The Charlotte News

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We seek truth, that we may follow it.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1938

Jewel for Lexicographers

Some genius over on the Western Carolina Tribune of Hendersonville has invented a first-rate new word — *Simmorality*. (We recorded it in our Visiting Around column Friday.) To be sure, he may not have intended it. The thing may have been a misprint on the typewriter, or he may have had the collaboration of the compositor in bringing it forth. No matter. That is precisely the way genius works. In any case whatever, it is a beauty.

For look you, *similis* equals *like*, *simulare* equals *to be like, to imitate*, whence our English words *similar* and — *simulate*. Take the root *sim-*, add *morality*, and, lo! how perfectly is something we know set down. Let the Messrs. O. & C. Merriam, the Messrs. Funk and Wagnalls, and the Oxford University Press haul into their dictionaries forthwith *Simmorality*, a brand-new word.

The Commodore Turns Over

It is all for the best, we haven't a doubt, that nothing will come of the case of the captain of the American tanker illegally seized at sea, robbed of his cargo, and beaten daily for fifteen days by the piratical Italians, Germans, and Moors masquerading under a Spanish Insurgent flag at Palma.

But, for all that, we could not in the heat of reading the story for the first time resist a momentary nostalgia for Commodore Stephen Decatur as commander of the American Mediterranean squadron. Let Buccaneer Franco and his crew give thanks that that lusty and sudden sea-dog passed, with his era, a hundred and eighteen years ago. For it is not of record that he bothered himself very much with what the State Department might be thinking, in his dealings with those other pirates at Tripoli and Algiers. Rather, he simply went storming into their harbors, confident that the matchless gunnery of his sailors was equal to any odds, and, having battered them to pieces, came out to report that American ships were once more safe on the Great Blue Sea.

Better our way, we genuinely believe. But how unquiet it must be in the Decatur family burial plot these days!

Mr. John Rescued

Mr. John Carson, it appears now, is going to get a chance to do his stuff after all. Mr. John bears the portentous title of Consumer's Counsel for the Bituminous Coal Commission. And it is his job to make a noise like the Federal Government busily opposing the Federal Government — that is, like one who is determined that coal shall not cost the consumer more when Congress has already ordained that the commission shall fix coal prices, which, of course, means that coal is bound to cost the consumer more.

But the commission did not deal fairly by Mr. John. It went right ahead last November and proceeded to fix coal prices without bothering to consult Mr. John at all. Then, when he took to writing letters to the newspapers in complaint, it fixed a time for Mr. John and his consumers to be heard. But, somehow, that engagement kept getting moved up and never really came off. But now 209 railroads have gone into Federal Court in the District of Columbia and got an injunction, and the prospects are that the coal commission is going to have to start all over and hear Mr. John before it does anything else.

What the railroads may hope to do with Mr. John, we don't know. But it's a break for Mr. John. It must be tough to have a job where they won't let you do anything but sit in your office and bite your nails all day.

Straws in the Wind

How the city would vote, whether for or against an open Sunday, if it had a chance to vote, which it probably won't have, is anybody's guess. The best guessers are convinced that the majority would rally to the Blue Laws. They say that those who strive to keep the community in the straight and narrow just naturally organize better than the others and that it is organization which wins elections and referendums. They cite the prohibition election . . .

And maybe they're right. Then again, we aren't so sure. In that poll of the Johnston Building taken by News reporters and written up in yesterday's paper, proponents of an open Sunday outnumbered opponents by 290 to 98, which is as 2½ is to 1. It is entirely possible, of course, that the denizens of the Johnston Building are not representative of the city as a whole. Yet more than two-thirds of them were registered voters.

A wider cross-section was covered four years ago in a comprehensive poll taken by The News on the daring proposition of Sunday movies. Now, Sunday movies, for some reason, are considered to be a little more sinful than Sunday baseball and Sunday golf, but even so the vote, while close, was in favor. The count, which we have carefully preserved for whatever it signified, was 5,879 to 4,867.

Singapore

The British, as all good little readers of the news columns know, are formally opening their mighty naval base at Singapore today, with no other company than three cruisers from these States. But we have no time to speculate on military matters now.

What fetches us is that name — Singapore. More even than Port Said or Bombay or Callao, it stirs up in our blood a feeling we used to have in our boyhood — the feeling we still sometimes have — when the trains began to pound out of the station, gathered head, and went sweeping on toward what for us in those days were very far places indeed. The feeling we had when we listened to the river rolling on its way. The feeling we have had since as we watched rusty freight ships swinging down to the Atlantic — and the Pacific — past Staten Island. We should not, we think, very much like really to go to Singapore. For there, we hear, they have the greatest tin smelting plant in the world and a very British "biscuit factory." We have it on the evidence of the movies, indeed, that there are astonishing sailors' dives along the waterfront, but the movies, alas, are not, we fear, the best of evidence. And, anyhow, if we went there, where else would there be to want to go? Better, perhaps, to be content with the high brave sound of that name, the stirring in our blood, the mood of,

Across the sea of Wonderland
To Mogadore we plodded,
Forty singing seamen
In an old black barque.

Victory for Something

Tennessee's Supreme Court ripped out the stitches of that trim little scheme by which Governor Browning had thought to sew up the state for his faction of the Democratic Party and keep out the Boss Crump faction. Last October the Legislature was called into special session to make the necessary alteration to the primary laws. This was, in effect, to limit the number of unit votes which a populous county like Boss Crump's Shelby (Memphis) could cast in a primary to one-eighth of one per cent of its population. Each county was allowed one unit vote for each 100 votes cast in the last gubernatorial election.

Thus, no matter how Shelby County might troop to the ballot boxes to do Boss Crump's bidding, after the number voting had passed 38,400 the rest would be wasting their time. And Memphis rolled up more than 60,000 votes in the 1936 Democratic primary. The practical effect of the legislation, then, was to disfranchise some 2,000 voters who were likely to vote against Governor Browning and his picked candidates.

As between Boss Crump and would-be Boss Browning there probably is very little to choose. But at least Boss Crump eschews legislatorial conspiracies to prevent the will of the people from being done. He sticks instead to the time-honored Democratic method of getting the larger count by hook or by crook.

Their Last Resting Place

(Mrs. Thos. N. Davis, Lexington Record)

A certain husband recently asked his wife if she knew where his hunting pants were. When she told him they were on the floor of the guest room, he went expecting to find them rumpled, perhaps, but still trousers. Not so. They had become part of a new rug. From what I heard, it will be some time before that rug looks nice to that man.

UNCLE DAN GETS A RAP

BY RUBE S. JOHNSON

NEW YORK CITY.—This recent business of agreeing with my ex-palsie-walsie, Donny Romny Richberg, is getting to be a saccharine sort of habit with me, and there I have to go and do it again.

Mr. Richberg points out that, even if business were panting to co-operate with government, business men would first have to co-operate with each other. There is no such unit as "business." Business is just a big bunch of individuals. They can't co-operate with each other without being in danger of the jail-house. They can't co-operate with government, both because they can't co-operate with each other and because there isn't any place to co-operate in, or any machinery with which to do it.

Mr. Richberg points to the remarkable co-operation of farmers with the Department of Agriculture and to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics as a place where agricultural policy can actually be planned.

They Do What They Are Set Up To Do

This is scattering the shots close to another bulls-eye. The Department of Agriculture has to do with 6,000,000 individual farmers. Somehow it manages to get them to an astonishing degree of co-operation. It really represents them. It fights for them. Its voice is heard and respected at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue.

The Department of Labor can't keep all its little charges from chewing each other's ears but, in representation of several million workers and many unions, it is out in front. It fights the battles of labor. It does all it can to secure co-operation and unity in labor. Its voice is also powerful in Congress and in the administration.

But the Department of Commerce — Oh, alas! alackaday! It plans not, neither does it press—for business. It isn't even a good excuting bureau.

But Commerce Department Is A Flop

If this Department had been organized and, above all, manned to maintain the contacts with, assume the leadership of, and champion the cause of business as the Departments of Labor and Agriculture have done in their fields, is it conceivable that any such rift as now exists between government and business could ever have developed?

The answer is "No." This administration and business started out in 1933 in the closest co-operation ever known in this country. That perhaps could not have continued at its extreme warmth. But it was the business of the Department of Commerce to keep it as warm as possible and with proper organization and leadership it could have at least been prevented from freezing.

Uncle Danny Roper is a sweet old smoothie, but somehow he just didn't quite make it go at either end—with business on the one side or with the administration on the other. The bewilderment of business and the unnecessary hostility between business and government is a national peril. The cold fact is that the Department of Commerce hasn't performed what they call in the army "its mission."

A Desert-Dog's Life

(Richmond Times-Dispatch)

For the desert nomad, now being harangued by British and Italian broadcasts in Arabic, we can only suggest the two-humped camel, with a radio on each.

Visiting Around

Yeh, His Mama Helped to Put the Skids Under Missus Simpson

(Kings Mountain Herald)

Two-year-old Prince Edward, son of the Duke of Kent, is said to show an instinct for engineering.

But Don't Let Him Think He Can Get Away With Spats

(B. F. Sink, Lexington Dispatch)

Hubert Leonard still walks with a cane. We fear he will get the habit.

How Are They on Cripple Creek and O Sole Mio?

(New Bern Tribune)

The artists, working together, have acquired remarkably perfect fusion. One of their most popular numbers is their arrangement of "Turkey in the Straw." They are also noted for their renditions of the works of Bach.

Get a Car

(Adv., Kinston Free Press)

Save on Horse Collars—F. F. Brooks & Son.

All the Same, You'd Better Button Up Your Overcoat

(Hendline, Catawba News-Enterprise)

WEATHER HAS A HARK WORSE THAN ITS BITE

Syrians Are Older Branch Of Our Race

Story Assigning Them A Separate Status Bring Protests Of Syrian-American Leader.

Dear Sir:

In regard to a story in your paper of January 28, regarding birth in Laurinburg, I notice that your paper copies the Laurinburg Exchange in dividing the 193 births reported in this fashion: White, 51; Colored, 51; Indian, two; Syrian, 1.

The Syrians of North and South Carolina were deeply insulted when they saw that article in your paper and in the Laurinburg Exchange, for it assigns a separate race classification to the Syrians. The Syrians are one of the oldest branches of the Caucasian race in the world.

Many Syrians have been citizens of the United States for years. My father immigrated to this country in 1894, became a citizen, and served as a soldier in the Spanish-American War. All of his children were born in the United States, and two of them served as soldiers in the World War.

As chairman of the Southern Federation of Syrian-American Clubs, I went to see Mr. O. L. Moore, the editor of the Laurinburg Exchange, and he advised me that it was an inadvertent mistake and published a correction of the story which appeared in his issue of January 27. On behalf of these clubs, I am asking you to make the same correction. Many Syrian-Americans are readers of your paper.

JOSEPH S. BADDOUR.

Goldsboro.

(Editor's Note—The story referred to was a dispatch from Laurinburg. Of course, the Syrians are an old branch of the Caucasian race—much older, in fact, than our own branch—, and no more call for a separate racial classification than the Germans or the Jews or the Greeks or the Irish. We are genuinely sorry that, through the inadvertence of our editors, the mistake was allowed to pass. And, to be sure, we had no thought of offense to an excellent people.)

WHY, AFTER ALL THE TALK ABOUT SLUMS IN THE CITY, HAS NOTHING BEEN DONE?

Dear Sir:

A few months ago there was a great stir made here about the slums, and then, like lots of things that are brought up in Charlotte, it was let go to sleep. Why, I don't know, because slums exist all over this city; and in some parts of the city the buildings that are rented out by real estate people are not fit for dogs to live in. The poor Negroes and white people that live in them are hard pushed to pay their rent, and when it rains they have to move their beds around to keep from getting wet at night.

This same condition exists in very many of the better places that are not exactly in the slum list, but very near it. You can go down on Third Street here or Second Street and see houses that white people are living in that are not really fit for human habitation. Now, I can't understand after all this talk we have had about slums, why the authorities don't do something to make living more comfortable for those who have to accept and live in such places.

I would be very happy to see this attended to, anyhow in the next year or so. Other cities and towns have taken this matter up, and have done a great work to make better living possible for those who cannot afford high rents.

J. B. O'MEARA.

Charlotte.

The News solicits letters from its readers upon topics of the day, especially when opinions contrary to the editors are expressed. Such letters should be short, typewritten if possible, and signed.

A-CLI-mated

(Louis Graves, Chapel Hill Weekly)

When she went into the post office the other day a young woman who is on the staff of the University Library asked one of the clerks how the force liked the new building. He replied: "Oh, we're getting acclimated pretty quickly," putting the accent on the 1.

Later that day she repeated the conversation to a group of her fellow workers in the Library and questioned the clerk's pronunciation of the word acclimated, in which she accented the ac and the a. Her companions, who possess diplomas from eight or ten colleges, North and South, joined her in dissenting from acclimated — all of them except one. This person suggested that they consult the dictionary. They did — one dictionary, and then another and another — and found that the post office clerk was right.

Neither of my own dictionaries, the Century and the Standard, gives acclimated as even an alternative pronunciation.

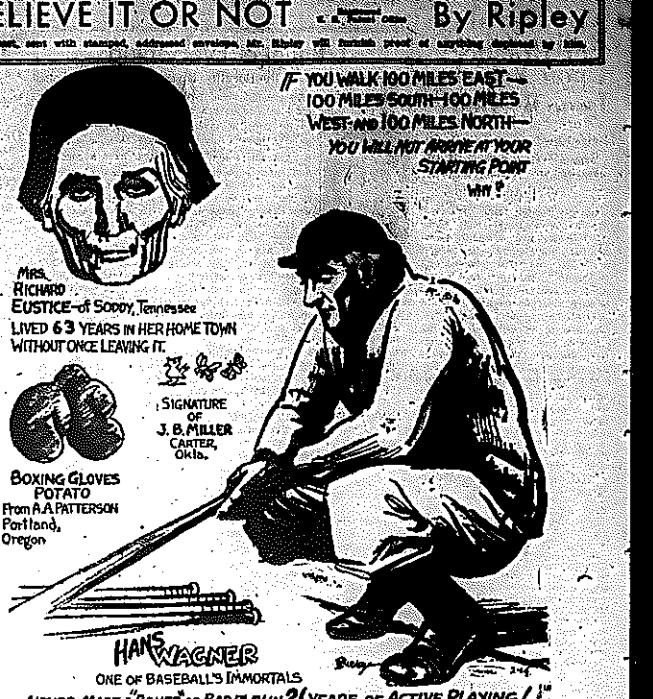
You'll Have To

(Greensboro News)

New York woman of 100 reads without the aid of her glasses. And that's interesting; but we'll bet her reading is confined to the cinema sub-titles, and when we get to be 100 we expect to be able to guess at them.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT — By Ripley

On request, sent with stamped, addressed envelope, Mr. Ripley will furnish proof of anything depicted by him.



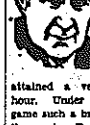
Explanation of Today's Cartoon

NOT ON THE SQUARE—If a man travels 100 miles east, 100 miles south, 100 miles west, and 100 miles north, he will not arrive at his starting point for the reason that while he is traveling north on the last leg of his journey, he is not traveling a parallel course to his southward journey on the second leg of the trip. East-west lines of latitude are parallel, but north-south lines of longitude are not, being farthest separated at the equator and coming together at the North and South poles. In land surveying, new standard guide meridian lines, run by solar compass east and west, are used as a base for new tiers of townships, each township six miles wide at the south line. Every few townships farther north, new standard guide meridian lines must be established to compensate for the curvature of longitudinal lines.

IT SEEMS TO ME

By HEYWOOD BROUN

MIAMI, FLA.—California has had a hurricane, and Florida is very much pleased. Indeed, it is expressing its sympathy and appreciation in eight-column headlines. As a matter of fact, the dispatches from San Francisco do not quite justify the large type. I speak as a neutral who lives in Connecticut.



In Defense Of A Maligned Hurricane

The factual report seems to be that the city on the West Coast experienced a wind which in spots attained a velocity of 76 miles an hour. Under the local rules of the game such a brisk breeze does not make the grade. Down here it would be reported as "fresh easterly winds."

I do not know whether it was the Chamber of Commerce or some functionary in the local Weather Bureau who set the standard. But, according to the Miami manual, a hurricane can earn its title only if it can produce a sustained velocity of more than 80 miles an hour. And the requirement is that the gust shall prevail for a full five minutes.

My only personal contact with a hurricane was here. And it was such a meager one that most Floridians were all for throwing it back. By now they are inclined to call it a gale. Naturally, I am a partisan of the storm and against detractors. As one who leans toward the under dog I insist that the wind which I experienced was actually a hurricane. And the figures will support this contention. The big blow of 1935 did manage to make a showing of 82 sustained miles an hour. Out at the airport, I am informed, there were gusts which hit a full limit of 120. Since the commotion was wholly out of season, occurring in November, the local commentators were loath to abide by their own rules.

Even A Storm Picks On The Under Dogs

But in all fairness to the Miami press I must report they all call it a "hurricane," no matter how grudgingly. However, they took the edge off the disturbing visitation by adding an adjective. Here that storm has always been known as "the Yankee Hurricane." In other words, it was the work of some "outside agitator" and not a local product.

As a friend and admirer of Florida — or, rather, of its climate — I am willing to play ball to the extent of saying that I think the horrors of the hurricane are very much exaggerated. Man does not need to be forever at the mercy of the elements. I think I've heard it said that the elements never forget. But they can be lulled and conquered. It isn't difficult to build in such a way as to defy all winds in reason.

When storms in any section of the nation bring death and destruction an examination of the casualty lists will disclose that the victims came from Mr. Roosevelt's underprivileged one-third. There are many huts and houses in our country which do not need to wait for a hurricane in order to be shattered. I've seen some which I could blow over myself by taking a deep breath.

But Maybe It Is Simply A Hint For Us

As far as the press reports go, one ancient adage does not seem to stand up very well. It has been said that God tempers the wind for the shorn lamb. But newspaper "morgues" do not bear out this assertion. Fat and woolly sheep fare better at the hands of nature than their naked brothers.

If some flying fragment in the universe bumps us good and hard one of these days I suppose that all, regardless of rank and station, will take the rap. Short of such a catastrophe, it is a good rule to "keep a nickel under your heel," as they sing in "The Cradle Will Rock."

Even the lightning seems to have a nasty habit of picking on the poor and obscure. But I'm not knocking nature. It seems to me that the vast forces which think about in the cosmic scheme of things are trying to nudge us and give us a notion. Humankind has been slow to take the hint.

The sermon as I see it is that a man is a sucker if he does not organize for the most fundamental fight of all. I refer to that final bout in every all-star bill—"Men Against Death."

Peregrinations of Paul's Ghost

(Olin Miller, Atlanta Journal)

According to the Columbus newspapers, the devil made a large number of personal appearances, in visible though not in tangible form, in that city during the latter half of January. In an editorial January 31, Editor W. C. Woodall, of the Columbus News-Record, announces, "We are told that the devil, after a visit of some two weeks in Columbus, which was full of interest and excitement, with something doing almost every minute, is having to leave us, with sincere regret on his part."

It seems that after resting for a couple of days, the devil moved on over to Upson County, where he is making personal appearances and disappearances in varying forms most spectacular, bewildering and horrifying. In its issue for February 4, the Thomaston Times reports: "Wednesday night the devil headed for Thomaston, making his first stop at a filling station three miles south of this city. Those who saw him on this occasion, it was said, shot him several times, and he apparently fell mortally wounded at the edge of the highway, but a moment later he simply vanished—just like that. Many others reported brief and mystifying visits by the devil later Wednesday night. And early Thursday morning a colored employee of the city of Thomaston saw the devil, tall and all, in one of the city's trash wagons, where he evidently snatched a few minutes' sleep along about sump."

Earlier Days

News of 75 and 100 Years Ago From Files in the State Library at Raleigh

FEBRUARY 14, 1863
75 YEARS AGO

THE LAST RESORT

The act of the Lincoln Congress to raise an army of Negroes is a full confession of inability of the white Yankee to conquer the South. And we think it has another meaning. Several of the Yankee states have passed laws to prevent Negroes from coming within their borders, and all of them feel, and do not hesitate to say, that they are nuisances—lazy, thriftless, beggarly, thievish nuisances—as a class, we mean, for of course, there are exceptions. Now, if the Yankees can only induce them to enter the army—tempted by the fine clothes in which they will be decked out—they hope to get rid of this beggarly class, for what the Confederate don't kill they will capture and put to work on the plantations. We mean, of course, such of them as don't run away without waiting to be killed or captured.

In relation to this new Yankee army, the Richmond Whig says:

"Bennett, of the Herald, is apprehensive that the high price of Negroes in the South will operate as a powerful stimulant and incite the Rebel guerrillas to unwonted exertions to capture the whole army. He gravely admonishes Lincoln of this danger and exhorts him to adopt extraordinary precautions to guard against it. It is understood that the whole African army is to be under the command of Horace Greeley, who, we are informed by his biographer, Parton, was black at his birth and continued so for several hours afterwards. He therefore has an hereditary right to his position which he has not forfeited in becoming an albino. In case of the apprehended disaster of a capture, it is Bennett's consolation that the commander will be taken along with his army and be restored on some auction block to the rights of color to which he was entitled by birth."

—Fayetteville Observer.

FEBRUARY 14, 1838
100 YEARS AGO

POWER OF TRUTH

It is supposed that there are three Federal newspapers to one Democratic published in the United States. How is it, then, that the Democrats are in the ascendent? Because "truth is stronger than fiction."

—Raleigh Standard.

The Standard might have found a reason more true and less fictitious than the above. It is because not half the people read the newspapers. Wherever you find a reading, intelligent people you are sure to find a majority of Whigs.

—Fayetteville Observer.

A Qualified Man

(Atlanta Constitution)

A Tammany jobholder who can neither read nor write is retiring, but says he will continue in active politics. He can count.