

The Death of a Friend.

News of the death of John Denis Fryer, dear old "Chut" whom we all loved, came to his 'Varsity comrades as a harsh and terrible blow. During the long period of illness which preceded his death, Chut himself was unfailingly and characteristically optimistic, and so his friends were to some extent deceived as to the fatal nature of the malady which was slowly gaining its hold upon him. Sharing his optimism, we looked forward to the day when he would be back amongst us, as active and cheerful as ever.

The sudden and direful news came during the Long Vac., and thus it was that when students re-assembled at the beginning of the year, the joys of re-union and the happiness of incipient activity were tempered by the solemn thought that one of the 'Varsity's best was no more.

Chut's death is one other of the tragic after-effects of the War. Of all the hideous weapons of modern scientific warfare, none is so detestably cruel and wicked as the use of poisonous chemical gas, which works silently and insidiously in the systems of its victims, bringing death only after a slow process of physical suffering. So he died of whom it might well be said in the words of that poet he loved:

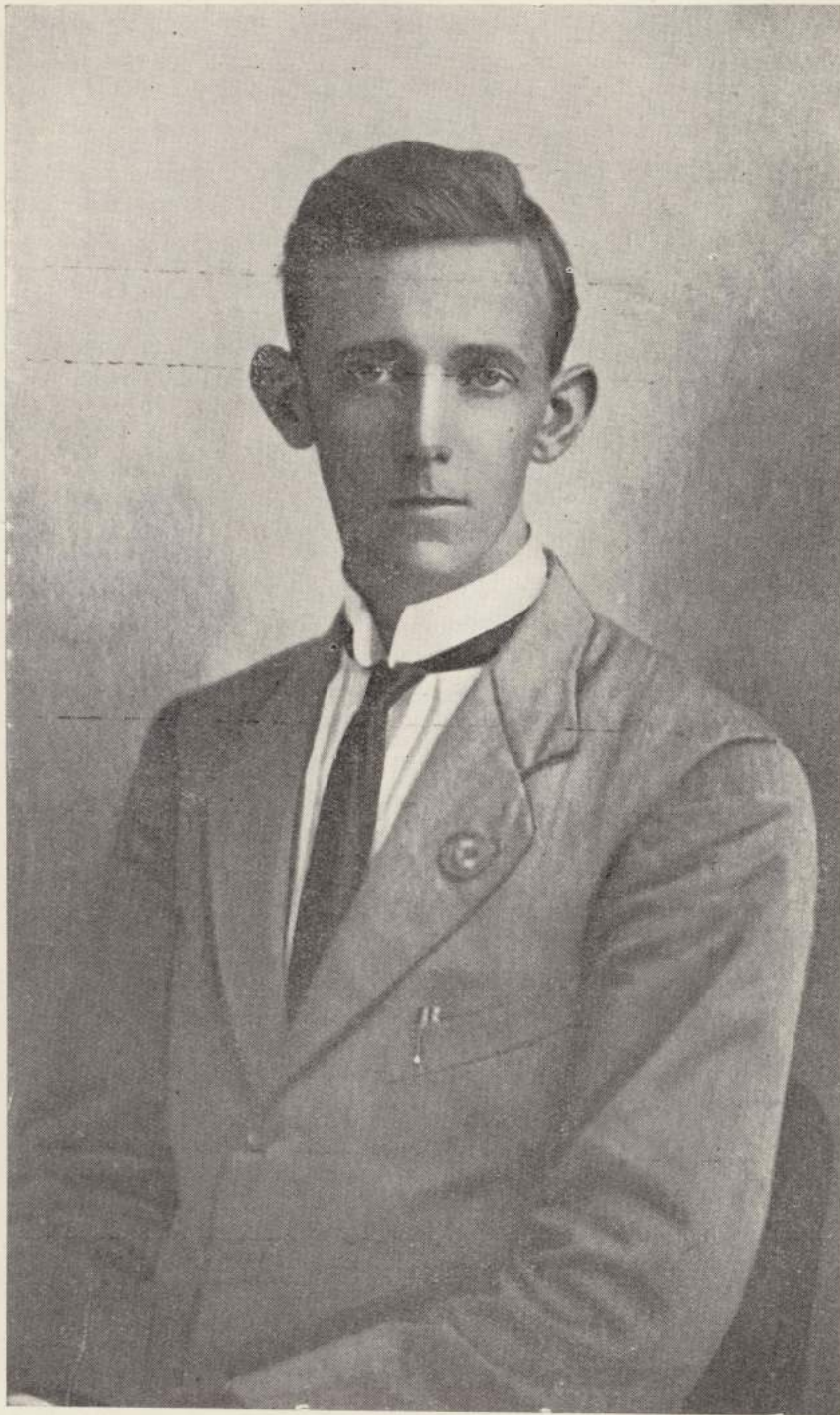
"He was a verray parfit gentil knyght"

—and we who remain have nothing now but the inspiration of his memory, and the consoling thought that, at least, his suffering is done. "This was a Man!" we exclaim with Antony as we think of the Chut that we knew; and then we find ourselves experiencing man's age-old hopeless feeling of protest against the harshness of inscrutable Fate which strikes blindly and cruelly and without discrimination:

"As flies to wanton boys, are we to the Gods,
They kill us for their sport."

And finally our reflections are tinged with one more poignant regret—
"Man's inhumanity to Man."

The tragedy of Chut's death lies not only in the feeling of personal loss which it means to all of us who were his friends; not only in the loss which the University in particular and the community in general have sustained; nor is it solely the tragedy of a young life suddenly cut off with a Destiny of Promise left unachieved. Each of these bitter reflections must enter into our grief; but saddest of all the thoughts occasioned by the death of our comrade is the spectacle of Civilised



JOHN DENIS FRYER.

Died 7th February, 1923.

Humanity sacrificing with cruel rites its splendid Youth on the altars of the ruthless God of War.

Of J. D. Fryer's life much might be chronicled in detail. His academic record, his sporting record, and his war record, all bear striking testimony to his ability, generosity, and unselfishness. As a student he worked in an official capacity for the Union, Commem., "Galmahra," the Dramatic Society, the Men's Club, and the Football Club, with a whole-hearted self-devotion and an unquestioned ability. College and University had always a first claim upon his time and energies; and now we know that the unwonted strain and worry of his work in these offices hastened very considerably his fatal illness.

Alas that the "Mag." for which he worked so hard should so soon chronicle his death, and the Commem. at which he was to graduate should find him in the grave!

A catalogue of Chut's achievements, eloquent though it may be as an example of unselfishness, can mean little to those unacquainted with the force and influence of his personality. Other men will carry on his work for the University in the various Social and Literary Societies; others will uphold as he did, the honour of College and 'Varsity on the athletic field. The undergraduate body bids farewell on Commem. Day each year to men whose work for the common good makes them difficult to replace as they go. This is not the chief loss which Chut's death means to us. In these respects he can be replaced as all other departing members are replaced.

It is Chut the kindly and genial companion whom we shall not so easily replace; Chut, the cultured and witty friend of our 'Varsity and College life; the lively raconteur of Common Room and Vestibule; Chut the ardent lover and discriminating critic of verse, and above all, Chut the indefatigable champion of fair play and tolerance—this is the personality which is no more, and here our loss is irreparable.

This he has given to all who came in contact with him—that one can look on death and suffering, pain and evil, and yet smile calmly, helping, with infectious cheerfulness, to gladden the way of many others.

So we remember him best, manifesting his earnestness of purpose in a smiling philosophy of life which helped more people than he even guessed. In our memory he will always be "Chut, the Merry Jester." So he would wish it, too. "Vain regrets" formed no part of his philosophy, and this is the lesson for us of his life and the manner of his death.