon's Market delivered. Mrs. Sykes came in to fix his supper as often as he wished, and Mrs. Olsen came in to clean twice a week, which was more than sufficient for a bachelor who had no intention of entertaining guests.

Marvin loved wandering about his new home at night without turning on lights. He especially enjoyed exploring it by moonlight. His previous residence had been laid out like a diagram. This place was more like a labyrinth with interesting passages and unexpected rooms and stairways that creaked and groaned. He made Abernathy a generous offer and bought the place.

One evening, Marvin sat happily meditating in a chair in the middle of the library. The room was dark except for the light of the full moon streaming through the windows, and he had dozed off. He was a light sleeper; and, at about midnight, something made his eyes pop open. He stared at the wall before him. There, framed in moonlight on the wall, he saw the shadow of a woman.

Marvin froze in his chair. He was terrified. He was aware of the flood of cold sweat on his face and hands. He was gripping the arms of his chair so tightly that his hands ached and the chair creaked. Then a cloud covered the moon and the light faded. When the cloud had passed, he could see nothing but moonlight on the wall. He realized that he had been holding his breath.

He did not know how long he stayed there not daring to move; but at last, after the day had dawned, he crept from the library. He sat in his kitchen, drinking hot coffee and trying to sort things out. He was not an emotional man, and as he pondered the fear that had overwhelmed him, he felt strangely exhilarated. It had not been fun but it had been powerful, and at least it had snapped him out of the blue mood he had been falling into lately. He resolved to put himself on late-night patrol and take the consequences.

Two nights later, as he quietly turned a corner in a hallway, he noticed something in a mirror hanging on a wall. The light was very dim, but he saw reflected there the image of a young woman dressed in black, her long blonde hair falling to her waist. Her face was pale and unsmiling, and she was looking straight at him—or through him. He felt a rush of terror, but he fought against it and made himself turn abruptly to confront this specter. He was alone. Marvin leaned back against the wall and mopped his forehead with his handkerchief. He was trembling, almost quaking with fear.

He suspended his midnight patrolling for a week, but then he was overcome by the urge to renew his vigils. He wondered at himself. He would not have been able to explain why he was deliberately seeking the experience of crushing fear.



It was two in the morning on another moonlit night when, gazing from an upstairs window, he caught a glimpse of something moving near the woods. He strained to see more clearly, and then the fear and dread hit him again like a body blow. A ghostly figure was moving along the margin of woods, and it had glanced up at him. He rushed from the window and cowered in the hall outside of the room. He could not catch his breath, and he wondered if he might be having a heart attack.

Finally, he calmed down, and though it took courage—courage he had not known he had, because he had never before had occasion to use it—he returned to the ground floor and waited.

After about fifteen minutes, he heard a faint sound coming from the direction of the withdrawing room. He hurried along, and was just in time to see his young blond ghost clambering through a window. This time he felt no fear. He turned on the lights.

She was dressed in a sweat suit, she was slender and pretty, and her blonde hair was swept back into a long ponytail. She did not look happy.

"I was afraid you would catch me," she said. "You've kept a very good watch on things."

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Jeanie," she said.

"My name is Marvin. So, you've been living here?"

"Yes, I've been living here."

Marvin and Jeanie sat and talked until long after the sun had risen. Five years earlier at the age of sixteen, she told him, she had run away from home because her abusive stepfather had told her he intended to kill her. She believed him. The mansion was vacant at the time, and she found a door left unlocked. She had lived there ever since.

"I stay in the attic in a small suite of rooms the tenants don't know about," she said. "When the house is rented, I don't come out much except in the dark after midnight—I jog along the lake for exercise, and I think I've read half of the books in the library. I'm very good with needle and thread, and I make my own clothes out of throwaways—it's amazing what people toss out. And nobody has ever missed the food I've taken."

They talked and talked. Jeanie hadn't realized she was starved for companionship. For his part, Marvin hadn't realized his recent blue mood was simple loneliness. After a few days had passed, however, he decided it was time they moved on.

"I have a plan, Jeanie," he said. "I'm going to set you up with a new identity so that your stepfather can never trace you, and I'll send you to college. After you get your degree, I'll put you into a good job in our family firm in Denver."

"I don't want to go to college," Jeanie said, "or to Denver. I want to stay here."

"Well, I don't see how that will be possible," Marvin said.

"Can't you think of something?"

"I don't believe so. Look, it's not as though we were man and wife."

"Oh, Marvin, I was beginning to think you would never ask me," she said.

"We'll have to change your appearance somehow," he said.

"I do look older now, and I could cut my hair and dye it red," she said.

"Auburn, I think," he said.

Edited Out

James G. Bruen, Jr.

"Who do you think I am, sergeant? Jessica Fletcher?" laughed Miss Teri Reiter into the wall phone hanging in her kitchen. "Just because I write murder mysteries, do you think I can solve them, too?"

"Well," sputtered Sgt. Dick Copper into his cell, "I thought you might be able to help me out. The victim being a mystery magazine editor and all, I thought you might have some insight that we're missing. We're a bit flat-footed and could use some help."

Teri Reiter soon joined Sgt. Copper across town in the third-floor walk-up apartment of Eddie Toremort, or, more precisely, Toremort's former apartment, for Toremort was dead, sprawled on his back on the wooden floor, a blue pencil stuck into his chest, piercing his heart. Stacks of paper encircled the corpse.

"The apartment was locked from the inside," said Copper.

"The murderer came and went over the transom," observed Reiter.

"Looks that way."

"The murder weapon?" Teri Reiter asked, gesturing at the blue pencil.

"Looks like it," he said, "but then there's these marks all over his body, even on the soles of his feet. I can't make hide nor hair of 'em. None pierce his skin at all. Some weird ritual, I bet."

Reiter glanced at them quickly. "Oh," she said; "they're editing symbols and proofreader's marks."

"I wonder what they all mean?"

"Would you like me to explain, sergeant? This one means delete, and this means insert, and—"

"No, I mean, whadda they have to do with his murder?"

"Perhaps he died of a thousand edits?" she chuckled. "Or his antagonist wrote with a poison pen?"

"I gotta comedian," growled the cop, "when what I need is another Fletcher woman."

"Jessica Fletcher was delusional, sergeant," replied Reiter, snickering slightly. "She never left California, but everybody pretended she was in Cabot Cove, Maine."

"Jessica was a fictional character!" snorted Copper. "She wasn't real. And Cabot Cove wasn't real neither!"

"She was as real as I am."

"Teri, I hate to break your heart, but you're fictional, too," insisted Copper.

"Is Sherlock Holmes less than real because he's fictional?" rejoined Reiter. "Is Fr. Brown less than real?"

Copper stared at her in disbelief. "This philosophy stuff's too deep for me. I'm just a down-to-earth type a'

guy, working a murder."

"Once a story makes it into print, its characters spring to life," continued Teri Reiter.

"Look at these stacks of papers around his body," said Copper. "They're all so neat and all. You'd think they'd've got disturbed in the ruckus. But they look like they've been arranged all neat-like around the corpse. Whaddaya make of that?"

"Manuscripts," noted Reiter, flipping casually through some of the papers. "And most of them aren't very good, either."

"Yeah, but why aren't they scattered all over the place? Why are they all so neat around Toremort's corpse like a circle of tombstones?"

"Sentinels standing in silent tribute to his profession," said Reiter. "The killer obviously respects the printed word, even when its quality is inferior."

"You mean I'm looking for an author?" asked Copper. "Or somebody who loves to read?"

"Precisely."

"Don't read much myself," said Sgt. Copper, picking up a manuscript and perusing it for several minutes. "Ever submit a story to Toremort, Teri?" he asked eventually.

"Several, sergeant. Why?"

"Just wondering," said Sgt. Copper, returning the manuscript to its stack.

"I remember hearing somewhere that in murder stories, an author can't just spring the murderer on the readers from nowhere, right? That wouldn't be fair to the readers. The murderer's gotta already be in the story, right? Not somebody that gets introduced for the first time when it's revealed he did it, right?"

"That's right, sergeant. I wouldn't be much of a mystery writer if I violated that rule."

"But all rules are made to be broken, right?"

"Not that one, sergeant. It's inflexible."

Sgt. Copper pondered her statement briefly before speaking: "Well, Teri, then you must've killed Toremort, right?"

"Me, sergeant? Me?"

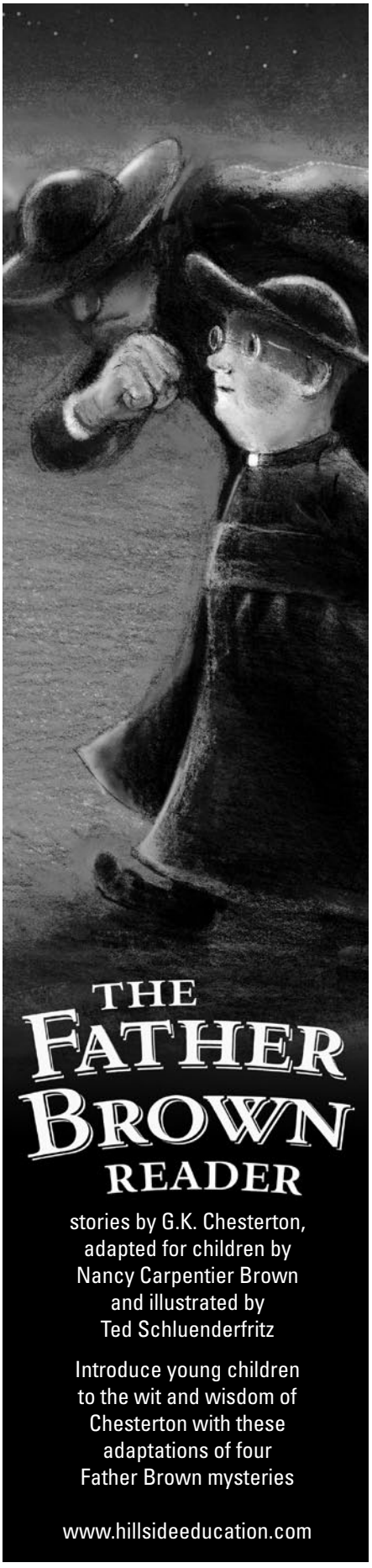
"You, Teri. You're the only writer in this story, and, like you said, a writer did it."

"Your logic is impeccable, sergeant," she conceded.

"But why, Teri? Why kill off the editor?"

"Have no sympathy for Eddie Toremort, sergeant. He committed an unpardonable offense; he deserved to be rubbed out. He denied characters their very lives: he accepted one of my stories for publication, but never ran it."





Chesterton on Art



Art for Art's Sake

In the days of Oscar Wilde, who did at least make up his jokes for himself, but made up his theories by a certain knack of totally misunderstanding Flaubert, the whole literary world used to buzz with all the business that was called Art for Art's Sake. It was what new and modern and daring notions nearly always are–that is, it was partly a truism and partly an untruth. In other words, everything in it that was not a truism was an untruth. If it meant that artistic criticism should be artistic it was obviously true; if it meant that a solid social object, like a picture, a book, a statue, or an ornamental chocolate box tied up with pike ribbon, has no other aspect or effect except the artistic, it was obviously false...Men like Wilde liked literature to be a little naughty and admired improper art merely for being improper. But that is to moralize art; it is to introduce a moral test where there should be only an artistic test. At the same time they objected to the improper artist being denounced, kicked, shot or hanged or otherwise dealt with strict propriety, according to the moral test. This again was to forget the art of the artist and remember only the moral position of the man.

The true Art for Art principle is quite plain. If a man shoots his grandmother with great skill (as, for instance, while his grandmother is very rapidly climbing a tree covered with leaves) let us by all means admire and applaud him for being a good shot. And let us hang him for having shot his grandmother. That does really keep the two departments of thought clear and separate.

Walter Pater declares that art should teach us to enjoy certain exquisite moments of appreciation; and solely for those moments' sake. Which seems to mean that we must not connect them with any sense of the effect on our souls, or the significance of beauty in the universe.

Now I will venture to say that if we only enjoy jewels or sunsets under these limitations we shall not enjoy them much. There must be some sense of general well being to enjoy anything very much, even "for its own sake."

The romance of ritual and colored emblem has been taken over by that narrowest of all trades, modern art (the sort called art for art's sake), and men are in modern practice informed that they may use all symbols so long as they mean nothing by them.

Art for Art's Sake is in its nature merely a superstition. For anything becomes a superstition when it is absolutely separated from all other considerations, whether it be religious exercises or scientific research on art, or beer, or foreign stamps. The drunkard, for example, is merely an idolater, and his motto is "beer for beer's sake."

This is the worst element in our anarchic world of to-day. The whole is one vast system of separation—an enormous philosophical Divorce Court.



The theory of art for art's sake, for instance, as applied to painting, was a proposal to separate a picture from the subject of the picture. Sentiment would be better without art; art would be better without sentiment. In other words, a picture would be a better picture if it were not a picture of anything. And a subject would be all the better subject if you did not paint it.

It is, therefore, in antagonism to the whole of that recent aesthetic philosophy which made art a thing sacrosanct and absolute, its own judge and its own end. There is no blacker mark of decadence than the kind of idolatry which is expressed in the phrase "art for art's sake." Art is in many ways the religion of the cultivated class to-day. And it is the decadence of art when it is separated from the rest of life, just as it was the decadence of religion when it was separated from the rest of life. So long as religion meant, as it did in its vigorous days, that the whole nature of man must have an outcome and sublime climax it was strong. It rotted away into musty theology and mad ethics precisely when people began to say "piety for piety's sake," and just as decidedly exactly as the old ascetic pitted religion against life, so decidedly does the new decadent pit art against life. Both sought to make their nostrum conquer and ignore every other side of man. The theologian disdained pity in the name of logic, and called upon men to contemplate the soul-destroying nightmare of an eternal and living pain. The art critic disdains pity in the name of realism, and calls upon men to contemplate all the most repulsive agonies and disillusions of moral pathology. Aestheticism seeks to stand alone, and it will fall as Puritanism fell. For what is now called "the artistic conscience" has become a thing very much narrower and harder than the "Nonconformist conscience."

You never work so well for art's sake as when you are working for the sake of something else.

From *New York American*, Feb. 3, 1934; August 20, 1932; "The Universal Stick," *What's Wrong with the World*; *The Bookman*, April 1902; *Daily News*, March 31, 1906; February 7, 1902; June 25, 1904

ALL IS GRIST



The Cutting Edge

By Joe Campbell

I don't know what goes on in the editorial offices of literary journals. I can only guess. Here is my latest guess:

Chudley, the assistant editor of *Garlic*, a quarterly magazine, can't make up his mind about a recent submission. He approaches Booth, the editor.

"There's something unusual about this piece, Booth."

"Yes, Chudley?"

"It's grammatical."

"Grammatical?"

"It follows the rules of grammar."

"That is unusual. Is there anything else wrong with it?"

"It contains some poetry."

"We love poetry."

"I know, but this poetry is punctuated."

"You mean it contains periods, commas, question marks—"

"And colons."

"How disgusting."

"It also has a regular meter."

"Did you say meter?"

"Iambic pentameter."

"That's *so* sixteenth century."

"Yes, and it rhymes."

"Then it can't be poetry."

"Of course, but—"

"Why on earth did you bring the piece to me? It's your job to reject submissions that are obviously unsuitable."

"I enjoyed reading it."

"That's a bad sign. You've got some holidays coming, Chudley. I'd take them if I were you."

"I also understood it."

"How many times did you read the piece?"

"Twice."

"You understood it after only two readings?"

"The writing is lucid, the characters clearly drawn, the levels of meaning accessible, the—"

"Need I remind you that this is a literary journal? The next thing you'll be telling me is that the piece lacks gratuitous sex."

"I'm afraid it does."

"And you expect us to risk printing it?"

"I'm not sure what we should do. That's why I brought it to your attention."

Booth ponders silently.

"I'm not unmindful of our constitutional right to free expression," he says. "But a deficiency in gratuitous sex. Isn't that offensive?"

"Of course, it's offensive. But I thought we wanted to be on the cutting edge."

"You have a point, Chudley."

"There's one more thing."

"Yes?"

"It's also deficient in blatant vulgarity."

"As well as four-letter words, no doubt."

"No doubt."

"We published a piece like that before you joined us. There was a lot of criticism and one of the granting agencies withdrew its funding. I nearly lost my job."

"No one said being on the cutting edge is easy, Booth."

"Well, I guess I should give it a look."

Chudley hands him the piece, and he glances over it.

"You failed to mention that in the poetry the first letter of each sentence is capitalized."

"I didn't think you'd notice."

"Our readers will notice."

"We could run a disclaimer, absolving the editors and proofreaders of blame."

The Emigrant's Guide

By William Cobbett



"The Apostle of Distributism"

William Cobbett, known to Chestertonians as "the Apostle of Distributism," was a keen observer of his time. He documented the economic and social shambles of an England caught in the throes of the Industrial Revolution and where distribution of capital ownership was becoming increasingly concentrated. In *The Emigrant's Guide*, Cobbett offers his prescription: Go to America. In early 19th century America, almost anyone could become an independent owner of capital.

Cobbett's 1829 manual for new Americans describes American life from a perspective that complements Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. This edition from **Economic Justice Media** includes an extensive foreword adapting the principles of distributism to a modern economy.

To Order

The Emigrant's Guide (240 pp, ISBN 978-0-944-997-01-7) is available for $20 from **Amazon.com** and **BarnesandNoble.com**, as well as by special order from local bookstores. For bulk/wholesale orders (10 or more copies at a 20% discount), e-mail onceandfuturebooks@yahoo.com.

"Our readers will hold us responsible anyhow. They expect literature and this piece doesn't make it. Sorry, Chudley. If we run it, who knows what might happen. We could be asked to accept advertisements."

"I hadn't thought of that."

"Discretion is the better part of valor, Chudley."

"That's *so* sixteenth century."

"It's also reality. Return it with the standard rejection."

"You mean the one that's grammatical, punctuated, contains capital letters, lacks gratuitous sex, vulgarity, and four-letter words, and is easy to understand?"

"Rejection slips aren't literature, Chudley."

Art vs. Science?

By Blaise Mibeck

Often, I will find something in art that will remind me of science, and vice versa. For instance, the giant portraits of Chuck Close (see http://www.chuckclose.coe.uh.edu/). His later works are abstract until you see the whole image—then they have a near photographic precision. Chuck Close is using his understanding of the roles color and unconscious inference play in visual perception. He has experimented with human visual perception to make these incredible images that inspire the viewer to reconsider how familiar and unfamiliar every person is.

Our ability to make sense of what we see is quite incredible. In fact, Hermann von Helmholtz, the famous electrical engineer, studied vision and discovered the eye to be very poor at collecting images. People appear to extract large amounts of information from what they see. The theory is that experience and assumptions are used to fill in the gaps; to make up for what the eye can't see. A good artist understands more biology, chemistry, and physics than many people would think.

Likewise, scientists can be artists. There is often a style of investigation, an aesthetic principle for displaying data and a certain artfulness in the lab. Imaging has always been at the heart of science and the principle method science uses to communicate findings to the non-science community. Consider the lunar sketch's of Galileo, Roentgen's x-rayed hand images, and the high speed photographs of Harold Edgerton. None of these were intended as art—but they do reflect the universe and inspire the viewer to see ordinary things differently.

Galileo's studies made the moon more than a light source in the background of a scene—he made it the scene. Roentgen's first x-ray image was of his wife's hand. Too dense to transmit the mysterious radiation, her wedding ring contrasts with the near invisible nature of her flesh. The skeletal fingers could remind us that marriage should be a battle to the death. Edgerton often intentionally composed his high-speed photographs with the skill of a still life artist.

Good artists and scientists are tenacious. Ideally, both are concerned with truth and the understanding that comes from observation. Scientists can be as intuitive as artists and artists as precise as scientists. The general population has difficulty understanding artists and scientists, despite the ostentatious behavior of each field's more flamboyant celebrities. Both fields, unfortunately, have their share of famous hacks. For the common scientist and common artist, however, these fields can be full of tedious work, false starts, and of course the *ah-ha* moments that keep them from changing careers.

Art and science have been plagued in the last one hundred years with a temptation to appear great by shocking the sensibilities of their audience. This unfortunate trend is being played out by artists who can not draw and by scientists who can not experiment. Little truth, beauty, and good has come from seeing an American flag laying on a floor and a crucifix immersed in urine. Likewise, polar bears clinging to scraps of icebergs and photoshopped images of an underwater London do little to promote the legitimate science of climate change.

In all of these examples, a goal to express some truth is present. The flag is something that can be trodded on literal and figuratively. "Piss Christ" expresses the reality of what the incarnation means—the level to which God stoops to become a human and to exist in the sewer that is sin. The problem is that these stunts are more concerned with pulling emotional strings than they are at depicting the ideal (in the case of art), or discovering the mechanisms (in the case of science), that are present and at work in the universe. The good (and bad) news is that the longer this trend continues, the less seriously the public will take these two important human endeavors.

CHESTERTON IS EVERYWHERE

(From *The Financial Express—Bangladesh*, January 25, 2010)

Time To Catch The Bull By The Horn

by Shamsher Chowdhury

Excerpt: "[A] level of orientation in politics is necessary for the good of the nation amongst all stages of the society enabling people to understand and interpret the workings of a democratically elected government. In late July of this year, I wrote an article in the columns of this very daily calling for banning of student wings of our political parties. In that column I quoted G. K. Chesterton having said as early as 1926, I quote, 'Education is simply the soul of the society as it passes from one generation to the other', unquote.

Home rule at home



Christmas Eve

By David Beresford

> "Oh, I don't know," answered Mary, lightly enough; "there's only two things generally true of them. At certain curious times they're just fit to take care of us, and they're never fit to take care of themselves." —*MANALIVE*, G.K. CHESTERTON

It was Christmas Eve, and I was sitting in the living room looking at the Christmas tree, contemplating whether to light a cigar to celebrate the holiday. The rest of the family was getting supper ready before we went to Mass, and my big problem was, did I have time to enjoy the cigar, or should I wait until after? After Mass was winning in my mind, for half the pleasure of a cigar is the anticipation.

I find that a nice cigar, or my pipe, is quite a pleasant past-time. A pipe or cigar is not for everyone. There are many people who prefer to pass the time by recycling their garbage, while others find fulfillment in chasing flu vaccines. I know of some who are happiest when they are rubbing antiseptic gel on their hands. These are all harmless enough pursuits in themselves, prone to cause preachiness and self-satisfaction perhaps, but largely harmless. So, I adopt a live-and-let-live attitude, and while for me an occasional cigar gives me more pleasure than sorting cardboard, getting needles, or squirting what feels like dog slobber on my hands, I realize that the world is a big place and filled with lots of different folk.

One such is a friend of mine, a fine fellow and normally quite sane, clever even, whose particular hobby is to nurse a never-ending cold and paint his upper lip with camphorated liniment. I play along, for he really does extract so much pleasure from this enterprise. "How is your cold today, Bill?" "Bad, very bad, I can't seem to shake this cold." This year he was ecstatic, for this was a bonanza year when he was able to get *two* flu shots: one for the so-called swine flu in the fall and another for the normal seasonal flu. I never saw the fellow happier, his medicine cabinet was filled with pills, salves, and tonics; and his red nose redder than ever! And, like I say, when you examine it from all sides, no real harm is done.

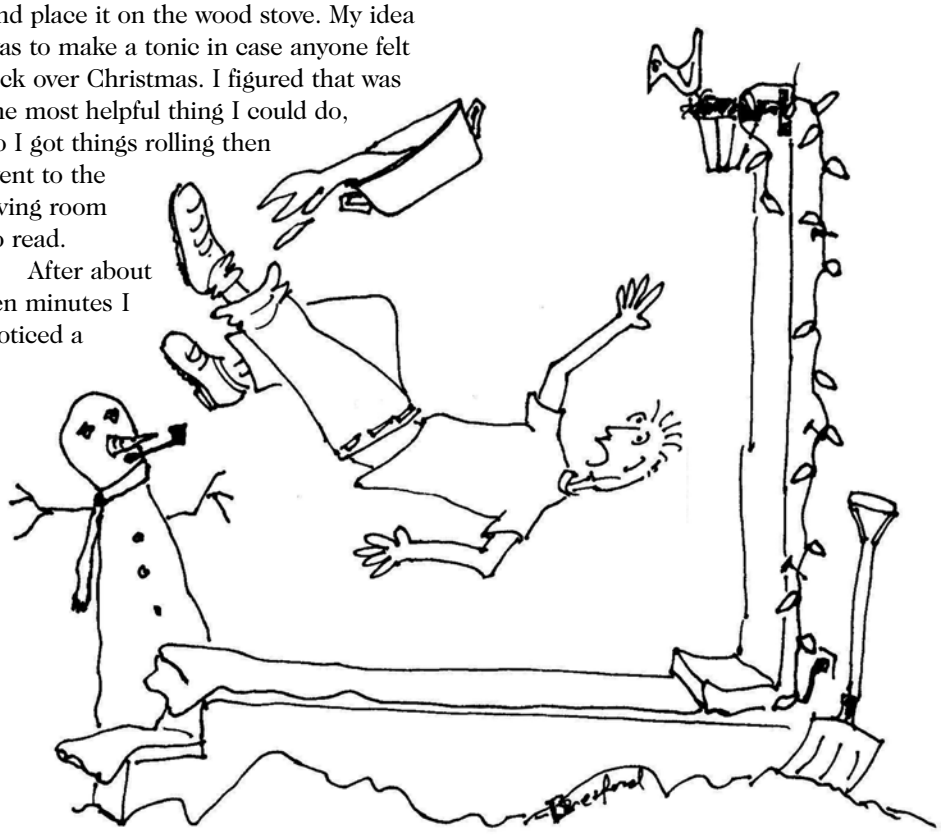
As I was saying, it was Christmas Eve, and from where I was sitting I could hear the sound of productive work. I decided to pitch in and help, so I went into the kitchen and asked my wife for a large pot—"Theresa, where do we keep the pots? Can you get me one? Sure, no hurry, I'll just wait here until your hands are free." I had previously asked my boys to cut some juniper branches and put them at the back door, and I instructed my daughter—"Anna, stop drying dishes and help me here"—to put these in the pot filled with water and place it on the wood stove. My idea was to make a tonic in case anyone felt sick over Christmas. I figured that was the most helpful thing I could do, so I got things rolling then went to the living room to read.

After about ten minutes I noticed a repulsive smell coming from the kitchen. I investigated, and the source was the pot filled with boiling water and juniper branches. This was not going to work, it seemed, so I took charge, got a towel, and carried the pot to the back door to get rid of it because the smell was making everyone nauseous.

I cannot actually remember the details, but my feet must have slipped on the ice on the back porch because my legs went up and I went down, hitting my head on the threshold, while simultaneously throwing hot water all over my feet. I lay there groaning for a few minutes, and then turned over and crawled back into the house, calling out, "Can someone put ashes on the ice on the back porch before somebody gets hurt?" My children ran from the kitchen to help me up, and Theresa came into the room wiping her hands on her apron. Taking hold of my elbow, Theresa guided me to the living room and told me to sit by the fire. One child got me a cigar, another an ashtray, a third a book, a fourth a glass, and a fifth my brandy.

"Stay here now. You have helped enough. We will just have to get by on regular cough syrup like everyone else this Christmas," said Theresa.

And I trust she was not being ironic.



THE FLYING STARS

"What do you call the man who wants to embrace the chimney sweep?" "A saint," said Father Brown. —G.K. CHESTERTON



Please Don't Feed the Venus Fly Trap

By Nancy Carpentier Brown

Our house has a problem. Bugs. Yes, and lots of them. Our lot used to be a farm field where the bugs could have the run of the place, and after fourteen years, they still think they can. I suppose they feel displaced by our structure and fight to take back their own territory.

We have always had cluster flies. These slow moving *pollenia rudis* show up in the autumn, fly around like crazy for a few days, then find themselves a nice cozy little nook to hole up in for the winter. I guess I don't mind them under the siding or the eaves of the roof. I'd never have to see them there. But when they come out and buzz around at the window—that bugs me.

Autumn also seems to bring out a gaggle of ladybugs. And box elder beetles. And crickets. And wasps.

Winter brings mice, which occasionally find their way up to the attic. Spring inevitably brings in the ants. And spiders and pill bugs seem to be year-'round visitors.

I used to feel at war with the bugs, needing to pluck up an enormous amount of courage to get rid of them. When we first moved in, I carefully carried each ladybug and spider outside and set it free. I've since become less eco-friendly.

Last year, though, brought a strange turn of events. I stopped seeing bugs as "the enemy" and started viewing them as, well, not friendly, but more like food. Yes, food. Don't get the wrong idea.

Just for fun, we had bought a pitcher plant. The tall pipe-like structures are actually carnivorous tubes, baited with sweet smells and equipped with evil sticky pads lined with downward facing spikes, ready to lure the lazy fly or curious ant into an amazing trap.

Suddenly, the bugs I found in the house seemed, well, useful. I could feed them to the plant. I had a rather strange sense of satisfaction knowing that the bugs would meet their inevitable end in the digestion of this weirdly-evolved vegetation.

As I caught each fly and put it down into the pitcher plant, I felt a smug sense of "so there!" as I watched it approach its impending doom, unable to crawl backwards for the spikes—this is probably a sign of a sick mind.

This year, to add to our thematic collection, we have purchased a Venus Fly Trap. The mysterious creature snaps its "hands" closed on anything that moves, triggered by some process scientists have yet to explain. The plant can exist without trapping insects, but it has evolved to be healthier if it gets food, so I am keeping my plant healthy each time I feed it.

Unless I feed it something bad. Which I did. I figured if it liked flies, what about trying it on a box elder beetle? Initially, my Venus Fly Trap liked the beetle. It closed down on it and trapped it just as it had done for the spiders and flies I gave it. But then, slowly, over the course of a few days, the paddles started turning black. A quick search of the Internet told me that box elder beetle must have carried bacteria, which sickened the plant. My poor baby! I had to cut off the arm.

I know that insects are a part of life, and this past year with our carnivorous plants has taught me their usefulness in the food chain. I don't think I would have done well as a pioneer housewife in a soddie or a log cabin with a dirt floor. Still, I've seen what can happen to roads and pathways when you don't keep working on them. Like Chesterton's white fence, they don't stay roads and pathways unless you keep re-surfacing. The post doesn't stay white unless you keep painting it white. A house is really a temporary structure in a world of insects and bugs, prairie grasses, and trees. The birds try to come in our chimney. The wasps try to make their hanging nests along our eaves. Spiders set up camp near our lights to take advantage of the night bug attractant. Why shouldn't they? Our home displaced their home years ago. They're only trying to take it back. But luckily, I'm bigger than they are. And I've got insecticide, too.

Our home is our castle, and we're always defending it. At times, we're defending it against little things, like bugs. At other times, bigger things like ideas and thoughts. And no matter how long we've lived there, we'll always have to fight the critters—bugs or ideologies—that try to dwell there with us.

Chesterton is like the pitcher plant, helping us digest the ideas that bug us, keeping our homes a little cleaner. The ideas, like the bugs, will still try to creep in. But we have our pitcher plants and our fly traps, and we know how to use them.

Like insects trying to find a tiny corner for the winter, buggy ideas will always seep into our homes. Be on guard.

And take my advice: don't feed box elder beetles to your Venus Fly Trap.

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Health Care

- The mistake of all that medical talk lies in the very fact that it connects the idea of health with the idea of care. What has health to do with care? Health has to do with carelessness. ("H.G. Wells and the Giants," *Heretics*)

- Prevention is *not* better than cure. Cure is healthy; because it is effected at an unhealthy moment. Prevention is unhealthy; because it is done at a healthy moment. (*Daily News*, May 30, 1908)

- These great scientific organizers insist that a man should be healthy even if he [is] miserable. ("The Idiot," *The Ball and the Cross*)

- The cult of hygiene today is not so much materialistic as mystical. Health is preferred to life; and the experts seem to be more satisfied with what they call a well-nourished corpse than with a lively cripple. (*New Witness*, July 20, 1916)

- Many hygienic enthusiasts of our time want to think of every man as a patient. (*Daily News*, May 30, 1908)

- If you really wished an official to take charge of your health it would be, first of all, necessary that the official be with you every minute of the day. He would have to stay with you all night long to see that you did not snore, and that you slept in a hygienic attitude. Imagine such a supervision...The carrying out of the idea would mean ultimately that there would be a long procession of people—all watching each other. But then it would be necessary to have somebody watch the official. (*Boston Globe*, Jan. 16, 1921)

- You can be an expert in disease. You cannot be an expert in health. Health is too large and free to be explored. (*Daily News*, July 6, 1912)

- If a man's personal health is a public concern, his most private acts are more public than his most public acts. ("The Eclipse of Liberty," *Eugenics and Other Evils*)

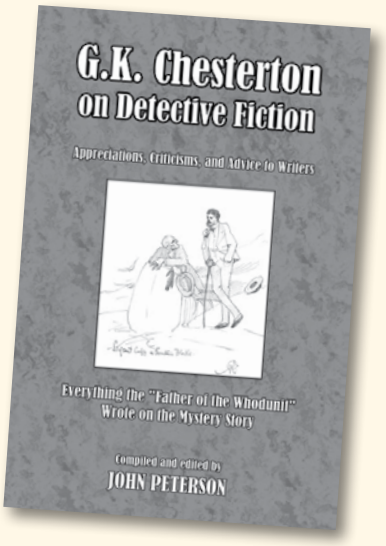
- The success of the Public Health Services has drawn the attention of the theorists to the population problem... It is a logical and obvious economy: Those who are not born will not need the services of the clinic or the doctor. (*G.K.'s Weekly*, Feb. 23, 1929)



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JOGGING WITH G.K.

"Do not look at the faces in the illustrated papers. Look at the faces in the street." —G.K. CHESTERTON



Confessions

By Robert Moore-Jumonville

This month I came close not to submitting an article. I'm not sure how long I have had the privilege of persecuting readers with this column of my mad Midwest meanderings about running. Maybe nine years? I don't think I've skipped an article during that time (though missing the deadlines general editor Sean Dailey sets is another matter). Often in the past I've worked ahead, some summers writing the bulk of my articles for the coming year after school finishes. But this fall chaos descended thicker than the leaves and I have fallen behind in life. I realized if I did not submit a column, it might go completely unnoticed, which would be a properly humbling experience. Or the absence of my column might be heralded as an improvement for all sorts of good reasons; for one, after so much holiday overeating, we don't relish reminders of exercise.

I also realized good reasons exist for contributors not to offer an essay to a publication. When we read through the *Illustrated London News*, for instance, we know there were periods and occasions when Chesterton, for all his prolific consistency, did not submit essays. From January 17 to May 22, 1920, Chesterton's columns were written by Hilaire Belloc, and in the four-month period from February 12 to May 21, "J.D.S" replaced Chesterton as contributor. April 23, 1928, also reports no column for the week, and there are other gaps. Without scouring the details of Chesterton's biography we could deduce that during these absences he was either on holiday, or occasionally reporting in sick.

Then again, Chesterton may have absentmindedly missed a deadline here and there. We could imagine many reasons for his pen remaining idle. Perhaps one day he woke up with a hangover and stayed in bed to draw; or maybe when the time came to deliver his completed essay, Chesterton found himself hopelessly lost—abducted by a strange cabman, wandering some unexplored plain in Brussels in the rain, or planted on the wrong train. When I asked my daughter Annesley what she thought might have kept G.K. Chesterton from submitting on a given day, she replied: "Maybe he burned his toast." Maybe. Or perhaps one day Gilbert's household was "unexpectedly invaded by infants of all shapes and sizes," as he relates in "The Real Journalist." Of course, he immediately forgot about the article due and attended instead to arbitrating squabbles over who knocked down whose blocks, no doubt administering honorable verdicts among the warring children.

> Just as he metes out principles of the highest morality, it occurs to him suddenly that he has not written his Saturday article; and that there is only about an hour to do it in. He wildly calls to somebody (probably the gardener) to telephone to someone for a messenger; he barricades himself in another room and tears his hair wondering what on earth he shall write about.

Absence of topic and lack of time create the dilemma: how to give the world a present of "fifteen hundred unimportant words."

Since, on short notice, I need to offer a present of nine hundred unimportant words, while also attempting to interject the topic of jogging, let me suggest that, if there are good reasons not to write an essay, or meet a deadline, or go to work (on occasion), there also are jolly good reasons (at least every day one wakes up tired in the dead of Michigan winter) not to go running. I realize discipline of itself can count as a good thing. However, I also realize that for some folks running (apart from the necessity sometimes of running from danger—from mad dogs, fires, bad opera, etc.) is always an odious enterprise.

I take as an example this exchange that appeared on my Facebook page recently between Mike Foster and Miki Tracy (unknown to me until it mostly had played itself out). The discussion went like this:

> FOSTER: "running for fun is so NOT Chestertonian. Unless it was for last call @ Ye Old Cheddar Cheese."
>
> TRACY: "Running 'for fun' is unspeakably bizarre insanity. Personally, I'd rather stick myself in the eye with a fork whilst dancing a jig on a small slab of Styrofoam in the middle of the winter Pacific during an ice storm—now 'that' sounds like fun! Which is strange, because when I was eighteen, I could run two miles in twelve minutes on a humid July day...still didn't like it."
>
> FOSTER: "'Running for fun', even before I had anterior fractures of L1-3 vertebrae in 2000 & hip replacement three years ago, was an oxymoron. Michael Stipe of R.E.M. says it well: 'I'd rather chew my leg off.'"

The next twenty-three posts between these two zanies impersonate a George Burns-Gracie Allen comedy routine.

Sometimes I am dreadfully consistent at running (say five days out of seven), but like most things in life, I get into slumps now and then. I wonder this time of year whether it is mainly the wind. Not just the wind by itself. It's when I check the weather in the morning and notice not only that the temp is 20 degrees or below, but that the wind is 15 mph or above. The excuse is begging to be used. And I ponder silently: "I think I will not hang myself today."

"The more truly we can see life as a fairytale, the more clearly the tale resolves itself into war with the Dragon who is wasting fairyland." —G.K. CHESTERTON



Red, White, and Blues

By Kyro R. Lantsberger

Nearly a decade of warfighting lies behind us since the opening blast of September 11, 2001. Mistakes along the way and poor decisions have led to waning public support in the fight against an enemy whose resolve has not wavered. Both Houses of the U.S. Congress have passed national health care legislation despite some of the largest and most vocal protests in the history of this country. Couple this with an economy in recession and national debt at a level hardly comprehensible, one could make the statement along with G.K. Chesterton that this nation is, without doubt, "America in a Rut" (*ILN* 08/02/1924).

At the time of Chesterton's writing, America was in a small recession, a slight dulling of the roaring twenties. As Chesterton often reminds, progress is not always improvement. Culture is not necessarily enriched by production and consumption of resources; as a matter of fact, usually it is restricted. As Chesterton notes, "progress in machinery generally did occur where there was no progress in mentality... The people without machinery have been intellectual, independent, speculative, or sceptical, as you choose to regard it." When digesting the words of Chesterton, and the complexities of life in this world, for that matter, it is necessary to consider the seeming paradoxes of a situation. For while it is true that tough times force us to confront our inner vanities, and the easy seduction of materialism and the venial misuse of resources, it is also verifiable that times of hardship sow the seeds that ripen into upheavals, as we see in the story of the Bolsheviks.

Chesterton was writing during the time when big industry seemed to be swallowing up the masses, sending them into lonely vigils in the dark anti-cathedrals that were the factories of the time to perform processes divorced from the product. "If it comes to thinking, to questioning, to the use or abuse of speculation, no people have done it more than people sitting on the bare ground and staring at the stars. No people have done it less than people engaged in the applications of physical science to practical commerce." Oddly, it is the loss of manufacturing that many now lament. Our current malaise is far more nebulous, defined as a near-cataclysmic shutdown of the financial system caused by the loss of money that never actually existed in the first place. It is easy to see the physical exploitation going on in a sweatshop labor situation; more subtle to grasp until the end is the exploitation of presumption and overindulgence. It is no longer old-fashioned to revisit the classical arguments against usury. As Chesterton observes, "The desire to see wheels go round involves the idea that they will always repeat themselves. In one sense it may be called progressive, since when the wheels go round the cart goes on. In another sense it may be called conservative, for in assuming that the wheels will go round it assumes that the wheels will not come off. But, above all, when the wheels are really going round rapidly, they are generally in a rut." I do not think it is drawing too much of analogy to compare Chesterton's dismal image of the twirling wheels of industry to the churning and "recycling" of money over and over again, assuming that the wheel will perpetually remain turning. Unfortunately perhaps it does, digging a deeper and deeper rut.

While it is true that tough times force us to confront our inner vanities, and the easy seduction of materialism and the venial misuse of resources, it is also verifiable that times of hardship sow the seeds that ripen into upheavals.

The United States always seems to be a source of wonderment for Chesterton. "America is a very great living and complex reality, and everybody must apologise for having any impressions of it at all." He rightly regards it as the only nation founded on a creed. Even compared to its Ango-national counterparts of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, the early history of the United States sets it apart. Nations normally arise organically. A group of people sharing a common culture, language, geography, or even common ancestors identifies itself as unique and manifests itself over the course of history as a coherent political unit. This is not the case with the American experience. The United States is meant to be the political expression of a particular worldview. This worldview has been under constant revision, repackaging, and reinvention since before the ink dried on the Constitution; it is perhaps more accurate to say that the defining characteristic of the American nation is a shared mythology and set of ideals more archetypal than actual, a New World Athena sprung forth from the ideas of the Old World Zeus. "It is no longer a question of our calling in the New World to redress the balance of the Old. We [Europeans] are the New World, and we are upsetting the balance of the Old; and it looks as if the balance of America were a good deal upset."

"It is true that I am of an older fashion; much that I love has been destroyed or sent into exile." —G.K. CHESTERTON



From Out of the Past, Met in the Future

By David W. Fagerberg

It has been a hundred and one years since Chesterton burst on the scene with his book *Orthodoxy* in 1908. He had already been attracting attention with essays—particularly a set of controversies with Mr. Blatchford three years earlier—but I think most biographers treat the publication of *Orthodoxy* as a benchmark.

A century plus a year. Seems like a long time ago, an impression confirmed by looking on the Internet, which contains a list of things in the decade following this benchmark. Instant coffee in 1909, conveniently followed by a pop-up toaster ten years later. 1913 saw two advances in fashion, the modern zipper and the bra. Something slightly more useful for the advance of civilization came in 1916, stainless steel. And exactly one decade after *Orthodoxy* came the superheterodyne radio circuit, something you can't appreciate in itself but which became a standard component in every radio and television.

Such a list of items may put the reader in the frame of mind received by walking into an antique store and seeing dusty doilies and rusted radios. "The nineteen hundreds," we gasp. I lived through half of them, but a near decade's residence in the twenty-first century makes them seem distant, indeed; even more so, I imagine, for grade-schoolers who have no conscious memory of writing a "one" and a "nine" in the dateline.

So how does it happen that I find Chesterton meeting me on the road ahead, instead of the road behind?

In 1929, about the time the yo-yo was reintroduced as a fad and Clarence Birdseye introduced frozen food, five years after Chesterton had become a Catholic, he wrote an apologetic work explaining why he had. *The Thing: Why I Am A Catholic* contains an essay entitled "What Do They Think?" Chesterton is moved to ask the question so he can exercise one of his favorite pastimes, which is to back the discussion up one step from heat to light, from prejudice to grounding assumptions.

The occasion for this question was a sentence in an article of a London paper which "stated that Rome tolerates, in her relation with the Russian Uniats, 'strange heresies and even bearded and wedded clergy.'" Chesterton found himself staring at those eight revealing words on the page. "Only a wild unreason, about the whole way the thing [Catholicism] hangs together, could thus make even the joints and hinges of that rickety statement rattle and creak with laughter." He began to see behind the phrase the misunderstanding in the mind of the writer. There follows an instance of classic Chestertonian prose, one of my favorites:

> There is in the world, they would tell us, a powerful and persecuting superstition, intoxicated with the impious idea of having a monopoly of divine truth, and therefore cruelly crushing and exterminating everything else as error. It burns thinkers for thinking, discoverers for discovering, philosophers and theologians who differ by a hair's breadth from its dogmas; it will tolerate no tiny change or shadow of variety even among its friends and followers; it sweeps the whole world with one encyclical cyclone of uniformity; it would destroy nations and empires for a word, so wedded is it to its fixed idea that its own word is the Word of God. When it is thus sweeping the world, it comes to a remote and rather barbarous region somewhere on the borders of Russia; where it stops suddenly; smiles broadly; and tells the people there that they can have the strangest heresies they like...We might well suppose, therefore, that the Church says benevolently to these fortunate Slavs, "By all means worship Baphomet and Beelzebub; say the Lord's Prayer backwards; continue to drink the blood of infants—nay, even," and here her voice falters, till she rallies with an effort of generous resolution, "—yes, even, if you really must, grow a beard."

To repeat the title of the essay: what do they think who think such a thing?

The reason why Chesterton, "the hapless Catholic journalist," despairs of explaining The Thing to these critics is because he does not know at what end of the sentence to begin in order to untangle their knot of confusion. "What is the good of his laboriously beginning to explain that a married clergy is a matter of discipline and not doctrine, that it can therefore be allowed locally without heresy—when all the time the man thinks a beard as important as a wife and more important than a false religion?" He wonders what apoplectic shock the critic may go into if he saw "a bearded Franciscan walking through Wimbledon."

I do not know how many Anglican priests and bishops wear beards, but I think the most recent gesture by Pope Benedict XVI would be willing to accept their beards if he has gone so far as to also accept their wives. At this writing, the newspapers are abuzz about the creation of Personal Ordinariates for Anglicans who desire to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church. I read, "Roman Catholics are to allow married men to become priests in a radical concession to attract recruits from the troubled Anglican church." And "the new churches' bishops will be confusingly named 'Ordinaries': they will be almost like real Roman Catholic bishops, except that they may be married, like their clergy." From out of the past, Chesterton meets us in the future.

"The mystery of life is the plainest part of it." —G.K. CHESTERTON



Vanished

By John Peterson

James found his way across the darkened cocktail lounge and joined his newfound friend and drinking companion, Pete.

"Tough day?" Pete asked.

"Is there another kind?"

The two middle-aged tipplers had become acquainted through their shared interest in dark-rum daiquiris on the rocks. At first it had led to no more than a brief acknowledgement, but in less than a week they were seeking out one another's company in the murky saloon known as Gordon's Smoker—a haven for business men who need a buffer between the anxiety of work and the tedium of domestic life.

James had two grievances. The first was everything at the office. The second was everything at home. Pete was unfailingly sympathetic. Tonight the home front was getting the treatment.

"The way you've described Wilma," Pete said, "she doesn't seem half bad."

"She's not bad," James said, lighting an oversized cigar. "She's boring. I wish I could spend more time with Betsy."

Both men were in their middle forties, and James had decided that Pete, in comparison with his other friends, was an unusually witty companion. At least he was during hours they spent drinking together before the evening commute. James had somehow failed to notice that his new friend was not so much a good talker as a good listener.

"Why don't you dump Wilma and marry Betsy?" Pete asked.

"I would, but Wilma's uncle left her a retirement trust. That's the reason I married her in the first place. It's a million-dollar annuity and it kicks in ten years from now when she's fifty-five. If we get divorced, we each get equal payments; but if I remarry, my payments go to Wilma and I get zilch. So I always have to think twice before I haul off and belt her one."

Pete asked what would happen if one of them died. James explained that the survivor gets everything in the trust with no strings attached.

"James, my friend," Pete said, as he signaled Millie to bring two more daiquiris, "it happens that I have the perfect solution for you."

"Forget it," James said. "I'm not going to Fort Leavenworth on a murder wrap." He blew a cloud of bluish cigar smoke into the already hazy atmosphere.

"Suppose your wife just suddenly vanished without a trace," Pete said. "After seven years, you apply for a death certificate. There's a hearing before a judge, and—*voila!*—you're single again. You marry Betsy, you collect on the annuity."

"As a day dream, it's a winner," James said.

"Did I ever tell you what I do for a living?" Pete asked. James realized that he knew almost nothing about his friend. He was not really sure how that had happened, since they had spent so much time talking together. "I make people disappear," Pete said. "Poof, gone—no sign of a struggle, luggage still in the closet, kettle whistling on the stove." James stared at his friend as if the man had just grown horns.

"You put a hundred thousand bucks in checking," Pete continued, "and I do the rest. All you do is play the part of the concerned husband. You won't have to tell any lies, because you really won't know anything about it." James continued to stare at him. "Well, think it over."

James decided to see where this bizarre idea was leading. "Suppose I promised you the hundred grand, and then I reneged on the deal," he said. "What then?"

"Nobody reneges on a man who can make people disappear, James," Pete replied, casually. "Think about that."

"Okay, then," James asked, "how do you do it?"

"Professional secret," Pete said.

James smashed his cigar into the ashtray. "I'm going," he said. He threw down some bills and abruptly marched off. He put the episode down to a brush with a man he had somehow failed to realize was a joker with a sick sense of humor—if not a complete lunatic. He would find a different bar for his after-work daiquiris and be more careful in making any new acquaintances. However, while riding home on the train, James reconsidered. He knew full well that Pete was no joker and that he wasn't a nutcase.

"Late again," Wilma said. "Cold potatoes and another roast cooked down to mush. What was it this time, Jimbo, the booze or the broad?"

James wondered why Wilma's remarkable tranquility had lately turned to waspishness. She knew he detested being called "Jimbo."

She went on. "I don't have to put up with this," she said. "Either we get a whole new game plan for this so-called marriage of ours, or I'm going to get a whole new life. Or are you too drunk to take my meaning?"

"Hold on, Wilma," a desperate James said. "I don't know how things got so bad between us. Look, I'm going to spend more time at home. Let's put an addition on the house—a party room or something."

To his surprise, Wilma seemed quite taken by the notion. "Why, James," she said, "that's a lovely idea!"

"I'll take tomorrow morning off," he said. "We'll go to the bank and arrange for a home-equity loan to cover the costs. Then we'll find an architect and a contractor."

The bank was only too happy to come up with the home-improvement loan. The bank would have advanced them twice the amount they needed, even were it for no more serious a purpose than buying lottery tickets

had James and Wilma been interested in that sort of recreation.

When James sat down at the familiar table in Gordon's that evening, Pete was all apologies. "Look," he said, "I shouldn't have suggested you let me handle your Wilma problem. You're not that kind of guy, and I'm just glad we're still on speaking terms."

"I've got the one hundred grand," James said, taking out another cigar and forgetting the newly lighted one he had just placed in the ashtray. "What's the next step?"

"We just shake hands on it."

James hurried home. He did not want another catfight with Wilma, and being late for dinner again would not help his cause. In the kitchen, he found something aromatic bubbling in the crock-pot. "Wilma?" Now where had she gone?

The next morning he called the police. "Look," he said, "this is embarrassing. My wife has vanished. She walked out last night before I got home, and she didn't take any luggage. I know what you think it probably means, but my wife is not like that."

The ensuing investigation was slow to start and halfhearted at best. Wives disappeared all the time. Eventually a forensics team was sent to the house to look for signs of foul play. After a year, the police closed the file. James had to admit that Pete really knew his business.

"Now we just wait," he told Betsy. "When we have a death certificate in hand, we get hitched. A couple years after that, we cash in, and I start paying the bank back for the loan money I passed along to Pete." James hadn't thought to ask his lawyer what would happen to the legacy if Wilma were somehow to reappear after he was remarried.

With the hundred thousand dollar payoff in hand, Pete stopped visiting Gordon's Smoker. For one thing, he did not want to see any more of James. For another thing, he hated dark rum daiquiris on the rocks. And third, he was enjoying the tourist scene and favorable exchange rate in Paraguay. His lovely companion was enjoying it too.

"When we get bored with this," Pete said, "we can spend some time in Rio—what do you say?"

"I'll go anywhere with you," Wilma said, "as long as James isn't there."

The Toy Shop Customer's Casebook By Steve Miller

A Toy Shop Christmas

The Shop of Ghosts



A toy shop customer finds a strange shop where the toys seem real and the proprietor refuses to be paid for his wares.

The Mystery. When will Father Christmas die?

Subplot. How long has the dingy toy shop been in existence?

Other Characters. Charles Dickens, who wants to know the location of the grave of Father Christmas; Sir Richard Steele, who thought Father Christmas dying when he wrote of Sir Roger de Coverley and his Christmas Day; Ben Jonson, who thought King James had put an end to Christmas; and Robin Hood, who saw Father Christmas dying.

Location. A very small and dimly lit toy shop in one of the grayest and leanest of the streets of Battersea.

Publishing History. "The Shop of Ghosts" was first published in *The Daily News* in 1906. In 1909 it was included in the collection, *Tremendous Trifles.* In 1926 it appeared in a selection of Chesterton's writings, *A Gleaming Cohort,* as "The Shop of Ghosts: A Good Dream." It is found in Volume XIV of *G.K. Chesterton Collected Works* by Ignatius.

Noble Allusions. (1) The story brings comfort (maybe joy) to those fearful of the War on Christmas waged by the ACLU and other proponents of political correctness. Father Christmas does not exist to bring us a "winter holiday." As that noted Jewish philosopher, Theodor Geisel writing as Dr. Seuss, demonstrates in his tome, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas,* the holiday transcends presents, trees, and roast beast. The true spirit of Christmas is family, friends, and fellowship, which prove Charles Dickens' observation about Father Christmas at the end of the story to be correct. (2) Chesterton peoples the story with characters from the Merry England he loved and which he celebrated in *A Short History of England.* The English Christmas is the force which can unite Robin Hood, Ben Jonson, Sir Richard Steele, and Charles Dickens. (3) Like his beloved toy theaters Chesterton was fascinated by the toy shop. It is a place of wonder and power in *The Napoleon of Notting Hill.* Here the toys are not fantasy but reality seen from a great distance. A green Bayswater omnibus is passing through a huge desert. A blue elephant is blue with distance, not paint. The black doll lives in passionate tropical foliage. The red Noah's ark is "really the enormous ship of earthly salvation riding on the rain-swollen sea, red in the first morning of hope."

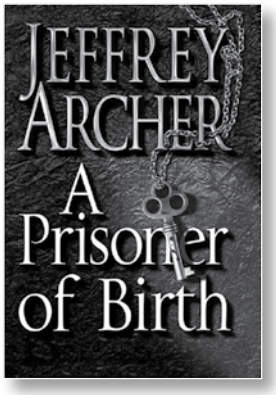
The Opening. "Nearly all the best and most precious things in the universe you can get for a halfpenny. I make an exception, of course, of the sun, the moon, the earth, people, stars, thunderstorms, and such trifles. You can get them for nothing. Also I make an exception of another thing, which I am not allowed to mention in this paper, and of which the lowest price is a penny halfpenny. But the general principle will be at once apparent. In the street behind me, for instance, you can now get a ride on an electric tram for a halfpenny. To be on an electric tram is to be on a flying castle in a fairy tale. You can get quite a large number of brightly coloured sweets for a halfpenny. Also you can get the chance of reading this article for a halfpenny; along, of course, with other irrelevant matter."

Chesterton's Bloodthirsty Heirs

"I should enjoy nothing more than always writing detective stories, except always reading them." —G.K. Chesterton

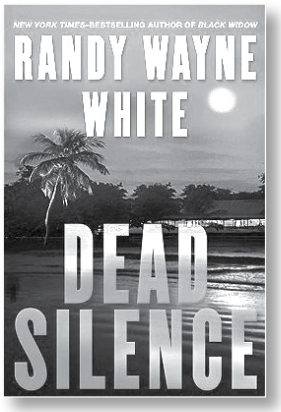
by Steve Miller

Jeffrey Archer. *A Prisoner of Birth* (2008). If one steals, one should steal from the best. Jeffrey Archer does not disguise that his novel is a modern retelling of *The Count of Monte Cristo*. The perpetrators of the injustice sending Danny Cartwright to prison for 22 years call themselves the Musketeers Club. In his prison education program the Edmond Dantes' stand-in reads the original book by Dumas. As stated in an interview, Archer saw his key plot dilemmas as contriving a credible departure from the escape-proof Belmarsh and providing his hero with the financial resources necessary for a diabolical revenge. The escape parallels that of Dantes from the Chateau D'If. The treasure requires machinations as complex as the cunning retribution. The novel recognizes, as the Dumas' original sometimes did not, that intelligent villains are not fools and will discern the existence of a plot against them and its likely source. Cartwright



is credible as a man of humble origins who uses practical wisdom from the London streets and the discrete counsel of Swiss bankers to attack the wealth of his enemies. But as the story twists and turns, the question is who will destroy whom first? Archer is a popular author whose experience includes serving as a Member of Parliament, and two years imprisonment for perversion of justice stemming from a libel verdict obtained by perjured testimony. Belmarsh prison where Cartwright is sent was Archer's first stop during his own incarceration. His talent is to create characters interesting and complex enough to seem real.

Randy Wayne White. *Dead Silence* (2009). A bespectacled marine biologist may seem an unlikely action hero. But Doc Ford has a past as an ex-CIA assassin and a present including the vigilante killing of a football star who committed rape and murder. Therefore, it is not surprising when he helps foil the kidnapping of a female U.S. Senator by a group of Cuban ex-torturers. The Cubans manage to capture a teenage essay contest winner who turns out to be almost more than the criminals can handle. A chase from Long Island to Florida ends with the boy buried in a box with a limited supply of air and Doc Ford trying to rescue him while dodging a murder charge. In his quest, torturing a witness with a guilty past causes doubt whether Ford can be the true hero of the saga. The novel has a cliffhanger quality and perhaps a feeling that the reader is being asked to hang off a few cliffs too many. Whenever a peril is seemingly resolved, a new one springs up to replace it. Also, these villains from an island nation can elude a federal manhunt but cannot operate a boat. The tale shows more originality than most, however, and raises a few questions about what the government does in our name. Doc Ford combines feelings of guilt with the efficient ruthlessness of an intriguing anti-hero.



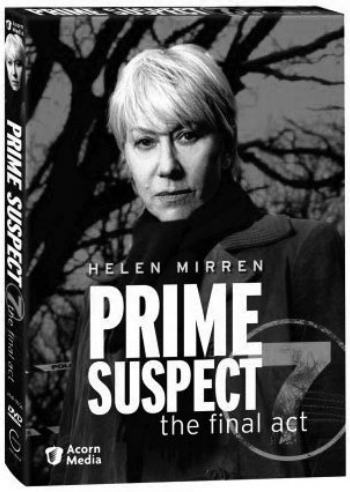
A Policeman's Lot Is Not A Happy One

By Chris Chan

Prime Suspect (1991-2006)

Prime Suspect is a TV crime series, but it is also an epic tragedy. Over the course of seven installments more than the ravages of murder, rape, and violence are chronicled. The heart of the series is in its central character's slow, cyclical pattern of unraveling and regrouping. The protagonist is Jane Tennison, an ambitious detective superintendent whose professional successes seem to be inversely proportionate to the disintegration of her private life and personal relationships. Helen Mirren has rightly received impressive acclaim and awards for her performance as the embattled Tennison, propelled by striking reserves of controlled inner strength rather than flashy or sentimental theatrics.

The first episode of the series (*PS1*) is arguably the best, although that fact should not put potential viewers off later installments. Here, Tennison has to fight for respect in a misogynistic police department, proving herself by catching a serial killer who preys on women. Eponymous prime suspect George Marlow (John Bowe) seems a likely culprit, but as the investigation moves forward doubts are raised even as hunches are verified. Bowe's performance rather brilliantly blends a slight sympathetic touch with



a soupçon of unsavory menace. Tom Bell adds another powerhouse performance as Bill Otley, a surly homicide veteran who sees Tennison as an unqualified upstart (Bell makes welcome reappearances in *PS3* and *PS7*), and Zoë Wanamaker shines as Marlow's prickly girlfriend. The finale of the first entry is the closest the series has to a happy ending, although an unsettling but believable final twist dulls the shine of Tennison's triumph.

PS1 sets up themes that will echo throughout the rest of the series: Tennison's continual quest for career success and respect, her on-and-off cigarette and alcohol addictions, the continual failures of her romantic life, and the impacts of her mounting loneliness and depression.

PS2 focuses on a potentially explosive case where a long-buried body stands to disrupt a black neighborhood by flaming racial tensions, and new forensic technologies and office politics are introduced. *PS3* centers on a disturbing world of child prostitution and murder. Both are solid and intriguing productions, and if they never quite hit the emotional and dramatic heights of *PS1*, at least they are light years away from being disappointing. Towards the end of *PS3*, Tennison makes a decision that will completely change the trajectory of her life and psyche, one which may potentially cost her the sympathy of many viewers, or perhaps the aftereffects of her choice will make some people commiserate with her.

The emotional fallout of this decision carries over into *PS4*, the only entry in the series to be composed of three shorter telemovies rather than one nearly four-hour miniseries. Relationships between mothers and children at three different stages of their development center in each of *PS4's* episodes: infancy, adolescence, and adulthood. The simultaneously best and most flawed is the third installment, where the Marlow case is revisited in the light of new evidence. The storyline is intriguing, but the actor brought in to replace Bowe lacks the nuance that made the original performance compelling.

PS5 pits Tennison against a cocky crime boss, and in *PS6* she tries to capture a renegade Balkan war criminal. *PS7*, subtitled *The Final Act*, has Tennison investigating a young woman's murder as her own alcoholism spirals out of control and the mistakes of the past confront her as she stumbles towards forced retirement.

The production team had to make a calculated choice in crafting the emotional climax of the final episode. Would Tennison make a full acknowledgement of the role that her own mistakes had made on her life, or would she lapse into a clichéd "my decisions were the right ones because they were *my* decisions" speech? In the end, the difference is split: Tennison makes an *apologia* for her life, but Mirren's face belies her words. As Tennison's career dedicated to the pursuit of truth comes to a close, we wonder if she will discover the truth behind the mystery of her life, and whether she is capable of fully acknowledging these facts. In the end, some mysteries have to go unanswered—various viewers will come to different conclusions.

One of the most striking aspects of the series is just how ugly it often is. There are no stately English country houses with attractive colors and gardens. Instead, we get shot after shot of dirty streets, scruffy empty lots, graffiti-layered walls, and barren mass-produced housing. Matching the physically ugly settings are characters who are ugly internally, though not necessarily externally. If people are shaped by their environments, then the series' settings appear to produce a largely coarse and brutal people: selfish, dishonest, and sexually obsessed. Throughout the series, only a handful of people are wholly likeable, mainly police officers, relatives of victims, and members of Tennison's own family.

NBC recently announced plans to Americanize *Prime Suspect*. Regardless of the quality of the finished project, the results will be interesting on an academic level. Will the U.S. version simply go through the standard motions of shocking sordidness and politically correct notes of female empowerment, or will it manage to seek out and depict emotional truths commonly ignored on standard television series? No matter what happens, the original *Prime Suspect* series will stand on its own as an exemplar of the social and emotional costs of crime and unnatural death.

WHODUNIT THEOLOGY

Father Brown on Satanism:

I know something about Satanism, for my sins; I've been forced to know. I know what it is, what it practically always is. It's proud and it's sly. It likes to be superior; it loves to horrify the innocent with things half understood, to make children's flesh creep. That's why it's so fond of mysteries and initiations and secret societies and all the rest of it. Its eyes are turned inwards, and however grand and grave it may look, it's always hiding a small, mad smile.



Day by Day

The Duty of Delight: The Diaries of Dorothy Day
Edited by Robert Ellsberg
Marquette University Press, 2008
669 pages, $42.00 (hardcover)

Reviewed by Dale Ahlquist

On the day that I was born, Dorothy Day attended a wedding. I know this because I read it in her diary. What resonated was that at the wedding there was a reading of an excerpt from G.K. Chesterton. It was one of many strange connections I felt with Dorothy as I started each morning with her last summer, following her life and her thoughts from the 1930s up until her last entry a week before she died in November of 1980. When I finally and regretfully closed the book, I felt so grateful for the work of editor Robert Ellsberg that I called him up and thanked him.

There are all kinds of reasons to dive into this remarkable work. It is informative, inspiring, even entertaining. It is the study of the life of a saint, the surprising struggles, the small victories, the great disappointments, the dramatic adventures on the world's stage, the deeper adventures of the interior life, a journey of faith, a journal of prayer.

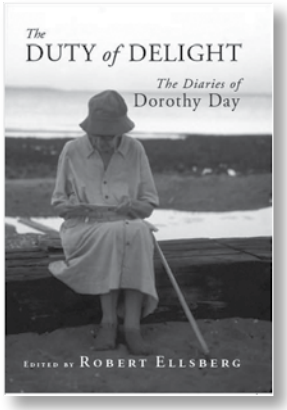
Day reveals her understanding of Chesterton's definition of the mystical Christian virtues, that love means loving the unlovable. She is pained by the loss of faith all around her, which she considers the greatest disaster. She seeks to be more detached from the world, to be more spiritual, even while being up to her elbows in the world, serving others.

Above all, *The Duty of Delight* is a book of meditations:

> God rewards us for so little effort. Just a resolute turning to Him of our wills.
>
> Man often chooses evil because it has the semblance of the good, because it seems to promise happiness.
>
> What are hardships endured for Him? Where he wants me to be, there I must be happy.

Because it is a book of meditations, it will be a personal book for whomever reads it. It certainly is for me.

I especially appreciate the fact that Dorothy helped bring into being an idealistic organization and became its driving force and most visible spokesman. She pursued something that most people simply dismissed. People thought her goals were impossible—or merely foolish. She published a periodical that was a money-loser. She traveled around the country, meeting fascinating people. Was asked to give talks on all different subjects, and often paid little or nothing. In between trying to raise a family, she tried to write. She got some nice recognition here and there, won respect from unlikely corners; she was also subject to rejection and unbelievable opposition from expected allies.



Along the way she attracted a lot of goofy people. She records a colleague moaning, "Why does this movement attract all the crazy ones?"

Her answer: "If people are slightly mad, how much more attractive it is that they should be mad for God."

She would find solace in the Jesus Prayer, in classical music, in good literature, including a stiff dose of G.K. Chesterton.

One day Dorothy got a phone call out of the blue from Eunice Kennedy Shriver. They talked about hell.

Yes, I could relate to all these experiences, these trials and triumphs. Even the call from Eunice Shriver. One day, out of the blue, Eunice Shriver called me. We talked about purgatory—really.

Dorothy Day was a blessed companion each morning last summer. She reminded me that wherever we are, we have to deal with people: we can either drag them down or pull them up—or be dragged down or pulled up.

The phrase "the duty of delight" comes from Ruskin. It was the title Dorothy had planned to use for the book she wrote following her autobiographical, *The Long Loneliness*, a title and book she feared too gloomy. But she never used it. Robert Ellsberg wisely used it for these personal notes which she had ordered sealed until twenty-five years after her death.

Dorothy knew the importance of delight, and her diaries reveal a Chestertonian sense of wonder at God's simple gifts. Appreciating a tree outside her window. Watching a mother cat chase crickets. Listening to the song of a bird. Enjoying lambs playing in the field, or waves crashing on the rocks. A snowy day, a rainy day, a clear day, a quiet day. She saw past the dirt and past the despair and found the delight. Sometimes it is a duty, surely, but it is still a delight.

I could not help but be reminded of the epitomal scene of Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town*. In it the character Emily is given a chance to relive one day of her life after she has died. She chooses her twelfth birthday. She returns and suddenly looks at everything with utter amazement, as each precious moment slips by too quickly, and she is overwhelmed. She turns to the Stage Manager and asks, "Do human beings ever realize life while they live it? Every, every minute?"

The Stage Manager answers: "Saints and poets, maybe. They do some."

Saints and poets. Especially the saints who were poets and the poets who were saints. Like G.K. Chesterton and Dorothy Day.

Yes, You Can Go Home Again

G.K. Chesterton Collected Works Volume X: Collected Poetry Part II
Compiled and Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Denis J. Conlon
Ignatius Press, 2008
518 pages, $24.95 (paperback)

Reviewed by Nancy Carpentier Brown

Triolets, ballades, epic poems, nonsense verse; published works, unpublished works, works complete and incomplete. Chesterton was a prolific master of the poem, both as a serious work and as a tease for a friend. He wrote poems for publication, expertly revising them again and again. He wrote poems as gifts for birthdays, apologizing within the poem itself for making a poor rhyme.

Many of his poems are already collected in *Volume X* of the *Collected Works*, but in the continual search for Chesterton's writings many more poems were discovered, particularly from his younger years. After the first collection of poetry from Ignatius Press appeared in 1994, Denis Conlon, with the help of Aidan Mackey, collected enough works to fill another volume, and thus *Part II* (also referred to as "X-B") has now been published.

Chesterton penned around a thousand poems during the course of his life. His verses often look as though they are his natural reaction to the people and events of his life. Here is a poem to celebrate "a certain evening." Another is penned "to Frances on the death of her sister Gertrude"; yet another describes "The Missing Link."

Chesterton's first two published works, both in 1900, were small books of poetry, *Wild Knights* and *Greybeards at Play*. *Greybeards* is reproduced in its entirety with Chesterton's illustrations within this new volume of poetry. Also included are reproductions of the book of Clerihews which Chesterton, Bentley, Oldershaw, Chesterton's father Edward, Maurice Solomon, and Waldo d'Avigdor (all but Edward, members of the JDC) produced under the title of *Dictionary of Biography*, richly illustrated by G.K. Chesterton in 1893.

In addition to the many early poems Chesterton wrote prior to 1900, this second volume includes dozens and dozens of ballades. Chesterton seems to have been able to produce a ballade on the spur of the moment for any reason or occasion.

The early works are notable for a few reasons. There are many works which appear later in revised form in other collections. The early re-writes inform us of a man who does indeed edit and rework his lines. His re-workings can give an impression of how his mind was turning upon the problem, which is an interesting exercise.

In addition, one is amazed at the level of vocabulary in a young man of fourteen. Today's teens wouldn't be caught knowing words like profligate, adamantine, paeans, warders, pennons; few could use the name Mephistopheles in a sentence, let alone spell it.

The early poems reveal a Chesterton steeped in history, interested in events and especially death scenes of the past. There is a nice poem ("Not in Vain") that describes Chesterton's early love of books and reading by the fire. In addition, these early poems show us a sixteen-year-old boy in love, writing about his current aching heart. Religious themes also are a common thread woven all throughout the pages of poems, from early youth onward. Thoughts about God, angels, biblical themes, and scripturally inspired words are common.

Included in this volume are several snippets of plays or fragments of scenes written by Chesterton, one assumes, for playacting with friends. *Saint Bartholomew's Eve*, *The Junior Debating Club—A Morality*, *The Almighty Man*, and *The Secret Garden of the Sultan of Egypt* are included, as well as *Shipwrecked Off Fairyland*, which is both a play and a musical.

There are many poems dedicated to the Junior Debate Club, many devoted to Frances or her work friends, or their siblings, cousins, and adult friends once married.

Revealed, too, are that Chesterton's motifs, carried with him throughout life, began very early. The poem "The World Lover" reminds us of his childlike wonder at God's creation, a sense of wonder that never left during his entire life.

And lastly, in his collection *Greybeards at Play*, the final poem stands out. Chesterton describes a walk through a field where he meets a little child, "the sage of whom I learn." Already, his childlike innocence is forming, as he learns to "see" through the eyes of a child. And the very last verse describes the child leaving his childhood behind, and wondering if he can ever find his home again, now that he's turned his back on it ("home" being a metaphor for childhood).

Chesterton seems to answer him: yes, he can find his home again, by traveling forward all the way around the world, for the world is round. This combination of two ideas: that one can re-gain one's childlike innocence, and that one can find home if one travels all the way around the world, repeat and are renewed in many a Chesterton work.

Those two themes, seeing the world through the eyes of a child, and wanting to find one's way back home, are important in Chesterton's life.

Half the fun of reading this volume is Conlon's helpful footnotes. For example, on page 394 he tells us, "Not a Man, Mrs. Whitehouse: Bonrick and Maud were names of cats." And on page 424 we are quite helpfully told that "L.S.D." stands not for the drug we think of, nor the Beatles' song, but rather, "pounds, shillings, and pence—British currency."

This new collection gives us insights into the life of Chesterton that no biography can. Who could grasp how well Chesterton knew the people Frances worked with at the PNEU (Parents National Educational Union)? A Chesterton play finds humor in the antics of the workplace where Frances toiled for five years during their long engagement. Many other insights can be gained into the life of Gilbert Keith Chesterton besides these. *Collected Poetry Part II* is highly recommended for those seeking to understand Chesterton, as well as to read more of his talented verse.

A Good Biographer is Hard to Find

Flannery: A Life of Flannery O'Connor
By Brad Gooch
New York: Little, Brown, 2009
448 pages, $30 (hardcover)

Reviewed by James G. Bruen, Jr.

Like Chesterton, Flannery O'Connor was an artist, and not merely of the written word. "I don't know how to write," O'Connor told the adviser to her high school newspaper, recounts Brad Gooch in *Flannery*. "But I can draw." In *Mystery and Manners*, O'Connor commented on the propensity of writers to draw. "I know a good many fiction writers who paint, not because they're any good at painting, but because it helps their writing. It forces them to look at things. Fiction writing is very seldom a matter of saying things; it is a matter of showing things."

From childhood, Flannery O'Connor was defiantly different, a taciturn loner who was to find herself at home in the thirteenth century with Thomas Aquinas. In Georgia, O'Connor stood apart and observed others who became grist for her stories. Her adult friends were from elsewhere, drawn by her writing. Writing slowly and meticulously, she produced a small corpus of work. "'She was very serious about her mission in life, and had a sort of destiny,' says Barbara Hamilton. 'She knew she was a great writer. She told me so many times.'"

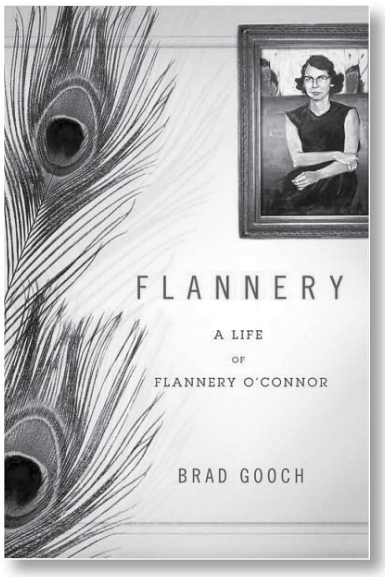
Although she wrote two novels, O'Connor is best known for her short stories. With a wry sense of humor, "weird imaginings," and contrariness, she is known for the grotesque, which, given her artistry, is praise. As Chesterton noted in *The Everlasting Man*, artists understand that one branch of the beautiful is the ugly, the grotesque. Gooch thoroughly and artfully describes O'Connor's upbringing, family, education, literary style, work habits, literary friendships, and the real-life observations and situations that underlie her stories, as well as the impact of her lupus on her writings. Gooch's treats O'Connor's Catholicism descriptively, sometimes uncomprehendingly, without delving deeply into how it underlies her stories. "Much of my fiction takes its character from a reasonable use of the unreasonable, though the reasonableness of my use of it may not always be apparent. The assumptions that underlie this use of it, however, are those of the central Christian mysteries. These are assumptions to which a large part of the modern audience takes exception," O'Connor once said. "Belief, in my own case anyway, is the engine that makes perception operate." A more thorough biography would explore such statements in depth. Lorraine Murray's recently published *The Abbess of Andalusia* paints the spiritual portrait of O'Connor and her writing that *Flannery* lacks.

Two of Gooch's statements appear to be the key to understanding his approach to Flannery O'Connor; they definitely color it.

"No matter what routines she did privately, in her stories she always presented blacks with dignity," writes Gooch. His statement is patronizing, as if he said she always presented Indians as noble or gays as superior. O'Connor would have recoiled from this generalization. When "a student complimented her dignified, respectful portrayal of a black servant," Gooch recounts earlier, "Flannery's answer went something like this, 'No. That's just the way he was.'" O'Connor recognized the dignity inherent in each person as a creature and child of God, but also depicted fallen nature. Original sin and free will suffuse her stories. Her approach thus makes some people uncomfortable. The poet John Crowe Ransom visited her writers' workshop and chose one of her stories to read to the class. "When Ransom came across the word 'nigger', he refused to read it aloud, substituting the word 'Negro.' 'It did spoil the story,' Flannery complained [later]. 'The people I was writing about would never use any other word.'" A "type of artistic racism," Gooch sniffs, "worked well for her." By saying that she always presented blacks with dignity, Gooch may be signaling that it's okay for enlightened, educated folks to read O'Connor despite her use of the word "nigger" in her fiction.

Similarly, when Gooch writes that O'Connor was "opening up to Teilhard, and moving beyond while never abandoning an absolute Thomism that some felt 'too straightjacket,' or old-fashioned," what does he mean? Does he really mean that her views evolved but never changed? Or, again, is he again merely sending a signal, telling the enlightened they may read O'Connor despite her Catholicism?

Brad Gooch, professor of English at William Paterson University, is gay; he has written previously on gay interests, such as "finding the boyfriend within." In *Flannery*, his proclivity is reflected in his discussions of sexuality, and he seems disconcerted by O'Connor's apparent chastity. He does, however, allow O'Connor to speak, and she is eloquent: "As for lesbianism, I regard that as any other form of uncleanness. Purity is the twentieth centuries [sic] dirty word but it is the most mysterious of the virtues." Unable to portray O'Connor as a lesbian, Gooch presents her as sexually repressed and naïve, with a lesbian friend pining in unrequited love for her.



He then ends *Flannery* on a personal note with a schmaltzy proclamation of his own homosexuality.

Brad Gooch's *Flannery* is a pleasant read, but my estimation of it waned as I reflected on what I had found. For Gooch, O'Connor's talent trumps her medieval, backward faith. And, of course, had she not died so young, well, Teilhard de Chardin would have led her to enlightenment: it's acceptable to read O'Connor despite her racism and her religion. Those unfamiliar with Flannery O'Connor's body of work should begin instead with *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, a collection of her short stories (among these are masterpieces), and, as she said in *Mystery and Manners*, "just try to enjoy them."

The Incomparable Joseph

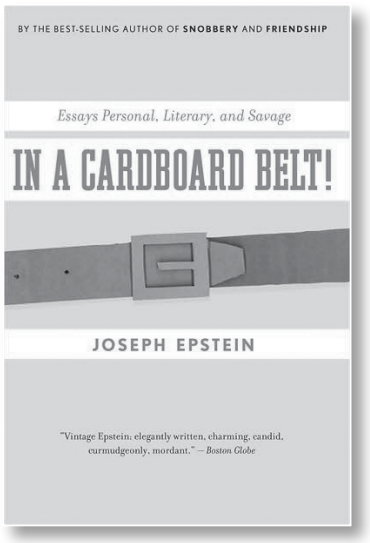
In a Cardboard Belt! Essays Personal, Literary, and Savage
By Joseph Epstein
New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2007
410 pages, $14.95 (paperback)

Reviewed by David Paul Deavel

Since my mid-twenties I have been a member of a small but very devoted literary cult dedicated to the finely-honed writing of Joseph Epstein. Epstein made his living for many years teaching literature (without the pretensions of tenure or a doctorate) at Northwestern University and editing *The American Scholar*, jobs at which he no doubt succeeded, but his real identity is as the finest (some say only) familiar essayist in America. His sixth volume of familiar essays, *In a Cardboard Belt!*, shows that even past seventy he still has it.

What, you might ask, has the man got? What is it that makes that small group who love him keep coming back for more? What made the friend who introduced me to Epstein decide to date a woman merely on the basis of her love for him? (Epstein, that is.) The answer might be found in Epstein's description of the criteria for membership in "The Max Beerbohm Cult." "Membership in the cult requires a strong penchant for irony, a skeptical turn of mind, and a sharp taste for comic incongruity." Such a cult, as Epstein notes, is necessarily very small and "always in danger of guttering out—but never, I'm happy to report, quite doing so."

Epstein's cult is also necessarily small. Responding to a grandchild's query whether he was "slightly famous," Epstein said that indeed he was, "except no one quite knows who I am." Though he is famous for writing "familiar essays," reading one of the longer Epstein pieces requires a certain cultural knowledge that extends beyond the realm of television and music trivia. He is, indeed, a literary man whose tastes run both to the purveyors of minor classics like Beerbohm and Lord Berners as well as to the mountains of high modernism like Proust. This set of essays, unlike his earlier collections, includes both strictly literary essays on characters such as the above, as well as familiar essays about eating out ("Memoirs of a Cheap and Finicky Glutton"), vacation travel ("On the Road Again, Alas"), reducing the number of books in his apartment ("Books Won't Furnish a Room"), teaching ("Goodbye, Mr. Chipstein"), and many other subjects.



Whether the essays are strictly literary or not, what makes them work is the peculiarly "sharp taste for comic incongruity" that Epstein himself lays out in his highly polished prose. Epstein can write finely honed and precise definitions of art for Marcel Proust, but dismiss Sartre's criticisms with the jauntiness of a college student: "Not smart, Sartre." The sensibility is in many ways that of Chesterton and Shakespeare, which dictates that about the highest and most serious subjects we must tell jokes. And with Epstein, the jokes are very funny.

Epstein's skeptical turn of mind can provide both the funniest and, to the religious believer, the most frustrating aspect of reading him. On the funny side, the section labeled "Attacks" includes takedowns of some of the biggest gasbags of the century—men like Edmund Wilson, George Steiner, or Harold Bloom. Concerning the third figure, a supposedly great literary critic: "Bloom is altogether too self-regarding to be among the most critical appreciators of literature. Most of the time one can't get around Bloom himself to a clear view of his subject. Reading him is like watching a man pirouetting in front of a steamy bathroom mirror with a much too small towel around him." Hilarious, but absolutely accurate as a diagnosis. Epstein's joke about Bloom is that he is George Steiner "without the sense of humor." Catch Steiner's next piece in the *Times Literary Supplement* and find out why Epstein says that "more humorless than Steiner human beings do not come."

The frustrating part of his skepticism is that Epstein sometimes gives the impression that he has used the rather less personally demanding religion of literature as a way of avoiding an attempt at the questions we all must face. With all due respect for and understanding of his worry that literature is "what gets lost when ideas are extracted too cleanly from literary works" and his deep distrust of the reductivism of most intellectuals, Epstein's skepticism sometimes seems to get in the way of finding the wisdom

he says he looks for in literature. Although he poignantly outlines the power of Isaac Bashevis Singer's work in its driving sense that "[n]o human drama has been devised that can compare or compete with the drama of salvation," he admits in another essay that "oblivion" is what he suspects waits for him at the grave's edge, though he's never found any certainty about it, or if God exists.

I've always been haunted by his recollection in an earlier essay about his friend, the eccentrically brilliant, but somewhat more religiously certain Edward Shils. Shils on his deathbed sadly remarked to Epstein, "we've never spoken about matters of the heart." Despite his often penetrating reflections on social, mental, and emotional life, Epstein himself hasn't yet gone as deep as he could in probing the wisdom of man.

Beerbohm never liked being called the "incomparable Max." "Compare me, compare me," he'd say. How does one compare the incomparable Joseph? Though not probing to the deepest levels of life, he remains an inseparable companion to the rest of them. If you're not part of the cult yet, you're in for a treat.

The Politics of Politeness

Christianity, Patriotism, and Nationhood: The England of G.K. Chesterton
By Julia Stapleton
Rowman and Littlefield, 2009
238 pages, $32.95 (paperback)

Reviewed by Chuck Chalberg

It is much the fashion today to separate and debunk the very commitments that were joined and celebrated by the young (and not so young) G.K. Chesterton. Today Christians are commonly encouraged to regard patriotism as somehow beneath them, if not also beneath contempt. When patriotism is deemed acceptable at all, it is only accepted on strictly secular terms. And nationhood? The term itself smacks of nationalism, an even more reprehensible "ism" than patriotism. If genuine emotions of patriotism have at best a questionable place in polite company, politicized displays of nationalism have no place at all. Nationalism, after all, strikes many as uncomfortably close to the ultimately reprehensible "ism" that is fascism. And polite (read *fashionable*) company is by definition anti-fascist. Its default position is labeling its enemies as fascist. Could polite company ever so much as imagine that the term might be legitimately applied to itself? Never.

G.K. Chesterton was nothing if not polite and unfashionable and anti-fascist. If Julia Stapleton is right, and in the main she surely is, the ever-polite GKC was more than slightly unfashionable in his own time. And if GKC was and remains right, and in the main he surely is, he would still be dismissed as thoroughly unfashionable today. He might even be accused of fascism. It's likely that he would continue to politely accept the dismissal—and deny the accusation.

Which came first for Chesterton? Was it Christianity or patriotism or what Stapleton terms "nationhood?" Stapleton herself opts for patriotism. In fact, her central argument is that Chesterton's "ancestral disposition toward patriotism was instrumental in guiding him to [sic] the Christian fold." If not truly a Christian until he had thought his way there, Chesterton was always a patriot, even when he was an unthinking one. This is not to suggest that he did not have to search for England as he searched for God. For search he did, "beneath...multiple layers of concealment, denial, and mistaken identity."

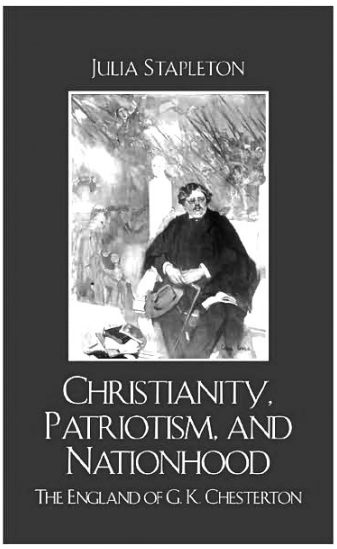
The thrust of Stapleton's story is to recount this search, a search which culminated not just in the discovery that he was a Christian and a patriot, but that for him patriotism, "Englishness," and Christianity were "mutually dependent and reinforcing."

This trinity, in turn, stood against a counter-trinity of cosmopolitanisms (at least two of which remain powerful today). These are imperialism, internationalism, and pacifism. Chesterton, the Christian patriot, deployed his "fighting faith" against all three during a lifetime when they took turns looming very large indeed in the life of England and the world beyond.

Cosmopolitans, then and now, claim to love humanity. Fair enough. But problems quickly arise when they have to deal with actual human beings. The key problem, as Chesterton often pointed out, is that cosmopolitans hate the very things that ordinary people love, things like "flags and drums and drinks and crowds and bonfires."

It must be conceded that the young Chesterton was a cosmopolitan of sorts during his brief flirtation with imperialism. But once it dawned on him that imperialism had nothing to do with protecting England and everything to do with wielding power, he rapidly abandoned it.

All brands of cosmopolitanism come in for Chestertonian criticism in these pages. Kipling, the imperialist, "admired," rather than loved, England. Tolstoy, the pacifist, spoke "bewildering nonsense" when he claimed to have the "same love for all men." And Wilson, the internationalist, promoted a League of Nations that Chesterton thought could be more



accurately defined as a "League to Abolish Nations."

Chesterton welcomed President Wilson's belated decision to join England's fight against Prussian "barbarism" in 1917. Sadly, Stapleton notes, the "principles of patriotism and nationhood" for which Chesterton fought lost "much of their cutting edge" following the Great War. This was a risk that Chesterton was willing to take at the time, given his long-standing conviction that England would ultimately have no choice but to wage war against a Prussia-dominated Germany.

While the heart of Stapleton's treatment of Chesterton's England deals with the pre-1914 period, she does take her story to World War II by way of suggesting that Chesterton would have welcomed Churchill's wartime leadership. She also contends that Chesterton would have identified with the "notion of heroic national character" that drove so much of that war effort, Churchill's imperialist ambitions notwithstanding.

At the same time, it is Stapleton's judgment that the English story since World War II would not have been much to Chesterton's liking. As she puts it, the very things that Chesterton championed, namely "patriotism, the English 'soul,' and nationhood," have fallen on "stony soil" in the decades since the defeat of Hitler. In sum, if post-World War I England was a disappointment to Chesterton, he would have looked upon post-World War II developments as a disaster.

Complicating Stapleton's story even further are three additional, and not necessarily unrelated, phenomena with cosmopolitan overtones all their own. These are the Reformation, Islam, and the Jews. All drew Chesterton's attention well before either world war, and each commands Stapleton's attention in this book. Here Chesterton continued to part company with polite opinion. And here Stapleton begins to part company with Chesterton.

Stapleton contends that it was Chesterton's judgment that two of these three phenomena had contributed to weakening England during his lifetime, namely the Reformation and the Jews. She further suggests that Chesterton also worried that two of these three would continue to weaken England in the future, namely the Reformation and Islam.

In a chapter titled "Authenticity, the English, and the Jews," Stapleton is properly hesitant to label Chesterton an anti-Semite. But she is not at all hesitant to flirt with such a judgment—Chesterton's conception of "English authenticity" may not have been defined by anti-Semitism, she purports, but surely was "colored by it." She criticizes his "sweeping generalizations about the inability of the Jews to integrate into the nations in which they settled, or to inspire confidence in their loyalty."

Could a Jew be a true English patriot? In Stapleton's judgment, Chesterton would answer "no." But by the same token could any non-Englishman satisfy Chesterton's requirements for becoming an authentic English patriot by way of acquiring true "Englishness?" Once again the answer would likely be "no."

In keeping with the general tone of *Christianity, Patriotism, and Nationhood*, which reads like the doctoral dissertation it might well have been, Stapleton chooses her words very carefully. In fairness to her, she is not preoccupied with labeling her subject as anything other than a faithful Christian, a solid Englishman, and a loyal patriot. More than that, unlike the Prussians he forever opposed, Chesterton's sense of "Englishness" was rooted in a cultural—not a racial—conception of "nationhood." Unfortunately for him and for the rest of the world, the Great War that was World War I first exacerbated and then gravely worsened the very problem of Prussian racialism that Chesterton had long warned against, thereby paving the way for a demagogue far worse than Frederick the Great, Bismarck, or the Kaiser, and the greater war that was World War II.

Lord Ivywood Lives...in Canada

Shakedown: How Our Government is Undermining Democracy in the Name of Human Rights
By Ezra Levant
Toronto, Ontario: McClelland & Stewart, 2009
232 pages, $25.95 (hardcover; $15.95, paperback)

By Chris Chan

Ezra Levant's *Shakedown* is a book that is both infuriating and inspirational. The political corruption that he describes ought to enrage citizens of any nation, but Levant's willingness to endanger his personal finances and position in order to protect the rights of all Canadians will endear him to readers. Always intelligent and sympathetic, Levant creates a compelling and endearing narrative that shows just how prescient Chesterton could be: the world of the Canadian bureaucracy in *Shakedown* replicates the twisted political nightmare of Lord Ivywood in *The Flying Inn*.

In the late 1970s, Canadian Human Rights Commissions (CHRCs) were formed in an attempt to prevent discrimination against minorities and to provide recommendations on public policy. Over the course of the next three decades, however, CHRCs throughout Canada began to take on new responsibilities and powers that were not delegated to them. In recent years, these commissions have moved beyond their original duties of investigating cases of potential discrimination to advancing an agenda contending that the government has a right, duty, and mission to eradicate behavior that it dubs "hatred" through the trial, conviction, and punishment of those found to be insufficiently enlightened.

CHRCs were meant to serve as legal advisories preventing discrimination. People suffering from persecution

due to ethnic or religious identity were to turn to these commissions for justice. Over time they have, under their own accord, assumed more and more powers over Canadians (the precise jurisdictions varying from province to province) until today, acting as official censors, CHRCs inform Canadians that they cannot voice certain opinions, that they cannot profess certain religious beliefs, and that they cannot offend members of "protected groups" for any reason whatsoever.

Courts only in the loosest sense of the word, CHRCs do not observe standard rules of law. In these tribunals, CHRC judges decide what is acceptable and what isn't based solely on their own whims. Anyone can file a complaint against anyone at any time: even the most illegibly scribbled complaint is given serious treatment. It costs a complainant nothing to accuse someone of violating human rights, but defendants must pay for legal costs themselves. Many individuals have gone bankrupt fighting an accusation from someone who doesn't like what they have to say. CHRCs are blatantly one-sided in the cases they accept; complaints of favored "minority groups" are taken as a matter of course. CHRCs routinely prosecute Christians and political conservatives for alleged "hate crimes." Christians, particularly Catholics, who try to file grievances with these commissions find almost invariably that CHRCs dismiss their suits immediately.

Worst of all, truth is not a defense, nor is fair comment. Should a commission believe that what a defendant says or writes or does exposes someone to "hatred or contempt," the defendant may be subject to financial penalties or compelled to issue a public apology. In extreme cases, a CHRC tribunal may order someone to cease certain kinds of communication altogether. CHRCs have decided who can enter the public debate and who cannot, and what can and cannot be said. Their justification? Supporters contend that CHRC rulings remove hatred and unpleasantness from the public sphere, and that restrictions on speech are necessary for the smooth functioning of Canadian society. Levant strongly disagrees, and *Shakedown* is filled with well-honed arguments that savage CHRC assertions.

Americans are likely to forget that the United States is one of the few countries in the world, even the Western world, to have constitutionally guaranteed freedom of speech. Canada has no equivalent of the First Amendment. Indeed, as one Canadian official scoffed, "Free speech is an American concept, so I don't give it any value." Furthermore, many European countries routinely exert control over public discourse in order to maintain their ideal of social harmony. The United Nations has passed resolutions for years at the pressure of certain nations, crushing debates and asking that criticisms of certain groups be judged illegal hate speech. Perhaps no other so-called Western democracy powerful enough to impose censorship has been given the means and institutionalization now found in Canada, and Levant repeatedly calls for U.S.-style First Amendment protections to be spread throughout the world.

In 2006, Levant, a lawyer, writer, and political activist, came under fire from a CHRC for publishing the infamous Danish cartoons of Muhammad in his political magazine. When the plaintiffs in the suit tried to compel Levant to publish a lengthy rebuttal essay and pay damages, Levant ignored the popular wisdom and chose to fight. Levant filmed his interrogations by the CHRC, posted them on YouTube, and started a blog (ezralevant.com) in order to sway popular opinion.

Levant's practical tactics worked. He swiftly gained allies and, contrary to all expectations, numerous legal rulings in Levant's favor followed. CHRCs in general took a public relations beating from all segments of society. Although significant progress has been made over the past two years, free speech still isn't free in Canada. *Shakedown* should be required reading for Chestertonians if only to provide evidence to the unwary that their man had preternatural powers for identifying the social and political problems of the future.

A Guide to Poetry For Those Who Hate It

A Sudden Certainty
By Dwight Longenecker
kaufmannpublishing.com, 2009
48 pages, $11.95 (hardcover)

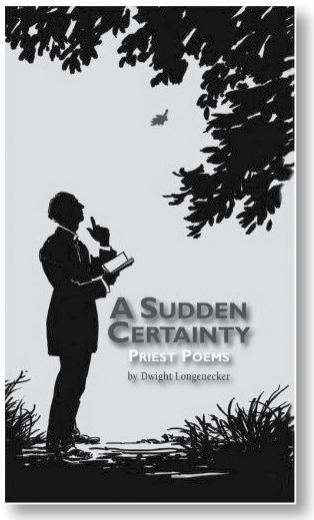
A Poem of the New Creation
By Peter Milward, S.J.
kaufmannpublishing.com, 2009
96 pages, $11.95 (hardcover)

Mysteries and Stations in the Manner of Ignatius
By Pavel Chichikov
kaufmannpublishing.com, 2005
48 pages, $10.95 (hardcover)

Reviewed by Kevin O'Brien

One of the surprising things about my local Chesterton society is anti-intellectualism. Members prefer to sit and gripe about how awful the culture is, and how great the big man Gilbert is, but God forbid we should actually read his books and discuss them! A tendency, I have heard, that exhibits itself in other local societies as well. And the one thing people have the most trouble with is poetry. Even members who read Chesterton's essays will flinch at his poems. Many people, even Chestertonians, are suspicious of poetry.

Several months ago I reviewed for this magazine *Divining Divinity*, a collection of poems by Joseph Pearce, published by Kaufmann Publishing, a small publishing house that has dedicated itself to—of all things—collections of poetry. Now before you skim to another article, or go running from the room in terror, or laugh derisively at the folly of such a business model, consider these lines by Father Dwight



Longenecker (from *A Sudden Certainty*), a student's plea to his priest:

> No, no, Father, please don't toss the mike
> like a DJ when you preach. Please don't be cool.
> Please don't ride a Harley motorbike
> when you come to school.
>
> Don't wear red cowboy boots for Pentecost,
> and tell dumb jokes to be our pal. Please don't "high five,"
> say, "Sweet!" "Awesome!" "You suck!" or "You're toast!"
> Don't teach us how to jive.
>
> Don't sing to the latest pop band;
> You don't need to be hip and up to date,
> Or come to our parties with a drink in your hand,
> trying to relate.
>
> Play it straight. Say the black and do the red.
> Refrain from politics and rainbow pins.
> Pray for all of us, the living and the dead,
> and listen to our sins.

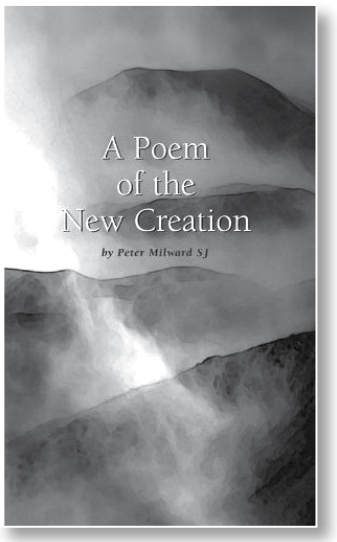
"Say the black and do the red" refers to the missal, which serves as the priest's "script" for Holy Mass. The priest says the words printed in black ink (his lines) and performs the actions indicated in red ink (a kind of stage direction). How much simpler life would be if priests would do that.

So, you see, you can understand poetry. And the stuff that may be harder to understand (such as "Say the black and do the red") can be grasped with a little research—or better yet a little reflection. Take, for example, these lines by Fr. Peter Milward from *A Poem of the New Creation*:

> Then in the prayer of the Virgin Mary
> Appeared the angel Gabriel
> Descending as if from distant ages
> Bearing the promise long awaited
> Now at last fulfilled within her

At first glance, though, the verse is not rhyming and the meter throughout this book is irregular, and one wonders why this counts as poetry. It's because poetry, even when not rhyming or clearly metrical, is at least an attempt to reflect the barely expressible through words that are ordered and structured, its very order and structure reflecting the ordered and structured nature of the poem's subject.

In this case, there appears to be nothing hard to understand in these few lines, but think about what Fr. Milward is saying. Read the poem backwards for a moment—fulfilled within Mary is the promise long awaited borne by the angel Gabriel, who appeared in the prayer of the Virgin. It is Mary's prayer that brings this about, her prayer that preceded her *fiat*, her yes to God. The poet is telling us that before the offer and the acceptance, before the fulfillment of the promise that became the Incarnation, the field is prepared by prayer, by Mary's longing for the Lord, by her talking to Him in her heart, by her relationship with Him. What does this tell us about the importance of prayer? Does God simply work automatically without us and without our calling out to Him, our yearning for Him, our desire to unite with Him in our deepest and most silent places?



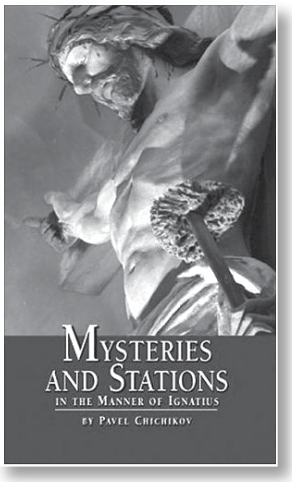
These few words, "Then in the prayer of the Virgin Mary," imply what it just took me a paragraph to spell out. This is part of what poetry does.

Now look at a more difficult poem, and a tremendous one. This is from "The Proclamation of the Kingdom" by Pavel Chichikov in *Mysteries and Stations in the Manner of Ignatius*.

> To see the ripple in Siloam's pool,
> The wheat that grows, the harvest and the yield
> Is to be shown the passing of the soul:
> Here we are, we die, the tomb is sealed
>
> But as the flowered galaxies decay,
> The stone of death itself is rolled away,
> And as the ripples of Siloam die
> Scales of blindness tumble from the eye
>
> And as the wheat is sickled from the stalk,
> The leper's cured, the crippled beggars walk,
> And as the servant stands from his sickbed,
> Wine is Christ, infinity is bread.

Siloam's pool is the pool in which Christ instructed the blind man to wash so that he would be cured. Chichikov shows us the ripples in this pool, the passing waves that pass and die away in the same way that wheat grows and is harvested by the sickle, itself an image of death. Even the very "flowered galaxies" decay—and in these images we see the passing away of our very souls—"Here we are, we die, the tomb is sealed."

But "the stone of death itself is rolled away," and in the passing of the ripples of the waters of Siloam, "scales of blindness tumble from the eye"—an image that encompasses not only all of the miraculous cures of blindness by Jesus, but also the cure of St. Paul, at whose conversion and healing scales fell from his eyes. As the wheat dies (and is "sickled", a marvelous word), the lepers are cured and the crippled



are walking. And yet we are not left with images of healing and rebirth only, for the image of the "sickled" and sacrificed wheat is carried through to the last line, where "wine is Christ, infinity is bread."

Notice how the poet weaves the images of death and despair into the images of life and health and resurrection—how at the end even death itself is transformed as Christ, who is infinity, becomes bread (the Eucharist), the fruit of His death and that which sustains us.

Now in pointing out to all of you poetry-haters and anti-intellectuals the merits of these verses, I am missing much of the point. For the meaning of any good poem, the revelations that come from meditating on any good poem, can not in all fairness be separated from the way the poem is expressed, from its words and meter. The beauty of Chichikov's poem is not simply the beauty of its sentiments or its philosophy. Its beauty cannot be severed (or you might say "sickled") from the words and phrases that the poet so carefully chooses and, guided by the muse, arranges. The spirit of the poem and the stuff of a poem go together.

The same can be said for people. We are composite creatures, souls enfleshed. We are walking poems. And in learning to understand poems, we can learn to understand much more than the poems themselves.

Divining Divinity (2008) by Joseph Pearce is available from kaufmannpublishing.com for $10.95.

We are pleased to offer our readers another poem by the revered Aidan Mackey. This obituary for George Maxwell and its accompanying verses appeared originally in 1957 in *The Distributist*. —Ed.

GEORGE MAXWELL, T.O.S.D.
R.I.P., March 8th, 1957.

As this issue goes to press we learn with very real sorrow of the death at his home, of George Maxwell, master-craftsman and member of the Guild of SS. Joseph and Dominic, of Ditchling, Sussex.

George Maxwell was, with Harold Robbins and Vincent McNabb, the teacher and philosopher of Distributism, bringing us back always to first principles and never allowing fundamental issues to be clouded and obscured by irrelevancies. We are proud of our association with him, and with the constant and increasing support which he gave to this paper. In his last letter to us, received on March 7th, he spoke of plans for the future, and said that he was looking forward to this, our first issue as a quarterly. Few people will miss his guidance and wisdom more than we will.

Our Summer issue will contain a more adequate tribute to George Maxwell's work and influence. Meanwhile, on behalf of our readers, we offer sincerest sympathy to his widow and family.

GEORGE MAXWELL.
d. March 8th, 1957.

He worked in words and wood. And ever both
Were fashioned to the Master-Craftsman's praise.
He took and kept the faithful servant's oath
Of true and humble service. All his days
Were Christ's, and all his work was raised as prayer
In loving craftsmanship of heart and mind
Where nothing warped found place: his only care
To carve the pattern that the Lord designed.

We called him teacher; he in life and trade
Did to the Carpenter of Nazareth look
And thence learned his proud craft. All that he made
Was dedicate, he never once forsook
His standards set, nor from his labour swerved.
He goes to God. His 'prenticeship is served.

A.M.

CHESTERTON UNIVERSITY

An Introduction to the Writings of G.K. Chesterton by Dale Ahlquist

Notes from an Island

The Glass Walking Stick

G.K. Chesterton lived on an island. It was called England. And yet, he was strangely "envious" of another island, the one where Robinson Crusoe was shipwrecked. It had something to do with the mystic in him, the longing for quiet contemplation, for self-sufficiency, for the poetry of limits, the romance of thrift. It even had something to do with why he enjoyed books. "This desire to be wrecked on an island," he writes,

> partly arises from an idea which is at the root of all the arts—the idea of separation. Romance seeks to divide certain people from the lump of humanity, as the statue is divided from the lump of marble. We read a good novel not in order to know more people, but in order to know fewer. Instead of the humming swarm of human beings, relatives, customers, servants, postmen, afternoon callers, tradesmen, strangers who tell us the time, strangers who remark on the weather, beggars, waiters, and telegraph-boys—instead of this bewildering human swarm which passes us every day, fiction asks us to follow one figure (say the postman) consistently through his ecstasies and agonies. That is what makes one so impatient with that type of pessimistic rebel who is always complaining of the narrowness of his life, and demanding a larger sphere. Life is too large for us as it is: we have all too many things to attend to. All true romance is an attempt to simplify it, to cut it down to plainer and more pictorial proportions. What dullness there is in our life arises mostly from its rapidity: people pass us too quickly to show us their interesting side. By the end of the week we have talked to a hundred bores; whereas, if we had stuck to one of them, we might have found ourselves talking to a new friend, or a humourist, or a murderer, or a man who had seen a ghost.

This passage comes from "The Inside of Life," one of the Chesterton essays in the collection called *The Glass Walking Stick*. Only a fraction of Chesterton's 1,600 *Illustrated London News* columns were collected into books during his lifetime. Almost two decades after he died, his secretary, Dorothy Collins, went to that vast mine of uncollected "Our Note-book" essays and put together this volume. It is probably the least-known of the posthumous Chesterton books that Dorothy Collins assembled.

The striking title comes from the first essay in the collection (see page 9), which evokes an image of Chestertonian paradox, for walking sticks are not normally made of glass. And sticks don't normally walk, for that matter.



But the essay itself is about a most pleasantly surprising paradox: the treasures of the poor. Keeping the theme going, there is another essay in the collection called "A Walking Paradox."

The remainder of Dorothy Collins' selection includes a number of pieces about Spain and France, about English literature and English history, including his columns following the deaths of two monarchs, Edward VII in 1910 and George V in 1927.

On a prophetic note, there is one essay that hits today's political correctness and multi-culturalism square in the face. Chesterton describes how the League of Nations was attempting to erect a sculpture as an International Peace Memorial. The sculptor's design was rejected because it contained a Christian symbol. It was not Buddhists or Moslems from Asia who objected, however; it was the Europeans. Pagan symbols could be used, but not Christian. Why they were proud of paganism but embarrassed by Christianity was not well explained. But Chesterton explains it. The problem is not non-Christians from a non-Christian culture, but anti-Christians from a Christian culture. It certainly creates a dilemma: in a culture created by Christianity, what are the symbols for peace?

Chesterton's criticism of the narrowness of fads and fashions is itself timeless, even as the particular fads and fashions change. He points out how people talk about change "as if the change were unchangeable."

> The latest opinion is always infallibly right and always inevitably wrong. It is right because a new generation of young people are tired of things, and wrong because another generation of young people will be tired of them.

While the Chesterton essays are, of course, delightful, one of the best things about this volume is the introduction by Arthur Bryant, the columnist who succeeded Chesterton at the *Illustrated London News*. Chesterton had written the weekly "Our Note-book" column for thirty-one years, right up until his death in June of 1936. Bryant was asked to fill in as columnist until a permanent replacement could be found. Apparently there was trouble finding that permanent replacement because Bryant filled in for the next forty years. Between the two, they wrote the "Our Note-book" column for seventy-one years.

Bryant gives a glorious tribute to his predecessor: "Chesterton spent his whole life in teaching others how to live. Even today the sound of his name is like a trumpet-call. To him the world was a field in which one went about doing battle with evil in order that good might endure...If any literary name of our generation becomes a legend transcending letters, it will, I believe, be his."

FEAR OF FILM

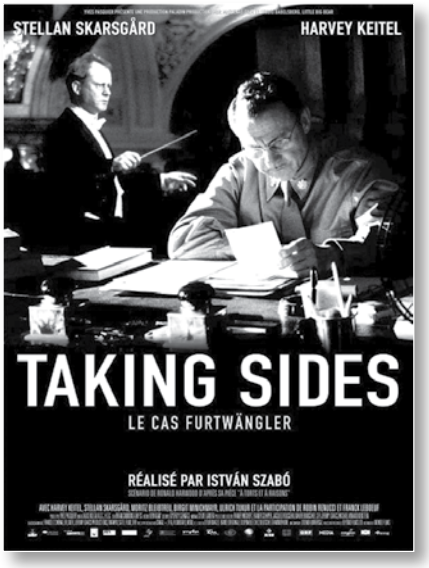
In Its Darkest Hour

Taking Sides (2001)
Directed by Istvan Szabo
Written by Ronald Harwood

Reviewed by Art Livingston

When a person's native country deteriorates into barbarism and tyranny, he is left with two choices—flee or remain. Fear may cause flight, and who would blame such a move? Perhaps he leaves to join some attempt to liberate his land, and the world properly applauds him as a hero. Then again, he may stay, with sad adjustment. Much of human experience is like that, and even former enemies in battle tend to forgive such people eventually. Those who do not leave may fight openly and die almost instantly, or quietly cooperate and thus be a small party to the evil. One other possibility is left—one often hopelessly confused with the latter: Those who remain and say in the words of master conductor Wilhelm Furtwangler, "I would not leave my country in its darkest hour."

After World War II, Dr. Furtwangler was held in custody and interrogated repeatedly; as a result he underwent three separate trials during the Allies' de-Nazification effort and was acquitted every time. To underscore: he was thrice exonerated. Why three times? Furtwangler was Hitler's favorite conductor. Even though he saved many people, Jewish and otherwise, from certain death, even though he finally fled Germany shortly before he was to be labeled an enemy of the Reich, even though he contrived not ever to give the Nazi salute when the occasion normally demanded it—none of these make a whit of difference to a certain type of self-righteous puritan who would arbitrate morals by treating mere inquiry and accusation as proof of guilt. In the case of some Allied interrogators, these were types of the priggish fools Wendell Berry had in



Serious about the Western tradition? WE ARE.

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know," Keats reads from his Grecian urn. But in a world where truth is besieged and beauty is ignored in favor of "statements," we need to know a lot more!

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mind when he wrote about historical self-righteousness, those who tell themselves "...if we had lived south of the Ohio in 1830, we would have owned no slaves; if we had lived on the frontier, we would have killed no Indians, violated no treaties, stolen no land."

Taking Sides stars Harvey Keitel as such a man, an American officer who is an insurance salesman stateside, and who has all but hanged the maestro in what we must call his mind. This fellow makes the Ugly American by comparison seem like something depicted on the Grecian Urn. So sure is this little man that he will trip up "the Fuhrer's bandleader," he employes every trick he learned from Gestapo Tactics 101; were he to proceed any further he would become something of a war criminal himself. I think he does understand that much, but just barely. His German secretary and his Jewish-American assistant are appalled at his cheap efforts at wit, his unrelenting (but thoroughly believable) boorishness, as well as his ham-fisted attempts at thuggery.

Another famous conductor, we learn, had actually been a member of the Nazi party, but was not subject to any trial or harassment, and found work as a conductor for the three years Furtwangler was on the shelf defending himself. Because Furwangler was Hitler's favorite, however, the New York Philharmonic withdrew its offer for him to become its permanent musical director. Furwangler never conducted outside Europe again after the war, even after he had unmistakably proved his innocence. I wonder what happened to that other conductor, a guy named von Karajan? "Come clean! What was your party number!"

Toward the end of the film, Stellan Skarsgaard as Furtwangler at last responds in a manner other than a measured and dignified response to the questions put to him. The secretary and the assistant lower their heads in shame, with all the embarrassment we often feel for the obtuse, their quiet anger tempered by a palpable revulsion they feel at the admixture of ignorance with a touch of cruelty. The audience feels relief when Furtwangler finally says what should be trumpeted at any pseudo-moralist who fancies himself the scion of political indignation. This statement is applicable not only to 1945 Germany, but also to 2010 United States: "If you are going to bully me like this, Major, you better do your homework. You have no idea how impertinent and stupid your questions are."

Director Istvan Szabo gives the Major the last word, and it is difficult for the audience not to blush for a man capable of such culpable naivety. In a voice over, he narrates the last lines of the movie, telling us how Hitler's drum major got off and escaped what was coming to him.

As the credits for *Taking Sides* rolled, one idea became implanted in my mind. I had just been taught an important lesson, and not the one I have been blathering about. I too must learn not to feel about the Major the kind of false indignation he put on constant display toward a great man. One image also remains firmly implanted in my mind—that of a foolish nonentity snapping William Furtwangler's baton right into his face.

IN PRAISE OF PHRASES

"Half our speech consists of similes that remind us of no similarity; pictorial phrases that call up no picture; of historical allusions the origin of which we have forgotten." —G.K. Chesterton

"Going bananas." Mario Scarpa (1923–1987)

The phrase seems an odd choice for conveying the idea that someone is silly, crazy, or going berserk, for what bananas have to do with these subjects is by no means clear. In a perfect example of folk etymology, some have claimed the phrase is related to "monkey business" and stems from the playful antics of monkeys and their love of bananas. But the truth seems no less farfetched.

In 1968, comedian, impressionist, and television performer Scarpa, using his stage name of Guy Marks, penned the words and music to one of the silliest hit songs in the history of recorded music—a parody of the tame and uninspiring lyrics so typical of the dance band era—and the earliest recorded use of "bananas" for "loony":

Oh your red scarf matches your eyes.
You closed the cover before striking.
Father had the ship-fitter blues.
Loving you has made me bananas.

You burned your fingers that evening
While my back was turned.
I asked the waiter for iodine,
But I dined all alone.

Oh your red scarf matches your eyes.
You closed the cover before striking.
Father had the ship-fitter blues.
Loving you has made me bananas.

Guy Marks appeared as a comic actor in films as well as TV, but his first love was performing as an impressionist in nightclubs, on television variety shows, and in Los Vegas casinos.



Welcome to the Plutocracy

By John Médaille

Chief Justice Roberts laid out the basic principle of sound jurisprudence as "if it is not necessary to decide an issue, it is necessary not to decide the issue." In other words, courts should deal only with the issues presented to them, and not go beyond them to "legislate from the bench." The habit of judge-made law has saddled America with some of its most dubious features, such as abortion on demand. Without judicial restraint, the judiciary replaces the legislature as the ultimate source of our laws, and the legislature exists only at the sufferance of the judges.

Alas, Hizoner violated his own principle to overturn, at a single stroke, more than one hundred years of legislation and judicial precedent with the recent ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. The issues before the court were simple enough. A conservative political corporation, Citizens United, wished to run attack ads against Hillary Clinton within thirty days of the Ohio primary, but this is forbidden by the McCain-Feingold Act. CU found a clever way around the law: they produced an attack movie, and then ran advertisements for the movie, claiming they were not political ads within the meaning of the act. The FEC refused to go along with the ruse, and CU sued. CU was merely asking the court to bless its end-run around the campaign laws, and on these grounds the case was originally heard. But the majority of the court, for reasons not yet known, asked for a re-hearing of the case on wider grounds, a re-hearing that was peculiar in that it took place on September 9th, a full month before the court's normal session.

In ruling on the issues presented to it, the court upheld the FEC against CU. But on the issues that were no part of the original case, they voluntarily threw out restrictions against corporate funding of campaigns, restrictions that date back to 1907 and have been upheld by every court since then, in test after test. This is not evolution, but revolution, and a revolution predicated on some very peculiar grounds.

The court majority treated this as a "free speech" case. Yet, this is somewhat perplexing. As far as I know, CEOs have always had the right to say whatever they liked, to support whatever candidate they wanted, to go to whatever rallies they wished, and to write letters to the editor whenever they felt the need. That is, they enjoyed all the rights of free speech that every other citizen has, so long as they used their own money.

But the CEOs did not want to be treated like any other citizen; they wanted something much more important: they wanted to use their companies' treasuries—money that rightfully belongs to the investors and the workers—to control the political process. Mark Hanna, the Republican King-maker of the early twentieth-century, said that two things were paramount in politics. "The first is money, and I can't remember what the second one is." That "second thing"—and everything else—will soon be forgotten by everyone else, since the new rule allows corporate executives to use the company treasury to influence political contests. Since these resources are measured in the trillions of dollars, there will be an inexhaustible source of funds with which to command the political powers. But this money is supposed to be invested to increase the profits of the corporation. And it will be. Politics are treated like any other investment and expected to get a return, a return in the form of subsidies and favorable tax treatment. And as David Brooks noted, corporations also want rules which protect them from smaller and more nimble competitors. In other words, they will use the political process to control the economic process.

With this rule, the corporations are formally in charge of the government of the United States. But corporations are not capable of running a country, save for running it into the ground. Indeed, they can barely run their own enterprises without support from the public purse. Now, the line between the corporate treasury and the public purse—already stretched very thin—will completely dissolve. America will be formally a plutocracy and substantially a kleptocracy.

Yet for all that, there is some justification for the court's attack on the

> Although the First Amendment provides that "Congress shall make no law…abridging the freedom of speech," §441b's prohibition on corporate independent expenditures is an outright ban on speech, backed by criminal sanctions. It is a ban notwithstanding the fact that a PAC created by a corporation can still speak, for a PAC is a separate association from the corporation. Because speech is an essential mechanism of democracy—it is the means to hold officials accountable to the people—political speech must prevail against laws that would suppress it by design or inadvertence. Laws burdening such speech are subject to strict scrutiny, which requires the Government to prove that the restriction "furthers a compelling interest and is narrowly tailored to achieve that interest."
>
> —from *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*

campaign finance laws. Indeed, they are only recognizing what is practically an already established fact. Money will always find its way to power, and where there are large concentrations of wealth, they will come to own the political powers; they will become the state. The current miserable situation in campaign financing is the result of the last abysmal reform, with attempts to correct the problems of the previous reform, and so on back to the Tillman Act of 1907. All the law can do is to raise what roadblocks it can, for as long as it can, until the powers that be find a new way around the laws. And then we begin again.

So what's to be done? Well, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. Recognize the reality that power follows property, as Daniel Webster noted. Allow the corporations to give as much as they like. However require that all donations to any cause or candidate be instantly posted on the group's Web site that any one may examine. At least we would know the truth of the situation, and while this truth may not set us free, it will at least let us know where we stand.

But we can go further in this truth-telling to include truth-in-labeling. Each congressman will be required to wear those NASCAR suits which prominently display the names of their corporate sponsors. So the typical congress thing might have Big Pharma on his chest, Exxon on his ass, and the big banks running up and down his arms. Each politician would be required to begin and end each speech with the statement "This message brought to you by ..." and list the names of his three top contributors. And each bill will be required to bear the logos of its corporate sponsors. This won't make politics any more democratic, but it might make it a lot more honest.

With the *Citizens United* ruling, the court revealed the depth of its contempt for judicial restraint, original intent, and deference to the legislature. The ruling is nothing short of a coup, a fundamental change in the structure of the America polity. It will work not only to the defeat of democracy, but to the destruction of what's left of the small businessman. From this day forward, no one will hold office who does not have the approval of the corporations, no small business will exist save by their sufferance.

But it will not last. Greed consumes everything, until it finally consumes itself. Corporations are incapable of running a government, except for running it into the ground. The bankruptcy of this country is already far advanced, and the process will be accelerated by making it an open kleptocracy. So, welcome to the plutocracy; enjoy while it lasts, which will not be long.

Modern Literature

- The modern novel has gone through a series of stages, of which the first might be stamped with the general motto of "Boys will be Boys." Then came the earnest late-Victorian novel of emancipation and the ethics of sex, which might bear the motto "Girls will be Boys." And finally, we are left with the very latest psychological and neurotic sort of novel, which seems to carry the cognizance of "Boys won't be Boys." (*New York American*, March 10, 1934)

- Modern philosophy has taken the life out of the modern fiction. (*Illustrated London News*, March 8, 1930)

- Whitman's free verse had all the virtues of democracy; modern free verse has all the vices of aristocracy. (*New York American*, Dec. 9, 1933)

- There is not any subject about which a modern writer may not write a play, especially if it is a bad play. (Introduction to *The New World of the Theatre*)

- Eugene O'Neill, apart from many other talents and twists and turns of invention, has hitherto been the finest expression of a modern mood, which is in fact a primitive and almost prehistoric mood. (*New York American*, Feb. 28, 1934)



- Henry James' long stories were much too long, but in short stories even he had to stick to the point, though he was a little like a man everlastingly sharpening the point of a pencil till it broke out of sheer sharpness, and he patiently started again. (*New York American*, Dec. 16, 1933)

- It is not our light literature, but our heavy literature that is fraudulent. (*Daily News*, March 23, 1907)

- In expressing confused ideas, the moderns have great subtlety and sympathy. It is in expressing clear ideas that they generally find their limitations. (*Illustrated London News*, Sept. 12, 1931)

- I would rather have the man who devotes a short story to saying that he can solve the problem of a murder in Margate than the man who devotes a whole book to saying that he cannot solve the problem of things in general. ("Sherlock Holmes," *A Handful of Authors*)

Gilbert Keith Chesterton Answers His Mail

Religion in Theatre and Science in Religion

Dear Mr. Chesterton,
Should Religion be in a Theatre?
Signed,
G. Pshaw

Dear Mr. Pshaw,
Whose Religion in whose Theatre? If the religion of the Quakers (which consists of quietude and listening for an inner voice) were presented at the Moulin Rouge, I should think it unfair to the Quakers. If, on the other hand, the religion of the Thugs (which consists of strangling people) were practically presented at the Comedy Theatre, I should think it unfair to the Comedy Theatre. There cannot, in the flat face of history, be any Christian objection to Bible stories being presented as plays. Unquestionably, a great number of them have that dual principle of the speech and the reply which is the bifurcation at the very beginning of all drama, which seems to have launched the Greek plays before anyone knew that they existed, and which still endures in the chief services of the Christian Church. But whether or no these Scriptures originally were plays, there is no kind of doubt that they were turned into plays, age after age, year after year, day after day, by the great majority of those who have professed and called themselves Christians for close on two thousand years. To say that Scripture must not be put on the stage is far more unorthodox and far more unhistorical than it would be to say that it must not be read with spectacles or must not be put on a bookshelf.

Your friend,
G.K. Chesterton
(*Illustrated London News*, Sept. 27, 1913)



Dear Mr. Chesterton,
How do we know that two and two do not make five in the fixed stars?
H. Ibsen

Dear Mr. Ibsen,
At least as well as we know there are any fixed stars. The very distinction between fixed and unfixed stars is only established by pages of mathematics; or, in other words, by assuming about two thousand times over that two and two do not make five. That there is a mental limit in man, at which mathematics also become mysteries, is quite true; but it has nothing to do with a vulgar test of locality; and the riddle is not found in the Pleiades at a certain distance from the earth, any more than it is in the earth at a certain distance from the Pleiades.

Your friend,
G.K. Chesterton
("Ibsen," *A Handful of Authors*)

Dear Mr. Chesterton,
I have a simple question regarding the doctrine of the Fall: "How could a perfect man be able to fall?"
Signed,
R. Blatchford

Dear Mr. Blatchford,
All right. I have only to add one trifling question: "How could a perfect man be unable to fall?" Is it not evident that a perfect man ought to have power, courage, endurance, self-control, discrimination, and such things; and is it not obvious that he would not have them unless he was capable of being afraid of danger, or moved towards temptation, or perplexed with difficulty. A perfect man, in other words, must be able to fall, and not able to fall; we are all of us trying (violently) to be perfect men, and yet the thing which we are giving at is a contradiction in terms. The question of Free Will is, of course, entirely of the same character.

Your friend,
G.K. Chesterton
(*Daily News*, Nov. 14, 1903)

Dear Mr. Chesterton,
The Hindus teach that the earth stands on an elephant and the elephant stands on a tortoise. In your capacity as Brahmin, how do you answer the taunts of those who ask, what does the tortoise stand on?
Signed,
M. Singh

Dear Mr. Singh,
I answer sternly, "He stands on his dignity, and declines to answer impertinent questions."

Your friend,
G.K. Chesterton
(*New York American*, Oct. 8, 1932)

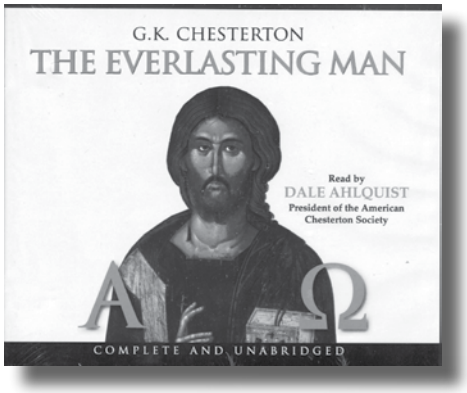
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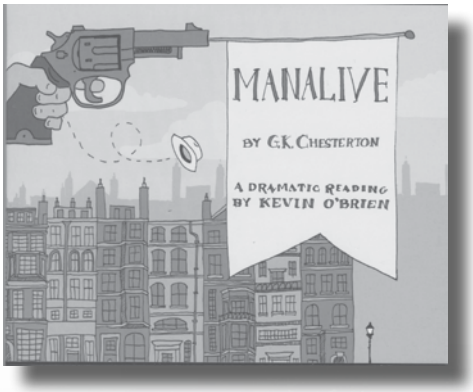
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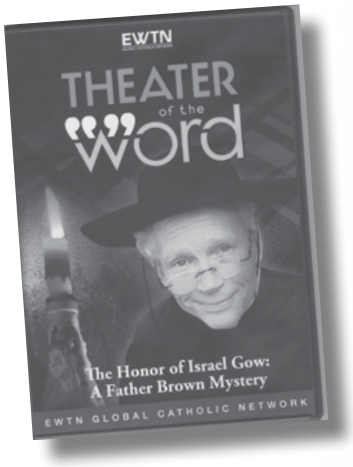
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NEWS WITH VIEWS

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"When the real revolution happens, it won't be mentioned in the newspapers."

FATHER OF THE YEAR, 2010

DEBARY, Fla.—Police didn't know why Jorge Garcia decided to interfere with a felony traffic stop at 2:45 a.m. on New Year's Day. What they did know was that they didn't care for Garcia's interference or his demeanor, so they ordered him back into his own vehicle. After he refused the order, the sergeant at the scene ordered him arrested, at which time Garcia made for his car and then refused to come out. When he saw two officers reaching for their Tasers, Garcia did the manly thing; he grabbed his nearby infant, held it in front of him and repeatedly shouted, "Tase the baby, Tase the baby." Officers managed to remove the child unharmed and convinced Garcia to be more compliant courtesy of two Taser blasts.

Chesterton once said that fatherhood is a fact and to call a man a father is to assert a fact. Let us follow our mentor and assert the fact that Garcia is no one's idea of a father.

EVERY BOY NEEDS A HOBBY

PORTLAND, Ore.—A woman riding the number 33 TriMet bus in Portland recently came away with a new, but most unwelcome look. Unbeknownst to her, the man seated behind had quietly removed locks of her hair throughout the journey. When she left the bus and discovered her loss she was able to dial 911 in time for police to nab fellow passenger Jared Weston Walter. As it turned out, Walter was suspected of being the infamous "TriMet Barber" who for six weeks had been either snipping or super-gluing women's hair during bus rides. Moreover, he had an outstanding assault charge in King County, Washington, in connection with another hair-gluing incident as well as a sex crime conviction in Texas. While police were at a loss as to Walter's motive, they were unwilling to consider it a harmless pastime and the TriMet Barber is now facing additional felony assault charges.

According to Chesterton, small-minded criminals become criminals out of sheer conventionality. While he is far from conventional, we'd be hard pressed to accuse Walter of being large-minded.

THE CASE OF THE PHOTOGENIC PERVERT

WARRINGTON, England—Employees at an Adsa store discovered that a spy camera had been installed in a light fixture in one of the changing rooms. When Cheshire police examined the camera's data card they were surprised to find the enterprising pervert failed to shut off the camera while installing it and had provided them with crystal clear images of his face. Police are searching for the suspect who, given his intelligence and attention to detail, shouldn't be that difficult to track down.

PC POLICING

WARWICKSHIRE, England—What would the New Year be without a reminder of how political correctness is rotting our language and the culture in the process? Police in Warwickshire have been cautioned about using the time-tested greeting, "Evenin' all." Why, you may ask? Because according to the handbook *Policing Our Communities*, the meaning of terms such as afternoon and evening can vary according to a person's culture or nationality, and such subjectivity may be confusing. As an example, the handbook says evening in the UK connotes the hours between 5-7 p.m., when people have their main meal. But someone from the U.S. "might have their main meal earlier and for them evening may be an earlier time." To which we in America say, "So stinking what?" But Chesterton, ever the gentleman, may have simply observed that moderns aren't to be trusted with a living language.

NO FLAG ON THE PLAY

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Speaking of people who shouldn't have gone into crime, a pair of burglary suspects in the process of fleeing pursuing deputies decided to cut across the football field of a nearby high school. In what proved to be a masterpiece of timing, a group of sheriff's deputies were practicing on that very same field for an upcoming game against local firefighters. When they heard there was an illegal procedure in progress, the sheriff's team tackled the suspects. When the dust settled the suspects were facing a fourth and very long yardage, courtesy of the justice system.

Had they read more Chesterton, the ill-directed burglars might have realized the best way of getting home is to stay there.

FINALLY, A LITTLE COMMON SENSE

STANFORD, Calif.—Thomas Sowell is a man whom G.K. Chesterton would be comfortable chatting up over a few good ales. Those who follow his well-written columns on Townhall.com and elsewhere would likely agree. Sowell is a breath of fresh air and common sense all too lacking even in the arena of conservative punditry. That said, he recently wrote the following words that are too good not to pass along. "When politicians propose some hugely expensive new program," he said, "and are asked how the government is going to pay for it, a standard ploy over the years has been to claim that they will pay for it by eliminating 'waste, fraud, and abuse'...If you can do that, why haven't you done it already?"

Are you smiling, G.K.?

DIVORCE, RETAIL STYLE

LONDON—"Divorce," said Chesterton, "is a thing which the newspapers now not only advertise, but advocate..." Years after G.K. wrote this, the Debenhams Department Store chain is doing some advertising of its own. Noting the popularity of greeting cards, parties, and cakes to "celebrate" failed marriages, the retail chain figured the time was right to establish a "divorce registry." After all, said Peter Moore, head of Debenhams retail services, "a divorce means that one partner will be leaving the marital home and therefore be left without any essentials in their new house." He added establishing a divorce gift list means "...family and friends can help the newly separated begin their new life." Not to be outdone, certain segments of the legal profession are also riding the trend. The London law firm of Lloyd Platt & Company has begun offering gift vouchers to those consulting them on divorce and they have since been swamped with inquiries.

Once more Chesterton emerges as a prophet, for he also said, "It may be, indeed, that all the flowers and festivities will now be transferred from the fashionable wedding to the fashionable divorce. A superb iced and frosted divorce-cake will be provided for the feast...A dazzling display of divorce presents will be laid out...Toasts will be drunk, the guests will assemble on the doorstep to see the husband and wife go off in opposite directions."

YET ANOTHER CRIMINAL GENIUS

MURFREESBORO, Tenn.—Anyone familiar with the "Darwin Awards," given to those who do humanity a service by removing themselves from the gene pool, knows awardees must be deceased in order to win. If ever there was someone who deserved an honorable mention, however, it is Nathan Beasley, who passed out in his car while at the pump of a Tennessee gas station with a big batch of methamphetamine cooking in the back seat. Also in the running would be the gas station employees who saw Beasley's car sitting at the pump for over an hour before calling police.

SPEAKING OF FAILED MARIAGES

OLYMPIA, Wash.—While it may have appeared she lost the duel that was her marriage, Carolyn Paulsen-Riat was not about to go down without fight. Upset that her husband was leaving her, Paulsen-Riat decided upon her own version of a "shock and awe" strategy that her estranged spouse didn't discover until he switched on his 220-volt table saw. Regaining consciousness sometime later he realized the saw and the balance of his power tools had been re-wired, courtesy of the fair Carolyn who saw, like Chesterton, that divorce and murder are both desperate remedies. While she faces charges of domestic assault and malicious mischief, the former Mrs. Riat may have won the duel after all.

CLERIHEW CORNER

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The Originator

President Coolidge
Objected to paying muleage
When the people of Nicaragua
Sent him a nice jaguar.

—EDMUND CLERIHEW BENTLEY

CLERIHEW: A humorous, unmetrical, biographical verse of four short lines—two closed couplets—with the first rhyme a play on the name of the subject. Readers are invited to submit clerihews for "The Clerihew Corner," with the understanding that submissions cannot be acknowledged or returned, nor will all be published.

The Imitators
Clerihews from the Washington DC Chesterton Society

Chestertonians of D.C.
Have fellowship, fun, beer, and ice tea.
The discussions are lively as we share the selection—
In true Gilbert style, there is no direction.

—CHERYL FORBES, Ashburn, Virginia

Patrick Kennedy,
Please explain to me
On what doctrinal distortion
You justify abortion.

—STEVE MOELLERING, Falls Church, Virginia

Clara Barton was a nurse
Who didn't focus on the purse.
Her instincts became the boss
Founding the American Red Cross.

—BERNADETTE MACDONALD, Woodbridge, Virginia

The blackboard lessons from Fulton Sheen
Were wise, humorous, and ever so keen.
In the 1950s his style of delivery no one would balk—
Today, however, they'd throw away his chalk!

—CHERYL FORBES, Ashburn, Virginia

Chris Matthews
Is unwise to choose
Someone to berate
Who can excommunicate.

—STEVE MOELLERING, Falls Church, Virginia

Clerihew,
Can you
Write one that's clever?
Me? Probably never.

—STEVE MOELLERING, Falls Church, Virginia

LETTER TO AMERICA

G.K. Chesterton in the New York American

Democracy Gone to the Dogs?

I recently read a most extraordinary remark by a gentleman who appears to be an expert on dogs, and who says (I have no notion whether with any justification) that dogs are better treated in England than in America. He may be right, for all I know, but his way of putting it was this, and it was printed in large letters: "If I were asked to state the essential difference between dogs here and in America, it would be that here the dog is regarded as a citizen and in America he is not."

When I read that, as a flash of lightning will illuminate a whole landscape, I understood all sorts of things. I understood the grave and essential importance of Citizenship; and why modern English educationists all want poor children to be given special lessons in Citizenship; and why the leading articles tell us every day in exactly the same words that we must all remember to be Citizens; and why Citizenship has been put in the place of outworn things like religious or domestic responsibility.

It also explained to me why the Citizens are treated as they are.

When the process is complete, for instance, and we see Mr. Jones of Wimbledon taken out for a walk on a lead, with a chain attached to his collar, so that he shall not rashly cross the road or loiter and lose his apportioned hour of exercise, I shall know that he is being treated as a Citizen. When I hear loud noises indicating that Mr. Brown is being violently scrubbed or shaven, because the expert on dogs thinks he ought to be, I shall realize that it is because he is a Citizen that he enjoys these attentions.

When I find that Colonel Robinson is confined to drinking water, and has to drink it on his hands and knees out of a plain vessel placed on the ground and inscribed "Citizen" in large letters, I shall at last understand why it is said that Total Abstinence is essential to true Citizenship. And when at last there dawns the happy day of Universal Citizenship, in which there are no distinctions, then I shall be able to go and buy a few Citizens, humanely enclosed in cages and scrambling about on straw, in the shops and shows where they sell such animals.

And if a female Citizen happens to have a large family, I may assist in deciding which of the little Citizens shall be drowned; to say nothing of possibly going in for the regular breeding of Citizens; and the mating of male and female Citizens according to my views rather than theirs...It is all very extraordinary, but there it is in black and white. It is this to which the great name of the Citizen has come.

Of course the worthy expert did not mean any harm. He thought he was showing liberality to dogs. It did not occur to him that his own argument destroys all liberty for men. It is impossible to treat a dog like a citizen; it is impossible in the full sense to treat a dog like a man.

But it is much easier to treat a man like a dog. And this does not necessarily mean to ill-treat him like a dog. Being kind to a dog, just as much as being unkind to a dog, is based on the idea that he is a dog and not a citizen; just as a Negro slave was not a citizen, though both can be, and often were, treated with great affection.

Now all democrats today have to defend democracy; it is in great peril. We have to defend it against mere cynics and mere academic pedants; also against real reactionary thinkers; men of action who are men of genius. But above all we must defend it against this sort of sloppy and sentimental extension of it.

Nobody wants dogs to vote. Certainly nobody wants dogs to rule. But there are still people who do really want men to rule even more than to vote; and not merely to hunt in larger packs or live in more hygienic kennels.

New York American, October 17, 1931

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