

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1930

CONVICTS

Today's Christmas news is about 350 men who are going to have the merriest Christmas they have had in a long time.

The 350 meh are convicts. No, this isn't one of those ~~xxxxi~~ stories about a Merry Christmas in jail. These people are going to do their Christmas celebrating at home.

The Associated Press states that Governor Graves, of Alabama, has announced that 350 long-term men who have distinguished themselves for good behavior in prison, will be given Christmas paroles. They will be released for 15 days and allowed to go wherever they please. Of course that looks like a grand chance but the Governor says every one of the 350 will do the square thing and report back when their time is up.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Here's a question that caught my eye today:-

"When was the first Christmas card sent?" That question is in the New Literary Digest. It's in the weekly Digest Questionnaire. Well, I turned to the article in which the answer is given and I found that the first Christmas card was sent in 1844. An English artist, sent a card to a friend and on it he drew a sketch to symbolize Christmas.

The Digest has a fascinating article on the origin of Christmas customs in general. It quotes from an article by Mildred Blakelock in The Homiletic Review, and goes on to say that the Yule log for example was a pagan custom of the ancient Britons, and that the lights on Christmas trees come ~~fax~~ from an old Swedish custom. If you want to find out the real meaning of charming ceremonies that surround Christmas just turn to your Digest and read this timely article.

## AIRPLANES

Now for a story of a little dispute that arose over the old question of "whose going to ride in - no, not the family car, but the family airplane." According to the Associated Press Mrs. Laura Meyer of Chicago went to court and aksed the judge to maker her husband stop taking joy rides in the family plane. She said the machine didn't belong to him. It was hers. And she wanted to take a few flips in it herself now and then.

With a husband and wife quarreling ufriously you might call that flying machine a "fury plane." But the "fury plane" is something else again. And it's right here in today's news. It's a new British type of fighting plane. A dispatch to the New York Sun states that it has tremendous speed and tremendous ~~xxxxxxxx~~ climbing power - also tremendous fighting power. It will be used to attack bombers, and from the description it seems to deserve the name of "fury plane."

LINDBERGH

By the way, Colonel Lindbergh's new plane caught fire today. According to the International News Service Lindbergh put it out easily - his wife remaining in the plane all the time. The plane was on the ground.



CORNWALLIS

And here comes a unusual item:- Down in the Virginia House of Delegates a proposal has been made to erect a monument to Revolutionary War heroes. No, not heroes of Washington's army. The idea is to commemorate the bravery of the British army under General Cornwallis, the army that was cornered and surrendered at Yorktown. What a difference a hundred years makes!.

1 ~~And~~ <sup>next</sup> this is the story of a little  
2 white hen that got tired of commonplace  
3 barnyard life and turned hobo. The  
4 United Press tells us that trainmen out  
5 in Nebraska saw her come wandering down  
6 the lane from a farm and she did just  
7 what any other hobo does--she rode the  
8 rods. She just perched herself on the  
9 rods, ~~and~~ <sup>as</sup> the train pulled out. But  
10 apparently a tramp's life didn't have  
11 any permanent charms for that little  
12 white hen. At Inland, Nebraska, she  
13 hopped off the rods and scampered over  
14 to a chicken farm. And she made herself  
15 at home and hasn't shown any more  
16 inclination to start out on the hobo  
17 trail again. Oh, but when they get  
18 that wanderlust they just <sup>can't</sup> stay in one  
19 place for long. So they'd better keep  
20 their eye on that little white hen or like  
21 the rest of us shall <sup>want to</sup> be off to Florida  
22 or California or Canada on a winter holiday.  
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## VOLCANO

In my wanderings up and down the Earth the Fates have decreed that I live in some strange places. Last night I mentioned the steaming heat of the Mergui Islands in the Bay of Bengal. And at one time I dwelled for a while in the so-called no-man's-land of Central Asia in the Afghan mountains.

All of which seems mighty tame beside this next item. It's about a man who is going to live for two months inside the crater of a live volcano! When I was a youngster I too happened to live for a few years in the ~~xxxx~~ crater of a volcano. But it was extinct - and of course that doesn't count. But here is a man, Father Bernard Hubbard, head of the Department of Geology of the University of Santa Barbara, California, who is casually going to make his home right in an active volcano where the Central heating plant in his cellar will be real fire and brimstone.

The name of this volcano is Aniachak and it is said to be the world's largest active crater. It is situated up north on the Alaskan peninsula. So you see the good Father is headed for one place that isn't recommended in that alluring new Literary Digest Travel Number. But Father Hubbard says he prefers his

fire and brimstone in this world rather than in the next.

Meanwhile, out in Java, another active volcano got busy today. Merapi is the name of it, and Merapi had been slumbering peacefully ~~for~~ and politely for some 80 years. Now, however, the Associated Press states that the mountain is spouting fire again. Clouds of black smoke are belching from the summit, and every second or so out of the smoke dart tremendous flashes of fire. A hundred lives have been snuffed out and the Javanese are said to be fleeing wildly through the darkness just as the inhabitants of Pompeii fled some 2000 years ago.



ENGLAND

From Java let's take the new Dutch mail plane that flies across Asia to Europe.

In London they are having a fight in Parliament about the right of the working man to go on strike. At present England has a law directed against strikes, especially general strikes. But the Labor Government wants that changed. A London dispatch to the New York Evening Post states that Prime Minister MacDonald is attempting to put through a bill to legalize all kinds of strikes so long as they are peaceable; all except general strikes for purely political purposes. The whole matter is really up to the Liberals in Parliament. The Labor party has to depend upon the Liberals, because the Liberals hold the balance of power.

## VATICAN

Here's another one of those startling combinations of the new and the old cropping into the news. The Vatican over in Rome has ordered three helicopters. Well, the helicopter, as you know, is the up-to-the-minute, new-fangled thing in aviation. And the Vatican, as you know, stands for all that is old and historic. The Pope wanted ~~xx~~ to have an aviation field in the Vatican grounds, but, according to the New York Times, there wasn't enough room for an ordinary airplane to take-off or land. The Autogyro, which the New York Times calls a species of helicopter, can go almost straight up or sink slowly down just about the way a parachute does. The Autogyro doesn't need any large landing field. And so, hovering above the historic Vatican and the dome of St. Peter's, built and decorated by Raphael and Michelangelo, those weird planes that look like flying windmills will soon be seen drifting here and there. If St. Peter and Michelangelo are looking down from the cloud railing in Heaven, won't they get a thrill out of that?

1 I found my News Item of the Day in  
 2 a peculiar way. I ran across Herb Roth,  
 3 the well-known <sup>New York World</sup> ~~newspaper~~ artist, and  
 4 he was at his desk sketching out a  
 5 drawing with hasty, excited strokes.

6 "I can just see how this thing  
 7 occurred," said Herb. "And what a  
 8 fight it must have been!"

9 Herb wanted to tell me a story, and  
 10 he was doing it by drawing a picture,  
 11 and the picture showed a ~~large~~ savage  
 12 struggle between a tiger and a python.  
 13 It was based on a United Press dispatch  
 14 from Bombay which told how a huge <sup>king</sup> python  
 15 got into a ~~struggle~~ clinch with a <sup>Royal</sup> Bengal  
 16 tiger. And that certainly must have  
 17 been ~~gentle fun~~ <sup>real battle Royal if there ever was one.</sup>

18 The dispatch tells how they found  
 19 the giant python, nearly 29 feet long  
 20 and 3 feet in girth, just killed in the  
 21 jungle. All over that snake were the  
 22 savage marks of a tiger's claws. And  
 23 it was torn by a tiger's teeth. The  
 24 grass and weeds all <sup>around</sup> ~~over~~ had been beaten  
 25 flat in the titanic struggle, and the



ground was covered with tiger's fur. That huge python had probably dropped from a tree just wrapped himself around Mr. Tiger, and then the fight was on.

Well, you can work out the details of that battle for yourself. It's a great chance to use your imagination. Herb used his alright in that picture he was drawing, and I'm going to see if I can't get him to finish it up for me so I can hang it in my trophy room.



## DEER

An interesting lot of letters have been coming in lately from folks, telling me about curious things, bits of news that have never been printed, or that never get beyond the local papers. For instance, here's a hunting story from N.C. Hons, of Youngwood, Pennsylvania. Mr. Hons tells how his friend George Himelright, went on a deer hunt. George had a friend along and they were sitting on a stump when a fine big doe went by.

"That's tough," said George, "now if that was a buck we'd get him easy."

Well, George kept right on wishing that a buck would come along. Suddenly he got his wish -- but not the way he wanted. A buck came tearing through the brush and bolted out into the clearing. That buck was in a hurry. He was traveling so fast that he couldn't put on the brakes and turn when he saw George sitting there right in his way. The buck took one flying leap. Did he make it? No. He landed right on top of George. His forefeet hit George on the head. His hind feet

1 hit George in the middle of the back.  
2 George went sprawling from that stump,  
3 and as he fell he heard the birdies  
4 twittering and saw plenty of stars.

5           What happened to the buck? Well,  
6 he's probably going yet.

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LITERARY DIGEST

The Literary Digest this week quotes from the American Lumberman on the present economic situation. Here's what it says: "All we need is mass consumption of what we have made by mass production."

And here's a line which the Digest Topics in Brief Page that quotes, "Judge": "A magazine is conducting a contest to learn which are the twelve greatest dates in history. 13,000 contestants, we predict, will start their list 'Anthony's date with Cleopatra'".

Those winter colds in the head come in for a wise crack which the Digest quotes from the Florence Herald, of Florence, Alabama. It says: "Everybody has a guaranteed cure for a cold - that is everybody except the doctor."

## PODUNK

Well, if we follow the advice of this week's Winter Travel number of the Literary Digest we will have a choice of a lot of interesting places to visit. But there is one place we won't go - and that's to Podunk. Because there ain't no such place as Podunk. At any rate, an article in the New York Evening Sun says that a search of the United States Postal guide shows that Podunk is purely an imaginary place. It's just a burlesque name used to indicate a one horse town. But, say, I'd swear I've been in Podunk many a time. Where did the word come from? Well, Podunk is the name of an Indian tribe, and you will find many a Big Chief - Rain-in-the-Face and many a little squaw Spotted Fawn among the Podunks. And down on Long Island there's a town, not Podunk but Potunk, and that's not much better.



## REPORTERS

It's a well known saying that you seldom hear newspaper men speak well about their own profession. A reporter will usually tell you what a sad lot reporters are. But here comes my friend Dr. John Finley, Associate Editor of the "New York Times, telling us what fine fellows reporters are.

Then he adds that they are the real historians of the present day. Well, I for one have plenty to thank the reporters for. Here I am broadcasting the news every night, the news which reporters are sending in from all parts of the world. Their names are not usually signed to the information they collect. For the most part they are just nameless, silent workers collecting the news for all of us.

Dr. Finley says the reporters will be on the job until the last reporter has filed his last copy, and the last editor has made his last comment, until the last edition has gone to press and until Gabriel's trumpet has been heard by radio around the earth. Well, I think I'll finish with that bit of Dr. Finley's eloquence, but I'll be back tomorrow evening with more

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news for you, that is, I will unless Gabriel surprises us by slipping up to the microphone ahead of me and sending out that trumpet blast. So, unless you hear from Gabriel in the meantime,

SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.