

1925. Class "C."

1st Prize

W.B.

"Gardez La Foi."

757

The British Empire Exhibition. 1924 - (1925).

Writing in the summer of 1925 one is able to judge the Wembley Exhibition from a vastly different stand point, from that which one could when this essay competition was instituted. Of such value and significance was the 1924 Exhibition that public opinion, as well as the powers that be, urged its continuance in 1925. It simply had to be carried on for another season. On re-reading from "The Weekly Bulletins of Empire Study" those inspiring messages of past and present history-makers and super-thinkers, on re-reading the Bulletins themselves, the Guide Books and one's own miscellany of information gained at the Exhibition itself, one cannot but feel that this mighty effort has accomplished the great work which its promoters anticipated with such ardent patriotism, and acumen and fore-sight. As a matter of fact one may safely assert that the Exhibition has exceeded the utmost expectations of its most sanguine supporters.

Probably no other great Exhibition has been so criticised - probably none has received so many setbacks - none has required such colossal preparation and organization; yet its success is so great that it may not be measured in our generation.

The idea of empire is not new - the idea of the British Empire is new. At the great Conferences of Empire Premiers, at great Empire meetings, and in our teachings of Empire in our schools, it has been emphasised that the British Empire is indeed a league of nations - that it consists of "many federations of nations inside one greater federation, full of peaceable power." Rudyard Kipling has taught us to understand some of the responsibilities of Empire - showing us that it is a great trust, a tidying-up-job. General Smuts of South African fame has shown us that there are only 2 ways of fulfilling our obligation - the way of force and the way of understanding. The Wembley Exhibition will have helped largely

in broadcasting this understanding; for there we have learnt not only the Imperial geography of the present, but also the Imperial history of the past, and the Imperial possibilities of the future. We know that there would have been no "Empire Exhibition (1924)" if men like Drake, Frobisher, Raleigh, and Chancellor had stayed at home in the 16th-17th centuries. We know now what British Science and inventions have done for the world - that they have given the world among much else the steam-engine, locomotives, and Electric dynamo. These in their turn have created industries, means of transport and communication. The Exhibition has shown us that it is only by the use of scientific knowledge that we have been able to use our gifts in making the Empire mainly self-supporting. It has taught us that the four great virtues of Empire are: - unselfishness, courage, foresight and integrity. By the time the closing date arrives in the autumn, probably some 30 millions of

people (that is, more than half the population of the British Isles) will have visited Wembley and have benefitted by the knowledge there gained. In a single day each may learn more Empire Geography than in a year of hard studying. The Exhibition is in fact a stock-taking of all the vast resources of the Empire — no mere museum this!

The claims and duties of Imperial Citizenship are mutual, we have been told — and we have now learnt that they can be satisfactorily interpreted only by wide and sympathetic understanding of the facts. The Empire Exhibition places these facts before us in their most attractive and understandable form.

We have found, at Wembley, that the study of Empire has proved an inspiring and ennobling theme — that our great communion of nations and peoples may be a great implement for bettering the world — and that the ties that bind them together are, as Burke said,

"Light as air, but strong as links of iron." The Exhibition has very largely helped towards the great ideal mentioned by Mr Asquith when he said,

"All that we wish for is to be allowed peaceably to consolidate our resources, to raise within the Empire the level of common opportunity, to draw closer the bond of affection and confidence between its parts, and to make it every-where the worthy home of the best traditions of British liberty."

As a result we ^{have} become, and will become, more conscious of our duty as trustees of this great inheritance. Children from the farthest corners of the Empire must be saved from slavery, disease, and ignorance - they must be cured, cleansed, taught, and guarded. Thus the Exhibition teaches us the best of all lessons - true Knightliness.

In conclusion - one may read in a West African Folk-Tale in one of our "Bulletins of Empire Study" of how all the wisdom of the world, contained in Father Anansi's pot, escaped and spread

around the globe.

Let us trust, and pray, and
work that the beneficent
results engendered in the great
Wembley Exhibition may be
spread like-wise for the
good of mankind.

"Gardez la foi!"