

The Language of Nations.

[The Value of Esperanto].

Never a day passes in which we do not read in our papers about the progress of aerial science. There is also talk of a Channel Tunnel, and of Tunnels at Gibraltar and Constantinople. The peoples of the earth are every day being brought nearer together. But what is the use of this if when they meet they cannot understand one another?

Had it been possible for the workers of the world to organise themselves into one great League before the war, they might have frustrated the designs of militaristic autocrats and politicians and prevented the world from being plunged into misery and ruin. Such a League might have been possible if an international language had been sufficiently widespread. The international language which has stood the severest trial and had the greatest measure of success up to the present is Esperanto. It is the creation of a Polish Jew, Dr. Zamenhof, who made it his life work and died poor.

When General Allenby entered Jerusalem he was obliged to use seven languages in issuing his proclamation to the people. The matter would have been greatly simplified and much labour and energy saved if one language could have been used instead of seven.

The idea of using Esperanto is not to substitute it for any national language, but to be able to get into touch with people in every part of the world without the necessity of spending years of study on several languages.

During the war, newspaper correspondents have worked under great difficulties by reason of the language barrier. Here is an example. Mr. Alexander M. Thompson, representing the "Daily Mail" at Petrograd, published the following message on October 12th, 1917. "From Petrograd I came on to Stockholm, intending to see the end of the Socialist Conference which is now indefinitely postponed; and then return home; instead of which even here I am held up with the investigation of German plots and developments which I am studying as well as my ignorance of the language will permit. For some days after my arrival I was unable to find a translator to interpret the Swedish papers for me, and I raged at the exasperating barrier of language which shut me out from all knowledge of things going on about me. Here was I, the accredited correspondent of a great London Daily, especially appointed to inform the British public by daily cable of stirring events in Sweden, and except in respect of colourless official statements from the Allied Legation, I had less chance of knowing the news that any street boy. It was maddening; it was unbearable!"

The Five-pointed Star.

Now if Mr. Thompson had only taken the advice that was given him years ago to learn Esperanto, and had worn the five-pointed green star of the Esperantist, he would have had no trouble whatever. The local Swedish Esperantists would have obliged him with enthusiasm.

With regard to the commercial uses of Esperanto, it is often necessary in the Ford factory at Detroit, U.S.A., to write notices to workpeople in eight different languages, and in another huge American factory notices are posted in no less than fifteen languages.

Think of the waste of time and energy involved!

Not long ago, after only a few weeks' study of Esperanto, a gentleman wrote an article in that language on "Reinforced Concrete," which being read by a Russian brought his friend an order for \$8,000 worth of goods.

The well-known firm of John Adams, of Sheffield says, "We have a world-wide connection, and during the past fifteen years have frequently had the opportunity of using Esperanto in correspondence with foreign clients, and we have always found it to be quite equal to any national language in every respect; in fact, we much prefer to use Esperanto rather than any national language, as through its medium the possibility of misunderstanding is entirely eliminated."

The Latin of Democracy.

The following testimony of Mr. C. L. J. M. Parkinson, M.A., Oxon., and Inspector of Schools, speaks for the Educational value of Esperanto: "I was so amazed at the progress made in Esperanto by the children of the Eccles Elementary School, Lancashire, that I resolved to learn it myself so that I might the better understand their work. During my study of the language I have come to realise its great educational value." After only two months' instruction in Esperanto in 1917 the children in the Eccles school began to correspond with children in other lands, and now they have correspondents in France, Holland, Denmark, Italy, Spain, Persia, China, America and Australia. Think of the stimulus of this instruction in the teaching of geography! Other schools in various parts of the world have followed this example.

Esperanto is the Latin of the Democracy. It can be acquired in one-tenth of the time it takes to learn any living language. Tolstoy, after only two hours' study of a penny pamphlet found he could read it easily. Professor Max Muller, an undoubted authority on language, places Esperanto high above all other attempts at an international language. Dr. J. E. B. Mayor, Professor of Latin at Cambridge, learnt Esperanto at the age of 83, and then declared all children should start it at 5. Professor Oscar Browning, who is master of some twenty languages, is delighted with the beauty of Esperanto, and some years ago translated his favourite English classic, Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," into it. Professor Gilbert Murray says, "I think there are few more profitable ways in which a man can spend his leisure than in thoroughly mastering Esperanto."

The practical benefits to Canadians possessing a knowledge of Esperanto are very great. By means of it they will be able to find markets in Japan, China, South America, and in fact in any country in the world. In Japan, Esperantists are numerous and two or three magazines are published in the language. Not long ago in one University alone in Peking, China, 300 students were studying Esperanto. Brazil and the Argentine are also very enthusiastic in utilising Esperanto for both commercial and educational purposes. When Russia is settled it will probably be found that there are more Esperantists in Russia than in any other country in the world, and this country is full of great commercial possibilities.

Esperanto can be mastered in one school session. The late Chief Inspector of Schools for Scotland recommended it as the one additional language in cases where language work is given to children who have to leave school at the age of 14. Time spent in teaching languages to children who have no aptitude for them is time wasted. If a child cannot learn Esperanto, he cannot learn any other language. It is a training in logical thought and expression, it quickens interest in school work, it gives a better knowledge of the mother tongue because the root words are the same as in his own language, and generally it widens a child's mental horizon.

The Khaki University teaches Esperanto. Applications for a course should be made to 31 Bedford Square. The address of the British Esperanto Association is 17 Hart Street, W.C. 1, where all literature can be obtained.

SOLDIER INDUSTRIAL GRADUATES.

The number of soldiers who have been placed in civil occupations after having graduated in industrial courses under the Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment Department is 1,347. There are at present 6,076 returned men undergoing training.

TORONTO'S 60,000 SOLDIERS.

Toronto, Ontario, is planning a great civic welcome to its 60,000 soldiers when they have all returned, about midsummer. This will be the largest public reception ever held in the history of Toronto. Altogether, the province of Ontario, with a population of less than 3,000,000 sent 200,000 soldiers to the war.

MANUFACTURERS WANT SOLDIERS.

According to the statement issued by the Toronto Branch of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the demand by members of the Association for returned soldiers now exceeds the supply. This is quite the reverse from the position a few weeks ago, when it was thought that the situation might develop into a somewhat serious problem.

Information Service.

OFFICIAL information on all matters of interest to returning Canadian soldiers and their dependents may be obtained through the Information Bureaux, established at the Khaki College Centres at Buxton, Bramshott, Rhyl, Ripon, Sunningdale, Seaford, Witley, and The Beaver Hut, Strand, London.

Enquiries made by letter or in person to the Central Bureau of Information, 31 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, will receive prompt attention.

Every question asked will be given the fullest consideration.