

mother stands at the door and gives them each a white carnation.

What for?

I guess just for Purity.

Are all Randolphs pure?

Of course. They are strong, silent Service people with firm jaws, square shoulders, clipped voices, and good table manners. They all Have Faith. Except John. He wears tennis flannels, scorns afternoon tea, refuses to join the Service, and thinks it time the sun did set on the British Empire.

But, of course, he reconsiders his opinion?

How could you guess? Yes. Grandfather Randolph shows him a map illustrating the movements of Randolphs all over the world. Each Randolph has his flag. When a Randolph dies his flag goes reverently into a little box. The game is called Keeping Track.

And that makes John join the Service?

Instantly. He is Assistant Commissioner for the Gold Coast in a twinkling.

Only Assistant?

Yes, his brother Clive, the one in shorts, is the Commissioner.

And they go out alone to fight the Molybdenum Menace?

Not alone. Helen — Mrs. Clive Randolph — goes with them to Have a Youngster.

Isn't that a little rash?

It would seem rash, but they don't come finer than Helen. And so we leave London-Seat-of-Empire, and travel to the sinister laboratory where Zurov is nominally studying ants, while his men are secretly poisoning Carpenter, the Deputy-Commissioner.

Shame. Do they kill him?

They do, although Clive hurries through the Rains to save him. Clive is suspicious of the ants. He knows all about them, you see. He once wrote a book called "The Ant World, by Randolph." Zurov has it on his desk, demi-oct., gilt edges, good quality binding. But Clive never reaches Carpenter.

Why not?

Because Helen visits some school children in the rain, and the Youngster arrives, and John fakes a message from the Colonial Office to bring Clive back. Carpenter dies, the Youngster dies, Clive is sent down, John (now Deputy-Commissioner) takes to drink, and the family scutcheon is blotted.

Who wipes off the blot?

Phyllis.

Phyllis who?

Phyllis Ransome, John's fiancée. She arrives fresh from England in a cool summer dress, a topee, and long gloves, with a few necessities tossed into a bag, and the box of flags from Grandfather.

And that pulls John together?

Certainly. He breaks three whisky bottles over his car, pretends to be drunk, and reels into Zurov's broadcasting station just as DNXV is calling the world to stand by for a six o'clock broadcast. Then he shouts "The pudding is hot" into the transmitter.

The pudding is what?

Hot. That's a family saying of Grandfather's. All Randolphs understand it. Another Randolph, Simon, hears it in the Foreign Office in London-Seat-of-Empire. He cries "John's in the radio station. I know it," and they telephone Clive on the Gold Coast to blow the place up with bombing planes before six o'clock.

Why before six?

Because the world will go to war at six.

What time is it now?

Four-forty by Big Ben.

But John's in the broadcasting station?

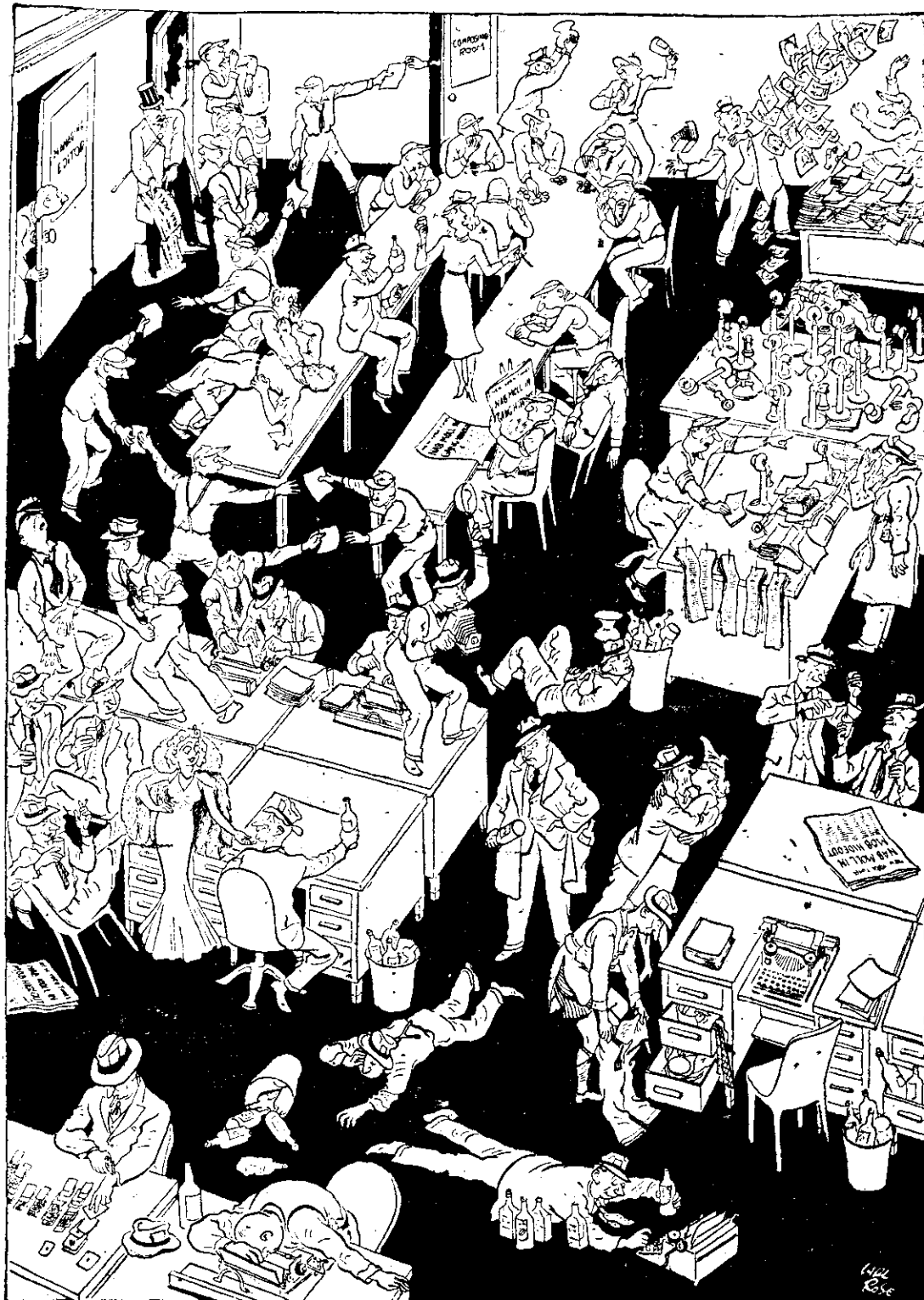
Ah, you thought so, and Clive thought so, but he isn't. Zurov has just thrown him out at 5.59. So when the bombs hit the broadcasting station everyone dies of concussion except John, who Returns with Honour with his arm in a sling.

And the world is saved for democracy?

* * *

The world, as you rightly surmise, is saved for democracy, the family scutcheon is wiped clean, the sun never sets, Mr. and Mrs. Clive Randolph and Mr. and Mrs. John Randolph arrive home in sixty seconds odd, and Mrs. Randolph senior is waiting at the door with four white carnations.

JOURNALISTS DEBUNKED



(Reproduced from Scribner's Magazine)

The news-room of a big newspaper finally decides to live up to the Hollywood conception of journalism.

IT is some time since Carl Rose illustrated Hollywood's conception of American journalism for Scribner's magazine, but we think it is not too late to share the joke with readers of *The Listener*.

Rose had in mind the New York Times office, but Fleet Street has also been lampooned, cartooned, and typhooned with the same carefree inaccuracy. The drawing applies equally to Fleet Street as Elstree sees it, and Times Square in Hollywood's hilariously distorted vision.

The film magnates are entitled to their little bit of make-believe, but we want to be sure they do not give readers the impression that our office produces *The Listener* out of the sort of shambles Rose has drawn—or that any real-life office produces any newspaper out of anything of the sort.

It is all quite ridiculous—as ridiculous as the Hollywood producer who said business was colossal, but he hoped it would pick up soon.

But it's good fun.