

# THE FORUM

JULY, 1928

Vol. LXXX



No. 1

"We must apply the rule of toleration. Because there are peoples whose ways are not our ways, and whose thoughts are not our thoughts, we are not warranted in drawing the conclusion that they are adding nothing to the sum of civilization."

— Calvin Coolidge

## OUR MUDDLING WORLD

SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA:

**H**AS it ever happened to you? You are reading a book of history. It may be the history of Florence under the Medici, that of Spain under Ferdinand and Isabel (for some reason or other misnamed "Isabella" in English-speaking lands), or perhaps that of the French Revolution; and you feel so much entranced by the events, more thrilling than any novel, flowing tumultuously into the channels of your soul that a wave of envy surges in your heart: "I wish I had lived in those wonderful times!" If it has happened to you, take heart. I am sure that future readers, when tossed about by the emotions which they are certain to feel when reading the history of our own age, will often sigh with envy: "I wish I had lived in those wonderful times!" Our age is one of the great ages of history.

Were Christianity a deeper factor in our spiritual life than it really is, we should feel thankful for the distinction which the Deity has granted our generation. We are being tried. We are living times without peace because times brimful with hope. The civilization of the nineteenth century burst in 1914, like a gigantic pestiferous bubble. We have not yet erected the structure of the

twentieth. We do not even know whether we shall have time to erect it during the paltry three quarters which remain. Peradventure we twentieth century men are meant to live a roofless life in the political wilderness, as the pioneers of the more fortunate twenty-first. But we need not complain. The wilderness is fascinating to watch, and over our heads the grays and mauves of bygone regrets mix their colors with the tender pinks of our newest hopes.

In this-and other articles in THE FORUM I shall comment on world events — and particularly on European events — from the detached point of view of one who, both by innate tendency and by acquired conviction, feels like a *Weltbürger* — a world-citizen. I have no quarrel with patriots. I am a patriot myself and cosmopolitanism seems to me particularly abhorrent. Then let patriots have no quarrel with me. They should understand that, were I to give an account of European and world affairs strictly from the patriot's point of view, I should have to become patriotic on behalf of several dozen fatherlands in succession — an exercise in emotional gymnastics which I do not feel inclined to undertake. And moreover, would the result be intelligible?

No. Since I am to deal with world affairs, it seems to me that the best point of view to adopt is that of the world. For good or ill (as is the case with most human things, for both good and ill) I have been an international official for six years. Official Geneva is an admirable training ground for *Weltbürger*, and a man who can resist six years of it and remain an obdurate nationalist should certainly be examined by mind specialists. Spaniards, moreover, are particularly apt to adopt an international point of view, for their anti-gregarious individualism makes them impatient of excessive inward claims on the part of their own nation, and therefore ready to criticize the nation's claims outward. For reasons which need not be developed here, I believe the individual to be the best and safest bulwark of the world. Hence the value of Spaniards — I mean individual and individualistic Spaniards, in these times of world politics.

But I see I have just fallen into the very trap against which I was warning all and sundry. I have been indulging in the nationalistic pleasure of praising my own countrymen. Have I not even been praising myself? The devil, in the act of being expelled through the door, had stolen in through the window. Warning, reader! Here are my articles and comments. Take them with a

grain of salt. Take *everything* with a grain of salt. Even your own impressions. Even your caution.

The main world event in the twentieth century is the birth of the world. The world did not exist before. There were empires, nations, continents, seas, "zones" (either of influence or of exploitation); there were open doors, and God only knows how drafty they made the earth. But no one knew the world. The world was born in the World War, which, as its name shows, was a world event. And now all men of sense realize that the world once born is going to grow. It is going to claim a right to its own history, its own economics, and its peace.

But — and that is what makes our age so fascinating — the nations and the empires are not quite sure that the world is born, and even when they admit it to themselves, they are not quite happy about it. In fact, they are not happy at all. They wish the world was not there; they consider it a nuisance and they try to go on as they did in the good old days — each its own way, the way of anarchy and freedom.

But there it is. The problem is very much the same as that which our cities have had to solve with signals and policemen in order to regulate traffic. When traffic down Broadway consisted of twenty broughams and a few herds of cows a day, no signals and no policemen were necessary. When the world was big and nations small and far between, no order was necessary in international affairs. Now the world has become small and nations and empires are enormous. Freedom of movement on the part of every one of them is impossible, for they are bound to keep bumping badly against each other in the narrow passages; and when nations bump there is always a danger of a serious spill. Yet, old ways die hard, and, whether dangerous or not, the good old way of anarchical pushing ahead and scraping along and scrambling and bumping still finds favor.

But perhaps, you may say, if the method is risky, the prize is worth the danger. Let us see. Can a nation's hope and ambition wish for anything higher and more splendid than the British Empire? At the time I write, the British press prints pitiful appeals for help to relieve the black misery which has befallen the coal fields of this mighty land. Where is the glory and the power of a nation which cannot provide the daily bread for all its men? With all its might, its magnificent navy, its proud sway over two-

thirds of the world, what has the British Empire done in actual, human, creative wealth? Seldom can it boast of living along without carrying a dismal and (in more senses than one) doleful list of unemployed.

There was a Cuban — Martí — whom Spain is rediscovering after having considered him one of her enemies, who left among many other works of great interest an aphorism which deserves to be meditated on: "The value of a civilization must be measured by that of the men and women which it produces." Here is a standard for us. I am told that the latest statistics for the number of suicides per thousand inhabitants show Spain at the bottom of the list. I am sorry to have to be nationalistic again. I believe that such statistics are the best index of civilization. They certainly mean far more than statistics of concrete production (that, I can say quite aloud) and even (but this I must merely whisper) — and even than statistics of education.

A writer in *The Round Table* (December, 1927) glorifies the British Empire under the name of *The Commonwealth*. "The Commonwealth," he writes, somewhat boldly, "is the Sermon on the Mount reduced to political terms, a society organised on the theory that the duty which each of its members owes to the rest is beyond measure." Now, let us pass over "the Sermon on the Mount *reduced*," although the reduction of the Sermon on the Mount and its destruction are bound to be identical operations. There are substances for which a difference in degree amounts to a difference in nature. Imagine a "cautious temerity" or a "niggardly generosity." You cannot. Of course you cannot. Neither can you imagine the Sermon on the Mount *reduced* to political terms. But still, let us pass it. What, however, are the facts?

The facts are that the *white* part of the British Empire is a loose combine of commercial firms: John Bull & Co., Canada & Co., Australia & Co., New Zealand & Co., South Africa & Co., and Ireland & Co. The combine is no doubt easier to run and more cordial owing to the family ties which unite the directors of the several partners in it. Yet — and even though this family substratum admits a modicum of uneconomic give and take — the firms and the combine are run on economic lines. And thus it is that Canada, New Zealand, and Australia — particularly Australia — are empty, while England has more men than she can feed. Why? Because the firms overseas do not care to see their

workers (*i.e.*, their working shareholders) suffer from any lowering of their standard of living; and as to adapting miners to other occupations, the risk involved "would not pay." What has that to do with Christian ideals or even ideas, I ask you? No. We'd better live the Sermon on the Mount alone.

The world is not tuned to the sublime. It is just born, and children don't like sublimity. Its pitch is in the reasonable. And the needs of our day do not rise any higher nor do they require any nobler gifts than the humble and rather uncommon gift of common sense. The British Empire is a great achievement, but not the achievement the world needs at this juncture. Its historical function has been great. It will have to be appraised as highly as it deserves. Nor is this the moment to attempt so fascinating a task. But this may be said at once: the time has come when something else is required. The British Empire can no longer be the basis of the world's life. It will, no doubt, continue its flourishing life as one of the elements of the world. But the basis of the world must be larger.

---

Such seems to be the opinion of one of the ablest men whom the French diplomatic service has produced. Monsieur Jacques Seydoux, released from his official silence by his resignation from a high post in the French Foreign Office, edits a paper of international relations, *Pax*, in the austere columns of which the devil of French nationalism manages at times to perch. Monsieur Seydoux has caused something of a sensation in European politics by publishing in the London *Times* an article in which he warns Great Britain against a policy of isolation. So far, so good. We are all agreed that isolation is not a positive policy, and therefore that it is sterile.

But Monsieur Seydoux follows a line of argument which cannot appeal to any true universally minded man. After reminding Great Britain of the generous offers of "coöperation" (whatever that may mean) which France put before her just after the War, he goes on to explain how France, disappointed in London, turned to Berlin. The growing industrial coöperation between the two enemy-sisters of Europe is one of the chief features of contemporary politics. "The marriage of iron ore and coal," as it was put to me by a French publicist at a time when such matrimonial arrangements were still thought rather bold. Since then, so much water has flowed under the bridges which span the Rhine and the

Ruhr that Monsieur Poincaré can speak with moderation of German war guilt, with an eye on German peace gold.

Some enthusiasts in Paris and in Berlin dream of a Franco-German combination with an economic understructure which would bring about the downfall of England — still thought of as Albion in more than one European capital. And a German gentleman, associated with potash, writes in a French newspaper with no less a name than *L'Avenir*, that the industrial understanding between France and Germany must be followed up by a military alliance which would erect opposite England a "bastion from Antwerp to Brest." That such stuff can be printed by a German in a French newspaper less than ten years after the War is a disquieting sign of the unexpected ways in which the forces of oblivion can work in this strange world of ours.

The fact remains, however, that the reproach of isolation leveled against Great Britain is made not in the name of the world at large but in that of France and Germany. "Come," seems to say this editor of *Pax* (Oh Peace, what goods your pavilion is made to cover!), "come and join us. We are going to control the iron and the coal of Europe; you control her shipping and her finances; come and we three shall be kings and rule the world — at any rate this part of it." Then, I suppose, the three would turn toward New York and, strong in their union, would ask the United States to strike a little arrangement with them to the pleasure and profit of all concerned.

The scheme is grand. But the Briton, ever lacking in imagination, holds aloof. Aloof, but not alone. Great Britain has her own combine to run — a combine composed of youthful firms with a brilliant future: Australia & Co., Canada & Co., and many others. When invited to join the prosperous Franco-German concern, Pax & Co., Great Britain answers: "No, thank you. I have my own concern. Your name, I own, is fine. Pax & Co. must sound great in the international trade; but my show is not bad — Commonwealth & Co. And there are fewer languages to learn."

*Next month Señor de Madariaga will continue to observe*  
*"Our Muddling World."*

# IS COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE MORAL? — A DEBATE

*IN these changing times, things are not always what they seem. Take marriage, for instance — and this new name for an old situation which some call “companionate marriage.” How is one to decide whether companionate marriage is moral or immoral? The answer will depend very largely upon what one thinks about conventional marriage. If marriage is only a simple relation between a man and a woman, then the morality of companionate marriage rests solely with the consciences of the two involved. If, on the other hand, marriage is also a bond with society, then society not only can but should condemn as immoral any form of wedlock which disregards the social consequences of marriage. Here, at the very beginning, is the precise point where Mr. Bertrand Russell and Professor William McDougall part company in the debate which follows.*

## I — THE OSTRICH CODE OF MORALS;

BERTRAND RUSSELL

**I** WISH to begin with a tribute to Judge Ben B. Lindsey, whose courage and humanity I cannot sufficiently admire. Having long used his office for the unprecedented purpose of promoting human happiness, he has, not unnaturally, been ousted by a combination of sadists of all parties. But what Denver has lost the world has gained. If I understand aright his advocacy of “companionate marriage,” his purpose is, in the highest and best sense, conservative, not subversive.

Companionate marriage has two aspects, one legal, the other social. The legal aspect is threefold. First, there is to be recognition of marriages not intended (at first, at any rate) to lead to children, and in such marriages the parties are to be encouraged to obtain the best available information on birth control. Secondly, so long as the marriage remains childless, divorce by mutual consent is to be permitted. Thirdly, the wife is, in general, to have no claim to alimony if the marriage is dissolved. But as soon as there are children the marriage is to become, *ipso facto*, an ordinary marriage.

The social aspect of companionate marriage is a matter of custom and public opinion. At present when a man marries, he