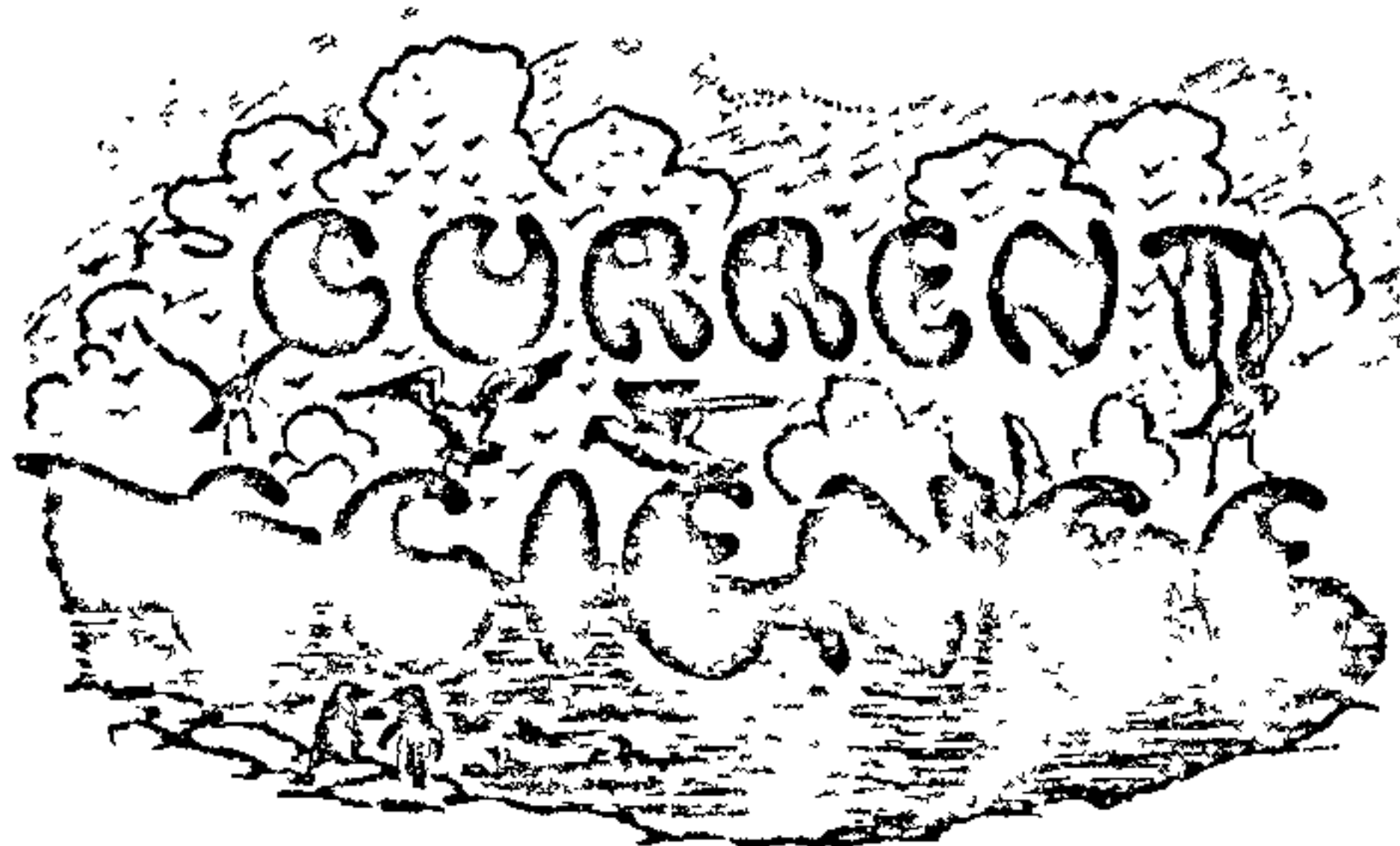

CURRENT SCIENCE—50 YEARS AGO



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THE SCIENCE OF PEACE. By Lord Raglan. (Methuen & Co., Ltd., 36, Essex Street, W. C. London, 1933). Pp. x + 160. Price 3s. 6d.

Lord Raglan is a distinguished anthropologist and his opinions on the fundamental problem of peace are entitled to great respect. We have read this brilliant book with great profit but in one or two respects we venture to differ from the author. The primitive races are alleged to be peace-loving and war is said to be unknown among the early food-gatherers. The beginnings of war are traced to the custom of offering human sacrifices among the primitive and ruder agricultural communities and the practice of head-hunting on a chieftains' death. The surviving stocks of primitive groups are peaceful and the inference 'must be' that their forbears must have been strangers to wars. We are disposed to think that if the earlier races or the food-gatherers were peaceful, they did not possess the instinct of possession or aggrandisement. "Sufficient unto the day is the gathering thereof" must have been their rule of simple lives: if, on the other hand, they made the least attempt to gather all and leave nothing for their neighbours, we can conceive the sort of relation which would subsist between two such tribes. It seems to us that in nature as well as in the unorganised communities peace depends upon well-gratified appetites of stomach and sex and whenever there was hindrance to the satisfaction of either, fight must ensue and fight is only war writ small. Suppose a group of people are reduced to starvation or prevented from exercising their natural proclivities, they are bound to rise against their oppressors, leading

to hostilities the duration and intensity of which must depend upon the resources of the parties engaged in the conflict. Suppose in a community every individual member has the means and liberty to gratify his appetites in the manner he likes best, there would apparently be no cause for conflict among them and suppose the world is so constituted, world-peace is assured. Because human nature possesses what we regard as antisocial instincts, Moses laid down the Ten Commandments and from the day this Revelation was made, individuals and nations have been trying to circumvent them and because they live in highly organised and complex societies, the conflicts have become private or public enterprises.

The trouble with our civilisation is that it is a maladjustment of head and heart. Our emotions have not kept pace with the progress of our intellect. In the case of Veddahs of Ceylon, the Punans of Borneo, the Pygmies of the Congo Forest and the Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert, the head has not outstripped the heart and their childlike simplicity of habits will certainly change if they are civilised.

The causes of modern war among nations are still to be traced to the primitive but imperious instincts of stomach and superiority complex, which may be paraphrased into trade, economic and industrial rivalries and tariffs, over-population and covetousness of the neighbour's land and cattle, emigration laws and religious and racial intolerance. In the settlement of disputes arising from any one of these or other causes, it is important to remember that two heads and not two hearts that are involved and all agreements based on the understanding of the head must be fugitive. Intelligence always strives to establish superiority and rarely is an opportunity lost to detect errors of reasoning, faulty judgment, and unfavourable settlements in the previous transactions whose revision must produce fresh disputes. The heart humanised the savage and the head civilised him and unless humanism overtakes civilisation, the prospect of world-peace must remain a dream.

The early religions set about civilising the human mind and ennobling the human heart by such excellent teachings as "Love thy neighbour as thyself," "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out", "Do unto others as you would be done by"; "If thou call thy brother fool thou art in danger of hellfire" and "God is love" and all prayers conclude with "Peace and Goodwill unto all

men". These doctrines appeal to the heart and when metaphysical disputes and sectarianism arose trying to establish the superiority of one set of doctrines over another, bloodshed resulted.

Lord Raglan provides excellent and most convincing arguments against the doctrines of war-mongers and we admire the resources and readiness of his replies. The fourth section of the book in which he provides a constructive and well-reasoned programme for achieving world-peace is the most important contribution. Undoubtedly the first condition of world-peace is "demilitarisation of Religion". This implies not only the restoration of religions to their original purity and simplicity, by stripping them of all controversial metaphysical accretions, but their reduction to the basic formula of universal Truth, Beauty, Love and Goodness. All talk about "Soldiers" of religion must cease and man must instinctively, like Abu Ben Adam, love his neighbour and it is same as "loving the Lord". A more spirited and straightforward utterance on the humanisation of religion we

have not read.

The chapters on "Education for Peace", "The Curse of Babel" and "World Civilisation" are illuminating and those confronted with the stupendous task of reconstructing the dismembered fragments of the world structure, will find hope and encouragement provided in the chapters on "Law versus War". "The Government of the World" and "Peace-mindedness". The Chapter on "Women and War" concludes with a pregnant sentence: "It has been said that the last thing that man will civilise will be woman, but has he ever tried." The experiment may be tried, but the subject is sure to resent the attentions of the experimenter.

The book is a superb contribution to the solution of the teasing present-day problems. We are not likely to succeed in establishing world-peace by treaties and international conferences. Peace is an ultimate fact of human nature and environment. We would like to have more books such as the one we have before us, written clearly, precisely and with knowledge and far-sightedness.

ANNOUNCEMENT

64TH ANNUAL CONVENTION AND NATIONAL SEMINAR ON 'SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT'

The 64th Annual Convention and National Seminar on 'Science and Technology for Rural Development' of the Institution of Engineers (India) will be held at Patna during 2-6, February 1984.

The list of Keynote Speakers are as follows: (1) Science and Technology for Agriculture by Shri Harbans Singh, Agriculture Commissioner, Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi; (2) Science and Technology for Rural Industries by Dr M. M. Chakrabarty, Vice Chancellor, Jadavpur University, Calcutta; (3) Science and Technology for Habitat by Shri H. B. Lal, Chief Engineer, Rural Electrification, Bihar State Electricity Board, Patna; (4) Science and Technology for Rural Housing and Roads by Dr H. C. Visvesvaraya, Chairman and Director-General, Cement Research Institute of India, New Delhi; Dr N. S. Srinivasan, Executive Director National Transportation Planning and Research Centre,

Trivandrum; (5) Science and Technology for Drinking Water Supply, Sanitation and Health by Shri V. Venugopalan, Adviser, Public Health Engineering, Ministry of Works and Housing, New Delhi; (6) Science and Technology for Meeting Rural Energy Needs by Shri T. L. Sankar, Director, Institute of Public Enterprises, Hyderabad; (7) Management for Rural Development by Prof. Malathi Bolar, Director, Human and Natural Resource Research Society, New Delhi; (8) Science and Technology for Employment Generation in Rural Areas by Shri M. Venkataratnam, Chairman, Rural Electrification Corporation, New Delhi; (9) Societal Adaptation of Technology in Rural Areas by Dr S. P. Gupta, Joint Secretary University Grants Commission, New Delhi.

Details can be had from: Shri R. K. Abrol, Deputy Secretary, (Technical), The Institution of Engineers (India), 8 Gokhale Road, Calcutta 700 020.
