

THE THREAD OF FLAME

the wonders with which the world was full; to them, with their ugly homes, cramped outlooks, and misshapen hopes, it was, I fancy, much what the marvels of the next world will be to those accustomed to the dwarfed conceptions of this.

Saturday afternoons were the days of our reunions, and we came to the last in June. It was a fatal day, the 28th, marking the fifth anniversary of the tragedy through which the new world began to dissociate itself forever from the old. As contemporary history was a large part of our interest, with the development of man's efforts stage by stage, the occasion naturally came in for comment.

On that particular day we were in the great room, which, as far as I know, has no rival in any other museum in the world, where the whole history of ceramic art is visually unfolded in order from the crude, strong products of the Han, Tang, and Sung dynasties in China, up through the manifold efflorescence of European art to such American works as that of Bennington, Cincinnati, and Dedham, which may be the forerunner of a new departure.

We had come to that section of the room where were displayed the first representative pieces brought back from the East by merchants and ambassadors, and so voyages of discovery were in order. Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama and the Dutch, English, and Portuguese explorers had been discussed, and I was in the act of giving to my boys the story of the origin of delftware as