

GOOD EVENING, EVERYBODY:

This is the grimmest news day since the time when radio first flashed the spoken word on the air. It's a dark and bitter climax of a succession of other days -- the kidnapping of Baby Lindbergh, the finding of the body, the arrest of Hauptmann, his conviction at Flemington, the Governor's reprieve. And now -- the last day!

This afternoon Hauptmann's last fugitive hope got its answer -- and the answer was -- NO. His lawyers made a desperate last-minute appeal to State Supreme Court Justice Trenchard, the same judge who presided at the Flemington trial. They asked for a judicial stay of execution, on grounds of new evidence. But the Judge refused to intervene, -- refused to delay the sombre drama that will take place in the New Jersey State Prison about half-past eight tonight -- about an hour-and-a-half from now.

Another man convicted of murder was to have gone to his doom tonight before the Bronx carpenter; but, at the last moment Governor Hoffman has given this other man, Charles Zied, a reprieve for thirty days. So Hauptmann will walk the last mile alone

tonight.

Hauptmann broke down today, weeping - nerve-wracking scenes. He spent his time writing long letters - to his Mother, to his wife. What has he said? What has he told? The same as always. "I have absolutely no change to make in my story," he cries. "Any change would be a lie."

His wife, in a Trenton hotel, is in a state of collapse. With the vanishing of all hope, she has broken down.

Over in Germany a white-haired woman of seventy speaks with bitterness and grief. "He is innocent", she cries. "Those people over there have no conscience. My Richard is their victim." It is Hauptmann's mother that speaks out of a depth of ~~grief~~. *Despair.*

In Hollywood, Hauptmann's sister is locked in her home, guarded. She says threats have been made against her and her daughter.

Governor Hoffman of New Jersey, who gave one reprieve, is said to be crushed by his failure to re-open the case and halt the execution.

Attorney General Wilentz, who built the case against

Hauptmann, says that justice is being done. Yesterday, when the Pardons Board refused to intervene, he left the court room in smiles.

At that same hearing yesterday, County Prosecutor Hauck - *actually* fainted. Today he is home ill.

Dr. Condon, the *eccentric* ~~accepted~~ Jafsie, who was the star witness for the prosecution, is secluded in his Bronx home tonight. He refuses to see anyone.

And Lindbergh? With his wife and little son, he is surrounded tonight by the quietude of the English countryside in spring. He is engaged these days in scientific study, the biological study ~~to~~ he began with Dr. ~~Alexis~~ Carrell of the Rockefeller Institute. He's working to perfect a device to pump blood mechanically in surgical cases. Lindbergh is experimenting with - an artificial heart.

Such are the trappings of tragedy - as tonight the dark drama is played out in the monster crime of our era.

ROBBERY

Crime in all its insolence flared up at Chelsea, Massachusetts, today, one of the boldest and cheekiest robberies on record. The City Hall of a thriving community is no place for bandit violence - but it was. Cash under the guard of a uniformed policeman should be safe - but it wasn't.

The robbers knew that the weekly payroll of town employees of Chelsea was due to arrive at the City Hall. A bank messenger bringing it, with the protection of a policeman. What did they do. Three of them waited lurking, just inside the City Hall. A fourth sat at the wheel of a black sedan at the curb outside. A gangster ambush in the very sanctuary of the law!

And now - there come the bank messenger, with a satchel of money, the city payroll, sixteen thousand dollars. The policeman stalks beside him. They climb the steps of the City Hall, and trudge into the door. And now things begin to happen. The ambush, the unexpected attack. There is no shooting - only slugging! The bandits knock out the messenger and they beat down

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the policeman. They seize the satchel full of money, and dash to the street, to the waiting black sedan - for the getaway.

Tonight, the cops are hunting with a vigor more than ordinary. They are determined to avenge the supreme insolence of the robbery.

ETHIOPIA

Listening to Lowell Thomas tell the news night after night for weeks, I several times heard him use the word - "eclipse". He was talking about the Ethiopian war - eclipsed by the German problem. When Hitler hit the Rhine - that abruptly pushed Mussolini's African adventure into the background.

But, broadcasting for Lowell tonight, I can't use that expressive word - eclipse. The Ethiopian war appears right in the foreground of the news tonight; with an accent of drama, a flicker of international thrill.

Today's war news is - strictly political, with a vivid international meaning.

The Italians have captured Gondar. Gondar is ^{the} local metropolis by the shore of Lake Tsana. Lake Tsana is the headwater of the Blue Nile. The Blue Nile is a great feeder of the water supply of the British Sudan and age-old Egypt, daughter of the Nile. So the Lake Tsana district is vital to British imperial interest. In the treaties between London and

Rome, for the dividing up of Ethiopia, Britain claimed the sources of the Blue Nile as her sphere of influence. In his attack on Ethiopia, Mussolini has kept clear of Lake Tsana until now.

Every color of the new Italian drive looks political. The commander is strictly political. He is Secretary-General Starace - Secretary-General of the Fascist Party. That makes him Number Two Fascist in Italy, second only to Mussolini in the Party. Secretary-General Starace in command - that's as if Mussolini were pointing a dramatic finger at the international politics of the affair.

Another of those motorized columns - in a swift dash. Tanks! Armored cars! Trucks! Comparatively few troops, all Italians, no natives. Everything on wheels, everything bristling with machine guns. And it's a replica of the "hell on wheels" column, which made such a dizzy rush some weeks ago on the southern front. Only - this northern "hell on wheels" column had an easier time of it. No large army in front of it to defeat, and a comparatively level territory to travel over.

The tip-off can be found in the speech that the Secretary-General made to his soldiers just before the advance began. It was a fiery harangue. He gave his men final orders to be on the lookout, to shoot straight, etcetra, etcetra. His severest injunction, his sternest battle command, concerned one interesting point - that lively tip-off.

Addressing the military drivers in his motorized column, he warned them in the most preemptory terms - to keep to the right. That reflects on the reckless driving of the Italian military chauffeurs, their inclination to swing and swerve all over the place at Break neck speed. It's equally a reflection on what a parade the advance on Gondar has been, when the commander is principally worried about keeping his motorized column running smoothly, without getting tangled up with marching troops. "Hell on wheels" made a dash of a hundred and fifty-five miles through northern Ethiopia in a few days - a brilliant exploit of transportation, if not of war.

The tingle of excitement comes, when we consider the capture of Gondar in the light of international politics. Mussolini has promptly taken advantage of the storm that Hitler raised in Europe when he goose-stepped his soldiers to the Rhine. The Ethiopian war went into eclipse, and to Mussolini that meant ~~exactly~~ a chance to push his own game in a big way, while Britain was all tangled up between Germany and France. So, he has dared to reach out for Lake Tana, and grasp a domain tacitly recognized

as Britain's. My guess is that it will all boil down to this - the League of Nations discussion for an Ethiopian settlement will begin soon, and Mussolini will talk business with his hands on the sources of the Nile. It looks as if he had grabbed off a big bargaining point.

In all of this - the diplomatic game has an interesting appearance. Mussolini stirred up an international turmoil when he invaded Ethiopia. Hitler took advantage of that to rearm the Rhine. That kicked up a new storm, and a bigger one. Mussolini *Now uses* ~~used~~ this as a strategic opportunity to get his fingers on Lake ~~Tana~~ ^{*-the all-important*}.

It looks like an international game of whipsaw.

ZEPPELIN

Those diplomatic complications mix things up in more ways than one. That's why a giant silver cigar is on a course tonight that you'd hardly suspect. Germany's new super-Zeppelin, the VON HINDENBURG, started out today on its first trans-Atlantic voyage - to South America. The natural route from Germany to South America would take the immense balloon on a tack to the southwest. Instead, the greatest of Zeppelins began her maiden voyage by steering north, over Holland, and then along the English Channel. What was the Zeppelin Von Hindenburg flying around, avoiding, dodging? Why, the country which the old soldier Von Hindenburg fought so long and so hard - France.

The New German watch on the Rhine has created so much tension between Paris and Berlin that the French authorities failed to give the super-Zep permission to fly over French territory. Maybe somebody aboard might take some forbidden photographs that area of secret French fortifications. So, the flying ship has to make a detour around the north, then southward across the Atlantic.

After this first flight to South America, the Von Hindenburg will make its second to New York, starting out on May 6th.

PICKWICK PAPERS

There's so much darkness and tragic futility in the news that it's a pleasure to look over to England tonight -- ~~xx~~ they're holding a series of celebrations over there. They're commemorating what may well be called the greatest success story in the world. It's the hundredth anniversary of the Pickwick Papers. I, myself, in looking up little known facts about well-known people, have had occasion to pry into the success story of Charles Dickens -- and it's enough to make you dizzy.

In London a hundred years ago the publishing firm of Chapman and Hall had an idea for a new book. They wanted a story written round a series of pictures of London life. The pictures were really the main thing in their minds. So first they got an artist to draw the sketches. Then they looked around for an author to write the text. They hit upon a promising young writer, just twenty-three. He had already written a series of newspaper pieces called -- "Sketches by Boz." These were sprightly, and so they engaged the young fellow for the job. The result was -- Pickwick Papers.

Let's take a closer look at this unknown author - this chap whose name was Charles Dickens. His childhood had been sordid. His father couldn't pay his debts and so was thrown into a debtors' prison with all its horror. The Dickens family had nothing to eat. So nearly every morning the boy, Charles, took some of the family furniture to the pawnshop. Finally Mrs. Dickens and her four children moved into the wretched debtors' prison, and lived with the father. Such were the dark ~~ix~~ dismal antecedents of the man who wrote the Pickwick Papers.

The immortal work was published in a series of small paper back books. The first, a little thin, green unimpressive volume, appeared on March Thirty-first, 1836. Precisely one hundred years ago today. By the time the fourth booklet of the series was out, the publishers knew they had one of the greatest finds in the history of literature. The sales were jumping phenomenally. The astonishing success of Charles Dickens was made. During the past hundred years his novels have been outsold only by the Bible and Shakespeare. On his second visit to America people stood in line hour upon hour in an icy wind

to buy tickets for his lecture. In Brooklyn the line of standing people built bonfires to keep warm while waiting. Some brought mattresses and lay down all night to keep their places in line. When the tickets were sold out there was a riot. The ones that couldn't buy any tickets stormed and raged.

That's the success story they celebrated in England today. In Rochester there was a pageant at the Bull Inn, where Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller had some of their drollest adventures. And a stage coach a hundred years old creaked up to the venerable inn, and actors took the parts of the immortal Pickwickian company. In London there were banquets, receptions, exhibitions of mementoes and a ceremony at Westminster Abbey, presided over by such leading lights as the Duke of Kent, Prime Minister Baldwin, and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

At Caxton Hall, decorated like Dingley Dell, there's a Dickens pageant. G. K. Chesterton is one of the actors. What part does he take? Why, the fat boy. All you literary scholars will recognize the appropriateness of that -- the mighty Chesterton with his paunch and jowls and his face like a full moon. Fat boy, indeed.

Dickens wrote vivid scenes of perfect domestic bliss while his own marriage was a tragic failure. Year after year his misery deepened. He had the whole world fawning at his feet and yet his own home was filled with heartbreak.

Here's a toast to you, Mr. Pickwick -- And -- Goodnight.