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G U T E T O

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Nur rekte, kuraĝe
Kaj ne flankigante
Ni iru la vojon celitan:

Es guto malgranda
Konstante frapanta
Traboras la monton granitan.

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ESPERANTO AS AN INSTRUMENT OF MENTAL TRAINING

(Mr. Ernest A. Dodge, on the staff of the Esperanto Association of North America, has a valuable article under this heading in Education (January). Reprints were soon exhausted, but a new edition is contemplated. Here is a summary.)

In this age, when all corners of the earth are in contact through radio, films, finance, and politics, the "monkey wrench" of linguistic barriers hinders the smooth working of the machinery, and is increasingly felt to be an intolerable nuisance. Various proposals for eliminating the difficulty have been put forward-- either as unconscious expressions of national egotism ("let all the world learn our language!"), or as studies from an impartial angle. Here Esperanto stands alone, in that it has long passed from the stage of experiment, or trial and error, and has for several decades been functioning in the field of international use. (Here follow references to literature, travel, etc.)

But there is another side of the question. Dr. Zamenhof builded

better than he know. Some features of Esperanto, which perhaps he introduced merely to make the language easier to learn, make it also a potent instrument of mental culture.

An illustration may be taken from stereoscopic vision. One whose thought can flow through only one language views the world of expression in a "flat" way, as in vision by a "single eye; but a second language, giving a view from a different point, adds depth and perspective. If the second language, like most European languages, is fundamentally similar to English, the effect may be too much like having a pair of left eyes, instead of a left eye and a right. But Esperanto permits a view from a significantly different angle, with a maximum gain in perspective.

(a) Esperanto shows that complexities and irregularities are only incidental, and not essential for a clear and effective expression of thought: luxury ornaments at best, dead weight at worst.

(b) Esperanto uses the simple method of saying just what it means, without relying on idioms (or indirect ways of hinting at ideas). (c) By its word- and form-building--"agglutinative" rather than "inflectional"--Esper-

anto introduces the student to a linguistic form remote from the Indo-European, Semitic, and Chino-Thibetic language families, whose methods must nevertheless be very congenial to the human mind, since they are predominant in many linguistic families other than those just named. If French, German, or Spanish, give the English-speaking youth a grammatical view-point that is international, Esperanto does further, by giving him one that is world-wide.

Let us note some things which a course in Esperanto does for the mind of the student.

I.--Esperanto makes the student conscious of the various parts of speech.

For clear and logical thinking this is important, because the parts of speech are the basic building blocks in the scheme of logical grammar. Yet to English-speaking youth they are apt to appear as something largely theoretical, remote from the visible facts of language. In English there is nothing in the form, sound, or spelling, of words, to enable one to distinguish one part of speech from another with any certainty. Under is a preposition; sunder a verb, blunder a noun or houses is a noun, rouses a verb. Many English words can be used

with no change in form, as several parts of speech. Only the context tells you whether better is an adjective, an adverb, a verb, or a noun. Cross may be a noun, an adjective, a preposition, or a verb.

In Esperanto the parts of speech stand out with crystal clearness, and its user inevitably becomes "parts-of-speech-minded". Every noun ends in o (even in the plural and the accusative). Every derived adverb ends in e. Every verb ends in i, is, as, os, us, or u, according to mood and tense.

II.--Esperanto calls attention to the logical distinctions of mood.

The student of English grammar learns to describe each verb by mood and tense, according to the auxiliary used or to the ending of the verb. But in this he is often following an arbitrary system, based on form, and not on sense or use. Too seldom is he led to consider the real force of the verb in its context. Even literary English uses verb forms in many ways which do not harmonize with their grammatical names. If I be is conventionally called "present subjunctive"; yet nearly always refers to the future. If I were is called "past subjunctive"; yet refers never to the past, usually to the present (If he were here

now); sometimes even to the future (If he were to come tomorrow). By custom the word is--called a "present"--often has a future meaning (If he is there next Tuesday, he will telephone). Would go is a hypothetically doubtful future in He would go tomorrow if . . ., and a simple future in He told me that he would certainly go, while in. Often one would go to the forest it refers to habitual action in the past (In Esperanto, logically, irus, iros, iradis).

Take another illustration. My hat is getting old; it is time I bought a new one. The student is tempted to parse bought as a verb, indicative mood, past tense; for that is where its form seems to place it. But in fact it has nothing to do with the indicative idea or with past time. It refers to an action of the future, conceived not as a fact, but as dictated by duty or propriety. Esperanto shows this clearly.

In short, Esperanto, free from arbitrary traditions, uses the form directly expressive of the idea to be conveyed.

III.--The student learns how many meanings hide beneath the cloak of what by spelling is only one word.

This is especially the case

with prepositions, which are often the most difficult part of language, because so often inconsistent--the same form expressing a wide variety of relations. Even Esperanto, with its logical simplicity, allows certain common prepositions to cover various shades of meaning, though limiting this to meanings logically related. Nevertheless, Esperanto comes much closer than the national tongues to giving each preposition one well-defined meaning. Let us compare two English prepositions, with and of, with their Esperanto equivalents.

They played with us (in company with: kun). He wrote with a pen (by means of: per). Hair white with age (because of: pro). I never heard of that (concerning: pri). There is nothing of importance in the news (nothing important: no prep. needed). The city of Rome (apposition: no prep. needed).

IV.--A study of Esperanto clarifies the meanings of English words.

It helps to separate root meanings from adventitious meanings accrued through age-long usage. This is a topic as vast as the dictionary. Here are merely a few examples.

Will the Lord ever forsake us? No, he is ever faithful! The non-Esperantist student may easily fail to realize that the first ever means at any time (iam), while the second means at all times (ĉiam).

Or take three senses of celebrated. He is a celebrated painter (famous: fama). After the game the rough necks got some whiskey and celebrated (indulged in rude festivity: festaco). The priest celebrated the mass (solemnized: solenis).

Or the little word got. The dog has got the rabbit (has caught: kaptis). Have you got any of yesterday's bread (Have you any: havas). I got him to come (caused: igis). I got warm by the fire (became: iĝis). I have got to go (must: devas). I got home early (arrived: alvenis). I got up at six o'clock (left my bed: elfitiĝis). He got out of the country (went out, fled from: eliris, ekiris, eskapis).

V.--Esperanto compels an analysis of idiomatic expressions, whose conventional meaning cannot be inferred from the words.

Modern languages, English especially, abound with idioms; but in Esperanto they are practically non-existent. For this reason Esperanto provides a good mental exercise to the student who is trans-

Fold Here

lating idiomatic English, and has to decide what it really means. Consider, for example, It came to pass (occurred). Look out (Be careful). By and by (sometime hereafter). By and large (in a general way). Down town (at the business center). We could smile at the invalid who suffers a good deal--surely he suffers a bad deal! In addition to idioms in the strict sense, colloquial English contains thousands of expressions now classed as slang, which may be only idioms in process of formation. But we need not elaborate.

This is not a tirade against the use of idioms in the historical national languages. In the mouth of a native they make the language expressive and forceful, but the foreigner finds them a great difficulty.

VI.--Esperanto enables the student to create his own logical words for many complex ideas.

From a limited number of roots, by the use of three dozen affixes, the learner can readily build up thousands of other words as needed. Here are a few derivatives from one root: patro, father; patra, paternal; patre, paternally; patruo, fatherland; patrino, mother; patrina, maternal; patrineco, motherhood; hopatrino, mother-in-

law; panjo, manna; pacjo, daddy; gepatroj, parents; gepatra, parental; prapatroj, forefathers.

In national languages the art of composition means putting words together to form sentences. But in Esperanto it starts more fundamentally, by combining roots and affixes to form the words themselves. Often this word-building has already been done by others, and is merely imitated by the present-day student. Yet even then he sees at a glance the separate elements of thought which together express the full meaning of the word; he is conscious of the interrelation of the simple ideas which unite to form the complex notion. In this service--and the fact must be emphasized--no national language in the school curricula can even begin to rival Esperanto.

This feature of Esperanto, more than any other, justifies the statements (a) that Esperanto gives to the English-speaking student not "a pair of left eyes", but linguistically a "right eye and a left", so well separated in viewpoint, that from the mental base line thus lengthened we survey a new dimension in the world of thought, and (b) that it gives the English student a linguistic viewpoint not merely international but intercontinental and world-

wide.

The Esperanto system of word-building is more than a brilliantly successful expedient for making the language easy. It has a distinct educative value, by exposing to view the bones and sinews that form the anatomy of complex ideas.

VII.--Esperanto greatly shortens the period of study necessary to enable the student to read and think in a language other than his own.

Such a power, whatever the language may be, is a cultural attainment and a pleasure. But the pathway to reach it is many times shorter with Esperanto than with even the easiest national language.

We should not exaggerate this point. Complete mastery of Esperanto, simple though it is, will not come without careful study and practice. Yet in comparison with French or German the difference is striking. (1) The spelling is strictly phonetic. (2) There is no arbitrary grammatical gender (that most illogical of all difficulties in continental languages). (3) There is only one conjugation, with only six invariable endings for verbs proper, and six for participles. (4) There are no irregular verbs or nouns; no exceptions to grammatical rules. (5) Word-order is simple and free, much as

in English. (6) Roots are selected from the international stock, so that a majority are recognizable at first sight. (7) The use of affixes greatly reduces the number of words to be memorized. One root suffices for brother and sister; one for big and little; one for shave and razor; one for learn and school. (8) Arbitrary or conventional idioms are so nearly absent as to be negligible.

Thus after only a few lessons one begins to use Esperanto with pleasure.

VIII.--Practical tests prove Esperanto to be a splendid introduction to other and more difficult languages.

One instance is an experiment at an English school, at which girls who started with Esperanto, followed by French, were better grounded in French at the end of a two-year period than those who took French only. In addition, they retained their knowledge of Esperanto as an additional accomplishment.

In another way, also, Esperanto can play an important rôle in school economy. It quickly reveals whether a student has enough aptitude for languages to take up a school course in which linguistics are a loading required study. Some minds do not take kindly to

language study, even in its simplest forms. Such a student may do well to be satisfied with only two languages--the mother tongue and Esperanto--and to devote his further school efforts to subjects for which he is better fitted.

But the reverse effect also is experienced. Students who, discouraged by their small success in mastering Latin conjugations or the *oratio obliqua*, come to think of language study as something distasteful, and not for them, discover that by "learning to walk before they run"--by mastering Esperanto before attacking languages of greater difficulty--they develop a liking for languages that would otherwise have never come to light.

Nothing here said is meant to disparage in any way the noble English language which is our birthright. English is terse, forcible, and picturesque, and through its wealth of synonyms has almost limitless possibilities of variety. (Which means, incidentally, that to master English is a fine artistic sense is a substantial fraction of a life work!).

But English alone is not enough. The learning of a second language is an invaluable aid to appreciation of the first. And even for

that purpose only (quite apart from its own very real utility), Esperanto is worthy of the most serious and favourable consideration of educators.

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The Esperanto Grammar according to
"PETRO"

written in English by N. Bartelmas
a German Esperantist, which makes
it interesting in style as well as
content. A sample of the material
to be found in this booklet follows:

FOURTH LESSON

(Corresponding to the 4th
and 5th Chapters in "PETRO")

25. "Vi" (you) is a personal
pronoun of the 2nd (spoken to)
person in the singular and plural.
Therefore: Vi estas bona knabo,
You are a good boy; vi estas bonaj
knaboj, you are good boys; Mi amas
vin, I love you.

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