

MYSTERY

Two mysteries of the sky - a shooting, a disappearance.

The naval authorities are trying to find out who took a pot shot at the Blimp ZMC-2. The point to be stressed is that it was no mere haphazard blazing away, no mischievous boy with a gun. The bullet was fired with careful aim from a high powered long distance rifle. And the circumstances of the shooting are most singular.

The Navy Blimp was on an errand of mercy, scouting over the sea in search of a man who had drowned. Flying five hundred feet high off the Jersey coast. The sea ~~was~~ below dotted with boats. The crew aboard the ZMC-2 heard the crack of rifle, and the sound of a bullet striking metal. When the Blimp returned to Lakehurst, they found a bullet hole in the metal sheeting of the horizontal fin. Who did it? And why?

The puzzle is deepened by a revelation made by Commander Rosendahl, the Navy's expert on dirigibles,

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who is in command of the Lakehurst Airship Station. He ~~says~~ ~~that~~
~~that this is~~ ^{it's} not the first time the ZMC-2 has been fired on.
It's the third time. ^a ~~Some~~ sniper took a shot at her on her
maiden flight across the country seven years ago. ~~Another~~
~~time,~~ ^{her} Three years ago bullets winged ~~the ZMC-2 while she was~~
~~making a flight~~ over New Jersey. The gas bag of the Blimp was
hit ^{so} ~~in such a fashion~~ that she lost a large quantity of helium.

A mystery-story writer might work up some sort of a
plot about a mystery-marksman with a grudge against the ZMC-2.
But no doubt it's just a matter of plain devilry - the
temptation to take aim at so large and tantalizing a mark
flying high. But it's a vicious kind of mischief to shoot at
a naval airship with a high powered long range rifle, as has
just happened to the ZMC-2.

The second aircraft mystery gives us the information
that the patch of oil found on the Pacific has no relation to
the missing army fighting plane. It had been guessed that the
speedy pursuit ship might have plunged into the ocean and left

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that big spot of oil on the surface. But a coast guard cutter investigated and found the floating oil to have come from a passing coastwise steamer. That leaves the strange disappearance of Lieutenant Skaer in his new-type war plane a blank mystery - save for one other piece of evidence which has popped up. A flyer's helmet was found on a nearby beach. It might have floated ~~on the~~ ^a shore. But so far, the helmet has not been identified.

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The plane was shrouded in secrecy to start with. It was something new, developed behind closed doors, something formidable and something fast. The Armies of the world are working feverishly to develop combat planes of greater fighting power and greater speed. The missing plane was the United States Army's contribution. It could do three hundred and twenty-five miles an hour. So the Army was keeping its speed-fighter a secret, its design, its points of novelty - in the dark. More in the dark than ever today - with search planes and boats combing the ocean off Los Angeles, looking for some sign of the ultra-modern terror on wings that flew off and vanished.

ROBBERY

Suppose we try to think out an odd place, a strange sort of setting for something melodramatic to happen -- a violent crime. An ingenious soul might say -- the Keeley Institute for Alcoholics; ~~the~~ resort for many a year famous for the cure of inebriates, people enslaved by the bottle. A weird place for a spectacular crime to happen. ^{Well,} You'd think it would take a ghoulish type of robber to hold up that haven for delerium tremens. But that's what happened today, with the crash of gunfire;-- and, murder, it seems likely.

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Four bandits stalked in and help^d up the executive office with drawn guns. The stick-up didn't work smoothly for two reasons. Maybe the Institute people, when they saw the stick-up men and the guns, thought it was just a case of D. T.s anyway. There was a scuffle, resistance. The President of the Institute ~~Th~~ was there, Dr. Oughton, of lifelong service in the treatment of alcoholism. The bandits blazed away, and Dr. Oughton ~~g~~ fell. They say he is fatally wounded, not expected to recover.

The second reason why the stick-up didn't work smoothly, not smoothly for the bandits, is this -- they got nothing.

Apparently they escaped with not a penny. They hunted and searched. They broke into a strong box, in which there were valuable papers, but no cash. So when the Institute for the Cure of Drunkards was held up, the story seems to run this way -- murder and no profit. Or maybe the profit will turn out to be -- caught, convicted, sentenced. *But they did get away with a box full of valuable papers.*

ETHIOPIA

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Here's a case of Smith threatening to sock Jones and everybody talking about ways of preventing Smith from smacking Jones and ~~the~~ general pessimistic head-shaking to the effect that Smith just can't keep from lambasting Jones. Then, suddenly, we hear the word -- there's no way of stopping Jones from swatting Smith,

Smith in this case is Mussolini. The standard reasoning is that war in East Africa is inevitable, because Mussolini simply cannot draw back. He has moved so far and fast toward war that he cannot possibly execute a right-about-face. He has assembled such a heavy force to strike that he cannot help striking. Meanwhile nothing has been said along these lines about Haile Selassie. It hasn't been supposed that he might find himself forced to go to war, whether he wants to or not, or whether the Italians want to or not.

But R reports come from Addis Ababa telling of a mass meeting of High Chiefs of Ethiopia, the great territorial Lords in their lion skins. In full uniform the King of Kings reviewed

his Chiefs as they marched by at the head of their warriors.

And most resplendent of all was Colonel Julian, the Black Eagle

of Harlem. The cry that greeted the Emperor was -- "War"! The

Chiefs demand an immediate call for the armed strength of the

nation to gather for battle. They stated their opinion in

Council that the clash of arms cannot be averted, that the

Emperor must sound the war drums. They said that the crisis

with Italy has gone so far that the dusky warriors of their

tribes would consider it a national disgrace if any terms of

settlement were made. The war hosts of Ethiopia will be

humiliated by anything except ordeal by battle.

If it is pessimism to point out that Mussolini must have war -- it's doubly pessimistic to say that Haile Selassie also must have war.

And, by the way, that big military review in Addis Ababa was followed by an Ethiopian order for mass recruiting.

GENEVA

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As affairs in Geneva drag on hopelessly, it becomes increasingly clear that the issue is drawn between Great Britain and Italy. Britain's stake, as we have known all along, is that large part of Abyssinia which contains the head waters of the blue Nile. London is icily opposed to Italy getting any control over that section. Moreover, there appears to be a broader opposition - England not wanting any European power to be in command over Ethiopia in general, since the country lies strategically close to Britain's Cape^{to} Cairo, line of communication in Africa.

The discussions at Geneva got nowhere today. There was an argument about calling a conference of the interested powers. England wants to make it a four power affair. Italy wants it to be a three power confab. England wants to include Ethiopia with herself, Italy and France. Italy objects to having Ethiopia join the talk. Mussolini wants the proposed conference to be based on the nineteen-six-treaty, in which England, Italy and France agreed among themselves to divide up

Ethiopia. Mussolini more and more pointedly puts his finger on Great Britain's signature to that partition document. So they got nowhere - deadlock. They hadn't anything to present to a general meeting of the League Council. The meeting was postponed until tomorrow.

ROOSEVELT

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About the time the Geneva proceedings reached a deadlock today, President Roosevelt, sitting in the White House, uttered words of peace, East African peace. His statement reads: "I wish to voice the hope of the people and the government of the United States that an amicable settlement will be found and that peace will be maintained."

This is the latest of a series of administration words against war -- hope repeatedly expressed that there will be a settlement between Italy and Ethiopia. And some will say that in addition to talk for peace, something should be done for peace. But doing something for peace may get somebody in a scrap, and that would be doing something for war. And Washington doesn't want to get mixed up in any entanglements. So it's a good deal of a dilemma.

UTILITIES

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The death sentence was wounded again in Washington today. If they keep shooting and knifing it, death to the death sentence will be the word. The House of ~~Rep~~ Representatives took a vote. The question was -- "Should the House accept the Senate Utilities Bill?" The ~~Senate~~^{Senate} Bill has the death sentence clause, calling for the abolition of utility holding companies. The House had passed its own bill, without the death sentence. The Upper and lower branches of Congress are staging conferences trying to iron out the differences.. So it was put up to the Lower House today -- how about accepting the Senate Bill? The answer was "No". Once more the House rejected the idea of putting the axe to those holding companies.

The vote of rejection is interesting. It points to a swing in favor of the death sentence, ^{but} not enough of a swing to change the decision. Today's vote ^{was} ~~of~~ two-hundred-and-nine, to a hundred-and-fifty-five -- a majority of fifty-four votes against the death sentence. The last time the House voted on the subject the majority was seventy. Death sentence advocates picked up sixteen votes -- not nearly enough.

WHISPER

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There was plenty of excitement at the Lobby probe in Washington today, shouting and thumping on the table, indignation and emotion. Inevitably so, when the proceedings came to that most ticklish point --the whispering campaign. It's amazing how pervasive and contagious those whispers can be. People are saying that they know on most certain authority that the President had had a mental breakdown. ^{But} The sybilant mutters were followed by all sorts of newspaper declarations that Mr. Roosevelt was in the best of health.

That's inflamable sort of stuff to bring into a Senate inquiry. So Senator Black of Alabama and other Senators thundered and ~~gungit~~ banged out questions -- shooting them at the man who admitted he had suggested a plan for a whispering campaign that the President was insane.

He is E. P. Cramer, a Plainsfield, New Jersey advertising man. He testified that late in March he wrote to C. E. Groesbeck, Chairman of the Board of ^{the} Electric Bond and Share Company. In his letter he proposed ways for fighting the administration. And the third suggestion was as follows, in ~~his~~

his own words: "Whispering campaign designed to create popular suspicion that the New Dealers and ~~xxxx~~ especially the New-Dealer-in-Chief either are incompetent or insane, discrediting them in the same way that Michaelson so successfully discredited Hoover." *That's a direct quote.*

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Under a barrage of questioning ~~he~~ the witness admitted that he hadn't any idea ~~that~~ the President was insane. *And* That he'd never seen Mr. Roosevelt. He admitted that he was now ashamed of the proposal. The Michaelson part of his suggestion referred to Charles Michaelson, publicity man of the Democratic party. The witness said he believed ~~that~~ Charley Michaelson had circulated rumors that President Hoover was insane.

The testimony indicated that Cramer's suggestion had no connection with the ~~xxx~~ whispering campaign that did occur. That didn't happen until a month later, a month after ~~the~~ he had written his letter. Moreover, it was brought out in the testimony that the Company ~~was~~ to which he had written had never taken any action on the plan, hadn't even noticed it,

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just ignored it. C. E. Groesbeck, to whom the communication was addressed, declares that he never ~~■~~ read it, never saw it, never got it -- and that he can't be responsible for letters people send him, especially letters that don't even get to him.

So ~~xxx~~ the great revelation turns into nothing in particular, just somebody getting a bright idea, a sorry sort of idea, and writing it into a letter to somebody higher up. Just a lot of flaming fireworks for a Senate investigation.

TRANSPORTATION

The Eastman Bill is a measure to unify the transport systems of the nation, to bring them all under one harmonizing control. The Interstate Commission ~~is~~ to do the harmonizing -- rail transportation, bus lines, waterways and airlines. The House of Representatives passed it today, with dozens of votes to spare. Only eighteen Congressmen voted against the Eastman Bill. As the Senate has already voted in favor of a law along those lines, the Bill now goes to a conference -- in which the Representatives and the Senators will iron out some points of difference in the respective transportation bills they've passed.

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All of you folks who have been wondering about those new half-a-cent pieces and tenth-of-a-cent coins, trying to figure out how they'll clutter up a fellow's pockets, and worrying about the amount of arithmetic necessary to make change -- well, you've all been worrying in vain. The way it looks now, you won't gape as the clerk says:- "That will be four dollars and sixty-seven and seven-tenths cents." You won't drag out a lot of weird looking little coins mixed in with the regular money and get dizzy trying to shell out the right number of half cents and one-tenth cents.

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The committee on coinage of the House of Representatives spoke up today and said: "Nix. Nix on the fractional chicken feed;" in spite of the fact that Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau suggested the coinage of the minute money, saying that it would help in the payment of those fractional sales-taxes in many states and cities; also, in spite of the fact that President Roosevelt himself had made up designs for that proposed picayune small change -- the committee tabled the measly

money
^ motion. The reason they gave for this was -- that to authorize this pettiest of petty cash would give the Treasury Department

too much authority.

You can all go right on getting rich by saving your pennies. The idea of having one-tenth pennies for the penurious boys to save and pinch and squeeze -- that would give too much scope to thrift.

So you can save your pennies and I'll save my words.

And, - SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.