

Cecil Rhodes and his Scholars as Factors in International Conciliation.

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Cecil Rhodes was still a young man—
not more than 24—when, in a paper of
which Mr. Stead has given us the sub-
stance in his little book, "The Last Will
and Testament of Cecil J. Rhodes," he
attempted to formulate the ideal which
should govern his life.

"Service of my country," "betterment
of the human race," "furtherance of
the British Empire," "the end of all
wars"—these are some of the phrases
that catch the eye in this early docu-
ment.

And in a Will which he drafted about
the same time, and of which also Mr.
Stead has given us some account, we
find the same note—"extension of
British rule," "restoration of Anglo-
Saxon unity," "the foundation of so
great a Power as to hereafter render
wars impossible and promote the best
interests of humanity."

These are the ideals for which, while
little more than an undergraduate,
Cecil Rhodes had determined that he
would live and work; and they do not
differ in essentials from the ideals which
speak to us from the documents which,
much later in life, his maturer
soul found expression, the Will which
established the Scholarships. A differ-
ence there is; but not one that touches
the fundamental spirit of the thing.
Something of the local character has
disappeared: a larger experience has
modified the predominantly British tone
of the first expression; but in essence
the ideal remains the same—the good
of his country and the good of human-
ity.

It was characteristic of his genius,
and is some explanation of his career,
that the two should present themselves
to him as no more than different as-
pects of the same ideal. For his was
essentially a concrete mind. Dreamer
in a sense he was; for he possessed in
rare abundance the imaginative stuff
of which poets, discoverers, philoso-
phers are made. But behind his dream-
ing, or within it, moved the force which
turns men's dreaming into action. We
may call that, if we will, a quality of
character rather than of mind. But we
know in the end that these distinctions
are provisional only, and academic, and
that, in the chemistry of the living soul,
mind and character somehow fuse, and
make an individual. And of Cecil
Rhodes' personality it is no contra-
diction, but the barest truth, to say
that it was at once imaginative and
practical; and that in consequence his
thinking, however wide in reach, re-
mained to the last concrete. There have
been philosophies which have taught,
in one form or another, that the more
immediate good bars the way to the
more ultimate—that the part is the
worst enemy of the whole. But so ab-
stract and timid a philosophy was little
congenial to the mind of Cecil Rhodes.
For him there was no whole except in
the parts, and no ideal which did not
realize itself in something near and
personal.

If we apply this to our present inter-
est, we may certainly say that for him
Internationalism was not an ideal to
be reached through the denial of Na-
tionalism. "Pro patria pro orbis con-
cordiam." It is a notable and a pre-
gnant motto that the Association for
promoting International Conciliation
has chosen; it is one, moreover, with-
in which the thought of Cecil Rhodes
would have moved freely. Only, he
would, I think, have insisted that we
must be clear as to its emphasis and
significance; that we must not inter-
pret it as suggesting that the true na-
tionalism is internationalism; he
would have insisted that the approach
must be the other way, through the
nation to the brotherhood of man; ita
pro patria ut pro orbis concordia. In
his mind the service of humanity and
the service of country ran together as
a common fount or inspiration, and we
should be untrue to his thoughts if we
attempted to divide them. They are the
two forms under which at different mo-

ments, or rather from different angles,
he envisaged, with quite remarkable
consistency, the thing most worth liv-
ing for, the end of his own personal en-
deavor.

And he had a very definite and char-
acteristic conception of the means
through which he could best further
this end. He would do what lay in his
power to extend the area within which
a special type of character prevailed.
Character was to be the instrument;
for character determines the way in
which men approach the problems of
society and government, and in the end
dictates the solution at which they ar-
rive.

And, inevitably, the type of character
which he wished to perpetuate was the
type he knew as British—or rather, as
he later came to think of it, as Anglo-
Saxon. For that type stood, in his
belief, for the principles upon which the
well-being of nations depends, the
principles of justice, liberty, and peace.

Yes, Peace. Not only does the docu-
ment in which, as early as 1877, he out-
lined his ideal, connect the extension
of British rule with "the end of all
wars," but the Will of the same year,
to which I have already alluded, gives
the supreme object to which he would
devote his wealth to be devoted as "the
foundation of so great a Power as to
hereafter render wars impossible." And
to this end he suggests the formation
of a secret society after the Jesuit
model, co-extensive with the British
Empire, preaching imperial ideas, and
effecting its objects through the con-
trol of education.

Fourteen years later, in 1891, he
sent to Mr. Stead a letter in which he
formulates, roughly but unmistakably,
what we may well call his creed. The
centre of that creed is once more a
secret society, and the sum and end of
it all is the peace of the world, with a
single language universal and triumph-
ant.

Eight years later he drew up his last
Will, the Will which founds the Schol-
arships.

The main provisions of that Will
are so well known that I need not here
do more than briefly recapitulate them.
The bulk of his wealth Mr. Rhodes left
to seven trustees, directing them to es-
tablish scholarships, tenable for three
years, at the University of Oxford, for
which should be eligible:

- (1) Colonists from different parts of
the British Empire.
- (2) Students from the United
States of America.
- (3) Germans.

Colonists are to be brought to Oxford
"for instilling into their minds the ad-
vantage to the Colonies as well as to
the United Kingdom of the retention
of the unity of the Empire." Ameri-
cans are to be included in the scheme
in order "to encourage and foster an
appreciation of the advantages which I
implicitly believe will result from the
union of the English-speaking peoples
throughout the world, and to encour-
age and foster an appreciation of the
advantages which I implicitly believe
will result from the union of the Eng-
lish-speaking peoples throughout the
world, and to encourage in the stud-
ents of the United States of North
America who will benefit from the
scholarships . . . an attachment
to the country from which they
have sprung, but without, I hope,
withdrawing them or their sympa-
thies from the land of their adoption
or birth." And, finally, fifteen schol-
arships are assigned, by codicil, to Ger-
many, because "an understanding be-
tween the three great powers will ren-
der war impossible, and educational re-
lations may be the strongest ties."

If we compare this Will with the
documents in which Mr. Rhodes gave
earlier expression to his beliefs and as-
pirations, we can only feel that his
thought has grown and expanded, even
while remaining essentially the same.

It has not altered in fundamentals, for
the same ideals are there, dominating
the whole; peace triumphant over
war; education making for the union
of the peoples; international sym-
pathy developing, not in spite of, but
through, national loyalty. But the
form which the ideal takes has under-
gone some change. In the first place, it
is now less a question of "British rule"
than of "Anglo-Saxon union." The ideal
now is one of confederation, not of
"absorption within the British Empire."
In the second place, Germany for the first
time comes within the scheme. The
occasion for this addition may have
been accidental, the recognition, so he
tells us in the codicil, of English as a
compulsory subject in the German
schools; but the real cause must be
looked for in something deeper, in some
underlying sense of the ultimate af-
finities of the German-speaking and the
English-speaking peoples—of a common,
or at least of a similar, ideal working
itself out in the character and his-
tory of the three great branches of the
Teutonic family.

It may be that Germany never en-
tered so completely into the heart of
Mr. Rhodes' dream as did the United
States of America: that his dream re-
mained, as a dream, essentially Anglo-
Saxon in character. But dreams have in
the end to compromise with facts;
and Mr. Rhodes at grip with facts,
came, apparently, to feel that the des-
tiny of the German race was suffi-
ciently allied to that of the English-speak-
ing peoples to make co-operation be-
tween the two for a common end a gen-
uine possibility. Perhaps also he may
have come to regard his original vision
of the world dominated by one people
and attaining to peace in that way, as,
if not fanciful, at least remote; to re-
mind himself that it might be worth
while to do something in the meantime
to forward the great ideal of justice,
liberty and peace, by promoting the
co-operation of peoples the similarity
of whose history, traditions and ideals
might justify the experiment.

And if the extension of the schol-
arships to Germany sacrificed something
of his original dream, the sacrifice
brings its own compensation. For it
plants the scheme more broadly on the
roots of things; it brings us one stage
nearer recognition of the fact that the
peace of the world is destined to come
not sooner merely, but more whole-
some, even, and more irrevocably,
through the concerted action of dif-
ferent peoples, whose differences have
been merged in a common hunger for
justice and peace, than through the
predominance in the world of any one
Power. It may be that the fifteen Ger-
man scholarships make no great show
beside the ninety-six American and
sixty (or, as they now are, seventy-
eight) Colonial. But they have, I think,
a significance of their own, of which
number is no measure.

So much for the ideals and aspira-
tions of Cecil Rhodes, as they shaped
themselves in his brain, and developed,
and came in the end to express them-
selves in the establishment of the
scholarships. He must be cold, whose
blood moves no faster for the splen-
dour of this ideal.

I turn to Cecil Rhodes' scholars, to
that body of men through whom his
ideals to secure to themselves a place
and an influence in the world. Who so
obvious as they to preach the gospel of
international conciliation? It might
almost be said that a scholar whose
spirit does not answer to the call of
the motto "Pro patria pro orbis con-
cordiam" is a failure for Cecil Rhodes;
a failure for his idealism, and for the
efforts which he has very visibly made
to translate that idealism into the
language of practical life. This does
not mean, of course, that a Rhodes
Scholar commits himself to any particu-
lar belief or doctrine. Election to a
scholarship is not initiation into a so-
ciety admission to which is condition-

al on the profession of a certain creed.
All that Mr. Rhodes demands is that
in the selection of his scholars weight
be attached to such qualities of mind
and character as are likely, in his view,
when brought under appropriate in-
fluences, to develop a special attitude
towards life, in particular a special at-
titude with regard to social service and
the mutual relations of peoples.

But the influence of circumstances on
disposition, however ultimately inevit-
able, is yet not for us calculable be-
yond the chance of disappointment;
and it may be that, in one case or an-
other, the direct contact with the life
and thought of other peoples, of which
these scholarships are the opportunity,
will not issue in widened sympathies,
will not generate a zeal for the ser-
vice of man, will not bring any nearer
to us the peace of nations. Well, we
can do no more in that case than record
a failure—a failure, that is, of Mr.
Rhodes' idea, and of the influences up-
on which he relied. For a Rhodes
scholar who is not willing, on his way
through the world, to do his share in
the work of reconciling devotion to
country with loyalty to the cause of
peace is in one sense untrue to the
Rhodes ideal; untrue, that is, not in
the sense that he is false to any pro-
fessions of his own—for he has made
none—but in the sense, simply, that he
was meant (may we not say?), in
the great hope of Mr. Rhodes, to grow
to a certain attitude or outlook on
things, and has not done so.

We have seen that it was an idea
constantly present to Mr. Rhodes that
he might found a society copied from
the Society of Jesus—"a secret so-
ciety," he writes in 1891, "gradually ab-
sorbing the wealth of the world, to be
devoted to this object," viz.: "to secur-
ing the peace of the world for all eter-
nity." His idea may not have been des-
tined to realize itself in just the form
of which he dreamed. That after all
is a small matter. The bigger a man's
idea, the less can he tell what time
may make of it. That is the penalty
he must pay for the privilege of giv-
ing birth to something which has life
in it.

But it may well be that in the pro-
cess of the years the Rhodes society
shall yet appear; not, in the event, as
a secret society, nor composed of mil-
lionaires, nor expressing itself neces-
sarily in any definite organization, but
for all that a very real and living "so-
ciety," a fellowship of men who have
a common experience and are inspired
by a common hope, of men who in par-
taking of the Rhodes benefaction have
entered also into the inheritance of the
Rhodes ideals; a fellowship, in one
word, of his Scholars.

It is pertinent to ask how Mr.
Rhodes hoped to produce through the
scholarships the results at which he aimed.
Well: that is all part of the ideal-
ism of the man, part of his gorgeous
optimism. In the hasty judgment of
the world, ignorant of much which
could only become matter of public
knowledge after his death, Mr.
Rhodes' name stood for cynicism, per-
haps for materialism. Those who knew
the real man protested, for the most
part in vain, that no judgment could
more cruelly misjudge; and history is
already writing its endorsement of the
judgment of his friends.

Assuredly, no cynic ever took his
dreams as seriously as Cecil Rhodes
took his. Nor would cynicism ever
have suggested to him that in bring-
ing together in Oxford year after year
some 200 young men, that they might
associate with each other and with
others of their kind, and be brought
within the reach of certain influences
and traditions, he was putting his
hand to a work that should contribute
to the peace and happiness of the
world. Yet that is, in all literalness,
what Cecil Rhodes believed, with a sim-
plicity of conviction which might have
been comic if it had not succeeded in