

ETHIOPIA

P. J. - Sunco. Thurs., Feb. 25, 1937.

In a mountain^s of Ethiopia, southwest of Addis Ababa, a chieftain faced the firing squad - a lordly Ras, mighty in his time, and of ancient pride and power. The rifles crashed - and seldom in this melodramatic world have gunshots sounded with such an echo of the tragic. For here indeed was the crack-of-doom ~~and~~ⁱⁿ a drama of life that would beggar a play-acting-story-teller's imagination.

Ras Desta D^{that}emtu[^] was his name, ^{1/2} great chieftain of Ethiopia, son-in-law of the Emperor Haile Selassie. Of his fame, the stories are contradictory. His enemies in Addis Ababa called him, the blood sucker of Ethiopia - because of his wealth-gathering as a princely merchant and because of the harsh taxation he imposed as Governor of the Sidamo Province. But Americans knew him as something else, when he came here on a mission of state at the time of Haile Selassie's coronation. They knew him as a smiling prince, a dusky, bushy bearded potentate of laughing whim and humor. When he arrived at New York as the Emperor's representative, he was given a royal salute of twenty-one guns. But the captain of the ^{United States} government

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craft that greeted him found to his consternation that he had no Ethiopian flag to hoist in his honor. So in desperation the skipper ran up a signal flag, the signal meaning "A" - "A" for Abyssinia. When Ras Desta learned this, he roared with laughter. ~~What pleased him best in the~~

What pleased him best in the United States was an amusement park, with ~~the~~ roller coaster, ~~the~~ side shows and ~~the~~ Ferris wheel. He announced that he was going to have a regular American amusement park built in his ^{own} princely domain in Ethiopia. But ^{the} turn and tide of events changed all that. Not an amusement park, but the battlefield - for Ras Desta.

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During the Ethiopian War, he was one of the four or five great ~~war~~ war chiefs of Haile Selassie, King of Kings. His post was on the southern front where he commanded a swarming army. Opposed to him was Italy's lean faced, thin lipped, colonial general, Graziani.

Ras Desta sustained the first great defeat in ~~the~~ series of defeats that brought about the utter collapse of the resistance of Ethiopia. ~~Graziani's mobile, motorized columns~~

Ras Desta fled, a fugitive. And it was not long before Haile Selassie fled. The Ras joined his royal father-in-law, and accompanied him to Jerusalem for a brief stay in the Holy Land. While in Addis Ababa Graziani, became the Italian Viceroy.

One by one the great war chiefs of Ethiopia submitted to the conqueror, some in Addis Ababa - and some went to Rome to make their submission. But not Ras Desta Demtu. This son-in-law remained faithful to the exiled King of Kings. He returned to Ethiopia, to the wild western part, and there organized a last resistance, a forelorn hope. The Italians swiftly mopped up the country. But Ras Desta, in the mountain wilds, kept a fighting force in action. Haile Selassie, arguing before the League of Nations that an Ethiopian government still existed, based his claim on Ras Desta - saying he represented independent Ethiopia, still fighting.

In Rome Mussolini demanded that the Ras must surrender. Offers were made. He negotiated, but nothing happened. In Rome, Mussolini lost patience. Just a month ago he issued a command giving Ras Desta seven days to surrender. If not - death. The seven days went by and still nothing happened. So now it was

life or death.

Then came the crash - in Addis Ababa, the tossing of hand-grenades at Viceroy Graziani, injuring him and other Italian army leaders. The Italian dispatches seem to indicate that this was all part of Ras Desta's final defiance. With the life-or-death ultimatum given him, he planned an ultimate stroke. Graziani, the Viceroy, to be bombed and killed with other high officials. And, in the confusion, Ras Desta and his army of warriors would make a dash on Addis Ababa. But the hand-grenade attack failed, inflicted injuries - not death. And Graziani, the swift and relentless colonial soldier, ordered instant, drastic reprisals and suppression. And he sent out the order "get Ras Desta! "

Coincident with this, a curious situation arose in London, in connection with the splendors and glories of the forthcoming coronation of King George the Sixth of Great Britain. The King of Kings invited to send a representative to Britain's royal pageant. Word from Rome was that if an Ethiopian delegate attended, Italy would boycott the coronation. Crown Prince Humbert would not go. This was followed by a report naming the represen-

tative that Haile Selassie would appoint. And the name: Ras Desta. So in Ethiopia Graziani gave the command with sterner emphasis:-
"get Ras Desta!"

He sent a flying column on a swift march. Several days ago it encountered Ras Desta's army of warriors. There was a wild battle - the tribal fighting men scattered by modern weapons. Several subordinat Rases were captured and executed. But Ras Desta got away.

Now the end - fugitives in the mountain fastness, tracked by implacable pursuers. These pursuers are not Italians, not white men, but black. White officers, but native Ethiopians soldiers enlisted and trained by the Italians. And Ras Desta was captured by his own African countrymen. Today Viceroy Graziani sent his report to Mussolini. He concludes the story with a phrase of fierce brevity, saying - RasDesta was immediately turned over to a firing squad.

You can hunt a long time before you'll find a story that sweeps with vivid melodrama like that - royal African Prince, American amusement parks, Ethiopian war, the League of Nations, Mussolini the Black Shirt Dictator, the coronation of the King

of England, flight, capture and doom! A salute of 21 guns
when he came here. A different salute of guns today.

ACTRESS

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As for tragic stories, it's an odd day when Spain doesn't provide us with one. Today at Movietone Newsreel we talked about a Spanish beauty, a Hollywood actress who had been a Fox Twentieth Century star ^{and} - it was recalled what a brown-eyed beauty she was, with reddish hair. The story goes on to a bathtub, and how a senorita of the films established a record - ^{by} ~~like~~ taking the longest bath. For nine hours she sat in the bathtub, lather ^{ed with} ~~and~~ soapsuds. Why? Did she need so much cleansing? Not at all. They were making a bathtub picture, and filmed it over and over again, for nine hours - the way they do in Hollywood.

And now today's news tells of the film star Rosita Diaz - facing the firing squad. A report from Gibraltar declares she was tried by the Rebels as a spy for the Left Wingers, found guilty - and executed. The World War had its Mati Hari, and now the ~~civil~~ Spanish civil war has its Rosita Diaz - if the story be true.

Neil Enslin is signalling to me.
What's on your mind Neil.

CHILD LABOR

(Today the Kansas Legislature took a vote -- sixty-four to fifty-two. And that made Kansas the twenty-eighth state in the Union to ratify the Child Labor Amendment. Eight more states are needed to put the Child Labor clause into the structure of our government. It has taken twelve years to get the twenty-eight states to ratify. And now -- eight more to go.

Why so long? Why all the reluctance?)

Right now in the New York State Legislature the amendment is up for ratification, and it's facing the stiffest kind of argument, with powerful figures and organizations lined up against it. The Child Labor controversy that is on right now in Albany gives us a broad view of the arguments pro and con -- especially those against.

First let's take a look at the proposed amendment. It does not suggest that the Constitution shall prohibit Child Labor. It proposes that the Constitution shall give Congress the power to do just that. The amendment reads: "The Congress shall have the power to limit, regulate, and prohibit the labor of persons under eighteen years of age." Right now Congress can not do that. Three times the Supreme Court has knocked out laws that

Congress has passed on the subject.

In Albany the amendment is backed up by President Roosevelt, Senator Wagner, and Mayor LaGuardia and the State Federation of Labor. The arguments they advance are easy to see - they point to the inhumanity of employing small children to drudge in factories. They show that the labor of children keeps grown-ups out of jobs.

Yet in Albany we find powerful forces arrayed against the Child Labor Amendment -- the Merchants Association of New York the Farm Federation Bureau, the State Grange, and the Catholic Church, headed by Cardinal Hayes of New York.

(The farm spokesman claim it would open the way to prevent children from helping out at home or on the farm. They point out that boys and girls doing the chores and lending a hand with the crops is an essential part of the economy of the farm -- always has been.

The Catholic prelates regard the Child Labor Amendment as an entering wedge for the government to interfere with the private concerns of the family. Cardinal Hayes puts it this way: "Primarily," says he, "the authority over the lives of children rests

in their parents." The apprehension is that government authority might work its way into family life, take control of children from parents, and thereby desolve the family as the number one social unit.)

Regulation should be local -- not national. "It should be enforced," says Cardinal Hayes, "by agencies of government in close touch with local conditions." And by that he means -- the states.

Such are the contentions as Kansas ratified today -- and as New York State is debating.

STRIKES

Here's some cool sense applied to the strike situation. The walk-out and the sit-down hit the headlines big across the country. The sit-down especially makes the limelight -- such a novelty of recent months -- naturally gets the publicity. Today, however, Assistant Secretary of Labor McGrady gives us some facts about the six dominant industries. Of their twenty-eight million, only forty-five thousand are on strike at this moment. "There's nothing abnormal in the present situation," declares Trouble Shooter McGrady. He adds that if we leave out the automobile labor trouble, we can total up the number of strikes and the number of working hours lost per man, and find that the figures are a little below average.

So let's thank the Assistant Secretary for his comforting reassurances, and go on to observe that negotiations are getting nowhere in the aviation sit-down in California. Fifty-six hundred workers are idle in the Douglas Aircraft

plant at Santa Monica, and tonight all attempts for a settlement are at a stalemate. The president of the company declares that there won't be any peace parley until the sit-downers get out. He figures that just remaining seated in one place is not appropriate to the business of flying through the skies. *The authorities are getting ready to evict the sit-downers.*

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The strike that concerns the sky is matched by one that concerns the depths of the ocean. You look up and you look down, and it's strike. There's no move for peace in the labor trouble at the submarine building shipyards of the Electric Boat Company in Groton, Connecticut. Neither the company nor the Union will make the first move to start negotiations. When neither side will make the first move, that's a good way to get nowhere in a hurry. The Union strengthened the picket lines today, but no violence is reported. *Gov. Cross declares he want tolerate any sit down strikes in Connecticut.*

A tragic ~~strike~~ note comes from Los Angeles. ~~There~~ ~~was~~ a sit-down in a bakery plant. The court issued an injunction ordering the strikers to vacate. And, after three days of sitting-down, they obeyed, peaceably left the *rolling pins and the dough* ~~bakery plants~~.

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You may think that's all in accordance with law and order, but listen to the tragedy. After the sit-downers left, the boss inspected the bakery and found they had eaten thirty-five dozen pies, ~~After that, they didn't have the crust to keep on sitting down, or maybe they thought they needed a little exercise to digest the pies with a ten mile cross-country hike or something.~~

~~like that~~

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Another tragedy concerns an Illinois strike of watch case makers. In case you don't understand, watch case makers are not watch makers. They're something ~~very~~ different. The tragedy is that last night I mentioned ~~the~~ ^a strike, ~~of watch makers.~~ ~~I was properly reproved for that~~ ^{and} today, ^{I am assured} They are watch case makers, with a capital "C".

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In Detroit fifteen meetings have been staged, the fifteenth today - between General Motors and the Union. That's a lot of conferences, but they seem to be getting places. Yesterday the Company and the Union announced an agreement on seniority rights, method of pay, and speed of production. Today they tackled the question of minimum wage rates. That

question of wages always bulks big and looms large - as why
wouldn't it bulk and ~~room~~.

ISLANDS

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When a couple of islands threaten to secede and join another government - that sounds as though it might have possibilities of war. But let's hope hostilities don't break out, because it would be too awful to have a war between Massachussets and New York - and all because of Nantucket. Just the same, Nantucket is threatening to secede from Massachusetts, together with Tuckemuck and Muskeget. ~~It begins~~ ~~to~~ sound like Ethiopia.

The trouble is no mere matter of national honor or imperialistic ambition. It's much more important than that. It's a question of the electric light bills. Nantucket, Tuckemuck and Muskeget claim their electric bills are too high, ~~they're payi~~ being charged too much. They've been demanding relief from the Massachusetts State Public Utilities Commission. They want the Commission to cut the rate they have to pay. But things are not happening fast enough. So now there's a threat of secession. They say they'll renounce their allegiance to Massachusetts and join ^{the empire state of New York where} ~~New York State. The~~ ^{presumably electric light bills are lower. Huh!} Nantucketers declare that at the next town meeting they'll adopt

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an article pronouncing Nantucket no longer a part of the
Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and they'll apply for admission
into the State of New York, where at this moment
I am in a state of ultimate finality.

~~They'll say quits to Massachusetts, just as I am
saying quits to this microphone, and~~

And SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.