

Lowell Thomas Literary Digest Broadcast
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Birthdays

Well, two men who have made about as much news in the last ten years as any two men of our time are celebrating birthdays today -- President von Hindenburg, ex-War Lord of Germany, and Mahatma Gandhi, pacifist leader of India.

Von Hindenburg, at eighty-three, is one of the most amazing figures of modern times -- in a sense, the Washington of the German Republic. I talked with him in 1918 when the German Revolution was in full swing and when it looked as though his life had been a failure. He looked like an old man then. But twelve years more have gone by and in that time he has proven himself as great in peace as in war, and he has won the admiration of the world.

Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, his sixty-first,

must have been a bit tame. He is still behind the walls of Yeravda Prison in Poona. But Gandhi is a philosopher. He loves to squat cross-legged and reflect on the weaknesses of man. Gandhi is one man who can enjoy himself even in prison. That's where philosophers have the advantage over the rest of us. I met Gandhi in Bombay when he first started his famous noncooperation movement. He preached nonviolence. And his followers straightway started rioting, and a score of people were killed.

Gandhi, like von Hindenburg, is admired by his enemies as well as by his supporters. What greater tribute can be paid to a man than that?

London

The British Imperial Congress over in London got down to work today. Just wait a minute -- I'm not going to smother you with any dry facts and figures. But think of the glamor and romance that surrounds such a congress!

Of the hundred odd delegates to the London Congress, some are white -- in fact, most are

white -- some are black, some are yellow, some are brown, and some of every intermediate shade. Although English is the official language, the delegates speak a medley of tongues, as fantastic as the tongues that stopped the work on the tower of Babel. The names of the places they hail from make me eager to jump on the next ship and start out for a jaunt around the world again. Those delegates come from

Cairo, Mhow, and Zanzibar,
Ceylon, and Singapore.
From Mandalay and Cooch Behar,
Vancouver and Lahore.
Around the name of each there clings
Enchantment's golden veil;
The magic of strange lands and things,
The glamor of the trail.

I paraphrased those lines from a little poem written years ago by Berton Braley.

What a fascinating picture it is to think of that conference, with its representatives from Australia, Borneo, Scotland, New Guinea, Uganda, Saskatchewan, Tasmania, Newfoundland, the Solomon Islands, Malaya, Cyprus, Fiji, and a hundred other picturesque corners of the globe!

And the presiding officer is the wartime socialist fire eater Prime Minister Ramsay McDonald.

McDonald, in his opening radio address, according to an Associated Press dispatch, estimated that the delegates to the Congress had spent a total of more than four months in getting there, and had traveled fifty thousand miles.

And what a conflict of ideals and desires there must be as they face each other. Nearly every newspaper in America today, in commenting on the Congress, points out that its conclusions may profoundly affect the lives and business of all the peoples of the world.

Ramsay McDonald seems to have his mind centered mainly on world peace and what the conference can do to encourage it.

Patrick McGilligan, foreign minister from the Irish Free State, according to the New York Times observer, is in London convinced that greater recognition of the dominions as free and sovereign states is the most important thing be-

fore the gathering.

Prime Minister Bennett of Canada and General Hertzog of South Africa emphasize the importance of closer welding of trade relations between the British Commonwealth of Nations, while Prime Minister Scullin of Australia wants foreign nations excluded as far as possible. He wants the far-flung countries under the Union Jack to become self-sustaining.

Sardines

The International Sardine Conference is to meet at Lisbon. The present world sardine situation will be debated, says the A. P. Scientists from Spain, France, and Great Britain will go more deeply into the matter. There is still some mystery in the habits of these fish, although they have been studied a good deal. Improved knowledge will be of great value to the sardine fisheries, an important industry. It appears from the Associated Press dispatch that all is not known about the sardine, except that numbers of them congregate in a can.

Atlas

It would be fine if we could always have a map of the world in front of us when we are reading the day's news -- a big enough one so we could just glance at it as the news whisks from continent to continent. So many items concern places thousands of miles away.

Today I kept one of the handsome new Literary Digest Atlases on my desk. It is a fine example of the modern cartographer's art.

But what I started out to say, was that in the new Digest, which is out today, I read an unusual article about the continents of Africa and South America. Did you ever notice how the two are shaped just so they will fit together like a jigsaw puzzle? When I read the article in the Digest I turned to my new Atlas and found this was actually the case. It is fascinating and puzzling. What does it mean? Were they once one continent? The Digest gives you the latest scientific theory on this, and it is strange and astonishing.

old

Gold is being smuggled across the Mexican border. A New York Times correspondent in Mexico City cables that gold is worth more in the United States than south of the Rio Grande. He says smugglers are bringing it across the border in the gasoline tanks of automobiles. The explanation given is that Mexico has a silver standard instead of a gold standard like ours. This means that the value of silver is always the same, while the value of gold goes up and down. They can get more for gold here in the United States so naturally they would like to sell it to us. But the Mexican government forbids that. Hence the smuggling.

There's an endless magic in that word -- gold. A mining engineer who is an expert at digging gold out of the earth happened to hear me last night and came to look me up. D. J. Kennedy is his name. (Don Kennedy, we used to call him). We had not seen each other for twenty years.

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RETAKE

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you could hear me play the piano you would get a laugh out of that.

Kennedy told me some interesting things about gold. He said that gold production here in the United States is decreasing. About forty-two million dollars' worth was dug out of the earth last year. But that wasn't enough. Right here in this country fifty-five million dollars' worth of gold was used for manufacturing purposes alone. Which means that about fifteen million dollars' worth of gold had to be imported from foreign countries. We had none to use for monetary purposes at all.

The total gold production of the whole world in the past four hundred years has been one billion ounces. Of this amount, one-half has absolutely vanished and been lost. That is, it has been lost so far as using it for money is concerned. Most of it has been tied up in jewelry and in manufacturing of various kinds. Out in India people bury it in the earth instead of putting it in banks, and vast quantities of it are

completely lost in that way. They forget where they put it. Also, huge amounts of gold have gone down to Davy Jones. Remember all those ships that were sunk during the World War with gold on board. So only half of the gold dug out of the ground in four hundred years is in existence now in the form of money.

Placer mining, washing gold out of the beds of streams where the precious dust is mixed with the sands, is almost a thing of the past. Up in the Klondike I used to watch them taking it out of the river beds by the square yard, and I have seen them doing it in California in the Bret Harte country. But it is so easy to get it that way that it doesn't last long. Most of the gold of the world is gotten by lode mining. L-o-d-e, I mean. And it comes from South Africa, Canada, and the United States. South Africa produces seventy percent of it. This year Canada jumps in to second place ahead of us.

Some of the Canadian mines in the bush country of Northern Ontario are now down as far as 4500 feet. In Africa they are deeper still -- over a mile. The rocks in Canada are what

geologists call the pre-Cambrian formation. These are of the oldest geological age. Hence the Canadian rock has cooled off more than other rock. In Africa the rock is millions of years younger, and one result is that the temperature is a lot hotter for the men who are working in the bottom of the African mines.

The deepest mine I ever worked in was 1400 feet. It wasn't so very hot, and I had no trouble cooling off, because while I was shoveling rock I had to stand in water up to my knees.

Well, my friend Kennedy and I yarned along, and he told me of an incident of prospecting by air up there in the North. He says that most of the prospectors and mining engineers fly back and forth across vast, almost uninhabited sections of Canada. One of the best-known pilots, he said, is Al Cheesman, who last year flew with Sir Hubert Wilkins in the Antarctic. Well, Cheesman was flying across the wilderness on his way to pick up a mining engineer. Suddenly his plane caught fire. He was only up about a thousand feet. Just ahead

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was a lake and he made a dive for it. The plane was a flaming comet when it struck the water 300 yards from shore. Cheesman barely had time to jump out. But he swam ashore, walked back to the aviation base, got another plane, and went on with his trip. It was all in the day's work.

Women Bandits

Over in China women have taken to banditry. Civil war, stoppage of industry, and famine have driven Chinese women to hit the bandit trail. An Associated Press man wires that they are as hard-boiled and ferocious as their brother outlaws -- and in some ways more efficient.

Recently a gang of women bandits raided a town in Woochung. After looting and killing, they carried away more than a hundred prisoners to hold for ransom. That was in accordance with bandit custom. But there was a difference. None of the prisoners escaped. Ordinarily, after a bandit raid, one or two prisoners will get away

and bring back news and give some hint of the bandits' whereabouts. No such thing happened in the case of the raid of these female brigands. They carried the prisoners off on their backs, in slings, the way Chinese mothers are accustomed to carry their babies. With that kind of transportation, well, who could escape?

Flash

Ernest Cole was jilted by his sweetheart. She said her love had grown cold. Ernest thought maybe if he set her house on fire, it might warm her affection. But her love is even colder now. As for Ernest, he is in the cooler.

Donkey Race

Traffic in dear ol' London is slow enough at any time. But see what happened today. The Associated Press correspondent tells us Ye Olde Hambone Clubbe, by Jove, startled the natives

with a donkey race right in Piccadilly Circus, hub of the London universe.

The six braying donkeys were ridden by women in coster attire. You know, the distinguishing marks of that costume are dowdy hats covered with artificial flowers, and pearl buttons as big as saucers. Well, the donkeys cantered round and round old Piccadilly Circus. I say, it was a scream.

Englishmen in top hats and spats adjusted their monocles and stood aghast. The faithful bobbies tried in vain to carry on with their usual British dignity. But trams, buses, cabs, and vans all got in a jolly old tangle, until finally the bobbies put a stop to the race. I say, they had a regular riot over the whole!

Cows

In Chicago, says the Chicago Herald-Examiner, a cow was taken from a train, ridden in a bus through the Loop, and then entertained as an honored guest at a committee luncheon of the Chicago Association of Commerce. This celebrity is known

as Madame Heather, although her full name is Fabelt Creator Heather. Among her other social distinctions is the 25,000 pounds of milk she gave in one year, with a record week of 692 pounds of milk and 364 pounds of butter. If that cow wants any further entertainment I'd like to invite her up to my farm in Dutchess County, N. Y., for a spell. Maybe she could show my cows how it's done.

Doolittle

Just before closing time at the Literary Digest office this evening, I got to thinking! What was the most interesting bit of news that had come off the press and over the wires? -- the news item of the day? Sitting in a corner was an office boy reading an afternoon paper. Every time I see that boy he's reading the paper! So I asked him what he thought was the most interesting bit of news.

"Didja see the story about Jimmy Doolittle?" he asked.

Like most other lads, he's an aviation

enthusiast. At that, I think he was right. Jimmy Doolittle's adventure yesterday is another real thrill -- and it must have been particularly thrilling to the other flier -- I mean the one in the other plane, when they collided.

According to a United Press dispatch from Kansas City, Jimmy was out stunting in his snappy new speed plane -- stunting as only Jimmy Doolittle can. He took off the ground like a shell shooting up from an anti-aircraft gun. He was making what is called a power climb -- that is, he was darting almost straight up into the air from the ground at 180 miles an hour.

Well, in those general whereabouts was Lieutenant J. M. Cross, an army reserve pilot, in another plane. He happened to be in Jimmy's path. Jimmy's ship caught him -- shot up from under the other plane, and clipped the tail right off.

No airplane will submit to having its tail cut off -- and down she came, burying herself into the earth. Cross had jumped, pulled the ring of his parachute, and fluttered to the ground in safety. As for Jimmy -- his plane was not

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seriously damaged, and he made one of his usual skillful landings. Lucky boy, Jimmy.

I was talking to him about two weeks ago and he was telling me of some of his numerous escapes. Some fliers get quite a reputation for their parachute jumps. But not Jimmy. He has the reputation of bringing his plane down even when he gets into trouble. But at last, about a year ago, a day came when he had to jump. It was at the Cleveland Air Races. He was diving at over 200 miles an hour when the wings came off. He jumped and got down safely, and then walked back to a hangar several miles away and asked for another plane so he could go up again.

The official he reported to happened to stutter. When he saw Jimmy coming in, he said:

"W-w-w-where's your p-p-p-plane?"

"The wings came off and I had to jump," replied Jimmy.

The official looked at the open parachute all crumpled up under Jimmy's arm, and said:

"W-w-w-well, d-d-d-did you g-g-get down all right?"

Well! The timer is st-t-t-t-uttering for me to s-s-s-s-stop. So good-night.
