



RICHARD WRAXAL MOORE

1939

Though smaller and less strong than the average of the boys in his Form, Richard Moore played football, hockey and baseball, with courage, if not with distinction. He spent five years at St. Paul's, one year at Milton Academy, then entered Williams College in 1940. In his Freshman year he withdrew from college and became assistant to the sports editor of the New York *Herald Tribune*.

At the age of twenty, Moore enlisted in the Marine Corps. Through the Guadalcanal and New Guinea campaigns, he was a heavy machine-gunner in the 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division. After twenty-seven months in the Pacific, he returned to the United States. He volunteered for further combat duty, went overseas again, joined the 29th Marines and on June 19, 1945, was killed in action on Okinawa.

Of the events, hardships and dangers of his long military service, Moore said and wrote practically nothing, even to his family. Of his thoughts, hopes and ideals, we know more. For example, after Guadalcanal, he wrote: "It is hard to take an objective view of the peoples who have brought so much sadness to our homes, but, if America cannot do it, neither can the countries which have seen so much more. . . . The dealings of the international body with the Axis powers after the war must ever be conditioned by consideration of its two objects in dealing with them at all, namely a lasting peace and their transformation from a liability to civilization to one of its assets."

Moore was writing in a hospital in Australia in 1943. He was ill with malaria after his first campaigns. The above sentences are quoted from a long article which he called "Will we reject Utopia?" Written

with deeply moving sincerity, it is essentially an inquiry into the causes of the war and a plea for humility, gratitude and justice: for recognition by Americans of their nation's guilt and failures in the past; for recognition by Americans of their debt to the peoples of England, Russia and China, to all the peoples who suffered and opposed oppression; for just dealing by Americans, first with the oppressed within their own boundaries, and then with other nations, the weak as well as the strong.

Moore was keenly aware of his country's weaknesses: of the greed, the prejudices and the false thinking that had beset its past and that threatened its future. But, having seen the qualities of his countrymen at war, he dreamt that America might yet realize the true greatness of which he perceived her already capable. Such was the hope which sustained him, such the faith in which he fought and died.

Richard Moore had three brothers, all of whom served in the Armed Forces during the Second World War. One of them, Pfc. William S. Moore, Jr., an alumnus of St. Mark's School, was killed in action in France, November 8, 1944.