

INTRODUCTION

Lowell Thomas broadcast
for the Literary Digest
Thursday, Oct. 1, 1931.

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1 Good Evening Everybody:
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3 I had rather a hectic time this
4 afternoon. I was between two fires--
5 one fire was the news as it came streaming
6 in and the other was the baseball game.
7 When the World Series is on, things
8 always get a bit disorganized around an
9 office especially if that office has a
10 news ticker. The office boys just don't
11 seem to be able to control themselves
12 when they know the game is being 'ticked
13 off, play by play. They ~~just~~ hang around
14 the ticker, and when they don't they are
15 telling each other what the score is,
16 who made a hit and who slambbed out a
17 home-run.

18 So all afternoon I heard such
19 remarks as "GEE, ST. LOUIS MADE TWO IN
20 THE FIRST" and "WOW SIMMONS HIT A HOMER".

21 Was I annoyed? Well, I was as
22 much interested as those kids and every
23 so often I'd go out there and elbow
24 through the crowd of office boys and
25 porters and stretch my ~~kn~~ neck for a look

at the United ticker, and exciting game.

There's something particularly tense and thrilling in watching the plays as they are ticked off -- STRIKE ONE -- BALL ONE -- BATTER FLIES OUT TO CENTER. It certainly looked like the unexpected when St. Louis by clean straight hitting batted the Mighty Lefty Grove for two runs in the first inning. Then the Athletics scored four in the third, and later on Simmons smacked a homer.

Well, the Athletics, the favorites to win this 1931 World Series, snared the first game by a score of 6 to 2. And tonight Connie Mack is stroking his famous adam's apple with much glee.

1 It looks as if the latest attempt
2 to make an airplane record has failed.
3 *Kingsford-Smith,* The famous Australian flier started
4 out in an attempt to beat the record for
5 a flight from England to Australia.
6 Well, he just seemed to vanish from
7 sight and a good deal of worry was felt.
8 And now comes a cable from the
9 International News Service which states
10 that Kingsford-Smith was forced down
11 near the ^{*Turkish hamlet*} ~~town~~ of Milas in Asia Minor.
12 He was caught in a sandstorm and had to
13 land. This delay makes it seem as if
14 he won't be able to set any new record.
15 The present record, by the way, for
16 the eleven thousand mile sky voyage
17 from England to Australia is eight days
18 twenty-two hours and twenty-five
19 minutes.

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1 There are 300 airplanes in these
2 parts that will have to limit their
3 activity to solid ground, the plain old
4 terra firma -- for a while, at least.
5 They are planes whose owners and pilots
6 don't happen to be licensed in New York
7 state.

8 A ^{N.Y.} law went into effect today which
9 prevents any pilot from taking a ship up
10 unless he has a license. And the boys
11 will have to stay on the ground until they
12 get their flying papers. The New York
13 World-Telegram names some of the pilots
14 who are affected by the new law. One is
15 Bert Acosta, the trans-Atlantic flyer.
16 Another is Roger Wolfe Kahn, the son of
17 Otto Kahn, the financier. And a third is
18 Jack Chapman, eleven-year-old aviator who
19 has made solo flights. He can't get a
20 license until he is 18 years old. So he
21 says now that he guesses he will have to
22 ride a bicycle for the next several years.

23 The new law has made a number of
24 the aviators hot under the collar, and
25 they say they're going to Albany to
protest.

1 In New York City today a lot of
2 folks have been trying to figure out
3 who was to blame for the rain of acid
4 that descended from the sky yesterday.
5 Some say the Navy was to blame, and
6 others say NO, it wasn't the Navy at all.

7 Anyway, a shower of acid fell
8 in a drizzle on the crowds of people and
9 the automobiles in the streets. There
10 were plenty of people and plenty of
11 automobiles, because all this happened
12 right in the middle of the town.

13 Meanwhile, in the sky a warlike
14 spectacle was seen. The giant dirigible,
15 the Los Angeles, went sailing along over
16 the city, and around the big ship a
17 speedy airplane cut capers. As it swept
18 along it left behind ~~it~~ a huge trail of
19 smoke, and that smoke spread through the
20 atmosphere and became a vast dense
21 curtain. The whole thing was an
22 exhibition of how a plane could lay a
23 smoke-screen in time of war to protect
24 a dirigible from attack.

25 And it was out of the smoke-screen

1 that the rain of acid came. It is
2 explained today that sometimes that
3 particular chemical smoke combines with
4 elements in the air, and the change
5 produces hydrochloric acid.

6 The aviator in the smoke-
7 producing plane had been instructed not to
8 lay that heavy curtain too near the
9 dirigible, because the hydrochloric acid
10 in the air might eat through the fabric.
11 That particular burning stuff has a way
12 of biting into cloth.

13 I suppose the dirigible didn't
14 get any of the acid, but the people down
15 in the streets did. It came raining down
16 The tiny drops landed on people's clothes
17 and burned holes in them. On hands and
18 faces it inflicted a stinging sensation.
19 And it burned spots in the upper parts of
20 automobiles. ^{And it did about \$50 worth of damage to mine. My car} There was a small stampede,
21 ~~as~~ the New York Evening Post relates.

22 [^]On 20th Street, between First and
23 Second Avenues, a crowd of children were
24 watching a football game when the rain of
25 acid came down. They gasped and choked

now has a spotted finish

1 and ran home in a hurry.

2 The Captain of the Los Angeles
3 declares that he wasn't responsible for
4 it. He says he was ordered by the Navy
5 Department to take his airship over New
6 York City. He had nothing to do with the
7 smoke-screen, and adds that permission
8 to lay it down was obtained from the
9 New York City authorities.

10 *All of which doesn't mend the*
11 *clothes or take the spots off the*
12 *automobiles.*

1 In Iowa the unemployment situation
2 is being relieved somewhat by old Mr.
3 Gopher. I mean that pestilential crittur
4 something like a prairie dog, which is
5 the Western version of the eastern
6 groundhog.

7 Brother Gopher is a lot smaller
8 than a groundhog, but he operates in
9 much the same way. That is, he operates
10 on your gardens and ^{crops} ~~gardens~~ in general.
11 What a gopher can do to a fine head of
12 lettuce or a big luscious cabbage - that's
13 what makes the farmer's hair turn grey.

14 In Iowa they have a bounty on
15 gophers, a nickel for every one of the
16 pests that you can kill. And so the
17 boys have gone in for gopher hunting. More
18 than twice as many bounties have been paid
19 this year as last. The Associated Press
20 gives this year's gopher crop as thirty-
21 two thousand. At five cents a piece that
22 means \$1600., which has helped quite a
23 few chaps to tide things over.

1 This next bit of news certainly
2 doesn't look anything like depression.
3 It tells us of a huge gain in the ^{total} value
4 of real estate in New York City in the
5 past year -- that is, so many new
6 buildings have been put up that the total
7 value of property which the city
8 represents has made a big increase.

9 The New York World-Telegram gives
10 us a set of figures issued today by the
11 Department of Taxes and Assessments. They
12 tell us that the taxable value of
13 property in the past year has increased
14 by over one billion, 117 million dollars.
15 A large part of this is explained by the
16 fact that a good deal of property has been
17 exempt from taxes for ten years, and that
18 10-year period is up. But nearly half a
19 billion dollars of the increase is
20 accounted for by new buildings which have
21 been put up. For example, there's the
22 Empire-State Building, which is marked
23 down as being worth ^{a whole pile of} ~~42~~ millions ~~dollars~~.

24 And here's an interesting figure.
25 How much do you suppose the American

1 metropolis is worth, just as so much real
2 *I mean Greater New York?*
estate? Well, it is worth over 19 billion
3 296 million dollars.

4 No, those figures don't have any
5 of that lugubrious complaining sound of
6 depression in them. They seem to have
7 the ring of prosperity.
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John C. Krapp.

V-P of Otis
Elevator Company.

Oct. 17, 1931

P. 11

Tall Story
anecdote

INTRO - KNAPP

Now I think I'll call on Mr. Knapp here. He is Mr.

John C. Knapp, Vice-president of the Otis Elevator Company.

He's the man who makes things go up and down, I am going to ask him if he has encountered anything interesting recently in his up and downs. Yes sir, that's the microphone, Mr. Knapp.

It will catch anything you say and send it over a few thousand miles even quicker than your elevators go.

1 Well, Lowell, I guess I'd better
2 be careful what I say, and tell only the
3 truth. I don't want to get caught in
4 anything false or inaccurate, so I'll
5 play safe and tell a Tall Story. Is
6 that O.K.? Fine. Here goes.

7 I was around at the New Waldorf-
8 Astoria this afternoon, at the grand
9 opening. Well, it's amazing how the
10 modern hotel is developing -- and that's
11 no Tall Story.

12 Of course, I was interested in
13 the elevators. The elevator, as we all
14 know, is to those tall buildings what
15 the arteries are to the body -- and
16 that's no tall story either. In fact,
17 the elevator is almost a thinking piece
18 of mechanism. And the skyline of New
19 York City is the result -- of elevators.
20 For instance, in the Empire State Build-
21 ing the order was that the elevators
22 must deliver 15,000 people onto the
23 sidewalks in 30 minutes -- between 5:00
24 and 5:30 every evening.

25 Well, that new Waldorf is the
tallest hotel in the world, and it leads

1 me right into the Tall Story I have in
2 mind. It's one of those whoppers that
3 circulate in that Tall Story Club of
4 which Lowell Thomas is the official
5 scribe or grand giraffe, or something.
6 Yes, this one is a hotel yarn. It
7 concerns one of those old-fashioned
8 hotels, a regular fire-trip in a small
9 town. And it didn't have an elevator.

10 Russell Daub of Erie, Pennsylvania,

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1 relates the experience as his own. Mr.
2 Daub was a guest in that hotel. And it
3 certainly was cold that night. ~~There~~
4 ~~was~~ a fire, ^{broke out.} The old shack started to
5 burn and just kept burning. Mr. Daub
6 was trapped in his room, which was on the
7 top floor. ~~No, as I said, there wasn't~~
8 ~~any elevator that he could take down to~~
9 ~~the ground.~~ And the stairway was choked
10 with smoke and flames. ^{There wasn't any elevator.} What did he do?
11 Well, here's the way he tells it:-

12 "There was a pitcher of water on
13 the dresser. I grabbed it and rushed to
14 the window. I poured the water out in a
15 long stream. Well, it was so darn cold
16 that night that the water froze on its
17 way down, and I slid to the ground on an
18 icicle."

19 Yes, as I said, when a man talks
20 over a microphone and his words can be
21 heard over thousands of miles, he'd
22 better be careful to tell the truth, the
23 whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

24 But Lowell, even our ~~clubs~~
25 elevators don't go high enough for that
Tall Story Club of yours.

CHINA

Well, Mr. Knapp, let's ⁽⁵⁾
push the button and come down to some
plain, sober facts. Here's

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1 ~~Now comes~~, a report of Soviet
2 troops mobilized on the border of
3 Manchuria.

4 Representatives of the
5 International News Service in China
6 asked Marshal Chang, the military
7 Governor of Manchuria, to give them
8 a report on Soviet activities along
9 the border of his province. Ever since
10 the trouble between the Chinese and the
11 Japanese ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ Manchuria there have been
12 rumors about what the Red Army of
13 Russia might do.

14 Marshal Chang sent out
15 telegrams to his military commanders
16 along the border and received a report
17 in reply that twenty thousand Soviet
18 troops are gathered opposite the town
19 of Manchuli, which is near the line
20 separating Manchuria from Russian
21 Siberia. That may be an indication
22 of the interest which the Soviet
23 Government is taking in that row
24 between the Chinese and the Japanese.
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1 Well, poor Mussolini. It's just
2 too bad. He's giving up his job - I
3 mean one of his jobs.

4 The time was not so long ago when
5 the Duce was Minister of about just
6 everything in Italy. He held nearly all
7 of the cabinet posts. He was Minister
8 of War, Minister of Marine, Prime
9 Minister, and so on, down the line.

10 In recent times, however, he
11 has dropped a lot of those jobs and
12 turned them over to other men. ~~Recently~~ ^{Of late}
13 he has been only Prime Minister and
14 Minister of the Interior, and now he
15 isn't going to be Minister of the
16 Interior any more. The report is that
17 he is going to resign that post and
18 turn it over to somebody else. And so
19 that will leave poor Mussolini with
20 only one job. Yes, he won't be anything
21 more than Prime Minister, Duce, Dictator
22 and boss of everything in Italy.

23 But then Mussolini may find a
24 little consolation in the fact that he
25 is now a grandfather. The United Press

1 reports that the Black Shirt Dictator
2 today received a cable from China
3 announcing that he has his first grand-
4 child. His daughter and son-in-law
5 are stationed at Shanghai, where the
6 son-in-law is the Italian Consul.

7 I don't know how Mussolini
8 likes being a grandfather, but I
9 remember how Irvin Cobb took it when he
10 became a grandfather. He was at the
11 Dutch Treat Club in New York and one
12 of the speakers at the luncheon turned
13 to him and asked him how it felt to
14 be a grandfather.

15 Cobb got up with his huge good
16 humor. What he said had all of that
17 whimsical geniality for which the man
18 is famous. "It's all right to be a
19 grandfather", said he, "only it's tough
20 to be married to a grandmother."

21 It was said in such a kindly
22 frolicsome way that everybody roared
23 with laughter.
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1 I don't quite understand the
2 mental processes of this chap who
3 comes along next. But anyway, he was
4 angry, highly indignant, just plain mad.
5 At any rate, a funeral was going down
6 the road at Wadena, Minnesota, and
7 Charles Milbradt, a farmer, started to
8 shoot at the hearse. It appears that
9 Brother Milbradt wanted to attend the
10 funeral. In fact, he wanted to be a
11 pall-bearer, but they turned him down.
12 They said he couldn't be a pall-bearer
13 because he showed up dressed in overalls.
14 It must have been one of those society
15 funerals.

16 Anyway, that made Brother
17 Milbradt angry. He got his gun and as
18 the funeral passed by he opened fire on
19 the hearse. He shot the hearse up quite
20 a bit and then the next thing you know
21 he found himself telling the judge
22 about it. The Associated Press quotes
23 the judge as saying it would be just
24 sixty days for the would-be pall-bearer.
25 Then the sentence was suspended.

1 I'd like to pass along a brief
2 bit of dialogue this evening. It was
3 spoken at Sacramento, California.
4 Governor James Rolph, ~~Junior~~, was
5 asking a few questions of R. A.
6 Vandergrift, the head of the civil
7 service. They were talking about the
8 civil service examination through which
9 traffic policemen were put. Some of
10 the questions didn't seem to have much
11 to do with traffic regulations. In fact,
12 they sounded more like an examination
13 to be taken by a college professor.

14 "I don't see," declared the
15 Governor, "why a man who wants to be a
16 traffic cop should be required to know
17 who was the fifth wife of Henry the 8th."

18 "But, your Honor, that wasn't
19 the question that was asked," expostulated
20 the head of the civil service. "Nobody
21 asked those- would-be traffic cops who
22 was the fifth wife of Henry the 8th. The
23 question went this way: How many wives
24 did King Henry the 8th have -- one, two,
25 three, four, five, or six?"

"Yeah," responded the Governor, "and I'd like to find out why a traffic cop should have to know THAT."

The United Press dispatch on the subject tells us that there was no reply, and I'll leave it to you to figure out the answer, while I say,

SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.