VOICE OF THE PRESS

DREADFUL DRUMFIRE

Behind the roar of the flaming hell that is the Russian front, behind the clangor of the clash in Libya, behind the steady boom of bombs flattening a score of Europe's cities, there is a dreadful obligato of riflefire. It is the German executions in conquered lands.

As many as 100,000 men and women have died before these Nazi firing-squads, the Inter-Allied Information Committee in London estimates. Whether that is an accurate figure we do not know. No one knows, not even the Nazis.

In Poland alone 82,000 people have been executed during two years of occupation, this committee estimates. Every conquered country has contributed its toll of those who were led out to die unarmed, unconvicted of any offense.

In no modern war has anything like this, or anything approaching such a scale, been permitted to happen. It is the measure of a Nazi future. —Guelph Mercury.

—v—

NOT LOUSY IN ENGLAND

The Canadian soldiers overseas are not bothered by lice. That is something for which they must be grateful. No matter how clean the troops tried to keep themselves in the last war, when they were in the front line areas, they were troubled with body lice.

Splendid sanitary arrangements have been made. Hot baths are provided and the quarters are kept scrupulously clean at all times. The men are provided with clean underwear and steam units go from camp to camp to give dirty clothes a thorough cleansing.

And, in case there is any man in a company who just does not want to take a bath, the men of his section see to it that he does no go bathless.

—Windsor Star.

—v—

"THEM WERE THE DAYS"

A placard on the wall of a California hotel in the goldrush days of '49 stated:—"Board must be paid in advance. With beans, $36; without beans, $12. Salt pork free; potatoes for Sunday dinner, pocketing prohibited. Extra charge for seats around the bar-room stove. Lodgers must find their own straw. Beds on bar-room floor reserved for regular customers. Lodgers must rise by 5 a.m. in the barn by 6 a.m. No fighting at tables. Anyone violating the above rules will be shot."

—Belleville Intelligencer.

—v—

REALISM AND SACRIFICE

Many men and women in Britain's war plants work sixty and seventy hours a week, with no day of rest either. They do it heartily, not because they particularly like long toil, but because they know it is the only way that victory can be won. On this side of the Atlantic, how far we are from realism—and sacrifice!

—Hamilton Spectator.

—v—

FINE YOUNG CANADIANS

In this country but three years, and unable to speak English when they arrived here, two Czechoslovakian children win the annual speaking contest in the public schools of Wentworth County. Theirs is a remarkable achievement and in them the Dominion has two fine young Canadians.

—Hamilton Spectator.

—v—

WHY BOTHER?

Vocal choruses are not suitable for broadcasting through factories to relieve the strain of close work, because the workers grow tense trying to catch the words. After hearing the words of some of the popular gems, we wonder why they bother.

—Stratford Beacon-Herald.

—v—

SOLILOQUY

The change that has come over America can be appreciated when you recall that not so long ago to convoy or not to convoy was the soliloquy in every hamlet.

—Windsor Star.

—v—

UNUSUAL EGGS

From Pembroke comes news of an egg with ten V's on its shell. That's almost as many as some eggs have on their car windows.

—Ottawa Citizen.

—v—

REALLY BETTER OFF

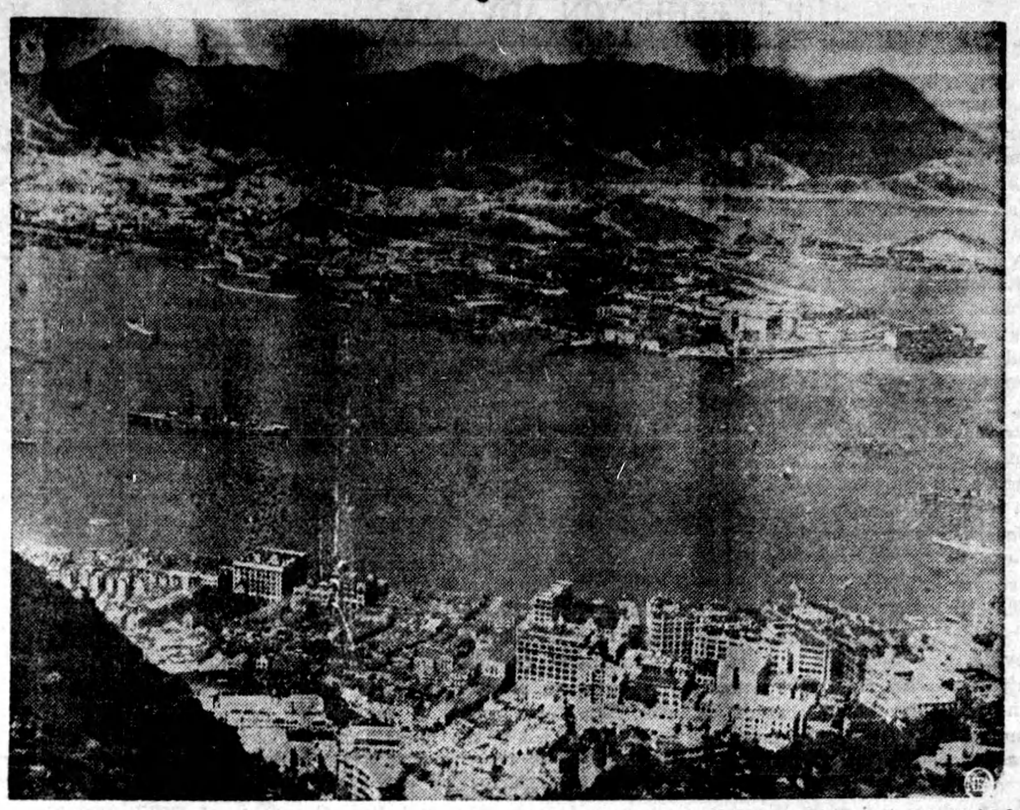
When a fellow is turned down by a girl because he isn't well off, he really is.

—Kitchener Record.

That Word "Panzer"

Two requests about panzer reach me from different quarters. One is to say what it means; the other is to get the term dropped in favor of good plain English. Well, panzer means armor and since the German armored divisions have been more conspicuous than any other down to the invasion of Russia, we have adopted the German name for them, much as we habitually speak of the German Luftwaffe instead of the German air force or U-boats (unterseeboote) instead of German submarines.

HONG KONG — SQUEEZED IN JAP TRAP



Claiming that they were already in possession of Kowloon, the mainland section of the British crown colony of Hong Kong, seen above in the background, Japanese said they were preparing an attack on Victoria Island, foreground—the location of the city of Hong Kong. British governor reportedly refused Jap demand that colony surrender.

Tell Whitest Lie Says First Lady

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt says she believes in telling the whitest lie of them all, the fib about Santa Claus.

In her question - and - answer page in the December Ladies' Home Journal, the First Lady says she subscribes to the telling of fairy tales as well as children's stories based on scientific fact.

"I certainly do believe in telling children to believe in Santa Claus," she wrote. "They learn soon enough that Santa Claus is mother or father, or some other kind person. Why not let them have the joy of believing that Santa Claus does come to all children and that he is such a jolly old saint?"

Dog-drawn Taxis Appear In Paris

Dog-drawn taxicabs have appeared on the streets of Paris, because the lack of fuel has forced the withdrawal of motor vehicles and most harness-horses have been sent to the slaughterhouse.

A 1925 law prohibiting the use of dogs for traction power has been cancelled and a new police ordinance permits "canimobile" taxis, provided they be drawn by huskies fitted with painless harnesses.

The use of terriers or smaller dogs for traction is still forbidden.

Fewer Gadgets On New Car Models

Demand for materials in the armament program may require the U. S. automobile industry to produce only two and fourdoor sedans without brightwork, wool upholstery, rubber floor mats, and other gadgets and finery. Station wagons, limousines, roadsters, coupes, convertible models may disappear.

Automobile officials said the "Victory" model automobile would have no double-bar bumpers and bumper bars, clocks, cigar lighters, radios, dual tail lights and extra parts. It will come in fewer colors, with fewer coats of enamel.

Jap Empire

Exclusive of conquered parts of China, which varies constantly, Japan controls a Far Eastern Empire that totals almost 900,000 square miles, although the area of Japan proper is less than 150,000 square miles, says Pathfinder. Japanese territories include Korea, the southern half of the island of Sakhalin, Formosa, and a group of more than 1,400 islands in Oceania that formerly belonged to Germany. Manchoukuo, although not formally a part of the Japanese empire, has been occupied by Japan for ten years. In addition, Japan occupies parts of French Indo-China and Inner Mongolia.

Some Opinions About Generals

After the latest reshuffling of her generals, Russia seems, temporarily at least, to have found a winning combination. Perhaps Stalin has begun to chime in with several of his distinguished predecessors on the subject of generals.

Lincoln had a sour view of them. On one occasion, when it was reported to him that the Confederates had captured a brigadier general and 12 mules, he said: "Too bad. Those mules cost us $200 apiece."

Margot Asquith once said to Gen. Pershing, after the first World War: "The only reason we won the war was because there were generals on the other side."

And President Paul Kruger, giving instructions to his Boer soldiers in their war against the British in South Africa, said: "Kill as many officers as possible, but for God's sake spare the generals."

Saving Ontario's Natural Resources

CANADA'S FUR TRADE
No. 69

The value of the furs sold in this country at the present time is quite large, probably about the same as it was a hundred years ago, but the emphasis is away from the beaver, martin and fisher to the muskrat, skunk and red fox. The number of people engaged in the industry is probably much greater, than was the case a century ago but, as I said, the aggregate value of the fur is about the same.

Muskrat and skunk sold for a few cents in the early 1800's and red fox and raccoon seldom went over a dollar. Nowadays, these are the mainstay of the trade but they sell, individually, for much more. Too, the fur ranches have come into the picture and a great deal of our fur is ranch raised. This fur is probably better quality for it is taken when the animal is at its best and on the better ranches it has been produced under almost ideal conditions.

About 25 important fur bearers occur in North America and a number of others may be taken at times. The weasel family are the most hunted and contribute the major share of the pelts. Muskrat lead all others in total numbers taken. Beaver were almost extinct on the market a few years ago but are now coming back. Skunk, red fox and mink are of considerable value to the trapper.

Altogether the fur trade of Canada is an important asset. However, as I stressed in a previous article it must be handled intelligently or it will be lost. The animals must be protected when they are scarce and they must have places to live. I will write more about this in another article.

LIFE'S LIKE THAT — By Fred Neher

"Oh, those X's are where we marked the spots."

THE WAR - WEEK — Commentary on Current Events

Bitter Cold and Russian Power Halt German Drive on Moscow

Two dramatic items show the deadly parallel of the Russian Campaign. The first, a description of the French campaign in Russia in November 1812, reads:

"The road was even more thickly covered with dead horses than on preceding marches. There were many human corpses, too; and at every bivouac one saw large numbers that had died of suffocation from the fumes of fires, because they had dragged themselves too close when already frostbitten and half frozen. Others still moaned but could not drag themselves away."

The other item is from a Nazi radio broadcaster's description of the German campaign in Russia in November, 1941:

"Grey is the country, grey the sky, everything grey and empty. With its aspect of forlornness, the whole country is frightening. The road to Moscow resembles one vast soaked sponge along which men, horses and lorries slog painfully and strenuously. Slowly they move, dragging themselves step by step. Time after time they are bogged down. This is Russia."

Everywhere from the Arctic to the Sea of Azov the Germans are retreating and, in many cases, retreating in disorder. The myth of the invincibility of the German army is being torn to shreds by the Russians. What will the people of the Reich think now of Hitler's boast made in Berlin two months ago that Germany's eastern enemy was crushed and would never rise again?

Russian Army Reorganized

The German failures before Moscow and at Rostov were evidence that the Russian army had been reorganized in the midst of a terrible campaign. Special Guard divisions were formed, vast reserve armies trained in the valley of the Volga and important shifts made in the High Command. Stalin is Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet forces and he is said to have personally worked out details of the Russian counter-offensive. The vast masses of the people of Russia were totally mobilized to work wherever needed, and to work even beyond their powers of endurance. Every civilian in Russia was in the front line.

The Cossacks Ride Again

Horse-power as of old, was a definite factor in dispersing the enemy. The Russians have for some time been building up a strong cavalry corps, especially outfitted for winter service. These wild, hard-riding Cossacks were loosed when Rostov was recaptured. They were on the Germans before a defense line could be established. 118 German tanks were among the booty surrendered — the horse is certainly still in the war.

Perhaps the lowly louse will take a decisive part in the war on the Eastern front. The Swedish capital reports that lice-borne typhus has infected some German troops, already suffering from cold, hunger and exhaustion. The epidemic, which can exterminate as many men as all of Stalin's battling forces put together, is spreading eastward from the Ostmark area of Poland.

Germany Blames the Weather

A spokesman for the German Army has admitted a halt in the Nazi drive. He said that Moscow would not be captured this year, that during the winter German troops would have to abandon the war of movement, that all up and down the 2,000 mile front they were digging in. "The cold is so terrible that even the oil freezes in the motorized vehicles," he said. "Soldiers trying to take cover simply freeze to the ground. Fighting under these conditions is practically impossible." It is a fact that when the weather is below zero, the steel of a rifle barrel burns like fire and a man firing from a prone position is apt to freeze to the snow before he can gather himself for the next rush.

Moscow's Version

Moscow had a different version of the fighting. It was not cold alone that caused the Nazi halt but fighting Russian soldiers and an organic defect in the work of the German command in planning the war. Sturdy determined Russians are advancing ceaselessly through bitter cold against a bewildered and benumbed enemy. The Germans are fleeing before bayonets and hand grenades and bullets of the Russian army while the artillery follows close behind pouring shrapnel and high explosives into the hard pressed ranks. The German High Command speaks of "local actions" and "orderly retirements" but Moscow claims that the retreat has become a rout.

A Long Way To Waterloo?

The significance of the Russian successes does not lie in accounts of ground recaptured, says the New York Herald Tribune. For some time there have been hints in Berlin quarters that rectification of the German lines would be necessary in order to stabilize a winter front. This would probably involve withdrawals from the salients driven north and south of Moscow and might mean extensive movements westward along the whole of the northern sector. There is no very clear natural defensive line for the Germans in that area, and the ability to take up strong posts must depend largely on the skill and energy of their engineers.

But it is clear that the Red Army is not allowing the Germans to complete their search for winter quarters in peace. A retreat is always a difficult operation. Military observers have been wondering, since the power of the German offensive was first displayed, what would happen when this complex mechanism went into reverse, and it is possible that the Russians, acting under climatic conditions highly favorable to themselves, will now give a spectacular answer. The Germans are being pressed hard at very point they are suffering new losses in addition to those inflicted during the suicidal drives on Moscow and it may well prove that the Napoleonic experience will be repeated.

Let it not be forgotten, however, that it was two years from the time of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow to the Battle of Waterloo.

The Book Shelf

SARATOGA TRUNK
By Edna Ferber

Saratoga Trunk is a novel of the 'eighties, the days of the railroad builders. Set against a background of the old World city of New Orleans and the New World city of Saratoga, the history of this period is vividly presented. Into it is woven the romance of Clint Maroon and Clio Dulaine.

Clio Dulaine, the daughter of a New Orleans aristocrat and his French mistress, grew up in Paris, her young mind filled with the unjust treatment of her mother. She returned to New Orleans and there met Clint Maroon whose father had been ruined by the railroad builders.

Each had one great purpose in life—Clio to avenge the injustice to her mother — Clint to avenge the loss of his father's fortune. They fall in love and set out together with a definite plan of revenge.

Launched on a romantic and relentless career, they leave the old cultured city of New Orleans and go north to test their wits against the pleasure-loving society of fashionable Saratoga.

This latest, and perhaps best, of Edna Ferber's many outstanding novels paints a dramatic picture of the American way of life, and makes historical America live again for this generation.

Saratoga Trunk . . . by Edna Ferber . . . McClelland & Stewart Limited . . . Price $3.00.

Roosevelt Audience

President Roosevelt's radio address of Dec. 9 on the basis of an analysis by the broadcasters, commanded the largest audience in history—90,000,000 persons or virtually every adult in the country.

REG'LAR FELLERS—Just Supposin' — By GENE BYRNES