

ASTOR

Today's romantic question now is unanswered. Mary Astor now admits she was married today -- married again. At first she denied she had wed the suave young Mexican Manuel del Campo. A lady's word, of course, was not to be doubted. So for a while we had to take the film star's answer - "No, not married." Now that's changed to "Yes."

Mary Astor and del Campo took a plane from Hollywood to Yuma, Arizona. There they hurried to a judge, and were made man and wife. Immediately afterward, del Campo took the sky route south to his home in Mexico - to attend the funeral of his father. The elder del Campo had been a government official in the far off days of the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz. A family of distinction, a family that has recently lost its wealth - they say.

Mary Astor flew back to Hollywood, where she was instantly besieged by reporters with questions. There's always a great sentimental interest in the chiming of wedding bells for a beautiful film star, and romantic curiosity was intensified by

recollections of that law suit between Mary Astor and Dr. Thorpe, with its vivacious diary, and languishing testimony. Maybe the full story of today's events are in the diary.

At first she said it was just a case of a boy friend on his way to Mexico and she accompanied him as far as the border. Later she told all.

So our craving for a sentimental story is not thwarted.

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And here's another from away back a hundred and fifty years ago, when Thomas Jefferson's daughter was a bride.

This comes in the news today because of a lawsuit entered by the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County, Virginia, against a New York dealer. The county demands the return of a rare document, a bond signed by Thomas Jefferson for the wedding of his daughter. It begins, "Whereas, there is a marriage suddenly intended to be solemnized, between Thomas Randolph, Jr., and Martha Jefferson." It goes on with old-fashioned legal phraseology, which nevertheless evokes a picture of a sudden marriage in crinoline days.

STORM

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I was talking to a man from Oklahoma today and he told me that in years past the usual season for dust storms was between the end of winter and the coming of spring rains - the time beginning with the equinox on March 21st and the showery, drizzly time in late spring. Today, we are more than a month before the equinox, and yet Oklahoma and adjacent states have already had five dust storms! Tonight the fifth is blowing, the familiar and gloomy story of the ^{dark rolling cloud,} ~~dust storm~~. Gloomy is right - the black blizzard turning day into night, crops destroyed, traffic paralyzed, human life jeopardized. ~~Straight~~ Street lights shining dimly through the gritty twilight. Churches turned into emergency hospitals for cases of dust pneumonia.

While the dust is blowing west of the Mississippi Valley, the United States Weather Bureau gives us a report for the region east of the Mississippi. There January was a month of record-breaking rainfall. In the Ohio Valley sixty million tons of water fell from the sky, in three weeks - enough water to cover the entire Ohio Valley for a depth of sixteen inches. ^{No wonder they had floods.} Those three weeks of January downpour were equal to the normal rainfall for an

entire year. And top soil was washed away, eroded, in sixty-five per cent of the Ohio Valley. Why? Once that country was ninety-eight per cent forest. Now only thirty-seven per cent is woodland.

It's all part of the story of freak weather this year, when winter brought sultry temperatures to the east and fruit destroying frost to California.

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Now let's see what the President proposed today. It has a familiar sound -- crop insurance, a way to insure the farmers against poor crops and bad years. Crop insurance plus a storage of reserves, agricultural reserves.

The basic idea is as old as ancient Egypt, when the Pharaohs stored up hordes of grain in the fat years, so that there would be food in the land when the lean years came. That was a storage of reserves, agricultural reserves. The Bible tells us how Joseph put the scheme into practice for Pharaoh.

Now-a-days, things are a little more complicated than that. Instead of a Pharaoh, we have a President -- who wants to combine crop insurance with that storage of reserves. The White House idea goes this way: Let the government insure the farmers against bad years, crop failure. Let the premium

RETAKE

The President sent another special message to Congress today, and in it he took a side glance at the Supreme Court. He proposed things and, while doing so, he suggested the question -- what will the nine justices say?

At the end of today's special message, the President remarked to Congress: "May I repeat what I have suggested in a former message?" So let's see what it was that he suggested in a former message. That was two days ago, when the White House proposed to Congress a plan for helping farm tenants. At that time the President said to the lawmakers -- "Most Americans believe that our form of government does not prohibit action on behalf of those who need help."

Today in his repetition of that same thought the President spoke of economic and social reforms that are essentially national in scope, and declared that the nation does not believe that our form of government was ever intended to prevent them.

Boiled down to the simplest language the President is ~~fighting~~ ^{citing} his victory in the November election and saying the people are for his ideas -- in case the Supreme Court ~~is~~

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for this insurance be collected from the farmers in the form of cash or in the form of agricultural products. Put the money in a fund, and store away the produce. Thus we'll have both cash reserve and a crop reserve. When bad times comes this can be used to pay insurance money to the farmers. Also -- the crop reserve will make up the deficiency in the country's food supplies.

The President's message today proposes to start with wheat. He suggests that wheat insurance could be put into effect for the crop of next year, 1938. From wheat the insurance idea would be extended to ~~xxx~~ other agricultural commodities -- until all farms and all crops are covered.

It's a good deal reminiscent of the grain policies of the Pharaohs of old, but then ancient Egypt had no Supreme Court. X An indignant Pharaoh might have turned his nine justices into mummies. Times do change.

GREGG

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I ran across the President of the National Arts Club today, but we didn't discuss the arts. We talked about shorthand. Because the National Arts President happens to be Dr. Gregg, the creator of the Gregg Shorthand System, which I believe becomes more and more predominant among the stenogs, taught in public schools, and all that sort of thing. Naturally, the dean of shorthand spoke of people who have risen high by the accurate notebook and fast pencil~~ing~~. He himself is an example, an emigrant boy, who rose from penniless poverty to creative pre-
dominance in the stenographic world.

But Dr. Gregg didn't talk about himself. A rare raconteur, he told me the tale of a factory town boy twenty-five years ago who was so swift with the curling strokes that he was sent to report a speech by Woodrow Wilson, then running for the presidency. He did that so well, that Wilson offered him a job as his personal secretary - and the boy didn't want to take it. Because he was an enthusiast for Teddy Roosevelt, the Rough Rider.

Yet he finally accepted the post, and was Woodrow Wilson's

shorthand secretary during the eight years of the presidency and at the Versailles Peace Conference.

It was at Versailles that the young fellow distinguished himself - as a connoisseur of detective stories.

President Wilson, as history records, was an omnivorous reader of mystery sleuthing yarns. ^{They helped him} ~~he hardly could~~ get his mind off things and go asleep. He read them more than ever in those Paris days ^{of} ~~with~~ Lloyd George and Clemenceau. But it was a problem to get English language detective stories in France. So the stenographic secretary was given ~~x~~ the task of procuring the proper kind of a crime chasing ^{thriller} ~~killer~~ for the President. He did the job with energy and good selection.

Today that one-time presidential stenographer is high up as a court reporter in New York. But that's the smaller part of it - he's also a writer of detective stories. Picking them for Wilson, he read so many - that he learned the technique of wizard sleuthing fiction. And now he grinds them out.

I mentioned to Dr. Gregg a standard comic theme in the realm of shorthand - stenographic errors, the funny bulls the

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cute girl stenographers make. He told me the biggest laugh he
had ever seen ^{it} concerned a letter inquiring about a certain man's
credit, how much credit he was good for. The boss dictated a
quick note to go on the bottom of the letter. He dictated: "The
sky is the limit." The girl stenographer transcribed it: "This
guy is the limit!!" That's the way the credit rating went out,
which was the limit.

SPAIN

The word from Spain tonight is - counter-attack. (A climactic battle of thunder and death is on to cut the eastern communications of Madrid, and surround the City. The clue to the military situation right now is that word, counter-attack, the Left-Wingers reacting with a desperate drive against the Rebel assault. This must mean that Franco's mechanized legions have advanced so far and into such strategic territory that the only thing for the Socialists to do is to force them back - or else.) Counter-attack, or the City is doomed!

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The international slant today is that Portugal still refuses to join the embargo on war materials to Spain. At the Non-Intervention Committee meeting in London, ~~today~~, the Portuguese delegation kept on saying, "No" to every proposal to have a neutral non-intervention patrol placed along the Portuguese-Spanish ~~Spain~~ frontier. So the only thing that is really settled is the international agreement to stop all foreign volunteers from going to Spain to fight. That deadline remains set for midnight on Saturday.

I had a reminder today of what an old theme that is -

volunteers fighting in Spain. At an art exhibit I saw an old picture on chintz, a memento of a war in Spain long ago. And French soldiers were in it. That print on chintz depicted an episode of battle, and a curious affair it was. You will see how curious, when I tell you the name of the exhibition pictures. It's called - "The Pig in Art." ~~Ex~~ My droll and humorous friend, Karl Freund, the art expert, has gathered works of art that portray our ^{roly-poly} ~~poly-poly~~ friend, the pig.

In the case of the French fighting in Spain, it's shown how a couple of them were taken prisoners. They were trying to catch a pig and had it by the tail. The squealing porker dragged them along, dragged them right across to the enemy line, where they were made prisoners. A ~~reminder~~ reminder with a laugh, how foreigners have always been fighting in Spain.

Neel Enslin looks rather anxious. What is it Neel? Do you want to interrupt me for a moment?

SUPREME COURT

There is another compromise proposal concerning the Supreme Court. Senator Burke, Democrat from Nebraska said today that he was going to propose an amendment to the Wheeler Bohn plan. This would give Congress the right to override a Supreme Court decision, a two-thirds Congressional majority necessary to do the trick. Senator Burke wants to put a time limit to such an amendment. He would have a provision, according to which the plan would have to go through in a year. Also there is further idea of having such an amendment ratified by State conventions instead of State legislatures. This was the way the repeal amendment was put through.

LINDBERGH

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Tonight two of the most interesting people on this globe are in one of the most fascinating of places. A place called Bahrein. Look at your map and you'll find that Bahrein is an island in the Persian Gulf, just off the desert coast of Arabia. Investigate the legends of Arab~~ya~~, and you'll find that Bahrein is an island of fantastic myth, supposed to be the place where Sinbad-the-Sailor encountered some of his astonishing adventures. Or, if you want to be matter of fact and prosey, look into the commercial records of today, and you'll see that Bahrein is an important center for the pearl fisheries. Off its shores, from times immemorial, the pearl divers have descended to the floor of the eastern sea and brought up the treasured oyster that holds the gleaming ~~pearl~~ ^{Jem.}

But who are the two people who tonight are on Sinbad-the-Sailor's island of pearls? Why - the Lindberghs. The Flying Colonel and his lady, who flies with him.

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Day before yesterday, the sky jaunting Lindberghs were forced down in a sandstorm on the Arabian desert. Yesterday they were in Bagdad, where the shadow of Haaron-al-Rashind walks

through Arabian Nights. Today, their plane winged out over the Persian Gulf, and swooped down at Bahrein. To the wandering shade of Sinbad-the-Sailor, it must have seemed far more remarkable than the extraordinary bird - the Roc*. On the island of the pearl fisheries tonight the Lindberghs are being entertained by that interesting potentate, the Sheik of Bahrein, Sheik of the pearl divers.

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So the Lindberghs are on the trail of romance - the trail to India, to be precise. But India, ^{land of} also romance.

WIFE

In London, in the House of Commons, they've been having a debate about a law that deals with domestic troubles. A member from Glasgow arose and declared himself against too strict a law governing family fights. To illustrate, he told the story of a well-to-do Glasgow citizen, who was known to have frequent uproars with his storm-and-strife. This braw Scott and his wife staged such a household battle that the neighbors next door called the police, and the domestic quarrel ended in a Glasgow police court.

Did the law and its rigors have any effect on that embattled Scottish couple? Not at all. The well-to-do husband simply bought the two houses on either side of his own, bought them at a cost of fifty thousand dollars. And, is keeping them vacant. Just so he and his wife can have their frequent fights without interference by the neighbors. Those two over in Glasgow are probably having a battle right now, as we now go on to -- to Supper ----- and - - - - SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.