

46
GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

When Lowell Thomas asked me to take over for him tonight, he said he thought a British viewpoint on the news might be refreshing for the radio audience. I don't know -- I ^{have} been in the United States so much that in England, ^{I expect} they regard me as having quite an American viewpoint. So we'll see.

47
In any case, our viewpoints are all the same on one thing to be talked about tonight -- the Easter season, Good Friday. All Christendom commemorates the day today -- and so for that matter do the Jewish people. It is a coincidence that this year Good Friday for the Christians and the Passover for the Jews fall on the same day. Not such a great coincidence, because the two seasons of commemoration always occur at about

the same time. The Bible is clear about the reason for that because Jesus went up to Jerusalem during the Passover season, and there was crucified.

The dates are usually different, because the Christians use one kind of calendar way in reckoning the time for Easter, while the Jews use another in calculating the Pas^sover.

In Rome today amid the solemn observances, one thing of political portent was observed. The customary solemn ritual was celebrated in the Sistine Chapel, and as usual many cardinals

LEAD - 3

and the diplomatic corps to the Holy See were there. But not the diplomats of Germany -- the German members were conspicuously absent. This was significant -- because of the controversy between the Vatican and the Hitler Reich, the troubled situation of the Catholic Church in Germany.

48
But the most dramatic observance of Good Friday and Easter is to be found in Spain -- amid the terror of the civil war. I scanned today's news of the Easter season in Spain with an especial interest -- because last fall I was at Burgos, at General Franco's headquarters.

SPAIN

Today behind the rebel lines the churches were thronged. With the insurgents it is a holy war. When I was at Franco's headquarters in October hardly a man did I see that wasn't wearing either a medal or a scapular. Today over the ancient city of Seville the Good Friday hush settled. The famous holy images of carved wood, many of them centuries old, were drawn through the silent streets escorted by the hooded members of the confraternities. It was the most impressive Good Friday Seville has ever known, different this year than ever before in history. For the women shed their shoes and tramped miles over the hard stones as an offering to Heaven for their husbands, sweethearts and fathers fighting with the Rebel Army. There were more than ten thousand of these women and girls, many in mourning. And on the Left Wing Side, too, in spite of Anti-Church propaganda, they're celebrating the Easter season.

In many parts of the front, fighting flagged and in the lines outside Madrid the troops were playing football. Only one Rebel bomb crashed into the city today.

In the northern part of the central province of Cordova bitterest fighting continued. Near Pozo Blanco the Rebels are struggling to get control of the mercury mines at Almaden. Mercury is almost worth its weight in gold in Spain today -- it's used in processing fuses for shells. The counter-attack by the government troops sent the rebels surging back once more. Italian troops are said to have been in the rout -- Madrid commanders claim there were ten thousand of them.

Well, so the pendulum swings to and fro in Spain. When I saw General Franco at his Headquarters in Burgos last Fall the capture of Madrid seemed to be at hand. The whole army vibrated with the spirit of victory. But five months have rolled by since

then and the Rebels are seen to rely more and more upon their foreign auxiliaries. But not with much success. The Madrid Government took up this point today. It issued an angry note to the non-intervention powers, Great Britain and France, declaring that despite control Spain will provide herself with arms and ammunition when and how she can. The war would ^{have} ~~be~~ ended months ago, they say, but for the mistaken and suicidal policy of non-intervention observed by the democratic powers of Europe and ~~the systematical ignored~~ systematically ignored by the Fascist states.

These and other angry protests against German and Italian intervention in the Spanish War will remain in the letter baskets of London and Paris over Easter. British and French statesmen clearly hope that the Easter peace will smooth ^{out} ~~down~~ ruffled feelings.

BOSWELL

51
The American news today tells us something about a famous story, a story peculiarly British. It's the Eighteenth Century friendship of those two inseparables, Dr. Samuel Johnson and his admiring biographer, James Boswell. From time to time for the past dozen years, we've had new revelations about Boswell and Johnson - thanks to an American collector of rare books and documents, Colonel Ralph Isham of New York. In a medieval castle in Ireland, he found a precious store of Boswell manuscripts, which he published. Several months ago, he went back to that same Malahide Castle, near Dublin, and there he made new discoveries of letters, diaries, documents,

(Today Colonel Isham ~~brings~~ is back in New York with a whole ~~heap~~ new heap of Boswell and Johnson papers - *the matchless prize* chief among which is *an original* a ~~the~~ diary kept by Dr. Johnson, a manuscript in the handwriting of the great lexicographer.) But ^{the} one thing I find the most beguiling is a mere legal document, a solemn and formal law paper. In this Boswell, in the last year of his life, makes a grant of five hundred pounds to his daughter Veronica. Why? The reason goes back twenty-two years, when Veronica was a small

child. At that time she did something that ~~pleased~~ ^{delighted} him exceedingly.

52 The document puts it ^{in Boswell's prim} ~~this~~ way: "I was pleased with her ^{infantile} ~~infantile~~

attention to my illustrious friend, Dr. Samuel Johnson, when he was in Scotland."

The literary world well knows the colossal admiration Boswell had for his illustrious friend. In the Journal which Boswell wrote, describing how he took Dr. Johnson to his home in Scotland, he mentions the friendship between the ^{ponderous} ~~great~~ lexicographer and the tiny Veronica. Johnson was a most formidable figure, with his enormous learning, his roaring voice in argument, his huge ugliness, his immense girth. He was a figure to frighten the children - but not the baby Veronica, just four months old.

Boswell in his Journal relates how the child was amused by the great man. Johnson's manners and his ^{ungainly movements} ~~moods~~ made her giggle.

She insisted on being with him, climbing on his knee, prattling and laughing. And the mighty lexicographer loved it.

In his Journal that year Boswell made the note that he would reward his daughter Veronica with an extra share of his fortune, because of her childish graces toward the colossal doctor.

53 Today, the documents which Colonel Isham bring back, show that James Boswell kept his promise. Twenty-two years later, in the last year of his life, he granted an extra five hundred pounds, a large sum in those days, to his daughter - then a young woman. This - to reward her for "her ^{infantile} ~~infantile~~ attention to my illustrious friend."

Last evening a great air liner crashed in the Allegheny mountain country, not far from Pittsburgh, and killed thirteen people. Why? What was the reason for the crash? The night was clear, and there was little wind. The airport was only six miles away, and within a few hundred yards of the crash there was a level meadow which might have provided reasonably safe landing. So what happened to make the luxury airliner take a deadly downward plunge from seventeen hundred feet?

54 At about the same time as the disaster, a curious thing was witnessed in a town of New York -- Hornell. Two sea gulls descended in the business section -- settled flapping on a main street. They were forced down by ice on their wings. The ice had accumulated so heavily that the gulls were carried to earth. A game warden thawed their wings out, then turned them loose. Today it seems that what happened to the gulls also happened to the ill-fated plane.

After an investigation, the explanation is given -- that ice forced the airliner to descend from an altitude of ten thousand feet, ^{to} and get below the clouds. Inspectors found masses

of ice on parts of the wreckage. And today an airline official makes the statement that the formation of ice on the ~~control~~ ^{ailerons} ~~surfaces~~ made the plane unmanageable, and caused it to plunge headlong into the hillside. *Nothing ever before known.*

So, as it appears today -- the prognostication of the two sea gulls is correct, wild fowl forced down by ice. The ancient Romans used to practice divination by the flight of birds -- augury. Today we find an explanation of sky disaster hinted by the wings of sea gulls.

55
There is an irony in today's news that gives us another story of wild fowl -- this time a curious oddity, a wild goose racing railroad trains in New Jersey. For the past two days, between Point Pleasant and Long Branch, a wild goose with beating wings and an outstretched neck, has been flying alongside the speeding trains -- and keeping up with them. The commuters have named him -- Old Honk, and rush to the car windows to watch him match his wings against the speed of steam on the rails.

Old Honk flies low, about fifty feet from the cars. When the train stops he stops too and circles around. He waits until the train gets up speed, then with a burst of wing power

catches up. Old Honk is sporting.

The train passed a lake, whereupon the bird could not forget its wild goose nature. Reverting to type, Old Honk made a wide detour over the lake, and circled it for a turn or two. He seemed to have lost the train altogether this time. But -- not at all. With a brilliant flash of swiftness he flew after the speeding locomotive and ~~the~~ coaches, and triumphantly led the train into Long Branch.

NEWSPAPER FEUD

56
In England we read a good many stories of American newspaper life, with its tradition of - get the story, no matter what! Today, there's an example of that tradition, an extreme example of it. The editor got the story in his last gasp.

At Alturas, California, Claude McCracken, editor of the "Modoc Daily Mail", was at dinner with his wife and a guest.

In came Harry French, son of ~~a~~ ^{the} rival editor, with whom McCracken had waged many an editorial war. French came in through the

kitchen, drew a pistol, and opened fire on McCracken - ~~fatally~~ ^{mortally}

wounding him. The ~~stricken~~ ^{dying} editor was hurried to a hospital, and

there he dictated ^{the} ~~a~~ story ^{for the wire} like any reporter ~~• a telegram.~~

"Tonight about six thirty," he wired, "Harry French shot Claude McCracken, editor of the 'Modoc Mail', with an automatic pistol. Condition of McCracken serious. Signed - McCracken."

Two hours later, he died.

An heroic incident of a newspaper man ^{doing his job.} ~~wiring his story.~~

At the same time, it's a pitiful tale of a journalistic feud.

McCracken and the father of the man who killed him, had taken

^{many a} ~~frequent~~ flings at each other in their editorial columns. ~~And~~ ^{One}

57
wrote to the other, a letter to the editor, making fun of the rival newspaper. Another time, one editor printed a squib, ridiculing the rival publication for not having paid its gas and electric bill. They twitted each other back and forth like that constantly. It seemed no more than country journalism, the way of a small town paper. But today all that ~~had become a deadly family feud,~~ turned into the blaze of a pistol. Harmless editorial humor had become a deadly family feud.

BANDITS

There's one bit of news tonight that might provide a lively idea in a detective story. I've written a few mystery yarns myself, but I never thought of anything so vivacious as this. The story comes from Harrison, New Jersey, and tells how a year ago a construction company was the victim of a pay-roll robbery. Hold-up men snatched a bag of money, thirty-six hundred dollars. Whereupon - Douglas Smith, the company manager, bought a robbery proof bag, in which to transport the pay-roll money. He was thoroughly laughed at, for ~~this robbery-proof~~ *the ingenious* contraption did seem a bit extreme. It was fitted out with blank cartridges and a sulphur gas bomb. When snatched from a guard, the cartridges would explode and the sulphur would fume with acrid smoke. That did seem a trifle melodramatic. Everybody laughed at Manager Smith, but he stuck to the idea.

Today, the news tells how two company employees were carrying that trick bag crammed with twenty-seven hundred dollars. Suddenly they found themselves looking into the muzzles of sawed-off shotguns. Two bandits, who snapped - "Hand that over!" The man with the money ~~at~~ satchel immediately obeyed, but as he handed the bag

over, he pulled the rip cord which started the timing device inside. The bandits started down the street. They had taken scarcely a dozen steps when things began to happen. The bag began to blow up as the cartridges inside exploded. Choking smoke poured out, from the sulphur bomb.

The astounded robbers had their nerve. They tried to hang on to the satchel full of fireworks. They hurried down the street with shots crashing in the bag, and sulphur smoke pouring out of it. The fireworks attracted children ~~and~~ dogs. A crowd swarmed, knowing nothing of the hold-up, merely attracted by the amazing sight.

That convinced the robbers they were beaten. They tossed away the roaring, fuming monstrosity - and took to their heels for a getaway.

At a window of the company building, Manager Smith, who had been laughed at so much, ~~xxxx~~ saw the whole performance. "It was marvelous," he said, roaring long and loud - also laughing last and best.

*Which is also my last laugh
and so goodnight.*