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PLEASE . . .

It is raining and that is somehow appropriate when one starts to write about Remembrance Day. Although we suspect that the people to whom this editorial is really addressed are much too busy to read it, and although we suppose that the heads of the two most powerful governments on earth wouldn't pay much attention to what a few students have to say. Anyway, there's something we'd like to tell them.

A lot of us around here don't need a special day to remember things that are pretty hard to forget. Things that the people who declare the wars, and arrange the remembrance ceremonies never saw. Like the half-trained kid who stepped on a Schu mine his first day in the line, and then lay there under a blood-stained blanket watching his eighteen years of life ooze away from the smashed-up mess where his feet had been. Or the farm girl who had her baby in a stable in the hills of Reggio Emilia while the nebelwerfer across the river knocked tiles down in her face from the battered roof, and a couple of scared Canadian boys tried to help her bear the son of a German soldier who might have been firing the shells. It didn't matter about the baby being illegitimate after all, though. Both of them were killed about two hours later.

This Remembrance Day will no doubt run according to form. But please, gentlemen, on all the platforms in all the countries of the world, don't tell us about the men who "gave their lives". As far as anybody knows who was in on the thing, nobody gave his life. Most of them died reluctantly, clinging to life as long as they could, and fighting back the pain. Some of them were cursing when they died, and others were mercifully deadened to both the physical pain and the spiritual hopelessness by the drugs that modern science has given us to help the victims of modern science to die quietly, without making too much fuss.

And, gentlemen, don't tell us that the world is still in danger, and that you know that those of us who are left will make sure that the dead didn't die in vain.

If the world is still in danger, gentlemen, it's your fault. Yes, yours. The fault of all the men who continue to demand

This editorial, appearing in "The Varsity" last November 11, took top honors in the Canadian University Press competition for the Bracken Trophy.

that their personal views shall be defended by war. The fault of the stupid, bumbling Baldwins and Chamberlains and Trumans and Mackenzie Kings and all the Babbitts who mutter about freedom. And the fault of the Stalins and Vishinskys and Molotovs and all their followers who also talk about freedom.

Neither side is willing to give an inch on what it considers to be essential points. Neither side has the faintest conception of what goes on in the minds of the other. And neither side apparently cares.

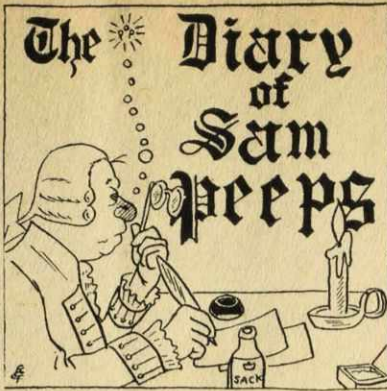
Both the United States and the Soviet Union are engaged in the greatest expansion in history. Both are convinced—or rather, both sets of leaders are convinced—that unless their system prevails, the world is doomed. The Russians are working through parties established in every country trying to get the rest of the world to follow their line. And the Americans are holding up a glittering bait in one hand and a red bogey in the other, trying to get the rest of the world to follow their line.

In Eastern Europe, the descendants of Mendelssohn are listening to proletarian music, whatever that is, and throwing overboard their own culture for a standardized product made in Moscow. In Western Europe the descendants of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Victor Hugo are chewing gum, listening to be-bop, and forming chambers of commerce.

Does it not occur to you, the members of the two master races that are competing for the tattered mantle of the Harrenvolk, that the rest of us might like just to be let alone? That, just possibly the world could get along if both of you would realize that you have no divinely appointed mission to rule? That, also just possibly, the average American or Russian would rather stay home on the farm than "give his life" for intolerance?

Right now, instead of trying to halt expansion, both the United States and Russia seem mainly occupied with trying to fix the blame for the situation on each other. And the longer this keeps up, the harder it will be to stop the expansion. Why not admit that you're both to blame? And then start some negotiations in which the words "fault", "blame", "right" and "wrong" shall be barred in favor of "peace" and "practicability"?

At least, gentlemen, if you get down from your platforms at 11.02 a.m. to hurry back to power politics, don't expect us to like it, or you.



Friday, Jan. 21—
Did go downtown to the Engineers Ball

To crash my way through the door, And when I got there, the tables were bare; The sack was all on the floor.

Much put out by this seeming deviation from the old custom. I did enquire of one who leaned at a perilous angle, Gargoyle Wowsler by name, as to the reason. He did reply that it was an order published by Willy Buttons, of the engineering organization, who did quip that the apprentices were most adept at mixing liqueurs under tables. Methinks he was right, for most of those present at the dance were firmly ensconced under the tables, paying little attention to the dancing which went on sporadically, there being girls present, although a homely lot, I thought.

Later to Noman's Land where I did slip on clam shells on the floor, injuring myself slightly so that I did eat while standing at the counter. Off to home, contented, singing a great new song called "A Rambling Wreck Who Covets Tech—Though a Hell of an Engineer." It is the theme song of the apprentices.

Saturday, Jan. 22—Loud wailing in the Gym Inn this morning early, whereat I did find that Jacques Breakout is galloping about in a fine fit of rage, or remorse, some say, in that he no longer is looked upon favorably by Milady Choice Wentron. Old friend Pinely has come to her aid, though, and did escort her to the Engineers dancing party last night.

Jacques Chrysler, sitting up in the musicians stand, did look most sad as Gael Morelie danced around with blonde Lady Frantic Doing. Chrysler doth play a fine horn, though.

To the game of ice hockey this afternoon where all the girls did scream with anguish when Gorgeous George McGrounders did crash into the little wooden fence around the playing surface. He did look most comely in his short breeches, almost like a boy. His fine stockings, of homespun, in gay yellow and black colors, did turn his shapely leg to advantage, at which some of the athletes did mock him.

Did hear last night that while the common people did make their way to the ball of the Boilermakers Guild, the ladies and nobles did attend a great soiree at old Oxford where all did wear very fancy clothing, and was a pleasant enough assemblage though a weak punch.

Was amazed to hear that the herdsman, and thespian from the old Globe Theatre, George Fosdick, was permitted to attend this affair—he being a notorious bouncer and out of place. However, he did have a fine young lady with him, most comely, named Lady Bobsdaughter.

Sunday, Jan. 23 — Up betimes and to the old Oxford Chapel where not many were present, they benign in no condition to attend before the late service this evening. Father Diehard was on hand, though. A small dancing party was held in the Commoners Room, where a great many low types were present last night. Did attend myself, and was thereby forced to have a bath, my second this year, and one too many, but I could no longer abide the smell of the unwashed rabble which somehow did cling to my clothes after all this dancing of late. My wife was most pleased with this bathing business, and I did resolve to take to the water more often, though I find it uncomfortable, and not gentlemanly. To bed early, and happy, after a busy weekend.

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