

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF AMBROSE BIERCE ...: TANGENTIAL VIEWS • VOLUME 9

AMBROSE BIERCE



Resumo de The Collected Works of Ambrose Bierce (Volume 9); Tangential Views

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Excerpt: ... DISINTRODUCTIONS THE devil is a citizen of every country, but only in our own are we in constant peril of an introduction to him. That is democracy. All men are equal; the devil is a man; therefore, the devil is equal.

If that is not a good and sufficient syllogism I should be pleased to know what is the matter with it. To write in riddles when one is not prophesying is too much trouble; what I am affirming is the horror of the characteristic American custom of promiscuous, unsought and unauthorized introductions.

You incautiously meet your friend Smith in the street; if you had been prudent you would have remained indoors. Your helplessness makes you desperate and you plunge into conversation with him, knowing entirely well the disaster that is in cold storage for you.

The expected occurs: another man comes along and is promptly halted by Smith and you are introduced! Now, you have not given to the Smith the right to enlarge your circle of acquaintance and select the addition himself; why did he do this thing?

The person whom he has condemned you to shake hands with may be an admirable person, though there is a strong numerical presumption against it; but for all that the Smith knows he may be your bitterest enemy.

The Smith has never thought of that. Or you may have evidence (independent of the fact of the introduction) that he is some kind of thief -- there are one thousand and fifty kinds of thieves.

But the Smith has never thought of that. In short, the Smith has never thought. In a Smithocracy all men, as aforesaid, being equal, all are equally agreeable to one another.

That is a logical extension of the Declaration of American Independence. If it is erroneous the assumption that a man will be pleasing to me because he is pleasing to another is err...

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