

LOWELL THOMAS BROADCAST FOR THE LITERARY DIGEST

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1931

CHINCHOW

( Well, the old world has been celebrating Christmas in the same old way. Why, they had a merry Christmas even in Chinchow. Yes, in that troubled and much-discussed city in Manchuria which is the bone of contention between the fighting armies of China and Japan.

The forces of the Mikado are advancing against the city. The Chinese defenders are preparing to make a last desperate stand. The sound of machine-gun and cannon fire at close quarters is expected at any minute.

Within the walls of Chinchow is a small colony of foreigners -- Europeans and Americans -- and it is they who celebrated a really merry Christmas today in Chinchow.)

Both the Japanese and Chinese sent presents to that tiny foreign colony. The Christmas trees and also a supply of cakes were contributed by none other than Marshall Chang Hsueh-Liang, former warlord of Manchuria, and commander of the Chinese defenders.

The clouds of war hang low, but just the same a merry Christmas was celebrated today, in Chinchow.

1 In Washington skepticism is expressed  
2 concerning the Japanese argument that  
3 their military movements in Manchuria  
4 are necessary. The Japanese declare  
5 that the Chinese are preparing to take  
6 the offensive, and so the soldiers of  
7 the Mikado have to do something to  
8 meet the Chinese advance.

9 The International News Service wires  
10 that the American ambassador at Tokio  
11 doesn't support the Japanese contention  
12 at all. The American diplomatic officials  
13 say they find no reason to believe that  
14 the Chinese are preparing to take ~~the~~ any kind  
15 of offensive.

## RAILROADS

Well, it's practically here, that  
increase of railroad rates.

Page 3

1 There is going to be an increase of  
2 ~~railroad~~ freight rates, beginning  
3 January 4th.

4 Not long ago the Interstate Commerce  
5 Commission told the railroads they could  
6 increase freight rates on certain  
7 classes of merchandise. <sup>And now the commission says the increase can begin on</sup> Railroad <sup>Jan. 4th</sup>  
8 executives have decided to take  
9 advantage of the permission.

10 The International News Service  
11 declares that on certain kinds of  
12 products the freight will go up three  
13 dollars a car, and in some cases four  
14 dollars. ~~a car.~~

15 The increased rates ~~■~~ will remain in  
16 effect until March. Then they <sup>rates</sup> will go  
17 back to the old scale, unless steps are  
18 taken to renew the increase. The new  
19 rates are permitted for only a  
20 temporary period.

21  
22 Well, I suppose you are saying,  
23 surely there can't be much news today.  
24 As a matter of fact there isn't. But  
25 let's explore a bit and see what we can find.

# TAXES

About the only thing resembling news is

~~Here's~~ a sketch of the general outline of the Democratic tax program.

The Democrats in Congress are ~~opposed~~ opposed to the increased taxes suggested by President Hoover. They are getting up a taxation program of their own, and the Associated Press describes it something like this: It opposes lowering present income-tax exemptions. That is, the Democrats do not intend to put a tax on the small incomes that do not pay any taxes now.

The Democratic idea is to put the heavy taxes on the bigger incomes, and also to levy an inheritance tax. ~~It is~~ <sup>The Democrats</sup> ~~are~~ also opposed to a general sales tax.

They ~~Democrats~~ think ~~that~~ there may be some kind of special tax put on a few non-essentials, such as amusements. But in general they are against slapping a tax on ~~stuff~~ <sup>articles</sup> sold across the counter. Nor do the Democrats think it is necessary to raise as much money as President Hoover's plan calls for. They think that part of the deficit can be

1 tided over by short-term notes, so  
2 that it won't be necessary to hit people  
3 quite so hard with taxes right now.

4 This, at any rate, is a <sup>Christmas</sup> forecast of  
5 the general outlines of the program  
6 which the Democrats in Congress will  
7 present in opposition to the President's  
8 plan for increased taxes.

1 I don't suppose it makes much  
2 difference whether Santa Claus appears  
3 in person before the young folks, right  
4 before their astonished eyes, on  
5 Christmas morning. Just so long as he  
6 leaves something, ~~why~~ that's his real ~~ly~~  
7 ~~important~~ job.

8 But just the same, there were a  
9 couple of very young people at the White  
10 House who got quite a thrill this  
11 morning. They were the ~~the~~ Presidential  
12 grandchildren, Peter and Peggy Ann. The  
13 International News Service relates how  
14 they were having breakfast when there was  
15 a sudden commotion, and Santa Claus put  
16 in a dramatic appearance. He came in  
17 the approved fashion, down the chimney.

18 Good Kris Kringle asked Peggy Ann  
19 whether she had been a good girl, and she  
20 answered with an enthusiastic YES. In  
21 response to a similar question, Peter  
22 assured the Saint that he had been a  
23 good boy, although not quite so  
24 emphatically. He declared that he  
25 had been reasonably good -- about as

1 good as you can expect.

2 Santa Claus seemed to be well enough  
3 pleased, and left a bag of good things  
4 for the two youngsters.

5 *At any ~~o~~ rate Santa clause actually*  
6 *came down the chimney at the White House.*

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1           One of the most interesting  
2 Christmas celebrations in the country  
3 was staged today way down South in  
4 Georgia.

5           Each year on Christmas there is a  
6 gathering of old negroes of slavery days,  
7 men and women who had been slaves, in  
8 those distant days before the war. There  
9 is a society called Ex-Slave Association  
10 and it staged the Christmas gathering of  
11 the former slaves in Atlanta.

12           In telling the story the Associated  
13 Press mentions the rolling strains of  
14 spirituals and cotton-patch songs --  
15 "Swing Low Sweet Chariot, Char-re-ot,  
16 a comin' fur to carry me home."

17           The old ex-slaves admit that it  
18 won't be long before they will be crossing  
19 the Jordan, but meanwhile Christmas is  
20 Christmas, "caws dere's coons in de swamps,  
21 possums in de trees, ~~water in de~~ <sup>yams in de</sup> ground."

22           It's Christmas in Georgia and the  
23 old darkies are goodtimin', yes, having  
24 a mighty good time.

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1           ~~I know you've been hearing that~~  
2 ~~fine old tune a dozen times this~~  
3 ~~Christmas season.~~ No Yuletide is  
4 complete without "Silent Night". That  
5 lovely old song is one of the prime  
6 favorites of the great day when Christmas  
7 ~~xx~~ trees shed their mellow glow, and  
8 millions of children all over the world  
9 laugh their loudest. And so let's  
10 give thanks to the mice.

11           I mean the mice that ate through  
12 the bellows of <sup>Frahner</sup> Franz Gruber's organ.  
13 One hundred thirteen years ago Franz  
14 was the choir master of a quaint church  
15 in a sleepy old town among the hills of  
16 Austria. Franz was proud of his organ,  
17 although it wasn't new. No, it was a  
18 venerable and perhaps somewhat  
19 decrepit instrument.

20           Anyway, the mice were in it.  
21 They ate through the bellows and not a  
22 peep of music could Franz extract from  
23 the instrument. This was somewhat  
24 distressing at Christmas time. It was  
25 all the more distressing because Franz

1 Gruber's good friend, the assistant  
2 priest, came to him ~~x~~ in a great hurry.

3 "Franz", cried the assistant  
4 priest, "you must compose a melody  
5 at once. Christmas is here. I have just  
6 written verses for a Christmas carol.  
7 ~~xx~~ You must set them to music. Go to  
8 your organ and compose a tune."

9 The story is told in the current  
10 issues, the Christmas number of the  
11 Literary Digest. The Digest relates  
12 that Franz read the verses ~~xxx~~ that  
13 his friend had composed. They were  
14 those familiar words of "Silent Night".

15 Franz Gruber was impressed.  
16 He felt an immediate impulse to hurry  
17 to his organ and play music for those  
18 verses his friend had written. But what  
19 ~~xx~~ good would it do for him to go to  
20 his organ? Those accursed mice had  
21 eaten the bellows, and the organ would  
22 not play.

23 You can picture Franz tearing  
24 his musician's hair. What a misfortune.  
25 And yet, we perhaps can thank those mice

1 for the fact that we have that lovely  
2 Christmas carol "Silent Night."

3 Franz~~z~~ couldn't compose the music on  
4 his organ. All he could do was sit  
5 down and write the song for ~~these~~  
6 two ~~voices~~ and a chorus, accompanied  
7 by a guitar. And that may be why the  
8 great old song is so tender and lyric.  
9 If Franz had composed it for the organ,  
10 it would probably have turned into  
11 something more solemn and stately. As  
12 it was, he had only / ~~xxxxxxx~~ <sup>voices</sup> and a guitar,  
13 and that means something sentimental  
14 and sweet.

15 The Literary Digest goes on to  
16 quote an article in the Homiletic  
17 Review which relates that the Christmas  
18 carol~~s~~ composed under such curious  
19 circumstances, almost ~~xxxxxxx~~ instantly  
20 spread far and wide.

21 A world traveled German missionary  
22 tells how it was sung to him in  
23 Hindustanee, at the foot of the Himalayas.  
24 He heard negroes sing it on the Zambezi.  
25 In the Sudan the Arab boys serenaded

1 him with the familiar homeland  
2 strains of "Stille Nacht", and today  
3 on this Christmas of 1931, there is  
4 no other melody heard half so widely  
5 over the vast spaces of continents  
6 and oceans.

7           So let's be thankful to the  
8 mice that ate through the bellows of  
9 Franz Gruber's organ.

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1 It looks as though an explorer might  
2 have discovered modern descendants of the  
3 Queen of Sheba. At any rate, that's one  
4 possible theory.

5 Bertram Thomas, an English explorer,  
6 has arrived in New York from the barren  
7 deserts of inner Arabia, and he tells a  
8 reporter of the New York ~~Times~~ <sup>Herald-Tribune</sup> ~~American~~  
9 of an adventurous trip he made into the  
10 Rub Al Khali, <sup>desert,</sup> which is deep in the  
11 forbidding wastes of Arabia.

12 He started out on a desert journey  
13 of 900 miles. He took 43 camels with  
14 him. He had only 17 left when he  
15 returned. All the time he was  
16 threatened with death at the hands of  
17 the roving nomads of the desert. The  
18 party of Arabs he took with him  
19 deserted -- all save one hardy Sheik,  
20 and the Sheik's son.

21 Well, it was in the middle of that  
22 wild Rub Al Khali desert that Bertram  
23 Thomas came to a mountainous region that  
24 he believes may be the lost <sup>biblical</sup> province of  
25 Ophir. And among those craggy hills he

1 discovered a primitive people, who  
2 still live in caves. They have a  
3 strange religion. It is blood ~~and~~  
4 worship. They are polygamists. When  
5 a man marries he receives a dowry of a  
6 certain number of cows. If he wants to  
7 divorce his wife, all he has to do is to  
8 ~~give~~ give back half the number of cows.  
9 And Bertram Thomas believes that these  
10 strange cave-dwelling tribesmen may be  
11 descendants of the people over whom the  
12 Queen of Sheba ruled.

4  
13 And now the explorer is on  
14 American shores to tell of his strange  
15 journeys thru Land of Frank's incense and  
16 myrrh.

# FLOODS

1 *Those*  
2 <sup>^</sup>Floods are still raging in northern  
3 Mississippi. The Tallahatchie River is  
4 still running over its banks, and a  
5 large section is submerged beneath the  
6 swirling waters.

7 State authorities sent more than 400  
8 convicts today to help in the desperate  
9 emergency work of trying to repair  
10 broken levees.

11 The International News Service  
12 reports that it is still raining  
13 pitchforks, and <sup>the downpour</sup> ~~that~~ has made things  
14 worse in the flooded sections.

15 The towns of Glendora and Sumner are  
16 flooded, and any folks who were abroad  
17 today did their Christmas traveling in  
18 boats.  
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1 Out in the Hawaiian Islands the  
2 famous volcano Mount Kilauea kept  
3 erupting all day. The historic  
4 mountain spent a violent Christmas.  
5 Flames have been spurting 200 feet above  
6 the summit. In the crater is a pit  
7 called "The House of Everlasting Fire."  
8 The floor of the pit is filling up with  
9 molten lava. And new fountains of  
10 liquid fire are pouring from the  
11 infernal depths of "The House of  
12 Everlasting Fire."

13 The International News Service makes  
14 the comment that <sup>ed</sup>renown old Kilauea  
15 behaved more <sup>as if it were</sup>~~appropriately for~~ the  
16 Fourth of July, than ~~for~~ Christmas.



1 In Chicago the District Attorney's  
2 office was told of a curious case  
3 observed by the Postoffice Department.  
4 There was a man who was receiving a huge  
5 number of letters from women. It was  
6 very peculiar, and an investigation was  
7 made. They found the man was a college  
8 student, 19 years old. His name is ~~Sheldon Kline~~  
9 Sheldon Kline, and he says his favorite  
10 study is psychology. He was making a  
11 special study of the psychology of  
12 women. He was doing it by mail. He  
13 made love to 100 women by mail -- all  
14 for Science ~~and~~ sake, he claims.

15 And he declares that he has learned  
16 a lot from the scores and scores of  
17 love letters he received -- long love  
18 letters, red-hot love letters.

19 The Associated Press passes along  
20 some of the conclusions brought out by  
21 the love-letter campaign.

22 "Any woman," declared Kline, "will  
23 listen to a hard-luck story, but  
24 blondes ~~are~~ <sup>the</sup> are more sympathetic.

25 "All women like to think the man paying

1 them attention is handsome. <sup>He</sup> When women  
2 are at loss for words of romantic  
3 endearment, they ~~snap up~~ <sup>coo</sup> the banal  
4 endearments of popular songs."

5 Kline represented himself as a tea  
6 planter from India. He says that's  
7 the sort of thing that goes big with  
8 the girls -- far-away romance. He  
9 explains that most women are bored to  
10 death with the routine of their lives  
11 and want to break away in imagination.

12 His final bit of ~~ickickickick~~  
13 philosophy is that love is the only  
14 illusion that women won't surrender.

15 *And more power to them I say.*

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# COLLAR BUTTON

(1)

1 Well, there's one thing of which we  
2 can be sure -- Edson J. Cheever, of New  
3 Hampton, New Hampshire, did not get a  
4 collar button for Christmas today.

5 The Associated Press puts Edson on  
6 record as the champion long-distance  
7 collar-button owner. Back in 1887  
8 somebody made him a Christmas present of  
9 a gold collar button. That was 44 years  
10 ago. Edson still has it, and wears it  
11 every day. And he hopes to be still  
12 wearing it <sup>on</sup> Christmas Day 44 years hence.

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FAMILY

In Chicago there's a family that celebrated not only Christmas today, but also three birthdays. Elmer Oest was born on Christmas. His wife Rosa also was born on Christmas. And, adds the International News Service, their daughter Shirley, was born on Christmas, and that seems to make it unanimous.

And talking about unanimity, the editors of the Literary Digest, and the Voice of the Literary Digest, are unanimous in hoping that you have enjoyed a Merry Christmas, and,

SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.