

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to E. H. Walpole, February 14, 1948

Levi T. Pennington

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February 14, 1948.

Dear Friend:--

Your good letter of the 12 th of January arrived just one month later, and we were glad to hear from you again, as we always are.

I fear your feeling that none of the nations of the world is acting from Christian motives is far too near the truth. As far as the United States is concerned, it seems clear to me that Congress is "playing politics with human misery", a thing which Herbert Hoover urged Congress not to do in the early days of the long depression. (We took the noon meal in the white house with the Hoovers the day after he gave that injunction to our national law making body.) But they did play politics with human misery then, and I feel that they are doing it again.

We are concerned over here about the proposed universal compulsory military training bill which militarists are trying hard to get enacted into law. To take a million men a year out of productive labor, or out of education which is even more important, give them training for a year that even from the military standpoint will be of little value, and thus spend billions of dollars per year while the world starves -- well, it seems to me it will be the worst step ever taken by our government if we do not succeed in preventing the move.

Surely the whole world is in a mess. What a vast change would come at once if the spirit of Christ were but given an opportunity to work in the affairs of men, personal and international.

I can well imagine that you have many things to do in addition to your own personal concerns. How good it is that you find it possible to rest at Mt. Usher. And how we should like to visit that lovely place again. We saw nothing like it during our entire visit to England and Ireland.

We have been especially happy in recent months in guests from across the water. First we had Gerald and Gwendolyn Littleboy of Saffron Walden, where he is head master of Saffron Walden Friends School. Then in November we had Dr. Henry F. and Lucy Bancroft Gillett, of Oxford, in whose home we were entertained in 1931. Last month came Stephen and Alice Thorne, the former "recording clerk" of London Yearly Meeting, though he is not what we should call a recording clerk, for he does not write the minutes -- we'd be more likely to call him the executive secretary. And day before yesterday we had two visitors from New Zealand, whose name I cannot at the moment remember. They expect to go on to London Yearly Meeting -- I do not know whether or not they expect to visit Ireland.

Things go on with us in a fairly quiet way. Aside from the work of our local Friends meeting and the quarterly and yearly meeting, most of my energies have been spent in the work of relief. This has been done through the American Friends Service Committee, of which we have organized an Oregon branch, Church

World Service, and Heifers-for-Relief. This county, which I organized for the most part, sent the first carload of heifers to Europe that went from this state. I worked somewhat on the so-called Christmas Ship (though it did not get off till this month and came to be called the Friend Ship), on which 1,550,000 pounds of food and clothing were sent to needy places in Europe, I believe to Germany and Austria. Our local meeting here has sent tons of clothing across the water, more than a ton in a little over a month at the end of the year. Our Oregon Branch of the American Friends Service Committee raised more than \$14,000.00 for relief in four months.

We have been deeply sympathetic with the conditions in England, but there has never been a suggestion from any of the English Friends visiting us here that any part of our relief efforts should be diverted from continental Europe to Britain.

How hard we all should work and pray for the coming of a better day for the world. It seems to many of us that we are traveling toward the complete destruction of western civilization unless we follow some better way than greater and greater preparations to kill and destroy.

But God is not dead, and I believe that better things are ahead for the world, though it would be hard to point out any specific thing in the conduct of men and nations that would so indicate. It is on faith rather than sight that I base my hope.

With love and best wishes from both of us to you and your family, I am

Sincerely your friend,

Levi T. Pennington.

E. H. Walpole,
Mount Usher,
Rathnew,
co. Wicklow,
Ireland.