

# FOREWORD

'But when you have a common faith, then you shall be free,' says Soong, the American-educated Chinese flyer, in this stirring book by Andre Norton.

Six and a half years ago, the Cleveland Press World Friends' Club was launched with the faith that international understanding and goodwill was possible between young folks of different nationalities, political creeds, economic stations, races and religions, if these young folks would be generous in their thinking and write faithfully to each other.

The club had a modest beginning: several hundred students of Greater Cleveland, between the ages of ten and twenty years, writing to students in four or five English-speaking countries.

Today more than sixty-two thousand young folks in seventy-four countries of the world are proud to claim club membership. Correspondence is carried on in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Italian, Polish, Dutch, and other languages.

War has temporarily suspended correspondence between boys and girls here and those in Axis or Axis-occupied countries, but the club's spirit marches on in the hearts of those who are keeping faith everywhere: in Norway, in Java, in Denmark, in Guam; yes, even in the heart of many a young German.

No boys and girls in any country answered the challenging call of world friendship more spontaneously, no boys and girls anywhere have clung to it more firmly, than have the Dutch.

They have managed, over almost unsurmountable odds, to get word to their American friends; some have even been guests in homes here. Around one of these Dutch boys, Lorens van Norreys, and his pen-friendship with his American friend, Andre Norton, has spun a stirring and fascinating tale.

To our friends everywhere this book goes forth, as a sign that we have not forgotten, that we have not broken faith. Our paper is ready, our pens are poised, for the day when letters

may again wing their way to boys and girls in countries whose borders are now closed to us.

And as this story of dauntless, indomitable Dutch Lorens, written about freedom, conceived in freedom, is read by you who still enjoy freedom, remember that only by preserving that intangible, shining freedom through common faith can we win a just peace. Then we can build a future in which Dutch Lorens, Polish Janucz, Italian Maria, Filipino Ramon, Danish Inge, Egyptian Yousef, and Chilean Eliana will share with each other and with us the good things of life.

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