

BLACKFRIARS

November, 1920, we have had confidence in the League of Nations and clearly asserted our firm wish to collaborate in the great work of peace." He added: "This two-fold feeling we have never retracted. We persist in believing that the League of Nations, though it may need serious reform, still preserves its reason of existence, and we shall never refuse our co-operation." (*Osservatore Romano*, 28th September.)

Let us call for moral disarmament before material, for a union of upright minds before a union of interests. Let us ask for peace for men of good will, and it will become such as to be accepted even by men of evil will.

We must all co-operate, with the conviction that the risks of peace are far inferior to those of war; at the least, they can bring no remorse of conscience for violation of others' rights, for having trampled upon the innocent, for having failed to keep signed pacts and pledged words, for having unloosed on the world another war of extermination.

LUIGI STURZO.

MR. NICHOLSON ABDICATES

MR. NICHOLSON continues to show, towards the general reading public, that instructive patience which the permanent civil servant must show to his transitory chief. He carries on, in his biography of Dwight Morrow,¹ that implicit instruction in the control of world affairs which he began in the trilogy on Lord Carnock, the Peace Conference, and Lord Curzon.²

But his subject here is very different and very unexpected. There is no adumbration, in the story of Lord Carnock, the perfect English civil servant and statesman; in the story of that magnificent aristocrat and administrator, Curzon; no adumbration of the story of the American school-master's son, who became partner in J. P. Morgan's, Ambassador to Mexico, was close to being Secretary of State to Mr. Hoover, whose prestige, at the time of his premature death, aged 58,

¹ *Dwight Morrow*, by Harold Nicholson (Constable; 18/-).

² See BLACKFRIARS, November, 1934, *Carnock, Conference and Curzon*.

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clearly foreshadowed the Presidency, and whom Mr. Nicholson feels bound to call "the completely civilized man."

There is just one connecting link between this book and the preceding Trilogy, and it is the reason for Mr. Nicholson's writing it. All four books praise men who sought to attain to a mastery of the technique of world affairs, who sought, in fact, to know the true state of things, who were determined to discard notions preconceived to the accurate, orderly, sympathetic knowledge of them, and who were confident that their intelligences were capable of mastering the jungle-like complexity that faced them. Otherwise, this book differs—by a world—from its predecessors. The scene swings from European Diplomacy to Transatlantic Commerce, from Petersburg to Pittsburg, from Whitehall to Wall Street.

It is a great tribute to Mr. Nicholson that he can at once make us appreciate so new an atmosphere, make us not only see the American scene, but see it from a new angle. For the background of Dwight Morrow is one rarely appreciated by Europeans, because lost in a general impression of Big Business—I mean the background of American scholarship, that already great tradition which will, with the course of years, grow still greater. Our ideas habitually run in sequences; we are apt to say "American-business man" and yet the strenuous pursuit of knowledge by a very great proportion of educated Americans is no less notable a fact than their strenuous pursuit of wealth. For Dwight Morrow, it was his pursuit of knowledge, of the facts, that brought him the wealth he never sought, that, indeed, he feared. There is the story of him waking up one night, gravely disturbed, and saying to his wife, "Betsey, I have had the most horrible nightmare. It was truly horrible. It was all so vivid." "What was it?" she asked him. "I dreamt, Betsey, that we had become rich. But *enormously* rich." And so he did, later, but it was a wealth gained from qualities bred in an intellectual, even a pedagogic, atmosphere. What Mr. Nicholson calls "that gentle standard of cultural integrity which is the glory of the American teaching class" was the mainspring of all his activity. The intense intellectual training of his home life was deepened and matured by four years spent at Amherst—whose ancient traditions of culture, in the mellow setting of Massachusetts, Mr. Nicholson admirably outlines for us. Morrow's loyalty to this intellectual

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home and all that it stood for remained the strongest of all his loyalties, and he devoted great energies to its welfare until the end of his days. Indeed, of all the financial, diplomatic and civil affairs, national and international, which exercised him during life, that which tried him the highest was the question of the removal of Dr. Meiklejohn from the Presidency of Amherst in 1923. Rightly enough, in an affair of such importance, the equivalent to the removal of the Vice-Chancellor of an English University, Morrow's action was determined by his final loyalty. "What really deprived Dr. Meiklejohn," says Mr. Nicholson, "of Dwight Morrow's support was the latter's suspicion of the president's intellectual frivolity."

The culture of Amherst gave breadth and lucidity to a mind which, by its intensive study of mathematics, history and law, might merely have been formidably capacious. The biography of Morrow exhibits to the world the combination of two qualities, rarely seen together, capacity and applicability. His career may be briefly detailed: company lawyer from 1899 to 1914; partner in J. P. Morgan's until 1927; Ambassador in Mexico until 1930; and then a Senator until his death next year. Probably the English public best knows of him as the father-in-law of Col. Lindbergh; certainly the English nation owes to him, as to the firm of J. P. Morgan in general, an immense gratitude for financial support during the war. (The incident is recorded of Mr. Lloyd George, in 1916, asking the firm of J. P. Morgan for 300 million dollars a month for the next five months, and this was only one instance of the immense sums that firm underwrote for the Allies.) But Mr. Nicholson's purpose is not merely to trace the main transactions of this life, absorbing as they are; his purpose is to depict a character which, he thinks, is new to history, a man who combines immense ability with inexhaustible powers of understanding. That means—a man of vast ability but no pride. In commercial and other transactions Morrow's opponents usually found that he was able to state their own case for them better than they could themselves; when he was plunged into the unhappy sea of Mexican politics, he said: "I know what I can do for the Mexicans. I can *like* them." His complete lack of self-consciousness, and his untidy appearance, combined with intellectual power and "creative benignity," formed an

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irresistible combination in negotiations. When he came to London in 1930 for the Naval Conference, he acquired an immense influence over European statesmen and a practical control of the Conference—for these reasons: “Morrow was devoid of all feelings of ethical superiority, even as he was devoid of all feelings of intellectual inferiority,” whereas most American statesmen have a feeling that any average European statesman can trick them through superior intelligence and inferior morals. Secondly, whereas the civilian heads of delegations mostly abandoned technical questions to the naval experts, Morrow, with his technician’s mind, boldly plunged into and mastered the intricacies of tonnage and gunnage. He was, in fact, the perfect negotiator, the man with not only a mastery of his own case, and therefore of his own experts, but also of his opponents’ case and therefore of their confidence.

Mr. Nicholson’s idol has hitherto been the trained administrator as the regulator of world affairs through precisely articulated documents. Here he finds a figure before whom he can abdicate. “The completely civilized man” he calls Morrow. That may be so; at least, the development of such a type must be the aim of civilized education; and at least it is reassuring to find, if only once in a decade, a man with intelligence enough to grasp the unhappy intricacies of the time and with the manifest good-will to make his abilities fruitful.

URBAN FOSTER, O.P.

BLIMPERY

THERE is little ease in a world so rich in forms and still in process, the end of which for every part is waste and death. Buds must break, maggots must breed, and man may not curse though his heart must break, and even at last his reason. This is not evil, for why should it be otherwise? *The heart of the wise is where there is mourning: and the heart of fools where there is mirth.*

Still the death of one is the birth of another; what is lost on the roundabouts is gained on the swings. The wiser heart will withdraw from mourning as well as from mirth, and without personal ache will consider the balance of loss and gain in the