

Dr. Sloane's Monograph on World Democracy

"HOW to Make the World Safe for Democracy" was the underlying problem presented to the Paris Peace Conference at the close of the war. The mere statement of the problem assumed that democracy had been demonstrated to be the most desirable form of government attainable by mankind.

How far is this assumption correct? Democracy means one thing in England, another in France and another in the United States, although its essential elements are the same everywhere. What has it done, what is it doing and what can it do in the future to promote human welfare—to preserve life and liberty and secure men and women in the pursuit of happiness? These are some of the questions which Prof. William M. Sloane, the historian, who lives at Princeton and lectures at Columbia University, has attempted to answer in his latest book, *The Powers and Aims of Western Democracy*.

On the paper swathing which protects the volume against manual moisture and the dust of travel the publishers speak of the author as the most eminent of living American historians. His scholarship was acknowledged by the French Government when it bestowed upon him the Cross of the Legion of Honor after the publication of his elaborate *Life of Napoleon*. It should not be forgotten, however, that there are other American historians of distinction still living. James F. Rhodes of Boston has received the honorary degree of doctor of civil law from the University of Oxford in England in recognition of the literary ability displayed in his *History of the United States From the Compromise of 1850*; and the *History of the People of the United States* by Prof. John Bach McMaster of the University of Pennsylvania has given the author a reputation in this country as great as that which was gained by the late John Richard Green in England on his *History of the English People*.

II.

The most useful function of a historian is that of guidance. The facts of the past should supply the world with lessons for the present and for the future. The historian may content himself with a simple narrative of facts leaving the inferences to be drawn by his readers; or he may himself extract, formulate and elucidate the lessons which the facts of his narrative import or imply. When he does this his work is most helpful—assuming that his deductions are logical and warranted by his premises. It is no reproach to the general reader of the present day that he desires to have some of his thinking done for him by others. Many a breadwinner who would prefer to exercise his political activities in the light of the lessons taught by history lacks the time and capacity to ascertain for himself what those lessons are. Life is too short; and he is forced to rely for enlightenment upon such books as this volume of Prof. Sloane's when he has leisure to seek advice beyond that which is furnished by his daily newspaper.

In order to assist as large a number of citizens as may be to exercise their political privileges as intelligently as possible—that is, to vote sensibly and select wise leaders—Prof. Sloane has in the present volume utilized his extensive historical learning in an endeavor "to trace democracy from its sources and the history of the democratic nation from its sources" and thus to show what peace means and what are the conditions of peace. Such ascertainment is a necessary preliminary to any honest effort to reform existing defects in our body politic.

Democracy, according to the author's view, is a most complex and perplexing system of government, "probably the final word in an effort to give not only every adult but every minor a share in sovereignty; in an agony, so to speak, of human perfectibility on earth it hopes to secure the equalizing of individuals, not only in rights and duties but in so-

cial perfections of discipline, manners and property."

Democracy, however, says Prof. Sloane, was not the first word of civilization; that word was, as it continues to be, property—with an embryo of democracy at the beginning which was to develop with each step in the process of evolution. The oldest records which have survived to us in the mass of cuneiform inscriptions that constitute the brick libraries of Chaldea show a profound respect for real property among the most ancient civilizations of which we have any historical knowledge; and "the sacredness of property in any form is the foundation stone of personal liberty."

Modern democracy was started on its way by the Puritan Revolution in England. Cromwell's Ironsides were its apostles. Every member of every Puritan congregation shared in its administration; the majority ruled; and here we have the origin of community-will as the controlling power in government, which is the distinctive feature of democracy.

III.

To make and keep democracy safe and sane in the exercise of popular sovereignty three institutions are believed by the author to be necessary, namely: (1) a constitution or fundamental law containing a bill of rights; (2) government by representation instead of by the direct vote of the people; and (3) universal suffrage.

"There is no such safety valve against revolutionary explosion as the feeling of every man and woman that however slight the influence of a single vote, yet his or hers is as great as that of any one else." Prof. Sloane does not share the ill advised prejudice which many people entertain against party government. What substitute is proposed? he asks. "None which commends itself, because in any other way we revert to oligarchy or tyranny. Government by democracy, like most good things, is very expensive, but government by oligarchy or tyranny is not only ruinous in price but ruinous in morals."

In that portion of his book relating to the evolution of the modern nation Prof. Sloane reaches the conclusion that the most efficient type of national organization and that which most nearly approaches the democratic ideal is a federal republic. He then proceeds to consider the struggle for peace which originated with the rise of the modern State. The idea of peace as a condition to be desired and sought for is as old as history; but this is a very different thing from a philosophy of peace capable of being put into actual practice. The latter, in the opinion of the author, originated in the writings of Kant, who was of Scottish descent and whose intellectual bias was far more Celtic or Gallic than it was Teutonic.

The six terms of Kant's doctrine of perpetual peace are stated by Prof. Sloane as follows: (1) There can be no peace with a nation harboring the least purpose or renewing war; (2) No existing State, small or large, can be acquired from another by inheritance, exchange or gift; (3) Standing armies are to be totally abolished; (4) There shall be no public loan concerned in any way with war or peace in foreign affairs; (5) No intervention by one State in the constitution or government of another; (6) No state at war shall engage in any atrocious practice which might disturb reciprocal confidence at the conclusion of peace; no assassinations, poisonings, violence of terms of surrender or armistice; no conspiracy within an enemy State.

Kant regarded peace as an end in itself and not as a means toward the attainment of a golden age of stagnation. "If there is to be peace on earth—and there can be—beyond that goal is an infinite vista of generous rivalry and invigorating contests for the brotherhood and freedom of men."

The beneficent influence of Kant, however, was utterly subverted in Germany by Hegel, "the arch fiend," in the perversion of German thought throughout the nineteenth century. His writings were an apotheosis of the Prussian monarchy. Perpetual peace, according to his teaching, led only to degeneracy; war was desirable as the essential element of German Kultur. "Under the aegis of the Hohenzollern dynasty there began in practice and in the academic chair a subtle and sly subversion of Kant's peace gospel, a betrayal of the Master, which lasted until the torrents of German violence burst upon the world in 1914."

When we reflect upon the fact

war has for centuries been the habit, state of mankind the prospect of a permanent peace may well be regarded as utopian; yet Prof. Sloane thinks we may reasonably hope for a stable peace which will endure longer than the latest one of forty years and perhaps indefinitely longer. In negotiating for such a peace our chief concern should be the establishment of international justice. There can be no lasting international justice without international courts to pronounce judgments in accordance with principles of law previously agreed upon by the nations of the world.

IV.

In striving for a permanent world peace Prof. Sloane warns the United States against any effort to impose our own notions of nationality and constitutional government upon any or all of the strata of mankind who may be concerned in the outcome of the conference of nations. He declares it to be a crime against humanity to think of other peoples in terms of ourselves; and he eloquently denounces that "narrow self-sufficiency which conceives of the savage, the barbarian, the man of the tribe, the city, State and the modern nation in its varied forms as either desiring or needing the complexities of free democracy."

It is doubtful, indeed, how far we ourselves are capable of working out our own chosen system of government.

The stability requisite to permanent peace throughout the world can be attained only when every nation is clothed with a garment of government which Prof. Sloane calls a good fit. "Japan," he says, "wants a limited autoeracy—strange Oriental contradiction in terms—and has it. What Russia or the many Russians desire they must eventually secure, perhaps monarchy with or without checks and balances. France must remain a centralized republic or oligarchy, as it is, or turn federal republic, as has been proposed. And so on through the list; with stable governments there can be peace; without them, none." The author asks whether we are to have indefinitely a passive peace such as has been negotiated—which he calls a peace without life and without honor—or a peace instinct and vibrating with life because it gives to all parties those elements of national welfare and happiness which each feels is essential to its existence.

He reviews the obstacles to the attainment of such a peace and finds them to be both numerous and difficult to overcome. He evidently thinks it is a mistake to deprive Germany of all her colonies. The parasitic nature of German emigration, which feeds on other civilizations, often greatly to their detriment, has long been a disturbing factor in many countries. Prof. Sloane would establish a vast German Africa or a German Central Asia to be occupied by the surplus population of the fatherland.

V.

In order to insure economic peace he thinks the United States will have to consent to the internationalizing or neutralizing of the Panama Canal. Most of all he seems apprehensive concerning the problems of the Pacific. We can doubtless trust in the benevolence of Great Britain and Japan—the two great Pacific Powers—for many years to come; but how will it be when the memories of our association in the great war of 1914-1918 have largely passed away? The question of "the square deal in the Pacific" cannot safely be neglected by American statesmen. In spite, however, of all the difficulties in the pathway of a permanent peace Prof. Sloane feels confident that

a peaceful federation of the free peoples throughout the world is appreciably nearer than it was when the Great Design for a general association of nations was propounded at the end of the sixteenth century. A pessimist can find plenty to worry about in trying to forecast the future of democracy; but in the light of Prof. Sloane's discussion of the subject the prospect seems fairly bright.

His book deserves a high place in the philosophical literature produced by the Great War.

THE POWERS AND AIMS OF WESTERN DEMOCRACY. BY WILLIAM MILLIGAN SLOANE. Charles Scribner's Sons.

A Divided Mr. Gompers

THERE is no mystery about the Samuel Gompers of this book. He does not need to be explained or interrupted or apologized for. He is perfectly easy to understand and perfectly consistent. Half of him is an old fashioned Anglo-Saxon, even conservative type of citizen. He does not believe in the proletariat per se. He does not believe in the rise of the working classes per se. He believes in trade unionism first, last and all the time, and preaches it in season and out with all the fervor of an ecclesiastic. He is jealous for trade unionism, sets it up as a god that must be served before all else and frowns upon anything—compulsory arbitration, unrestricted immigration, State health insurance, anything—that may seem to trespass on the prerogatives of trade unionism and interference with its growth and reason for being.

Mr. Gompers is a trade unionist without reservations. He thinks that trade unionism alone, in time and with patience, will accomplish all that the laboring classes are striving for. "A hundred times we have said it, and we say it again, that trade unionism contains within itself the potentialities of working class regeneration."

For this reason Mr. Gompers has never been in favor of going off after new and strange gods; of surrendering, as he says, to any of the numerous "society saving or society destroying schemes which decade by decade have been sprung upon this country." He does not believe in "short routes." He believes in evolution no matter how slow.

"No intelligent workman who has passed years of his life in the study of the labor problems expects to wake up any fine morning to find the hopes of these years realized over night, and the world on the flood tide of the millennium."

In Bolshevism Mr. Gompers sees a short route that leads to nowhere. "They went out for the maximum for the masses, for land, bread and peace, and they haven't their land or bread or peace. We prefer to go on in this normal way of trying to make the conditions of life and labor better to-day than they were yesterday; and better to-morrow and to-morrow's morrow than each day that has gone before."

Mr. Gompers' position in regard to the war consistently follows. With the arrival of the war and the stupid German propaganda, you might say he got the rest of him into full action and forgot the trade unions' half of him for a while. The excerpts in this book of his war speeches and declarations are a fitting climax to what is on the whole a fine and consistent record.

N. P. D.

LABOR AND THE COMMON WELFARE. BY SAMUEL GOMPERS. Compiled and edited by HAYES ROBBINS. E. P. Dutton & Co.

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