

Checked
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A prophesy came true in Venezuela today. Yes, it had been predicted that, following the death of Dictator Gomez, trouble would flare in the Republic on the Caribbean. But it isn't that sort of general prophesy which strikes the imagination of Latin Americans. The story is much more melodramatic.

It tells of a prisoner in La Rotunda. That's the notorious jail for political offenders at Caracas. A white round building -- hence the name "rotunda." This prisoner, it is related, was gifted ^{with} ~~with~~ powers of divination. He could foretell the future. He made many prophesies which turned out to be true. Of these -- two are to the point this evening.

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15 yrs. ago The prognosticating prisoner foretold a glorious future for a mere army sergeant -- Sergeant Contrerez. This humble soldier, he forecast, would become President of Venezuela. And that has turned out to be one hundred percent accurate. Caracas is a beautiful city. It's statliest ~~xx~~ site is Plaza Bolivar. There, in ornate splendor, stands the Casa Blanca -- White House. And there in power rules the one time army sergeant -- now President Contrerez. When Dictator Gomez died, Contrerez took his place in the Casa Blanca.

But what was the second prophesy the foreseeing prisoner made fifteen years ago? It was this -- that when Contrerez became President, violence and bloodshed would follow. Has that come true? Here's today's news from Venezuela.

In Caracas, in Plaza Boliva^{ry} in front of the Casa Blanca -- the machine guns rattled and spat fire today. And men fell -- dead and wounded. Riot and revolt, and the storming of insurgent crowds.

The trouble came by a road of inevitable logic. When Gomez died a wave of expectation swept Venezuela. For twenty-seven years Gomez had ruled the land with a fist of iron. So his passing aroused nationwide feeling that suppression was gone and freedom had come. The time for liberty seemed to have arrived.

But the old Gomez leaders could hardly be expected to declare a sudden liberation. ~~Contrerez~~ Contrerez, becoming President, kept the lid clamped on, ^{put} ~~put~~ a heavy censorship on newspapers. He clamped down on the university students, always hot-heads. He forbade a crowd of more than three persons at a time to assemble on the street.

Today there was a crowd of more than three assembled,

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more than three hundred, more than three thousand. Popular discontent surged through Caracas, and the mob swarmed in the Plaza Bolivar.

In front of Casa Blanca the troops were lined up on guard, under the command of the Governor of the City, Galavis. The crowd wouldn't disperse. It pressed forward with shouting menace. Swarthy-faced Galavis, Number-One henchman of the President, gave the order -- fire! And the machine guns spurted death and terror. Stampede and panic. Soon the Plaza was deserted save for the prone figures of four dead and a score lying wounded. The latest from Caracas is that President Contrerez has removed the shooting Galavis from his post. Another Governor of the Federal District has been appointed.

So in that fashion they fulfilled today -- the second prophesy of the prisoner of La Rotunda.

WEATHER

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Now about the weather -- the inevitable subject these days. I attended the White House Press Conference this morning -- but that doesn't mean that the President, in telling the correspondents the latest news of Government, talked about the weather. The subject that caught my interest ~~had~~ referred directly back to those exciting bits of cold weather news -- about menadrift and in desperate peril on floating ice, about towns isolated by the ice jam and in dire straits, like Tangier Island. [¶] A girl correspondent asked President Roosevelt -- about Government plans for ice-breakers. Which, of course, referred to the fact that powerful ice-crashing craft would ^{have ed} help plenty in doing those rescue and relief jobs. As it was, relief had to be flown by the sky rout^e.

The President replied that the Navy and the Coast Guard were working along the idea, not of building new ships, new ice-breakers -- but of utilizing vessels already on hand. They are trying to devise ways of turning otherwise obsolete ships into ice-breakers -- sheath the bows with a ^{reinforced} ~~reinforced~~ construction, a ram to slice through ^{an} ~~the~~ icefield. That, they hope, will work out effectively, and avoid the expensive building of new craft.

Such was the word which the President gave ~~in~~ the deftly organized routine of the Press Conference. ^{F. D. R.} ~~He~~, certainly knows how to deal with newspaper men, genial, smiling, a gay quip, a clear-gazing, candid answer.^s

Another weather note here in Washington concerns the threat of a flood. There ^{has} ~~is~~ been a heavy thaw, ~~here~~ It seems almost like Spring, ^WWith snow melting far and wide, streams rushing, ~~The~~ Potomac is rising. The river is frozen over. But it rained last night, and more is promised. And with rain and thaw, the ice threatens to break up at any time. And when it does, the drift ice is likely to jam downstream. And that will mean a flood in Washington.

The Army is standing ready for ^{the} ~~an~~ emergency, with two thousand men and mountains of sandbags. They'll jump in and build dykes along the Potomac the moment the flood waters become perilous.

Far and wide Old Man Winter keeps on his disturbing way. In the East -- there's blizzard white. New York City has snow, to make the icy street conditions worse. New Jersey took a beating from ~~a~~ snow storm and sleet. Eastern New Jersey got the brunt of it all, because the storm swept along the Jersey Coast. ^R The Middle West is in the grip of cold, and the weather man's promise is -- colder.

The West Coast reports a violent storm over the Pacific, lashing the seaboard, howling far out over the water. And, caught in the swirl of that tempest -- the China Clipper, ~~The~~ giant plane that broke ~~the~~ ^{the} transport trail from America to Asia. She took off for ~~her~~ second flight on the trans-Pacific sky route. She flew along for ~~thirteen~~ ^{thirteen} hours, a thousand miles toward Hawaii, when the storm stoped her. That Goliath craft can lick almost any gale. But she couldn't lick ~~that~~ ^{is} one. She battled against it with motors trying to out roar the tempest. But it was no go. The China Clipper had to surrender, surrender to the storm king. The big wings wheeled around, she turned back, beat a retreat. It would have been murder to keep going in that kind of weather. So the Clipper returned -- returned safely. She'll wait for quieter skies before venturing on that second trip to the Orient.

~~Yes,~~ And there's another kind of weather word, that ugly familiar word -- dust. From California to Texas dust storms are raging. The white blizzard succeeded by the black blizzard. While -- in the Northwest the ~~the Northwest the~~ word is just as old and just as ugly -- earthquake. Montana got ^{another} a shaking. The cities of Helena and Butte felt the tremor. But it wasn't anything serious.

the Old World

And, ~~Europe~~ chimes in with some bad winter weather news.

A tremendous blizzard in Turkey, gathering many a victim among the bleak highlands of Anatolia. Storms on the Mediterranean. *And*

A cold wave the whole length of Europe.

But don't talk badly about the weather man tonight. Just remember the old Latin maxim that says -- Speak nothing but good about the dead. For the weather man is dead -- at least the dean of them all. ~~For~~ Dr. James H. Scarr, head of the Bureau in New York. ^{he} For forty years predicted rain or shine, hot or cold. His forecasts were watched by millions of people in the East, ^{especially} ~~Among those who followed his prognostications were~~ ^{by} ship captains, ~~especially the~~ skippers of great trans-Atlantic liners. And, his word was ~~xxx~~ law with aviators, ^{his and Dr. Kimballs.}

~~Dr. Scarr gave weather advice to every trans Atlantic flier who started from this side. And that included Lindbergh.~~

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He began as a school teacher in Kansas and Oklahoma. Then he studied law. But he doesn't seem to have liked it, because one day he took a Civil Service examination for a weather bureau job, and got it. In those days the prophetic task of weather prediction was commonly ~~signed~~ assigned to a Sergeant at an army post. The Sergeant flew a kite with instruments and reported his readings. Dr. Scarr changed all that, and made such a reputation that he was transferred to New York to head the biggest weather bureau of them all.

ENGLAND

The British Cabinet has decided upon the hugest armament plan in British history. Britain has been discussing projects for expanding her strength in weapons to an unheard of limit. Now His Majesty's Government has made its decision. One billion five hundred million dollars. That's the size in money. Britain to become "the supreme armed power in Europe" - that's the aim. Among the details agreed upon by Stanley Baldwin's Cabinet today are the following:-

The British armament industry is to be re-organized on a war-time basis -- expanded, in readiness, as if war were at hand. The British Navy is to be made vastly more powerful. They are going to build a great flotilla, a regular fleet, of a new speedy kind of war craft. And there's to be a giant expansion of that new Naval base at far off Singapore, already one of the world's tremendous naval stations. Singapore has been undergoing a seven-year period of rebuilding

at a cost of one hundred and sixty million dollars. ^{There's} ~~is~~ ~~hear~~ ~~of~~
a new Naval Drydock at Singapore, more than eight hundred feet ~~long~~
long and one hundred and seventy-eight feet wide. It will take a
fifty thousand ton battleship out of the water as easily as you lift
a baby out of a crib. It came from England. They towed it all the
way to Singapore, ~~through the Atlantic and Mediterranean, the Red Sea,~~
~~the Indian Ocean.~~ It took them eight months to do it.

And, they took four square miles of jungle, ripped out the
tropical forest, levelled off the land, ^{and} constructed a military
airport with all ~~the~~ modern paraphernalia.

^{Also} ~~They~~'ve installed a world-^{girdling} ~~girdling~~ radio station -- to chat
with London or Australia. In fact that Singapore station can
communicate with any territory of the British Empire. And since the
sun never sets on that empire, the radio is indeed globe-girdling.

To these outstanding features ~~xxx~~ add the greatest of wharves,
cranes, machine shops, barracks, oil storage, giant cannon, and a
bristle of anti-aircraft guns -- and you'll have a picture of the
power that they've already been building at Singapore. ~~Then~~ ^{TP} ~~Q~~ add to
that the fact that the mighty armament program decided upon today

calls for a still further armed expansion out there -- and you will have an idea of the military and naval importance of the Malay metropolis. Well, like Gibraltar, the Suez, and Aden, it's a vital stronghold along that line of empire we've heard so much about. Singapore dominates the Straits between Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. That's the route between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. Japan in the Pacific; but England holds the gateway to the Western waters -- holds it with a stupendous fist of fire and steel at Singapore.

Meanwhile London chimes in with some word about the Mediterranean. The Admiralty makes an announcement of something we've been hearing for quite a while, but now it's official. The Admirals give out the word that the British Naval base in the Eastern Mediterranean is to be moved from Malta to Alexandria. Why? Well, the answer is something that we've heard before too. It's because Malta is so dangerously near the southern tip of Sicily where the Italians have their powerful air bases - air bases from which bombers would take only a few minutes to swing over Malta with a hail of high explosives. Alexandria is not nearly

So

vulnerable. The Egyptians may riot, may call for independence,

may rage against the military control that England holds over

the ⁱⁿ ancient land. ^{But} The British Fleet will be based on Alexandria ^{or}'s

old town.

ITALY

While London talks about the Mediterranean, Rome talks about Africa. An Italian garrison ~~was~~ wiped out by the Ethiopians. This is not claimed by Addis Ababa, it is a statement from Rome. A Black Shirt garrison held an advance dangerous position at a place called Curati. The Ethiopians came swarming in a wild attack. The Black Shirts fought desperately to hold them off, but were overwhelmed. ~~overwhelmed~~ This Black Shirt reverse is the black mark in an otherwise ~~px~~ brightly worded report from the Eternal City -- a report of other fights here and there -- victories.

There is one bit of news from Rome that brings some interesting comment. Mussolini has issued a decree to allow ~~foreign~~ foreign military observers to go to the war front. Until now ~~other nations have~~ ^{nations have} ~~nations have~~ not been allowed to send their army experts with the advancing Italian columns, to see how things were going and make notes on Italian skill in waging war. But that's all changed now.

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This, I hear, will eliminate a hardship to the United States. It is told me by Bill Courton^eay, war correspondent for Collier's Weekly, recently returned from Ethiopia. He relates an interesting newspaper story of East African war -- saying that the

American war correspondents were about the only genuine Simon-pure newspaper men out there. The English, German, French and Russian correspondents were all army officers, Majors, Colonels, sometimes even Generals. They had become newspaper men merely for the purpose of getting to the Italian war front. They reported to their newspapers in London, Paris, Berlin and Moscow, but they also reported to the staff^s of their own armies. So actually, although the Italians allowed no foreign military observers with their army, there ~~and~~ were military observers all over the place, ~~military observers~~ of every ^{sort,} ~~sort,~~ except Americans. Now Washington will have a chance to send its own gold braid representative. And at the same time the other countries won't have to use the newspaper man dodge any more.

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MUSIC

Shakespeare's old question about "What's in a name?" can be asked with special point in the sounding realm of music. How do some pieces of music get the names that are tacked onto them? There's an ecstatic composition by Debussy called "The Moon Descends On The Temple That Was." The name is lyrically esthetic, and so is the music. But, the words and melodies might just as easily mean -- "The Sun Descends on the Love-Nest That will be."

These reflections are evoked by advance notice of a soiree of art next Sunday to be given by eminent French musicians at Carnegie Hall, for the benefit of the French Hospital. On the program is a composition by the esoteric modernist composer, Edgar Varese. The name of the composition is -- "Density Twenty-One-Point-Five." Sounds more like chemistry than music.

Yes, what's in a name? It's like this: That ultra-modern composition is an elegy for the flute. It was written especially for the renowned flautist, George Barrere. Mr. Barrere plays on a rare and valuable flute -- a flute made of platinum. Now, platinum, in terms of chemistry, has a density of

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twenty-one-point-five. So it isn't the density of the music,
nor the density of the composer. It's the chemical density of
the flute, 21.5

And my density will be even greater than that if I
don't say --

SOLONG UNTIL MONDAY.