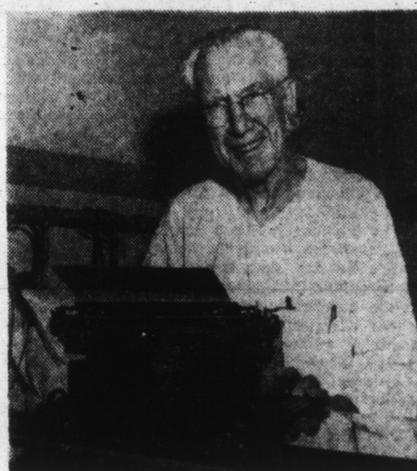


Inside Indianapolis

By Ed Sovola



"WHEN THE people face east on Armistice day they better face God with their hearts." William A. Meeker, world war I veteran, sitting on the edge of his bed at the Veterans Administration hospital, spoke earnestly about a lasting peace he thinks the world will never have unless it turns to Christian principles for guidance. "The news on Dec. 7, 1941, that we were attacked rankled my soul," he said. He admitted that the thought of becoming a soldier in his youth excited him. A native of Mt. Vernon, Ind., Mr. Meeker lived in Indianapolis during his youth. "I stood with a broken heart and watched soldiers march off to the Spanish-American war. I swore that I would fight in the next war. I volunteered in the tank corps in world war I after pulling a lot of strings. I was 41 then. But what I have seen since then—no one can make me believe that we can settle anything by fighting." The war ended while Mr. Meeker was on training maneuvers in North Carolina. A clothing designer, most of his life, Mr. Meeker lived in Indianapolis for 20 years before he moved to Milwaukee, Wis. Two days after Christmas last year his left leg was amputated above the knee. Today, completing his 14th month as a patient at the Veterans hospital, Mr. Meeker is hoping he will be home again by Christmas.

People Forget Too Quickly

"I WATCHED the Soldiers and Sailors monument being built on the Circle. I thought at the time, as I do today, that it is a magnificent tribute to the men who died for their country. Not so much any more. Monuments just hold us back. People forget the misery of war." Mr. Meeker believes that gigantic structures which extol the valor and courage of fighting men are a reckless waste of money. The time, effort, money, and skill which is used to build monuments could be directed into better channels such as research, hospitals and more aid to men who have suffered in the wars. He feels acutely the loss of life and misery caused by world war II. "Can you possibly conceive how much good we could do if we expended towards some constructive end the money, genius, and energy used to win this war?" he asked me. As an example, Mr. Meeker used cancer. He thinks every scourge of humanity could be conquered by concerted action which would ultimately bring us to the threshold of that world which exists and has existed in the minds of idealists since the dawn of time. Mr. Meeker wonders how many more wars mankind can endure. He also wonders how many more monuments will be built to honor the dead of those wars. "If a monument could be built which would vividly show the torture, pain and misery of war—bring home to everyone who gazes upon it the screams of agony, the picture of utter destruction of flesh and blood—mental anguish of those fighting and those who must wait—I'd be all

"Face the east and pray." . . . William A. Meeker spends his time at Veterans hospital writing letters and reading.

Peace Begins in Heart of Man

THE MOST depressing sight Mr. Meeker witnessed was at the tomb of the unknown soldier in Washington, D. C. Married but childless, Mr. Meeker said it was a painful sight to see parents standing in front of the tomb with tears in their eyes wondering if possibly their son was buried there. Mr. Meeker has lost all faith in signed treaties. When the Atlantic charter story with its "Four Freedoms" was finally told, it bore out what he had felt from the beginning that it was "the bunk." "I didn't like the way it was done—in a corner," he said. Having just finished reading Betty MacDonald's book, "The Egg and I," Mr. Meeker is impressed with the simple way of life and the feeling of inner peace in every individual. Peace begins in the heart of man and at home. He said Abraham Lincoln left the world a great working thought with the words, "with malice toward none, with charity for all." If it were followed. "On Armistice day when the minute's silence comes—then when people should pray for the answer and not stand as if it were a disagreeable task." A firm believer in progress Mr. Meeker continued, "And along with prayers, people shouldn't forget, and they have plenty of examples, where peace has been fumbled, that it takes work—infinitely amounts of it to earn a peace and keep it."

IT IS A challenging test to higher education. The challenge—and responsibility—have been accepted. Only as current students enter their professional fields to fail or to succeed will the verdict be known.

Will the colleges and universities live up to their responsibility? A swing around the collegiate circuit indicates they will. Part of the answer lies in the hands of the student body.

Nowhere are conditions normal compared with pre-war standards. There are hardships for the administration, the faculty and the students.

IF STUDENTS continue to understand that the hardships must be endured temporarily, they will contribute immeasurably to the success of higher education in the post-war world.

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