

Alistair Cooke: *Letter from America*,
2005, London: Penguin Books.

From "The Immigrant Strain." 6 May 1946.

"...Americans...shuffle through every stereotype of every foreign culture as confidently as they handle the family's pack of cards. Americans are not particularly good at sensing the real elements of another people's culture. It helps them to approach foreigners with carefree warmth and an animated lack of misgiving. It also makes them, on the whole, poor administrators on foreign soil. They find it almost impossible to believe that poorer peoples, far from the Statue of Liberty, should not want in their heart of hearts to become Americans. If it should happen that America, in its new period of world power, comes to do what every other world power has done: if Americans should have to govern large numbers of foreigners, you must expect that Americans will be well hated before they are admired for themselves." (4)

We don't seem to have the capacity to hear wisdom when it is spoken