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## A CHAPTER ON LEGS

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(with apologies to Charles Lamb)

I have no legs. Now don't get me wrong. I don't mean to suggest that I am devoid of those twin appendages to the human trunk which somewhat resembles stilts and which are occasionally useful for hanging trousers on. I think I am well—though not profusely, for I am no centipede—supplied with those bony projections.

When I say that I have no legs you must understand that I mean for walking—that mode of locomotion, forward or backward, or even sideways, peculiar to the species of being known as *homo sapiens*. Nor do I refer to the **act** of walking, but rather to the **habit** of walking, for indeed to say that this microcosm has never engaged in such an **act** would be a foul untruth. But I am by constitution antipathetic to the habitual use of that form of motion. I can talk and gesture, see and taste, hear and smell, feel and sit, but walk I cannot. It would not seem that I am organically incapable of walking. Not at all. But by inclination, by habit, by sentiment, I prefer to sit.

Some men are born to walk and others to sit. My nativity (under the sign of Taurus, the "sitting" bull) has placed me among the gentry of the latter class, which, dear reader, if you will scrutinize carefully, you will soon see to be far superior to the former group. Why the superiority? For answer let us ruminate—the only kind of thinking suitable for a sitter—upon the relative merits of the walkers and the sitters.

Who give their days—for we are not considering sleepwalkers here—or even their leisure over to walking but the quarrelsome, the loafers, and the disgruntled? The quarrelsome need to take walks to cool their dispositions and to keep away from others by whom they might be provoked. The loafers (upon whom our English friends have bestowed the very appropriate appellation of "spivs") must walk for they have nothing else to do and are too lazy to sit—but more of that later. Those disgruntled with their lot in life walk to seek solace in the things of nature; walking is to them an opiate. The idle, indolent, insipid, disgruntled, disaffected, dissatisfied, provocative, pugnacious, palestric man—this is the walker.

But what man who is at peace with himself and with the world need walk? The contented man is at ease by his own fireplace. The industrious man is busy in his own



chair. The peaceful man enjoys the pleasure of his friends. So what need have these men to walk? Absolutely none. The genial, gentle, good-natured creature—this is the non-walker.

During the centuries the walkers have had the best of us sitters, I am afraid. We have done the real work, but they have got the publicity. For example, take the very name "walker". We all know of Johnny Walker, but how many have heard of Johnny Sitter, whose beverage, I venture to say, tastes just as good. The worst effect of the domination of the walkers, however, has been their mis-handling of the world. We sitters live our lives "ex cathedra" and therefore cannot walk into error, but the walkers possess no such infallibility. And what a sorry mess they have made of things! It is time, fellow sitters, that we ceased hiding our lights under our armchairs and woke up to the fact that it is our duty to give to the world what we have hatched. Sitters of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chairs! You may gain the world for Sedentarism.

There are those who declare that he who does not desire to walk is not truly human. But here, ah, I have authority on my side. Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas rush to my defence. Man, they assure all and sundry, is defined, not as a perambulating animal, but as a rational animal. What if the Philosopher were a peripatetic in mode of teaching? He was not so in doctrine. But, persist my detractors, nothing daunted, man is studied as a mobile being. (My philosophic protagonists turn their intellects to meet this flanking attack). Man can be considered as a mobile being, we are forced to admit, but—and here we hoist the walkers with their own petard—this is but man in his poorest state, in the lowest degree of abstraction. Remove man from all matter and he is no longer mobile but static; he is sitting, as it were, and only in the inferior state was he walking.

Some others prefer not to tangle with the philosophers. These cast a very simple accusation at me—that I am lazy. But what is laziness if it is not the desire to take the easiest way out? The walkers need not think that their vocation is the only kind of labor. Indeed, 'tis not labor at all. The real laborers, the true proletariat of the universe, are the thinkers and the sitters. What of the armchair strategists? Does not incessant thinking often wreak havoc on their bodies comparable to injury from the foeman's steel? Above all, what is more difficult than just sitting? This is the highest form of labor and the sitters are therefore the chosen people, the elect. Have the walkers ever



tried to sit—hour after hour, day after day, week after week? What makes baby sitters so sought after? Undoubtedly it is the difficulty of the employment and the paucity of consummate sedatorial skill. Surely sitting is the most arduous, the most exacting task of life. It is an art, for one must not just sit—he must sit right. It tasks every fibre of our being. Sitting is the real business of life. Descartes said, "Cogito, ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am), but surely it is more true to say, "Sedeo, ergo sum" (I sit, therefore I am).

—M. R. M. '51

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### A SOLUTION: DISTRIBUTISM

Two very real inclinations in modern society are the over-emphasis of specialization and the centralization of industry. Those prevailing trends are especially apparent in the United States and Canada. Industrial centralization more than anything is responsible for untamed regions of both countries remaining undeveloped. There is a constantly increasing migration to central Canada from the Maritimes and the Western provinces. Although central Canada is expanding prodigiously, this situation has a detrimental effect on the less populous provinces. Since it is an unhealthy tendency, it should be corrected. Distributists advocate decentralization of industry; and we find in distributism a reasonable means to bring about a dispersal of wealth and power.

Concentration of power, and immensity chokes the individual. Masters of industry rule society but the common man's opinion is rarely taken into consideration. Small businesses encounter great obstacles. Many of these smaller enterprises are forced to sell to industrial corporations to avoid economic ruin. This is one of the principal reasons for our national industry becoming over-centralized. Even in agriculture, there is a leaning towards collectivism. Small farms are being incorporated and virtual manorial farming has resulted. In agriculture and industry, lesser individuals are becoming increasingly dependent, while land-owners and industrial magnates are amassing wealth and power. Because of this situation, the great men of industry participate more in governmental affairs. Eventually, we shall find them dictating to governments. Thus, there will be as a consequence an aristocracy of opulent capitalists.

Distribution calls for a diffusion of wealth and industry as a means to secure man's freedom. Possession of