

1 Greetings, neighbors--you know, I  
2 feel as though the radio were just a  
3 tremendous widening of the old front  
4 porch--the neighbors all gathered  
5 together--and as I come up the steps  
6 they are asking me:

7 "What happened today?"

8 The first piece is a sad one.  
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## JOFFRE

"There is no hope." This was the tragic word that was given today to the International News Service in Paris by one of the attending physicians from the bedside of Marshal Joseph Joffre, France's hero of the Marne, who was lying close to death as the result of a serious attack of arteritis which necessitated the amputation of his right leg.

"The Marshal's condition is so low," the doctor said, "that we are unable to operate again despite the extreme urgency." Latest United Press and Associated Press dispatches at four o'clock Chicago time report no change in Joffre's condition and indicate that he will probably last through the night.

## JOFFRE

"Papa Joffre", the 79 year old, white-haired hero of the Marne whose picture probably decorates more homes in France than that of any other national figure, as the International News Service correspondent tells us, has been seriously ill for several days with an inflammation of the arteries. The seriousness of his illness was kept from the public until this morning.

Now France, just recovering from worry over the sick statesman Poincare, is awaiting anxiously the final bulletins from the bedside of its great soldier.

One by one the great heroes of the World War are passing. Foch has gone, Clemenceau has gone. Earl Haig of Britain has gone, Diaz and Cadorna of Italy are gone. And on the German

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side, Admiral von Tirpitz has gone. Now, Joseph Jacques Cezare Joffre, Commander of the French Army that held the German onslaught at the Marne, "Papa Joffre" to the ~~British~~ French poilu, is facing death.

RUSSIA

What do you think? The boss of Russia has given himself a government job. For the last 7 years Joseph Stalin, the dictator of Soviet Russia, has been running the country without any official job, merely as the head of the all - powerful Communist party -- a good deal the way some of our political bosses of our country have run cities or states while somebody else was mayor or governor. Now, Stalin is so completely master of Russia that he's willing to take a little job in one of the complicated group of committees that administer the affairs of government in Russia.

1 A rather disquieting bit of news  
2 comes from across the Mexican border. An  
3 International News Service dispatch reports  
4 that an army of 26,000 troops was being  
5 hastily mobilized through Mexico today  
6 to become available at midnight tonight  
7 as a guard for all railway lines and  
8 round-houses in the principal terminals  
9 in case a threatened general railway  
10 strike becomes a reality. Officials  
11 of the national railways denied that a  
12 general strike was probable. But the  
13 government's action in affecting the  
14 most rapid mobilization ever undertaken  
15 by a Mexican army indicated that it  
16 would take no chances of possible danger  
17 to the railroad lines or rolling stock.  
18 Dissatisfaction with both the pay and  
19 working conditions was given as the cause  
20 of the agitation for a general railway  
21 strike.

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1           There is a lull in politics in our  
2 own country as Congress has gone home for  
3 the holidays and official Washington  
4 gives itself up to social affairs. The  
5 big noise just now is caused by the  
6 far-reaching echoes of that statement  
7 of Mr. Lucas, executive director of the  
8 Republican National Committee, reading  
9 Senator Norris of Nebraska out of the  
10 party. You know Professor John Dewey,  
11 the famous philosopher, and head of the  
12 League for Independent Political Action,  
13 wrote the Senator a letter asking him to  
14 be the presidential candidate of an  
15 independent liberal third party. Today's  
16 papers report how Senator Norris told  
17 the newspaper men in Washington that he  
18 couldn't do that, that it wouldn't be  
19 practical, and that any independent  
20 candidacy would be impractical as long as  
21 presidents are elected by the present  
22 electoral college system. But the effect  
23 of all this on the Republican and  
24 Democratic prospects in 1932 is being  
25 actively discussed by the Washington

1 correspondents and the newspaper  
2 editors all over the country--and all  
3 this discussion is something we Digest  
4 editors are watching and studying most  
5 carefully.

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1 I always like to read those stories  
2 about explorers who wander into a lost  
3 valley or drop through a hole into the  
4 center of the earth and find all kinds  
5 of queer ~~kind~~ prehistoric animals.

6 Remember how Conan Doyle and H. G. Wells  
7 used to write them! Maybe here's a true  
8 story of the kind. It comes from  
9 Australia by way of the Associated Press.

10 It **seems** that a distinguished  
11 zoologist in a lecture in Brisbane said  
12 that there was plenty of proof that back  
13 in a woods of Queensland there was a  
14 huge cat-like marsupial--you know a  
15 marsupial is a kind of animal that  
16 carries its young ones around in a pouch  
17 or pocket like a kangaroo. And the  
18 interesting part is that this marsupial,  
19 according to the professor, has a striped  
20 stomach and most fearsome appearance.  
21 What a chance for some circus!

22 And while we're about it, I can't  
23 help thinking there are some more  
24 mysteries that may be solved by the  
25 expedition that sailed last night to the

1 Matto Grosso region of the Brazilian  
2 jungles--the country that President  
3 Theodore Roosevelt explored on his famous  
4 River of Doubt expedition. This  
5 expedition is going to take moving  
6 pictures and it's going to bring back  
7 all kinds of animal life, armadillos,  
8 anacondas, and rare birds. And they  
9 may even find that mysterious lost tribe  
10 of Indians that explorers have heard of  
11 and sought for in vain.

12         One of the things they are looking  
13 for and want to bring back samples of,  
14 so the New York papers tell us, is the  
15 famous cannibal fish piranha. I'll spell  
16 it for you: p-i-r-a-n-h-a. They are  
17 small fishes but they travel in great  
18 numbers. Anybody who falls into one of  
19 those Matto Grosso rivers is likely to  
20 be devoured--eaten to the bone--by these  
21 terrible fish in just a few minutes.  
22 ~~Maybe some of these fish could be used~~  
23 ~~for testing steak instead of the machine~~  
24 ~~that this evening's New York Telegram~~  
25 ~~tells about. It seems that over in London~~

ANNAPOLIS

There's a middy down at Annapolis that won't get into the Navy. But that boy is not going to have any trouble succeeding in life. He's going to be another Edison or ~~XXXXXXXX~~ perhaps a whole General Electric Company of his own. He was fired from the Naval Academy because he had been rigging up electric wires all over his dormitory, with which he stopped elevators between floors, dimmed the lights, interfered with the telephoning. A little detective work on the part of the authorities disclosed an electric clock in this boy's room. Then a system of wires running all over the building. The dispatches from Annapolis which tell the story, don't give the boy's name. But he's going to be famous one of these days, and don't you forget it. I see the United Press correspondent says the boy is planning to take the Examination for West Point in the Spring. Maybe he figures they want electricians in the Army, even if they don't in the Navy.

1           When I looked at the New York  
2 Telegram tonight I saw pictured the  
3 familiar face of William J. Guard, and  
4 there was a story about him. You know,  
5 Guard has been the press agent for the  
6 Metropolitan Opera House for 20 years.  
7 And what he doesn't know about musical  
8 and theatrical people nobody does. The  
9 writer in the Telegram calls him "New  
10 York's last true Bohemian". He and I  
11 have <sup>at least</sup> one thing in common. We are both  
12 Methodist minister's sons.

13           The Latest story about Guard is  
14 that when Einstein was taken to see the  
15 opera at the Metropolitan he visited  
16 Guard's office. And Guard produced a  
17 scrap of paper. On the paper was written  
18 Guard's definition of relativity. He  
19 was rather proud of it and I don't wonder,  
20 ~~because~~ It was this: "There is no  
21 hitching post in the universe." This  
22 was shown and translated and explained  
23 to the famous philosopher and  
24 mathematician. After a moment  
25 deliberation he took the pen offered him

1 and wrote down under Guard's definition:  
2 "Gelesen und richtig besunden." That is,  
3 "Read and found correct." And he signed  
4 his name "Albert Einstein". ~~Excuse me, please,~~  
5 And the scrap of paper is now the most  
6 priceless souvenir in Guard's marvelous  
7 collection of mementoes.

8 This, by the way, is only one of  
9 the stories told in a collection of  
10 stories about Einstein in this week's  
11 Literary Digest, <sup>now selling on the newsstands,</sup> and on another page is  
12 a cartoon showing Uncle Sam leaping  
13 from a great heap of perplexing problems  
14 to welcome Albert Einstein. As the  
15 Digest headline writer puts it: "We  
16 may not 'get' relativity, but we like  
17 Einstein."  
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# BEAUTY

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1           Everybody that's heard me over the  
2 air knows I have a weakness for poetry.  
3 "My only books are women's looks." That  
4 line flashed into my mind when I saw a  
5 story in tonight's New York Telegram.  
6 Somebody from the Telegram has been around  
7 talking to the beauty experts. They've  
8 been studying women's faces. Certainly  
9 nobody has been studying them any more  
10 closely. They certainly ought to qualify  
11 as authorities. So the Telegram reporter  
12 asked a number of them whether women's  
13 faces have changed any in the last 10  
14 years. "Well," said one of the beauty  
15 experts, "even a man from Mars could tell  
16 the girls of 1931 from the typical woman  
17 of 10 years ago." What do you think about  
18 that? How have they changed, then, you  
19 may ask. Now, remember, I'm quoting the  
20 Telegram, and I don't want anybody to  
21 hold me responsible for this. Here is  
22 the change as summed up from the reports  
23 of these cosmetic magicians:

24           "The woman of today has a mouth  
25 nearly twice as large as she had 10 years

1 ago; her jaw has advanced to a more  
2 belligerent angle and become square;  
3 her eyes are brighter and she has dieted  
4 until her cheeks are never plump."

5         And we learn even more. In  
6 general, they tell us, women are using  
7 less rouge and more lipstick and they  
8 are emphasizing their eyes and their  
9 mouth. And this is about as far as a  
10 mere man can venture to go on with this  
11 delightful but rather delicate and  
12 dangerous topic.

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1 I have a lot of friends who are  
2 bird lovers. Here's a little story  
3 especially for them. How many birds  
4 spent their Christmas in New York? No,  
5 I don't mean jailbirds. ~~And I don't mean~~  
6 ~~how many birds, either.~~

7 Say, speaking of birds, do you  
8 remember how Sothern played, "Lord  
9 Dundreary" and how he quoted the proverb--

10 "Birds of a feather flock together."

11 "Birds of a feather!"

12 "How silly! How could a whole lot  
13 of birds have just one feather? And  
14 then, even if every bird had just one  
15 feather--why he'd fly all on one side,  
16 and that wouldn't do at all."

17 "Birds of a feather flock together.  
18 Now, that's silly, too! Why, of course,  
19 they flock together. Why, who ever  
20 heard of one bird going off in a corner  
21 to flock all by himself--why, the whole  
22 thing is silly!

23 Dear old Dundreary!

24 But back to my birds. What I  
25 wanted to ask, was, how many kinds of



1 birds spent their winter in New York.  
2 Well, guess again! The New York Sun  
3 today tells about a bird census that was  
4 taken just before Christmas for the  
5 publication called Bird Lore. The bird  
6 investigators found exactly 108 different  
7 kinds of birds in New York! Of course  
8 there were wrens (so many varieties of  
9 wrens!), and sparrows, ducks, robins,  
10 chickadees, woodpeckers. But there were  
11 also rarer birds--hermit thrushes,  
12 Maryland yellow-throats, bitterns, and  
13 the great bald eagle. By the way, I  
14 have a pair of eagles for neighbors near  
15 me out where I live on the Palisades.  
16 <sup>R</sup> And I can believe all those birds were  
17 here, for on Christmas Day I was walking  
18 out in the woods near Plainfield, New  
19 ~~Jersey~~ Jersey, 20 miles from New York City,  
20 and as we walked over the snow we saw  
21 overhead a great flock of birds--  
22 thousands and thousands of them, I never  
23 saw so many together--circling and  
24 wheeling, rustling through the trees,  
25 lighting, and moving off again, going

1 through all sorts of formations like an  
2 enormous airplane army. And as they  
3 sailed overhead the soft, pulsating  
4 whirring of the multitudinous little  
5 wings--it was an altogether new sound  
6 to me, mysterious and strange, more  
7 than earthly--"like the bresh of angels'  
8 wings."

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## ICE

Here's a hot one. I mean it's a cold one. They're importing ice from the tropics to the north. That's no joke. The Associated Press tells today about how they've been operating an oil well down at Tampico, Mexico, that produces carbon dioxide gas in great quantities. Now, they have a factory right there on the spot that solidifies the gas into sub-zero ice -- 40,000 pounds of it a day. And x they're going to bring this ice to the United States and sell it. What next?

Speaking of ice - there were a hundred people, men and boys fishing on the ice in Sandusky Bay this afternoon. A three acre sheet of ice broke away with them.

POEM

Well, here's a solution for the divorce problem.

It's only a jingling bit of verse by someone who signs herself Angela Cypher, and it's reprinted from The New Yorker on the Digest's popular poetry page in this week's issue. It's called TOO MUCH TALK. Humph. Maybe that tells the whole story, but anyway here goes the poem:

Too much trivial  
Conversation  
Spoils the marital  
Relation.

All the greatest  
Vamps of history  
Specialized  
In charm and mystery.

If your wedded  
Life is seamy,  
Strive to look  
Aloof and dreamy.

If you have  
A sense of humor  
Let it seem  
Unfounded rumor.

Solemn men  
Would pay good money.  
If their wives  
Were never funny;

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Nervous men  
    Would be more placid  
If their wives  
    Were never acid;

Stolid men  
    Might grow ecstatic  
If their wives  
    Were less dramatic.

Silence is  
    A point to score on,  
Too much talk  
    Betrays the moron.

END

When I was a small child, the family used to gather for prayer every Saturday night. And there was one hymn we always sang -- my mother and father, we four boys, and any stranger who was within our gates -- "Safely through another week, God has brought us on our way."

And so I feel this Saturday evening. After all, we as  
~~xxx~~ a nation have been brought safely through another week.

Maybe this 1930 Christmas has meant more to us than for many a year. After all, Christmas is a thing of the spirit and not a spasm of holiday shopping, or an estimate of the volume of holiday trade. We are meeting in a nationwide campaign to help those most sorely stricken by recent reverses. From the helpful mood of Christmas we turn to the hopeful mood of New Years.

I hope Lowell Thomas is enjoying his belated Christmas holiday. It's been a great pleasure to talk with my neighbors again, I assure you, yet I shall find it a still greater pleasure to be with you on the big front porch Monday night when Lowell Thomas runs up the steps with his budget of news.

And so -- good night.