

## A Treaty of Peace

by Ambrose Bierce

Through massacres of each other's citizens China and the United States had been four times plunged into devastating wars, when, in the year 1994, arose a Philosopher in Madagascar, who laid before the Governments of the two distracted countries the following *modus vivendi*:

"Massacres are to be sternly forbidden as heretofore; but any citizen or subject of either country disobeying the injunction is to detach the scalps of all persons massacred and deposit them with a local officer designated to receive and preserve them and sworn to keep and render a true account thereof. At the conclusion of each massacre in either country, or as soon thereafter as practicable, or at stated regular periods, as may be provided by treaty, there shall be an exchange of scalps between the two Governments, scalp for scalp, without regard to sex or age; the Government having the greatest number is to be taxed on the excess at the rate of \$1000 a scalp, and the other Government credited with the amount. Once in every decade there shall be a general settlement, when the balance due shall be paid to the creditor nation in Mexican dollars."

The plan was adopted, the necessary treaty made, with legislation to carry out its provisions; the Madagascarene Philosopher took his seat in the Temple of Immortality, and Peace spread her white wings over the two nations, to the unspeakable defiling of her plumage.