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AMERICA'S OLDEST COLLEGE PAPER

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The Past Few Weeks

Taking it all in all, 1951 has been a very strange and wondrousome year so far.

Everything from international affairs to the general state of health of the Dalhousie student body has been in a troubled condition, and perhaps these two matters are not as unremote as it appears at first sight.

First and foremost there is the Korean War. The year 1951 has seen a number of important reversals on the military front. In December the United Nations forces were near the Manchurian border and the Yalu River. Several weeks ago they were on the defensive and threatened with loss of all Korea but a small beachhead, if not the loss of the whole peninsula. Today they have made up part of this lost ground and have driven almost to the gates Seoul. The huge Chinese Red Army which crossed the Yalu River in great force several months ago is apparently not to be found. If the U.N. forces retake Seoul this will mark the fourth time since July that the city has been bombarded and captured. The U.N. troops went into Korea to save the South Koreans, but by this time there can't be very many South Koreans left to save. An added touch of confusion is supplied by the announcement that the U.N. forces will probably halt their drive at the 38th parallel.

An equally confusing picture is to be found on this continent. Several weeks ago the President of the United States declared a state of national emergency. Administrators were appointed to see that there was no stoppage in the flow of materials vital to the prosecution of the Korean War. Yet last week a wildcat strike of railway switchmen managed to bring the U. S. transportation system almost to the verge of ruin, causing incalculable damage to the national productive effort. The effects of this strike have begun to make themselves felt in Canada. Dark threats of drafting the striking switchmen have been heard from Congress and it would seem that this unofficial walkout will soon be brought to an end. But during the period of the strike great harm was done to the U. S. economy, and all this while thousands of United States troops were fighting in defence of freedom.

One of the freedoms for which the U.N. troops are fighting is the right to strike; freedom of association; freedom to form trade unions. At the same time these freedoms are being abused at home and perhaps much-needed supplies are not available. In the Soviet Union and Red China, such strikers would probably be shot at dawn; but so far as propaganda is concerned, they could not have provided a better subject if they had planned the whole thing.

A similar situation was to be found in the United Kingdom. A number of dock workers, allegedly Communist inspired, have gone on strike and tied up a portion of the import trade of Great Britain. As a result the meat ration, already microscopic, has again been reduced.

The strikes are also a good sign in that they show that there is still freedom in the democracies. Any country that will allow common citizens to hamper the national preparedness effort rather than infringe upon their rights is truly great.

In Canada, by comparison, all is serene. An unprecedented peacetime military budget has been presented to Parliament and there is little doubt that it will be approved. This budget provides for large increases in the Canadian military forces, especially of the Air Force. This is a good sign. It has long been recognized that Canadians make good fliers, and during the last war one-fourth of the fliers in the Commonwealth Air Forces were Canadians.

It has also been announced that Canada will ship British-type arms to North Atlantic Treaty countries. Canada is once more assuming the position of Armourer of the Democracies. These British type arms are to be placed with American-style weapons. These will be more readily available than British arms, and as there is more likelihood of Canadians fighting in co-operation with U. S. troops than British armies as in the past, it will solve in advance a supply problem that has plagued Canadian troops. Uniformity of arms will be a reality.

Taken all-in-all, the international news of the past two months has been for the good. The democracies are awake, and not blind to realities as before the last two wars. Perhaps it is only the blind who get into wars.

Harold's Disappointed Love

by Fred Neal

(This story appears as a sequel to "Harold—A Dreamland Fantasy" that appeared earlier this month in the Gazette.)

It was a dark, damp, dismal day. The grey sea mist hovered hesitantly over Shut-in Island, whisked across the bay to Blandford Head, returned, and settled ominously. Filmy feelers spread out to the neighboring headlands and coves. The wind rose slightly and the dank fog rolled in over the bay and swept along the shoreline, finally enveloping houses, fish-wharves, fields and woods in cold, clammy vapors. The fog closed in silently round the cottage while I ate my Sunday dinner. Only straggly spruce trees pierced the haze beyond the front garden, straggly cat-spruce and the lone poplar that waved in the wind before the dining-room window.

It was a big dinner, but not too big for the occasion of the week-end of the King's birthday, or rather, the week-end celebrated as such. After the dishes were washed I stirred up the open fire in the living room, put an extra pillow on the easy chair, and settled down for a quiet afternoon.

This year the King's birthday was on the same week-end as the Apple Blossom Festival down in "the Valley". I was celebrating the festive occasion in the home-like atmosphere of the cottage; I did not expect any visitors and that day I had dressed in old trousers, a sweatshirt and a jacket.

I opened a book dramatizing the siege and fall of Louisburg, 1745, and became engrossed in the reading when, suddenly, with a sparkling and crackling of the fire, the hearth seemed to become alive, not with flames, but with dancing shadows and blazing eyes. A wisp of greenish flame crept furtively 'round a vermilion-bellied log. Then it was not a flame at all. Through the heavy smoke there appeared, as if out of the flame, or maybe out of the log itself, a giant turtle with big blue-green eyes and a waxy stare that almost hypnotized me. The flames roared and leaped up into the waiting chimney-space as if to say: "Aha! I know him; it's Harold!"

With a turtlish groan, a grimace and a heave, this giant tortoise lumbered up over the chain between the andirons, over the shiny fender, 'round the new fire-screen, across the hooked rug (all this slowly and deliberately, mind you), and gradually inched his way, step-by-step, up over my shoe and up my pant leg. I wasn't wearing the vest with which Harold was so familiar from his previous visit, and this time Harold perched himself precariously on my belt buckle.

Before I had recovered from my amazement and no little consternation at this second visit of my lachrymose friend, Harold had cleared his throat and begun to speak. He could see that I wasn't listening as yet, and he cleared his throat again, and then

Valse Triste

The aging man left the Church and with Slow steps ambled down the hill To where the aspens quivered in a grove. I went to him and said: "I am her son". He rose slowly from his seat, his Shoulders slightly bent As by some long accustomed weight And in his eyes there seemed to burn a light So dim, it could have been a shadow. And to this the furrows of his brow Made a face of sorrow. "I am her son" I said, "you remember her?" A wistful look came into his eyes, a sad Smile, to his lips. "Remember her?" he said. "Ah, yes. But that was long ago. I think a war had ended, yes. And I Was your age then. We met At our old college, in this very time of year When old October danced its dance of Death. How many times has it danced so since? How many memories have refused to die." "You loved her much?" I asked. "Too well", he said as dampness crept Into his eye and the brand of sorrow Seemed more clear. "Time will erase our love she had said. And perhaps our Lord to her was kind And let her forget, gave her a new Joy in life. But I, I never could. The memories would not die and I Who left her with a smile Forgot her not." "Tell her, my son, that you have seen her Past And tell her that the past Is ever dead." He rose with ageless sorrow In his face. "So you're her son!" He muttered, and sadly shook his head. I tried to speak but only silence came And as he wandered heavily away A dying leaf in aimless, lost decent Danced to October's dance of death as To the earth it fell.

again, and still another time. Then, satisfied that he commanded his audience and that all else was in readiness, he began afresh to tell me more about himself and his troubles.

It seems that his married life was about to break up. Marital trouble, whether in a turtle household or a human home, can be very disturbing and very, very sad. With a large tear in his eye, right in the corner and beside the third hair of the right hand side of his left eyelash, and an apparent lump in his throat, Harold related his story to me.

"It began long before my marriage," he sobbed. "In fact, it began long before I was, or you were, or any of us were. It began way back with Adam turtle, when a companion for him was created out of the fourth plate of the underside of his carapace. After that, everything hinged on Noah turtle, who took two of us into his ark so that we didn't have to swim and swim around for all that long time that the world was flooding. After that there were others, and more and more of us, until finally there were so many of us, that some turtles lost the history of their pedigrees. Some couldn't even trace their pedigrees through the turtle-logical tables, either."

I didn't quite understand the possible consequences of this misfortune, but Harold was quick to explain to me the importance to a turtle of his forebears. "Some of us," he continued, "are snappers; others of us are plain, ordinary, respectable turtles from Woolworth's stores; others are in

aquariums along with all our other relatives of the reptile family; and still others belong to the quite modern branch of the family that they make soup out of." Just then a big tear trickled down his jaw, hung there momentarily, and then fell to his carapace with a distinct splash. He stretched and shook his right fore-leg, or fore-flipper, I might more fittingly say, and the tear rolled down between his breast-plate and his skin.

Harold began again. "When I was married by the Bishop of Turtlearia, how was I to know that my wife was of this latter variety?" He sobbed loudly and paused to wipe his flipper-like paw over his eyes and across his nose. "How was I to know? Now my wife, my dear Theodosia, has to leave me. Algy (you know, the one who went to finishing school for turtles) tells me that Theodosia isn't even a real turtle; he says that she isn't even one of us. Her pedigree is different from ours, and now they want to take her away from me."

Harold sat there on my belt buckle crying and sniffing and I didn't know quite what to say or do. I had eaten a bowl of Campbell's "Mock Turtle" Soup for dinner, and I feared that even by this act I might have deprived Harold of his precious Theodosia. And tears came into my eyes too.

Then tears appeared to come to the eyes of all the hundreds of little turtles that filed slowly, lumberingly out of the fire and sat there on the hooked rug eyeing me suspiciously. Oh my, what had I done? What could I do? Dear me; this was terrible. Possibly I had made all those turtles unhappy.

A loud crack of the fire and a renewed vigor in the yellow flames, awakened me out of the dream and I sat up straight with a start. On the roof the rain was falling softly. Outside, the spruce trees, sentinels in the storm, still pierced the fog. In my stomach I felt a pang of hunger; but not a hunger for turtle soup. Turtle, that is.

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