

N.R.A.

The hornet is buzzing and stinging again, and the hornet's name is Clarence Darrow. The latest Darrovian characterization of General Johnson as a military dictator has the General's yes-men groping wildly for adjectives to refute the wily old lawyer. The General himself takes a more sane attitude. He uses only one adjective - "ridiculous". But, judging by what one hears from Washington, the entire staff is busy collaborating to produce something that will squelch Darrow. Just for their information, that has been tried before, but never quite successfully.

CANDY FOLLOW N.R.A.

They are still signing codes, a sweet one this time.

In the future, when you buy five pounds of candy for the little woman, it will be Blue Eagle candy. The National Association of Confectioners, getting together at the Waldorf, have adopted a code for the industry. It took the candy makers a long time to agree on this. A hot controversy about a sweet code.

DEBTS

There are infinite possibilities in Secretary Hull's suggestion that the European nations pay their debts to Uncle Sam in kind. Incidentally, the use of the word kind to mean goods has always puzzled me. Mebbe it means that if John Bull and the rest of Europe don't accept, it will be exceedingly unkind of them. Or did we offer it? And what are we offering?

Be that as it may, the Secretary of State's suggestion opens up an interesting picture. Supposing John Bull sends us a million dollars' worth of monocles. In that case we would have to import a million Englishmen to wear them.

Another item the English might send us is a few hundred million dollars' worth of plug hats -- toppers you know. Well, we might sell some of them to Communist diplomats. The rest we could use for targets. There's no fun like snow balling an A number one Bond Street topper. Then, again, we might have to accept several million dollars in British authors. We might hire Convention Hall of Chicago and let them read their books to each other. Preferably all at once. Well, that's a bit unkind. Although some British books are as bad as some American books.

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The ironic fact about Mr. Hull's suggestion is that it was first made by British statesmen and we turned it down vociferously. Maybe the English will turn it down - coming from us. Ah, but have we made that full offer? And to what extent?

MARK

Financial news generally makes pretty dull reading, and to tell the truth, dull hearing. But occasionally it has a significance far beyond that of mere figures and money.

Consider for instance the capers of the German Mark. It is continuing its tobaggan slide. The move has spread over here. America naturally is the last country to react to such fluctuations in foreign currency. The fall of the Mark started in Paris and spread to London and Holland. Now that it has reached our shores, the Mark has taken a breathless drop of sixty points in almost no time.

This strengthens the belief that the financial affairs of Germany are in a bad way. And that in turn has wide political significance.

LONDON FOLLOW MARK

Meanwhile the rumor market is getting busy on the subject of Uncle Sam's dollar. We haven't been paying much attention to it since President Roosevelt definitely devalued it some months ago. In fact, we have been taking it for granted that it would stay very much where it is.

The latest bit of gossip has it that the dollar is going to be devalued still further. This story does not come from Washington. It comes from London. The reasoning of Lombard Street is that the amount of silver which America has been buying in England means that the value of the dollar is going to be pushed down to fifty cents.

It is no secret that Washington's monetary ~~is~~ policy has not had the effect it was hoped. It did not bring about the general rise of prices that had been expected. So the British think that further devaluation will be bound to raise those prices and cause money to circulate more freely and strengthen the tide of recovery.

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But it's only a rumor from abroad.
May mean nothing.

ASTOR

One small sprightly bit in the news recalls singular turns in the history of one of America's famous families. Those of us in middle life may remember that renowned marriage, which made the front pages ~~of~~ all over the country, when the financial magnate, John Jacob Astor, in his middle life married a young wife. He had a grown-up son, the present Vincent Astor, ~~also~~ host to the President on the recent fishing trip.

Both John Jacob Astor and his bride were in that most famous of all ship disasters, the loss of the Titanic. John Jacob Astor himself, calmly and bravely went down with the ill-fated liner. Madeline Force Astor was saved. Not long afterward she had a son, the younger John Jacob Astor, who figures in the news today. Physicians at the time wondered what would be the effect on the child from so frightful a prenatal strain -- that terrifying day when the Titanic was lost. No effect whatever, apparently. The boy grew up ~~sturdy,~~ ^{sturdy,} strong, and sound, a fine chap -- a little moody perhaps, but then, that seems to be in the Astor family. The Astors have never been as sportive as the Vanderbilts or as gay as the Goulds.

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Since then the widow of John Jacob Astor has ^{been} married twice, the last time to a handsome Italian prize fighter. And that made quite a stir on the society pages.

The newest episode, hot in the newspapers right now, concerns a broken engagement and a hundred thousand dollar wedding ring. Young John Jacob Astor became engaged with all the blare of trumpets that accompanies nuptial alliances in the Four Hundred. But something went wrong with love and romance. The engagement was broken and the young man spoke his feelings in public and to the reporters. He said he wanted back the engagement ring he had given his fiancée, an heirloom, the jewels of which had once been a part of the crown of the Empress Eugenie, consort of Napoleon Third.

The bride's family ~~has~~ preserved a discreet silence, until now -- though what they have to say is sufficiently discreet and dignified. They announce they have returned the hundred thousand dollar ring, after having received a full and sufficient apology for those things that had been said in public.

GRASSHOPPERS - CANADA

Our Canadian friends are trying an experiment that all farmers will be watching keenly, especially those in the middle west. The idea, briefly, is to get rid of grasshoppers with poisoned sawdust. Let 'em eat it. In Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, the relief workers are loading five hundred million pounds of doctored sawdust into railroad cars. It is to be shipped to the farming districts overrun with the insects. The sawdust will be mixed with bran, then saturated with poison the bait will be scattered over the land.

If the experiment succeeds, it will be literally a God-send in many parts of the world. Hitherto all remedies, all methods of fighting the locust plagues, have been of little avail. The results will be watched not only in America but in Africa, where the settlers have had the most heart-breaking experiences, seeing the results of their hard toil of the soil devoured by ten-mile clouds of locusts.

JAPAN RELEASE

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You'd think the finding of that missing Japanese diplomat in Nanking would eliminate the fear of an international episode. You'd think it would eliminate Japan's excuse for the presence of those warships off Nanking. But Japan appears to have other ideas. The warships are still there.

The Chinese government showed its good faith. It was Chinese soldiers who found the missing man hiding in a cave, a cave near the ancient tomb^s of the Ming dynasty, the old rulers of China. He had gone four days without food or water. He has ~~not~~ not offered any explanation of his four days of disappearance. The Chinese say he hid away to escape a reprimand from his diplomatic superiors. He admitted that he had lost important official documents.

To the outside world, it looks as though Tokyo had gone off the handle prematurely. The Japanese Government not only sent warships to Nanking, but paraded marines up and down the streets of Shanghai, and demanded that the Police Chief of Nanking be fired. Now, if Japan does not promptly withdraw her warships from the Chinese capital, it will give the other nations something ^{more} ~~serious~~ to think about.

DEVILS ISLAND

There's a great story in the latest news from Devil's Island. A worn, middle-aged man has just been released from that hell-hole in the tropics. He was a spy. ^{A traitor,} ~~His case~~ was second only in French military annals, ~~to the historic affair~~ of Captain ~~Alfred Dreyfuss~~ who was also sent to Devil's Island. ~~Dreyfuss~~ was soon released and declared innocent. Charles Benjamin Ullmo, with a full burden of guilt, He passed twenty-six of his fifty-two years ^{on Devil's Island, that} ~~in that penal colony, which is the~~ byword for a living death.

Charles Ullmo

~~He~~ was the son of one of the wealthiest families in France, went to naval college, had a distinguished scholastic career, and became a brilliant, swagger young naval officer. He formed friendships with men who had served in the East, and through them became an addict of opium.

His parents died and left him a fortune. He squandered it on a ~~xxxxxx~~ beautiful dangerous woman, called La Belle Lison. For Lieutenant Charles Benjamin Ullmo, naval officer of France, nothing counted in the world save La Belle Lison -- and opium.

They were expensive habits. And when his money ~~ix~~ ran out he grew desperate. La Belle Lison had to be kept in fine clothes, jewels, and glittering entertainment. And that drove the young lieutenant to the ultimate military crime: *Treason.* He wrote to the German Minister of the Navy under an assumed name and offered him photographs and plans of French Naval fortifications.

The Surete, the famous French Secret Police, got onto it, and, pretending to be secret German agents, negotiated with him. They agreed to give him thirty thousand dollars for the documents he offered, and laid a trap for him.

The money was to be turned over at a meeting in a washroom of the express train from Calais to Paris. The detectives kept the rendezvous. A man entered the washroom. They pounced on him. He protested his innocence. Just then a timid little fellow came in and asked: "Why are you arresting him?"

"Robbery," the detectives growled. "It's none of your business. Get out of ~~here~~ here."

They took their prisoner away, and he completely proved his innocence. *They got the wrong man in the wash room.*

After that fiasco the agents of the Surete got into correspondence with Ullmo again. Another arrangement was made. The money was to be hidden ~~near~~ ^{beside} the highway on the road to Marseilles. When the day came the detectives placed the money and then hid themselves. They waited for hours, while automobile after automobile passed, but never a one stopped for the money. Evening was coming on when finally a car appeared in the distance. It slowed down. It stopped. A man jumped out and ran to the prearranged ~~prearranged~~ place where the money was hid. The detectives gasped. They recognized him. It was the mild little man who had walked into the washroom of the Calais express, when that futile absurd arrest ~~had been~~ ^{was being} made.

That is how ~~Ullmo~~ Lieutenant Charles Benjamin Ullmo was sentenced for the rest of his life to Devil's Island. He spent the first fifteen years in solitary confinement. Now, he has been ~~Ullmo~~ pardoned.

Through all those long, lonesome years he got letters from France -- letters from a woman. No, they were not from La Belle Lison for whose sake he had become a traitor. They were from a little girl who had been a childhood sweetheart. She had admired him so much, when he ~~had~~ had put on his handsome naval uniform. She had ~~wé~~pt bitterly over his disgrace. Then she wrote to him, a long stream of letters, to Devils Island. And it was she who pleaded and pleaded and finally persuaded the President of France to grant him a pardon so that she could marry him when he returned to France.

RACING

Here's an odd bit -- about the sport of kings -- horse racing. I got it from Dr. William Jack, formerly one of the head surgeons at Johns Hopkins, now associated with Willis Sharpe Kilmer, multi-millionaire racing mogul. He told me some striking things about the Kilmer stables -- at Court Manor down in the Shenandoah next to the Endless Caverns -- five hundred race horses, some worth a quarter of a million dollars apiece; one hundred and twenty-five racing mares in foal right now; colts insured for ten thousand dollars each -- and Sun Beau, the biggest money-maker in the history of racing. Sun Beau and his various offspring have made a total of two-and-a-half million dollars.

The Kilmer stables have just acquired what is called the finest race horse ever imported to America from Europe. Mr. Kilmer bought it from the Aga Khan, racing enthusiast and spiritual leader of millions of the Mohammedans in India. Price? Fifty Thousand dollars.

"At that price it was stealing the horse from the Aga Khan," says Mr. Kilmer who hurried to close the deal, because, as he said: "The Aga Khan might wake up the next morning and say, 'Where's my horse?'"

And that's what the multi-millionaire Mohammedan leader did say. The next day he did ask: "Where's my horse?" And when he found what he'd done, the Aga Khan made some non-religious remarks even for a Mohammedan.

Each of the nervous, highly sensitive thoroughbreds in Mr. Kilmer's world-famous stables has another animal for a pal. For instance, Sun Beau's pet and pal is a police dog. They are inseparable. Sun Beau won't race without him. Another Kilmer horse has made a pal of a Sicilian donkey. Guino, the magnificent horse bought from the Aga Khan, ("stolen," as Mr. Kilmer says), has a pet too -- a nanny goat. The thoroughbred and the nanny goat are the greatest pals in the world. Guino, when brought to this country, wouldn't eat. Finally they put a goat with Guino, and then they both nibbled hay happily together.

FIGHT

In the world of sports, boxing of course has the first place ~~just now~~. The big fight is official now, according to all the traditions of the prize ring. The process servers, sheriffs and court proceedings have ^{all} made their appearance.

Both battlers are being sued, with injunctions, judgments, and various other legal paraphernalia. ^{of} Maxie Baer, the great lover of the prize ring, is having ~~a~~ lawsuit troubles, not on account of his activities as ~~the~~ ^a great ^{big} lover, ~~of the ~~prize ring~~~~, but because of managerial complications. He has had various managers, under various contracts, and that's all in a snarl.

^{It's really} ~~the~~ Champion Carnera, the gargantuan gondalier ^{who} ~~was~~ is suffering from a stomach ache brought ~~on~~ on by moonlight and roses. The Italian ~~xxx~~ waitress over in London who has been suing him for several years, has slapped an injunction on the champion's share of the purse, so that she can collect fifteen thousand dollars, which the courts have awarded her as a mustard plaster ~~xx~~ for her aching heart.

The rough and ready followers of the prize fight game are being entertained with choice selections from passionate love letters which the palpitating pugilist wrote to the waitress. One languishing letter begins like this:-

"~~A million~~["] My dearest girl, whom I love; I won my 2nd fight here in America. You can live tranquilly, because I will not have another girl but you."

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Ah, those deathless ~~views~~^{vows} so easily forgotten, common alike to poets and prize fighters. The heavyweight champion of ~~of~~^{to the waitress,} the world forgot his plighted troth, and now it's costing him ~~money~~ fifteen grand.

In addition to the legal angle, there's the medical angle. First, they said that the bellicose Baer was in no condition to fight, and now the carnivorous Carnera has a cold. With both fighters, sued and sick -- the ballyhoo is boiling and s-l-u-t-m.