A COMMONWEALTH HYMN.

There's a light upon the mountain tops that meets the rising morn,
Where the bondless winds are shouting at their play;
And soon the valleys, far below, and clad in tasselled corn,
Will flush beneath the glances of the day.
Across the ocean creeps the dawn, with level light and low;
The threshing waters beat and break in thunder and in snow;
And now the eager sun has set the sombre capes aglow,
And stripped the clinging darkness from Australia.

There are lands beyond the swinging seas enriched with golden climes;
There are lands of fading shrines and ancient towers;
There are lands whose mists can never hide the glory of their times;
But none to match this queenly land of ours.
For oh! she is the kindest that has blessed her sons with good;
And we love her for her graces, who have known her every mood;
And not an axe can ever check the sap of nationhood
That rises in the bosom of Australia.
Thou Shining and Eternal One! Whose Presence broodeth still
In might above the peoples Thou hast made,
Though Thou triest her with trouble, give her yet the lofty will
That seeks a righteous purpose unafraid.
Oh, give her men to mount a rugged destiny, but high;
The noble patience that can put enticing evil by;
With ever hearts to cherish her, and ready hearts to die
For our dear and mighty Motherland, Australia.
—CECIL POOLE, by permission of the Editor of “The Bulletin.”

THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND MANDATES.

The day had dawned at last when Peter and Margaret Trent were to sail with their father and mother by the S.S. “Montoro” for Rabaul, the capital of the mandated territory of New Guinea.

What busy preparations had been going on for weeks past for the voyage and for their long stay in tropical New Guinea! Their father, Mr. Trent, was an anthropologist, who was being sent by the Australian Government to study the lives and customs of some of the tribes in New Guinea, who were reported to be decreasing in numbers.

"But, Mummy," said Peter, who always wanted to know the reasons of things, "why must we go all the way to New Guinea to bother about the natives there? Can't Daddy find enough work to do among our own aborigines without going to New Guinea?"

"Yes," replied his mother, "there is much work that Daddy could do in Australia, but it is a great honour for your father to be asked to do this special work. It is hoped that it will help not only the natives of that country, but also other native races of the world. Even if you do miss your schoolmates, you will find this new land very interesting."

"But," said Margaret, who also wanted to know the whys and the wherefores, "why does the Government consider the natives of New Guinea important?"

"Well, it is rather a long story, dear, and it goes back to the days of the Great War. When the war ended, many great statesmen met in the wonderful Palace of Versailles. One of the many big problems they had to solve was the future of the colonies captured from the enemy. Some said, 'This is simple! We shall add them to our own lands, as we have always done in the past when we conquered a nation. The spoils to the victor!' But President Wilson, the leader of the great American Republic, reminded them that the Allies had promised not to annex lands, because they were fighting not for conquest but only in defence."
"But that sounds rather foolish," said dogged Peter. "They couldn't hand them back to the enemy, and they certainly couldn't leave them to look after themselves."

"No," replied his mother, "they couldn't do either of those things, and they were very worried about the whole matter. Then General Smuts, one of the great statesmen of the British Empire, suggested a brilliant solution to the problem. All the countries represented at Versailles had joined together to form a League of Nations, and he suggested that the colonies that had once belonged to Germany and Turkey should be entrusted to the League of Nations, and that some great nations with experience in governing native races should be asked by the League to govern these captured lands. Everyone finally agreed that this was a very good idea, and before the statesmen left the Peace Conference they decided that the governing of these native races was to be a 'sacred trust of civilisation.' Because Great Britain had splendid experience in the governing of native races, she received several mandates, some in Africa and others in Asia Minor. Because Australia is close to New Guinea we were asked to govern it as a mandate. But we cannot do what we like there. We have to govern it according to the rules set down by the League of Nations. Australia agreed to do this and promised to regard it as a 'sacred trust.'"

"Did we have to promise very much?" asked Margaret.

"Yes, we promised that we would try to stop any kind of slave trade there, that we would control the sale of firearms and alcohol to the natives, and that we would not interfere with any of their religious customs which were not harmful to them. We promised also not to use their country as a base for our Australian army or navy, and that we would not train them to be soldiers."

"But Britain has always looked after her colonies well, hasn't she?" said Peter, who, only a few days before, had listened to speeches at school on Empire Day.

"Well, no nation is perfect, my son. Britain has had more colonies than any other nation, and has been very successful, partly because she has the great gift of learning from her errors. White races in the past have often ill-used the black, brown, and red people whom they ruled. Sometimes white men, in order to become rich, have made the natives slaves. When Britain and Australia and other nations of the League govern mandated countries, they want the natives to develop under their guidance. Every year they have to send to the League an account of the many ways in which they have been able to help the natives. Our Government hopes to be able to report that the tribes in New
Guinea are healthy and prosperous. That is why father is being sent to New Guinea—to study the lives of the natives, so as to find out how to keep them healthy and prosperous."

"Well, it is not much fun having an Empire these days," said Peter. "Too much like hard work! Why, in the days of the Romans, the governors of the colonies extracted as much wealth as they could from their people, and did not care one jot for the happiness or prosperity of the natives!"

"Yes," replied his mother, "an Empire to-day means great responsibilities, and sometimes even sacrifices have to be made by the Mother Country for the sake of the peoples under her care."

Suddenly a new idea dawned on Peter, and he laughed.

"I say, Mother! I suppose Dad will be an Empire-builder, will he?"

"Well, not exactly a British Empire-builder," she replied, "because New Guinea does not really belong to Australia. But if he does his work well, it will help the British Empire, and he will also be one of the builders of the Empire of Humanity, which is the greatest of all empires!"

—E. W.

(It is recommended that 5th and 6th Classes read also "The Theft of the Golden Eagle" in Part II.)

GIVE TO US PEACE IN OUR TIME, O LORD.


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