

News Review of Current Events

JAPS SINK U. S. SHIP

American Gunboat Panay Bombed by Japanese on the Yangtse . . . British Warships Also Attacked

Edward W. Pickard
SUMMARIZES THE WORLD'S WEEK
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Latest Jap Outrages

JAPANESE aviators, strafing fleeing Chinese, bombed and sank the United States gunboat Panay on the Yangtse river above Nanking. The boat's storekeeper and an Italian journalist were killed.

At the same time and place the Japanese attacked and sank three Standard Oil steamers. At this writing it is reported the number of dead may be nearly 100, chiefly Chinese members of the crews.

Several British gunboats speeding to the aid of the Panay were shelled, one enlisted man being killed and a number wounded.

Washington and London lodged stern protests in Tokyo. Tokyo apologized with expressions of deep regret.

In America and Britain there was intense indignation over the latest outrages. No responsible person hinted that the United States or Great Britain should go to war with Japan on their account; but the man in the street felt there should be some way, short of war, by which the Japanese could be forced to cease their murderous attacks. Apologies may satisfy the diplomats but they do not restore lives.

President Roosevelt's protest was directed through Secretary Hull to Ambassador Hiroshi Saito with the request that it be sent to the Emperor Hirohito of Japan. It demanded apologies, full compensation and guaranties against repetition of similar attacks. The British foreign office was in touch with Washington by cable but Foreign Minister Eden denied that the British would take the lead in international action.

Even Tokyo was stunned by the attacks on American vessels, and the planned celebration over the capture of Nanking was called off.

Early Tax Revision

SUMMONING house ways and means committee members and treasury economists to a conference in the White House, President Roosevelt directed that revision of the taxes that oppress business be carried through as soon as possible. Those called were Robert L. Doughton of North Carolina, chairman of the house committee; Fred Vinson of Kentucky, chairman of a subcommittee on taxes; Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau and Undersecretary Roswell Magill.

On leaving the White House Mr. Doughton gave out the cheering assurance that the best possible tax bill would be formulated quickly and that the taxpayer would be given every consideration. If the contemplated measure can be rushed through congress it may be made effective on January 1, starting out what business and industry hope will be a Happy New Year for them and for all the nation.

In his press conference the same day the President gave business additional encouragement, asserting that the interstate commerce commission should take action to preserve the solvency of the railroads. He declared himself in favor of private ownership and operation of the railroads, but said receiverships of the lines cannot continue without financial adjustment.

Shortly after this the commerce commission put in a sour note by overruling the carriers' petition for 15 per cent immediate increase in freight rates.

House Passes Farm Bill
NARROWLY escaping return to committee, the administration farm bill was passed by the house by a vote of 268 to 129. It was believed the senate measure also would be put through successfully at once. Then it would be up to conferees from both houses to iron out the differences. There was doubt that final enactment could be obtained before adjournment of the extraordinary session.

More WPA Spending
HARRY HOPKINS, WPA administrator, announced that increased unemployment was compelling the WPA to increase its expenditures by \$23,000,000 a month. He said its employment rolls, now totaling 1,575,000 persons, would be enlarged to provide work for an additional 350,000 persons. The expansion, he said, could be handled within his budget, at least for some time.

Government Wins
THE Supreme court decided that the government need not pay interest on gold bonds that were called for redemption in advance of the maturity date.

The decision, written by Justice Cardozo, was unanimous, although Justices Stone and Black had separate concurring opinions. Cardozo



Hugh R. Wilson (pictured above), a veteran of the American diplomatic service and now assistant secretary of state, is to be our new ambassador to Berlin, succeeding William E. Dodd, whose resignation was submitted to the President.

is ill and his opinion was read by Chief Justice Hughes.

The litigation was started by Robert A. Taft of Cincinnati, son of the late President and Chief Justice William Howard Taft; the estate of James J. Ransom of Des Moines, and Arthur Machen of Baltimore.

New Men for SEC

TWO vacancies on the securities and exchange commission were filled by the President by the appointment of John Wesley Hanes, partner of a New York stock brokerage firm, and Jerome N. Frank, radical New York attorney, now serving as an attorney for the Reconstruction Finance corporation and formerly chief counsel of the defunct AAA.

Frank fills the position vacated by James M. Landis, who retired last September to become dean of the Harvard law school. Hanes fills the post of J. D. Ross of Seattle, recently named administrator of the Bonneville dam.

Sloan's Great Gift

ALFRED P. SLOAN, JR., chairman of General Motors corporation, announced he was donating securities worth approximately \$10,000,000 to the Alfred P. Sloan foundation with the hope of promoting a wider knowledge of "basic economic truths."

In his announcement Mr. Sloan said he deemed it proper to turn back part of the proceeds of his industrial activity to aid in bringing about "a broader as well as a better understanding of the economic principles and national policies which have characterized American enterprise down through the years, and as a result of which its truly marvelous development has been made possible."

Once the proper understanding is achieved, he said, the people may promote "the objectives that all have so much in mind." These he listed as: More things for more people, everywhere. An opportunity for achievement. Greater security and stability.

Mr. Sloan established the foundation on July 6, 1936, incorporating it in Delaware as a non-profit membership corporation.

Italy Leaves League

ITALY finally made up its mind to quit the League of Nations. No one was surprised when Mussolini announced this decision of his Fascist council, and no other nation expressed any regret over the action. The Duce in a characteristically bombastic speech told the people about it, and delighted cheers greeted his defiance of the opponents of fascism. For some time Italy has taken no part in the doings of the league, and her resignation really is not of much immediate importance.

Landon Won't Run Again

ALFRED M. LANDON definitely removed himself from the presidential campaign picture of 1940 by announcing in Washington that he would not be a candidate for nomination by the Republican party and would not accept the honor if it were offered him. He added that he was not retiring from politics, but would continue active in his party.

While in the capital Mr. Landon was invited to the White House and had a pleasant chat with the President, politics and business not being discussed.

First Flight Celebrated

FRIDAY, December 17, was the thirty-fourth anniversary of the epochal air flight of the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk, N. C., and the day was fittingly observed by all aviation interests in the country. Under orders from the army general staff every military flying post sent up all its available aircraft at the exact hour when the two inventors first made their plane fly. About one thousand fighting planes were in the air at the same time.

Atlantic Planes Wanted

EVIDENCE that passenger plane service across the Atlantic would be started within two years was seen in the request of Pan American Airways for bids on 12 planes capable of carrying 100 passengers each.

Performance demands call for a speed of 274 miles an hour at 20,000 feet and indicate the type of craft required would cost one million dollars each. Bids are to be submitted to Charles A. Lindbergh, chairman of P. A. A.'s technical committee by next March 15.

Brave Scouts Honored

FIGHT Boy Scouts who risked their lives to save others were cited for heroism by Daniel Carter Beard, national scout commissioner and chairman of the National court of honor.

Three scouts who receive gold honor medals are J. P. Fraley of Hitchens, Ky.; Guy Groff, Jr., of Marengo, Iowa, and Kenneth Simonson of Redridge, Mich., each of whom rescued a drowning person.

Five others who receive certificates for heroism are John Mentha, New York; John Rugg, Yonkers, N. Y.; Philip Beane, Bath, Me.; William Benham, Napoleon, Ohio, and Eldon Shaffer, Berrien Center, Mich.

Diplomatic Changes

SEVERAL major changes in the diplomatic service are scheduled for the near future. It was learned that William E. Dodd had resigned as ambassador to Germany and in Washington it was said that Hugh R. Wilson, now assistant secretary of state, would be given the post in Berlin. Dodd has found his duties difficult because of his admitted dislike of the Nazi policies and for some time has been regarded as "persona non grata" by the German government. He was a professor of history in the University of Chicago when appointed, and says he intends to resume work on a history of the Old South.



Mr. Bingham recently returned to the United States to undergo treatment for malaria at Johns Hopkins hospital in Baltimore. The State department expects he will go back to London after the holidays to pay his official calls of farewell.

Liner Aground; All Saved

THE Dollar liner President Hoover ran aground on a small island off Formosa when en route from Kobe to Manila. Her passengers, about 600 in number, were put ashore on two rocky islets, and there were picked up by the President McKinley of the same line and taken to Manila.

Wally Lowest Duchess

THE new edition of Burke's Peerage, authoritative book on British nobility, reveals that the duchess of Windsor has been placed in the twenty-ninth or last place among the duchesses. Her husband, the duke of Windsor, former King Edward VIII, is placed as No. 4 man in the empire, behind his brothers, King George VI and the dukes of Gloucester and Kent.

No Fraud by Mellon

THREE months after his death Andrew W. Mellon, famous industrialist of Pittsburgh, was exonerated of income tax fraud by unanimous decision of the United States board of tax appeals. The board threw out the fraud charges brought by the administration against the former head of the Aluminum Company of America and, by an eight to seven ruling, slashed the government's claim for additional taxes on Mellon's 1931 income from \$3,075,000 to about \$750,000.

Profits Tax "Impossible"

REPEAL of the undistributed profits tax as a levy "impossible of equitable and effective" application to the complex and varied pattern of American industry, is recommended in a report published by the Brookings institution, based on a study of the actual effects of the tax on 1,500 corporations.

Prepared by Dr. M. Slade Kendrick of Cornell university, in cooperation with the staff of the institution, the study was made from data obtained from the results of some 3,600 questionnaires sent out by Sen. Frederick Steiwer, Republican, of Oregon.

What Irvin S. Cobb Thinks about

Vanishing Wild Life.

VARNER PLANTATION, TEX.—Thanks to wise legislation, the wild fowl are coming back to this gulf country. True, the flocks may never again be what they were; yet, with continued conservation, there'll again be gunning for one and all.

But when I think back on the ducks I saw down here 10 years ago—in countless hosts—I'm reminded of what Charley Russell, the cowboy artist, said to the lady tourist who asked him whether the old-time r s exaggerated when they described the size of the vanished buffalo herds. "Wellum," said Charley, "I didn't get up to this Montana country until after the buffaloes started thinning out. But I remember once I was night-herding when the fall drift got between me and camp and I sat by and watched 'em pass. Not having anything else to do, I started counting 'em. Including calves, I counted up to 3,009,625,294, and right then was when I got discouraged and quit. Because I happened to look over the ridge and here came the main drove."



Irvin S. Cobb

Let an unshorn dandruff fancier claim he's divine and, if nobody else agrees with his diagnosis, the police will jug him as a common nuisance and the jail warden will forcibly trim his whiskers for him or anyhow have them searched. But if enough folks, who've tried all the old religions and are looking for a new one, decide he is the genuine article, then pretty soon we have a multitude testifying to the omnipotence of their idol.

Let another man think he is a reincarnation of Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great, and if few or none feel the same way about it he's headed for the insane asylum. But if a majority, which is a large body of persons entirely surrounded by delusions, agrees with him that he is what he says he is he becomes a dictator and rules over the land until common sense is restored, if at all.

Let the writer of a daily column begin to think his judgments are perfect and his utterances are infallible—but, hold on, what's the use of getting personal?

Grandma's Togs

WE LAUGH at our grandmothers who believed that, for a lady to be properly dressed, she should have a little something on anyway.

Maybe those mid-Victorian ladies sort of overdid the thing—bustles that made them look like half-sisters to the dromedary, skirts so tight they hobbled like refugees from a chain gang, corsets laced in until breathing was almost a lost art, boned collars so high they seemed to be peeping over an alley fence. Still, wearing five or six starched petticoats, the little woman was safe from Jack the Pincher unless he borrowed some steamfitter's pliers.

And later when, for a season, blessed simplicity ruled the styles, her figure expressed the queenly grace that comes from long, chaste lines. Probably the dears never figured it out just the natural cunning of their sex told them 'twas the flowing robes which gave majesty and dignity to kings on the throne and judges on the bench and prelates at the altar—and shapely women-folk.

How old-fashioned those times seem today when every dancing floor is a strip-tease exhibit and every bathing beach a nudist show; and a debutante, posing for snapshots, feels she's cheating her public unless she proves both knees still are there.

Reading Dickens

I'VE been reading Dickens again. This means again and again. I take "Pickwick Papers" once a year just as some folks take hay fever. Only I enjoy my attack.

Dickens may have done caricatures, but he had human models to go by. He drew grotesques, but his grotesques had less highly-colored duplicates in real life. And readers recognized them and treasured them as symbols of authentic types. The list is almost endless—Sam Weller, Sairy Gamp, Daniel Quip, Uriah Heep, Mrs. Nickleby, Mr. Micawber, Mr. Pecksniff—oh, a dozen more.

What writer since Dickens has been able to perpetuate one-tenth so many characters? There is Tarkington with his Penrod and his Alice Adams; there was Mark Twain with his Huck Finn and Colonel Mulberry Sellers. There lately has been Sinclair Lewis with two picturesque creations, to wit: Babbitt—and Sinclair Lewis.

IRVIN S. COBB
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Floyd Gibbons' ADVENTURERS' CLUB

HEADLINES FROM THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF!



"The Sleep of Death"
By FLOYD GIBBONS
Famous Headline Hunter

HELLO EVERYBODY:
Before the G-Men started mopping up on Public Enemies one of the most dangerous things that could happen to a person was to accidentally witness a gang murder. It didn't matter who you were. If you just happened to be unlucky enough to see the faces of the killers you were immediately marked for slaughter. The hoodlums had nothing against you personally. They just didn't like the possibility of your being able to identify them some day in court.

Mrs. Bessie Bronsky, of Bronx, N. Y., had just such a bad break with the result that her whole family was "put on the spot!" Some years ago before she was married, Bessie lived at the corner of Rutgers and Water streets. "The Water Street gang," a tough mob of hoodlums, made that neighborhood their headquarters at that time. One night, Bessie says, when her parents were out and she, her two little sisters and little brother were playing in the front room, they suddenly heard shots in the street. The children rushed to the windows to see what was the matter—and saw too much for their own safety.

They had reason to be frightened. Two men were chasing a third man—bring at him with revolvers as they ran. The girls saw the victim fall and the two men pause for a second under the street light in front of the house. As the girls stared horror-stricken at the sight before them the killers looked up at them. Bessie quickly pulled her sisters away from the window, but not before the men had seen them and what was worse KNEW THAT THEY WERE RECOGNIZED!



The Man Caught Bessie by the Throat.

Bessie says, in one of which she slept with her little brother, while her two sisters slept in the other. Their parents slept in another part of the house. Let's let Bessie tell it in her own words.

"I don't know how long I slept but in the wee hours of the morning I suddenly awoke with a choking sensation in my throat. I tried to lift my head but I felt so dizzy that my head fell right back on the pillow. I had a strange feeling of terror; that I could not explain. At first I thought that I had had the nightmare but after awhile I had a strong sensation that somebody who meant us harm was in the room!

Death From Gas Was Planned. "I was terribly sleepy and felt sick at my stomach but the feeling that a stranger was in the room was so strong that it kept me awake. I lay there shivering and pretending I was asleep. My little brother I knew was asleep and I wondered if my sisters were. Something told me to look around, so I finally succeeded in raising my head. The light from a street lamp in front of the house lit up the room fairly well but my eyes were so blurred that for a few seconds I could hardly see. I made out my sister's bed after awhile and as I looked a SHADOW MOVED ACROSS IT!

"I was so frightened now that I could not move. Cold chills went up and down my back and it seemed to me that my scalp was moving. The shadow moved again and then I saw what caused it. "A man stood bending over my sisters' bed! The man was dressed in only an undershirt and trousers but I knew at once it could not be my father. He was taller than my father but it was too dark to really see him. As I lay there wondering what to do I smelled something that nearly drove me frantic with terror.

"The room was full of gas—that's why I was dizzy—I smelled it plainly now and the whole murderous plot came to me. I got up my nerve as well as I could. 'Who's there?' I said. "In a flash the man sprang across the room and caught me by the throat. 'If you don't keep quiet I'll choke you,' he growled in my ear. I kept quiet for a second but the thought that my whole family would die if I remained quiet, nerved me. I made up my mind to let go one good scream even if he killed me after.

Bessie's Screams Saved Them. "I screamed at the top of my voice—a scream loud enough to wake up the entire neighborhood. I thought the man would kill me then but he let go of my throat and swearing at me ran out of the room. I kept up screaming. My sisters and brother never even woke up, but my mother and father did. They came rushing into the room and then something seemed to explode in my head and that's all I remember."

But that's not all Bessie's father and mother remember—not by a long shot! They found that a rubber hose from the kitchen stove had been placed over the gas jet in the children's room and the other end lay on the pillow of the two sisters' bed! And gas was pouring into the room from the open gas jet! Another few minutes and this story never would have been told. The papers would have told another story of the "accidental death by gas of four children."

Court of Brotherhood. One of the most ancient courts in this country is known officially as "Court of Brotherhood and Greeting," says London Tit-Bits Magazine. It is older than the Doomsday Book, is presided over by the warden of the Cinque Ports, and to it come the port barons clad in their ceremonial coronation robes to renew their ancient oaths "to maintain their charters, franchises, liberties and customs." Among the traditional ceremonials is the reading aloud of an old order of Queen Elizabeth imposing a fine of three shillings, four pence, "to be paid forthwith," on any member speaking more than once on any subject, and the same penalty for anyone interrupting a speaker.

Historic Hoaxes

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON
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One Born Every Minute
JUST as most Americans believe that it was Abraham Lincoln who first said, "You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time; but you can't fool all the people all the time," so are 90 per cent of them convinced that P. T. Barnum originated the saying that "there's a sucker born every minute." The great showman built a fortune on the essential truth of that statement but he didn't originate it.

The man who did was another famous circus proprietor—Adam Forepaugh, one of the founders of the old Sells-Forrepaugh circus. That saying dates back to the days when there was the bitterest rivalry among a number of competitors in the circus field for John Public's dollar.

Destruction of each other's "sheets" (posters), hiring rowdies to try to break up performances, pitched battles between circus crews and frequently bloodshed marked that rivalry. Added to such "direct action" methods was the custom of spreading false reports about a competitor. So Forepaugh thought he could injure Barnum by circulating the report that Phineas had once sneeringly declared, "There's a sucker born every minute." Such propaganda, however, proved to be a boomerang.

The public, instead of resenting this insinuation against its intelligence, chuckled appreciatively over the alleged remark of "Old P. T." and declared that he "had it sized up just about right." Thereby the public proved the truth of another saying attributed (also wrongly) to Barnum. It was that "the American people like to be humbugged."

American Dictator

TALK of the possibility of America's having a dictator, such as is heard from time to time these days, is nothing new. One hundred and sixty years ago there was being circulated in this country a report that congress had conferred upon George Washington the powers of a military dictator and that American liberties were in greater danger than they had been when the country was ruled by George III.

So alarming did the rumors become that John Adams issued a statement which said: "This is as false as the other stories. Congress, it is true, upon removing to Baltimore, gave the general power to raise 15 battalions in addition to those which were ordered to be raised before, and to appoint the officers, and also 3,000 horse (cavalry) and to appoint their officers, and also to take necessary for his army, at an appraised value. But no more. Congress never thought of making him dictator or of giving him sovereignty. I wish I could find a correspondent who was idle enough to attend to every report and write it to me."

It is doubtful if any correspondent, no matter how idle, could have attended to every such report. There were too many of them—all of them set loose by British propagandists to weaken the Patriot cause by shaking the confidence of the people in their leaders. And of them all this one about a dictatorship was the most dangerous for it added greatly to the difficulties Washington was having in that crucial year of the Revolution.

The Nantucket Sea Serpent

JUST as regularly as the bathing season comes 'round each year, just as certainly will there appear newspaper reports that some bather has been startled by the sudden appearance of a "sea serpent," one of those fabulous monsters which human imagination has conjured up out of the deep for centuries.

Back in 1931 such a monster was reported seen in Lake Erie and the "Sandusky Sea Serpent" was front-page news for several days. Then it was revealed that it existed only in the minds of two carnival men who wanted to attract crowds to a popular Ohio summer resort.

Last summer bathers in the Atlantic on the coast of Massachusetts really saw one and the "Nantucket Sea Serpent" became even more famous than its Ohio relative. For it was "genuine" to this extent: it was an inflated rubber monster, designed by a famous artist who is the creator of other such figures used by a New York department store in its annual Thanksgiving day parade in that city.

The appearance of the sea serpent was exposed as a publicity stunt by J. J. R. Indio, reporter for the New Bedford (Mass.) Standard-Times, after which several of those who were "in on the stunt" wrote an open letter to the Nantucket Inquirer and Mirror telling how it was planned to publicize Nantucket Island first and the department store incidentally. Nantucket was selected as the hoax spot because the artist has a summer home there and the founder of the store was born on the island in 1822.