

"Tawm's Holt"

By DUNCAN AIKMAN

TRAVELING up from the black delta mud of New Orleans or down from the gray crags of the Tennessee mountains, one comes to a broad region of mocking-birds and Alabama sunshine where the soil turns red and the Christian name Tom in the mouth of the permanent residents becomes "Tawm." There the "Tawm" most often mentioned, as has also been the case recently in some more populous and black-loamed sections of the Republic, is the Hon. Thomas J. Heflin, senior representative of Alabama and successor of Yancey, Morgan, Pettus, and Underwood in the United States Senate.

Also in proportion as the soil reddens and to some extent as it tends to incrustate over the instep, the pronunciation of the word "hold" slides perceptibly if not stridently toward "holt." And even those who most naturally and successfully avoid such provincialisms admit that in Alabama "Tawm" has a powerful "holt."

That is, you can meet in every Pullman car, hotel lobby, club, or daily newspaper office in Alabama native-born voters, not particularly traveled or afflicted with Broadway cynicism toward local statesmen, who will inform you that the only difference between Alabama and the rest of the Nation is that responsible public opinion is just a little more disgusted with Heflin "down heah, seh," than it is any place else. But in the very next breath, with a tinge of melancholy humor, these same urbanely apologetic informants will tell you that Alabama, though conscious of his measure, has been returning "Tawm" to one house of Congress or the other for pretty nearly twenty-five years now, and is not desperately or even encouragingly unlikely to do it again in 1930.

"But," you demand with the cheery inflection of the outsider anxious to see the bright side of things, "how does a State like Alabama, with all its traditions of dignity and with so many pleasant, sensible, and properly proud people obviously living in it today, get that way? Or, having embraced error as Texas does now and then with the Fergusons, and as all of us do occasionally in our separate madresses, what reason is there for believing that Alabama, when the time gets ripe, will not, like everybody else, snap out of it?"

Then the interviewer, if his mind runs to conventional deductions, sits down to wait for the answer that the folk-lore of a Papal removal to Washington is a little more potent than corn liquor in the Alabama backwoods and that nothing can be done to eradicate it. Only that answer doesn't come.

Instead, it is explained that "Tawm's holt" is all-powerful in Alabama, not because he is the greatest anti-Papist since Luther, but merely because he is the State's greatest cotton economist and platform joker, and that his constant barrage on the Vatican and its American political agents is merely a side-show which provides a steady flow of amusement and keeps the lonelier cotton farmers talking about him with an admiring, if desultory, accent.

In other words, even Alabama's fieriest Klansmen, even those whose horror of Jesuit agents is based on the fact that they have never seen one in the flesh, do not regard Tom's determination to damn the torpedoes and sink the Papal navy in Mobile Bay as his most heroic service or the most important item in his program of statesmanship. All this and its oratorical accompaniments show the kind of man "Tawm" is, it is true. It proves that he is not afraid of the princes and powers of the air, let alone the sachems of Tammany Hall and the massed priestcraft of the forty-eight States and the District of Columbia. But this, from the rural Alabama standpoint, is merely the sort of thing "Tawm" would do; just as beating up a dining-car waiter who answered him truculently some twenty years ago was a significant but non-essential performance natural to a man of superiorly audacious temperament. But neither is half so important as what "Tawm" on a great occasion in Alabama economic history did do. And this was nothing less than to make the price of cotton go up in 1917 and 1918.

How "Tawm" accomplished this is, in the literal record, a trifle cloudy. Historically, it appears that Congressman Heflin, as he was then, did little more than advise the farmers, impoverished by the weakness of the cotton market during the war's purely Euro-

pean phase, to hold their cotton and give him a chance to see if something could not be done about it. Something was, in a combination of the munitions and the uniform manufacture business, and cotton went to 40 cents a pound. Congressman Heflin thereupon began circulating around Alabama, in intervals between his patriotic labors at Washington, with broad smiles and the air of a philanthropist just holding himself back from saying, "Look what I did for you all."

Indeed, legend has it that in a paraphrase—or should one say a parable?—"Tawm" did say it. His critics charge that during his campaign for the Democratic Senatorship nomination in 1920, when he was far enough in the country to be safe from newspaper espionage, he made speeches relating a somewhat curious interview between himself and President Wilson.

According to this version, Congressman Heflin went to that most hail and familiar of Presidents and said, by way of cajolery: "Look here, Woodrow, you've got to do something about the price of cotton for the folks down my way."

The President beamed on his guest admiringly, and answered, "Well, Tom, what do you want?"

"I want," said Congressman Heflin in his most forcible English, "40-cent cotton."

"Won't 30 cents do, Tom?" the President asked, feebly, thinking of the friends connected with the grasping mill and speculative interests.

"No, Woodrow," future Senator Heflin came back, respectfully but fiercely, "30 cents won't do at all, and you know it."

"All right, Tom," the President yielded to the stronger spirit; "you go down to Wall Street and tell those fellows from me that it's got to be 40 cents, and the quicker, the better."

Now in Alabama I could find no documentary evidence that "Tawm" made such a speech even during the heat and fury of the five-cornered Senatorship contest of 1920. But whether he made it or not is, for the purposes of a serious inquiry into "Tawm's holt," largely irrelevant. Launched from the platform or from the Heflin word-of-mouth propa-

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The World This Week

New York Welcomes the Bremen's Crew

THERE was hearty good will in New York's welcome to the Bremen's fliers. Behind the municipal formula of river and harbor display, military parade and escort, reception at the City Hall by Mayor Walker (for whom the visitors had already shown a lively liking) and by the diplomatic corps, speeches and more speeches, and, one hopes, a little time for recreation and seeing the actual as well as the official New York—back of all this, Captain Koehl, Major Fitzmaurice, and Freiherr von Huenefeld have stirred the popular interest and applause. Their dangers passed, their calmness and good nature under the stress of adverse circumstances and the substantial victory they won over the tempest and fog have shown them to be true gentlemen adventurers.

One of the memorable remarks brought out by the Bremen flight is one by Miss Herta Junkers, daughter of the designer and builder of the Bremen. She said: "Aviation is not a weapon to fight wars with, but the finest means in the hands of humanity to avoid wars, to bring people together. It annihilates the barrier of space. It is the means of transportation which will bring nations closer to each other. It is also a wonderful common interest in which all nations can share."

What of the Bremen itself? According to the latest report, the impression that the motor was seriously injured is incorrect; the plane is now in perfect shape, and she may be flown to New York as soon as proper conditions prevail. Quite probably the three air comrades may fly to Greenly Island on a sister-plane of the Bremen and fly the Bremen to New York; there are even rumors that they may undertake the west-to-east Atlantic voyage to Ireland and Germany. Fitzmaurice declares, "Whatever we do we will do together."

All this optimism seems a little inconsistent with the earlier reports of the state of the Bremen. It is evident now that the absence of plane-skis, which should have been taken to the Bremen by the plane that brought the fliers off, but by some strange oversight were left behind, was a major cause of her abandonment, and that the reported engine troubles were less serious than supposed.

A Hero of the Air

FLOYD BENNETT's body, which lies at Arlington near Admiral Peary's grave, was buried with National honors and with a universal tribute to his intrepidity, his faithfulness to duty, his comradesly devotion. He was as true a hero as any of those around him.

Commander Byrd, whose plane Bennett piloted in that marvelous dash to and from the North Pole, called him "a real man—faithful and true." Governor Smith tersely commented, "His thought was not for himself, but for the other fellows in trouble."

Had it not been for the test-flight accident of the America a year ago, in which Bennett was terribly injured and Byrd and others less seriously, Bennett, who was with Byrd in the MacMillan expedition of 1925, might have been Byrd's second in command in the America's eastward flight across the Atlantic. He was well on his way to a recovery that would have made it possible for him to be second in command in Byrd's projected exploration and flying expedition in the Antarctic region. Bennett's disappointment as to the first of these plans and his buoyant enthusiasm for the second can hardly be exaggerated. Yet he ignored all risk to that hope when he flew from New York to Detroit, and again from Detroit to Lake St. Agnes, weak from illness as he was. He gave up his purpose to pilot a relief plane for the stranded airmen at

Greenly Island only when his condition became alarming.

The whole Nation echoes President Coolidge's words: "His noble and brave spirit will live in the memory of the things he accomplished."

The American Judge on the World Court

JOHN BASSETT MOORE, one of the world's greatest authorities on international law, has resigned his seat on the bench of the Permanent Court of International Justice, popularly known as the World Court. This American jurist has been a judge of the Court since 1921. Though the United States did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles and is not a member of the World Court, the American members of the Hague Court of Arbitration are called upon to nominate an American for a World Court judgeship. The question now arises whom will this American group nominate as Judge Moore's successor?

Dr. Moore, it is said, will devote his time now to the completion of his great work on international law.

Russia's Last "White" Hope

GENERAL PETER WRANGEL, who died on April 25 in Brussels, was the last leader of a "White" Russian military movement against the Bolsheviks. Since the Red Army routed his forces in South Russia in 1920 and forced them to a disorderly flight to Constantinople, not the most visionary Russian exiles have argued that anything could be accomplished against Moscow by armed attack from without. It appears that lately Lord Birkenhead, one of the "die-hard" Tory leaders of the British Cabinet, suggested something of this sort in Berlin. But Russian officers who have tried it would apparently be the slowest to be convinced that any results can be reached along that line.

Like Admiral Kolchak, who lost his