



## BABY-KISSING THE PEACE

STATEMENTS in favor of international coöperation have become standard equipment for politicians, like kissing babies and supporting widows' pensions. Pressed by an anxious electorate for his position on the future of America in an interdependent world, the politician solemnly reaches down into his safety kit and comes up with what he hopes he can palm off as a glistening new gadget, which he proceeds to call "international coöperation."

But in too many cases, that gadget is nothing more than an old wrench with a new twist. For the plain fact of the matter is that "international coöperation" as a term has become a notorious catch-all as devoid of real meaning as it is readily usable. Even old-line isolationists and nationalists can utter it without gagging. When the *Chicago Tribune* says it is in favor of international coöperation you can be sure it doesn't mean that McCormick has been hit either by a revelation or a revolution; it simply means that the *Tribune* has found a Phrase and a Way Out.

Nor is the meaningless use of this term confined to the Troglodytes. A good many people who are sincerely in favor of an interrelated peace are using the term "international coöperation" as a two-word essay disposing of all the problems of the future. There ought to be a law to compel anyone who declares himself in favor of international coöperation to finish the sentence. We ought to require a verb and an object, perhaps even an adjective or two. What kind of international coöperation? Does our informant propose a world state or continental units or regional groupings or straight power politics or what? Does he mean by "international coöperation" that we will coöperate only on our own terms and when we are good and ready for it? Or does it mean that we have a specific responsibility to fulfill and in a specific way? Does it mean that we

will join in an international rule of law with fixed obligations? Or does it mean that we will hold court all by ourselves, "coöperating" if the mood strikes us? Does it mean participation or observation? Organization or association? Consultation or convention?

The world has a right to know. It has a right to ask us to stop playing fast and loose with the issues of common hope and common survival. The world is sick of American platitudes and the extension of campaign oratory into the field of long-range planning among nations. And this applies to both our political parties.

The world is convinced of our ability to make and deliver the goods—using goods in the literal sense of tanks and planes and guns. It is convinced of our ability to deliver military leadership and military victories. But it has yet to be convinced of our ability to make good on our promises or even to comprehend exactly what it is we are promising. Once, not so long ago, we promised the world we would participate in a Permanent Court of International Justice. Both Republicans and Democrats endorsed it in their platforms. We even sent a delegate to The Hague for the purpose of helping to design the general structure of such a body along the lines of our own Supreme Court, our chief architect then being Elihu Root, one of the greatest authorities on international relations in American history.

That was our promise to the world—a promise of active membership in an organization noble in purpose and pow-

erful in operation—all contingent only on our own support. But the promise was broken by a handful of men on the Senate Committee of Foreign Relations who stubbornly prevented the protocol from reaching the floor of the Senate—this despite the fact that it carried the approval of both parties. The Senate, too, was the graveyard of President Wilson's hopes for an organization of nations aimed not only at keeping the peace but at international health and progress.

Holder of at least two promissory notes that proved worthless, the world cannot be blamed for asking for something more than a statement of good intentions. It cannot be blamed if it says that we have to do more than mumble "international coöperation" by rote. It cannot be blamed for suggesting that this time we furnish a bill of particulars defining specifically what we propose to do or not to do; what we propose to give and what we propose to take; and, most importantly, how we propose concretely to translate our promises, whatever they are, into plausible reality.

Perhaps the only way this could be achieved would be by taking world planning out of American politics and by establishing it on solid ground where it would be subject to constructive changes, if needed, but where it would not become the proving grounds for partisan demolition crews. If this sounds as though we are asking for the moon, we had better begin baying now, for nothing less will give us even the skimpiest scaffolding for the structure of tomorrow.

N. C.

## A Bird Got into the Room

By Oscar Williams

LITTLE chimney bird, so smoke-dark in the white white room,  
Flying in heart-rending circles under the square ceiling,  
Your curious predicament has all the flavor of doom  
Caught in this screened-in room, fluttering about and reeling.

You hurt your wings against the fixtures and the furniture,  
And catch in the curtains that never felt anything but wind:  
You are so ignorant of means and intent, yet so frantically sure  
There is a way out to the sky that pulls at your little mind.

How can you know that flying away in this closed-in place  
Is flying on a stone sea where things are sculptured in freak?  
There are Armageddon edges, that hurt, to every inch of space,  
Flying through a screen brings the blood spurting at your beak.

It would take scheming of which prophecy is but one ingredient  
To realize that you could go out the simple way that you came;  
In this trap of rules it is suicide to be free or disobedient;  
Living in tight corners is a monopoly, man's specialized game.

But he is home, that owner of civilization, now he is here,  
And finds you exhausted in a corner when he turns on the light;  
His hand shall reach out in the room, close in on your fear,  
And carry your trembling body off to the great door of flight.

## Let's Start a Revolution

SIR: Several years ago in a lecture at Columbia University I made the assertion to an audience of doubting Thomases that photography had played an important role in improving the quality and clarity of type styles in all phases of publishing. Off-hand I cited in evidence a copy of Milton's poems (circa 1857) as against a modern edition. The cramped and tiny type style of 1857 would not be palatable to the public of today. In sequence I showed that as illustration improved the very type became bolder and the use of white space more liberal.

I then threw in a copy of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (June to November, 1854), the agate type and woodcuts of which were intended to be the family magazine for the enlightenment of a kerosene age. Contrast that, if you will, with a copy of today's *Life* and you must agree that good illustration forces the improvement of type styles and has had the effect of a wider diffusion of public knowledge.

All of this may be quite obvious to publishers who know how sweet are the uses of photography, but there is one branch of photography in which the publishing boys have missed the bus.

The photographs they offer the public of the faces of their writers, are, by and large, terrible. These pictures are dated, mishandled, and in no sense indicative of as much thought as type, paper, or for that matter, book jackets. Often the pictures of writers seem to be silly last-minute concessions, thrown carelessly into a spot on the back of the book jacket. Many of them are used again and again until they become as familiar as the Borzoi hound or the Simon and Schuster sower.

Why can't we get good pictures of authors? Day after day book reviewers and editors of book sections are faced with the terrible task of selecting from bad choices photographs of hackneyed faces to illustrate new offerings. In many cases newspapers have to fight the screen on a book jacket to obtain a picture of an author, there being no original print available. I speak with authority on this for it has been my humble lot for many years to deal with pictures of authors used with reviews in a large New York newspaper.

A great many of these out-of-focus Shakespeares fail to heed the example of that wily old fox in tweeds, G. B. Shaw, who has used his whiskers for years to spread his good words. No, they go serenely on their way, offering publishers one, or at most two, "approved photographs." I know one case where the comely author of a best seller has had the same picture used so many times that reviewers are tempted



to run the photograph sideways, just for the change. Apparently the publisher is told to go climb a tree.

Must authors be posed with Dalmatians licking their faces? Must they be posed hundreds of yards away fuzzily in a rowboat? Must they be posed, like some bleeding heart, with thumb or forefinger indenting their cheek? Must they be posed like some bald-headed Rodin creation, eyes downcast? Must they be posed with the jutting bowl of a very masculine pipe burning under the photographer's nose and obscuring the phiz? Must they be posed with eyes upturned to Gabriel?

Lord, Lord, sometimes I am convinced that the F.B.I. or passport school of photography is, on the whole, better for common use as a one column newspaper cut. In my home I have a better picture of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, done by the collodion method in 1868, than many of these pictures of modern authors that are thrust at the public. Who wouldn't turn to Lana Turner!

Take the advice of a picture editor, you with the written message. Forget that immodest shyness you display to your publishers and agents. Have a clear, honest portrait made, a recent one. You no longer look like a sophomore at Amherst and that gay snapshot that Aunt Tilly took of you in your first summer in a Connecticut hammock won't do. Make your publisher pay for that new picture. It wouldn't cost as much as a couple of those squat tea bottles that he served at your last launching. But by all means get abreast of the times and get that kunckle out of your cheek.

If you don't believe me, ask the reviewers! RICHARD F. CRANDELL.  
New York, N. Y.

## “The Six Weeks War”

SIR: I note that Fletcher Pratt, in his review [*SRL*, June 10] of Theodore Draper's "The Six Weeks War," appears to scold Mr. Draper for not having made use of "either Vilfroy or de Chambrun, a couple of capital witnesses." The de Chambrun referred to is, I suppose, René de Chambrun, whose book "I Saw France Fall" was published in this country in 1940 or 1941. As everyone knows, René de Chambrun is Pierre Laval's fervent partisan, as well as his son-in-law, and he was his father-in-law's partisan at the time he wrote the book. This fact alone, I think, would disqualify him from being a "capital witness"; and the contents of his book, which I know well, scarcely inspire confidence in its author.

As I write this I have before me another volume on the "fall" of France, "Documents sur la Guerre de 1939-40, reunis par Louis Thomas." Like de Chambrun, Thomas witnessed his country's defeat; but unlike Chambrun's book, published (to the dismay of many friends of France) in New York by an American publisher, Thomas's volume has the frank imprint on its title page: "Paris, 1941." In other words, it was published under German occupation, with German approval. Mr. Pratt would probably not describe the author of such a book as a "capital witness." But I have little doubt but that his degree of "capitalness" and de Chambrun's are about equal.

It occurs to me that Mr. Pratt may consider de Chambrun a "capital witness" in the sense of being an authentic mouthpiece for Laval's side. If this is so, I of course agree with him.

FRANCIS STEEGMULLER.

New York, N. Y.