

LET'S FACE THE FACTS

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Address to the Men and Women
of Canada

BY

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over a national network of
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Text of Florence Reed's address over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation national network Sunday night, August 11th, follows:

SALUTE TO ENGLAND

Once upon a time many years ago there were in England two men. One was named Gilbert and the other was named Sullivan. To Mr. S. one day said Mr. G., "What do you say we write an opera?" "Righto," replied Mr. G. So they did and they called it "The Mikado." Perhaps you may have heard about it. Now in this opera they had put a character and he was the Lord High Executioner and his name was Koko. Now it happened that also in England there was at that time a great comedian, one George Grossmith, so they went to him and told him he was exactly right for Koko and would he play it. He did.

And one day long after this English Koko came across the seas and met the American Koko who was Roland Reed and who happened to be my father, and he came and spent a week-end with us.

All this happened a long time ago when I was quite a small person, yet how clearly do I remember the delightful gaiety of his visit, the laughter, the reminiscing! Especially do I remember one evening when a dinner party had been given so he might meet and foregather with our representative stars of the theatre. There were probably eight million dollars' worth of celebrities at that dinner party at one fell swoop. After dinner I was allowed

to come down to the drawing-room to be passed around, as it were, and make my "dip." And there was a "Titwillow" going strong, one verse by one of them, the next by the other, and still another by Richard Mansfield, who had played Koko in the Chicago company, and was that "Titwillow" something! Everybody in the room convulsed. For me, personally, there always lurked a tear in "Titwillow." Father sang it for me often and it always made me cry a little. But that night everybody seemed to be feeling a bit, well, let's say, "mellow." I have wished many times there might have been a recording transcription to keep. Such things, however, were yet to be invented.

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLAND

I had never before met, never before talked with anyone from England, and this George Grossmith was a person of such charm and sparkle and overwhelming humor my young imagination was captivated. And when just before leaving us he presented me with a very gorgeous doll that talked and opened and closed its eyes and was the very most lovely doll in all the world, my bewitchment was quite complete. I expect it was then my obsession for England was born. Maybe it was the doll, maybe the "Titwillow," who knows? I don't. I only know it grew up with me and stayed put.

Is it possible to have a nostalgia for a place one has never seen? I only know I longed to go to England and that the longing continued. Then one day the miracle

happened! Incredible! We were going! At last, at long, long last, we were going! We were sailing on an English boat; then we were sailing next Saturday. Oh, how indescribable, how exciting, how intoxicating, that first crossing! The thrill of it!

And then one afternoon, the seventh day out, I thought I saw afar off, a faint line on the horizon. No, there was nothing. Yes, yes there was, the very thinnest, faintest, thread where before there had been nothing but sea. Breathlessly I asked, "Is it, is it, it isn't England? Don't tell me it is England!"—It was! No dressing and going in to dine for me that evening. On deck I remained gazing, gazing, until nightfall had cheated my eyes and I could no longer see it.

MAGIC AT LONDON

The next morning, my two feet actually on London pavements! I think it turned my head a little. The magic of it, the incredible magic! Buckingham Palace actually, unbelievably — The Palace—where THEY lived! I stood rooted for hours, hoping against hope! I actually tried to open a conversation with one of the immovable guards standing rigid in his little box! But that got me exactly nowhere, since he merely looked over my head and kept right on being rigid. I still have strong doubts that he was alive. Then the Houses of Parliament, the Abbey, the hush of it, and Bond Street and Hyde Park and Piccadilly and all of it, every blessed foot of it; sheerest, incredible fascination of seeing it, actually see-

ing it, after all the wishing. And oddly enough, each time I have gone over since, always the same enthralling charm and spell. And the English countryside! Dear Heaven, the beauty of it! The green of it like no other green anywhere, the hedgerows, the birds, the fantastic beauty of the trees which seem to have been in exactly that spot since the beginning of time.

Then the weekends in Bucks at the home of precious English cousins I had never before met. And, topping it all, a gratuitous nightingale hospitably thrown in! My very first nightingale. And the pink and white May trees in blossom, and the luncheon at Marlow, and punting on the Thames, and, of all things, Burnham Beeches. And the weekends at Oxford and Cambridge, and another at lovely little Broadway with its age-old and so attractive inn, the Ligon Arms. All of it, all of it, the beauty, the charm, the fascination, was England. And, back of it all, the thing you sense, you feel, you inhale with every breath of English air—the endless, endless tradition, the timeless aristocracy of that tradition rooted in the very soil. And the calm sureness of all the surface complacency, so characteristically English, yet under it, deep under it all, the iron spine!

DESTINY OF ENGLAND

Solid, confident, self-reliant, so that one feels sure there always was England, there always must be England, and there always will be England.

It is this that enthuses American hearts. Not only to cheer you on, not only to pull for you, to pray for you, to welcome with open arms your children, but to give, and give, and lend and send. Because, after all, you are the Motherland and blood is thicker than water.

And how altogether beautiful and heart-warming it will be for us over here to keep your children, fathers and mothers of England, to have the joy of looking after these small future fathers and mothers, and cherish them, and love them and, I am afraid, feel exceedingly loath when the time comes to part with them when you have made home safe for them to return. And not alone for your own children, but have straightened out again into human decency and sanity a Europe so wickedly, so needlessly turned into a shambles by insane barbarity, so that all the tragic children, vagrant, wandering, lost to hearth and home and to all dear familiar faces, shall be restored to accustomed, normal, happy childhood. And this is England's part. This is England's magnificent destiny! It lies tightly in her completely capable hands. Do not doubt it, do not listen to one poisoned word that would have it otherwise, because under God there is not the smallest doubt of it. Know it, believe it, it is written.

Victor Hugo's words in his analysis of the psychology back of Waterloo come aptly to mind. I quote: "Was it possible for Napoleon to win the battle? We answer in the negative. Why?

On account of Wellington? On account of Blucher? No. on account of God. Bonaparte victor at Waterloo would not harmonize with the law of the 19th century. It was the time for this vast man to fall. His excessive weight in human destiny disturbed the balance. Such plethoras of human vitality concentrated in a single head, the world accounting to one man's brain, would be fatal to civilization if they endured. The moment had come! The principles and elements on which the regular gravitation of the moral order as well as of the material order depend, have rebelled. Steaming blood, overcrowded graveyards, mothers in tears, are formidable pleaders. Napoleon had been denounced in the Infinite and his fall was decided. He troubled God. Waterloo is not a battle. It is a change of front on the part of the Universe."

And history does repeat itself. The law of the 19th century is the law of every century because it is the law of the universe, a law ever active, ever present, timeless, eternal, and under which right and justice shall prevail.

Then, carry on England! Every American heart is with you for "God and the Right." Carry on, we salute you England incapable of a shameful peace, England, who fighting the fight alone shall win alone, "England, this earth of majesty, this state of Mars, this fortress, built by Nature for herself against infection, and the hand of war, this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England"—we salute you!