

It Seems to Me

by
HEYWOOD BROUN



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THE drama and the news interest of the Hauptmann trial in Flemington Court house can hardly be denied, but has the rest of the world really stopped stock still to await the verdict? Perhaps a columnist does not quite understand the avidity of the reading public for each last detail. Editors throughout the country seem to be in complete agreement that there can not be such a thing as too much on this case. I dissent.

It is my impression that during all the time I have been reading metropolitan papers closely no single story has commanded a like amount of space.

And surely it can not be that the trial of Bruno Richard Hauptmann is actually the most important happening throughout the world in the last forty years.

It took far fewer columns to tell readers that America had gone to war. The Armistice ate up less space. Fire and flood and earthquake have marched across the front page with headlines of equal size, but not one of those stories penetrated so deeply into the dark continents of news which lie within. Today we seem to live within an era during which the appraisers say, "If it isn't the Lindbergh case it isn't news."

He's Had Enough

I AM well aware of the fact that in a rough and ready way all good editors have a responsibility in satisfying the curiosity and the desires of the reading public. Again it may be that each editor would do exactly the same if he were under the instruction, "Make up the paper simply to suit yourself and forget about the readers." In private discussion I have met few reporters who did not maintain that the Lindbergh case, from its beginning to the present trial constituted the biggest news story of the decade.

I can't agree, but even if I did it seems to me that somewhere in the middle of the flood of copy I would try to hold up a lone Canute hand and cry out, "Hold, enough! It is my belief that the law of diminishing returns applies with peculiar force to the use of words. It is true, of course, but not unfair, to refer to some of the examples of reporting done by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

And the rewrite men of the Old Testament did exceedingly well, small compass with stories such as the encounter between David and Goliath and the death of Abel. From a newspaper point of view I'm afraid it must be admitted that the account of the creation of the world is slightly underplayed.

Out of the files of old papers I could find at least half a dozen news stories which stood out in their own day. The story Floyd Gibbons wrote of the sinking of the Laramie, one of the best factual accounts I can remember, ran about eight columns but most the rest which I think of offhand were much shorter.

There Have Been Other Stories

LOUIS WEITZENKORN'S story of the funeral of Kid Dropper was a couple of columns. Dudley Nichols took about four in describing a rescue at sea by Captain Fried. It was Lindsey Dennis, wasn't it, who wrote the classic about the Bonton diver in the old Morning Sun? That wasn't more than a couple of columns.

Artists have a saying that it takes two men to paint a picture—one to do the painting and the other to knock him on the head when he's done. I believe it would help the high standards of journalism if there were more knocking on the head in newspaper offices. Of course, in the case of columnists, it might often be a good idea to knock them on the head before they started.

It may be that the association of those who would like to see a good deal less printed about the Hauptmann trial is only a minority party. But if the interest is actually as avid as the vast procession of type might indicate then I would expect to see excited little groups of people discussing the case on every street corner.

I have been back in New York a little less than 48 hours and perhaps I haven't been on the right street corners, but so far just one taxi driver asked, "What do you think of it?" and I answered, "I don't know."

I must insist that Flemington is not the center of the universe.

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Today's Science

BY DAVID DIETZ

VENUS, most beautiful of all planets, returns to the evening sky this month for the first time since last February. Since that time, the planet has been in the morning sky.

Look for Venus low in the western sky at the time of sunset. As the months go on, Venus will climb in the sky and become brighter. It will attain its maximum brilliance next August, on Aug. 3 to be exact, when it will be 15 times brighter than Sirius, the brightest of all the stars.

Venus, twin-sister of the earth, is the one planet most likely to be about the same size as the earth and closer to the sun. Dense, heavy white clouds which surround the planet prevent us from seeing its surface.

Mercury also becomes visible in the night sky during January. Look for Mercury about the last week of January. It will be very low in the West about the time of sunset, nearer the horizon than Venus and not so bright.

Little Mercury is the smallest of all the planets. Only a little larger than our moon, it would fit comfortably into the Atlantic Ocean. It is quite certain that the planet is uninhabited, for it always keeps the same face turned toward the sun. Trying to live on that face would be like trying to live on the lid of a red-hot stove. The other face is as cold as empty space.

In addition, Mercury is known to have no atmosphere.

The planet Saturn, which has been visible in the night sky during most of 1934 has now disappeared. As a matter of fact, it disappeared in December. It is now in the morning sky, but too close to the sun to be visible. In the morning sky also are Mars and Jupiter.

ASTRONOMERS this month are most interested in the new star or nova that appeared in the constellation of Hercules in December. Astronomers in all observatories have under careful watch.

Dr. J. J. Nassau, director of the Warner & Swasey Observatory of Case School of Applied Science, reports that he has taken 25 photographs of the nova.

Nova Herculis flared forth into new brilliance on Dec. 14. More exactly, it was first noted to have done so on that date. The nova was discovered by John P. Pringle, a British meteor observer.

Actually, what Mr. Pringle observed on Dec. 14, had taken place 1500 years earlier. Nova Herculis is 1500 light years away. That means its light takes 1500 years to reach us and consequently we have just become aware of something that happened to this star 1500 years ago.

Since the discovery of Nova Herculis astronomers have been examining old photographic plates to find the past history of the star. Several hundred plates were located which contained photographs of the star. These revealed that it had been of a magnitude of 14.6 on Oct. 4, 1934. At that time, it will be seen, it was an extremely faint star.

However, photographs on Nov. 14, 1934, show it to have increased to a magnitude of 13.8. It may be said, therefore, that the star was already beginning to flare up at that time.

By Dec. 9, as already mentioned, the star reached a magnitude of 1.9. This means that between Oct. 4 and Dec. 9, the brightness of the star increased 150000 times.

It is now known that the increase in brightness of a nova is due to some tremendous heating in the outer regions of the star. This increase in radiation pressure seems to blow the outer layers of the star's atmosphere out like a balloon.

Spectroscopic measurements indicate the speed with which the outer envelope of the star expands. In the case of Nova Herculis, the measurements indicate a velocity of 100 miles a second.

FRANCE'S AUTO KING DEPOSED

Lavish But Ill-Timed Spending Writes Failure for Citroen

BY MORRIS GILBERT
NEA Service Staff Correspondent

PARIS, Jan. 12.—The Eiffel Tower once more is just the Eiffel Tower, and no longer a blazing sky-sign by night. As the unique advertisement of France's most famous automobile, it has ceased to exist—and has become again simply a haunt of tourists and pigeons.

The extinction of the big Citroen advertisement that recently turned the famous old tower into a garish Christmas tree is symbolic of the apparent collapse of the Citroen enterprise. It cost 10,000 francs a night—\$600—to run that luminous billboard, and that was a lavish sum as advertising goes in France.

The whole Citroen layout was lavish. The famous "croisières," those motor explorations through Persia, down through Africa, across Asia were stupendous stunts.

The factories on the Quai de Javel were sumptuous. So were the Paris and Brussels "exposition palaces." So was the brave gesture, not many months ago, when Citroen scrapped his recent models and began building a new series of ultra-modern stock cars, aerodynamic, front-wheel driven, gadget-laden.

Indeed, it was the man himself lavishly in all ways—famous lavish at the races, the beaches, the casinos of France.

TODAY, the 20,000 Citroen employees in the Javel shops are laid off. "Temporarily," it is stated. "Judicial liquidation" of the enterprise may put them back to work again, in some part, some time. Meanwhile, they are on the dole, and hundreds of Citroen dealers are out on a limb.

Questions facing the Citroen liquidators and creditors are: How many men can actually count on new and continuous employment? How many cars can be put out a month, how much will their price rise or fall? The answer, translated in

DAILY WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

By Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen

WASHINGTON, Jan. 12.—Members of the President's official family are clustering around the patronage prospects of the new farm census like honey bees around a molasses pot.

First it was Presidential Secretary Louey Howe who tried to get a relative placed on the census roles. Now it is Uncle Dan Roper, Secretary of Commerce. His son, McCall, brother-in-law of Uncle Dan, operates a farm near Clio, S. C.

Roper decided to put him on the pay roll as a district supervisor and asked William L. Austin, director of the Census Bureau, to appoint him. This put Austin in a dilemma. Although Roper is his immediate superior, job for the farm census are the special prerogative of Democratic House members.

Austin explained the situation to Roper. The latter told him to leave it to him.

He sent an emissary to Allard H. Gaseque, representative from McCall's district, with a trading offer—Gaseque to offer no objection to the appointment of Roper's brother-in-law, and in exchange to receive appointments to two jobs in the Commerce Department.

Gaseque is still considering the dicker, but it is a sure bet he will accept. Two plums for one is not a bad trade.

PENNSYLVANIA's Governor-elect George Earle was present at the opening ceremonies of Congress.

As the first Democratic governor of the Keystone state in many decades he was the object of much flattering attention. But he stuck to his fall out of him.

Earle was surrounded by an admiring group when the stranger walked up and asked, "Are you Gov. Earle?"

"Yes."

"THE Gov. Earle?"

"Yes."

"So what?" the stranger remarked, and calmly walked away leaving Earle blinking.

CATCHING a six-pound trout with a "plow line" may sound like the product of an elastic imagination, but that's the story of Speaker Joe Byrns, and sticks to it.

At a lake in Glacier National Park where he was vacationing, a guide took Byrns and another guest fishing for pickerel. After trolling all day neither got a strike. The tackle, Joe explains, was cord heavy enough to use for a plow line, and a triple-gang hook with a huge hunk of meat on it.

The guide, abashed at the empty fish coffers of his charges, decided the tackle was too heavy, and stopped at a saw mill to borrow lighter equipment. Only one pole and line were available, and Byrns generously resigned in favor of his fishing mate.

While the guide and mate departed for another effort, Byrns located a nearby dam, at the bottom of which was a deep pool. He whirled the heavy meat-laden hook around several times, and let go with a hammer-throwing gesture that he now uses for calling the House to order.

No sooner had it struck the water than an immense fish gobbled it and started off. After minutes of intense fighting, Byrns managed to land it—a six-pound salmon trout, largest caught in favor of his fishing mate.

At dark, when his fishing mate returned with the guide he still had caught nothing.

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Each set of the equipment will bear a serial number and sales will be registered just as the sale of pistols which will make each officer a deadly marksman in the dark.

The device, known as the automatic night sight, the invention of A. B. Scott, Los Angeles engineer, soon will be in quantity production, although offered for sale only to city, county and state peace officers.

The invention, which fits securely on the muzzle of a regulation police pistol, consists of a small flash bulb, a clover-leaf shaped aperture and a system of lenses. In operation it throws a clover-leaf shaped beam of light along the path of the bullet, with the bullet striking the point where the inner points of the four beams of light meet. The secret of the device is in the lenses, which enable the light to illuminate the object aimed at, although a person in front of the pistol can not see the rays.

Each set of the equipment will bear a serial number and sales will be registered just as the sale of pistols is now recorded.

6 PARK RANGERS ARE SNOWBOUND IN OREGON

All Entrances to National Reserve Are Closed by Storm.

CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK, Ore., Jan. 12—Snow has closed the four entrances to the park and made prisoners for the winter of six men. The rangers of the park service will watch the lodge during the winter, maintain telephone communication with Klamath Falls and Medford and take pictures of nature's spectacle of winter in the mountains.

SEXTON CLUB LEADER

Our Lady of Lourdes Men's Group Installs New Head.

Joseph F. Sexton was installed as president of Our Lady of Lourdes Men's Club last night at the parish auditorium, 5317 E. Washington St. Past presidents were guests of honor.

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CITROEN, as an industrialist, was like a great athlete who lacked—in the pinch—one vital quality. The quality was timing. He knew how to swing on the ball like a Babe Ruth in his prime. The trouble was, he was swung too late—or too early.

In boom times, the Citroen plant was turning out the tidy number of 700 cars a day.

With a humongous plant, his tendency toward prodigality expressed itself in big effort. He tried to compete in America, in England, in other lands outside France.

He sent his cars through desert and jungle, over the Himalayas, across China, in big propaganda tours. There was something very American in his ideas of spending money to make money.

Only—it was the wrong country and the wrong moment.

Two years ago, despite the

world crisis which was beginning to affect France so that his production had dropped to 400 cars a day, the big magnate made his greatest gesture.

He junked his Quai de Javel factory and built a much more splendid one, capable of doubling his output. Citroen guessed wrong.

If the famous "up-turn" had been at hand and if his big plant development had happened to catch the trend, he would be a Napoleon of finance today. Instead, a year ago, he had to look for 800 million francs to keep running.

EVEN that didn't dampen Citroen's enthusiasm, and he put out his famous new "7." Judging by appearances and equipment, the "7" was a sweet and stylish little car. Its front wheels were powered, it braked on four wheels, had 'knee' springs, and snappy air-streamed lines.

Its clutch was a neat little lever on the dashboard and the hand brake was tucked away almost out of sight. The dashboard itself had enough trick indicators on it to fit a prima donna's Rolls.

It had no running board, the spare tire was housed as neatly as a watch crystal, it was supplied in the colors of the spectrum, and it pulled.

It pulled—but it couldn't pull the Eiffel Tower, or the "palais d'exposition," or the Citroen "croisières" all the way from Senegal to the Gobi Desert, or the plunging Monsieur Citroen himself.

All those things, these days in France, were just too much for a little light car—even if it did have a chromium cigarette lighter on the dash and a three-way horn.

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