

### THE COMMON ENEMY

Happy as I am to be with you here on this proud occasion, I am yet a little troubled. It is not possible for me to address today's new graduates in the mood of pure optimism which ought to be appropriate to Commencement. I cannot help feeling the contrast between the world you are facing and that on which I myself looked out in my youth.

There is recalled to my mind, most vividly, an occasion like this, though far away in time and space: The conferring of Degrees in the National University of Ireland before the World War. It was different from this in one respect that is all to your advantage, however: for we few women graduates were regarded as something in the nature of freaks, we were the natural prey of a crowd of rowdy young men! I remember walking up to the dais, trying to be very dignified in my gown and mortar-board, while from the galleries above, on either side, fell alternate showers of flour and soot; and standing before the venerable Chancellor, who pronounced over one that medieval Latin ritual - with fire-crackers exploding around the hem of one's beautiful new gown!

But it didn't matter. We were in radiant spirits, we new graduates - the highways lay open before us, no cloud in the sky. I compare that day with this, and some compassion is mixed with the sense of congratulation and envy that I feel towards you.

Here you are assembled, at the climax and conclusion of years of purposeful work. It has been work planned with knowledge and imagination; its parts co-ordinated; the whole course harmonized with the general ideal of progress: work in which the achievement of every one of you is an undisputed contribution to the honour and satisfaction of all. And from this order, this reason, this discipline, you have to go out into a world ringed about with fear and chaos, - to see, East and West of your own country, a condition of things that has been described, very aptly, as "Insanity Fair."

I envy you, nevertheless: I believe you full of the fine, courage of youth. "The Valour of Ignorance" some people call it; but it is often wise. And I envy you because you are Americans.

Your country is free. Coming from a country which was forced to make a bitter struggle for its freedom; belonging to the generation which made that struggle, I have seen nationalism proscribed and persecuted and grown, in consequence, narrowly intense. And I have seen, in England, how imperialistic ambitions can vitiate democracy. In Europe I have seen old and new liberties annihilated one by one. I rejoice in the sense of liberty here.

In these United States you are free and daring. You think your thoughts out to a finish and speak your minds. You have a country that is wide-spread and powerful, yet without the poison of imperialism in its system; a country that is a nation, united and proud, yet cramped by no narrow nationalism. You comprise the nearest thing to a world-

minded people anywhere in the world.

"World-mindedness!" The thing is so rare, the concept so new, that we have not made a word for it yet, and this clumsy term has to serve. It is humanity's most vehement need.

I have had constantly before my mind's eye, in these recent days in England, an old cartoon. A small crowded boat has sprung a leak. It is sinking at the stern and the people at that end are drowning. The men in the prow smile complacently at one another, saying: "Thank goodness, we are in the safe end of the boat."

I am afraid that cartoon could have been reproduced, with new faces, quite appropriately, a few months ago.

All humanity is in the same boat. I feel that this is realized here. Do not let anything make you forget.

I want to be frank. I am a European speaking to Americans. Inevitably there is, in what I must say, something of an appeal. But do not misunderstand or resent that. I am not forgetting old disillusionments. I am not going to continue the impertinence of commending to you this foreign policy or that. I am pleading only that you will not let any dust or fog, selfishness or sophistry, obscure the vision which I believe American youth to have attained to the vision of the world as one.

Mankind is one, and has a common enemy - the host composed of ignorance, poverty, hunger, disease and crime. If despairing peoples turn against one another, it is because they have failed to overcome that

hereditary enemy of each and all. No matter what else happens, the campaign against this host must go on. It necessarily is most urgent in time of conflict, its progress most feasible in time of peace.

Against these common enemies of mankind, against epidemic disease, hunger, and illicit traffic in drugs; against the miseries that follow famines and floods and wars, an unceasing struggle is being waged. It has to be planned and carried out by means of international co-operation. I rejoice to know that your government has definitely promised to increase American collaboration in this world-wide campaign.

These activities center, now, in Geneva, and people who declare that the League of Nations has become worthless and moribund must be speaking with little knowledge of its non-political fields of work. It is well that your government takes a happier view!

"This government," (to quote from the letter sent to Geneva last February) "regards each sound step forward in these fields as a step toward the establishment of that national and international order which, they believe, is essential to peace." But, the same note states, "much remains to be done."

There is no need for me, here, to emphasize how much. You have not spent your lives in a walled garden. You know that over great areas of the globe preventable disease is still rampant; that hunger, and vile conditions of living, persist; that the traffic in human debilitation by means of narcotic drugs goes on. You are conscious, at the same time,

that you live in an age of plenty; a period of mass production and superb power machines; you are aware that the conclusions of brilliant scientists are accessible for application to the ordering of human life.

Why then the persisting misery and chaos, conflict and decay? Is it not obvious that the cause lies chiefly in the fact that we have not learned to think in terms of the world? There is a calamitous time-lag between the progress of invention, which is almost unbelievably rapid, and the progress of human wisdom, which is almost incredibly slow.

There is a disastrous time-lag between the increase of inter-communication among countries, and the power of men to co-ordinate their ambitions and compose a harmonious world.

The genius of this age is the genius of science and invention. It knows no frontiers. But it has outstripped political thought, which remains, for the most part, localized - limited and hampered by merely national aims. What confusion and tragedy this past decade has seen! 1929, the year in which economic chaos set in, ought to have marked, instead, a new era of world wide well-being and hope. Man had triumphed in his struggle with nature, as never before. Unprecedented wealth was provided. The hungry might have been fed. If that had been conceived of as important, if a world administration or council had existed; if distribution had been wisely planned, we might have seen the growth of a generation unequalled in health, progressive spirit and content. But instead...

That evil word, tragic in its irony - "over-production" - was applied. Each nation reacted, blindly, in terms of itself. We see how they defeated their own ends.

What happens? Briefly, something like this. My country - an imaginary country, please, for the purpose of illustration, - produces an abundance, say, of food; sells food to its neighbor and buys, with the proceeds, this neighbor's iron and coal. A year of fine harvests comes. Our food is cheap. Our neighbor state has farmers. They are alarmed. They demand that a tariff be raised to exclude our produce, in order that they may sell their own. This is done and now we, losing our market, cannot buy iron and coal. Our neighbors miners are thrown out of work. They can no longer buy butter or meal. The farmers over there suffer, too. Both countries are impoverished. No one gains. There could have been mutual planning - co-operation, instead. The solution would not be simple and easy, but would it be beyond human intelligence and good-will? I do not believe it.

Another example of the chaos which want of co-operation creates: a government uses all its resources to encourage increase of population, then, failing to support its people, makes war abroad. A western people raise wages and shorten the hours of labour, but so raise the price of goods and can no longer compete against cheaper labour elsewhere.

The separate efforts of nations cancel one another out and even defeat their own ends. Competition becomes mutually ruinous. An armament race begins. The human race will cancel itself out if these

things go on.

I hope that this time-lag does not exist so deplorably among those who are young. You, who were born into a diminished world, whose minds are conditioned to the rapidity of communication, to the complexity and interdependence of affairs, will surely be less inclined than your elders to forget - to forget or ignore - the fact that "peace is indivisible" and progress must be for the human race as a whole!

"Much remains to be done." Yes, but it is not on this too obvious fact that I meant to dwell. I want, on the contrary, to recall to you some of the things which international co-operation against man's common enemy has achieved.

In the field of health, first, glance at just a few of the battles which the nations in co-operation have won.

You know that, at the close of the European war, an epidemic called influenza swept over continents, killing more than the war had killed? But did you know that there was an extreme likelihood of all Europe being devastated, in the years following, by typhus, typhoid and cholera?

In 1922, in Russia, a million and a half people were sick with typhus. War, famine and revolution had created chaos in that vast country. Fugitives were swarming over the frontiers. Poland called on the League of Nations for aid.

For the first time in history, European Government Health Services co-operated in a great preventive campaign. Twenty-seven

nations helped. Sanitation cordons were set up at the frontiers. Nurses and doctors ran hospital camps. Travellers and their belongings were subjected to disinfection. The epidemic was checked.

Had the states failed to co-operate, European civilization might have been overwhelmed by a devastation which would have made the war seem a lesser event.

In the same year, after the war between Greece and Turkey, hordes of refugees from Asia Minor poured into Greece. They brought with them smallpox, cholera and typhoid fever. Dr. Heiser states that their number equalled one fifth of the population of Greece.

Could the Greek government alone have prevented a terrible epidemic? Would that epidemic have been confined to Greece? Europe was threatened, and the nations collaborated. A commission sent out by the League of Nations cleansed the camps and vaccinated more than five hundred thousand persons. Greece, and probably all southern Europe, was saved.

One eighth of the population of the world suffer from malaria, Swamp-bred mosquitoes are the carriers of the disease. Only one effective remedy was known, quinine. And quinine was so rare and costly that most of the victims could not obtain it - and uncounted numbers died.

Against this common enemy, states members of the League and other states also, not members, combined. A commission was sent out to the worst areas. Its members drained swamps, and rid vast areas of the mosquito. They discovered a cheaper remedy - toyaquina. They hold



courses and train workers against the scourge. Whole populations which used to be feeble and fever-ridden are healthy now.

You know something about the fight against yellow fever. You can realize that, with aerial travel, to prevent the carrying of infection from one port to another needs international co-operation of the closest kind. Asia is in incessant danger of being invaded by the African parasite. So far, by means of rigid precautions and close co-operation, Asia has been saved.

It would be beyond the bounds of possibility, in these days of rapid, unceasing transit both of people and merchandise, to make quarantine effective without central control. Did you realize that the League of Nations takes measures against flies and rats?

There is to be seen, in the League of Nations pavilion at the World's Fair, a large map. It shows how the League's epidemiological organization works. That is the bureau whose duty it is to help quarantine authorities to guard against epidemic disease. To the bureaus at Geneva and Singapore, reports come in of health conditions in the ports. These reports are co-ordinated and broadcast to the authorities at ports concerned, who then know what precautions they ought to take. That is intelligent, economical co-ordinated work, and it succeeds.

Leprosy, sleeping sickness, cancer and rabies are among the common enemies which the nations unite to attack. The Brazilian Government has placed its laboratory at Rio de Janeiro, where leprosy is studied, at the disposal of the League; information is exchanged with similar laboratories

elsewhere, results tabulated and co-operative experiments planned. Waste and overlapping are prevented, useful results discovered by one group are made available for all. Steady progress is achieved.

And the League of Nations - did you know this? - occupies itself with cod liver oil for babies! The whole question of nutrition is being studied under the auspices of the Health Section of the League; so are the problems of housing and rural hygiene in general, while the improvement of labor conditions is the constant concern of the international labor office, which co-operates with the League.

Another matter in which governments, acting separately, would be almost helpless, is the illicit traffic in drugs. Drug-traffickers are internationalists. They have centres in numberless countries, employ a thousand cunning methods of smuggling and co-operate with the utmost finesse, making fortunes at the cost of human degradation. Governments which are at peace contrive, by police collaboration, to detect and suppress a great part of this traffic. When war breaks out, of course, that control breaks down.

I heard the representative of China, at Geneva, say with despair in his voice: "We are being conquered by drugs as well as by guns."

The problem of slavery in backward countries and the traffic in women and children; the increasing and piteous problems of refugees - with all these, the nations, in collaboration, deal. It is obvious,

is it not, that they will succeed in so far as the statesmen prove to be world-minded, and that selfish, narrow, short-sighted national policies would defeat every scheme?

This is not the place and time to say more about refugees; those driven innocents, those desperate fugitives guiltless even of self-defense; if we allowed our imaginations to dwell on their misery we should be able for nothing else all day. And at least we have the comfort of knowing that, however disjointedly, however inadequately, for them some effort is being made.

I have touched on all these matters because they show so clearly the value and the urgency of that outlook for which I am contending - the outlook which regards the world as a whole.

I have found it a cheering experience to come from Europe to New York and see, at the World's Fair, the achievements of many nations displayed; to come then, to this radiant city, and see your Exposition, and now to visit this college, where you have a department devoted to the study of international affairs. I am encouraged in a great hope. I believe that the threatened peoples will presently see, growing up, on the side of justice and freedom, a mighty, perhaps irresistible force: the force of moral judgement, informed, fearless and organized.

I suppose that every one of us here is a pacifist, in the sense of abhorring war. But I think we have all realized that world peace can never be achieved on a basis of integrity, leaving nations

partitioned, liberties strangled, grievances unreversed. Justice and freedom are essential to peace. No pacificism can be effective that does not seek to remove the causes of war. To deplore the production of armaments is useless while peoples live in fear. You cannot expect that people will submit, unresisting, to the loss of liberty. What would become of peace and order in any community where no court of justice existed to which the victim of aggression could resort for redress?

The hope of the World Court that would function effectively at the Hague or Geneva has broken down. But a great unofficial tribunal remains: the court of public opinion. Public opinion is, to my mind, a much more powerful weapon than most people suppose; above all, when it is enlightened opinion, which has grasped the truth and refuses to be deluded with lies.

The passion for self-justification is a weakness from which aggressive people are by no means free. To an astonishing extent, informed condemnation gives them pause. Because

Now I am not unaware that Europeans are inclined to exact too much from the United States. I see clearly enough the point of the quip that says - "England expects that every American will do his duty." Nevertheless, I am going to express something for which I look to young American - not with any sense of exacting it or demanding it, yet with hope.

*Believe this I*

I have never felt such despair as when confronted by a polite timidity of opinion that refused to censure or condemn practices which amounted to crime. I have never felt greater elation then when, either in connection with Ireland's struggle or recently in other connections, forthright messages flashed across the Atlantic from the President, Senate or Congress of the United States.

I have been and am a propagandist, unrepentant and unashamed. Propoganda can and should be the use of the weapon of truth to fight lies. I look for a great campaign of propaganda here; a search-light that will clear the smoke-screen of falsehood and prejudice out of the way. American opinion may act, I believe, as a kind of unofficial tribunal, a court of international equity, where disputes may be examined and judged. Public opinion, when it is founded on knowledge; when it is disinterested, unprejudiced, and at once calmly and boldly expressed can do much.

I hope and believe that the American people are making a close and vigilant study of world affairs, and mean to throw the weight of their moral influence on the side they think right.

And I trust that this will never have to mean taking sides with nation against nation or with class against class. Nothing is more vital, in a critical epoch such as this, than to remember that what we have to contend against is a policy, not a people, a system, not a country, wrong and evil practices, not a race.

In every country, however congenial, there are groups and ideologies against which we would contend; and under even the most aggressive governments there are people whose ideals are the same as our own. It is the evil principle that the court of opinion should condemn; it is against tyranny in all forms, - the destroyer of freedom everywhere, - the common enemy of all mankind, that we must put forth our strength.

Informed, clarified, fearless opinion - for this, people like myself, threatened with national international calamity, look to America now.

The issues are appallingly complex. It is the easiest of all things to say that they are beyond the power of any but experts to comprehend. But that is to leave the whole matter where we found it - in the hands of those who have made confusion worse confounded by their short-sighted, narrow views. They have failed or refused to apply the ordinary code of justice dealing to world affairs. They have failed, or refused, to observe between nations the common loyalties and standards that prevail, in ordered communities, between man and man. Some of them declare openly that might is the only right; others employ hypocritical subterfuge. All will be lost unless, in the region of international dealings, honest, humane standards are made to prevail. The code of the normal fair-minded man and woman must be made <sup>current</sup> in world affairs. That is the individual's task: the duty that confronts every one of us today. It does not mean a placid existence for those who take part in

it. The best intentioned, the most ardent, will differ among themselves. Tolerance and discernment are hard to attain and "bitter is the wound of a friend".

Of all man's common enemies, ignorance is most firmly entrenched, with prejudice as a powerful ally. To fight with only truth as a weapon means a long campaign. The processes of history are slow. One needs to be very patient. I chanced to read somewhere a phrase of your own President Reinhardt which expresses unforgettably, what we need: "to confront history with its own imperturbability and time with its own patience".

People who can combine that steadfastness with the ardour which wins victories are rare. Theirs is the temper needed in this campaign - this warring with truth against injustice and evil.

This is not a world in which we can hope for peace, in the sense of security and ease. I would like to be able to leave you with a wish for peaceful and pleasant years. As things are, the most I can wish you is peace of mind.

We have a saying in Ireland: "only he who is at war with the powers of evil is at peace with God." Whatever one may understand by "evil" and whatever one may understand by "God", I believe that to be true.

For vigorous people do not desire ease. Nature put energy into us - enough for the struggle for survival, enough for the labours of the pioneers. You have your ancestors blood in your veins, and energies equal to theirs. Modern life, with its routine and specialization fre-

quently cramps those energies. That is why some people welcome war. And does not that seem mad - with these great campaigns for the welfare of all humanity needing every gift of mind and strength that can be brought to them!

I hope that none of you may ever be called upon to take part in war against classes or nations, yet I will not wish you peace - my wish for each and all of you is that you, as Americans, will take a great share in the fight against the common enemies of mankind.

I will give you the farewell salutation of the old Irish warriors - Baer Buadh agus Beannacht!

Take victory and a blessing.