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# HOW MUCH DO YOU CARE FOR YOUR CHILDREN?

AN APPEAL TO WORKING-MEN AND WOMEN ON THE  
SUBJECT OF EDUCATION

BY

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"Children's Book of Moral Lessons," etc.*

"EDUCATE EVERY CHILD AS IF HE WERE YOUR OWN."

—*Rachel MacMillan.*

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The writer of this appeal was an elementary school teacher, in two village Church of England schools and two London Board schools, 1871-1896; later, a member of the Leicester School Board, 1900-1903; and a member of the Leicester Town Council and Education Committee (retiring in 1910). He has issued some 15 or 16 books for children and teachers on moral instruction, and taught children publicly on conduct subjects more than 700 times before more than 60,000 people in many cities of Great Britain, in nine cities in India (1913), in 40 cities of the United States (1911 and 1913-14), and before International Education Congresses in London (1908) and at the Hague (1912).

## HOW MUCH DO YOU CARE FOR YOUR CHILDREN?

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A BABY, nine months old, was being put to bed, when he caught sight from the window of a star suddenly coming out; and he eagerly pointed it out to his mother; and presently a second, a third, a fourth; and such was his joy and excitement that it was long before he could be lulled to sleep. Many years later, when he was famous all over Europe as a man of science, as a student of the infinite stars and the infinite universe, Henri Poincaré was admitted as a member of the French Academy. An address was presented to him, and the reader, recalling the baby's joy, said: "That evening brought your first contact with infinity, and your first lesson in astronomy; you were the youngest professor known."

Now, every child has in its nature some power to learn with joy the facts of our wonderful world.

A still greater Frenchman was Blaise Pascal, who, as a boy, drew circles and lines on the floor with such eagerness, and such understanding of their meaning and measure, that his father went to a friend, wept tears of pride, and asked what had best be done to educate so clever a child. The name of Pascal is held in honour to-day, more than 250 years after his death. But he had no vain thoughts of his own value as a man of learning. When he was dying, he felt very grateful to the friends who nursed him, and said he would like some poor sick person to be brought to the house so that he also might lie under the same roof with Pascal, and receive the same attention and comfort.

Pascal therefore believed that the noblest action, even for a man of great learning, was to do a service to his fellow-man. And, in the present pamphlet, I speak to the reader as one who holds that belief myself.

Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States in 1901-9,



has confessed that he never wanted to go to school. As a boy, he loved to ride, run, swim, and to study birds in the woods and fields, their songs, their nests, their plumage.

Very likely, the education given at the schools in Roosevelt's childhood days was too bookish. There is no doubt that our schools have been too bookish. Working people and common-sense farmers have many a time thought the children were not getting much life-value out of the schools. Sometimes they thought this and said this because they wanted to put children to wage-earning, and that was a shabby reason. But, at the same time, there was truth in their complaints. The education which I want to speak to you about will include the best sort of book-learning; but it will mean far more: it will mean training for real life in home, shop, factory, works, ship, office, field, farm, mine, forest.

In America, there stands a fine group of buildings on the shore of a beautiful lake at Ithaca, N.Y. It forms a University, founded in 1868 by Ezra Cornell. At the age of 16 he was the sole help of his farmer brother; and he undertook to chop and clear four acres of beech and maple woodland, and to plough and plant it with corn, on condition that he might be allowed to attend school during the winter term: such was his zeal for knowledge. A life of industry won for him a large fortune, and he acknowledged his debt to the humanity which reared him and protected him by endowing the splendid Cornell University.

We admire Ezra Cornell. And when I commend education to you as a thing worth thinking about, and as a good gift to your children, I am not treating it simply as a means of "getting on" and "getting ahead." Education is a power which enables us, in our turn, to render help and service to society.

One more story before I begin my proper lecture. The famous coloured orator, Frederick Douglass, was born a slave in Maryland, U.S.A. His mistress taught the boy to read. When her husband found what was happening, he said: "If you teach him to read, he will want to know how to write; then he'll run away." Douglass used to remark in after years: "This was the first anti-slavery speech to which I had ever listened; from that moment I understood the direct pathway from slavery to freedom."

Whatever freedom, and whatever level of dignity, and whatever political power you—the working-men and women of England and the sister-nations of our Commonwealth—hope to attain, can only

be reached by way of education. Political party programmes, yes; Unions, Leagues, Associations, Federations, yes; but all is in vain unless the whole nation educates itself for noble ends.

The Great War has brought heavy sorrow and much death into the world. We who have lost sons, brothers, husbands, friends, will bear the marks of grief to our last hours. Never, since human time began, had mankind so big a task as it has now to face, in rebuilding on the ruins. A great soldier, Sir William Robertson, has told how, when the Germans first retired to their Hindenburg line in France, the French country folk tried to find their old homes. They sought amid heaps of soil and rubbish, and found nothing left of the familiar cottages and farm-houses. Over a vast area of the world the sin of Austria and Germany has made a wilderness. We of the present generation will do what busy hands and brave hearts can to repair the waste. But very much of the work must be done by those who are girls and boys in our schools and playgrounds to-day. It lies in our power to prepare them, by a sound training of heart, brain, and hand, for this tremendous business. If we fail in our duty to-day, these young people will, in twenty or thirty years' time, be a weary and heavy-laden army of drudges, who will reproach us for our lack of love to them.

So when I beg you, fellow-countrymen and women, to support a forward movement in education, I do it in the name of your own children's future happiness and the welfare of our England. Some men on some platforms appeal to you to support education because it will enable England to get ahead of other nations; but I use no such talk. Some employers will push the cause of what they call education in order that they may get more skilled work, and hence more profit, out of their wage-earning labourers; but I have neither part nor lot in such motives and such policy. How much do you care for your children? That is the point. And would you not rejoice in the thought that the earnest efforts you may make now to prepare your children for their home tasks, and their commonwealth tasks, will win their gratitude in days to come?

I speak to the workers; but, in truth, the richer folk are also in need of education. If we look at the way they have often spent their time, their energy, and their money, can we say that they have been educated to serve their families, their country, or humanity? And when I speak of serving the country, I mean in the day of peace as well as in the day of war. There was once a man of



leisure who used to shut himself up in his study day after day, as if busy in some very important work of learning. It was at last found that he was reading the Bible, and counting up the number of times the letter S, or T, or G, or Z, occurred. In fact, he was not in his right mind. It is to be feared many persons are thus busy at activities that benefit neither themselves nor their neighbours; and if so, no matter how many books they have read, or how much they bustle about, their so-called education is a failure.

All must serve. The Prince of Wales has an excellent motto under his three ostrich feathers, *I serve* ("Ich dien"). What is good for royalty is good for the rest of us. So that there is here no mean idea of begging the working-classes to do service, while other people are idle, or only labour at half-pace. Our splendid old England is going to be a finer country than ever before, because we hope to enlist every soul in it, from the throne to the cottage, in useful daily work, done in fellowship and loyalty. Do not sigh, and declare that such an aim can never be realized. It can, and it will be, if the people resolve.

How are we to fix each citizen's service? Well, for one thing, if you have watched any group of children, you must have noticed that they did not all like the same things, whether in play, or dress, or diet, or work. If you have watched grown-ups, you must have noticed that some loved delicate tasks, and others loved coarse tasks. Men who dislike writing, or carting, or portering, may delight in tending and folding sheep. Every boy who "runs away" to sea is following a call that comes from nature. Lord Clive was once a clerk, and threw aside the pen, and rose to fame as a soldier in the hot plains of India. A great poet has told of a school which sorted out characters according to their ability. Once, when parents visited the school, expecting to find their son learned in some indoor science, they beheld a cloud of dust, then a troop of horse, and then their son astride of one of the horses. He had become an expert in horse management. Parents and teachers should join in observing the mind and the ways of every child from his early years upwards, so that when he is 16, or 17, or 18, or older, there will usually be small doubt as to the business, in field, mine, garden, shipyard, railway, factory; office, stores, school, etc., which he is best fitted for. I think there should be a National Register, in which the values for service are recorded for every child in the schools. A shopkeeper or merchant takes stock of all his possessions. Why should not the

nation take stock of its best possessions, its living treasure, in the souls of its girls and boys?

As to the length of time a young citizen should be trained, you of course know that the richer people will generally keep their sons and daughters at studies, in school, or college, or university, till the age of 18, or 21, or even later. You may think it right, or you may think it wrong, to have Upper Classes at all. One thing is sure. It is not simply the big purse that keeps a class "upper," though, it is true, the big purse means a hold on land and machines and tools. But the Upper Classes are better educated, so far as schools and colleges can make them so; and education gives power, and makes power greater. Hence, the children of the rich are taught to the age of 12 or 14 along lines marked out by teachers and tutors at home, or day-school, or boarding-school. They do not then (as working-class children have so long done) leave school. They pass to High-schools, and places like Eton College, Harrow, Winchester, and Rugby, and work pretty hard on their own account, as well as at the bidding of teachers. Even then many take a further step, and slave away, and listen to lectures, and follow up sciences and languages, and so on, in order to win positions in the army, navy, church, law profession, medical profession, or the Civil Service at home, or the Civil Service in India, or far-off colonies in Africa. It is plain to see that the parents of these young people are able to spend much on their maintenance during all these years of training. And this, in turn, makes it all the easier for the students to gain scholarships—that is, free places for a year or more in a school or college, or yearly allowances of money, which enable the learner to remain at his or her study without worrying about the cost of food, clothes, and dwelling.

You will declare that, though you do love and care for your son or daughter, you—the workers—cannot afford such maintenance. Difficult as it is when children are under 14, it is still more difficult after that age.

Yes, you are right.

But what marvellous treasure is hid in the souls of your children! Women gaze into the windows of stores where dresses are on sale, or jewels glitter, or furniture of many sorts is displayed, and their eyes wander from one admired article to another. No heap of treasures that you see in such shows will ever equal the spiritual jewels and glories of the minds and hearts of your own children. Out of those



minds and hearts grow the splendours of cities, and all that is magnificent in nations and commonwealths. The poet Blake talked of seeing vast things in little things :—

To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
And eternity in an hour.

Hold your child in your arms, and how much do you hold? You may hold a power that will some day, if wisely trained, bless a home, build and bless new cities, save and bless a nation, and bless and serve humanity the wide world over.

Hence, if I were speaking to the richer folk, I might plead that the wealth they control, if largely devoted to helping the education of the children in millions, would produce for our country and the world far more wealth in return. No nation is a hundredth part so rich as it ought to be, because no nation as yet has found out and used the wonderful powers in its children.

And to you, the workers, I would say that, year by year, you should join together in securing more and more free places in schools for ages above 14; more and more schools and colleges that are free in every seat and every class-room; more and more helps of scholarships, and grants, to clever youths and girls who are able to pass into universities at Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, Leeds, and elsewhere. I remember, when I went to school between 1860 and 1870, that nearly all schools for the poor demanded fees; and, now in 1918, Council Schools and others meet one at every turn in the city, and are seen in the loneliest valleys and up the remote mountain side, and all are free. As men and women struggled for the franchise, and succeeded step by step; as the workers struggled to get their Trades Unions respected by Law and Authority, and succeeded step by step; as Labour struggled for a more honoured place in the community, and succeeded step by step till Labour men sat in the Cabinet (though very much more has still to be done); so it is for you men and women to struggle for free education for your children, with training for useful employment, to the age of 18, 19, 20, 21; and to increase, step by step, the aid given to these young citizens, so that none may be kept back from unfolding the Best and Finest within him by fear of to-day's want, or fear of the hunger of to-morrow. The purpose of this struggle will not be to push smart children to the front, to outstrip competitors in a market, to gain

heavy salaries in superior posts. The purpose must be to foster a nobler spirit of service in the whole nation, and to develop more skill for doing the service.

The late Rachel MacMillan, sister to Margaret MacMillan (who has laboured so long and so bravely to improve the health and treatment of little children, and to brighten the schools), said a thing worth remembering by all the people of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth: *Educate every child as if he were your own.*

In this year, 1918, Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, Minister of Education, has opened out his new plan before the eyes of our nation. Put in short, it comes to this:—Nursery schools for little ones, aged 2 to 5 or 6, all free; schools in which girls and boys will be taught full time to the age of 14, and perhaps 15, all free (and no half-timers, in Lancashire or elsewhere, to be any more permitted); schools for girls and boys aged 14 to 16, attending full time, all free; or else, Continuation Schools for ages 14 to 18, for half-time study (that is, 8 hours a week, or 320 in a year), all free; medical care for all these ages, with the provision of play-fields, swimming-baths, holiday camps, etc., all free; and, of course, practical instruction with an eye to the household, garden, field, workshop, studio, and so on, all free.

All this is good. The dear dead whom we mourn would rejoice to know that the ruin wrought by the War will be repaired by young citizens educated on such lines. You will see that the plan does not, indeed, reach the fullness that we have just been thinking of—the full-time training for youth, with maintenance whenever needed, up to the age of 18, or beyond. It still leaves us with a half-time system; not so bad as the old half-time system, of course, since it will not begin till the age of 14; and yet it will not be the full-time training which our richer classes have considered good for their own sons and daughters. But the new plan is all for the good. Accept it. Let no man persuade you to take less. The attendance of young people at classes, or trade schools, or farm training, etc., on and off to the age of 18, will at first be a tax upon the parents. How much, then, do you care for your children? Do your best, so that the glorious and rich powers of their minds and bodies may grow and be strong for service, fellowship, and national honour. And if the strain upon you should be too severe, take counsel together, make your firm and candid claim. Ask that the burden



of maintenance which your income cannot bear shall be borne by the funds of the Commonwealth. Whatever is done or demanded, do it or demand it for the good of the Commonwealth. No nation can prosper if masses of its little ones are ill-fed or ill-clad. No nation can prosper if its young citizens approach the age of manhood and womanhood with neglected health, or housed in unhealthy dwellings. You can never agitate for anything purer or more vital than the health and happiness of the young. But when you agitate let it be for the sake of your village, your city, your England, your British Commonwealth here and overseas.

When we think of the importance of unity of aim in our country, many of us wish that, instead of having different sorts of schools receiving money from the public purse—Roman Catholic, Church of England, Council Schools, Jewish, etc.—we could have public schools everywhere alike, as in France and in the United States. As one who loves and respects England, its people and its history, I think the interests of my country should not be ranked second to the interest of any church or chapel. Our country should train its own young people for its own service, by good lessons and inspirations expressed in the common language of the nation, and not of any particular denomination. The people of this nation may decide to do, as the French and American nations have done, and omit what is called Religious Instruction. And if that happens, those who value teachings contained in the Bible, or Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, or the beautiful legends of Catholic saints, may rightly ask that the teachers should still be allowed to draw examples of noble feeling and conduct from such sources (as from any other good literature). I repeat it—"examples of noble feeling and conduct"; not for the purpose of teaching a creed. By "noble feeling and conduct" I mean that which expresses what is kind, trustworthy, temperate, and just. And in this case, as in all other points of education, the question must be: "What is best for all the people, not a section? What is best for the unity of our great Commonwealth, and what is best for our citizenship?" The subject is difficult. We shall never reach a settlement that will help our sons and daughters unless we approach it in a reasonable spirit. If we "bite and devour one another" (as S. Paul puts it), we shall do honour neither to citizenship nor religion.

Let us suppose that all the plan proposed by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher is agreed to by the British people. Let us also suppose that you, the

working-men and women, have made up your minds, for the sake of our national future, to get by degrees a yet larger measure of education. You surely are not going to leave the control of the whole thing in the hands of official people—inspectors, secretaries, clerks—or of persons who come from some other class than your own, and patronize the schools to which they do not send their own children? If you care for your own children (as, of course, you do), you will take an interest in the management of the schools, and, even at the cost of some trouble to yourselves, you will show your interest in a practical way.

You know how tired you get if you go round a museum or picture gallery, and look at too many things. You see so much that you learn little. So I shall not weary you with dry details about style of teaching, or the way we should prepare young students for the grand work of teaching. I will take what we may call a bird's-eye view. I will set out, in plain words, the main ideas in a plan for the people's education:—

1. Health of body to be cared for from the cradle upwards, the public funds helping with maintenance whenever the family funds fail, in order that the nation may have sound service from sound servants.<sup>1</sup> And the subject of health also links up with the provision of baths, playing fields, recreation camps.

2. Kindergartens ("Children's Gardens") and nurseries.

3. Elementary, or Primary Schools (for ages 5 or 6 to 14 or 15), which will give: Moral lessons, inspiring by stories of examples of love, temperance, duty, justice, service—Lessons in beauty, creating a taste for music, poetry, fine colouring and drawing, drama, dancing—Lessons in the art of observing and reasoning—Lessons in practical activities, woodwork, house-craft (cookery, laundry, etc.), gardening, qualities of animals, plants and minerals—Lessons about the great industries, here and overseas, which form the foundations of the British Commonwealth; that is, agriculture, forestry, mining, manufacturing, fisheries, transport. All this can be summed up as the History of Man and of his World.

4. Schools, or colleges, or classes which (no matter by what

<sup>1</sup> This care for health will also mean kind and common-sense guidance, by special teachers with medical knowledge, in the duties and responsibilities connected with sex.



name they are called) impart instruction to the youth of both sexes from 14 or 15 to 17 or 18, giving: First of all, lessons in good citizenship, without which all else is nought and waste—Lessons in science—Lessons in noble poetry, prose, music, etc. (that is, in beauty)—Instruction in practical arts and crafts in workshops, work-rooms, work-yards, offices, and so on, so that the pupil at the school will also be a kind of apprentice or assistant, both learning and earning.

5. Universities, open to all who have the powers of mind for learning the wider and deeper things of science and art and industry, and can thus render themselves more fit to serve the community which has done so much for them.

6. A National Register, to record the health, character, studies, and abilities of every young citizen, so that, whether in peace or war (but may the League of Nations have wisdom to avert war!), each may be called upon to give his or her best to the Motherland.

7. And once more let it be said that this plan of education is for all the youths of England (and Scotland, etc.); and we must all put our hearts and wits together to raise up such a spirit in this country that every young man or woman will count it an honour to serve in daily duty, and reckon it a shame and reproach to live on the daily labour of fellow citizens.

Now, what will you working folk do? Do you feel that this plan concerns you? Will you put any labour into this splendid business? Will you do it for England, for your children, for the nation's children?

Say yes, and come along!

Keep the plan before you; think over it; look at its difficulties; grumble at parts of it, if you like! anything is better than not caring; talk about it with friends and neighbours; and resolve that, so far as you can help, some such realized plan, some day or other, shall be the birthright of every English child. That is the first thing, then—to dream a dream, and set up a goal, and not forget it. When speaking in the House of Commons in March, 1918, Mr. H. A. L. Fisher said:—

The Board of Education had for a long time past steadily pursued a policy

calculated to bring home to the parents of the children at school an interest in the work of the school, and a sense of responsibility for their children.

You see how they talk about you in Parliament! And could you not turn the tables? Could you not—you, the people of England and the sister nations—pursue a policy which would push the Board of Education on, so that it would do more for your children than Mr. Fisher has promised? Could you not rouse Parliament into showing a more living interest in the training of young England?

Permit me, before closing this appeal, to set out some plain and simple hints as to how you, in your own neighbourhood, may help this glorious cause, and do good for your children and your country at the same time.

1. Ask any teachers, members of Education Committees, etc., to adopt the fine American idea of Parent-Teachers' Associations; that is, an Association connected with a particular school, or group of schools, which will hold (say) monthly meetings in the evening, at which parents and teachers can meet for a pleasant hour or two to hear talks on the welfare of the pupils, to chat about the boys' and girls' needs and progress, and perhaps to enjoy music and other entertainment. Be clear about the "parents." The term means the parents of the children in the schools, not outside parents who come in to patronize. The meetings should be held at the schools.

2. Get your political association (Socialist, Labour, Liberal, Conservative, Unionist, National Party, Progressive, or any other) to put the subject of Education on the agenda of its congresses and other meetings. Do not let the children take a second, or third, place in the political business. Bring up questions of their health, play, food, clothing, holidays. As long as there are ragged, sickly, and ill-fed children in your village or town, there ought to be anxiety among the neighbours, the citizens in general, the Education Committees, and the political leagues and parties.

3. Keep on urging and asking (in your Trade Union, or any other society) until you succeed in getting a group of Visitors attached to each school, half of whom (say three out of six) should be mothers or fathers of some of the children in those same schools. Meet these Parent-Visitors from time to time, and hear what they think of the children's health and bearing,



and so on. Do not encourage any disputes or wranglings with the hard-worked teachers. The object is to enable parents to understand the teachers' labours better, and to encourage the teachers. And, among other things, never overlook the important question of the size of classes. No teacher ought, as a rule, to have more than 30 or 35 children to look after.

4. Propose meetings of the local Education Committee with parents, or with representative parents, to discuss the welfare of the children. The whole thing is as much your business as it is that of the Committee. Inquire whether the Committee holds friendly meetings, more than once a year, with its teachers, assistants as well as heads.

5. Show your interest in the school time-tables. There is no reason why, now and then, in the local newspapers, or some such way, the public should not be able to read a plain, understandable account of what is taught daily in the municipal schools, or of changes about to be made, and so on. We put the bill-of-fare outside the door of the restaurant, and the programme of the play at the entrance of the theatre. Let us know the programme of our children's schools.

6. Why should not the school inspectors meet the parents and other citizens, and explain, in a style free from college jargon and technical terms, just what the schools are doing, what the teachers aim at, what the country needs in its young citizens, and how parents and employers can co-operate in the national task? And on such occasions (and, indeed, all the time) the main points for you to inquire about are these:—

Are the children taught, in an interesting way, the history of mankind, so that they may be inspired, by great examples, to a love and a practice of self-control, kindness, honesty, honour, justice, mercy, and social service?

Does the education acquaint the children with the natural resources and industries of the country and the British Commonwealth, so that they may see what is the foundation of the material welfare of the British people, and how vital it is that each of us should be trained to a useful art, craft, or office?

Are young people taught the use of their reasoning powers, and the value of science?

Are they encouraged to love the great poetry, and prose, and drama, and music, and monuments of their country, and to care for whatever is beautiful?

7. Fight against fees in any sort of public school, college, or university. If great changes in this direction cannot be made, try to reduce the fee-system little by little, but without ceasing.

8. For the honour and good of England and the Commonwealth, watch against people who wish to use the public schools in order to favour some denomination, or some sort of teaching that is not acceptable to the people at large. We want to unite our schools in love and service of the Commonwealth. We want, more and more, to unite the schools of the British Isles with the teaching and spirit of the schools of Canada, Newfoundland, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, India, Nigeria, Jamaica, etc. And, beyond that, we want the children of our British Commonwealth to love and serve humanity in general.

9. Keep a careful eye on the membership of Education Committees. In my opinion, only those who have been elected by the public should have the right to sit and vote on such bodies. I would have no "co-opted" members, except as friendly helpers who would give good counsel, but without exercising any voting power. And I think the local Members of Parliament, and the local organizers of industry, and local Trades Unionists, etc., should, from time to time, publicly confer with the Committees. For education is a question for us all, not for a handful of people in some remote committee room, and not for patronizing folk who pretend that child-training is a sort of mystery which only experts can handle.

10. Remember it is the interest of parents and the Commonwealth alike to see that every young person is prepared for an art, craft, or office that suits him or her. Watch and see that the committees, councils, Trades Unions, societies, guilds, etc., of your locality fulfil this important duty of placing every youth in the work that will best express individual ability and best serve the community.

Friends and fellow citizens, you can do all this if you will. Nothing in British history has happened so great as the rally of our people—men and women—to the call of the country in the War. Fools and blind were they who thought our folk had lost their grit. England is stronger to-day than ever before. Our



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children are coming into a mighty heritage of honour, and also of immense labour. Give them education for this duty, this service, this work for humanity. How else are we to get rid of our slums? How else are we to revive our villages? How else are we to put the rich idlers to shame? How else are we to end the class-war between property and poverty? How else are we to fulfil, with intelligence and mutual love, the giant task of building the League of Nations—first the League of our British Commonwealth (which is itself a noble International); then the League of our Commonwealth with our staunch friends, France, the United States, and Italy; and so on, in a widening circle, until at length the League covers the peoples of the whole earth?

Only by educating youth better can we create a better future.

ARMOREL,  
WOODFIELD AVENUE,  
EALING, LONDON, W.5

*May, 1918.*

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No price is placed on this pamphlet, but the cost of printing is nearly 2d. per copy. Readers who desire to circulate this appeal among Trades Unionists and other working people can send any sums to Mr. Gould, and have in return a number of copies at not more than cost price.