

LOWELL THOMAS BROAD-  
CAST FOR THE  
LITERARY DIGEST

Wednesday, October 15, 1930

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INTROD.

It's been raining all day, and I did a complete loop coming here from the Literary Digest office. No damage. But skidding on Fifth Avenue during the rush hour is as thrilling as any of your so-called hair-raising adventures in Africa. I'm not complaining though. Mr. Baldwin, Britain's ex-Prime Minister, is the man who has grounds for complaint tonight. For Ramsay McDonald has stolen his thunder.

For a year now Mr. Baldwin, as the head of the Conservative Party, has been loudly advocating internal trade reciprocity and protection for the British Empire. That was one way of taking a slam at the Labor Government which was supposed to be all for the old Liberal policy of Free Trade.

Now along comes the Imperial Conference in London, with England and her Dominions talking over family prob-

lems. The Dominions, headed by Prime Minister Bennett, of Canada, came out strongly for Mr. Baldwin's idea, several days ago. That was music for Mr. Baldwin's ears. And he said he'd make a formal announcement committing his party, the Tory party, to his and Mr. Bennett's policy of internal trade protection. It was his great chance to take a wallop at the Labor Government. He said he would make the announcement Wednesday--that's today.

And here's where the unexpected twist comes in. A dispatch to the New York Times states that at a special session of the Dominion Conference, Mr. MacDonald, Prime Minister of the Labor Government, came out flat foot for the very system of Empire trade protection that is Mr. Baldwin's pet idea. So Mr. MacDonald stole his political enemy's thunder, took over his plan of campaign, and rode right off with Mr. Baldwin's war elephant.

What could Mr. Baldwin do? He did the only thing he could do. He called off his announcement scheduled for today.

While we're on the subject of Britain and her big family, I just saw the new copy of the Literary Digest. It will be on the stands tomorrow morning. You'll notice it. The cover is a glowing symphony of colors, a painting called the "Blue Pool", with gorgeous trees. Well, I got

a glance at an advance copy, and it has an article on the Dominion Conference, which I took good care to read before I came to bat with the story about Mr. Baldwin and Mr. MacDonald. That article straightened me out on several points concerning the situation between England and her vast Dominions.

I ran through the new Digest quickly. Hadn't time to read all of it--but I'll do that tonight. Maybe I was too busy looking at the pictures.

#### DIGEST CARTOONS

If there's anything I like better than anything else it's the Literary Digest cartoons, cartoons from all over the world--and sometimes from places where you wouldn't expect cartoons--at least, not good ones. Take Turkey. In the new Digest is a cartoon from far off Constantinople, a corker. It's a striking and powerful drawing symbolizing revolution menacing the world.

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#### FLASH

The International News Service also just phoned me a late flash from Boston, to the effect that the

<sup>the</sup> American Federation of Labor <sup>has</sup> recommended this ~~afternoon~~ that President Hoover appoint a national committee to suggest measures for the immediate relief of unemployment.

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And here's another flash from the Mississippi Valley. A real old time wild west pistol battle took place this afternoon out in Godfrey, Kansas, between a sheriff and his deputy and a bank bandit. The sheriffs were taking the robber to the state penitentiary, and he was riding in the back seat with the deputy. Suddenly the bandit drew a revolver that must have been slipped to him, by some accomplice, and he opened fire. The deputy dropped to the bottom of the car, killed instantly. The sheriff in the front seat whirled about, and the bandit shot him through the neck. But the sheriff kept his wits, drew his gun, and pumped several bullets into the bandit. The car was found later with the bandit and deputy dead, and the sheriff unconscious from his wounds.

That's the end of that flash, a savage end.

#### SULTAN

Today an interesting wedding took place in London-- another case of a fabulously rich oriental potentate

marrying a white woman. The monarch is the Sultan of Johore, one of the kings of the federated Malay States. It would be hard to imagine anything more colorful and dramatic. The woman is an English widow.

The Sultan arrived in London last week with his staff. He went straight to the home of Mrs. Helen Wilson, whom he had known in Singapore 20 years before. He proposed, was accepted, and the whirlwind courtship, according to a dispatch in the New York Evening Post--ended in short order with the wedding that took place in London today.

The Sultan of Johore is one of the richest monarchs in Asia. He's a Malay--of the brown race. His capital is right across the strait from the little island on which the city of Singapore is situated. I lived there for a month at one time, and often used to see the Sultan. He is a man in his late fifties, a great sportsman, and one of the most spectacular figures in that corner of the world. He had the reputation for staging such wild parties in Singapore--and take it from me they have to be good and wild to attract attention there--that his British advisers urged him to remain away from that city and stay in his own domain. He first made the acquaintance of the English lady, whom he has now married, when she was the wife of a Scottish doctor in Singapore.

This sensational courtship and marriage of an oriental monarch and a white woman from Europe is similar to the marriage that aroused so much comment back in 1928; I mean the one when the Maharajah of Indore married Nancy Miller, the girl from Seattle.

Marriages of this kind are uncommon. The dividing line between the races is very sharp in the Orient. But, of course, to marry a picturesque oriental sultan--well, some ladies don't seem to be able to resist the glamor.

### DAMASCUS

From Damascus comes a story about romance and marriage in the Orient.

Damascus is the oldest city in the world that is still standing. And now all you bachelors and bachelor girls just listen to this:-- The purchase price of wives is to be reduced to the absolute minimum. But the Associated Press dispatch does not tell what the rock bottom price for a wife is going to be. And the Congress also demands that divorce be made more difficult.

Most of the women attending the Congress at Damascus are Mohammedans, and in most Mohammedan countries the woman is at the mercy of the man if he wants to get rid of her. She is hardly more than his slave. During the Arabian revolution, I lived with one picturesque old

Arab robber who had 28 wives. He married them four at a time, and he told me it was his ambition to have a hundred! Among Mohammedans, all you have to do to divorce your wife is to say:

"I divorce thee; I divorce thee: I divorce thee"--three times, in front of a witness--and it's all over.

A Mohammedan as a rule never sees his wife until after the marriage --and then it's too late. "His is to command, her's is blindly to obey" is a familiar Mohammedan saying. When a woman enters the room we rise. An Arab never does. Nor will he eat with a woman; she is expected to serve him. When an Arab goes out on his camel "to smell the air", as they call it, his wife doesn't accompany him. She isn't even called his wife at all. He simply refers to her as "the relative in my house".

A man usually married between the ages of 20 and 24; a woman any time after she is 12. Professional match makers do not perform their services free.

### DIVORCE

But after all, we are most interested in the subject of marriage right here at home. And an As-

sociated Press dispatch has just come in from Washington, stating that 1,232,559 couples were married in the United States last year. And that means 1,232,559 mother-in-laws! In the same period there were 201,475 divorces. In other words, there were more than six times as many marriages as there were divorces. The records show that marriage is on the increase.

A curious thing too is that the State of Nevada had the highest percentage of marriages as well as of divorces.

And by the way, the Topics in Brief page of the Literary Digest that comes out tomorrow gives a hint to men on how to avoid matrimonial troubles. There is a quotation from the Florida Times Union. Here's the advice:-- "The wise husband talks in his wife's sleep."

The Topics in Brief page of the Digest includes 40 of the spiciest quotations of the week culled from newspapers all over America, and there is a smile or a laugh in every one.

I don't like to link two such topics as marriage and jail--but this next dispatch that comes into my hand is about the hoosegow.

#### TEAR GAS

The warden of the principal jail in Mexico City has recommended that the guards be armed with tear



gas pistols. According to the New York Sun, negotiations have been started with American manufacturers for the purchase of pistols that will discharge tear gas fumes instead of bullets. Making sinners weep for their sins, I suppose you'd call it.

I hope these Mexican poison gas pistols turn out better than one particular United States Navy torpedo, which certainly misbehaved itself. It is one of this evening's Freak flashes:

#### SUBMARINE

Up in Newport, says the Associated Press, they fired a torpedo out of a submarine. It started all right, then turned around, came back and knocked a hole in the hull of the submarine. Luckily it was a dummy, so there was no explosion--but these boomerang torpedoes aren't expected to be of much help to the United States Navy in the next war, if any.

Several years ago I hunted up all of the important German submarine commanders. One told me a tale of how a British sub fired a torpedo at his U-boat. The aim was perfect. The torpedo was set for too shallow a run, and when a few yards from the U-boat it leaped out of the water like a flying fish, landed on the U-boat's deck, skated across and went skimming on, bound for nowhere.

Boomerang and Flying Fish torpedoes ought to go well with a flag pole sitting airplane.

### AVIATION

The Associated Press has wired a photograph of a freak airplane accident that occurred in Texas. A plane in taking off ran into a mass of telegraph wires. But instead of cracking up and crashing into the ground, the plane perched right on top of a telephone pole. 66,000 volts of electricity were passing through the wires. But the pilot was uninjured, and in the picture the plane looks as though it was hardly damaged.

I recall a curious flying episode a bit like that. Several years ago, when I was flying with the Army Air Service pilots who made the first flight around the world, one of them, Lieutenant Leslie Arnold, told me about a time he was flying at a country fair.

His plane stalled, and he dived 200 feet into one of the main buildings on the fair grounds. It was the building where the prize poultry and cattle were housed. The roof gave way gently, and the nose of the plane went right on through until it rested on the floor of the second story, in the midst of all the chickens.

Lieutenant Arnold was thrown from the cockpit, and landed, unhurt, in the stall occupied by the prize bull! I forgot to ask him how he felt when he woke up and saw the bull gazing at him.

FREAK FLASHES

They're hatching ducks out of chicken eggs in London now, the Evening World reports. They stick a hypodermic needle through the shell and inject duck yolk. Whether they can hatch ostriches out of eggs laid by Bantam hens, the Evening World doesn't say. I hope they can. Then maybe I can make my farm pay.

FREAK FLASHES

They have a new idea in traffic enforcement out in Fresno, California, according to the United Press. Every day the traffic cops on the busiest corners take the license numbers of the most careful drivers they notice. The numbers are published next day, and the drivers get a free theater ticket. Let's all move to Fresno. But I'll have to leave my wife here. She gets tickets regularly--but not theater tickets.

NEWS ITEM OF THE DAY

Just before I came before the microphone I thought over scores of stories I had read in the days news and here is the one I chose not as the most important--but the most interesting--the news item of the day.

A child was lost and left a waif. The tide of war was breaking furiously over northeastern France. The Germans were rushing toward Paris with their endless green-grey columns. Streams of refugees were hurrying away before the thunder of battle. They streamed along the roads, and straggled through by-ways, distracted with terror, stupid with disaster.

Well, the child, the waif--he was only five--got separated from his parents in the wild panic. Other refugees, pitying him, picked him up and took him along. Then he was turned over to the authorities. What was his name? "Jacques," he lisped. What was his other name? Oh, he mumbled something or other with the indistinct fumbling of infancy. Where was he from? He couldn't tell that either, not clearly enough to mean anything.

They tried to find his parents--during the war and after the war. But the parents were never found.

That was 16 years ago, and now he is 19 or 20,

wondering who his parents were, wondering who he is. Probably he will never know.

This is not the story of an actual person. It's more than that. It's the story of forty-seven actual persons.

When the German war wave receded from over France, 4,552 war waifs were left astray.

Some were picked up by municipal authorities, others by Allied troops, still others by the German soldiers. More than one lost, hungry French kid was cared for by the men in spiked helmets.

The French Society for the Aid of the Repatriated took charge of all infant stragglers. One after another was restored to its home. Parents applied to the Society, asking about children they had lost. Many a mother recognized this waif or that as her own. Others were in doubt. There was wretchedness and heart-break.

In the end, of the 4,552 lost children nearly all were restored to their parents, says the New York Evening Post. And now the Society for the Aid of the Repatriated announces that forty-seven remain. Their parents died during the War, perhaps, or drifted afar. After 16 years, it is probable that they will never be reunited with their families. They are young men and

women now, ignorant of the people from whom they sprang, and of their names, and of their identities.

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Well, I've kept this next one for the last-- and it's the saddest story of all. One of the most important of the big football battles scheduled for next Saturday afternoon is the Notre Dame- Carnegie Tech game. Last Saturday Notre Dame gave the Navy an awful trimming, and that's O.K. from the South Bend standpoint. But now Knute Rockne, the famous Scandinavian coach of the Notre Dame Irish, comes forward and predicts positively that the Carnegie Tech boys will beat his team--not by a reasonable score, either, but by three touchdowns!

And me with ten bucks on Notre Dame. Well, after that there's only one thing left to say,--and that's goodnight.

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