The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1937

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesdays. The right is reserved, however, to make such superficial changes in the work submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical situation in the composing room, headlines written by those other than members of the staff cannot be used. Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publisher.

Misplaced Mud and Tangled Tunes

A picture of men shoveling river silt from Louisville's streets near two upright pianos that had floated in from no one knows where, suggested the above title.

When river silt comes down to the delta in the Nile floods each year it is looked upon as a blessing, since such silt can be richly productive. On city streets similar silt is a nuisance and possible source of sickness.

The same silt has probably so worked into the two mentioned pianos as to make it impossible for the greatest pianist to extract from them anything but tangled, jangled tunes.

However, the misplaced mud will be put where it can do some good and harmony will once more emanate from Louisville's homes and halls.

Why? Because man has an indomitable will which yields to discipline that it may conquer more.

Our people are not regimented and goose-stepped, marched and paraded as in Germany, but because they know the value of organization they have placed confidence in their leaders. Hence the flood areas will be reoccupied.

Misplaced mud and tangled tunes give man another chance to prove how much he has progressed in conquering his natural enemies.

When the Prowler Comes

"Let me tell you what I would do if I discovered a prowler in my house," advises and ex-prowler, writing anonymously for Cosmopolitan.

"Upon hearing one of my associates in my home, I would gently arouse my wife and four children, after I had locked the bedroom door, lead them over to the window and urge them to shout at the top of their voices, 'Police! Murder! Burglars!'

"That stunt will give any prowler the willies, believe me. If you women only knew what one of your hysterical high C's does to a prowler you wouldn't be a bit nervous when the boss leaves you alone at night. All prowlers are afraid of women.

"But the foregoing advice, I hasten to add, does not apply if the prowler is working on your bedroom door. It applies only when he is on the floor below, or above you. If he's in your bedroom, lie still. He will leave when he has fussed your valuables. If he's in an adjoining room and you can get to your bedroom door and lock yourself in, do so; then go to your window and scream your head off."

Have We A Patriot?

It may be that the munitions-makers of the United States will want to imitate the example of Baron Sumitomo who has given the Japanese army more than $1,000,000 and promises another donation of like size later on. The news from Japan is that other Japanese industrialists are expected to give large sums to enable the Japanese nation to meet any menacing international situation and adequately prepare for nation defense.

The Baron is said to belong to a noble family. He became a multi-millionaire through the manufacture of munitions and armaments for the Japanese army.

So far as we know, no multi-millionaire in the United States, who made his money out of selling munitions and armaments to the Government, has hitherto matched the generosity of the Japanese Baron. Surely, among our munitions-makers we must have a patriot. Will he step forth and let the nation hear from him?

Spank 'Em at Home

The principal of a London, Ontario, public school broadcast by radio the sounds accompanying the thrashing of an unruly pupil. It was hoped that the exhibition might influence other children to be good. It was only a miniature mockery of a public hanging—and everybody knows that staging a public hanging merely satisfies the morbidly curious. The proper place to spank a child is not only on the seat, but in the home.

A Mother's Influence

Canadian officials are now considering a move to restore the Dionne quintuplets to their parents. These kids, because of proper commercial guardianship, now possess over a half million dollars, and are expected to have another half million within two years. "No government official can take the place of a mother's influence in the formative years of a child's life," argues David A. Croll, the quints' guardian. Those are brave and true words, Mr. Croll. They prove that money—even great gobs of the stuff—can't create character.

WE WISH that some able and ambitious youth today would write a book setting forth his confused and bewildered thoughts relating to the cock-eyed world his elders have brought him into. We'll wager that such a book, intelligently written, would become a best seller—and perhaps have a beneficial effect upon giving the American people a better perspective.

Taking Michigan's Judges Out of Politics

As a citizen of Michigan, do you favor a program that seeks to "take the Supreme Court and Circuit Judges of Michigan out of politics?"

For many years various suggestions have been made to effect this desired improvement, and this Spring the voters will be given a chance to voice their feelings on the subject when they will be presented with a State Constitutional Amendment.

Michigan's State Bar Association, headed by Roscoe O. Bonisteel, of Ann Arbor, is behind the Constitutional Amendment which they expect the Legislature to place before the voters. In an effort to acquaint its readers with the details of the Amendment, The Eccentric has received from Mr. Bonisteel the following statement on the subject, which we suggest you read very carefully; it is as follows:

"The two Constitutional Amendments being proposed by the State Bar Association of Michigan to take the Michigan judiciary out of politics, provides that thenceforth all judges of both the Circuit and Supreme Courts will be appointed by the Governor upon nomination by a judiciary commission of nine members which is created by the Constitutional Amendment. The judiciary commission is composed of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the presidents of the Circuit and Probate Judges of the State, three lawyers appointed by the Board of Commissioners of the State Bar of Michigan, and three laymen appointed by the Governor. The terms of the appointive members of the commission will be for six years and staggered so that not more than two will expire in any two year period.

"The State Bar Association proposal is the result of many years of study by committees of the Michigan State Bar Association, and during the past year by the committee of 'judicial selection and tenure of the State Bar of Michigan.' The Amendment proposed is in accordance with the position of the American Bar Association taken at its most recent meeting in Columbus, Ohio. It effectively does away with the many shortcomings which are apparent in a system of selecting judges by a partisan political election. The Amendment is in accord with the best thought of the day on the part of students of systems of judicial selection and, although it is perhaps not wholly in accord with the specific ideas of any individual of the six thousand members of the Bar in Michigan, it is, nevertheless, a very practical proposal and brings assurance of the effective removal of our judiciary from politics.

"The superiority of an appointive system of selecting judges over the political elective system has been clearly proven by the experience of those states having an appointive system. In the summer of 1936 over 2300 answers to a questionnaire sent to Michigan lawyers by the State Bar showed that less than 10% of them favored retention of the present system of electing judges in the partisan political election. On the other hand, a canvass of representative lawyers picked at random in 10 states having some form of appointive system reversed the percentages and showed that, as a result of experience, over 90% of the lawyers generally approved of the system of judicial selection in effect in their state.

"Perhaps the most important single objection to the Michigan system of partisan election of judges is that it provides no security of tenure for an able, qualified judge. When the continuance in office of the judge is not dependent upon his ability or integrity, but rather dependent upon the direction of the political winds at the expiration of his term of office, it is too frequently true that the able, best qualified lawyer cannot be induced to aspire for the office. He is reluctant to abandon a lucrative and growing private practice, which will provide economic independence for him for the rest of his life, for a six year term of judgeat the end of which—not because of lack of ability, but because of political chance—he may be returned to private practice and compelled to begin over again at an age where this is most difficult. It is no idle assertion that all too frequently our best lawyers cannot be induced to run for Circuit judge because of the insecurity of tenure.

"The second most important objection to the present system of electing judges in Michigan is that anyone seeking election to the office (whether present incumbent or not) must actively engage in a political campaign if he is to be successful. Such political campaigning on the part of incumbent judges and aspirants to the office has two very harmful results: First, it jeopardizes the dignity of the court, the maintenance of which is vitally necessary to the administration of justice; second, the necessity of such campaigning under our present system likewise deters many able lawyers who might otherwise be available for judicial office. Political campaigning on the part of judges is part and parcel of the present Michigan system of partisan election of the judiciary. It is contrary to every professional ethic and moral requirement of the office. Political campaigning by judges is condemned by the Canons of Judicial Ethics approved by the American Bar Association and is abhorrent to all high minded citizens, judges, lawyers and laymen alike."

Ethics of Lawyers

Detroit lawyers are all upset because one of their members advertised in a Wayne County neighborhood newspaper. So they suggest disbarment. It's against the ethics of the profession, they assert. Well, as a mere lay observer, here's one evidence of where a group of human beings strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. If lawyers did no worse than advertise, they'd bring the millennium to their profession.

It's Refreshing

It is refreshing to know that the United States Senate's objections to the President's efforts to pack the Supreme Court come from Democrats as well as Republicans. Truly, this issue transcends party lines. If the Chief Executive is able to control both the Legislative and Judicial branches of the federal government, then the taxpayers can save money by abandoning the Congress and just let the Executive officers run the show; a controlled Supreme Court would merely approve the Executive's policies. Then we will have a dictatorship.

SO FAR THIS WINTER, the weather has been mild. Perhaps the reason is that there has been a scarcity of cold winds and blizzardy blasts. Anyway, that's the only reason we can think of right now.

People's Column

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column. All communications must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request. Letters must be limited to 500 words, and must be in the office by Tuesday noon for publication the following Thursday.

Editor,
Birmingham Eccentric.

I have been wondering what the citizens who are actively opposing President Roosevelt's so-called packing of the Supreme Court would do in his place.

President Roosevelt is trying to find a way to preserve our democratic form of Government, which pledges life, liberty and pursuit of happiness to ALL citizens, including the millions in the subsistence level. Many of his emergency measures do increase the security of the least secure were declared unconstitutional. In order to eliminate the danger of any "isms" gaining control, our President is trying to find some way within the Constitution to promote the General Welfare.

That, depends on how reactionary and how liberal, the men are who interpret the Constitution for 1937 problems.

I would suggest that all citizens before expressing any opinions would acquaint themselves thoroughly with the past histories, personal and social bias, and political philosophies of each of the Supreme Court Judges.

Mrs. H. H. Corson
Mar. 2, 1937

The Birmingham Eccentric,
Birmingham, Michigan.
Gentlemen:

I would advise the citizens of Birmingham and this vicinity, before becoming enthusiastic about natural gas, to consult with their friends in Detroit who are now using it.

No one with whom I have talked is at all satisfied, at least with the present situation.

Yours truly,
George H. VanBuren,
7188 Hazelwood Ave.

Mrs. Twelve Hours-a-Day,
Dear Madam:

In the Feb. 25 issue of the ECCENTRIC you asked the following question: "Can a man with six in the family live decently on sixteen hundred dollars a year?"

In your appeal to me for an answer I fear you have made a slight error. Not that I am unsympathetic. But I know that that sum is above the average wage. If we all had that, there never would be a depression. Do you criticize the corporations for limiting expenses to income?

Sixteen hundred dollars is really a large income nearly twice what many families of my acquaintance, consisting of from three to five grown-ups, have had to live on for several years. Excepting a few lucky ones, most of us get by this world only what we deserve.

While it hurts to see the children of others have more of the good things of this world than one's own, yet that feeling is a poor motive for getting these things and if indulged in will only lead to disaster.

Perhaps it is a greater kindness to teach your children the hard facts of this world. After all, they are going to live in it and should learn something about it before they are pitched headlong into the stream of life. Normal human nature loves to conquer; so don't deprive yourself of your children of the thrill of strife for conquest. It gives hope and zest to life.

T. H. Millington.

Editor,
The Eccentric.
Dear Sir:

Monday night I attended a mass meeting of an organization who call themselves the A. S. A. (American System Advocates). They explained that they were fighting for the constitution, for liberty, and for free speech. They certainly demonstrated how sincere they were for the latter.

At the close of the session a motion was made to send letters and telegrams to Senator Prentiss M. Brown, telling him they were opposed to "Packing" the United States Supreme Court. One young man gave a dissenting vote and was asked by the chairman to state why he was opposed.

He got up to do so but before he had a fair chance he was told to sit down. One lady (?) shouting, "Shut up." Immediately afterward, another man got up and talked about the strike in Flint and began to say they agreed with him, they roundly applauded.

If the one was out of order, then the other speaker was, too.

I think a better name for the organization would be "The Anti-Roosevelt League," or perhaps, "The Liberty League." That is, liberty for the privileged few. Working people aren't fooled by cries of save the constitution, or dictatorship.

Roosevelt is the friend of the working people, and is fighting with his back to the wall. Stick by him. Of course, everyone has a right to his or her own opinion, but don't try to give yours in a "mass Meeting" of the A. S. A. unless you agree with them. Thank you.

Sincerely,
"Not one of the 400"

Then the Egg Beater

She was something of a vamp, so they transferred her from haberdashery to woodenware in the basement.

"Don't see many flirts down here, do you, Mazie?" asked the floorwalker.

"Naw; the only interesting thing I've seen was a potato masher."

CONGRESSIONAL RECEPTION

'My Country, 'Tis of Thee'...

By T. H. MILLINGTON

"Pride Goeth Before a Fall"—

In the pride of his popularity the President, in a spectacular prize move, not only sent his recent Supreme Court message to Congress but, although he knows that legislation must originate in the Congress, he nevertheless delivered a bill embodying his plan without any recorded previous consultation with members of Congress.

T. H. MILLINGTON

With similar encroachments upon the prerogatives of Congress have been frequent in his administration. It never before has been so unexpected and so raw. It represents in its ruthlessness the Machiavellian theory, "The King Can do no Wrong," and is sufficient evidence of what such a man would do, if given the power.

But Mr. Roosevelt, while he seems to think himself a dictator, still is blocked by the plain terms of the constitution. It is these terms by which are reserved to the people social, agricultural commercial and industrial control within the States which, by perverting the simple meaning of plain English, he hopes to twist to his own purposes.

If these reservations should be invaded by packing the Supreme Court the Presidential office would completely dominate both the judicial and legislative departments of government and our representative government would be a farce.

But the President's pride is most certainly riding for a fall. The American people, it is to be hoped, still have some will of their own left. To infer that surrender to the President's demands for power over the courts is abandonment of constitutional government, is not an overstatement. In fact, once in possession of the power the President wants, obedience to it becomes automatic. So that intelligent understanding of his ultimate direction and objectives no longer is necessary. Whether the President be right or wrong the people may not question.

"Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die."

On the other hand, the leader who exercises such authority when actually he does not possess it is bound to encounter disaffection in his ranks.

That is exactly the case with President Roosevelt's latest proposal, which sadly he calls "judiciary reform." Like all conquering hero, he has commanded, but the lack of spontaneous obedience indicates that he may be deceived in his belief. That he not only is surprised by the amount of defection in his camp, but actually is worried about getting sufficient obedience to pay command is evidenced by the announcement that he will take to the radio in behalf of his legislation. As formerly, he hopes, no doubt, by his super-radio manner and voice to incite the millions, favorites, and the uninformed, to bring pressure to bear upon the recalcitrant Senators and Congressmen so that his proposed suppression of the Supreme Court may be accomplished.

It seems, however, unthinkable that he should succeed in confusing enough of either the public or the Congress to mislead them into aiding him in destroying the constitution. Already many men in House and Senate, heretofore blind followers of their idol, are definitely deserting his cause, and many are on the fence.

The country is showing unmistakable signs of awakening to the fact that because his radio voice is soporiferous it is not necessarily safe to follow it in state-craft. While many would like to give their idol dictatorial powers they still hesitate. They know that those who eventually will follow him in office may not be of his persuasion, and may not be as generous with the public money as their present benefactor has been and hopes to continue to be. They know they might not later be permitted to hold meetings of protest or to send letters and telegrams of remonstrance to their congressional representatives. Dictators do not permit such things.

The writer realizes that blind occupants of the New Deal bandwagon will poo-poo all statements and inferences as to these ultimate results of the president's proposals. They say that he has "mandate from the people." Other dictators have claimed to have mandates from God, but all are dictators just the same.

What other possible motives than genuine fear of constitutional barriers to his ambitions can be found in the President's proposal? Surely it cannot be the age of heredity, because some of his best supporters in the Senate and House are over that age. Nor can it be congestion in the Supreme Court, for records show that all cases are cleaned up each term. His tears of sympathy for the over-worked judges are crocodile tears, for their hardest work has been his own laws which he himself, as well as everybody else, knew were not possible of implementation with the Constitution. He himself said so when, despite its suspected unconstitutionality, he insisted upon the passage of the Coffee Cost Act. Not yet can it be the need of more judges, for there are thirteen vacancies in the lower courts, some of which have existed for a whole year. Why has not the President filled these?

All these excuses are a poor camouflage. His real purpose is domination of the courts. His claim of "mandate" by the last election is a slippery perversion of facts, for neither the Constitution nor the Supreme Court were issues in '32 nor in '36, and so could not have been voted upon.

Did you, dear reader, ever sign away a deed to a piece of property and still retain ownership of it? No, impossible! you say. So is it just what the President wants us to do. He claims that it will save our liberties.

What he wants is full control of commerce, industry, labor and social service over the whole United States, regardless of state line. To permit that is actually signing away our individual liberties, and we cannot both throw them away and retain them at the same time. Nor once lost, can they be recovered without bloodshed.

Mr. Roosevelt knows he can never accomplish this by an open and above board amendment by an awakened people who would be stung to resistance by such a proposition. In this proposal I hope he has over-estimated his power over Congress, and it is very probably the beginning of the end of his dominance. Therefore in desperation, to gain his objectives, he conceals his real motives under a cloak of sympathy for age and insufficiency of numbers to do the work of the Supreme Court. By his radio crooning he hopes to put an unwary, unsuspecting, uninformed, trusting public to sleep so that, without resistance, he may take from them that which, throughout all history, men have fought and died for, and which in no other land on earth has been held so inviolate or been so great a blessing.

Can it be that free America, that last and greatest stronghold of personal liberty will voluntarily yield to the President's demand and give away that freedom? It is unthinkable that a people so resourceful, so powerful, and in other matters so intelligent, should sink to such supine lunacy.

How many letters of protest have you sent to Senators and Congressmen? Do not stop with one. The real fight has not yet begun. To whom does this country belong anyway, President or the people?

POETRY SHOP

How do you write your verses, folks sometimes ask of me;
Where do you get the thoughts and rhymes and the meter and symmetry?

Oh, I fashion my poems from this and that—
While I'm smoothing the blankets or sweeping my rooms
Or frying an omelet or tending my biboms—
Today while I fastened a bow on a hat
For a wild little lass that goes tearing around,
I thought of her eyes and her curls, and I found
That the hat and the bow were a poem, so then
I set them to music with paper and pen.
When I'm stitching the seams of an apron or frock,
Or mending the stockings or dusting the clock,
Or feeding my hens or out gathering the eggs,
A sonnet or ballad or triolet begs
To be put into verses and set to a tune;
Or it may be the stars or the low hanging moon,
Or a thought that I've borrowed or some lovely thing.
A child on my doorstep, a bird on the wing,
The gold of a day, or a flower, or a tree
That fashions my verses and writes them for me.

—Beatrice McDonald

Random Remarks

Hilaire Belloc, British author, visiting America:
"For your own good, you must not mix in the European mess."

Wm. S. Knudsen, General Motors executive:
"Let us have peace and make automobiles."

Samuel Hoare, British First Lord of the Admiralty:
"Though we may be slow at starting, we have a remarkable way of eventually finding ourselves at the winning post."

Charles R. Gay, president, N. Y. Stock Exchange:
"If there is anything that we of the Stock Exchange do not want, it is another great boom."

Homer Martin, auto strike leader:
"What more sacred right is there in the world than the right of a man in his job?"

Rudolf Holsti, Finnish Foreign Minister:
"Small countries never can have too many friends or two few enemies."

Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady:
"One thing four years in the White House have taught me is the extent to which people do not understand the party of the country in which they do not live."

Fiorella La Guardia, Mayor, New York:
"The taxpayers are paying for the best. They ought to get the best."

William J. Quinn, Chief of Police, San Francisco:
"Modern police halt the development of potential criminals such as young hoodlums by winning their friendship and properly directing their energies."

John L. Lewis, militant Labor leader:
"I abhor strikes."

The Other Chap Says-

HE LIVED BEFORE HIS TIME

As one heard former Governor Chase Osborn discuss present day problems a few days ago in Lansing and express his ideas as to what should be done to bring about an improved condition in affairs of the nation, a belief could not help but prevail that he had lived the useful part of his life before his time. If Chase Osborn could, today, take the active, intense and forceful action in helping settle some of the current problems along the lines that he believes should prevail, that he believes should prevail, that he did a quarter of a century ago, there is little doubt but what much of the strife and turmoil, we are now going through, wouldn't be. Instead of men of force and ability directing our ways, we have an army of pettifogging politicians voicing a lot of absurd ideas that mean nothing and playing to the grand-stand for public approbation.—Elton R. Eaton in Plymouth Mail.

In Memory of Lt. Clyde Wood

One of America's best aviators
Loved by all who knew him
Birmingham today mourns the passing
Of a young man she was proud of
It is hard to think he died
So far from kin and home
May he live forever more
On a brighter shore
There are men dead who never die
But live on forever in memory
A mother will mourn for her boy
Her boy who's not coming back
Let's close our eyes in silent prayer
And know that he is not far away
But waiting for you in that great land
Unseen across the bar.

Katie Drumm

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