

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY AND PEACE

WHOEVER taught history in the year 1915 had a solemn task to perform. If he ignored the history in the making and failed to interpret the greatest tragedy in all the ages to children who were all their lives to be affected by it, he was a mere examination crammer, not a teacher.

The first duty today is to make the pupil realize the difference between the world of Washington's day and our own, and the stupendous contrast between a world of largely independent entities and one that is now organic. The modern man lives in a world painfully sensitive to its extremities, in which all nations have become members one of another. It is of vastly greater importance to the child, as a prospective business man or citizen, that he should interpret historic facts—such, for instance, as that of American cotton having been sold at half price, that Argentina stopped her imports after war broke out, and that every neutral nation's commerce was being ruined, rather than that he should learn of Ponce de Leon, or Marion's raid, or the number killed at Bunker Hill.

The teaching of history, geography, patriotism, and civics must all contribute together to interpret the life of today by the past. American history, isolated from its sources and from contemporaneous history, from ethics and economics, cannot be understood. Unless the teacher attain Emerson's great insight, that nothing can be known except as seen in its relations, he cannot illuminate the mighty present, and must leave life an enigma to the young mind.

For all that I learned in the grammar school, I might, if I had left school then, have scarcely heard of Homer, Plato, Cæsar, Alfred the Great, Cromwell, Goethe, Darwin, Bismarck, and Wagner; but I could recite glibly passages of "Chronologi-

cal recapitulations." I shall never forget to my dying day learning that Jacques Cartier discovered the St. Lawrence in 1535, and De Soto the Mississippi in 1541, and other matters of like unimportance.

History is better taught now, for it is linked with a remoter past and with contemporaneous events; but it is a question whether American history usually taught in grammar schools should not be condensed into one-half the allotted time, and the other half given to framing a setting for it which will make it more intelligible. National conceit is engendered when nine children out of ten are set adrift with no knowledge of any history but their own. They need standards of comparison, and sympathy with other nations born of acquaintance with their great contributions to our common civilization.

The child must be early taught elementary international economics, together with historic data. Norman Angell, the author of "The Great Illusion," declares that he can teach a twelve-year-old boy more of international economics than the average business man ever learned. This subject has profound bearing on the causes of war and might well occupy most of the time once given to the study of campaigns. The most important work of the educator today is to teach the new internationalism, and to develop the international mind.

The Revolution should be taught as being a war between the reactionary and progressive parties on both sides of the Atlantic. England's present admiration for Washington and admission of King George's blunder should be made explicit. A perverted teaching of the Revolution, until the first Venezuelan affair, promoted misunderstanding and made Young America look upon England as a hereditary foe.

Stress should be laid on the importance of the Constitutional Convention and the principles of federation which wrought stability and peace among our turbulent colonies. The peculiar glory of the United

States is its power to show the way to a united world. The teacher should point out the bitter hostility previous to 1787 between New York and her neighbors because of New York's tariff. Had not the Constitution prohibited tariffs between states, and provided that interstate difficulties be settled by the Supreme Court, a half-dozen interstate wars or more might have ensued. No change in human nature was necessary to keep peace between each of our forty-eight states and its neighbor, despite great diversities of race and religion, and despite gross lawlessness and fearful crimes within the states. The Civil War was no exception; one-half the states rebelled against the whole government, but the Supreme Court accomplished what it was designed for. Civil war is in a different category from interstate or international war. A World Court, in like manner, could keep the peace between the nations when they federate and agree to submit to it all disputes with other nations. This would mean disarmament of rival armies and navies, substitution of an international police, and no world wars.

Pupils should be told the immense significance of the over thirty treaties that the United States has signed to provide investigation and a year's delay before hostilities. These treaties will be kept; they are for each nation's benefit to keep.

LUCIA AMES MEAD

SUGAR AND SPICE

Sugar and spice and everything nice—
That's what little girls are made of!

MANY small girls are brought up as if this silly old nursery saying had a basis in fact.

Girls, it is supposed, are "little ladies"; but, hard as it is on the grown-ups (and that's old Mrs. Tippett on the phone now complaining that Junior is climbing her fence) boys are different.

Junior's sister spends her day having

doll tea-parties, getting her hair curled, walking downtown with mother or grandma to shops or to the beauty parlor, and playing "house."

All little girls play "house," but Sugar and Spice plays it hour after hour, squandering time that might be spent climbing, digging, swimming, hiking, cooking over a bonfire, making things, going on excursions. She does make-believe housekeeping instead of learning to set the table, wash dishes, or cook a real pie. Wearing a dressed-up dress, she mimics repetitiously her mother's bridge game, clubs, or callers, while the grown-ups look on exclaiming on the "cuteness" of the spectacle.

Brother gets in at night with a rip in his trousers and a smear across his nose, having spent the day scrambling over roofs, playing ball, turning cartwheels, watching subway construction, exploring wharves, getting chased away by the steam-shovel operator, and maybe bothering the park policeman to let him ride on a camel. But the world is geared to his venturesomeness. Even old Mrs. Tippett knows that "boys will be boys" and that they can't be kept in cotton-wool to grow into "sissies" and weaklings.

Economic conditions make no polite Victorian distinctions in the treatment of the sexes. Nowadays they may require even more from a girl than from a boy. A boy when he grows up probably will not be required to run a home and rear children and at the same time earn money. But life may easily thrust this grim responsibility on poor, ill-prepared Sugar and Spice. Yet adults still go on treating her as if she were born to be their personal pet. They force on her a routine which is trivial and empty, a sentimental atmosphere in which it is almost impossible for her real self to come alive.

Sometimes I notice among the new children who assemble on the first day of school, a little girl who appears to have stepped from the pages of Vogue. She