

LOWELL THOMAS BROADCAST FOR THE LITERARY DIGEST

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1931

ROCKNE

GOOD EVENING, EVERYBODY:

There is one piece of news this evening that's first and foremost - and it's bad news, tragic news.

Knute Rockne, the famous football coach of Notre Dame University, was killed this afternoon - killed in an airplane crash. There were eight men in the plane, and there are no survivors. All perished. Six of them were passengers.

According to the International News Service, the machine was a regular passenger and mail transport plane. It started out from Kansas City for Los Angeles. It fell in a farmer's field near Bazaar, Kansas, a few miles from Emporia.

The United Press wires that the farmer in whose field the plane fell says there

1 was an explosion aboard. He was
2 watching the big bus, which was flying
3 ^{and fighting its way thru storm and fog.} low, ~~and~~ He heard the sound of an
4 explosion, ~~and~~ Then he saw the ship
5 tumble to earth. Members of the farmer's
6 family were attracted by the echoing
7 noise of that something which blew up
8 aboard the plane. All hurried to the
9 scene of the wreck, ready to help the
10 survivors. But there were no survivors.
11 And thus in sudden and dramatic fashion
12 passes one of the foremost figures of
13 American sport.

14 I don't have to repeat the story
15 of Rockne's fame. It has been told over
16 and over; how he was a poor immigrant
17 boy from Norway and worked his way through
18 Notre Dame; how he played on the football
19 team and became a star, and then how he
20 won world wide fame as the coach of those
21 powerful Notre Dame Elevens which year
22 after year swept through other teams
23 like a ^{tornado.} ~~bull through a corn field.~~ There'll
24 never be another Rockne coached Eleven,
25 and there is a sense of tragic ~~XXXXXX~~

1 mourning on the campus of South Bend
2 and in fact throughout the country — *grief*
3 for ~~the~~ ^a man who was one of the square
4 shooting, clean cut, and most lovable
5 figures of our time.

6 From Central America too comes a
7 tale of disaster.

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EARTHQUAKE

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1 Tonight the capital of the
2 Republic of Nicaragua lies in ruins. The
3 earth shook and houses toppled. The
4 city is Managua, one of those beautiful,
5 old world capitals in Latin America.

6 ~~The International News Service~~
7 ~~informs us that~~ The earthquake did
8 huge damage. Communications are broken
9 down. Both the Navy and State Departments
10 at Washington are trying to get a wire
11 through to the small body of Marines
12 that are still stationed in Nicaragua.
13 President Hoover has instructed the Red
14 Cross to send such relief as may be
15 needed in the stricken city.

16 The United Press sends in a
17 dispatch that ^{tonight} the ruins of Managua
18 are on fire. Flames broke out right
19 after the earthquake. ~~look place.~~

20 A late dispatch ~~to~~ the
21 International News Service states that
22 between ~~three~~ ^{four} and ~~four~~ ^{five} hundred people
23 were killed, ^{and 2 thousand or more injured.} It adds that the American
24 Marines are helping ~~to~~ fight the flames
25 and ~~to aid~~ ^{assist} the injured.

GOLD

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But here's some better news.

1 There's a wild gold rush ~~down~~ in
2 the Mexican state of Sinaloa. Rumors
3 have been reaching Mexico City for a
4 week telling of a stampede among the
5 peons along the wild western slope^s of
6 the Sierra Madre mountains.

7 And now the man who says he's one
8 of the discoverers of the gold field
9 has appeared and told his story.
10 According to the Associated Press, he's
11 Manuel Llantada. He was a village
12 grocery ~~store~~ clerk and now he says he's
13 a millionaire several times over.

14 One day a friend dropped in and
15 showed Llantada a handful of shiny
16 nuggets which he'd picked up at the
17 foot of El Tambor Mountain. Then
18 Llantada and his friend went out to the
19 mountain together and found nuggets in
20 the canyons as big as small onions.

21 The gold rush began immediately.
22 Hundreds of poverty stricken peons
23 stampeded to stake their claims. 33,000
24 claims are said to have been laid out
25 and a boom town has come into existence

1 at the base of Mount Tambor. Nobody
2 was left on the farms and food ran short.
3 There was acute distress, but still
4 the miners, crazed by gold, thought
5 of nothing but their quest for the
6 yellow metal.

7 This, at any rate, is the rumor
8 which comes from the remote wilderness
9 of the Sierra Madre mountains. And it
10 may be true.

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COTTON

And here's a dispatch that will sound good to the folks down south. I mean in our own South.

The Chicago Herald Examiner says today that it has learned of a big plan to help the cotton growers of the South and support the price of cotton. The plan is said to have originated with William Wrigley Jr. of Chicago and a group of other mid-western capitalists.

The Associated Press states that while the precise details of the scheme are not announced, one feature will be the buying up and holding of huge quantities of baled cotton which is now a drug on the world's markets.

Well, anything to help the price of cotton will be greatly welcomed by the boys - down where the cotton blossoms grow.

1 And after that one comes a bit
2 of news that will sound good ~~to~~ not
3 only ^{to} the boys who grow cotton, but also ~~to~~
4 those who grow wheat and corn; likewise
5 the lads that run stores and do almost
6 any kind of work. It is, that ~~the~~ Uncle Sam
7 ~~Government~~ does not intend to increase
8 taxes.

9 According to the Associated
10 Press, Republican Leader, Senator
11 Watson talked with President Hoover
12 today at the White House about the
13 tax situation. Later on Senator Watson
14 told the reporters that he was
15 unalterably opposed to any increase in
16 taxation.

17 President Hoover added his voice
18 to Senator Watson's and declared
19 there would be no increase in taxes
20 provided Congress will hold down the
21 expenses of the government.
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MYSTERY

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1 Get out your pencils now, ^{all} you amateur
2 sleuths, and start ~~to~~ figuring. Because
3 here comes a puzzle which certainly seems
4 to be the quintessence of all that's
5 wild and weird.

6 Near San Gabriel, California, Jim
7 Cash, a Chinaman, was found slumped over
8 the steering wheel of his car. He was
9 unconscious and died.

10 According to the United Press, there
11 was a perforated box in the rear seat of
12 the car. In the box was a live rattle-
13 snake. The mouth of the rattlesnake
14 was sewed together with a string.

15 The Associated Press adds the
16 detail that there was a small mark on
17 the thumb of the Chinaman which may have
18 ~~been~~ been caused by the rattler's fangs.

19 Well, try to ~~figure~~ figure it out for
20 yourselves. And perhaps that fantastic
21 mystery will make a good situation for
22 that mystery story you're thinking about
23 writing.

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ACCIDENTS

1 Now comes a loud shout of
2 "Fore" - wham - ouch, my head.
3 Meaning that somebody got socked on
4 the head with a golf ball. It
5 happens on the best regulated golf
6 courses.

7 This distressing little scene
8 comes to mind as we look over a set of
9 figures issued by the Aetna Life
10 Insurance Company. The figures
11 analyze thousands of accidents that
12 have happened during the past nine
13 years - that is, accidents on which
14 the Aetna Company paid claims.

15 It is discovered that five
16 times as many people are hurt while
17 playing at sports and general recreation
18 ~~than~~ ~~those that~~ ^{as} are injured in
19 railroad, street car, elevated, subway
20 and steamship accidents. More than
21 twice as many claims were paid to
22 policy holders who got banged up a bit
23 while playing baseball than to ~~those~~ ^{Folks}
24 ~~who were~~ hurt in street car accidents.

25 It is a well known fact that

1 if you are dancing you'd better watch
2 your step and keep off your partner's
3 corns. You had also better look out
4 for accidents. ~~while dancing.~~ Those
5 insurance figures show that more
6 persons encounter accidents while
7 dancing than while riding in subways.

8 I suppose those ball room
9 accidents come when some fellow dances
10 once too often with a tough guy's
11 girl.

12 And then those figures given
13 out by the Aetna Life Insurance Company
14 go on to illustrate the perils of the
15 ancient and royal Scotch ^{til} game.

16 More people are damaged in one
17 way or another while playing golf than
18 while riding on railroad trains. Many
19 a golfer has been clipped on the "boco"
20 by a vagrant golf ball. Many a golfer
21 has seen his wife leap high into the
22 air when smacked upon the ankle. Many
23 a man has seen his mother-in-law swatted
24 in the middle of the back and heard
25 her let out a wail of rage and pain.

Yes, yes, such are the ^{and} perils
of golfing.

1 The political situation in
2 Europe is eased up a bit this evening.
3 Foreign Minister Curtius of Germany
4 announced today that the German Government
5 is accepting the proposals made by Foreign
6 Secretary Henderson of Great Britain -
7 namely that Germany submit her plan of
8 a Customs Union between Germany and
9 Austria to the League of Nations. ~~And~~
10 ~~that's good news.~~

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SUICIDE

(5)

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1 Now comes a funny story about *an exceedingly*
2 ~~suicide~~ ^{mournful topic} about people who're ~~am~~ tired of
3 life and want to end it all.

4 Over in Berlin a society was formed
5 to combat suicide. The idea was to help
6 ~~despondent~~ despondent people, to cheer them
7 up and persuade them that life was worth
8 living after all. The society was active
9 and energetic and went to work in a
10 big bustling way. The New York Evening
11 Post informs us that one strange and
12 bewildering result of its labors was a
13 large increase in the number of people
14 who yearned to hang, shoot, or drown
15 themselves. They came to the society
16 in droves.

17 And the society did very effective
18 work in convincing these ~~despairing~~
19 ones that they ought to go on living.
20 The society gave them good advice,
21 encouragement, ~~inspiration~~ inspiration, and
22 also, in most cases, some money.

23 *ah,* That was the magic charm. Pretty
24 soon the society discovered that it was
25 ~~in~~ in financial straits because of all

1 those people whom it was saving from
2 self destruction; and the idea began to
3 seep in that most of the despairing ones
4 were just coming around for a little
5 cash, change, mazuma, pfennigs, marks;-
6 anything, in fact, from dollars to rupees.

7 So now the society is keeping on
8 with its work as bravely as ever. But
9 it's handing out advice instead of money.
10 And lo and behold! the number of people
11 who're thinking about suicide has decreased
12 in an astonishing way.

13 What they should have done with
14 those would-be suicides, ^{was this: they ~~to~~ should have} ~~would have been~~
15 ~~to~~ hand ^{ed} each one ~~of them~~ a rope and a
16 pistol, and then watch ^{ed} ~~them~~ run!

1 The ~~is~~ dispatch ^{that} ~~which~~ turns up next
2 begins with the words--Complete Freedom.
3 Yes, Complete Freedom for India.

4 ~~The Associated Press cables that~~ the
5 working committee of the all-India
6 National Congress today drew up a list
7 of demands which Mahatma Gandhi will
8 present to the British authorities at the
9 approaching big confab between Indian
10 and British delegates. The demands
11 include Indian control of army, ~~of~~
12 finances and foreign affairs; ~~and~~ also
13 complete commercial and social equality
14 between the Indians and the British.

15 ^{In other words almost}
16 ~~It amounts practically to~~ complete
17 liberty--~~that is~~ ^{or} liberty as complete as
18 ~~fold of the~~ British Empire. Gandhi told
19 ~~that~~ all-India Congress that he knew the
20 demands were revolutionary and that the
21 British might turn them down, outright--
22 but just the same he was going to try.

1 At this point I am conscious
2 of a feeling that I would like to
3 tell something funny, something sprightly
4 and humorous. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ But this
5 next ~~item~~ is ~~something~~ just the reverse.
6 It's about wit and humor in Sōviet Russia.

7 This week's Literary Digest
8 tells us that jokes and caricatures in the
9 alleged funny papers of Russia are
10 subject to a rigid censorship. The
11 Bolshevik leaders work on the theory
12 that if a picture^s or a joke^s happened
13 to be funny, they are in danger of
14 showing a lack of faith in the creative
15 power of the proletariat. In other
16 words, a comic quip is liable to take
17 a dig at somebody or something.

18 The Digest quotes the Manchester
19 Guardian as saying that ~~by~~ humor is
20 rationed out in the land of the
21 Communists, and it's all supposed to
22 point out Communistic truths. The result
23 is that the jokes ^{are} ~~can be something~~
24 deadly dull and oppressive. *In fact jokes in*
25 *name only.* The Digest illustrates the

point by telling of a characteristic cartoon which appears in a Moscow Comic paper. It shows an apple rolling down a slope. The apple is labeled "Opportunist" and at the end of the slope is a sign post marked "Right Deviation".

Where's the joke? Well, I don't know. The cartoon means that an opportunist, or anyone who takes the easiest way, is always in danger of straying from the true paths of Communism.

The Digest points out that the Bolsheviki may be so well disciplined that they'll roll over and roar with mirth at a joke like that. Maybe so - but the Digest doubts it.

1 We have to consider this evening
2 a grave and important question. Should
3 the statue of a general wear spectacles,
4 glasses, cheaters? In other words,
5 take the statue of a general sitting on
6 his horse or standing majestically. Is
7 it right and proper for him to have
8 spectacles on his nose?

9 This weighty problem is being
10 earnestly debated at the Virginia
11 Military Institute. They're erecting a
12 statue to General Francis H. Smith, who
13 for fifty years was the superintendent
14 of V.M.I. General Smith wore eyeglasses.
15 ^{In fact,} he was never seen without his spectacles,
16 ^{and} ~~on. In fact,~~ the students affectionately
17 called him "Specs".

18 Many of the alumni of the school
19 declared that to have a statue of the
20 general without his spectacles would be
21 equivalent to mutilating his face,
22 cutting off his nose, or tying one ear
23 in a knot.

24 On the other hand, the members of
25 the Virginia Art Commission lay down the

1 rule that spectacles are not in
2 accordance with the established principles
3 of art.

4 According to the Associated Press,
5 the governor of Virginia announces that
6 the matter will be discussed by the
7 Art Commission next week and that they'll
8 have to make a formal decision. It
9 really seems to be a paradox, because
10 if that statue of the general is set up
11 wearing a pair of spectacles it won't
12 be art. But if it's without spectacles,
13 it won't be the general. And that seems
14 to be a hard nut to crack.

15 Now, wait a minute, folks, until
16 I put on my ^{own} spectacles and see what
17 comes next. Oh, yes. Here it is--just
18 one simple little phrase which goes like
19 this--

20 So long until tomorrow.
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