

THE LITERARY DIGEST

April 16, 1921

p . 3 2

EINSTEIN FINDS THE WORLD NARROW

PROFESSOR ALBERT EINSTEIN, whose theories on space, light, and infinity have made his name familiar throughout the world, thinks that this small particular planet on which we live is suffering from narrowness in its point of view. Too much nationalism—that is Professor Einstein's definition for the "disease from which mankind is suffering to-day." Even before the war sectional prejudices were bad enough, but the "prewar internationalism" was infinitely preferable to the present state of mind of most of humanity, he says, and he urges that the people of this sphere return to charity and mutual understanding. The great German scientist arrived in this country early in April, to lecture upon Zionism as well as upon his revolutionary theory of relativity. A New York *Times* reporter, who was among the many newspaper men assembled to greet him at the pier, gives this picture of the thinker whom the nations have decided to honor:

A man in a faded gray raincoat and a flopping black felt hat that nearly concealed the gray hair that straggled over his ears stood on the boat deck of the steamship *Rotterdam* yesterday, timidly facing a battery of camera men. In one hand he clutched a shiny brier pipe and the other clung to a precious violin. He looked like an artist—a musician. He was.

But underneath his shaggy locks was a scientific mind whose deductions have staggered the ablest intellects of Europe—a mind whose speculative imagination was so vast that its great scientific theories puzzled and appalled the reasoning faculty.

The man was Dr. Albert Einstein, propounder of the much-debated theory of relativity that has given the world a new conception of space, and time, and the size of the universe.

Dr. Einstein comes to this country as one of a group of prominent Jews who are advocating the Zionist movement and hope to get financial aid and encouragement for the rebuilding of Palestine and the founding of a Jewish university. He is of medium height, with strongly built shoulders, but an air of fragility and self-effacement. Under a high, broad forehead are large and luminous eyes, almost childlike in their simplicity and unworldliness.



EINSTEIN

Professor Einstein does not like to be interviewed, and the questions of the reporters bothered him a great deal. One of the few real interviews he has ever given was forwarded from Berlin to the New York *Evening Post*, shortly before Einstein's departure for this country. "I had come to Professor Einstein

to hear what he had to say about the plight of German science," writes Mr. Tobinkin. The subject was just then occupying much space in the newspapers of Berlin. Professor Einstein, however, spoke not of science, but of humanity:

"Of course," he said, "science is suffering from the terrible effects of the war, but it is humanity that should be given first consideration. Humanity is suffering in Germany, everywhere in eastern Europe, as it has not suffered in centuries.

"Humanity," he continued, "is suffering from too much and too narrow a conception of nationalism. The present wave of nationalism, which at the slightest provocation or without provocation passes over into chauvinism, is a sickness.

"The internationalism that existed before the war, before 1914, the internationalism of culture, the cosmopolitanism of commerce and industry, the broad tolerance of ideas—this internationalism was essentially right. There will be no peace on earth, the wounds inflicted by the war will not heal, until this internationalism is restored."

"Does this imply that you oppose the formation of small nations?"

the interviewer asked.

"Not in the least," he replied. "Internationalism as I conceive it implies a rational relationship between countries, a sane union and understanding between nations, mutual cooperation, mutual advancement without interference with a country's customs or inner life."

"And how would you proceed to bring back this internationalism that existed prior to 1914?"

"Here," he said, "is where science, scientists, and especially the scientists of America, can be of great service to humanity. Scientists, and the scientists of America in the first place, must be pioneers in this work of restoring internationalism.

"America is already in advance of all other nations in the matter of internationalism. It has what might be called an international 'psyche.' The extent of America's leaning to internationalism was shown by the initial success of Wilson's ideas of internationalism, the popular acclaim with which they met from the American people.

"That Wilson failed to carry out his ideas is beside the point. The enthusiasm with which the preaching of these ideas by Wilson was received shows the state of mind of the American public. It shows it to be internationally inclined. American scientists should be among the first to attempt to develop these ideas of internationalism and, to help carry them forward. For

3 EINSTEIN

the world, and that means America also, needs a return to international friendship. The work of peace can not go forward in your own country, in any country, so long as your Government or any Government is uneasy about its international relations. Suspicion and bitterness are not a good soil for progress. They should vanish. The intellectuals should be among the first to cast them off."

There are two men in Germany to-day who are traditionally inaccessible to newspaper men, Mr. Tobinkin notes. One is the financier, Hugo Stinnes. The other is Einstein. We are told:

Einstein has been greatly abused by a section of the German press, and he therefore shuns publicity. He lives in a quiet section of Berlin on the top floor of a fairly up-to-date apartment-house. His study consists of a reception-room, or rather a conference-room, and of his private workroom. The walls of the conference-room are lined with books of a general character. The large number of English books is especially noticeable. There is an *édition de luxe* of Dickens in English and a costly Shakespeare edition in German. Alongside of Shakespeare stands Goethe in a similarly luxurious edition. Einstein is an admirer of both Goethe and Schiller, and has the busts of the two poets prominently displayed.

Adjoining the conference-room is a large music-room. When he is not in his study, Mrs. Einstein told me, her husband is in the music-room. Music and cigars are the scientist's only relaxations. The number of cigars he smokes is controlled by Mrs. Einstein for his health's sake, but there is no control over the amount of time he chooses to spend at the piano or with his violin, for he plays both instruments well.

His workroom is exceedingly simple. There is a telescope in it. The windows give an exceptionally good view of the sky. There are also a number of globes and various metal representations of the solar system. There are two engravings of Newton on the walls. They are the only pictures in the room. The table he works at is simple and rather small. There is a small typewriter, which is used by his secretary. Einstein has a large correspondence, receiving on an average sixty letters a day.

He was pacing up and down the room as I entered his study. He was dressed in a pair of worn-out trousers and a sweater-coat. If he had a collar on, the collar was very unobtrusive, for I can not recall having seen it. He was at work. His hair was disheveled and his eye had a roving look. His wife told me that when the professor is seized by a problem the fact becomes known to her by this peculiar wandering look which comes into his eyes and by his feverish pacing up and down the room. At such times, she said, the professor is never disturbed. His food is brought to him in his workroom. Sometimes this mode of living lasts for three or four days at a time. It is when the professor rejoins his family at the table that they know that his period of intense concentration, and abstraction, is over.

After such a period of concentration, Einstein often rests himself by reading fiction. He is fond of reading Dostoyefsky. He walks a lot through the parks, and in the summer often goes out with his family in the fields. But he is never asked by his wife or children to go for a walk. It is he who has to do the asking, and when he asks them for a walk they know that his mind is relieved of work. His hours of work are indefinite. He sometimes struggles through a whole night with a problem and goes to bed only late in the morning.

Dr. Einstein asked whether he could not see a copy of my interview with him before it was printed. I told him that I would not write the interview until after my return to America.

"In that event," he said, "when you write it, be sure not to omit to state that I am a convinced pacifist, that I believe that the world has had enough of war. Some sort of an international agreement must be reached among nations preventing the recurrence of another war, as another war will ruin our civilization completely. Continental civilization, European civilization, has been badly damaged and set back by this war, but the loss is not irreparable. Another war may prove fatal to Europe."

The New York *World* extends a welcome, and hearty congratulations, in the following editorial:

It is not invidious to say that of the many distinguished visitors from abroad recently arriving in New York the one inspiring the most spontaneous popular demonstration at the pier is not a great general or statesman but a plain man of science—Dr. Albert Einstein, who comes with prominent Jews in aid of the Zionist movement.

Plain, that is, as respects his unaffected personality, but a

EINSTEIN

scientific investigator who has progressed into a higher sphere of speculative thought unfathomable to the ordinary intelligence. What he has to exhibit is not a new play or a new theory of life but a new hypothesis of the celestial mechanism, involving a radically altered conception of time and space and the size of the universe.

It is something when New York turns out to honor a stranger bringing gifts of this recondite character. Perhaps by the time he is ready to return the public will be glibly discussing the Einstein theory of relativity, whether or not it proves capable of understanding it. But behind the outward demonstration there is discernible a sincere tribute of admiration to the physicist who, amid the turmoil of war and the distractions of material interests, has kept his mind fixt on the star of pure science and has mounted to the heights with Newton and the other great leaders of scientific thought.



“AN AWKWARD BOY WITH THE LOOK OF A PROPHET.”

So a New York newspaper reporter described Professor Albert Einstein on his recent arrival in this country. The above photograph, which compares interestingly with the one shown in our Foreign Department on page 17 of this issue, shows the scientist and his wife near their German home.

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