

L. T. P. & G. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 1949
(Clifton Fadiman)

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

We have a new sensation from Washington - that city of goofy sensations. This concerns a top secret photograph, a picture made by the Navy and guarded with all sorts of security. Today, a copy was found hanging, on display, in a tavern - one of those plushy bars of Washington. Thousands of customers, having a drink, have been gazing at the military secret.

The story concerns the argument over the B-36. The Air Force has been claiming the super-bomber is invulnerable, virtually, because it flies at forty thousand feet - and no fighter plane operates at that altitude. But the Navy has come back, saying that the new Navy jet fighter, the Banshee, flies at forty thousand feet, and higher. This view was to have been presented to a congressional investigating committee by Admiral Radford, Commander of the Pacific fleet, and one of his chief bits of evidence was to have been - that photograph.

It's a picture of Washington taken from a Banshee

fighter - at an altitude of forty-eight thousand, eight hundred and forty-six feet - obvious proof that the Banshee can operate as high as the B-36. And it's a wonderful picture, made with a special secret camera.

That's the trouble - it's too good. The Defense Department took one look, and said - No, the photograph could not be made public. Air Force officers opened their eyes wide. The various "targets" were plain and distinct - the White House, the Capitol, the Pentagon Building, the military airfields. Air Force veterans called it - "a joy to any bombardier."

So the picture was suppressed, and classified as - "top secret." But what happened today? A United Press reporter dropped in at Club Four Hundred, a swanky drinking spot in downtown Washington, and there his eye was attracted by the secret photograph on a wall. More than that - it was an enlargement, a much bigger version of what the Air Force officers call "a bombardier's delight."

But how did it get there? The tavern keeper says that a little while ago a naval officer, whom he did not

knob, threw the photograph on the bar and said: "Go ahead and plaster this on your wall."

This break of news produced consternation at the Navy Department, which today confirmed the fact that the picture on the bar room wall was an enlargement of the one taken from the Banshee - at what is believed to be a record-breaking altitude for this country. Certainly, Washington was never photographed before from a point so high - or pictured so clearly.

JUGOSLAVIA

Word from Yugoslavia is that the chief delegate to the United Nations is hurrying to the United States - in case the regime of Red Marshal Tito may find it necessary to make an appeal to the Security Council.

From Vienna - news that Communist Czechoslovakia has closed its border with Yugoslavia in a sudden move today.

"The border is hermetically sealed," says an Austrian diplomatic official. Which ties in with the report last night of Russian tank divisions mobilizing on the border of the realm of Red Marshal Tito, the satellite who rebelled.

SUBSTITUTE RUSSIAN FLYER

In Austria today, the Americans handed a man over to the Soviets - the Aviator Barsov, who deserted from the Red Flying Force, and sought refuge with the Americans - saying that he preferred freedom. Brought to this country and entertained here, he then went to the Soviet Embassy in Washington, and said he wanted to be forgiven and go back to Russia. All the while he was watched by the F.B.I., was picked up, flown to Austria, and was given his choice. He still wanted to go back, and today was handed over to Soviet officers, who took him away in an automobile. People who know Barsov say he was persuaded by Soviet agents. They pointed out that he has a wife and child in Russia.

We'll have some more news for you in a minute or two. I just want to stop and get my breath -- this is a new job for me. I guess I've done about everything on radio except news broadcasting, and I'm very grateful to my friend, Lowell Thomas, for giving me these fifteen minutes in which to try to learn what the job is like.

I wonder how Lowell is getting along up there on the Roof of the World? I'm kind of interested to find out whether Lowell has penetrated into any of those secret Tibetan monasteries -- they call them lamaseries there. The priests are known as lamas. I understand that in some of these mysterious places there is hidden a lot of mystical oriental lore, wisdom that has not yet come West. I found out a little about this oriental secret wisdom when, a year or so ago, I read a remarkable book called Priestess of the Occult by Gertrude Marvin Williams. It tells the life of Madam H. P. Blavatsky. Madam Blavatsky was a curious old gal who really founded the Theosophist Movement in the West and claimed to have got her secret doctrine from the regions in which Lowell is now

adventuring.

Speaking of books, how about a little literary news? Some of you may want to get out a pencil and paper and make a note of a couple of these book titles I've jotted down here. Here are five books that people are talking about right now. One of them is The Big Wheel by John Brooks. The Big Wheel is a novel about life on a great weekly news magazine, and anybody who reads it can tell what magazine is meant, I guess.

The literary bqs are also arguing about a new novel called A Rage to Live by John O'Hara. A Rage to Live is a pretty frank picture of modern American life in a medium-size Pennsylvania town. Many of the reviewers think it is a little too frank.

If you're interested in historical fiction, you might try a long fascinating novel called The Egyptian by a Finnish novelist called Mika Waltari --W-A-L-T-A-R-I. It offers the most colorful picture you can imagine of life as it was lived in ancient Egypt fifteen hundred years or so before Christ.

Finally, may I recommend a really good self-help book, one that doesn't talk down and is full of wisdom that you and I can apply to our daily lives. It is called The Mature Mind, and it's by a very fine educator and philosopher, Harry Overstreet.

While we are dishing out the literary news, I might tell you about one or two books that are coming out next week that you might want to look out for. If you like detective stories, try a new thriller called The Second Confession by the outstanding mystery story writer, Rex Stout, creator of the famous detective, Nero Wolfe. The odd thing about this book is that actually the identity of the murderer and the clue to the solution of the mystery are practically handed to you right off the reel on a silver platter. It's tricky stuff.

I also want to mention a new novel about Joan of Arc to be published on September Eighth. It is called The Voice and the Light, and I may as well come clean and tell you that it's written by a

young nephew of mine, Edwin Fadiman, Jr. For that reason I'm not saying that I think the book either good or bad, but I would like to mention that when Mr. Jack Lait took over Walter Winchell's column the other day, during Mr. Winchell's vacation, he headed the column with a long paragraph about The Voice and the Light. I quote from Mr. Lait: "The Voice and the Light is priceless because it is in the language and the tempo and the mood that will assure it wide readership, not mere filing in the archives of scholars."

Well, if you want to look ahead a month or two I might tip you off to a few interesting books that are coming out. On November Fourth there will be published a really funny mystery story called What a Body by Alan Green. Eleanor Roosevelt's autobiography This I Remember will be out November Ninth. I've read it, and I can assure you it will prove interesting to Democrats and Republicans alike.

Finally, if I may be allowed a personal note, those of you who are looking for a good Christmas present

for anyone who likes to read might note that on November 19th a beautiful new illustrated edition of Charles Dickens' classic, The Pickwick Papers will appear. It has a long introduction by Yours Truly. I can't recommend the introduction, but Pickwick Papers itself is as good as it ever was, though it was first published over a hundred years ago.

SICILY

Today brings a new idea in the realm of political science - also banditry. Over on the island of Sicily, the King of the Bandits demands - a plebiscite. In a manifesto, this lord of the brigands calls upon the Italian Government to put it to a vote; let the people of Sicily decide - are they for the government, or for the bandit? This is the latest in the heights of impudence achieved by the outlaw named Giuliano, who for several years has been terrorizing the Sicilian countryside. In the past the island was famous for its brigands, and thus Giuliano lives up to the ancient legend of romantic robbers. With that modern angle - a plebiscite.

During the past few days, the Government at Rome has been preparing an all-out campaign to wipe out the king of the bandits. Special forces of soldiers have been mustered, with tanks, warplanes and paratroopers. To all of which cheeky Giuliano now replies - demanding a political solution.

Calling for a plebiscite to determine his fate, the king of the bandits declares: "If the people condemn

me I promise to follow my destiny. But, if the people want me, I will also follow my destiny."

It sounds as if he expected the people to elect him - the new Mussolini of Sicily.

BRITISH

Tonight British Foreign Secretary Bevin and Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir Stafford Cripps are on the high seas -- sailing for the conference in

Washington. Before embarking on the Mauretania, Bevin told newsmen that he and Cripps were going on what he called -- "one of the most important missions in history". That is how highly the British rate the Washington talks to decide on measures to rescue the shaky British economy.

SENATE

In Washington -- the Senate has decided to take a week off. That was voted this evening, after the lawmakers had passed the Minimum Wage Bill. This bill would raise the minimum wage from forty to seventy-five cents an hour in all industries engaged in interstate commerce. Congress wants to end the session, but earlier in the day the Truman Administration insisted on a finish fight in the matter of reciprocal trade legislation and a compromise farm bill. So the Senate, instead of calling it a session, merely decided to take a week off.

END

On this program tomorrow night we'll have Branch Rickey, boss of the Brooklyn Dodgers, who should be able to tell us something about those pennant races.

And now, as a parting salute to Lowell Thomas, I might quote a short poem by Ogden Nash. Lowell, of course, is in the land of the lamas, the kind who spell their name with one "L." There's another kind of llama, too, that walks around in Peru, but with a different spelling. Ogden Nash once wrote a poem about both of them, as follows:-

The one-L lama is a priest,
The two-L llama is a beast,
But I will bet my last pajama
There's no such thing
As a 3-L lllama!

(pause) Is there, Nelson.

So long until tomorrow.