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Imperialism

By F. W. Moore.

THE following remarks of the chairwoman at the eleventh annual meeting of the Provincial Chapter, I.O.D.E., are quoted from the daily press:

"Our motto is, 'One Flag, One Throne, One Empire.' Surely to-day when we read in our papers letters saying Canadians do not wish to sing 'God Save the King,' and that we should not have it played in our theatres, it behoves us to stand shoulder to shoulder remembering the 'national anthem' is a prayer to God to save our king, etc. . . . Another way of helping this forward is to teach others all about our flag, and what it stands for—courage, purity and truth. We should study the problems which confront our empire. We should promote loyalty to king and country; should forward every good work for the betterment of the colonies and their people, and to assist in the progress of art and literature, and draw women's influence to the betterment of conditions connected with our empire, and to instill into the youth of our country patriotism in the highest sense."

One cannot but admire the enthusiastic earnestness of the I.O.D.E. in its determination to live up to what its membership considers the very high standard of patriotism and duty that is embodied in the excerpt above. The pity of it is that such wonderful patriotism and loyalty should be diverted into channels that make them instruments of devolution and retrogression—results diametrically opposed to that sought with such fervour by these estimable ladies.

Alas, how can we explain ourselves without being misunderstood. The subject requires the most meticulously careful treatment. Moreover, we ourselves are patriots to the core, if patriotism is estimated by love of country. Nothing delights us more than to see the men and women on this great continent of America acquiring a knowledge of their relations to humanity as a whole, since all humanity is struggling as we are towards the goal of world brotherhood. As surely as the sun is in the heavens so surely is the law of economic determinism forcing us in that direction. What then will be the result of inculcating the kind of patriotism that is concerned with the welfare of one country alone at the expense of all others? Our sentiments are expressed by Bertrand Russell in the Century Magazine of New York and republished in the Wide World, Montreal, for May 17th of this year.

"Those of us who do not wish to see our whole civilization go down in red ruin have a great and difficult duty to perform—to guard the doors of our minds against patriotism. I mean that we should view impartially any dispute between our own country and another, that we should teach ourselves not to believe our own country morally superior to others, and that even in time of war we should view the whole matter as a neutral might view it."

"This is part of the larger duty of pursuing; nationalism cannot survive without false belief. If we can learn to serve truth, to be truthful in our thoughts, to avoid flattering myths in which we wish to disguise our passions, we should have done what we can to save our world from disaster."

"For this creed it is worth while to suffer, and indeed those who have it must suffer, for persecution is as bitter in the days of the Spanish Inquisition."

That this wonderful patriotism of the I.O.D.E. is an instrument of retrogression we should hardly expect a class of people whose environment is such as theirs to believe offhand.

They are accustomed to hear conventional lectures garbed in the world-wide fashions of imperial sanction, upholding as truth a thesis quite disparate from ours. Nevertheless, that does not disturb our equanimity in the least, believing that the membership of the I.O.D.E. is as amenable to the dictates of logic as any other class of citizens in the Dominion, and on this assumption we shall presume, for the sake of argument, that one of the pink fairy godmothers will try to tease some of the sisterhood by flaunting this number of the Clarion where they can see that a "bould, bad man" had the awful temerity to criticize their ideals, and having presumed so much we shall proceed to prove that imperialism, in its initial stages, is a growth due to evolutionary forces incidental to economic necessity.

Its development is closely connected with the urgent need of markets and natural resources, a need that holds in its satisfaction almost unlimited opportunities to a few property owners for the acquisition of wealth and power at the inconceivable expense of the degradation of the whole population (indirectly including themselves) of the empire they would establish, as we shall try to prove further down—a degradation incidental to the necessity that in hard times urges a group of workers representing particular industries to labour for the lowest wage proximate to that which rather than accept, the whole population would prefer to take a gambling chance on that precarious wheel of fortune known as revolution; moreover, in the forced acceptance of this low rate of wages is involved so many daily hours of labour that there exists in so dreary an environment neither the time nor the inclination to prepare themselves mentally to grasp the opportunities that the development of industry and machinery has so generously placed at their doors, and so it naturally follows that the goose that lays the golden egg is paralysed while the foolish imperialists, not having sufficient understanding to see that "the riches of the commonwealth, are free strong minds and hearts of health . . . cunning hands and cultured brains" are in the habit of congratulating themselves on the mental superiority that is, in the main, bought as part of service from their class-unconscious victims; yet at its best it is a superiority/ridiculously inferior (founded as it is on slavery) to that superiority that the generality of men might attain, were the real wealth of humanity as expressed in the verse quoted, developed as it ought to be. Fortunately, at a certain stage of its growth imperialism becomes impossible; the human material through which the laws of nature operate becomes corrupt; its actions soon reflect its growing putrefaction; the metaphorical nasal organs of justice are grossly outraged; her scavengers, sometimes barbarians in search of fresh territory as in the case of Rome's invaders, scent an easy prey and straightway commence to rid the earth of the unnatural imperial carcass. "Carcass" may be a forbidding word. It may savour little of Chesterfieldian refinement, but surely nobody can deny that it is appropriate. Is it any wonder that nature revolts at the Procrustean methods of restraining human understanding until it fits the semi-petrified couch con-

structed from our political institutions? A feeble understanding it is, one not sufficiently strong in the masses to permit them to see the incongruity of wasting their splendid mental energies in the eternal struggle for the necessities of life, when the necessities might be almost as free as water, and when the powers of the mind might be enhanced by all the subtle methods now used to dwarf them; when these same powers that might be employed to bring that wealth, freedom and progress that poets and sages have dreamt of all through the ages.

That the necessities, under proper administration, might be almost as free as water is proved by such statistics as the following, relating to the increased power of production accruing to man as a consequence of the development of machinery. It is taken from "The Scientific Monthly" for June, 1924. It occurred in an article by Dr. W. R. Whitney on the vacuum:

"The power outside of his own muscles . . . he has learned to control, has grown to nearly twenty horsepower or one hundred man-power for every man in the country. Therefore it makes only one percent difference whether all men work like horses or not. But guidance of power is man-work, because there are no machine mentalities. Almost everything but thinking may be artificially done, but knowledge and understanding must be actively sought and used." Can imperialism develop that mental power? We can only assert that the day she does her own doom is sealed.

Rome, Egypt, Chaldea, Persia and other states all fell victims to the lure of imperialism, just as all nations must do, who forget that slavery, wage or chattel, contains within itself the seeds of self-destruction—the fatal death-ray that finds in imperialism the most ideal of its many affinities.

Having said so much we shall now trace the course of Britain's development from a very early stage up to the present. We particularly wish to emphasise the fact, that as a rule changes in institutions were wrought by what is called the law of "economic determinism," and that when it appears as if some great man brought them about, we shall find on examination that they were due to conditions of which the man himself was merely the offspring.

The empire had its origin in England, but if all the people who were energetically active during its evolution could be brought together in a great convention, each speaking the tongue of his forefathers, its present polyglotous characteristics would be enhanced to a large extent, and if the experiences of each were recorded chronologically on cultural lines, it would be as well to take the river-drift men as subjects for introductory comment.

They lived in a remote period of ethnological time of which the exact date would be as impossible as it would be unnecessary to ascertain. We shall concern ourselves merely with the relation that one period bears to another, and in this way we shall find that men have arisen in the scale of development in proportion to the number and importance of their inventions and discoveries, and that all their institutions, usages and customs, are affected more or less by the influence emanating from these sources.

How many ages rolled by before the indications denoted the presence of a new race in Britain, it is

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