

**A PLAIN AMERICAN
IN ENGLAND**

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A Plain American in England by Charles T. Whitefield

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C. O.

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For years I have wanted to write my autobiography, but there seems to be no precedent for any one to break out in self-praise unless the person is well-known to the public, like Julius Cæsar, Mr. Pepys, Booker T. Washington, or Chimmie Fadden. I can hardly expect to rival in interest the personal history of royal and oil kings, but I am sure this sketch of one of the common people has the tales told by Julius surpassed for every-day interest though possibly it will be of less use in the schoolrooms.

It's a great comfort, too, to have such a good opportunity for the free and unfettered use of the pronoun "I." When

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you go into autobiography, you can just wallow in "I's" and no one seems to hold you up to ridicule or criticize your taste; and, now that type is set by machine, you needn't fear that the box of capital "I's" will go empty in the type case.

To begin at the beginning is, in my case, out of the question, because I was born in Brooklyn, and I was seven before I realized that when I travelled I should register from New York.

In fact the first time that I attracted my own attention to myself was on the occasion of my initial journey to England. Up to that moment I had felt that I was like every one else; but when I tried to settle down for a few minutes in dear old England, I realized that there had been

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mighty few people in the world like me, and none had ever come to England. I am a great admirer of the English, and the more often I go to England, the more I appreciate the good qualities of the people: I think that they are the finest in the world. I frequently tell my British friends this, and they are so polite that they never contradict but admit at once that my assertion is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Such a statement made to a Frenchman would cause him to shrug his shoulders and lead him to make deprecatory remarks; but an Englishman is too honest and straightforward to permit himself to prevaricate on even so vital and personal a subject.

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I have no wish to thresh old straw, and I will pass over the familiar stories of one's first impressions in a strange land, which have been so thoroughly and correctly covered by Kate Douglas Wiggin in four volumes octavo, superbly illustrated, \$5.00 net (postage extra), and say at once that I am not one to get riled because you are expected to chop off the head of your egg instead of breaking it into a yellow and white mess in a tumbler. I can only suggest one change in connection with this egg business, and that would be a simple matter, viz., to cover the walls of the breakfast room with a white and yellow oilcloth, so that you can swing your knife freely at the egg head with a clear conscience, and not have

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to apologize to the hostess for leaving your breakfast autograph on her walls.

But everything of this kind has been fully covered in books, as I have said. Even the pamphlet advertisements of the steamship companies give you some particulars of how to manage. But there is one experience you may possibly have in England which, I am convinced, has not been properly told about, and I propose to put the whole American public wise on this.

THE COUNTRY HOUSE PARTY

I had not been long in England (in autobiographies you can always begin each sentence with an "I" if you wish, disregarding all rules of the "Ready Letter

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Writer”) before I was invited to a house party in the country. This sounded good to me. I had all my clothes pressed in London, went to the barber, visited a sweet girl graduate of a manicure and got my hands in a better condition than they have been since I had typhoid three years ago, refurbished my most dressy manner, took my pen in hand to thank the distinguished honourable lady and accepted.

I was invited to be a “gun” at this house party, but I declined this honour, because it sounded too expensive, and I wanted to save my goldpieces to help set up the maids and valets in a business of their own, on leaving the house.

That was lucky for me, as I found that