

L.L. - Sunoco. Thursday, March 26, 1942.

(Re. given by Dr. Krishnakal Shridharani)

This is going to be a strange experience for me.

I have listened to Lowell Thomas so regularly that I feel that it will do him some good if he listened to me for a change. Greetings, Lowell, wherever you are in Utah. Good luck too when you listen to the speaking silence of the mountains. But for real mountains, Lowell, you should come to our Himalayas *in India.*

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BURMA


46 The latest news from Burma, my next door neighbor now but a part of my country until very recently, tells of a Japanese attack that failed to penetrate the defense lines on the flank of the Chinese army near Toungoo. The mention of enemy flanking operations against the Chinese gives a key to the Burmese war news as reported by the British. The Chinese at Toungoo are represented as being gravely threatened - the enemy having cut to the north of the Chinese positions.

London states that the task now will be ~~of~~ to break the Japanese encircling lines by heavy counter-attacks, and these presumably are going ~~on~~ on right now. The British believe that the Chinese will be able to crash through, and break the trap.

The state of affairs in Burma is all the more menacing because of a Japanese drive in the area in the town of Prome. That place is to the west of Toungoo.

47 The Chinese-British defense line runs from east to west, through Toungoo and Prome. One is in the valley of the Sittang River, the other in the valley of the Irrawaddy. And now the Japanese, having flanked Toungoo, are threatening Prome - and this might compel a British-Chinese withdrawal - a retirement northward toward Mandalay.

All this brings the Japanese closer and closer to my country, India. They knock at India's eastern gates, perhaps in anticipation of Hitler's spring offensive which might bring him up to India's western gates, the historic Khyber and Bolan Passes. And yet the main ^{exciting} story from India is about ~~xxx~~ another matter.



INDIA

48 It is about Mahatma Gandhi. That spindly leader of India's millions is on his way to meet Sir Stafford Cripps. There is a great deal of similiarity between the two leaders. Both are ascetics, and both are ~~xx~~ vegetarians. But there is a great difference between them. Gandhi hates all wars while Sir Stafford Cripps is in India to rally the entire strength of India behind the war efforts of the United Nations. And the success of his mission will largely depend on how Gandhi reacts to his proposals. As Gandhi has made it clear, Sir Stafford has decided to see him in spite of his anti-war views.

I had the privilege of meeting Sir Stafford some time before he was appointed the Ambassador to Russia. And I have had the great privilege of being Gandhi's companion, on the famous march to the Sea in 1930 - And, my heart thrills at the prospect of these two men meeting in New Delhi. For

England could not have selected a better Englishman for the job, nor could India have selected a more representative Indian for the occasion.

49 The main difficulty that faces Sir Stafford Cripps is the Hindu-Moslem problem. But I have a feeling that the conflict between the Hindus and the Moslems has been greatly exaggerated in this country. The problem is there. But, it is not insoluble. First, let me dispell some of the popular misconceptions. Indian National Congress is not a Hindu organization as many people believe. There are as many Moslems in it as there are outside of it. Then too, Moslems do not contribute the bulk of India's fighting forces. And again, the Near East Mohammedan world is not suspicious of the Indian National Congress. So, perhaps we all might be exaggerating the threat of resolt issued by the Moslem League in India. Fortunately for India as well as for the United Nations, the Hindu majority is willing and able to make greater sacrifices than the minorities in order to achieve

India's unity. And when such spirit prevails, *nothing is impossible.*

50 With foresight on the part of the Indian leaders and with sincerity on the part of the British, the Hindu-Moslem problem is bound to be solved. It is not a good idea to talk too much about the disunity of India because only the Axis powers will benefit from ~~the~~ Indian disunity. So, from this point on, the unity of India is not ~~not~~ only India's funeral, but also the funeral of the United Nations.

MacARTHUR

Australia today gave renewed cheers to General Douglas MacArthur. They acclaimed a series of fighting statements that he made to an ~~xx~~ audience in the Australian Parliament Building. MacArthur described himself in these words:- "A soldier in a great crusade of personal liberty." And then he pledged his country to a fight ^{to the} finish. "There can be no compromise," cried MacA^rthur. "We shall win or we shall die - and to this end I pledge you the full resources and all the mighty power of my country and of the blood of my countrymen."

The South Pacific Commander-in-Chief then ~~xxxxxxx~~ attended a session of the Australian Parliament, where a bitter debate was on. The oratory was hot and excited, with shouts and reprimands. MacA^rthur, upon departing, made the following comment: "If the men of Australia fight as well as they argue, we are certain of ~~xi~~ victory."

PHILIPPINES

51
News from the Batan Peninsula tells of a heavy air raid. A large force of Japanese bombers struck at the fortress of Corregidor. They bombed for six hours, but General Wainwright's dispatch states that little damage was done and there were only a few casualties. The defending anti-aircraft batteries shot down four big enemy bombers.

On the ground the action was on a smaller scale, sharp skirmishes. The Japanese appear to be making what are called "feeler attacks." These may be preliminary to the all-out assault which has been expected, but which has yet to materialize. (The defenders of Batan were greeted with formal praise in Washington today. *General MacArthur* ~~The commander-in-chief~~ was granted the highest military tribute that the United States can bestow -- the Congressional Medal of Honor. The citation described the defenders of Batan as a gallant army worthy of the world's ~~xxxxxx~~ acclaim.)

EUROPE

52 Russia reports a seesaw of Red Army attacks and German counter-blows - on land and in the air. A big battle is raging in the area south of Leningrad, the sector of Staraya Russa. The Red Army reports that it has virtually captured that stronghold, where a Nazi army has been surrounded.

From the German side there is significant word - a thaw. The Germans report the beginning of the great thaw that dominates the time of Spring in Russia.

The British report heavy air raids against Nazi-occupied France, and they've dropped leaflets to the workers of Paris - saying that factories turning out war material for the Nazis will be bombed again.

In the Mediterranean - British air forces report that they have smashed a big raid by Axis warplanes. Another heavy blow against Malta, the island fortress - and this one was beaten off.

CHURCHILL

63 In London today, British Prime Minister Churchill uttered another of his grim pronouncements - picturing the present tribulations and ultimate victory. He called the recent Allied reverses - "a melancholy tale." Turning to the Far East, he described events in Malaya with the candor of a Churchill. "Singapore," he said, "has been the scene of the greatest disaster to British arms which our history records."

But the most ominous thing stated by the British Prime Minister, concerned something that is happening now. The Battle of the Atlantic, said he, has taken a turn for the worse. The shipping losses have increased dangerously. And this, of course, refers at least in part to the U-boat campaign on the American side of the ocean.

Then Churchill, having painted the picture in the darkest colors, repeated his familiar call of confidence

and of courage. He said the Allied nations cannot lose the war - save by some failure to combine their overwhelming strength.

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for
Meanwhile, all England is ~~xxx~~ talking about an election result announced today. There was a bi-election ~~for~~ Parliament, and the Conservative candidate supporting the Churchill Government was backed not only by the Conservative Party but also by Labor and even Communists. He had been endorsed publicly by Prime Minister Churchill. He is a marshal of the Royal Air Force, and ran in a district ~~xxxx~~ that has a large R.A.F. center. And yet he was defeated. He lost to an Independent, with no political organization, an engineer whose campaign consisted of attacks on inadequate war production, and whose slogan was "production for victory."

London tonight is interpreting the defeat of the government candidate as a reflection of the ~~dis~~ disappointment of the British people because of the lack of effective blows against the Axis.

EXPLOSION

55 A strange story comes from the scene of a disastrous explosion near Easton, Pennsylvania, today. It was a ^{tragedy} catastrophe of dynamite, and whenever anything like that occurs, there is an immediate suspicion of sabotage. Today, the suspicion is accompanied by an account of mysterious airplanes.

But first - let's see what occurred. Near Easton, Pennsylvania, there's a big cement quarry - a huge excavation. There they blast the rock with high explosive. Today, a truck drew up, and unloaded a large quantity of dynamite. This was to be stored in the powder magazine of the cement quarry. Altogether, there were some twenty tons of high explosive in the magazine - this is stated by Company officials.

A few minutes later, most of the workers were sitting around at the edge of the quarry, eating a light lunch. They were near the powder magazine, and

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the twenty tons of dynamite. In the excavation below, were sixteen other workers. Then suddenly there was a frightful explosion! It was so violent that pieces of debris were blown for a distance of seven miles. A farmer's barn a mile away was leveled by the blast.

56 And at Allentown, Pennsylvania, eighteen miles distant, homes were shaken and plate glass windows were shattered. Of the thirty men who were having lunch at the top of the quarry, not one has been found alive. So apparently, at least that many lives were lost. And fourteen children were injured. They were in the neighborhood of the quarry. However, the sixteen workers down in the pit were uninjured. They were a hundred and fifty feet below the surface.

(What caused the catastrophe? A superintendent of the cement company states that the boxes of dynamite

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just delivered had been opened but the fuses were not connected. The only way that they could have been exploded would have been by concussion, he explains. And then he adds a strange suspicion.

is quoted
He ~~quotes~~ *A* assistant foreman ^{is quoted} as saying that three airplanes had been seen circling above the quarry just before the blast. They were seen in the sky for some time until the blow-up occurred. The quarry superintendent says he believes that these mysterious airplanes - "dropped something." He thinks they dropped something that touched off the dynamite.

EASTER OUTFIT

Here's a bit of news that's exceedingly feminine. It's also an Easter item, and is appropriate only in the light of the well known feminine love for ~~an~~ Easter finery, ~~and~~ Easter hats and Easter dresses. *And nothing amuses an Indian more than the hats of American women.*

At Springfield, Massachusetts, June Oakley, who is seventeen, will march in the Easter Parade, wearing a dress of the finest silk. Silk is an oriental product. It is very much, for example, a product of Japan. June Oakley will wear a silk dress made out of a parachute that belonged to the first Japanese pilot who was shot down during the attack on Pearl Harbor. You can depend upon it that the Japanese use the finest silk for their war aviation parachutes - just as we do. So the silk dress that June will wear will probably be the finest on Easter at Springfield, Massachusetts.

June has arrived recently from Hawaii.

EASTER OUTFIT - 2

58 1/2 She's a daughter of a chief gunner's mate who was on duty at Pearl Harbor during the attack. And the first Jap plane to be shot down crashed in the back yard of her home in Honolulu. She ran out to the wreckage and salvaged the parachute, the scarf and the helmet of the pilot. And out of the parachute she has made a silk dress - for Easter.

In India we would take this as an instance of the truth, that women are the same the world over. But I cannot leave the subject of American women so suddenly. They are my most favorite subject. And I am sure that their position in this country fills all Indians with pity for American men. Men over here, I suspect, belong to what we call in India as "the depressed classes".

59 Well, it has been nice ~~to~~
speaking to you all, and here is Mr.
Hugh James.