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Christmas Carol-- War Reprint

"Silent night . . ." How silent, we wonder, this Christmas? Will it really be silent on the Russian front? How silent will it be in China? How silent in Germany where 1000 bombers roar swiftly over Berlin and where many years ago a German wrote words to this song we're singing still? For we are giving Christmas lip-service still, when there's little left in the heart and mind to back it up.

"Holy night . . ." And how many tons of bombs will be dropped on the world from the sky where once there shone the Star of the East? With how many bombs will we celebrate the coming of the Prince of Peace—or will the nations sentimentally, hypocritically, stop the bombing to wish each other a Merry Christmas and a defeat-holding New Year? You see, we're bewildered, too, little Prince of Peace.

"All is calm . . ." There is some calm in the world this Christmas. Calm deep under the earth, where lie the bodies of the men we have killed, and the bodies of our men who died. Calm deep in the earth lie their bodies. But are their spirits calm, we wonder? Can they see what is still going on, what even their deaths could not stop for a minute or a second? If they could see this, even in death they could not be calm, even in death they could not be sure that the war would accomplish anything except this deep, dank, twisted calm under the earth.

"All is bright . . ." Not quite all. Portland has brightened; New York has relaxed its dimouts. But what of the ships that glide darkly through the cold waters, what of the almost-silent, tense darknesses that surround our troops and their troops, before a battle begins to make the darkness disappear?

"Round yon virgin mother and child . . ." The mother then who needn't fear that a long cold piece of death-dealing steel would fall and blast her child to bloody bits. The mother who needn't watch her child play with imitation anti-aircraft guns, advertised to sound "just like the real thing." And see this child treat war as a game, a game that might torture and kill another child somewhere else.

"Holy infant, so tender and mild . . ." What are you thinking of our world now, Holy Infant, the world You died to save?

"Sleep in Heavenly peace . . ." Yes, sleep in Heavenly peace. For earthly peace is dead, little Child. Will there be a Resurrection? —M.Y.

Long Ago, Far Away . . .

Once upon a time a newspaper man named Pearson, Drew Pearson, got a scoop on a hero named General Patton, "Old Blood and Guts" Patton, as he was known in those days. This scoop which set tongues wagging was about a soldier who got slapped.

Think you, dear reader, that this fascinating tale does not have counterparts? Think you that all even slightly similar stories center from the blue Mediterranean? Oh, no. There was, so the tale goes, a young man dressed in the current khaki mode who crossed a street one day. There was also a bus, (that was before this advanced age of helicopters and power-driven kiddie cars). There was also an officer.

This young man, as legend has it, was possessed of the idea, recently disproven by statistical experts in the field, that one cannot salute and dodge a bus at the same time. Hence, upon him fell the wrath of the officer who was taking the cool, refreshing air. His rage was mighty and wonderful to behold. There is even the drastic statement recorded in the tombs of our dead ancestors which leads us to believe that the young man was required to salute many times over. There are other tales, which ran rampant at a place called the Side.

Ah, yes. Stuff happened in those days, stuff happened. And if "Old Blood and Guts" made headlines, it is only proper to include the imitation Pattons (if there are any) who found themselves upon no battlefield, except the tough rigors of life at Universitas Oregonensis. —M.M.

The Cutting Room

By BILL BUELL

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We told Dr. Ernst that witnessing a flesh and blood Shakespearean production would contribute vastly more to our understanding and appreciation of Elizabethan drama than attending Friday's English drama class. He agreed. So we left for Portland Wednesday night.

Sunday afternoon we went to Portland's public auditorium to see John Carradine's production of "Hamlet."

The ex-cinematographer's version of Shakespeare's most puzzling tragedy was thoughtful, restrained, and extremely sound. A minimum of emphasis was placed upon the action scenes. The scuffle in the graveyard was reduced to almost nothing; the duel with Laertes, although authentic fencing, contained none of the Doug Fairbanks style of acrobatic dueling histrionics.

He Really Wasn't

Gaunt John Carradine's "lean and hungry look" is well suited to the part of the melancholy prince. Although his rich deep voice did not carry well over the auditorium's antiquated public address system his readings of Shakespeare's lines were truly beautiful. He injected into them all the musical quality

and rhythmic cadence possible while still retaining a complete naturalness of expression.

Next to producer-director Carradine, the finest acting in the play was Kevin Kemble's forceful and dramatic portrayal of King Claudius.

Not G.B.—But Still Good

C. Montague Shaw's Polonius was a perfect "foolish prating knave," and he returned in the last act with a robust portrayal of the grave-digging clown.

Although Sonia Sorel as Ophelia was the only player to draw spontaneous mid-scene applause we thought the entire episode of Ophelia's madness was over-drawn.

Weak Queen

Kay Hammond's portrayal of Queen Gertrude was rather weak. David Powell as Horatio forced out his lines in an explosively jumbled manner that bore little resemblance to human speech.

But these defects were greatly overshadowed by the general effectiveness of the production. Seeing it was well worth standing up in that motorized sardine-can known as the Greyhound bus for five hours both ways.

Globally Speaking

By BILL SINNOTT

This will be the fifth Christmas of the war. In lieu of this fact it might be well for us to review the situation on the four previous ones.

CHRISTMAS—1939

Those days of the sitzkrieg—of the "Phony War"—seem to belong to another century. The marshal of France, still revered, was in Spain, engaged in apple polishing Franco. Senator Laval was, as usual, skulking around the corridors of the Luxembourg breathing defeatism.

Colonel de Gaulle was viewed with alarm by General Gamelin and the French general staff. He had the most peculiar view that this war was to be a war of mobility.

Only Poles

Poland had been blitzed, but they were only Poles. France was impregnable behind the impregnable Maginot line guarded by the finest army in the world.

England was complacent under the Birmingham business man. Winston was out of harm's way in the admiralty.

The United States was torn between three factions, those who knew we would get in eventually, those who wanted to keep out of war, and those who didn't care.

CHRISTMAS—1940

Hitler had surprised and terrified the world with his victories. France was under the rule of Marshall Cretin, another old marshal who betrayed his country.

Hitler controlled Europe with the exception of England and his ally, Russia. The British, under their dynamic leader, had resolved to fight alone until "blood, sweat, and tears" should bring final victory.

The Fuehrer had lost the Battle of Britain. The United States had finally been aroused to its peril. Conscription had become law. Japan was poised for the kill.

CHRISTMAS 1941

The "Wave of the Future" seemed about to engulf the democracies. Hitler's armies were before the gates of Moscow. The Balkan countries and Crete had fallen in the swiftest blitz yet.

The Japanese had sunk seven of our battleships at Pearl Harbor. The armies of the Mikado

ert Fox" was trapped in Tunisia. The Russians had surprised the world by their resistance. Stalin-grad had been held.

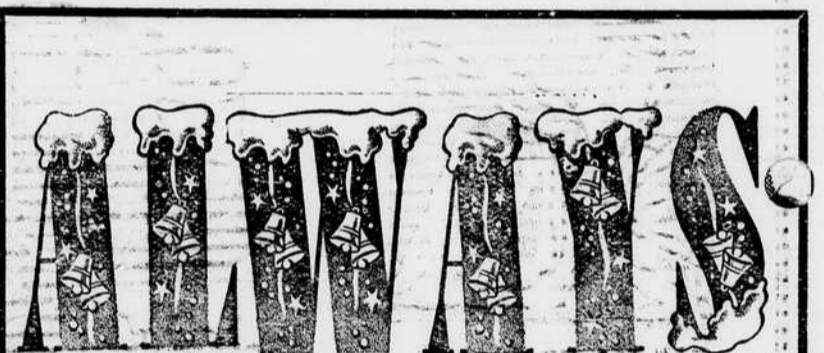
The Japs, after the disgraceful loss of Singapore, had been held. The Solomons had been invaded by our marines at Guadalcanal in August. The United States was still in the process of forging an effective fighting machine.

CHRISTMAS 1943

The scene is everywhere one of Allied success. The Russians are within sight of their pre-1941 boundaries. Musso, "the Jackal," is a psychopathic case. Germany has been bombed into an Aryan ruin.

What of CHRISTMAS 1944?

Every man in the V-5 unit at Illinois Wesleyan purchased a war bond in the third loan drive.



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