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At the Opening of the Second Summer School for
Women Workers in Industry at Bryn Mawr
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It gives everyone connected with Bryn Mawr College much pleasure to know that for the next eight weeks its green lawns and gray stone buildings will be used by ninety-eight women workers in industry. Few things in my life have been more exciting than your coming to study in Bryn Mawr College. It is an adventure for us and for you, an adventure that may have the happiest results. You and your teachers are beginning here something that may help to bring about industrial peace. Nothing ought to be impossible in the new world in which you will live the greater part of your lives. I venture to predict that we shall look back on the new emotions and sympathies that we have become increasingly conscious of since the great war as the beginning of a new era of understanding and coöperation, just as two thousand years ago the beginning of the Christian era marked another great change of heart.

I see now the same shifting of sympathy and interest in the younger generation of men and women that has taken place in my life time in regard to other great changes in public opinion, such as women's education, woman suffrage and prohibition, changes very similar to our present growing belief in social justice and international peace. This shifting was first to be observed in the heads and hearts of ingenuous

youth. As it was then, so it is now. Nothing so transports with enthusiasm the Bryn Mawr College students as the thought of world peace, or the hope of equal opportunities for life, liberty and happiness for all men and women. Nothing so consumes them with burning indignation as unnecessary discrimination against those less fortunate than themselves, or the suggestion that their brothers may have been born into the world to become "food for cannon." These new thoughts and feelings may well alter the whole human relation between manual workers and people who do not work with their hands, who until now have enjoyed greater opportunities of education and happiness. These other people are relatively few but influential out of all proportion to their numbers. Their coöperation means rapid, peaceful and permanent reform of our present unhappy industrial conditions. These new thoughts and feelings may well prove to be the strong foundations on which the United States of Europe and America will rise, a building not built by hands but by the irresistible forces of understanding and good will.

It was in the Sahara Desert that I first realised these coming changes. In December, 1919, my cousin, Alys Russell (Bryn Mawr, 1890), and I spent eleven days in the upper part of the Sahara Desert with our own caravan of Arabs, camels, mules, and tents. You probably imagine a desert, as I did before this journey, as made up of endless stretches of gray sand like the sands of the New Jersey seashore, but our desert was a great tawny ocean rolling from horizon to horizon. When you cross this ocean, as we did, you must go round, or over, these great billows of yellow sand, winding far below in their golden troughs, or climbing over their golden crests. It is indescribably beautiful. Striking camp at sunset was the most beautiful of all. The Arabs would unpack our camp chairs and we would sit for

hours watching the sun set and the moon rise while the tents were pitched and the prehistoric camels snarled and groaned as their packs were rolled on the sand.

One afternoon at sunset I was sitting on my golden hilltop, rejoicing that British women had just been enfranchised and American women would soon be politically free and wondering what would be the next great social advance, when suddenly, as in a vision, I saw that out of the hideous world war might come as a glorious aftermath international industrial justice and international peace, if your generation only had the courage to work as hard for them as my generation had worked for woman suffrage and prohibition. I also saw as part of my vision that the coming of equal opportunity for the manual workers of the world might be hastened by utilizing the deep sex sympathy that women now feel for each other before it has had time to grow less. The peculiar kind of sympathy that binds women together seems to come only to those who have not been free. It belongs to oppressed races like Jews and Armenians, to small and persecuted religious sects, to believers in unpopular reforms. It belongs at the present time to all women the world over because of their age long struggle, which is not yet over, for human rights and personal and civil liberty. Men have been engaged for centuries in bitter industrial struggles. Laboring men have been oppressed by grinding poverty and terrible working conditions. Men more fortunate financially have fought both laboring men and each other in order to secure the success and power that money brings. Men as a sex cannot be blamed for having lost this sympathy and mutual comprehension which is now for a brief moment the possession of women. Then with a glow of delight as radiant as the desert sunset I remembered the passionate interest of the Bryn Mawr College students in fairness and justice and the intense sympathy with girls

less fortunate than themselves, and I realized that the first steps on the path to the sunrise might well be taken by college women who, themselves just emerging from the wilderness, know best of all women living under fortunate conditions what it means to be denied access to things of the intellect and spirit.

When I returned to Bryn Mawr in the autumn of 1920 the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers in Industry, which I had dreamed of in the Sahara Desert, was approved by Bryn Mawr College, unanimously by the Directors and Alumnae Association and by a two-thirds vote of the Faculty. It was also unreservedly endorsed by Miss Mary Anderson, Miss Rose Schneidermann, Miss Julia O'Connor, Miss Agnes Nestor, Miss Mary Gillespie, Miss Frieda Miller, Mrs. Raymond Robbins and other women industrial leaders who sat from the first on the governing board of the School, and was later approved by the American Federation of Labor in its endorsement of workers' education, and by various unions and organizations of men workers in industry. The School opened on June 15, 1921, with 22 full time teachers and tutors and 82 students and closed after a brilliantly successful session of eight weeks on August 10, 1921.

During the past two years it has been my duty to preside over the Joint Administrative Committee, which is the governing board of the Bryn Mawr Summer School. As you know, the Administrative Committee is made up of an equal number of representatives of women workers in industry and of representatives of the faculty of the Summer School and of Bryn Mawr College, that is the women workers in industry have a fifty per cent representation on the Committee. I have presided over a great many committees, and I have worked on many more committees over which other people have presided, but I have never in my

lifetime worked on a committee as inspiring as this Joint Administrative Committee. It has shown me that the training obtained by women workers in industry, especially by the leaders among them, is invaluable in solving problems such as we have had to meet in the Summer School. It has amazed me to find that with this fifty-fifty representation we have agreed on all of the many very difficult educational questions that have come before us. It has taught me to admire and reverence the kind of experience that comes from facing and surmounting terrible hardships when it is used singleheartedly, as in the Summer School, to help on a great cause.

We are now sure that the Bryn Mawr Summer School fills a deep need and has come to stay. We hope that the other separate colleges for men and women in the east of the United States and in due time the coeducational state universities of the west will open similar schools. If all of the colleges in the United States would turn over for eight weeks every summer their buildings and equipment (or, whenever they maintain summer schools of their own, as many buildings and as much equipment as may prove necessary) to joint committees of education and labor, organized on a fifty-fifty basis like our Bryn Mawr Joint Administrative Committee, the rapid advance towards industrial peace would astonish us all. If we could teach in our colleges not only the comparatively few winter students but the more numerous summer students, winter and summer students alike could not fail to feel the mutual sympathy that comes from sharing similar instruction in similar academic surroundings. The next generation could not fail to understand one another far better than the present generation, and would be able to agree to work together for common ends. It would be far better prepared than the present

generation to meet its responsibilities and to direct the course of the coming social readjustment.

We are trying to teach you in the Bryn Mawr Summer School in exactly the same way in which we teach the students in Bryn Mawr College. We believe in the most liberal possible teaching, in the fearless search for truth, and in entire freedom of discussion and of expression of opinion by teachers and students. We hold it to be the duty of teachers not only to state clearly both sides of controversial subjects but to say without hesitation what their individual opinion is. We think that students have the right to know what their teachers believe but we also think that students who are properly taught will not accept their teachers' opinions as final, but will realize that such opinions represent one point of view only and that they must make up their own minds for themselves. In the Bryn Mawr Summer School you will find that you are at liberty to hold any opinion you think right on any subject and to ask your teachers any questions you wish. It is our hope that the teaching you receive here will lead you to think things out for yourselves and to revise your opinions continually.

We do not know that our present opinions are true. Opinions change from generation to generation, and even from decade to decade. We cannot tell whether our present view of social conditions is the one that will ultimately prevail. Cut and dried propaganda, undigested masses of applied scientific information, or applied social phenomena taught as unchanging facts have no place in schools or colleges. An eminent New York physician, a specialist in children's diseases, said recently that he had found in his practice that the babies whose lives were hardest to save were the babies of mothers who had taken vocational courses in baby feeding in schools and colleges, because such mothers had been taught as scientific facts methods of

feeding that have since been given up by all up-to-date physicians, and had not been taught that nutrition is a growing science. Our colleges ought not to teach applied theories as such. They should teach the unchanging principles of scientific and social research on which such theories are based from age to age, and the perpetual growth of knowledge.

No real social advance can come without a great change in public opinion, but it must be enlightened public opinion. The opinion of people who are not familiar with the history of the world and with the development of thought, who are not trained to think straight, is not worth much. Their opinion can produce no permanent impression. No lasting change can be made by uneducated, ill-informed leaders. If you, students of the Summer School, determine, here and now, to study or read seriously, a little every day, even if it is only a very little, you will find that year by year you will come to have more knowledge, more understanding. In the conflict of opposing opinions you will be able to follow a sane course. You will not only be able to think straight yourselves but you will be able to help other people to think straight.

This may seem to you rather an altruistic reason for getting an education. But there is another more compelling personal reason. There is no greater insurance against unhappiness than to learn to care for reading and study. The pleasure it gives is something that no one can take away from you. Nothing that happens in your personal life, not even great unhappiness, such as may easily come to any one of us at any time, can take away from you the joy of reading, of thinking, of comprehending things better, of satisfying the intellectual curiosity that is one of our strongest cravings. It is one of the many joys of being sixty-five years old, as I am, to find that every year that you live

you come to understand better how things are working themselves out. It is also a great happiness to live long enough to see the things that you have hoped for and worked for coming to pass.

Education, even a little of it, will make you more competent to do whatever you want to do, and the more education you have, the more generally competent you will be. The more you know, the more you will wish to know, the more interested you will be in everything and the happier you will be, and consequently the happier you will be able to make every one around you.

No country worthy of the name wishes its citizens to be slaves. A nation that does not think is doomed to destruction. All of us in the United States must be thinking as intelligently and as clearly as we can over the many problems that confront us as a nation. After we have taken time to prepare ourselves by study and reading it is our duty to reach the best conclusions we can and then to try to bring about what we think is right. It is not enough to think. We must act. But we must keep our minds continually open to new ideas. We must all of us be willing to revise our opinions until we die.

Every now and then there is born into the world a man or a woman with the power to think more clearly, to understand better, to inspire greater confidence than other men and women. Such a person is a leader to be trusted and followed and loved. The United States was very fortunate in the early days in developing some such leaders. Washington was one. I once had to make a speech on Washington at Valley Forge and by the time I had read all that I could find about him I came to realize, not from other people's say so, but for myself how very great he was. But even Washington was not as great as the leader who came after him. Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest men that

was ever born. Susan B. Anthony was also such a leader. She was the Moses that led the women of the United States into the promised land of political freedom. She is the greatest person I have ever known. If she had been born a man with a man's opportunities she, like Abraham Lincoln, would have been recognized as one of the world's great leaders and as one of the two greatest Americans. Roosevelt also was a leader. He showed us many economic and social abuses in American life and awakened the conscience of very many people. Woodrow Wilson voiced the universal desire for justice and fair dealing and made the people of all nations vibrate to his eloquent and moving words. This is a very great thing to do. He too is a leader. No gratitude, no devotion, no loyalty, can be too much to be given to a great leader. And in the future women as well as men will be leaders.

We are now waiting for such a leader, the greatest that has ever been born would not be too great for our desperate need, to show us the way to economic justice and industrial peace. When we think of the struggles that have been going on for the past century in this country, and in all other countries, between capital and labor the welter of conflicting opinion fills us with despair. Let us imagine that out of this summer school, or out of some similar school, should come a leader intelligent enough to settle to the satisfaction of all unprejudiced persons, such questions, for example, as what proportion of the earnings of any business ought fairly to go to the workers, what to the managers, and what to capitalists, who would be able to devise a universal system of cost accounting open to be seen by all. so that there could be no dispute over financial facts, who should prove to all unbiased persons that a six or seven hour working day is more profitable for employer as well as for employed. Such special controversies would be settled forever. We

could then pass on to something else. How gloriously the Summer School would have justified itself!

I believe that you will live to see wars between European and American nations outlawed and also industrial wars outlawed. People are coming to believe in peace, just as people are coming to believe in economic justice. Do not be too much discouraged by the present industrial situation. Try to believe, as I do, that on the whole we are moving in the right direction. Of one thing you may be quite sure. By coming to the Bryn Mawr Summer School and making the best use of the opportunities that we are so eager to offer you you are doing the best thing that you can do for yourselves and for other working men and women.

When the great moment, which is surely coming, is here, bringing with it equal opportunity to every man and woman born into the civilized world, we must be able to use it to the full, we must have ready many educated leaders. Equal opportunity does not mean equal intelligence and equal general capacity. That is something that can never be. It means that every child will be given equal opportunities of education and development. It means that in future we shall be able to utilize the ability and genius of all the people born into the civilized world in any one generation. Until now we have not been able to make use of the ability of women. Until now we have only been able to draw on the inadequate store of ability of the tiny proportion of men who have been fortunate enough to get a college education (scarcely six-tenths of one per cent of the total population, even in the United States), or who have been so supremely gifted as to be able to do without it. Equal opportunity will set free not only the women of this same tiny, privileged proportion of the civilized white races, but also the tremendous, hitherto almost untouched, ability, leadership, and genius of all the men and women workers of the

civilized world. We do not yet know what this vast reserve power will mean for the future development of the human race.

In the future men and women will work side by side in industry, in the professions, in politics and in every imaginable trade. You will live in a new world because women will bring into it something that has not been in it before. Anna Howard Shaw, the great woman suffrage orator, to whom we women owe an eternal debt of gratitude, used to say that "women know most about some things, and men know most about some other things, but that men and women together know all there is to know about everything in the world." And so in the world in which you are going to pass the rest of your lives you women are going to play a new and exciting part. Bryn Mawr College offers you, her summer students, just as she offers her winter students, ample opportunity to prepare yourselves for these new responsibilities. It would give all of us who have built up Bryn Mawr College, and all of us who are now working to build up the Summer School, great joy if from among our winter and our summer students should come some of the women leaders the world is waiting for.

