

## Feeding the Correspondents

Life is looking up for the press corps in Washington now that certain Cabinet members have started a new deal of their own and are serving refreshments to correspondents who visit their departments. Mme. Secretary Perkins of the Department of Labor gets the credit for instituting this charming custom, since it was she who began serving ginger-ale at her conferences with the press. This, of course, was just a challenge for Postmaster-General Farley, and the first thing the reporters knew, they found that genial gentleman cutting a melon (a watermelon, that is) when they dropped around.

It is obvious to the *Baltimore Sun*, which reports the new practise, that competition is pretty certain to develop. Possibly after consulting the culinary likes and dislikes in its Washington office, this journal suggests that stew and hard-tack be placed on the War Department's menu, lobster Newburgh on that of the Department of State, and old-fashioned shore dinners on the Navy Department's. It is a very pleasing prospect, so pleasing that one can almost see the editorial writer in question, leaning back in his chair and dreaming pleasantly of the chances of getting a transfer to the Capital. But he comes to with a start as he realizes that the napping all this possible eating calls for might interfere with dead-lines.

Of course, the editorial concludes sadly, "If the rivalry becomes acute and press conferences end with, 'Shall we have coffee on the lawn?' and 'Well, let's go back to the girls,' there is no guaranty that managing editors won't become restive and make low remarks like 'Where's Scroggs? Week-ending at the Department of Commerce, I suppose.' That's how managing editors are."

## Maharaja on Enforced Leave

His highness the Maharaja of Alwar, tall, glittery-eyed, cruel-mouthed, and wearing a costly head-dress of his own design, reaches London under something of a cloud, as his highness has been laid off for two years because the State of Alwar rebelled, precipitating a crisis with which British cavalry and air-planes had to deal.

However, the head-dress makes him quite a show. It is a blue velvet beretta, with an enormous diamond star, and it typifies, so he explains, his belief that he is a reincarnation of the Prophet Mohammed and the Hindu god Rama.

At home, as Mr. Thomas Blair tells us in *Pearson's Weekly*, "he has mixed with Hindu pundits and fakirs, and at the same time discoursed with mullahs and prophets of the Koran." For years he "has attempted to reconcile the two opposed religions of India," and in practise he follows both. Incidentally, he has taken care to make himself spectacular. Mr. Blair, who once witnessed his arrival at the Delhi polo grounds, described the Maharaja's large, glittering aluminum car:

"An enormous lamp, mounted on a stem, stood out in front of the bonnet by a yard,

and gold crowns, large as saucers, adorned each door. Even the buffaloes in the street, when they saw this car pass, ceased chewing the cud and stared at it."

For some years the Maharaja has been warned that his extravagances must be curbed. They were what caused the uprising in Alwar, when his people rebelled against excessive taxation, and there will be similar outbreaks elsewhere, Mr. Blair predicts, for "the staggering wealth of these Indian princes is already arousing much opposition among the educated. There are more millionaires in India than there are in the whole of the rest of the world."

## Fordlandia Brazil

Every one in Greece knows the pfordakia—by interpretation, "little Ford." Every one in Burma hears of the delightful misprint in a missionary tract, "Our strength is in the Ford." By the same token, every well-posted Brazilian knows "Fordlandia," the Companhia Ford Industrial do Brazil's great plantation at Boa Vista, with its 75-mile water-front on the Tapazos and its 2,471,000 acres of the world's richest rubber country.

"Within four years," so *The Panamerican Union* informs us, "the first new trees will come into bearing, and each year thereafter rubber production will grow, until eventually the plantation output becomes a factor to be reckoned with in the world rubber market."

"The project at Boa Vista is based upon strict adherence to the world-wide Ford policy that the company be as intensively national within each country as the resources of that country will permit. Throughout the world it is contributing to the development of many countries, as it is in Brazil, by drawing upon their natural resources for its material supply."

## Ships for the Scrap-Heap

A new dry dock, the world's largest, was opened the other day at Southampton, England, while a new Italian liner, the *Rex*, has broken the transatlantic speed record, and other superb new ships are abuilding—which is all very curious, one would say, on opening Lloyd's Register and learning that within a year or so, the total shipping in existence has shrunk by 1,814,125 tons. During the year, vessels of a gross tonnage of 1,346,140 were broken up. Why build more when those now afloat are so little wanted?

The explanation is, statistics are easily misunderstood. At first glance, the figures seem to affect big liners along with all other craft, whereas big liners—those of 15,000 tons and upwards—represent less than 5½ per cent. of the total tonnage.

Besides, three countries show a marked increase in their total shipping—Soviet Russia (158,068 tons), Panama (148,621 tons), Finland (88,407 tons)—and there are crumbs of comfort for Americans in the fact that, while American shipping shrank by 188,822 tons, America's percentage of the world's tonnage rose from 4.2 to 15.1.

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# When Phil May Sketched a Man-Eater

By H. K. CHAMBERS

**A**N old swimmer's memories of alarms and escapes on distant coasts were revived the other day by a shark scare in waters near New York.

Along the New Jersey coast and on both sides of Long Island Sound, fishermen, yachtsmen and important citizens with piers at the foot of their lawns, were excited over an invasion of sharks—"schools" of them, it was said. Beaches were being patrolled by coast guard vessels, and bathers were advised, in effect, to trust in God and keep their skins dry.

The old swimmer was listening to a motor-cycle policeman of King's Point, one of the several incorporated villages of Great Neck peninsula. A telephone flash to the village hall had reported a "school" of sharks from eight to ten feet long running riot in Manhasset Bay, just around yonder headland. It would be plain suicide, the policeman said, for the old swimmer to start off on one of his long aquatic rambles.

A crew of young rowdies in a dory came paddling in with a tale of a "school" of sharks out near Stepping Stone light.

"Sharks don't go in schools," objected

thrown from ships, were suffering short commons like the rest of the world.

One specimen nosed inland, up a meadow creek at Mattawan, into a neighborhood swimming hole, where it snipped a boy's foot off. A man plunged into that devil's hole to save the boy, and was killed. The shark, marooned by the outgoing tide, was slaughtered with frantic enthusiasm, and human bones were found in its stomach.

The old swimmer had rewritten one of the newspaper accounts of that imbroglio. He recalled each vivid detail, and then his mind drifted back to earlier casual glimpses of the man-eater family. He had grown up on a shark-infested shore, that of the east coast of Australia. Some of his earliest swimming had been in the shark-proof baths of Sydney harbor, otherwise Port Jackson, famed for its beauty and its man-eaters.

At Lavender Bay, across the harbor from the city proper, were Cavill's Baths, run by a fat Frenchman who used to promote swimming races and give exhibitions with his large and amphibian family. His eldest son, Ernest Cavill, a terra-cotta Adonis, became the most famous swimmer of his time, and revolutionized the art with his invention of the crawl stroke. And the man-eaters used to bump against the palisades which shut in so much appetizing flesh.

Out in the harbor, with its picnicking, yachting and weekly regattas for all kinds of sail-boats, hardly a week passed without a few shark horrors. In one case a man-eater knocked a young man off a low landing-stage with a blow of its tail, then turned and seized him, and bore him to the bottom in two fathoms of water, while eight feet of the shark's rear emerged erect for half a minute, as described at the inquest by the victim's chum.

## Phil May Sketches a Shark

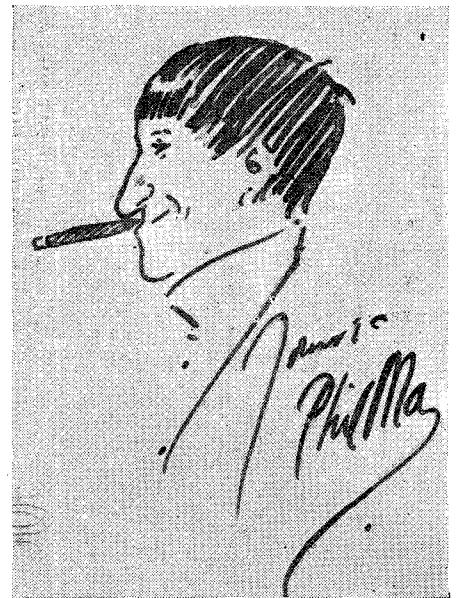
And yet the old swimmer, who was then a young swimmer, never laid his own eyes on a shark until he faced the one that awaited him while Phil May sketched it.

That was not in the harbor, but at Coogee Bay, a dent in Sydney's ocean coast. There the Pacific, in rank behind rank of shattering combers, assaults a crescent beach between two rocky headlands. Phil May, coming from London to make cartoons for the pink-covered *Sydney Bulletin*, had brought messages from a brother of the young swimmer in England. They had been lunching convivially with three other fellows before riding out to Coogee Bay on top of a steam tram-car, just for a lark. It was rather a solitary spot then, on week-days, in contrast to the little Coney Island it has since become, with watch-towers and sirens for shark alarms. There was practically no bathing in Phil May's time, unless one bobbed up and down in pens attached to some newfangled bathing machines.

Phil and the other fellows didn't want to go in, but the young swimmer, having a passion for the surf, and perhaps for showing off, hired a bathing machine, got into

a pair of red calico trunks, climbed out of the pen and swam out through one after another of the crashing lines of combers. In his enjoyment of the buffeting, he didn't think much about sharks. They were supposed never to come inside the surf. At the same time he was rashly doing his best to get beyond it to the open sea.

Turning on his back to ride up one of the



Phil May, by Himself

outermost parapets of unbroken indigo, he got a sudden panorama of the beach, and there he saw Phil May and the other fellows vigorously waving their hats and sticks in his direction. He knew they were shouting, but the surf drowned their voices. Then the land was blotted out as he sank into the next valley.

With a troubled feeling, he turned over and faced the sea. Across this valley rose another dune of glassy ocean, and within it, like a fly in amber, hung a shark, its snout toward the top of the wave, its body swaying downward in sensitive attunement with the motion of the water. Its color was the precise tawny shade of the wet beach. It seemed to be waiting for him.

How the young swimmer started back for the shore, what a tremendous distance it now seemed, how slow his progress, how dismal the thought that he might lose a leg at any moment—all this, it seemed to the old swimmer in retrospect, would give enough material for a whole chapter in a stream-of-consciousness novel. But he got back at last among the white horses, and worked his way out to the beach.

Phil May was sitting on the dry sand, fiddling at a sketch-book. Two or three pages were sprinkled with fragments of shark—here a snout, here a dorsal fin, here the sweep of a tapering body.

"I haven't got the life in that tail," he confessed cheerfully. "It had the movement of an eel. If you had only kept on another half-minute, old chap, I'd have caught that bloke alive."



A Typical Phil May Jest

the old swimmer. "I'll bet those were porpoises."

## The Reports Substantiated

However, it appeared later that enough sober accounts had come in from practical watermen to show that there really had been an unusual visitation of sharks—probably ground sharks, or some other variety lacking the dental equipment to take a bite out of a bather. None was reported more than ten feet long, and that's a pee-wee size for a shark.

Man-eating sharks, the old swimmer recalled, visited New York-New Jersey waters in 1916, when four persons fell victim to their hunger. Shipping had been reduced to zero by the war, and it was conjectured that deep-sea sharks, deprived of the food