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THE ARMS EMBARGO

THE President is to be commended for promptly invoking the neutrality law and embargoing munitions to Italy and Ethiopia.

Without waiting for either belligerent to declare war, or the League of Nations to decide whether an aggression had been committed, he sanely declared that "a state of war" prevails between the two countries, and acted accordingly.

A more timid chief executive might have held up the ban on arms indefinitely, until the United States had been formally and officially notified that a war was on.

His future course, however, may not be so easy. The present embargo was mandatory "upon the outbreak or during the progress of war between two or more foreign states." But should other nations enter the fray later, according to the language of the act, he "may" do the same to them. It does not say he "must."

Should the League use force to stop Italy, it would, of course, be war. Accordingly, it would be up to the President to decide whether arms could be shipped to Britain and such other powers as might become the League's instrument. The President has already indicated this country would not hamper the League's efforts to halt an aggressive war—provided America agrees who the aggressor is.

Yet, should a "League war" develop out of the present conflict, the preponderant sentiment of Congress and the American people doubtless will be for the strictest neutrality—hands off both sides, neither hampering nor helping either.

THEY PULLED A KNIFE

NEXT, the statesmen will invent cheap lies, put the blame upon the nation that is attacked. And so we arrive at another phase.

Remember the White Papers and the Red Papers and the various other colored documents that blossomed forth immediately after Armageddon broke in 1914? Each nation diligently declaring that another had started it?

And now we have what was to be expected. Poor little Italy was picked on.

"The bellicose and aggressive spirit developed in Abyssinia among the chieftains and soldiers who have been demanding action for a long time constitutes an immediate and direct menace to the Italian troops," says a Mussolini secretary. "This aggression has taken on a volume of importance which manifestly involved more serious immediate danger. In the presence of this situation the Italian government has found itself compelled to authorize the supreme command in Eritrea to take necessary steps in defense."

And in Geneva, the Italian delegate, Baron Aloisi, rises to declare solemnly to the League Council that Ethiopia had been "a constant and progressive menace to which Italy was obliged to answer by appropriate measures of defense."

Did Italy's defense consist in repelling an invasion. No. But in blazing away at everything in sight at Addis Ababa—many miles beyond the border—preliminaries to the "defense" having been the shipping for months across the sea of a quarter of a million troops and munitions, and then waiting for the rain to stop in order that the "defense" might begin.

It's the same old plea that shows up after every murder.

Ever hear the story of the two medical students who were inclined to rather rough practical-joking?

They dressed up a corpse that had been obtained for laboratory purposes, and one student supporting the dead man on either side, succeeded in reaching a saloon. Leaning the corpse against the bar in a way that indicated an obvious case of extreme drunkenness, one student ordered three drinks. After the two had consumed their they pointed at their friend to indicate that he would pay, and retired.

The bartender waited a few minutes and seeing no signs of cash forthcoming, reached over and touched the customer on the shoulder. This was repeated two or three times and brought no results. Whereupon the bartender picked up a bing starter and tapped the visitor on the head so hard that he fell to the floor.

Whereupon the two companions dashed in, leaned over and cried, "You've killed him!"

"Well," answered the bartender, "the ——— pulled a knife on me."

TIMELY—BUT WILL IT TAKE?

WHEAT will win the war! Remember that? There is plenty of timeliness in Secretary Wallace's warning not to let what's happening over in Africa run into another such farm land speculation as that which followed what was started in 1914.

Timely, yes. But we doubt whether the warning will be observed if the price of wheat which is already rising keeps on going up, and other farm prices follow. For it is human nature to speculate when a boom is on, whether the boom be in Florida lots or Goldman Sachs or Iowa soil.

But it may be of some value in a cautionary sense, to the extent of restraining speculative impetuosity and at least delaying the evil day, to recall now that the recent mortgage riots in the farm belt stem right back to the World War.

Wheat went above two dollars, cotton around 40 cents, and other prices more or less in ratio. The best farm land sold to selling as high as \$500 an acre, in, for example, Wallace's home state. Some 50 million acres hitherto uncultivated, and once locked to mother earth with hoops of grass, was plowed up and put to use, much of which we have wiped out of our eyes during those dust storms in the last few years.

Finally came the sudden end of the big bulge. Peace was restored. Battlefields went back into agriculture. Millions who had been fighting returned to work. And we don't have to look any farther to find the birthplace of the farm problem which plagued Harding, Coolidge, Hoover and Roosevelt, which finally brought forth the AAA, and made the over-enthusiastic potato grower of 1935 dream of the jail house.

War is mother of many more things than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

RILEY'S BIRTHDAY

IT is singularly fitting that today, anniversary of James Whitcomb Riley's birth, should be chosen for the dedication of the new therapeutic pool for crippled children at the hospital which bears his name.

The prattle of childish voices and the patter of little feet were music to Jim Riley. His poems are deathless tributes to his love of children.

His love of children was an intensification of his love for all humanity. His affection for his fellows was all-embracing. It shone through his poems like the beneficent rays of an altar fire.

Perhaps the most appealing character of Riley's poems was their homely quality. They struck responsive chords in the breast of every Hoosier because their humor was a part of Indiana's daily life. His was kindly humor for the most part, but Riley hated a "stuffed shirt" and was ever ready to deflate an overwhelming ego with a barbed witticism.

Although he occasionally made fun of others, he didn't hesitate to make himself the butt of his own humor. In letters to friends, he made a joke of the virtuosity which might have made him equally famous as an actor or musician.

His intimates remember Jim Riley for the gamine-like streak in his makeup. Perhaps an incident that happened long after his death is illustrative of this side of Riley.

There is a statue at Greenfield, Riley's home, built with the penny offerings of children. Each year, that statue is garlanded with flowers strewn over it by childish hands.

On one occasion child after child deposited an offering until finally a dirty little urchin approached the statue. Clutched in his hand were two straggly blossoms so wadded together that they looked like a snowball.

Instead of laying it reverently on the statue, some impulse led him to let fly with it and score a direct hit on the graven Riley countenance.

One of the poet's old friends standing by observed softly:

"That's the one of the whole lot that Jim would have liked best of all."

THE HOOVER ATTACK

TO Herbert Hoover goes credit for the best political attack on the Roosevelt Administration yet made by a Republican spokesman.

Although still in the uninspiring role of a political Jeremiah looking for grass in the streets, the former President voiced challenging truths in that part of his Saturday night speech which dealt with the inherent menace of expanding bureaucracy and the inevitable consequences of continuing national deficits.

Democratic incumbents can not dismiss with a shrug his statement that the so-called lower and middle classes, now carrying most of the burden of the government through invisible taxation, will shoulder even heavier burdens when pay-day for the New Deal's expenditures arrives, whether the reckoning be in "taxation, or repudiation or inflation." And the tax-the-rich law enacted by the last Congress makes that no less inevitable.

Yet it would have been a better speech, had some one else made it.

Mr. Hoover's record in regard to bureaucracy and deficits is not spotless. In at least two respects President Roosevelt's is much brighter.

The bureaucracy under Mr. Hoover was a sluggish thing which fumbled futilely with the depression. In contrast, the Roosevelt Administration has been one of enough vigor and direction to rekindle the people's faith in the strength and purpose of their national government.

Deficits under Mr. Hoover swelled yearly. When he left the White House, tax receipts and commerce were shrinking so fast that it seemed neither the government nor millions of Americans victimized by the depression would ever again know balanced budgets. Today, with the business outlook better than at any time since the 1929 cyclone hit, with an economic lift that has enabled millions of Americans to balance their personal budgets, the government's revenues are mounting because more people have something with which to pay taxes, and a balance in the nation's fiscal books will soon be possible.

For these hopeful circumstances, it would seem, credit should go not to the policies of Mr. Hoover, but to those of his successor.

DEFINING A LIBERAL

LABELS are always inadequate, slogans fail to satisfy, and catch-phrases never tell the whole story. Yet we live on labels.

One person calls himself a liberal. Another, a conservative. Another, a reactionary. Still another, a radical. And usually the fellow who doesn't agree with you goes into the particular category you despise the most. "Irreverence," as Mark Twain said, "is disrespect for the other man's God."

We have seen some, priding themselves on their conservatism, who under the skin were downright Bolshevik, and we have seen others who proudly wore the liberal label turn out in a pinch to be the most hidebound of bigots.

So when we can, it is well to elaborate a label into a definition, and we think the President did pretty well when he gave this as his conception of a liberal:

"The faith of a liberal," he said, "is profound belief not only in the capacities of individual men and women, but in the effectiveness of people helping one another."

We'd be interested in seeing any definition that seems better.

A WOMAN'S VIEWPOINT

By Mrs. Walter Ferguson

A SURPRISING thing has happened. A smart, up-to-the-minute moving picture comedy, which promises to be a box-office success, without a single kiss! I felt groggy with bewilderment when I left the theater where I had seen Claudette Colbert in "She Married Her Boss" for at first I couldn't think what it was about the show that had been so different. Then it struck me. What a friend of mine so eloquently called "lallygagging" had been entirely missing.

Whether this presages a new trend in pictures would be a wild guess, but the innovation is welcome. A good many patrons are in the mood for change. The inevitable clench and kiss at the end of every show are just a little too inevitable.

It is also interesting to speculate upon what this deletion may do to the life and habits of the younger generation. Perhaps both youngsters and adults would be more chary with their public displays of affection if the moving picture stars set the fashion. Perhaps necking would become the private enterprise it used to be. Perhaps spotlight kissing would even be considered a little vulgar in the best circles.

And I hope you're not going to accuse me of old-foginess for these remarks. Kisses are grand things in their place. But the exercise of some discrimination as to time, place and duration is now in order.

Kissing has steadily lost caste since it has been indulged in openly on the highways and in plate-glass restaurant windows. The meaning of a caress is entirely lost when you're willing to practice on every third person you meet.

That's why I hail Miss Colbert and her director for their restraint.

"When the Frost Is On the Punkin"



Forum of The Times

I wholly disapprove of what you say and will defend to the death your right to say it.—Voltaire.

(Times readers are invited to express their views in these columns, religious controversies excluded. Make your letters short, so all can have a chance. Limit them to 250 words or less. Your letter must be signed, but names will be withheld on request.)

SHIRLEY TEMPLE "LOVE" STORY DRAWS FIRE

By B. C. N.
Moving picture press-agency never was distinguished by its good taste. But an all-time low seems to have been set with the propagation in Hollywood of a story I have just read in The Times to the effect that Shirley Temple is having a love affair with a 10-year-old boy.

Some one put over a picture of these two children, with a caption stating that they are principals in Hollywood's latest "romance."

Shirley, we are assured, "fell hard" for the curly hair and dark eyes of the lad. Nothing more disgusting than this has ever come out of Hollywood. We expect bad taste in the press-agency of the adult stars. After all, they are presumably old and intelligent enough to stand it.

But that any one, even in Hollywood, should be so abysmally crude and stupid as to think that an obviously faked tale about a "romance" between two 10-year-olds would either please the general public or make life decent and pleasant for the children themselves—that, even in a land used to the imbecilities of movieland, is hard to believe.

He Condemns Our Neutrality

By J. G. Barton, Mobile, Ala.

The world has shrunk immeasurably since 1914. In European affairs we are no more desirous of remaining neutral now than we were then, if as much. Should a general conflict result from the current situation, our eventual inclusion is inevitable, regardless of our wishes. The last war cost millions of lives, billions of dollars and untold suffering. God knows what the next war may cost. The extermination of civilization as we know it is inconceivable.

The United States can stop this war.

My understanding is that the rightful purpose of a nation's great armament is to defend that nation from war. Never in the history of this country has a more urgent necessity presented itself for exercising that power.

It seems to me that right now our fleet should be steaming toward the Mediterranean to stand shoulder to shoulder with Britain. Such action would cause France and the lesser powers to fall in behind and Mussolini would collapse in his own bombast.

The total cost would be the fuel burned to the Mediterranean and return and we would emerge as world saviors.

Such action by us would undoubtedly have a salutary effect on other aggressively ambitious dictators and postpone to a distant date the world conflict which we all are so anxious about.

I believe that Theodore Roosevelt would have recognized this opportunity and have acted before this. Had Wilson made a similar gesture in July, 1914, undoubtedly the Kaiser would have hesitated.

Aside from the question of self-protection there is the moral issue. Has our national code reached a level where we can unconcernedly stand aside and watch a bully's murder of a weakling without even offering assistance when other help arrives?

Our present inaction probably considers any action politically unwise unless driven to it by public opinion.

I am a pacifist if pacifism means an abhorrence of all that modern war involves.

I am the father of two sons approaching cannon-fodder age. I am simply writing this to you as a thought which so far I have not seen voiced by any paper, as it seems to me to be the responsibility of the nation's press to guide public opinion toward any movement which might avert the possibility of our again becoming involved in a world-wide conflagration.

Sitting tight, doing nothing in splendid isolation and with eyes, ears and minds closed, we are drifting into another holocaust just as sure as God made little green apples.

TWO WARS—OURS AND THAT IN AFRICA

From Weed Patch Vets' Varieties Brown County CCC Organ

Today the newspapers of the nation are filled with articles about the war across the ocean. There is war—war between men—men slaughtering each other to carry out the personal aspirations of so-called leaders—WAR—war that mocks the Almighty with a pitiless butchering of His creatures—the ones created in His own image. WAR—human warfare—with all its filth and stink—its brutal passion—its glorification of all that is base and rotten.

Men sing and bands play—that the rhythm, like a barbaric chant, will induce a hypnotic indifference to the unspeakable horror of it all. WAR—desolate and destructive.

In America we have a different war. Our army of 600,000 being organized for another kind of conflict. Our trained officers leading the youth of the nation into a battle with our real enemies, insects, forest fires, erosion, and the other forces that would in time destroy us, if not conquered.

Men will sing in this war, too—a joyful theme of a joyful war—a constructive war—a happy war—a war without casualties—a war where "rookies" are made into bigger, healthier, stronger men—a war of conquest—and with a prize that counts—a war to save us and our children's children from our national enemies—not our brothers.

May God save us from the old kind of war—that we may win the war that really counts.

Insomnia

If death be only quiet sleep In a darkened room, Inert to life's green tapping Fate shoots through the gloom.

If death be sleeping, nothing more, And comes in this disguise, I shall not mind so much to go, I shall be glad to close my eyes.

Daily Thought

He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.—Proverbs xxii, 9.

PRAYER carries us halfway to God; fasting brings us to the door of His palace, and alms-giving procures us admission.—Koran.

Q—How can the odor of skunk be eradicated?

A—Labarraque's solution, which has for its active principle chlorinated soda, will remove the odor from clothing and skins.

Q—Is "A rolling stone gathers no moss," the whole of the proverb?

A—That is the complete proverb. A number of writers have added additional lines or words. For example, Thomas Tusser: "The stone that is rolling can gather no moss; Who often removeth is sure of a loss." Anna Jameson: "As the rolling stone gathers no moss, so the roving heart gathers no affections."

Q—What does the name Rushak mean?

A—It is a Central European name, derived from the Teutonic, and means "noise," "fame."

Q—What is "Blue John" milk?

A—A name sometimes given to milk so lacking in richness as to have a bluish color.

Washington Merry-Go-Round

By DREW PEARSON and ROBERT S. ALLEN

WASHINGTON, Oct. 7.—What the Navy, the general staff and President Roosevelt himself, really are worried about in the Ethiopian situation, is the Pacific. Surface conversation centers on the danger of war in Europe, a blockade, the hazards of American shipping.

But naval and military strategists are looking in the opposite direction. The area they are worried about is China, Siberia and Japan.

Reason for this might be summarized in the words of Col. Kenji Matsumoto, Japanese military attaché in Washington. Col. Matsumoto is extremely frank. Without the bat of an eye he says:

"Manchukuo is a very nice country, but it has no gold. The maritime provinces, eastern Siberia, have gold. They also have fish, timber, many things Japan needs. When we get ready we shall take them. This will be the first result of the Italo-Ethiopian war."

Even if Col. Matsumoto were not so frank, United States military and naval intelligence offices have ample reports, indicating all too vividly Japan's plans for taking not merely eastern Siberia, but the China coast, Hongkong and even the Dutch East Indies.

In fact, the Japanese foreign office, one year ago, was almost as frank as Col. Matsumoto. It suggested to both the Dutch and British governments that the time might come when Sumatra and Hongkong would become a liability to their present owners and they might wish to turn them over to Japan.

This is what has furored the brows of naval and military strategists, and even of the President himself.

THEY are not particularly concerned about Japan biting off a piece of Siberia. But for Japan to march down the China coast, develop the tremendous resources of the Yangtze Valley, the rich markets of South China, and corner the oil wells of the Dutch East Indies, would make her not only invincible in the Pacific, but one of the most powerful nations in the world.

This is why the State, War and Navy Departments are watching so intently the next move of Great Britain and the use of its powerful fleet. For it is axiomatic that once the British fleet becomes definitely involved in the Mediterranean, the Japanese cut lose with impunity in the Orient.

It is also why the British are doing a lot more thinking than appears on the surface, to decide whether to go the whole hog against Italy. Finally, it is why there have been some very informal and very secret soundings to learn just what would be the position of the American fleet in relation to the British fleet, in case war breaks and spreads to the Pacific.

In the latter event, there is one group of strategists within the Administration which believes that the United States should throw its weight emphatically with the British.

CONFIDENTIAL cabled reports indicate that the British admiralty is not seriously worried about the Italian fleet. British warships could wipe the Italian navy off the Mediterranean, the admiralty figures. But in doing so, the British would lose at least two or three battleships and three or four cruisers.

The admiralty considers this inevitable. And this really worries them. For such a loss would mean a British navy inferior to Japan's. It would also mean a free hand for Japan in the Far East—a free hand which would begin the minute hostilities started in the Mediterranean.

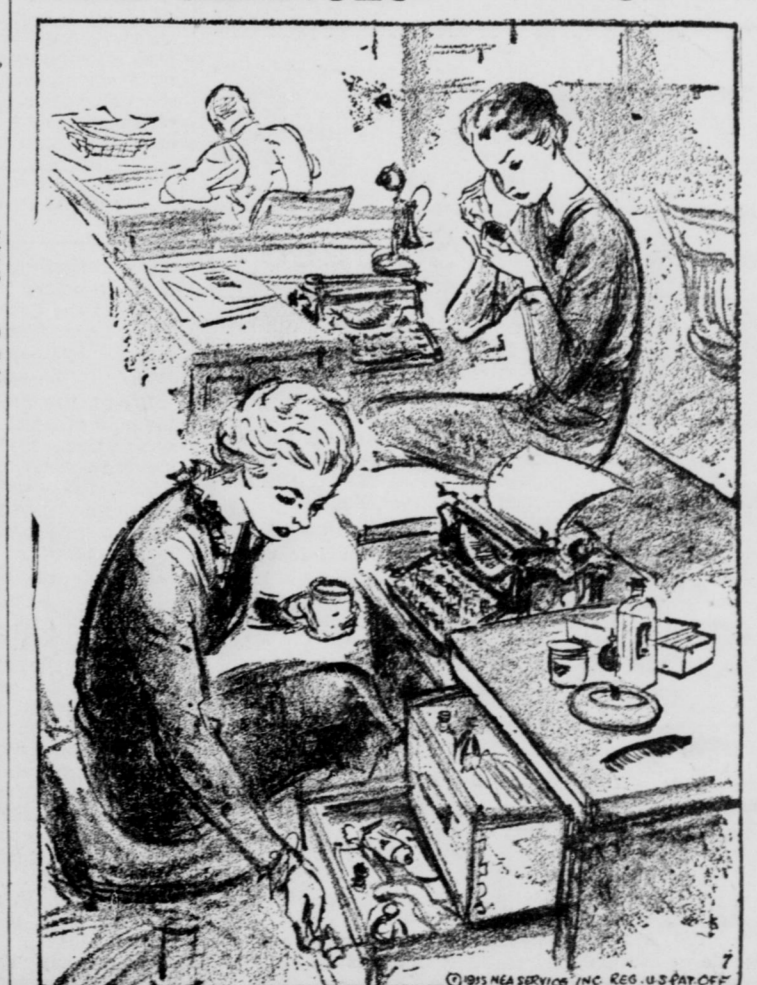
Mussolini knows this. The last thing he wants is war with the British, but he figures Britain will back down.

Mussolini also knows that the Russians are powerless to help the British in the Far East. He himself encouraged Hungary, Italy's ally, to form a supplementary alliance with Germany and Poland, in part directed against the Soviet. The minute Moscow is crossed with trouble in Siberia, Poland plans to bite off the Ukraine.

THEREFORE, the only country which can be of material assistance to the British is France. Hence the constant dickerings between London and Paris.

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SIDE GLANCES By George Clark



"You just can't keep an orderly desk around this office. Now somebody has been into my vanishing cream."