

L.I. - Luroco. Monday, Dec. 21, 1936.

46

One piece of today's news offers a glimmer of hope for the peace of Europe. At any rate, it indicates an end of the unfriendly feelings between Mussolini and John Bull, also between Italy and France. Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay announced almost simultaneously that their former ~~and~~ Legations in Ethiopia will be transformed into Consulates General.

On the face of it that doesn't seem much. But in diplomatic language it means that the British and French governments now accept ~~it~~ as an accomplished fact that Ethiopia is ~~now~~ Italian territory. To us laymen, of course it ~~is~~ ^{is} a slightly comic ~~situation~~. Outwardly London and Paris declining to say, "We recognize your conquest and salute your king as Emperor of Ethiopia." Instead of that ~~they~~ ^{they} say ^{ing} "We are sending Consuls General to the seat of your Government in Ethiopia." In such fashion governments achieve the process of what the Chinese call "saving face."

But as one cloud disappears from the European horizon, another takes its place. The burning of that Russian

47
freighter, the Konsomol, supposedly by Spanish rebels, ~~and~~ produced some portentous reactions throughout Europe today. As we learned this morning, Moscow is naturally furious.

There's been no official utterance on the subject. But the Soviet press screamed ~~all~~ aloud with indignation, claiming that General Franco and his forces should be denounced and treated as pirates. A spokesman for the Soviet government intimated that Moscow might ask other governments to agree and to join in such a declaration. If that were done any ship flying the flag of the Spanish Nationalist Rebel government might be ~~xx~~ sunk on sight. Failing this, Russia might act alone and send its warships to clear the seas of all Spanish rebel naval vessels. It could never be expected that Mussolini and Hitler would accept such an action without a fight. In other words, here again are the makings of a fine general international scrap.

However, there's a ray of hope even in this situation. It isn't definitely known how that Russian freighter, the Konsomol met her fate. Indeed, it isn't positively known what happened. The only thing sure is that she sailed from the Black Sea

48

a little more than two weeks ago, was ~~in~~ due at Gibraltar six days ago, and has not been seen since she passed through the Dardenelles. So, actually, there is no proof that the Konsomol was sunk, let alone that she was destroyed by any of General Franco's warships.

POPE

Ailing as he is, Pope Pius the Eleventh is determined to broadcast his usual message to the world on Christmas Eve. That doesn't meet with the approval of his physicians, who have ordered him to avoid all exertion. But the word from Vatican City is that the seventy-nine year old Pontiff wants to show his people in all parts of the earth that he is not as ill as he has been reported.

The official spokesman of the Vatican announced today that it isn't true that the Pope had suffered a relapse. All the grave rumors that have been circulated have been greatly exaggerated. And so, the Pontiff's message will be broadcast all over the earth on Christmas Eve. It will be heard in America at half past six in the morning, Eastern Standard Time.

CHINA

A touch of love interest is being thrown into the Chinese melodrama. (Late this afternoon we learned that the wife of the kidnapped ~~Marshal~~ ^{Commander-in-Chief} Chiang Kai-shek will board a plane and fly to Sian, where he is being held a prisoner. There she'll make her own plea to the young Marshal Chang to release her husband.)

Obviously, the Nanking authorities approved of this romantic act of the Generalissimo's pretty young wife. The gossip from Nanking is that they even hope this may provide a peaceful solution to ~~China's~~ the Chinese crisis. If her plea melts the heart of the rebellious young Marshal Chang, it will bring an end to a most anxious and ticklish situation. There's an intimation that Madame Chiang Kai-shek may take with her more than her personal eloquence and charm. She may be also equipped with a certified check. ^{anyhow -} If she succeeds, it will relieve the government forces of the necessity of bombarding the ancient capital of Shensi Province.

As for the lady herself, she's of particular interest to us in America. ~~She's~~ one of three sisters of the Soong family. Their brother, Dr. T.V. Soong, educated at Harvard, was former

Finance Minister of China.

All three of the attractive Soong sisters went to school in America. The eldest of them is Madame Sun Yat Sen, widow of the great leader of the Chinese revolution.

Their father was a poor Chinese sailor who landed in Wilmington, North Carolina, fifty-six years ago. A rich tobacco manufacturer took an interest in the young immigrant and sent him to Duke University. He went back to China full of American ideas, became a teacher and went into the printing business as a means of a livelihood. He made a fortune out of it, printing Chinese bibles for American missionaries.

CUBA

Before long we shall probably hear of a new government in Cuba. President Martino Gomez was engaged today in moving his personal effects from the palace. He hasn't resigned yet. **But**, it's expected to be ^{only} a question of hours. He will veto the ^{school} heavy tax on sugar, and then resign. Colonel Batista claims he has the signatures of a hundred and twelve Cuban legislators, enough to impeach the President.

51
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(Though a change in the presidency is indicated, the actual ruler of Cuba will be the same. Colonel Batista, the one-time sergeant-stenographer who made himself dictator, will run the show as before.) The only thing that will really change will be the name of the President. And of course the new president will be one upon whom Batista can count not to oppose him, ~~in~~ who won't veto the law for a tax on every bag of sugar to finance schools controlled by the army. — the children to be taught by army sergeants.

EARTHQUAKE

Death wrote tonight's story from San Salvador. Two hundred known to be dead, and nobody knows how many more.

Twenty-five thousand homeless. The historic old city of

San Vicente is one mass of ruins. Only one lone stone ~~clock~~
clock-tower remains of the picturesque town founded ^{by the golden Conquistador Don} ~~Alvarado~~ Alvarado
four hundred years ago. ^{ff} Digging among the ruins, relief

workers are still dragging out bodies of the victims. Train-loads of refugees, including more than five hundred injured, are pouring into San Salvador, the capital of the Republic.

52
All the forces of the government, under the personal charge of President Martinez himself, have been mobilized for rescue and relief.

One pitiful detail of the story is that the most violent shock struck San Vicente just as a religious procession carrying an ~~image~~ image of the town's patron saint, was passing through the public square.

Father Joseph J. Lynch, famous seismologist of Fordham University, tells us that his seismograph registered two more violent earthquake shocks today.

Menzel.

Dec. 21, 1936.

When we hear the word astronomer or astrophysicist, we think of a solemn gent who spends his life peering through a telescope with never a chance to smile. But I know a different kind of astrophysicist, a scientist who can see a joke just as readily as he can observe a solar eclipse. He's a friend of mine from Denver, Dr. Donald H. Menzel, now of the great Harvard Observatory at Cambridge, Massachusetts. Dr. Menzel was here with me last June, just before he left for Siberia at the head of the Harvard Expedition to observe the total eclipse of the sun at Akbulak in west Central Asia. Now he's here again -- speaking at the Brooklyn Academy of Music tomorrow night. And he an interesting and witty astronomer. Now about astrophysics, Dr. Menzel, did you see anything in Russia that amused you?

Dr. Menzel: The funniest thing I saw was in one of the Soviet parks of culture and rest, as they call their recreation centers. To be sure, there's precious little culture and practically no rest about them. One feature struck me:- they have targets in these parks. At these the boys and girls were throwing balls about the hardness and size of a baseball. The targets are constructed in the shape of a man with an open mouth. And whom do you suppose those targets were painted to represent?

L.T.: I'll bite, whom? Walter Duranty or Earl Browder?

Dr. Menzel: Hitler and Mussolini!

L.T.: What about the serious side of your astrophysical expedition? What discoveries did you make in observing that solar eclipse?

Dr. Menzel: we had the best of success. Conditions were splendid for observation. As for what we discovered, I can't quite tell you all of that. The calculations have not been completely worked out yet. There's a great deal of theoretical mathematics in it -- and we have been back only seven months.

L.T.: Only five months -- Dr. Menzel, your astrophysics must be as complicated as a fellow's income tax.

Dr. Menzel: I prefer astrophysics.

ALLIGATORS

Somewhere in New Jersey in the neighborhood of Port Jervis, a couple of alligators are roaming the countryside.

As I don't wish to create a panic in that region, I hasten to add that those gators are babies and not as yet capable of devouring, or even injuring, either man or beast.

They were making quite a distinguished trip when they got lost in the New Jersey hills. One of them had been sent by Mayor Ted Brown of West Palm Beach, Florida, as a present to Mayor LaGuardia of New York. The other was a gift from Postmaster Carr of West Palm Beach to his big boss, Postmaster General Sunny Jim Farley. They were in the airplane that crashed on its way from Miami to Newark, when Pilot Dick Merrill, Harry Richman's former partner, was blown sixty miles off his course ^{that weekend wild} ~~in Saturday night~~ storm. No serious casualties, fortunately, though Chief Pilot Dick Merrill is in the hospital at Port Jervis with a broken jaw and a broken right ankle. One of the passengers was slightly ~~but not gravely~~ injured. All eight of the passengers agreed that they owe their lives to the superb skill ~~by which~~ ⁱⁿ Merrill ~~avoided~~ ^{ing} a far worse accident.

As for Dick himself, his chief annoyance today is not his broken jaw nor his broken right ankle. He's sore because it interrupts his record of more than two million miles as transport pilot without ~~incurring~~ injury to a single

passenger, to himself or a plane. But cheer up

Dick, your passengers are okay, and you've only got a broken leg and a broken jaw. Pretty good in 2 million miles!

SUPREME COURT

56
The President ~~Roosevelt~~ received a Christmas present today that he'll probably welcome. Especially as it comes from a source that hitherto has not been ~~terrifically~~ ^{altogether} munificent to him. ^{It} The United States Supreme Court handed down a decision, another victory for the New Deal. The Embargo Act of Nineteen Thirty-Four is constitutional. So said seven of the eight Justices. That's the legislation which gave the President the power to forbid war munitions makers to sell their wares to either Bolivia or Paraguay during the struggle over the Gran Chaco.

A most important principle was involved. The result of that ruling will be to allow considerable discretion to future presidents in their efforts to keep us from getting mixed up in other peoples' wars. It's bound to have a strong influence on Congress when future neutrality laws come up for action.

For instance, the Supreme Court says categorically: "Both upon principle and precedent, we conclude there is sufficient warrant for the broad discretion vested in the President." In other words, the chief executive should have his

hands untied when dealing with foreign relations.

The act in question had been attacked by airplane and arms manufacturers. They claimed it was unconstitutional. But now the Supreme Court says ~~was~~ *it's okay.*

57
Another ^{one} law, of great importance to farmers will be reviewed by the Court. That's the Frazier-Lemke Act providing for a three-year moratorium on farm mortgages. It isn't strictly part of the New Deal, because it's known that the White House looked askance at it and was exceedingly doubtful whether it was constitutional. But it passed both houses of Congress with a whoop. Now its opponents claim it is unconstitutional. The Supreme Court today consented to review the measure. But that will be months ahead.

LONDON

If you had been standing on the White House steps today you might have thought that the presidential election had been won by Alfred M. Landon. For there was the Kansas Governor, large as life and twice as natural, being given a reception as though he were President-elect instead of defeated candidate.

Reporters buzzed and cameramen flashed their bulbs. Governor Landon smiled, chuckled and answered every question freely and frankly -- not being bothered by questions about what his administration intends to do. He had spent an hour chatting with his successful rival, and when they asked him, "What did you talk about?" he replied: "The President told me about his South American trip, I told him about my Florida trip. Said Governor Landon, "We swapped lies about fishing." But he admitted that wasn't the only topic they discussed. What were the others? Christmas and grandchildren.

Furthermore -- Mr. Landon even kidded himself with gusto. Among the correspondents there was a newspaper woman from Maine. "Come on", he cried, taking her by the arm, "You and I must be

photographed together." The lady was shy and tried to back away. But Governor Landon wouldn't hear of it. "You don't understand," he said. "This is Maine." Thereupon a big laugh went up from the crowd.

It's unusual for the successful and defeated presidential candidates to get together so soon after the fateful day to enjoy each other's company in a friendly, chatty way.

And tonight's Gridiron Club banquet ought to be one of the liveliest they've ever had -- both Roosevelt and Landon there, the annual newspaper affair when everybody and everything is a fit subject for kidding, even the President himself. And now something that isn't kidding: -- So Long Until Tomorrow.