

LISTENINGS

Perpetrated and illustrated by KEN ALEXANDER

IN A GLASS DARKLY

A BBC commentator asks, "What is Hitler's next move?" Nobody knows — not even Hitler. Maybe he is consulting the oracle. We see him entering the precincts of the soothsayer, Professor Boloneywitz:

Says Hitler: "I want the truth, Boloneywitz."

"Mein Heavens! Things must be bad, mein Fuhrer," murmurs the professor.



"I have come to see what the future holds," snaps Hitler, chewing his fringe savagely.

"Ah, the Fuhrer is brave. Mein best I will do. But the crystal acts strangely these days. Visions float across the scene — ah, so beau-ti-ful — black puddings, sirloins and saveloys, fat geese in brown gravy; it is difficult to see anything else; but I will try. Ah — if seeing was believing!"

"But why the square crystal? Isn't a globe more usual?" asks the Fuhrer.

"For ignorant simples, yes; but for Your Excellency to whom truth has more sides than foundations we will need at least six looks. It used to be said that truth will out; but that was before Goebbels and the Gestapo took a hand. Let us take a dekho at the portents.

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requested to remember that while sending the forearm should be on a plane approximately parallel with the table so that the arm would be neither above nor below that level. The arm should at all times be held fairly close to the side of the body. It was further stated that the keeping of the muscles relaxed would also help in overcoming any fatigue.

The remainder of the lesson was taken up in receiving practice, jumbled letters, figures and plain language being transmitted.

Hm! A mist—or is it smoke? Pardon, Excellency, while I brush this ham out of the picture. But, look you, did you ever see such a ham? Note the lambent aura of fat that haunts it, get an eyeful of that meaty texture, as delicate as the cheek of a Friesian milkmaid! What is ambition, what is conquest, what—hm, yes! The future—. I was carried away, sort of hamstrung by the moment. But what is this? Another ham? No—yes, it's Signor Mussolini. He is running. A mob pursues him. Are they Greeks? Are they British? No—by golly!—they are Italians. He has dived into the Mediterranean. He hasn't come up. Now I wonder what all that means."

"Never mind," says Hitler. "He was never in the swim anyway. What else do you see?"

"Patience, Excellency. Something else is coming up. Ah! This is strange. It is a big wire trap—and a large rat speeds round and round seeking a way out; and—but, no, no, Excellency! You won't like this a bit."

"Tell me!" shouts Hitler. "The rat is Churchill?"

"Forgive me, Fuhrer. I cannot tell a lie. The rat is you."

"Go on, curse you!" yells Hitler.

"You can see that it has been a very nice, big, strong rat but it has grown thin through too much diplomatic exercise. Also it has eaten nearly all the cheese in the trap and is growing weak. It doesn't look a happy rat at all. It is trying to force its way between the bars."



"It will succeed, it will escape!" screams Hitler.

"Y-e-e-s, maybe, but—"

"But what, sweinhound?"

"There is a dog who waits—oh, a very nasty looking dog who would not understand 'new orders in Europe' and the sublime privileges of rats. I think—"

But, with a scream of "Rats to you!" Hitler is gone and the Professor concentrates on calling up a saddle of mutton and a couple of geese in the crystal.

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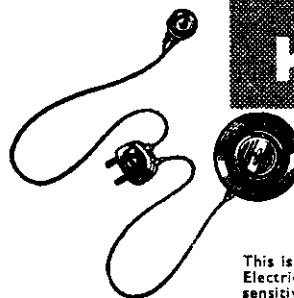
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