

EDUCATION FOR PEACE*

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*New times demand new measures and new men.
The world advances, and in time outgrows
The laws that in our fathers' day were best.*

YEAR by year, with the gradual conquest of space, our world grows smaller and smaller. Already we feel that the nations which dwell all around it have been brought together into a natural and inevitable circle, and that beyond this there is no escape for any single State or group of States. Henceforth we must work together, for we are growing more and more dependent on one another socially, industrially, and intellectually.

It is with the last of these relations that I shall here concern myself. For this is the one most neglected. Of our social and industrial interdependence we hear every day; but the fact that our progress must be based on the intellectual development of all nations simultaneously often seems to be ignored, and world-wide disturbances in trade and political relations are the result.

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Nations are dependent on one another intellectually as children are dependent on their elders. For it may be said of every great nation, and of even many a lesser one, that it has served the rest of the world as an intellectual father in some branch of learning. Each has contributed something which we would not willingly be without. Obviously, the great nations that have long ago reached a comparatively high standard of intellectual development, such as Greece, Italy, France, England and Germany, have contributed a larger share than more backward or newer countries. England is proud, and justly proud, of her political and colonial greatness; but England would never have attained this greatness without the scientific contributions of Germany, the social innovations of France, and the artistic influence of Italy. Even such countries as Holland and Switzerland have contributed a large share to the world's growth. Holland stands before us as the finest example of thrift and determination. Some of the democratic principles of Switzerland have been embodied in the Constitutions of all great nations; while the Swiss Confederation of cantons, differing so widely in language and religion, has served in the past,

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and will continue to serve in the future, as a model of international harmony. It is by adding these various national contributions that we obtain the sum total of the world's progress, and we learn how the different races have been unconsciously stimulating the growth of civilization, tightening the bonds of international relations, and aiding one another to reach the consummation of a splendid, though distant, world.

If our progress hitherto has been through the action and reaction of unconscious tendencies, then what could we not accomplish by working consciously so that these tendencies may be developed? Happily, such a movement is already afoot. Few and far between, scattered over the five vast continents of this world, there are leaders to-day who are devoting their lives to the intellectual emancipation of man;—leaders who are doing their utmost by pen, word, and personal example to awaken all races and creeds to a more conscious international co-operation, leaders who, undaunted by the dense intellectual squalor by which they are surrounded, strive onward, full of inspired confidence, toward a distant goal, which they themselves never hope to reach. They are as voices crying in the wilderness. But no truly inspired voice ever cried in even the most desolate wilderness in vain.

Of these public-spirited men, those who raise their voices in schools and colleges have the best opportunity of furthering their cause, for the spread of international ideals is directly subject to each country's system of education. Such a system should provide for the teaching of those subjects which, from the kindergarten to the university, would be best suited to lead the evolving mind to those broad fields of intellectual fertility, capable of absorbing, and of making allowance for, even the most deep-rooted of those innumerable commercial, racial, and religious rivalries which ever threaten the very existence of our race. For national prejudices are strongest among the uneducated and half-educated, and the most dangerous plague of the world is *ignorance*.

A move in the right direction was recently made in Geneva, the infant capital of the world. When the *First International Congress of Child Welfare* met there last autumn, it passed resolutions containing the following introduction:—

The First General Congress of Child Welfare is of opinion that in every country the education of the child, while based in the first place on patriotic sentiment, should be directed towards a wider love, namely, that of humanity at large, and that sanction must be given to efforts towards stirring in the hearts of children of all nations a current of sympathy and trust which may help to hasten the advent of an era of international peace.

Unfortunately the Congress did not make any practical suggestions as to how this is to be accomplished, and the question has still to be answered—What are to be the subjects taught, and what the method to be followed by our small band of truly progressive teachers? No doubt, each of these teachers has evolved some more or less practical idea; but a formula, capable of universal application, has yet to be heard of.

However, it is obvious to everyone who stops to consider the matter that a great deal could be done in a very short time, if the present antiquated method of teaching history, geography, and modern languages, as followed in our Canadian schools and colleges, were abolished in favour of the modern methods used in countries of a less rigid educational stagnation, such as Switzerland, Finland and Denmark.

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Perhaps no single branch of learning is more conducive to a wide understanding of things international than the study of modern languages. For it is only when we can freely converse with the peoples of other countries—when able to read and understand their best literature—that we begin to appreciate their merits, and make allowance for their failings. We then realize that these things which we at first considered to be unpardonable faults are mere differences of opinion, for which the history and geographical position of these countries will account. The student of national ideals must search for such ideals in the hearts of the people and in the pages of the books which best represent them; he must go back to the original sources from which springs the life-blood of the race. For we cannot in English read the books that were written in French, for the simple reason that *one language cannot be translated into another*. We may translate the sense of a word by using its nearest equivalent in another language, but we cannot translate the spirit of a whole phrase, or book, or poem. It took the French mind, tongue, and atmosphere thousands of years to shape a certain word expressing an abstract idea. Hence it is preposterous to suppose that a work of literary art, finely woven out of best French thought, may be translated by the mere use of corresponding English words. It is true that from a French book an able writer may create an English masterpiece containing the exposition of French ideas; but the soul belonging to these ideas would be dead, and more likely to repulse from than to attract to the French way of thinking. And this is a fact which educationists should bear in mind while they reform the existing system of instruction in languages. They must endeav-

our to teach French by creating a French atmosphere, real, or artificial, and by appealing directly to the spirit—the inarticulate spirit—of the pupil.

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The geographical ignorance of Canadians and Americans is proverbial all over the world. Yet the distance, and the commercial independence, of the North American continent from the rest of the world should have ceased by this time to be an excuse for it. In the first place, rapid transportation by sea, by land, and by air has greatly reduced this distance; while as to our boasted independence, our increasing standard of living makes it more and more difficult, and our need to exchange the commodities we possess renders it almost impossible. A thorough understanding of the geographical position and of the natural resources of other countries has therefore become a matter of primary and immediate importance. This line of investigation, which should include the study of racial problems, would naturally quicken our interest in other nations and our sympathy with them. It would reveal more fully the fact that other countries are struggling with difficulties in which we usually have a common interest, and which we may be able to overcome by joining our energies to theirs. We must realize that these countries are inhabited by people like ourselves, having the same ideals and aspirations. Thus the teaching of geography is of paramount importance; it is a subject that should be studied from the kindergarten to the end of a university course; and in its extent and influence it constitutes a great mission-field for teachers who are prepared to devote their energies to the spread of internationalism.

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To most students history is a dry subject. A good teacher, however, can make even the dullest passages fascinating, and its possibilities for the broadening of the mind are enormous. But it is chiefly the more recent historical events that lend themselves to a study which may be both entertaining and useful; for though the study of Greek and Roman times may be exceedingly interesting, the lives of these people, their quarrels, their religious and racial problems were too far removed from ours to serve us as models or precedents. The task of a teacher of modern history should be to interpret and to justify recent events of international importance. By *justify* I do not mean, for instance, that a teacher should be expected to show how it was right for Austria to go to war with Serbia, but rather that having explained all the racial, historical,

and economic difference between Austria and Serbia, he would endeavour to show how it was *because* of these racial, historical and economic differences that Austria went to war, and not out of sheer perverted motives on the part of that nation. Thousands of young men and women, some of whom will in time become great moulders of public opinion, are now passing through our colleges with the conviction that the French are essentially selfish, hypocritical, and foolishly sentimental, and that the Italians are universally treacherous as well as cruel to man and beast. Little or nothing is done to erase such ancient superstitions and prejudices from these students' minds, and thus the seeds of discord and possible wars are permitted to propagate. Our leading educationists are not sufficiently independent or influential to come out openly as champions of radical reform. The State stands by nonchalantly, and cuts down educational supplies to pay for armaments or political intrigue. Moreover, the State is too ephemeral a body to trouble about investments that bear fruit in a period far beyond its interest. Yet if only one half the money paid for armaments were spent on a broader and more efficient system of education, there might soon be little need for armaments at all.

The weakness of the present method of teaching history is easily apparent to anyone who reads text-books on that subject. They lack unity of thought; they are barren of ideals; they lead from nowhere to nowhere—and the average teacher of history, knowing no better, follows the text-book to the word. But what is the utility of a dry accumulation of unanimated facts to the average boy or girl? Unless a student has a mind naturally bent on deep reflection, he is wasting time studying history. Yet if only one page of that history were intelligently interpreted and compared with modern life, if the historian had endeavoured to show the significance of one fact in the chain of events leading to the present period of human development, then indeed would the student be able to benefit by the knowledge of that one page, that one fact. Through every page of that text-book there should run a united and definite purpose, which would tend to explain the ultimate meaning of history and give as clear an idea as possible of international tendencies past, present and future.

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This readjusted study of history, geography, and modern languages, aiming separately as well as collectively at a wider interpretation of universal life, might be supplemented in colleges by a fourth subject which is deserving of especial notice by those

engaged in higher education; namely, the study of international trade relations. Such a course might take the place of an advanced course in international geography, or it might be affiliated with this. It is essential that university students should learn to appreciate the degree in which we are dependent on all the isles and continents of the world—whosoever may lay claim to them—and to understand Canada's position in this universal chain of dependencies. The quarrels of the civilized world of to-day are mainly economic. The time of religious wars and violent constitutional struggles has passed: the school for the propagation of international good-will is undenominational, and the sovereign peoples all over the world are now moulding their Constitutions to their own national desires. Therefore, whatever future wars may arise will do so through our lack of having peacefully adjusted our economic problems. For this reason a comprehensive and sympathetic study of these problems is essential. Tomorrow the fate of nations will depend on the judgment of the children of to-day.

The present system of education, however, is so deeply rooted in our social scheme of things that it is easy to foresee difficulties in the way of change. A proposal, for instance, to extend either the high-school or the university course by one year—of which there is great need—would be strenuously opposed. It would be opposed by parents on the plea that they are unable to meet the additional expense involved, and it would be opposed by the pupils themselves, because, for diverse reasons, their general desire is to leave school as early as possible. But conditions of life here have undergone so radical a change within the last twenty-five years as to render an equally radical change in our educational system unavoidable. This system we must strive to adapt to present needs. The purpose of both teachers and pupils must be progress and internationalism.

For in progress through internationalism lies the world's salvation. We have recently seen how several powerful nations have attempted to settle their disputes by the age-old custom of the stronger destroying the weaker. It has not worked; the dispute was not settled; and millions of strong and intelligent men paid for this failure with their lives. The war left the countries of Europe in such a chaotic and impoverished state that only the iron grip of a dictator could long retain the reins of government, and it dealt democracy a blow from which it will take generations to recover.

Such failure of force is education's opportunity. The State must be made to realize its obligations to our schools and colleges; it must help them in every possible way to produce men and women who will feel deeply conscious of their new international obligations, and who will understand once and for all that the world is one round country, inhabited only by men who are free and equal with ourselves. We are slowly moving towards a world-confederation, with a world-court possessing sole control over armed forces. Hitherto our progress in that direction has been unconscious, or, at least, without method. But henceforth the State, our colleges, and even our elementary schools must strive to make this movement a dominating ideal in the minds of all, for it is supremely in the interest of our well-being.

Above all, let us have faith in the ultimate good of things. Even lofty and unpractical ideas have their value. History has, perhaps, been of greatest service in showing us how often the ideals of one age are the facts which explain the very existence of another. Thus Dante's fertile mind conceived a united Italy at a time when such a thing was inconceivable to his fellow-men. Likewise the present universal reach and dominating influence of the League of Nations was quite beyond our conception when its name was first suggested. Does not this serve to show that there is nothing more fruitful of results than an indomitable idealism such as that of Woodrow Wilson? Nor have any ten lines ever contained more truth, or better interpreted the world's method of progress, than these of Mary Coleridge:

Egypt's might is tumbled down,
Down, a-down the deep of thought;
Greece is fallen and Troy Town,
Venice' pride is nought.

But the dreams their children dreamed,
Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,
Shadowy as their shadows seemed,
Airy nothing, as they deemed,
These remain.