

CHRISTMAS

P. I. - Sunco. Tues., Dec. 22, 1936.

Time to talk about Christmas - so let's examine some figures to see how merry it is. There's one authority that should know ~~the~~ - the post office department, because the mail man is an important personage at Yuletide - ~~is~~ lieutenant to Santa Claus. The New York Postmaster reports percentage increases of ten and fifteen per cent. The mail man is handling ten per cent more first class letters than he did last year. The fifteen per cent increase is in the parcel post department - and that's the most significant department of all. You send Christmas cards by mail - <sup>--- and,</sup> more Christmas cards are being sent this year. <sup>- I thought that fad was dying out.</sup> Parcel post carries the Christmas presents - and that's where you'll find the biggest increase.

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The report summarizes the Yuletide situation this way - that more Christmas presents are being mailed this year than ever in the past - more than even in the boom time year of Nineteen Twenty-Eight - which certainly makes it a Merry Christmas.

That goes for every place where the flag flies, except perhaps Alaska. Santa Claus, traveling by reindeer and sled from the North Pole, has a comparatively short trip to the vast

*— therefore he ought to leave more in Alaska,*  
peninsula of the north. But the labors of the good Saint are a  
bit complicated in this modern day, and he has to do a certain  
amount of traveling by steamship from the south to the north,  
from our west coast to Alaska. That's where the maritime strike  
causes trouble for Kriss Kringle. At Seattle, a Santa Claus  
ship is idle at the dock tonight. It was supposed to sail ten  
days ago, but the strike of the ship workers held it up.

~~It was supposed to sail~~ Aboard the steamer YUKON is a consignment  
of candy and other Christmas presents for the kiddies of Alaska—  
two thousand dollars' worth. But it won't get on its way until  
the strike is settled. So with that particular cargo of Merry  
Christmas, Santa Claus will be delayed in coming to the children  
of Juneau,  
~~of Dawson,~~ Nome and the Matanuska Valley.

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OPIE READ

I telephoned Chicago this afternoon for some information about - the "Arkansas Traveler". The newspapers are honoring the birthday of the author and humorist who popularized that droll figure of old-time American comedy. Opie Read is eighty-four, star of best sellers back at the turn of the century. He wrote fifty-two novels which sold millions of copies. His first great success concerned the doings and the sayings of that figure of funny legend - the Arkansas Traveler. Opie Read ranks in American humor along with Bill Nye, Eugene Field and George Ade -- and tops them in novels.

So today I phoned the patriarch of American humor at his Chicago home, and asked him about the origin of the "Arkansas Traveler." Opie - sounding spry and mellow - said it was all a very old form of entertainment in the southwest. There was a set tune played on the fiddle. The country fiddler would play the tune, tell a joke, play a tune again, tell another joke, and so forth ad infinitum.

"But my impression", Opie Read related, "was a ~~particular~~ form in Arkansas. It goes to an earlier -- but he would be



Nye

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horseback to a farmhouse, where he'd loudly chant the Arkansas Traveler tune. Then he would tell a joke with an argument about voting for him, and then go into the tune again. He never lost an election, said Opie - "he was the real Arkansas Traveler."

I asked the humorist for a sample of the jokes that went with the old tune, and he recited one - a favorite of that old-time politician. Here's the way it goes:

"The biggest fool I ever saw  
Was on the banks of the Arkansas.  
He buttoned his shirt up over his coat  
And tied his britches around his throat."

That's as good a way as any to celebrate the eighty-fourth birthday of my old time Chicago friend Opie Read, American humorist of the school of Bill Nye, Gene Field and George Ade.

Talking about Bill Nye - he's in the studio here with me. Not the droll, original Bill, but a descendant of his. Isn't that right, Bill:

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BILL NYE: No, Bill Nye was about a forty-seventh uncle of mine.

And my name isn't "Bill" - it's "Walter Nye". But everybody calls me Bill.

L.T.: The odd thing is that I didn't bring Bill Nye here in humorous reminiscence of his forty-seventh uncle, but to tell us something on a subject that is tragic - the Spanish Civil War. He's one of the American refugees taken out of battle-torn Spain by the American gunboat CAYUGA. ~~He was~~ In Spain eighteen years, as a representative <sup>of</sup> ~~for~~ American firms. Is that right, Bill?

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BILL NYE: No, I wasn't a representative. I was a traveling salesman, a drummer. I drove around Spain in a car, selling bluing - you know what you use washing clothes, to make them white. In some parts of Spain, instead of using a little bit, the women would dump in the whole package of bluing, and the clothes came out blue, a sky blue. But they liked that, thought it was beautiful. So it was good for the business. But in one place the women thought the bluing was candy, and ate it. That was bad for the business.

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L.T.: Before we get around to the tragedy of Spain, Bill, tell us something in honor of Opie Read and his Arkansas Traveler and in memory of your forty-seventh uncle, Bill Nye. Tell us what you consider tops for a Spanish joke - and make it funny.

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BILL NYE: All right, I'll tell you a joke that really was tops.. and you figure out how funny it is. I was in Madrid in the early days of the civil war. The savage killings were beginning, Red firing squads doing their merciless work. But we didn't realize it. I was walking down the street when a party of militia suddenly walked up to me and poked rifles at me. I thought it was a joke. So I just laughed and kidded. "Hey you guys, don't shoot me, shoot that fellow over there," I said, pointing over my shoulder at a man walking by. And they did. ~~After~~ <sup>They</sup> they shot him, ~~he fell~~.

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L.T.: That's a frightful way to take a joke.

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BILL NYE: They thought I meant it, was making an accusation.



As I saw the man fall, I started running. It was too much of a joke for me, I knew it was time to leave Spain.

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L.T.: We got to the Spanish tragedy sooner than I expected. So let's go on to the news from the Madrid front - which gives us ~~an~~ ominous sounding word today. The Nazi Swastika in the ranks of General Franco's Rebels. The loyalists today admitted that Franco's men have captured the strategic town of Boadilla in their attempt to break through from the north, through the Guadarrama Mountains. And the Left Wingers claim that among the troops that captured Boadilla were units of Germans, with Nazi Swastikas on their uniforms.

*^ Franco announces he is placing mines in left wing harbors to blockade them. And Madrid was bombed again today.*

CUBA

In Havana the Cuban Senate ~~met~~ met today, but not as a legislative body. It constituted itself a court of justice. After these preliminaries it adjourned until tomorrow afternoon. That's a twenty-four hour wait - the space of time President Gomez has been given to prepare his defense. He is to go on trial before the Senate court tomorrow.

Havana is saying tonight that the result is a foregone conclusion. President Gomez will be found guilty and will be ousted as President of Cuba - on the charge of having improperly obstructed legislation. What legislation? That same school law about which we've been hearing - a heavy tax on sugar to support a system of rural schools run by the army. The school children to be taught by army sergeants.

It is backed by Colonel Batista, the iron man of the army - who says it's ~~an~~ education for the poor. It's opposed by President Gomez, chief of the civil government - who says it's a step toward Fascism. **R** When an army iron man meets a president - out goes the president. That, at any rate, seems to be the case in Cuba tonight. They say that Colonel Batista controls enough

votes in the Senate to depose President Gomez in the trial tomorrow.

So Cuba has a constitutional crisis - quite different from the one England had.



There was a blast of criticism in England when the Archbishop of Canterbury publicly condemned the romance of ex-King Edward and Mrs. Simpson, and took a dig at the former monarch's coterie of American friends. Yes, His Grace of Canterbury was denounced for talking out like that.

Did all this daunt and discourage the Church of England? Not at all. Today the Archbishop of York speaks up. Canterbury and York, those two ecclesiastical terms dominate the church history of England. Does the Archbishop of York speak in milder, more guarded terms than his brother prelate of Canterbury? No, not a bit. His Grace of York doesn't hit at the ex-King's American friends, but he doesn't mince words in talking about the royal romance <sup>over</sup> ~~the~~ which a monarch gave up the greatest throne ~~—~~ for the woman he loved.

Judge of the following - in the Archbishop's January letter to his diocese: "It has happened", he says, "that many a man before now has found himself beginning to fall in love with another man's wife. That's the moment of the critical decision - and the right decision is that they should cease to meet." ~~So England still remains agitated over that drama of romance and constitutional crisis.~~

before passion is so developed as to create an agonizing  
conflict between love and duty.

*concludes the Archbishop of York, "has*  
"That decision" ~~has~~ ~~xx~~ often been taken by men of honor. "

So England still remains agitated over that drama of  
romance and Constitutional crisis.

CHINA

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It seems that we were a bit previous the other night in picturing China's civil war as bloodless -- without bullets. No, there isn't any report of gunfire and fighting between Marshal Chang's rebels and the government army massed for the release of Generalissimo Chiang-Kai-Shek. That still is in the negotiation stage.

But, (word is beginning to leak out of the strange events that accompanied the revolt of Marshal Chang and his seizure of the head of the government. Today in Nanking it was divulged that Chiang-Kai-Shek was accompanied by a large party of officers. When Marshal Chang staged his revolt, forty-six of these were killed.) So instead of bloodless revolution, it was a savage and murderous affair.

One report tonight is that Marshal Chang has offered to yield -- if the Nanking government will give in to one demand of his. It is rumored that he has offered to release Chiang-Kai-Shek, and submit his own self to any punishment they want to inflict on him. But, what is it that he demands before he will do all this? He requires the Nanking government



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to declare war on Japan. That's the story in China tonight.

Meanwhile, there's no word from the emissaries who have gone to Marshal Chang to persuade him to release the head of the government. These two are Chiang-Kai-Shek's wife and her brother, Doctor T. V. Soong.

Right now they're in the city of Sian, where Marshal Chang has his power, and where the Generalissimo is held prisoner. Wife pleading for ~~her~~ husband; her brother second-  
*She's said to offering a huge ransom,*  
ing the plea. <sup>^</sup> But there's no word of any success that they may have had.

In all of this strange Chinese story there's a thread that leads in a singular way across the Pacific to this nation of ours. Fifty-six years ago a poor Chinese sailor landed in Wilmington, North Carolina. A rich tobacco manufacturer took an interest in him, and sent ~~to~~ the young Chinese immigrant to Duke University. Finally this Americanized Chinese returned home, full of ideas of the West. He became a teacher, then went into the printing business. He made a fortune out of it, printing Chinese Bibles for American missionaries.

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He had three beautiful daughters, whom he sent to the United States to be educated. One of these Americanized Chinese girls is the wife who with her brother has flown to the rebel fortress in behalf of her captive husband.

TANG

Let's complete tonight's impression of China with the story of the family of the Tangs - ~~a mere~~ <sup>a strange</sup> human story. Mighty strange, but it comes in the news from the Far East.

Once the Tang family was rich, with broad acres of peanut fields. But all that was ruined by the havoc of civil war, and the fortune of the Tangs was broken. It's a point of honor with an upright Celestial that he must square his debts, pay his creditors once a year. This the Tangs could not do.

It's an old family, going back for centuries. In the dim past the Tangs became converted to Nestorian Christianity, a ~~schismatic~~ <sup>schismatic</sup> branch that spread to the Far East. The Christian traditions of the Nestorians was with them, so a Catholic missionary, a German priest - was trying to persuade them to join with the church of the West. But the one thing that dominated the souls of the Tangs was the fact that they were not able to square their debts. They couldn't pay their creditors. The priest urged them to pray, but the elders of the Tangs remembered the ancient Chinese proverb - "We can grasp the imperial bow and sword when the beard of the dragon is out of our reach."



The beard of the dragon was the money to pay. It was out of their reach. The imperial bow and sword was - death. This was in their reach.

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So the elders of the house of Tang went into seclusion and prepared a banquet for themselves - a poison banquet. Then they sat down to eat. It was the honorable way, since they could not pay their creditors. Because the beard of the dragon was out of their reach, they would grasp the imperial bow and sword.

Just as they were about to begin the fatal repast, there was a crash <sup>of shots -</sup> ~~in their shop~~ a bandit raid. Brigands rushed in, and seized the elders of the Tangs - determined to hold them for ransom. Seeing a splendid meal laid out, the robbers sat down and ate it. <sup>Soon afterward</sup> ~~quickly~~ they were seized with the agonies of poison and died. The elders of the Tangs were left with the bodies of the bandits. When they called the authorities - it was discovered that there was a price on the heads of the bandits. The price amounted to five thousand dollars, and it was paid to the elders of the Tangs. So now they were able to settle their debts - and presumably get converted. *And s-l-u-t-m.*

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