

L.T. - SUNOCO. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1935.

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

I suppose I ought to have a whole dark list of disaster and tragedy to relate this evening, but strange as it may seem, I haven't been able to dig up any special amount of hard-luck stories in the day's news. On Friday, the thirteenth, the tidings from far and near should certainly be lugubrious and glum, but, curiously enough, they are just about the same as usual.

We all know that Friday is supposed to be unlucky. Medieval legend tells us that Adam and Eve ate the forbidden apple on Friday. The Saviour was crucified on Friday, and in the old times that same sixth day of the week was legal hangman's day. No sailor in the salty days before the mast would ever start a voyage on a Friday. It's all summed up in a proverbial line by the French dramatic poet Racine:

"He who laughs on Friday will weep on Sunday."

As for the thirteenth, you know what that means. In Paris there are people who make a regular profession of being the fourteenth at dinner parties. Such persons are called "fourteens". That's their

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job. The French are ~~that~~ convinced that if there are thirteen at the table, one will die within a year. The superstition goes back to the Last Supper, when at the table sat the Saviour and his twelve disciples - thirteen. Before sunset of the following day, the Saviour died.

In Germany and France the thirteenth is omitted in the numbering of hotel floors and street signs. The Italians never use the unlucky number in their lotteries. Maybe it all traces back to the dark lore of medieval witchcraft, when on the witch's sabbath there was a sinister banquet of twelve witches and one demon, straight from the brimstone pits of Hades.

So, you see, there should be stacks of bad black news tonight. And it's mighty funny that there isn't. Maybe there's nothing to that old superstition about Friday the thirteenth. That must be it. So let's go on with the news, which is neither better nor worse than usual.

ETHIOPIA

If you will look at your map of Africa, and run your finger along the eighth parallel of north latitude, you will see that it splits Ethiopia in two at its broadest point. That parallel, eight degrees north, is the key to the clarified version in the news today of the Franco-British proposal for the East African settlement. In the eastern part the plan would give the Italians a considerable strip of territory above that line of latitude. But generally speaking it proposes to hand over to Mussolini all of Ethiopia south of the Eighth Parallel. An immense region! The eastern portion, the Province of Ogaden, would be ceded to Italy outright. The western part would be controlled economically by an Italian Company for the purpose of exploiting minerals and for colonization. This would leave that western part under only nominal Ethiopian sovereignty, really under the control of Italy. Moreover, Mussolini would get the Tigre Province in the North, which his armies now hold - he would get it all except the Holy City of Axum.

The publication of the scheme leaves it pretty much

according to the reports we have had for several days - except for this: We had the general impression that the plan would give about half of Ethiopia to Italy. Upon clarification, it looks more like two thirds. In return Mussolini would turn over to Ethiopia a strip of land through the Italian Province of Eritrea to the ocean, so that Emperor Haile Selassie might have a seaport. That would hand the Ethiopians a mere tiny bit of Italian land - although of course a seaport usually counts for a good deal.

The two-thirds, instead of one-half part of it, has made the roar of protest louder than ever - jeers, sneers and snarls of anger from all over the world. League of Nations enthusiasts today made an organized complaint to Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin. And, there are more indications that the British Cabinet is weakening on the bargain it made.

However, Premier Laval of France sticks by his guns in spite of howls of rage from the radicals and socialists in the Chamber of Deputies.

And of course the small nations of the League are continuing their yells of fury -- crying out that France and England have betrayed them and the League.

Perhaps the most significant of all is the attitude of Rome. The Fascist authorities are worried by the huge chorus of protests that the plan has aroused. Which indicates that Rome likes the plan, and is afraid the whole thing to be called off.

Nevertheless, in the League of Nations today, the Hoare-Laval plan won the first manoeuvre. It is scheduled to go to the League Council, controlled by the big Powers. The opponents of the Hoare-Laval plan want it taken up by the Assembly of the League, where all the ~~xxx~~ nations are represented. If the peace plan were tossed in there, into the pit among the little fellows, it would have its tough going.

Haile Selassie made another bitter complaint today against the partitioning of his kingdom, and he called upon the League to have the Franco-British offer debated by the Assembly,

where the small nations can get at it. He demanded a special session of the Assembly for the purpose. But the President of the League Assembly, Foreign Minister Benes of Czechoslovakia, replies - "No"! His answer to Haile Selassie is that the peace scheme will be left strictly in the hands of the League Council - for the present at least. He points out that the Council of the Big Fellows is to take up the plan next Wednesday and adds that the Assembly will not be called to ~~xxx~~ consider it - not right now.

At tonight's reporting, the whole thing is sky high in the air. Nearly all the shouting comes from the opponents of that scheme to give Mussolini so much of Ethiopia. The advocates of the plan will have their say later, when the turmoil quiets down a bit. And even then they won't do any shouting. They, especially Premier Laval of France, are likely to speak in cool, calm tones, saying to the League enthusiasts, to the small nations and to the pacifists: "After all, what we want is peace. Do you want a European war? If so, who will fight it?"

Last night we heard that the Hoare-Laval proposal was

in part inspired by King George of England himself - the King being
worried about the danger of a European war. Now we hear that the
Pope too has been exerting his influence in the powerful ~~x~~ efforts
being made to settle things and push away the danger of a general
~~was~~ conflict.

What's ^{America's} ~~the matter with his~~ reaction to ~~the~~ all that ^{foreign} diplomatic turmoil? ^{It} ~~That~~ was answered by President Roosevelt in Washington today. ~~and~~ ^{He} said - neutrality. He announced that he is going to ask Congress to do some more to keep us out of ^{battles} ~~trouble~~ and skirmishes abroad. ^{The President} ~~He~~ told the Press Conference today that he intended to ask Congress to put through a new Neutrality ~~Bill~~ Law, one that will go further than the bill now ⁱⁿ ~~enforced~~. The President may or may not write a special message to Congress about it. ^{He} And, Mr. Roosevelt spoke of American defenses and how to increase them. He spoke of a Naval Reserve of one hundred and fifty thousand men. Our Naval Reserve numbers now less than twenty-five thousand. The President hopes to build that up and multiply it six times over.

As things in Europe get more complicated and more puzzling, American defenses come more and more into public discussion. Just a few days ago at a Congressional Committee meeting there was strong talk about our need of a more powerful Air Force -- especially long-range bombers to throw a net of protection out beyond our coasts.

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TOWNSEND

Well, we might have expected it! The Townsend Movement has developed into a ^{regular, rip-roaring} ~~full-fledged~~ political party. The followers of the Messiah-for-the-Aged got such a good start in the Michigan elections of last month that it is only natural for them to branch out in a large way. They swept the Third Michigan Congressional District, their candidate polling nine thousand more votes than his nearest opponent. At that time the National Secretary of the Townsend Plan said the Michigan victory was just a forerunner of ^{bigger} ~~some~~ political ^{ambitions.} ~~victories to come. Since then that program of~~ "two hundred a month for everybody over sixty" ~~has been touching off fireworks all over the country, especially in Washington.~~

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Now we have the announcement that the many Townsend Old Age Pension Clubs all over the country have cast the die, and decided to jump into the Nineteen Thirty-six fracas as a political party - the Townsend Party. They'll hold a nominating Convention just like the Republicans and Democrats. They'll put up candidates for president, vice-president, ^{and} for seats in Congress. Who'll be the presidential Townsend candidate? Not the worthy Doctor ~~Townsend~~ himself, apparently. He announces that he won't run for office.

We've had plenty of political slogans - like "the full
dinner pail", "two chickens in a pot", [^] and the "more abundant life",
"2 cars in the garage," "The Forgotten Man,"
and now there's another one coming along ^{on} ~~under~~ [^] a big banner in
the presidential race - "Two Hundred Dollars a month to every
Citizen over sixty!"

LIGGETT

Political circles in Minneapolis are still in a furore over the murder of editor Walter Liggett. Governor Olson asked the federal authorities in Washington to take charge of the ^{search for} ~~capture of~~ the gunmen who shot down the newspaper crusader-against-corrupt-politics. That would seem to indicate a feeling that there are too many political twists to the affair for a clean-cut, straight-away investigation of ^{all} ~~the~~ angles by the local authorities. Washington won't do it. The Governor ^{asked} ~~said that~~ the Department of Justice ^{to} ~~would~~ track down the secrets of the murder, ^{let} ~~that~~ the "G" men ^{do it. R} ~~would~~. But today Attorney-General Cummings said "No". He declared he won't allow the "G" men to take the case out of the hands of the ~~xxx~~ Minneapolis authorities. ~~I suppose one angle of the refusal is~~ ^{The} Department of Justice is supposed to intervene only when there are violations of federal laws, such as the federal law against kidnapping and bank robbery. A case of simple murder doesn't come under the jurisdiction of Washington.

Meanwhile, the widow of the slain journalist is picking up her husband's editorial pen. Today she went over the proofs of the next edition of the weekly newspaper that was his - "The Mid-West

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American". She claims she'll go right ahead and push those same political exposés and revelations, to silence which ~~presumably~~

is said to have been
Editor Liggett ~~was~~ killed. She says ~~she~~ she has the documents that he had collected to prove the charges he was about to print.

HAUPTMANN

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Yes, Friday the 13th -- and there's one bit of news dark enough to ^{harmonize} ~~connect~~ with the lugubrious date. After all the ^{words,} recent agitated discussion ~~on~~ the case of Richard Bruno Hauptmann a few ~~brief~~ brief, grim words were spoken today. They were uttered by Justice Trenchard, the trial judge ~~who~~ ^{was} presided over the conviction of the Bronx ~~exp~~ carpenter. It ~~is~~ ^{was} his duty as judge to set the date of execution of the sentence, and this he did. He gave the order of the court that Hauptmann must go to the electric chair during the week of January 13th -- a month from now. Once more that ominous number 13.

That narrows everything to the New Jersey Court of Pardons -- Hauptmann's last resort. Unless the Board of Pardons intervenes, the doom of the Bronx ~~exp~~ carpenter is inevitable.

FIRE

And now the echo resounds - "Fireman save my ^{be} child!" - and the firemen, instead of saving anybody's child were busy saving treasure. In Washington, also New York.

True- the treasure destroyed, damaged, threatened and saved in the fire at the great Post Office Department Building in Washington was mostly in the form of documents - valuable records in the working of government and some old and priceless papers.

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The blaze did its worst in the Reclamation Bureau of the Department of the Interior, where oceans of documents were stored relating to huge irrigation and reclamation projects the Government has been putting through. And then there were the files of the Home Owners Loan Corporation, and the Federal Communications Commission. They too were damaged.

A more romantic interest points to heaps of old-time navigation records, with facts and figures and stories about ships of those classic times when ^{broad} ~~the~~ _^ sail^s ~~ers~~ _^ went scudding before the wind. Then too, havoc was raised with the shiny offices of New Deal officials, including the ^{sanctum} _^ sanctorum of Postmaster Jim Farley. All that happened when fire broke out in the great new Post Office

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Building - not so much flame but acrid, suffocating, billowy black smoke, and a drenching of tons of water poured in by the firemen.

But the real thriller, the drama of treasure saved in the burning Post Office Building, came when a heroic fireman dashed out of the smoke, carrying in his hand a million dollars he had rescued. He had rescued a bundle of ten thousand dollar banknotes, a hundred of them, a cool million bucks. Yes, that was rescuing treasure all right - only it turned out that the stack of ten thousand dollar bills were all cancelled, just a bunch of relics, worth no more than so much paper. But he didn't know it when he risked his life to save the million.

In New York the theme of fire and treasure comes with a blaze in a jewelry building on the Bowery. A six-story loft building - occupied from cellar to roof by dealers in precious stones, a building crammed with emeralds, rubies and diamonds. That could have been a veritable conflagration of treasure, a million dollar bonfire of gems. By the way, what would happen to rubies, emeralds and diamonds in a blaze like that? Would they burn?

It was an ugly fire to fight because ^{of} heaps of chemicals the jewelers use. Clouds of corrosive, suffocating smoke spurted

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^{out}
of the burning building, and one fireman after another was overcome.

Yet, it wasn't so much of a disaster for the hoarded treasure.

Streams of water kept the fire confined to the upper three floors

of the jewel building, and even there they got most of the ~~precious~~

precious stuff to safety.

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LAUGHING

The story comes from China to the merry doom of Li Feng-Yin -- he died laughing. We've all used the expression - "Thought I'd die laughing" - but Li Feng-Yin did. Not that he was such an enormously jolly fellow, whose life was given over to chuckles and Chinese jokes and the far eastern merry ha-ha. The story is quite different.

Li Feng-Yin was a kidnapper. The Peiping police got after him and caught him. But Li didn't die laughing over that. He was brought before the Celestial judge, who sentenced him to death. He didn't die laughing at that either. The news dispatch says he was condemned to be shot. Maybe that's a mistake. Maybe, in the more characteristic Chinese way, he was to be decapitated. No, neither would that cause Li to die laughing.

The story is this - that his case was appealed and his death sentence was commuted to fifteen years in the penitentiary. So Li decided to celebrate with his fellow prisoners. They bribed the jailors and got stacks of food and drink - chow mein, birds' nest soup and rice wine. They dined and wined and drank

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to Li's escape from the executioner. With every toast to that happy event, Li laughed louder and longer, until at the culminating toast his uncontrollable mirth was fatal. Literally, he died laughing. And --

SO LONG UNTIL MONDAY.