

Miss Lester knew in the days when they were suffering for their political activities. She recalled visiting Nehru in gaol. "The weather was hot and hornets were buzzing about the cell—and Indian hornets have a sting like a rapier thrust. I asked him if he didn't find the hornets a nuisance and he replied that when he was first imprisoned he used to kill them, but the more he killed, the more that came, so he declared a policy of non-violence—if they kept their distance he wouldn't kill them—and that seemed to be working," he said.

Miss Lester spoke favourably of the progress India and Pakistan were making, and said she expected them to make a major contribution to the world, "though not just yet," as their own tremendous problems were pre-occupying them most of the time. A most healthy augury, however, was the change in the attitude of students. Even when she was there in 1946 their own problems were taking their whole attention and their interest in the outside world was negligible, but on her latest trip a few weeks ago interest in the outside world had been awakened and they were looking for means to express a desire for international goodwill.

Psychologically Backward

Besides her many visits to India, and her five trips to China and Japan, Miss Lester has on several occasions toured the United States and Europe and now has visited Australia and New Zealand and she had this provoking comment to make upon trends she had noted after recent tours. "In countries like Australia," she said, "and even in England, where war suffering was less severe than it was, for instance, on the Continent, we have slipped far behind these other peoples in psychological and spiritual development. Things which would knock us to pieces they can walk through untouched. We get all worked up over little petty things; they can pass them by. We are still in the adolescent stage wanting to hit back at injustices, but they have gone beyond that." By way of illustration, Miss Lester told of a Norwegian who had suffered torture under the Nazis for four years, and after the war had joined a YMCA team to work among the Nazis now in the concentration camps over which they had once ruled. When he first arrived two of the Nazis made haste to escape from his class. They had been responsible for some of the worst tortures inflicted upon the Norwegian and to them his only purpose of returning could be to revenge himself upon them. That he hoped to reform them, not revenge himself upon them, was so foreign an idea to the whole Nazi teaching that they could not for some time comprehend it.

From such people in the war-stricken lands we had much to learn, said Miss Lester, and unless we made the effort through imagination with prayer, we were going to suffer disappointment because we could not meet them on common ground.

—P.M.

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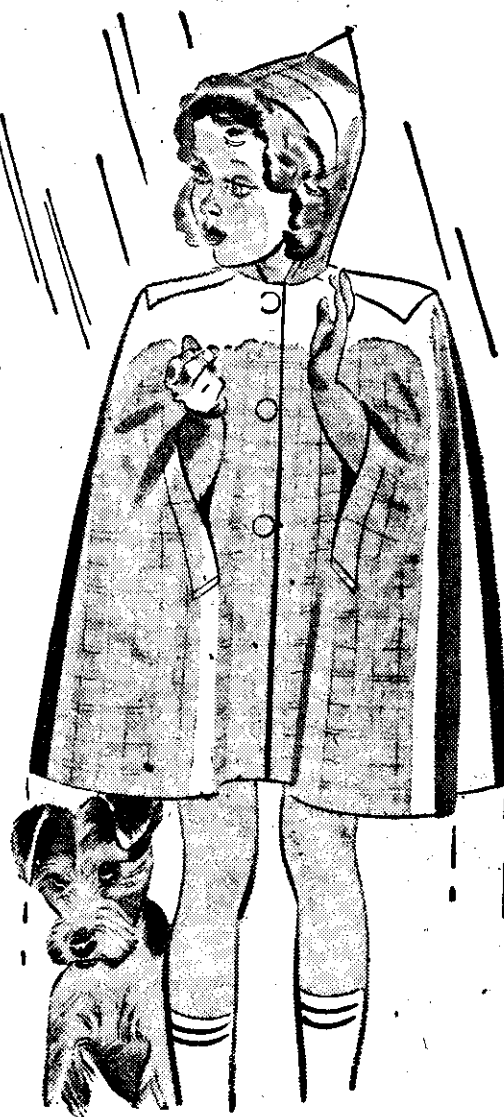
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