On Running After One’s Hat Summary of the Essay-**The London Flood-** The writer felt surprised on hearing that London had been flooded in his absence. He was happy that his own most beautiful locality, Battersea, too under water. It looked a lovely romantic town under water. The meat boat would have sailed smoothly in the lanes of flowing water. The greengrocer would have enjoyed the trip in the boat. A district under flood, according to the writer, would have looked a group of beautiful islands with a beautiful natural scene.

**Romantic Views of Flood-**The writer says that some persons regard such romantic views of flood, or fire wanting in reality. He says that a true optimist should see an opportunity for enjoyment in such things. The writer fully supports such happy and hopeful view. Toothache, or the case of being burnt at Smith field, inspite of real pain, may be rarely enjoyed. He calls all these cries of men, or women only sentimental, or imaginative inconveniences. Many persons complain of the late arrival of trains at a station which, like a young boy, is a source of pleasure and enjoyment for the writer. Quoting John Milton he says, “They also serve who only stand and wait.” He again says, “Many of the most purple hours of my life have been passed at Clapham junction, which is now, I suppose, under water.’

**The**[**Running after One’s Hat**](https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FG._K._Chesterton&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AOvVaw3MCUML8g1SVUFIyLIzMYZv)**—**Some people think it funny to run after one’s hat. He does not call it a proper thing. The same people run much faster in games and sports. It is wrong to call such running comic. It is certainly comic but man is also a very comic creature. Most comic things are most worth doing such as making love. A man running after a hat is not half so funny as a man running after a wife.

**That Hat-**hunting as the Jolliest Sport–The running after one’s hat is the jolliest sport. The writer says that hat-hunting shall be the sport of the upper classes in future. It shall be at a high place where gentiemen and ladies shall meet together in the morning. It shall be the sport with the maximum pleasure and recreation for all present there. The writer saw an oldman running after his hat in the Hyde Park where both the people and he himself were enjoying the sport with maximum pleasure and recreation.

**The Struggle is Exciting-**The same principle can be applied to any other domestic worry. For example, fishermen sit by dark pools enjoying patiently their fish-catching. In the same way, some people of very modern views make use of theological terms to lessen their distress. The struggle is exciting to those who face it with courage and pleasure.

**The Need of the Spirit of Adventure-**The writer asserts that with the same ideas in view even the floods of London could be enjoyed. Such an inconvenience may be regarded as the accidental aspect of an exciting situ- ation. An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly understood. The flood water in the great city of London should have been taken in that light. A Roman Catholic once said, “Wine is good with everything except water, and on the similar principle, water is good with everything except wine.”

“I am done with it! I am irritated! This is frustrating! Why does it happen only to me?”

We face problems everyday and life for no reason keeps throwing something at us. Even when our toe gets hit by furniture, we start cursing and stressing. No matter how trivial or challenging a problem is, we constantly worry about it. But all these problems can be romanticized as adventures after reading G K Chesterton’s essay ‘On Running after One’s Hat’.

The essay starts with Chesterton envying people who were in London when it was flooded. He says that Battersea (a place in London) has always been beautiful and the addition of water has made it appear like Venice. He imagines the boat that bought the meat to have moved with the elegance and smoothness of a gondola (a long and narrow boat).

*“There is nothing so perfectly poetical as an island; and when a district is flooded it becomes an archipelago.”*

The optimism of the essayist makes him romanticize the flood which we would normally think of as bringing misfortune, destruction and loss.

*“The true optimist who sees in such things an opportunity for enjoyment is quite as logical and much more sensible than the ordinary.”*

Most of the instances which we perceive as inconveniences are completely related to our mentality and outlook. The essayist gives an instance for example. When there is a delay in the arrival of the train, the grown-ups complain while the children never do. This is because for children, a railway station appears like a ‘cavern of wonder and a palace of poetical pleasure’. The red and green lights of the signal appear to them as the new sun and moon. So if we view such inconveniences as children do, we shall no more perceive them as inconveniences. All the so-called inconveniences depend on how we view it.

The second instance the essayist gives is running after one’s hat. Many find it unpleasant to run after their hats after being blown away by wind. They run after a ball in a game but not after their own hat as they find it is humiliating.

*“When people say it is humiliating they mean it is comic.”*

People find it embarrassing as they are laughed at by other onlookers. Their fretful pursuit serves as a source of laughter. But it is all right because everything a human does is comical.

He also says that running after one’s hat has the potential of becoming a sport and it can be an alternative to poaching. **“He might regard himself as a jolly huntsman pursuing a wild animal,…”.** The essayist imagines it to be a common sport among the upper class. They would have their personal assistants run after the hat on a windy day and it would provide them a hearty laughter. This will be less painful than animal hunting too. The essayist says that we should be relieved of distress if our actions can provide laughter for others.

The essayist recalls how his friend struggled with a jammed drawer everyday. So, he points out to his friend that he is always finding the drawer troublesome because he always opens it while thinking that it should be easy to open the drawer. He says that the main problem lies with his friend’s outlook. Hence, he advises his friend to think of himself as “pulling against some powerful and oppressive enemy” or as participating in some fearsome tug war. If he imagines such situations when pulling the drawer, then it will no longer be an inconvenience but an adventure.

So, if we develop a positive outlook on everything that we encounter every day, maybe life won’t be as hard as we think. After all,

*“An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered.”*