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ESPERANTO.

A First Lesson in the New International Language.

BY D. O. S. LOWELL.

SOME years since I was traveling in Egypt in company with two Germans and a Hungarian. We stopped overnight at a hotel in Alexandria kept by an Italian landlady. On calling for our bill, we found it reckoned in French money. One of the Germans tendered a twenty-mark piece, the Hungarian produced an Egyptian pound, and I asked change for an English sovereign. None of the party, except myself, spoke English; the landlady could speak no German, the Germans and Hungarian no French, and our change was given to us in Egyptian piasters. Thus there was absolutely no common currency; there was next to no common speech. I had to make shift as best I could to render my comrades' German into Anglo-French and the landlady's Italo-French into Anglo-German; but when we made Arabic numerals, all of us could understand. The figures saved the day.

I have often thought, since then, what a convenience some medium of communication would be, if it could be easily learned, like the Arabic numerals, and readily understood by all moderately educated men. How much the delights of traveling would be enhanced! How greatly should we enjoy reading the news directly in foreign newspapers and magazines, if it were printed so that all the world and his wife could understand!

When Volapük was invented I plunged into it with keen expectation, for I hoped there to find the medium of which I have spoken. But after a few days of disillusionment I withdrew, a sadder but hardly a wiser man. I had learned nothing that I cared to remember, and my dream had turned out a nightmare. The new language was just as difficult as any other, and seemed infinitely more ugly. It was neither dead

nor living, but was a sort of etymologic Frankenstein which nobody was likely to adopt, for it seemed like a monstrosity.

Time passed, and at last I heard of Esperanto—another language designed to be universal; but a burnt child avoids the fire. I judged Hercules by one foot and did not care to look at the other. At last, a friend thrust the subject upon my attention, and I could not avoid listening without discourtesy. The story is short; to modify Pope's famous line, I first endured, then wondered, then embraced.

Volapük may be compared with Esperanto only as dusk with daylight. A single specimen is sufficient. I take one given recently by the *North American Review*:

VOLAPÜK—Pük bevünetik pakäpalom fa vol lölik pekulivöl; abu men nomik tala, sesumül volapükels, kapalom püki lekanix Volapük.

ESPERANTO—La lingvo internacia estas komprenita de la tuta mondo edukita; sed neniam homo sur la tero, escepte la volapükistoj, komprenas la artan lingvon Volapük.

ENGLISH—The international language is comprehended by the entire educated world; but no man on earth, except the Volapükists, understands the artificial language Volapük.

The story of Esperanto, in brief, is this: Dr. L. L. Zamenhof, a physician in Warsaw, Poland, was impressed from his boyhood with the possibility of producing a simple language without irregularities or exceptions and comprehensible by everybody. To this stupendous task he applied himself, and in 1878, when he was only nineteen years of age, he thought he had completed his scheme. But he gained adherents slowly; and, moreover, he found that many little

things were lacking to make his language a success. Accordingly, it was not till 1887 that he published his first work.

The first country to adopt the language widely was France. The Marquis de Beaufront had been working on similar lines, independently of Dr. Zamenhof, and was almost ready to publish his invention when the Polish doctor's book fell into his hands. With a self-repression almost unheard of in history, he cast his own work aside to become the chief agent in spreading Esperanto. In fact, he is sometimes called the godfather of Esperanto.

From France and Poland Esperanto made its way, slowly at first, and then rapidly, over the continent of Europe. In 1905 a monster congress of Esperantists was held at Boulogne-sur-Mer, in which more than a score of nations was represented; and addresses, discussions, and plays were given in Esperanto by men who apparently found no difficulty in understanding one another in the new tongue.

In 1906 a second congress was held at Geneva. This was even more successful than the first, and a third gathering has been arranged for August of the present year in Cambridge, England.

Now there is not a country in Europe without its Esperanto Society. The movement has crossed the seas also to Australia, India, China, and Japan. An Esperanto journal is now published in the last-named country. Among the Japanese interested are Dr. Kuroita and Professors Asada and Fujioka of the Imperial University in Tokyo, and Baron Oku, commander of one of the Japanese armies in the Manchurian War. Other great men abroad who believe in

Esperanto are Professor W. W. Skeat, Sir William Ramsay, William T. Stead, M. Ernest Naville, and Pope Pius X.

In America, although two years ago Esperanto was almost unknown, it has to-day adherents among the faculties of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Ohio State University, and other institutions of higher learning. The best periodicals open their columns for discussion and print articles *pro* and *con*—chiefly *pro*.

Esperanto is a very easy language to learn. It is not an exaggeration to say that the entire grammar can be mastered in an hour; and a learner can begin to read the literature at once with the aid of a dictionary—a thing that is impracticable with any other language under the sun.

There are two Esperanto journals published in the United States, and almost every foreign country of importance has its own. Everything goes to prove that Esperanto is not only wonderfully simple and fascinating, but also perfectly practical. From present indications, it seems safe to predict that it will soon be known and read and spoken in every quarter of the civilized globe. Such being the case, it behooves all who do not wish to be behind the times to learn something of this new tongue, and with this end in view THE SCRAP BOOK herewith begins a series of articles designed to make the first steps easy so that he who runs may read.

Let us begin by examining a typical sentence taken from one of Hans Christian Andersen's tales, found in the *Fundamenta Krestomatio* of Dr. Zamenhof. The story is called "La Novaj Vestoj de la Reĝo" ("The King's New Clothes"):

LA NOVAJ VESTOJ DE LA REĜO.

ANTAŬ multaj jaroj vivis unu reĝo, kiu tiel amis belajn novajn vestojn, ke li elspezadis sian tutan monon, por nur esti ĉiam bele ornamita.

ANTAŬ—"before." A preposition governing *multaj jaroj*. Literally, "before many years"; translate, "many years ago." Prepositions in Esperanto govern the nominative case. The mark over *u* is employed (making *ŭ*) whenever it follows *a* or *e*. Each vowel has its distinct sound (*ah-oo*), but pro-

nounced rapidly these coalesce and give the sound of *ow* in "now." Pronunciation: *ahn'-tow*.

MULTAJ—"many." An adjective agreeing in number and case with *jaroj*. The final *j* indicates the plural number. The singular form (*multa*), ending in *a*, denotes an adjective. The two sounds

of *a* and *j* (*ah-ee*) coalesce, and give the sound of *i* in "mine." Pronunciation: *mool'-tie*.

JAROJ—"years." A noun in the nominative plural, object of *antaŭ*. (See *antaŭ* for the case which Esperanto prepositions govern.) Remove the plural ending *j*, and *jaro* (singular) is left. Of this the ending *o* denotes a noun. If the word were *jara* it would be an adjective; thus *jara festo* means "yearly festival." The letter *j* in Esperanto has the sound of English *y* or *ee*. In the ending *oj* each vowel has its distinct sound (*oh-ee*); but these coalesce into the sound of *oi* in "going." The pronunciation of *jaroj* written at length would be *ee-ah'-ro-ee*; condensed, *yah'-roy*.

VIVIS—"lived." The past tense of the verb *vivi*, "to live." Its subject is *reĝo*. There is but one form for the three persons and the two numbers. The past tense of every verb in Esperanto has this same ending—*is*. Pronunciation: *vee'-veece*.

UNU—"one," a cardinal number, usually invariable. Translate "a certain" and connect with *reĝo*. Pronunciation: *oo'-noo*.

REGO—"king." All Esperanto nouns in the nominative singular end in *o*. Pronunciation: *ray'-jo*.

We have now seen how all the vowels in Esperanto are pronounced:

- a* like *a* in "father": *antaŭ*
- e* like *e* in "obey": *reĝo*
- i* like *i* in "machine": *vivis*
- o* like *o* in "note": *reĝo*
- u* like *oo* in "cool": *unu*

We have also learned how to pronounce *aŭ*, *aj*, and *oj*:

- aŭ* like *ow* in "now": *antaŭ*
- aj* like *i* in "mine": *multaj*
- oj* like *oi* in "going": *jaroj*

Most of the consonants are pronounced as in English; but—

- j* is like *y* in "yard": *jaroj*
- ĝ* is like *g* in "gem": *reĝo*

Whenever a word has more than one syllable the accent falls on the penult, or the syllable before the last.

THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS IN ESPERANTO; therefore a thing once learned need never trouble us again. So let us continue:

KIU—"who," a relative pronoun,

which may relate to a person or a thing. Its antecedent is *reĝo*, and it is the subject of *amis*. Pronunciation: *kee'-oo*.

TIEL—"so" (in such a manner), an adverb, modifying *amis*. This, as well as *kiu*, is one of forty-five correlative words which play a very important part in Esperanto, and which will be explained farther on. Note carefully the meaning. Pronunciation: *tee'-ail*.

AMIS—"loved." From *ami*, "to love." What tense? (See *vivis*.) Look through the entire Esperanto paragraph and find verbs in the past tense. Pronunciation: *ah'-meece*.

BELAJN—"beautiful." An adjective agreeing with *vestojn*. The final *n* marks the objective case—the only case in Esperanto besides the nominative. The *j* marks the plural; the *a* denotes an adjective. Pronunciation: *bay'-line*.

NOVAJN—"new." Same construction and formation as *belajn*. Pronunciation: *no'-vine*.

VESTOJN—"garments." A noun, object of *amis*. The *n* shows the case; the *j* the number; the *o* the part of speech. Pronunciation: *vas'-toyn*.

KE—"that." A conjunction, used with the correlative *tiel* ("so . . . that"). Pronunciation: *kay*.

LI—"he." A personal pronoun, third person, singular, masculine, subject of *elspezadis*. Pronunciation: *lee*.

ELSPEZADIS—"used to spend." What does the *is* show? (See *vivis* and *amis*.) The *ad* is a suffix denoting continued or customary action; the *el* is a prefix, denoting "out" or "out of"; *spez* is the root, and *spezi* (the infinitive) means "to handle money": *en-spezi*, "to hand in," "to receive"; *elspezi*, "to hand out," "to spend." Pronunciation: *ail-spay-zah'-deece*.

SIAN—"his." A reflexive possessive pronoun, referring to the subject of the clause in which it occurs (here *li*), but agreeing with *monon*. The *n* denotes what case? The *a* shows its adjective force. Pronunciation: *see'-ahn*.

TUTAN—"entire." Translate "all his money." Adjective, agreeing with *monon*. Pronunciation: *too'-tahn*.

MONON—"money." Noun, object of *elspezadis*. How do you know it to

be a noun? How to be in the objective case? Pronunciation: *mo'-none*.

POR—"for." A preposition denoting purpose, and governing the infinitive *esti*. (As in old-fashioned English, "What went ye out *for to see*?") Pronunciation: *porc*.

NUR—"only." An adverb, modifying the phrase *por esti*, etc. Pronunciation: *noor*.

ESTI—"to be." All infinitives end in *i*.

ĈIAM—"always." An adverb; one of the forty-five correlatives.

BELE—"finely, beautifully," a derived adverb, as shown by the ending *e*; *bela*, "beautiful." It modifies *ornamita*. Pronunciation: *bay'-lay*.

ORNAMITA—"adorned." The verb *ornami* means "to adorn." The past tense of any verb adds *is* to the root (*ornam-is*), as we have seen. Now we observe that the past (passive) participle adds *ita* to the stem.

A little while ago we summarized

what we had learned of pronunciation. Now let us review our syntax:

1. Nouns in Esperanto end in *o*. Examples: *jaro*, *reĝo*, *vesto*, *mono*.

2. Adjectives end in *a*. Examples: *multa*, *bela*, *nova*, *sia*, *tuta*, *ornamita*.

3. Derived adverbs end in *e*. Example: *bele*.

4. Infinitives end in *i*. Example: *esti*.

5. The past tense—all persons and numbers—ends in *is*. Examples: *vi-is*, *ami-s*, *elspezadis*.

6. The past passive participle ends in *ita*. Example: *ornamita*.

7. Prepositions govern the nominative case. Example: *antaŭ multaj jaroj*.

8. A *j* in the ending denotes a plural. Examples: *multaj*, *belajn*.

9. An *n* in the ending denotes an objective case. Examples: *vestojn*, *monon*.

Therefore, our entire sentence reads:

Many years ago [there] lived a certain king who so loved fine new garments that he spent all his money merely that he might always be well dressed.

VOCABULARY.

A: the ending of an adjective.

AD: a suffix denoting continued action.

AMI: to love.

ANTAŬ: before.

BELA: fine, beautiful.

BELE: finely, beautifully.

ĈIAM: always.

DE: of.

E: the ending of a derived adverb.

EL: out, out of (a prefix).

ESTI: to be.

I: the ending of an infinitive.

IS: the ending of the past tense.

J: the ending of a plural noun or adj.

JARO: year.

KE: that.

KIU: who, which.

LA: the.

LI: he.

MONO: money.

MULTA: much.

MULTAJ: many.

N: the ending of the obj. case.

NOVA: new.

NUR: only.

O: the ending of a noun.

ORNAMI: to adorn.

POR: for.

REĜO: king.

SIA: his, her, its (reflexive).

SPEZI: to handle money.

TIEL: so, in such a manner.

TUTA: entire, all, whole.

UNU: one, a certain.

VESTO: garment.

VIVI: to live.

EXERCISE.

Write the following sentences in Esperanto (a correct version will be given in next month's SCRAP BOOK):

1—The king loved fine garments.

2—The king who lived many years ago loved to be well dressed (adorned).

3—A king who lived many years ago loved fine garments. (There is no indefinite article in Esperanto.)

4—A certain king spent all his money.

5—The king so loved his money that he did not (ne) spend it (ĝin).