

# America Has Attained the Highest Civilization Says Sienkiewicz

The Author of "Quo Vadis" Believes That Culture Is More Widespread in the United States Than in Any Other Country— "American Democracy Nearest of All to the Ideal Humanity Has Been Striving After"—American Cooking Deplorable, American Women Less Industrious and More Dressed Than the Women of Europe.

WARSAW, POLAND.—"I cannot bind myself down to write anything for any stated time on any stated subject," was the answer of Henri Sienkiewicz, author of "Quo Vadis," when a representative of the New York World asked him his plans.

It is a regrettable fact that since his third marriage, with Countess Babka, this great writer has given very little to the world. He says he is not in the mood. Possibly the delicate state of health in which Miss Sienkiewicz has been for some time has had a good deal to do with it, as he has passed many anxious moments on her account.

On her account, also, he is not able to pass the winter on his estate near Warsaw, in the government of Kielce. This property, which is called "Oblengorek," was given to him by the Polish people on the occasion of his jubilee, some seven years ago. It is situated in the prettiest part of Poland, far enough from a railway station to insure privacy from the inroads of tourists, and possesses, besides the house, a beautiful park and a home farm. The house, which is rambling and comfortable, reminds one a little of the more substantial Swiss villas. In fact, the government of Kielce is often called Polish Switzerland, from its hills and valleys, and beautiful views. The drawing-room, furnished in the style of the first empire, is a mingling of restful, neutral shades. The dining-room, furnished in typical Polish style, with many good pictures by modern artists, leads into the author's study, though, as a matter of fact, Sienkiewicz's best work—including "Quo Vadis"—was done elsewhere. Besides these rooms, on the ground floor are other sitting and bedroom. The general effect is one of simplicity, neatness and good taste.

**Park Is Beautiful.**

But the chief charm of Oblengorek lies in the park, with its shady nooks, dim alleys and confusion of flowers. Then, too, there is the spring of mineral water, discovered on the estate soon after it was presented to its present owner. At the time it was hoped that this water, which M. Sienkiewicz christened "Ursus," in memory of the gigantic Pole in "Quo Vadis," would be sent all over the world. It is not unlike Apollinaris in taste and it is clear and sparkling. In a short time, however, it was found that, owing to the difficulties connected with transport, the water, even in Warsaw, was too expensive to have a large sale. Small quantities are still, however, bottled and sent to different parts of the country. The spring is built round in a tasteful way that characterizes all that has been done by the owner of Oblengorek.

M. Sienkiewicz, whose handsome, powerful head shows signs of having been "out in the snow," has traveled about a great deal. Among other places he has visited the United States of America. He has little but praise for Americans and their country. And praise is a thing with which he is not lavish, as many people have found out.

"Truly, if anybody were to ask me which nation has attained the best civilization I would unhesitatingly answer, 'The American,'" he said. "In Europe only a few classes of the community have embraced civilization—or, rather, to speak quite correctly, only one class has done so. This class has gathered in and keeps everything. The whole world exists for it and in it only; science and learning are exclusively its department; poetry, art, intellectual movements—everything, in a word, that makes life really beautiful, spiritual and elevated, that comprises the aesthetic and intellectual part of human life, exists but in and for this class and acts but through this class. Go out of its bounds and you will find that nobody knows anything, nobody can do anything. This higher world writes, criticizes, judges, speaks—creates the community's opinion—publishes newspapers, fills picture galleries, libraries and theaters; it means

the whole of civilization. Beyond it exists but a huge turbid wave of humanity, living a life that is more or less physical, uncultivated, dark and coarse.

**Widespread American Culture.**

"But in America, whereas, perhaps, general science and culture do not reach such a height in individuals or in one particular class as here in Europe, to make up for it this culture is far more widespread—nay, there is no comparison between the universality of culture here and in America, so much does it exceed ours. And this is what is called American democracy.

"And now I will tell you this: If a high state of civilization does not insure happiness to the human race, then we ought to cast it away and return to the times when men walked about on all fours; but if we admit that widespread civilization does conduce to human happiness, then I can only affirm that, taking one country with another, human happiness is incomparably greater in America than anywhere in Europe. This is to say that America the democratic is nearest of all to that human ideal which man has been striving after for so many centuries.

"In order to be able to judge of a nation's moral standard one must have some sort of a foundation to go on. Of all human truths we may take this one as the least doubtful, that the development of education brings the development of morality in its wake. If anybody doubts this he has only to take statistics of crime from the first nation that falls to his hand and he will see the difference between the number of criminals who are quite illiterate, those partly educated and those highly instructed. And if this be so it is perfectly clear that, since general education stands higher in America than anywhere else, general morality stands higher, too. But observe, please, that I do not include the large parts of the country which are principally crowded with immigrants from Europe, driven to crime by want. I do not mean the towns on the Indian frontier, either; I speak of what I must call the 'finished states,' that is to say, those states which are living under normal conditions, and here I can assure you that you will find far more loyal people than anywhere else in the world—loyal in the sense that public safety is greater in these states than anywhere else.

**Respect for the Law.**

"Before visiting America, some years ago, I was told that I should have to go about with a revolver in my belt if I wanted to get home alive. Of course, when I got there I found people laughed at me. Though I spent more than half a year in the states, and went into all sorts of districts and corners, mixed with all kinds of people, slept on lonely farms and in fishermen's huts, I never had the slightest trouble with anybody, never was in personal danger and never by Ameri-



Henri Sienkiewicz.

can hands was my pocket in jeopardy. "And all this means a high state of morality among Americans, a high state of culture, not the culture of one single, elegant class, but a democratic culture permeating the whole nation.

"I noticed another thing about the Americans, and that is their prosperity. What the Americans call a poor man has a nice little house all to himself, a carpet on his floor, good tables, beds and the inevitable rocking chair. At first I could not understand why they called such a small farmer poor. Then I learned that it was because he had no money saved at the bank—not even \$100. Good heavens! How many authors, doctors and bar-risters there are here in Poland who have never had 100 cents in the bank! We do not call them poor. What we

call a poor man is one who lives in a cellar, eats but once a day, and never sees meat but through the butcher's windows. Here in our country poverty's teeth chatter with the cold; poverty begs, steals, breaks into other people's houses. Show me such poverty in America! There even a bankrupt former can turn his hand to a hundred things and earn a living.

**American Women.**

"Never before and nowhere else in the world have women had such a good time as in America. The laws make up to her, custom gives her freedom, public opinion shields her even when she is at fault, and all the men pet and spoil her. This respect for women is a general trait in the Anglo-Saxon character, but it is greater in America than in England. The American woman is a little like a spoiled child. But when you ask me if she stands higher or lower intellectually than the European woman I must ask: 'With what class of European women am I to compare her?' We have differences between the different classes of women such as do not exist at all in America. For instance, with us a 'drawing-room' lady, besides her own languages, speaks goodness knows

would give rise to all sorts of scandalous results in Europe. There we find nothing of the sort—partly, perhaps, owing to the American woman's cold temperament, partly to public opinion, which puts all the blame on the man.

"One result of their democracy is their respect for labor. There, where every kind of work is equally respected and held sacred, workers are not divided into higher and lower classes of the community. We Europeans have not the least idea of the extent to which labor is respected in America, and in this respect America stands immeasurably higher than any European nation. To be frank, a man in Europe who goes in for manual labor is looked down upon by those who do not work; he loses his caste, they exclude him from the class he once belonged to—if he comes from what we call the 'upper classes.' There is none of that in America. These classes, according to our ideas, do not exist—only different kinds of 'businesses' exist, and the gentleman who makes boots is as much respected as the gentleman who earns his living as a lawyer, and this for the simple and unshaken reason that public opinion makes not the slightest difference be-



House at Oblengorek.

how many foreign ones; she plays on the piano and knows how to talk about art and literature with the greatest charm—and that is what is chiefly necessary. Her mind is flexible and developed; if she thinks fit to pose as something unusual she knows how to cover her perfumed soul with a cloud of mystery. In the thick forest of words and feelings she moves about as if she were at home. In general she is quick and as keen in society as a razor; to speak the truth, she is not learned, but developed, both psychologically and aesthetically, to the highest point.

**Comparison Hard to Make.**

"Compare with the a country wench—Chloe. She walks about with red, bare feet, drinks vodka, cannot read or write, knows absolutely nothing of what is going on around her; the world reflects itself only in her eyes, as the heavens are reflected in water; Nothing touches her brain. Now, with which of these two sisters am I to compare the American woman? Leaving out the blue stockings and a small percentage who by traveling in Europe have made themselves up on European lines, I will take the average American woman. We find exactly the same thing that I mentioned when speaking about American civilization and culture. Every American woman, of course, knows how to read and write, and she reads the newspapers. They all dress exactly alike, that is to say, so far as the fashion and cut of their clothes go. Both intellectually and aesthetically they stand lower than a certain number of our women, and much higher than the masses of them.

"Personally I am far from holding American women up to their educated European sisters as an example. I would even say that they have many of their faults and are wanting in many of their good qualities.

"Taking them all round they are far less industrious, they look far less after their homes, housekeeping and kitchens. For this reason American cookery is in a deplorable state. Then they seem to dress themselves up more than our women. For this reason you will not see such dresses even in the Paris boulevards as you do in the New York Broadway or Kearney street, San Francisco. The fashions are the same for all women, so that what a millionaire's wife wears differs from a servant's dress only in the cost of the stuff—not in the cut. To my eyes these dressed-up women look very strange by the side of the men, who appear to care nothing about their clothes. The American man's aesthetic appetite is satisfied when he dresses up his wife. He seems to want nothing for himself.

**Social Relationship.**

"Very few American women know French or other foreign languages. I did not meet any women who were judges of art or literature, on any who knew how to paint or draw. Another thing that struck me was the mixture of Puritanism and freedom in social relationship. The relations existing between young men and women

between a respectable bootmaker and a respectable lawyer.

"And herein you will find the key to American democracy. In general, though I did not shut my eyes to the Americans' bad qualities, I must say that the more I studied them the more good ones I found."

**HANDICRAFT WORK AT 86.**

**A Venerable Vermonter Finds Delight in Weaving Beautiful Baskets.**

St. Johnsbury, Vt., has an ardent follower of the modern handicraft movement in David E. Harriman, who at 86 has opened a workshop on his own premises, the Boston Globe says.

In his youth in Beacham, Vt., he used to watch an aged man, Samuel Shepard, make baskets and a few years later profited by what he observed. At first a pastime for leisure hours, the basket making soon became a means of eking out a slender income, insufficient for the support of a growing family. Then thirty-five or forty years passed during which such work was forgotten.

Last summer his wife and a daughter, who is a teacher in Kansas City, Mo., were weaving raffia, and watching them brought back memories of his old employment to Mr. Harriman.

During the winters of such severity as those of northern Vermont outdoor work is impossible for a man of his age and it is often hard for one so active to keep busy. This work seemed just the thing and so his shop is now established. In this day of machine-made articles one of his perfectly-shaped, finely-built baskets is a delight to the eye.

His tools and materials are simple and inexpensive—a hammer, smoother, jackknife and two logs of brown ash. One log furnishes the handles and the uprights or warp of the baskets. For the warp or filling a second log about a foot in diameter is hammered with infinite patience until the pith gives away, leaving the grain free. Long strips are torn from the log, pulling always from the top to the bottom. These strips are smoothed with a smoother and cut into narrow strips with a jackknife.

From this point on any fifth-grade boy who has studied manual training could easily make the baskets, but it is doubtful if he could shape them as perfectly as does Mr. Harriman. His baskets are square, round and oblong, and are made in all sizes.

Up to date the work has been a labor of love with him, for he has given away every basket he has made.

**Smothered in Orders.**

The high military officials in Germany are equally highly decorated. According to a Paris contemporary, the eight adjutants of Frederick III. possessed but 35 decorations between them. Count Hulsén Hussler had 54 and his successor, Gen. von Pleasen, has already 58. The five personal adjutants of the kaiser possess together 100. Marshal Blücher could boast of only 15 in all.

## THE CLUE

By JAMES FRANCIS DWYER

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It was midnight. In Fifth avenue there were few pedestrians, and so a fat man in evening dress, hurrying northward, attracted attention. Six night birds, who thought his actions mysterious, followed a few paces in the rear. Occasionally they questioned each other as they trotted briskly along, but the questions were put in the hopeless tone that the questioner uses when he knows the person questioned cannot supply the information he requires.

The fat man didn't speak. He moved at a smart jog trot, looking straight to the front and seemingly unaware of the fact that he was the cause of much conjecture. The mystery scented by the others was caused by the peculiar movements of his hands. His arms were outstretched, and his two hands revolved round each other like the hands of a fisherman hauling in a line. And the inquisitive ones in the rear were unable to explain this movement. It was not a dignified exercise for a fat man in evening dress, and their curiosity was justified.

At Thirty-second street a policeman, dozing on the opposite side of the road, straightened himself as he saw the hurrying group coming towards him. Swinging his night stick he crossed over and waited the approach of the little procession. He was in charge of that neighborhood, and there should be an explanation.

The fat man passed the officer at a gallop. His hands were moving faster and faster, and the tails of his coat were sticking out like little black wings in his rear. The law was a trifle astonished. As he stood looking after the leader of the hurrying squad, he was jostled by the inquisitive ones following, and he became annoyed.



"Sprint a Little, or We May Be Too Late."

He grabbed a straw-hatted youth by the shoulder and questioned him.

"What's the matter?" he cried.

"Search me," answered the questioned one. "Let me go; I want to see what the ole guy is up to."

The policeman lost his temper. He was being treated with disrespect. A festive citizen was running a fool procession over his beat without giving him the least explanation! So he let go of the youth's shoulder and dashed madly after the man in evening dress.

"Here, what's the game?" he panted. "What sort of a stunt are you up to, anyhow?"

The fat man shook off the grip of the law and ran faster than ever, his outstretched hands circling round each other like the arms of a windmill in a gale.

"Stoop down and I'll tell you," he gasped, as the officer made another effort to restrain him.

The evident respectability of the fat man made the policeman comply with the request, and bending his six-foot frame he ran alongside the other as he listened. The inquisitive mob, now numbering a score, gathered in close, but the nightstick described a circle and they backed into safety.

For nearly twenty yards the policeman ran with bent back. Then he straightened himself up and laughed loudly. "Good for you," he cried. "Sprint a little, or we may be too late." Then he started to run madly alongside the man with the windmill arms.

Late revelers joined the group, but when they asked the reason of the chase they were told to watch the movements of the leader's hands.

"Been doin' that all the way from Twenty-eighth street," gasped the early followers, proud in the possession of that much information. "He's told the cop a joke, an' now the hickory welder is hittin' the trail with him."

At Forty-eighth street the policeman met the officer on the adjoining beat, and hooking him by the arm he whispered into his ear as he kept pace with the fat man. The new policeman guffawed loudly, and again the angry crowd looked vainly for the humor that seemed apparent to the two guardians of the peace. The first policeman slackened speed, called out a friendly "Good luck" to the fat man, and then returned to his own beat, while his comrade trotted swiftly in his place.

The fat man swung east, down Fifty-third street, and new recruits joined the procession at every yard. But all thirsted vainly for information. Questions put by the newcomers were met with the one answer: "Don't know; look at his hands. Been twisting them round and round all the way from Twenty-eighth street."

Crossing Third avenue the fat man halted suddenly. He knelt down upon the car tracks, and the officer stooped beside him. The crowd pressed round till the swiftly-swung nightstick swept them back. The man in evening dress crawled across the tracks and raked the ground with his fingers.

Presently he leapt to his feet and yelled out excitedly. "It's all right, officer," he cried, and once again his hands started to revolve round each other as he dashed towards the water.

Just here a third policeman was initiated into the mystery that was troubling the crowd, and with a merry laugh he took up a position by the side of the fat man. The crowd cursed collectively. Here was a mystery that had been explained three times to bulky policemen, yet they were kept in ignorance. It wasn't fair. They had a right to know why the man in evening dress was doing the windmill performance with his hands, and why that stunt amused the policeman. Much of their breath was exhausted in strange phrases denouncing the secrecy of the police, but they were determined to see the end.

Near Second avenue a man standing on the sidewalk turned when he heard the noise of the charging squad and contemplated the runners. Then he stepped into the street and crossed over. The fat man chuckled. He whispered to the policeman at his right hand, and the officer dashed ahead. The man in front started to run, but his pursuer overhauled him in a dozen strides, and they rolled on the pavement.

"Wat's the matter?" gasped the captured one. "Wat are yer scruffin' me for?"

"This gentleman wants his rubber door-mat," murmured the policeman, relieving his captive of the parcel he carried beneath his arm.

"Hully Gee!" exclaimed the prisoner, rubbing his eyes and staring round him at the crowd. "Where did yer get the mob, an' how did yer know I had it, anyhow?"

"I had you on a string," explained the fat man, holding up a black thread in the light of the street lamp. "I've caught five men who have tried to steal that mat. It's attached to a thousand yards of strong thread, and as they generally grab it when the streets are quiet, the trail is always clear."

**Motor Boats on Dead Sea.**

The Dead sea is a government monopoly, and at present is leased out to a small native company. They have a wooden boat built for a sailing vessel, but about six months ago had a motor put in it. If this company succeeds they might try a couple more motor boats. The Dead sea is one-third solid matter, the greater part of which is salt, and the question to answer is: Can the hulls stand the action of this salt water? People in this country are not wealthy enough to afford a motor boat for pleasure only, and as no one would be allowed to use one on the Dead sea, Jaffa is the only possible market for boats in the district. The Jordan valley, the river and the Dead sea are the personal property of the sultan. A permit must be first obtained from the sultan before boats of any kind can be launched thereon. Such permits have heretofore been very difficult to procure for motor boats.

**Appointment Causes Commotion.**

Maj. Gen. Edward Ritter von Schweitzer, a Jew, has received the appointment of field marshal, the highest military rank in the Austro-Hungarian empire. Anti-Semites express themselves bitterly, while the more liberal-minded are loud in their praises of Emperor Francis Joseph for this latest manifestation of his freedom from religious bias.