

LOWELL THOMAS' BROADCAST FOR THE LITERARY DIGEST

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 1931

MYSTERY SHIP

GOOD EVENING, EVERYBODY:

There's a mystery of the sea to be told this evening. During the night and early this morning frantic radio calls were received by wireless stations along the Atlantic Coast. They were clumsy and stuttering and full of wild alarm. They told of a ship sinking 30 miles south-southeast of Barnegat Lighthouse off the Jersey Coast.

"TAKING TO THE BOATS", one message said.

"RADIO ROOM FILLING WITH WATER, the call for help went on.

"FIFTEEN PASSENGERS," another message stated, "ARE IN THE LIFEBOATS."

And then, finally, LEAVING NOW, GOODBYE.

According to the United Press, the radio stations that received the messages flashed back the question:-- "What is the name of the ship?" That question was asked repeatedly while the distress calls were being received, but there was no reply.

Boats rushed to the windswept seas to the south-southeast

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of the Barnegat Lighthouse, but they found no trace of a stricken vessel or of passengers in boats. They scoured the sea in all directions but without result.

The mystery deepened. Ship authorities began to suspect that it might be a hoax.

But a late dispatch to the New York World Telegram informs that a U. S. Coast Guard cutter has found a cluster of wreckage in about the position given by the distress calls.

It may be the debris from the sinking ship or it may be merely some other flotsam and jetsam - floating aimlessly on the sea.

# EARTHQUAKE

1 Old Mother Earth did a little *more*  
2 quivvering and shaking and shimmying  
3 today. The seismograph observatory  
4 at Pasadena, California, reports heavy  
5 earth shocks about 7800 miles away.  
6 The earthquake <sup>evidently</sup> has taken place somewhere  
7 out in the Pacific Ocean.

8 According to the International  
9 News Service, the needle danced around  
10 pretty much the way it did when it  
11 recorded the earthquake out in the  
12 Philippine Islands ten days ago.

# ROBBERY

1 There was an attempt of robbery  
2 in New York today and the police came  
3 charging out on the humane mission of  
4 helping one of the robbers. Six men  
5 tried to ~~hold up~~<sup>loot</sup> an uptown branch of  
6 the National City Bank.

7 According to the New York Evening  
8 Post they seem<sup>ed</sup> to be operating  
9 according to a careful plan. But the  
10 beans were spilled when a burglar alarm  
11 went off, ~~and~~<sup>Whereupon</sup> the bandits dashed away.  
12 One of them was cornered by a mob and  
13 the angry citizens were about to ~~take~~<sup>take</sup>  
14 him apart<sup>and watch him tick</sup> when the police<sup>came to the</sup> rescued ~~him~~  
15 and escorted him safely to jail.

TELEGRAM

I can assure the folks down in West Virginia this evening that the Weirton Daily Times is still on the job.

Paul Glover, the city editor, telegraphs me that all say the editorial staff has been hard at work -- although early this morning a fire destroyed the plant of his illustrious sheet.

Such a thing as a fire is nothing to discourage managing editor John Jones. With his newspaper plant a washout he rushed his staff to Wheeling, West Virginia, twenty-nine miles away, and there in the establishment of the Wheeling News they got out the paper today. That's bit time stuff in a small town.

No sir. You can't discourage such a sturdy sheet as the Weirton Daily Times, and this country is full of small town newspapers just that sturdy and resourceful.

# BAN JOHNSON

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1 Baseball men this evening are  
2 talking and reminiscing of the old days.  
3 Ban Johnson is dead and he was one of  
4 the big figures of those <sup>some</sup> old days of  
5 baseball.

6 Byron Bancroft Johnson was a stormy  
7 figure in baseball, a pioneer and a  
8 fighter. He was one of the guiding  
9 spirits in the big <sup>battle</sup> ~~fight~~ that resulted  
10 in the establishment of the American  
11 League. Then he was president of that  
12 league for a generation. He directed  
13 its policies and was one of the important  
14 figures in the bringing ~~up~~ of the  
15 great prosperity of organized baseball.

16 A few years ago he was overthrown.  
17 The coming of Judge <sup>Kenesaw Mountain</sup> Landis as ~~the~~ the  
18 czar of baseball ~~broke~~ his power.  
19 Johnson fought against the new regime,  
20 ~~in baseball~~, but lost out. Since then  
21 he has been in retirement.

22 ~~The International News Service~~  
*I was in Philadelphia today and on the*  
*read in the Philadelphia Bulletin of how Johnson had*  
23 ~~reminds us that he has~~ long been ill;  
24 and ~~drinks~~ tonight it would only be  
25 fitting if he were in some far land

1 listening to the thud of the ball in  
2 the catcher's mitt, listening to the  
3 crack of the bat, the bump of a runner  
4 sliding into second, and the howl of  
5 the mob as the pitcher burns across  
6 a third strike.

7 As a strange coincidence <sup>all the papers</sup> ~~here's~~  
8 <sup>are pointing to</sup> ~~a United Press dispatch that tells of~~  
9 the death of Ernest S. Barnard today.  
10 He succeeded Ban Johnson as president  
11 of the American League at the time when  
12 Johnson was removed from power. Barnard  
13 served as president of the league  
14 right down to date, and he passes from  
15 the scene along with the man whom he  
16 supplanted.

1           And now you bridge players--~~you~~ you  
2 just think twice before you start telling  
3 again about that time when you held the  
4 perfect hand, those 13 trumps.

5           Here's an Associated Press dispatch  
6 which may tend to cast a ~~dark~~ bit of  
7 doubt on those 13 spades, hearts,  
8 diamonds, or clubs.

9           Ely Culbertson, the bridge expert,  
10 is most sceptical on the subject. He  
11 has played plenty of bridge in his  
12 life, and he says he never saw a player  
13 hold one of those perfect hands. The  
14 best hand he's ever seen contained ~~13~~ eleven  
15 trumps. ~~As for~~ As for those 13 trump-  
16 hands, he just ~~shrugs~~ shakes his head  
17 and wonders whether they might not  
18 have been held in the great bridge  
19 tournament staged by the Tall Story  
20 Club.



# PRETZELS

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1 I <sup>we</sup> ~~have~~ a bit of information to  
2 pass along, which is <sup>rather</sup> ~~a bit~~ spicy - I  
3 mean salty.

4 During the year ~~of~~ A. D. 1930, the  
5 people of the forty-eight states  
6 comprising the United States of America,  
7 consumed one billion pretzels.

8 Many people might think that  
9 the pretzel was on the down grade,  
10 but that isn't so. The salty, brown  
11 tid bit is constantly increasing in  
12 favor. In 1930 the American people  
13 consumed eight million pounds more ~~of~~  
14 pretzels than ~~they did~~ in 1925. <sup>To be exact</sup> They  
15 consumed thirty-five million, seven  
16 hundred ninety-six thousand, six hundred  
17 fifty one pounds of pretzels, or nearly  
18 one billion ~~xxxx~~ individual pretzels.

19 The fact is that this great  
20 country of ours is becoming pretzel  
21 minded. Pretzels used to exist for  
22 one purpose only, but now <sup>well known</sup> the <sup>^</sup>pretzel  
23 has widened out its scope. It is used  
24 for many purposes.

25 According to the Philadelphia

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Public Ledger baby cuts his teeth on pretzels. The pretzel is straightened out into a finger-like afternoon tid-bit.

Sometimes it's even like animal crackers. There are all kinds of pretzels, including pretty pretzels.

In other words, the pretzel has become fashionable in the nursery, in boudoirs, at swagger afternoon teas, and even at Sunday School picnics.

And so, henceforth, let no one point the finger of scorn at the lowly pretzel.

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While in Philadelphia today I dropped around to the University of Pennsylvania Museum to take a look at those relics from Mesopotamia - things archeologists have dug up from Ur of the Chaldees where Abraham used to live. They date back to 3500 B. C.

I asked Mr. Horace James, director of the Museum to help me pick out my news item of the day. Did he pick something 5000 years old? He did not! And so I have an army air service report to read to you tonight.

GIRL

It's written in the usual way of routine service reports -- that's why it's funny.

A baby was born in the family of an officer at the Fairfield Air Depot. Major A. L. Snead sent a report of the event to headquarters at Washington. Major Snead is just one hardboiled aviation officer.

Here's the way his bulletin to headquarters read:-  
about the baby!

"A girl (complete with mess kit) was received for service tests at 9:44 P. M. February 10, 1931 by the Fairfield Air Depot Detachment.

"A careful inspection disclosed following unsatisfactory features in the article:

"The fabric of the fuselage is wrinkled in a number of places, and finish is not standard olive drab.

"The landing gear is of very light construction, and it is believed that it would buckle under the stress of a hard landing.

"The navigation lights are both blue and it is considered they will tend to produce considerable confusion and uncertainty

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to other craft in their vicinity." The report goes on - still about the baby.

"Under certain flight conditions this article emits a high pitched noise which would be detrimental to the nerves of those exposed to it for any appreciable time.

"The article is approved, however. It is believed the characteristics complained of are not uncommon to all similar equipment."

This report was received by General James E. Fechet, chief of the air corps. He is still laughing.

1 The Dove of Peace won a big  
2 victory over in India today. [The Indian  
3 Nationalist Congress meeting at the city  
4 of Karachi voted to support Mahatma  
5 Gandhi and his plan for making peace with  
6 the British authorities.

7 ~~The Associated Press tells us~~  
8 ~~that~~ Gandhi won by an overwhelming vote.  
9 And so, he will not starve himself to  
10 death as he threatened to do <sup>yesterday</sup> if the  
11 Nationalist assembly decided against him  
12 and his plan for peace in India.

13 Instead he will go to London as the  
14 principal Hindu delegate at a new  
15 Round-Table Conference on India, which is  
16 to be held at the British Capital.

17 The Associated Press tells us  
18 that Gandhi in London will wear his usual  
19 garb, which consists of a loin cloth.  
20 If he finds the weather and the London fog  
21 a bit chilly he may throw a piece of  
22 cheese-cloth <sup>a piece of baddar</sup> across his shoulders. At  
23 any rate he will appear among the dignities <sup>ar</sup>  
24 of the British Empire clad in the loin-  
25 cloth of the humble Hindu. *And he will  
be attended as usual by the English admiral's  
daughter who cooks the food and is the secretary.*

*In Europe*

1       ^ An ominous word was spoken today,  
2 and that word was--war.

3       Foreign Minister Briand of France  
4 declared that he would fight to the  
5 bitter end <sup>against</sup> the proposed economic  
6 union between Germany and Austria. ~~and~~.  
7 ~~According to the International News~~  
8 ~~Service~~, Briand said it could only lead  
9 to grave trouble and perhaps war.

# GERMANY

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1 In Germany they have what amounts  
2 to a dictatorship tonight.

3 ~~According to The Associated Press~~ *tells*

*that* 4 Chancellor Bruening suspended seven  
5 articles of the German constitution  
6 today, as a move to stamp out the  
7 trouble created by both the Communists  
8 and the Fascists. *R* [The right to hold  
9 public meetings and political  
10 demonstrations and a variety of other  
11 things are for the present held up in  
12 Germany. And this practically amounts  
13 to a Hindenburg dictatorship.

1 <sup>Today I stumbled</sup>  
2 ~~I came~~ across a bit of  
3 information <sup>that</sup> ~~today which~~ gave me a few  
4 ideas on <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ subject about which I  
5 have been pretty vague. The subject  
6 was that Progressive conference down  
7 in Washington <sup>the one that</sup> ~~which~~ took place right  
8 after the adjournment of Congress.  
9 What did it accomplish? What did it  
10 mean?

11 Well, <sup>that's the topic which</sup> ~~the subject~~ is taken  
12 up in an article in this week's  
13 Literary Digest. The Digest editors  
14 quote David Lawrence, Editor of the  
15 United States Daily, as ~~saying~~ saying  
16 that the Progressive pow-wow was an  
17 attempt to drive both parties into  
18 the acceptance of certain Progressive  
19 documents.

20 Mark Sullivan writes in the  
21 New York Herald-Tribune that the  
22 Progressives hope to force the  
23 Democrats into making a nomination for  
24 the Presidency which they, the  
25 Progressives, can support.

The Richmond Times dispatch



1 is of the same opinion and sounds a  
2 note of warning to the Democrats. If  
3 a Democrat is elected, says the  
4 Richmond paper, the Progressives will  
5 say they did it. If the Democrats  
6 lose the Progressives will refuse any  
7 responsibility.

8 The Digest shows that a number  
9 of papers throughout the country hold  
10 that the Progressives did good work  
11 in bringing important economic and  
12 political questions into the limelight  
13 of public discussion. On the other  
14 hand, the Washington Post <sup>tells us that</sup> ~~says~~ the  
15 Progressive conference came to a  
16 lame and impotent conclusion, and the  
17 Chicago Evening Post calls the  
18 Progressive leaders master critics who  
19 have no constructive remedies for the  
20 ills they describe.

21 It looks as though the boys  
22 had their eyes fixed on the big 1932  
23 presidential election. I wonder whether  
24 you will get the same impression <sup>that I did</sup> from  
25 that Digest article?

1           When President Hoover gets back  
2 to Washington on Monday he will face a  
3 political storm that has been brewing  
4 during his trip to the West Indies.

5           The rumor has been floating around  
6 persistently that the President held a  
7 few serious political conferences with  
8 young Teddy Roosevelt, the Governor of  
9 Porto Rico. The report holds that the  
10 President wants the son of the mighty  
11 Rough Rider to be his running mate in  
12 the 1932 election. In other words, he  
13 wants to shelve the Vice-President,  
14 Mr. Curtis, and put young Teddy in  
15 his place.

16           It's only a rumor, but the <sup>Republican</sup> New York  
17 Evening Post reports that Vice\*President  
18 Curtis and his friends are seriously  
19 concerned about it, and that they're  
20 going to ask Mr. Hoover a few questions  
21 when he returns.

22           And then there's another thing that  
23 may worry Mr. Hoover a bit--or again it  
24 may not--probably not.

HOOVER

Joseph Fehr is an attorney at Washington and an authority on the law of the Republic of Switzerland. He points out that according to Swiss law a native of Switzerland can never give up his citizenship - and perhaps never lose his skill as a yodler. He remains a Swiss - and a yodler. Neither can his descendants give up ~~with~~ their citizenship - or yodling. They all remain subject to the laws and regulations of the Alpine Republic. They are technically subject to Swiss taxation and they can also be called upon to yodel in the Swiss Army.

Now genealogists nearly all agree that President Hoover's great grandfather immigrated from the yodeling mountains of Switzerland to Pennsylvania 150 years or so ago. And in the eyes of Swiss law that seems to make his descendants Swiss Citizens, including President Hoover.

And so, according to the United Press, the President may be called upon to pay Swiss taxes; yodel Swiss tunes; shoulder a musket in the Swiss Army, or swab the decks in the Swiss Navy.

Well, that's something to think about. Most of us may

find that we are citizens of somewhere else. Some of us may discover that we are subjects of the King of Siam or the Sultan of Swat.

Maybe over the week-end I will find that I am a citizen of the Gilbert and Sullivan Kingdom of Barataria. Well, we'll see---and meanwhile I'll yodel my old refrain of,

SO LONG UNTIL MONDAY.