

GUTETO

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No.1

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

Eĉ guto malgranda
Konstante frapanta
Traboras la monton granitan.

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THE DUAL ROLE OF ESPERANTO

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The language problem as it affects African natives is duplicated in many areas throughout the world where peoples speaking different languages are thrown together by occupational or political factors. In such cases a common language becomes an everyday necessity, and consequently various local solutions of the language problem make their appearance. On the Rand thousands of African natives speaking different languages are herded together in a sort of barracks known as 'compounds' adjacent to the mine or factory in which they work. The resulting concentration of linguistic confusion has led to the formation of a 'lingua franca' known as 'Kitchen-Kaffir.' According to a newspaper report the Chamber of Mines has gone to the length of privately circulating a dictionary or text-book of this language for the benefit of its white employees.

Apart from this practical everyday aspect of the language problem

the need for an international language of culture which will accelerate the fusion of the various national cultures is becoming acute. This dual nature of the international language problem may give rise to a difference of opinion between those who would develop Esperanto as a medium of literary expression and those who would resist innovations in order to preserve what they regard as its essential function, namely to provide a simple and easily learnt means of everyday intercourse.

There should however be no violent conflict between these points of view. A language without a literature lacks stability and becomes very sensitive to the influence of adjacent languages. The formation of dialects is the inevitable result. The only guarantee against this tendency is a literature, which in addition must be popularly diffused, for obviously a literature which does not enter into the life of the people will have little stabilising effect. Nowadays with our modern devices for the rapid and widespread diffusion of the spoken and written word, such dialects as continue to exist are rapidly becoming extinct through ab-

sorption into the standard literary dialect, which is then dignified by the name of 'language.'

We thus have good reason to believe that Esperanto, adopted as a world medium of culture, would not tend to split up into local dialects. A uniform standard of pronunciation would be maintained by wireless broadcasts, educational recordings, and more frequent international travel, while any tendencies toward the formation of local idioms would be eliminated by the necessity of keeping the language intelligible to the world at large.

This conclusion, it should be noted, presupposes a cultural level among the users of the language such as one would expect in a modern democracy. But should the language be adopted purely as a practical 'lingua Franca' by an uncultured people, as would be the case if it were introduced to replace 'Kitchen-Kaffir' among the natives in the goldmines of the Rand, a local dialect of Esperanto would inevitably tend to result.

However, there is little doubt that in the unlikely event of the Chamber of Mines popularizing the use of Esperanto among the mine na-

tives, a fair proportion of them would be quick to avail themselves of its **incidental cultural** advantages. Furthermore it is hardly likely that the Esperanto movement would neglect to cultivate such an extensive addition to the field of its influence. This would to a certain extent counteract the tendency towards the formation of a local 'Kitchen-Esperanto.'

While the aim of the Esperanto movement is the adoption of Esperanto throughout the world, the possibility of a preliminary localized adoption of the language should not be overlooked. It might well happen that three small adjacent countries might be persuaded to make Esperanto a compulsory subject in all their schools long before the big powers could be made to realize the impossibility of making their own languages universal. The attitude of the Esperanto movement to such localised adoptions of the language should be quite definite. It should promote any extension in the application of Esperanto. We can confidently adopt this attitude, secure in the knowledge that the increasing cultural use of the language will eliminate any local peculiarities which may arise.

THEOSOPHY AND ESPERANTO

The Theosophical Society, founded in 1875 by H P Blavatsky and H S Olcott, with its first object "to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sect, caste, or color," has several times published Esperanto translations of various works.

Among these is "Ĉe la piedoj de la Majstro" — "At the Feet of the Master" by Jeddu Krishnamurti, also known as "Alcyone." The book is dated 1913, bears the dual imprint of the Paris Esperanto Society and the Theosophical Publishing Society of London, and was translated by W W Mann.

"La problemoj de la vivo" — "The Problem of Life," a small pamphlet by Krishnamurti, was issued by the Amerika Esperanto-Instituto, Madison, Wisconsin, in 1935. It was translated by Karl Froding, and has a preface by H S Siggelko, President of Madison Lodge of the T S.

Also issued about 1913 was "Fatala Suldo" — "Fatal Debt," by Lionel d'Alsace, translated from the French, and described as presenting "theosophical ideas in the form of an interesting romance." —Alojz

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