Crawford 1446(3)

Puck's Girdle
OR
Gleanings from the Postal and Telegraph World.

LONDON:
WYMAN & SONS
74-6 GREAT QUEEN STREET LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS. W.C

PUCK'S GIRDLE;

OR,

Gleanings from the Postal and Telegraph World.

EDITED BY

C. ARMSTRONG,

General Post Office, Edinburgh.

LONDON:
WYMAN & SONS, 74-76, GREAT QUEEN STREET,
LINCOLN'S-INN FIELDS.

1888.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

WYMAN AND SONS, PRINTERS,
GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S-INN FIELDS,
LONDON, W.C.

PREFATORY NOTE.

IN introducing these Gleanings, and bespeaking for them a kindly reception, a word of explanation may not be out of place.

The object aimed at by the Editor is to provide yearly a collection of papers which, while of sufficient general interest to warrant a fair share of public support, will be specially interesting and valuable to postal and telegraph servants. By diffusing a knowledge of what is being said and done throughout the postal and telegraph world, "Puck's Girdle" will, it is hoped, prove a veritable bond of union, and promote a greater sympathy with each other's work in all branches of the services.

To those ladies and gentlemen who have so cordially assisted by forwarding contributions, the Editor begs to tender his grateful acknowledgments. Any reference to the merits of these contributions would perhaps be unbecoming, but it may confidently be anticipated that fare of this quality will attract sufficient support to ensure our "Annual" a long and prosperous career. *Au revoir.*

GENERAL POST OFFICE, EDINBURGH,
November 1st, 1888.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

Prefatory Note iii

1. The Electric Telegraph in War. Major Beresford, R.E. 3
2. Old Post Office Days. E. C. Sampson 8
3. Telegraphy in Canada. Chas. R. Hosmer 12
4. In the Side Eddy. Rhoda Reading 18
5. Leaves from My Note-book. W. K. B. 29
6. Sketches of Cable Life. E. Raymond-Barker . . 37
7. Western Telegraphers. S. J. Pryor 46
8. Strange Missives. Sperabene 57
9. A Narrow Escape. John Doherty 61
10. Jottings from Japan. W. B. Mason 67
11. Fifty Years Ago. E. C. Sampson 74
12. Chicago Telegraphs. W. J. Lloyd 82
13. My Friends in Blue, Yellow, and Green. Adam Gordon 86
14. Nellie Valentine. Frances M. Saul 98
15. Podger's Dog. P. Marshall Macintyre 107
16. Half Hours with the "Old Timers" (i.). E. C. Hine. 113
17. From London to Durban. A. K. N. 124
18. Difficulties of the English Language. C. H. Allport 130
19. Old Lothbury's Yarn. Old Lothbury 135

PAGE

20. Out with a Bundle of Letters. An Edinburgh Postman 140
21. At Eventide—A Memory. Col. Charles E. Taylor . 143
22. Half Hours with the "Old Timers" (II.). E. C. Hine 149
23. Atlantic Cables. Condenser 158
24. Our Influence. E. Bond Railton 161
25. Our Hero. An "Old Timer" 164
26. In the Dead Letter Office. Returned Letter Officers. 168

ARTISTS.

Eleanor Christie.

Winifred Christie.

T. Shodai.

THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH IN WAR.

EVERY great organised body or working machine owes the success of its operations and the completeness of its systems to the degree of rapidity and security which characterises the means of communication between its various parts and the controlling centre.

The more perfect the means of communication are, the more perfect is the organisation, and the more adaptable to variation of circumstances, and change of situation.

Of all organisations the human body is that which presents to us the most perfect system of inter-communication between its various members and the great controlling centre of the brain, which, by means of the nervous network, is in absolute and instantaneous accord with every dependent particle of a healthy body.

The electric telegraph may well be compared to the nervous system, and the more perfect its constitution and appliances are, the greater power of work, and the greater security will it guarantee to the organisation controlled by its means.

In ancient and mediæval times the great business of life was war, and we can trace from the earliest ages the constant efforts made for producing means of rapid, secure, and secret communication; whether this was by carrier birds, fire signals, or other devices.

It is only during the last forty years that the electric telegraph has been gradually superseding all other means of keeping touch between the various portions of an army, or

for the purpose of the defence of a country; and it is only during the last twenty years that any real progress has been made in utilising this agent for war purposes.

The first war telegraph was erected during the Crimean war; cables were then laid across the Black Sea from Varna to the Crimea, and short land lines connected the camp before Sebastopol with the harbour. The English army, therefore, has the honour of having introduced telegraphy to active service.

We next see it made use of during the Indian Mutiny in 1857, and by its means Lord Clyde's advanced posts were enabled to communicate with Calcutta. In 1859 the French made considerable use of a field telegraph which they had also tried in Algiers during the previous year.

In 1859 we find the Spaniards taking with them to Morocco a light field equipment, of which they appear to have made considerable use for outpost work, and since that time the Spanish army has been constantly endeavouring to produce an organisation suitable for mountain warfare.

Italy and Germany soon afterwards applied the telegraph to war purposes, but the greatest impulse in this direction was given during the great civil war in America. At the commencement of this struggle there was neither a State telegraph nor a field corps, and all had to be improvised and organised out of the material and *personnel* of three private companies then in existence in the Federal States.

Owing to the great enterprise and energy displayed by all connected with the work, the success was far beyond expectations, and wherever active operations were carried on, there we find the telegraph doing its duty, and that, not only on the lines of communication, and from garrison to garrison, but even on the battle-field itself, and notably so at the battles of Fredericksburg and Petersburg.

At the conclusion of the war over 8,000 miles of wire were in use, and more than 1,000 operators employed.

In 1866 the three armies of Prussia were enabled by a judicious use of the telegraph to make their celebrated concentration in Bohemia, which led to the overthrow of Austria at Königgrätz.

Extensive use was made of the telegraph during the war between Brazil and Paraguay, 1864–1869, and, in 1867 during the Abyssinian expedition, 250 miles of line were erected to keep up communication with the front.

During the Franco-German war, 1870-71, Germany made

enormous use of the telegraph, both by permanent and field lines, and not only had the army to use them for military purposes, but also for the civil necessities and government of the occupied country.

In the Ashantee expedition, the Russo-Turkish war, the Zulu, the Transvaal, and Egyptian campaigns, we see the use of the field telegraph gradually extending, and especially, as regards the last-mentioned campaigns, we see a rapid development both in its use and in the confidence placed upon it.

On the 9th September, 1882, during an attack by the enemy from Tel-el-Kebir, the telegraph clerks were for a time steadily working in their tents while shells were bursting all around them, and immediately after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, on the 12th September, the field telegraph, which had accompanied the night march, was brought into use to send the news of victory to the Queen, and Her Majesty's reply was received three-quarters of an hour later on the Vibrating Sounder set up in the Desert.

During the Nile expedition of 1884-85, great difficulties were encountered, but a line was erected up to Dongola and did excellent service, and it is only to be regretted that the transport at disposal did not admit of the telegraph accompanying Sir Herbert Stuart's march across the Bayuda Desert.

During the Bechuanaland expedition a line of 350 miles in length was run to keep up communication between the Head Quarters and the Colonial Telegraph system.

In 1885 the Telegraph Battalion of the Royal Engineers was also actively employed in the Eastern Soudan at Suakim, and it is noteworthy of this expedition that at the action of McNeill's zareba, the telegraph for the first time was at work in the fighting line, so to speak.

The cable had been laid out with the troops as they marched out towards Tamai, and on forming a zareba, a sounder was set up and communication opened with the base.

In the confusion occasioned by the sudden attack of the enemy, the instrument was knocked over, and the clerk (Corporal Bent) had to take part in the defence. The fight lasted about twenty minutes, and immediately on the Arabs being driven off, a new instrument was set up, and several messages, including one for *The Times* and one for the *Daily News*, were sent forthwith.

That there is a great future for the telegraph in military operations cannot be a matter of doubt, and in wars of the future we may expect to see the direction of important movements and actions entirely carried on by its means. The defence of our coasts and fortresses both at home and abroad will depend to a great extent on the great value of the telegraph being appreciated, and a thorough use being made of the opportunities it presents.

The *personnel* which may be required to work our military telegraphs will be far in excess of what the regular army could supply, and it is a matter of great importance to consider whether Volunteer Telegraph Corps should not be raised throughout the kingdom to supply the want. I have no doubt that in all our great telegraph centres in the United Kingdom numbers of young men would gladly come forward to fill the ranks of such corps, especially with the prospect of possible service in the field, and I hope the day is not far distant when we shall see a Volunteer Telegraph Battalion who will work hand in hand with their comrades in the Royal Engineers, as the men of the 24th Middlesex have already done.

As having had some experience with volunteer telegraphers in the field, I can speak as to their great value and many admirable qualities; but there are several ways in which improvements might be made both as regards organization and training.

In the first place, there are not nearly enough volunteers who, in case of war, on a large scale, are available for active service as telegraphers; and, secondly, those who do exist as such, belong to a rifle regiment, and receive little training as military telegraphers.

A military office telegrapher should not only be a manipulator, but should, as a first necessity, understand how to connect up and adjust all the instruments he may have to use, and understand the care and maintenance of batteries. He should also have a sufficient knowledge of the construction of field lines, as to enable him, not only to repair any slight damage in the vicinity of his stations, but to lend a hand to working parties when his services were not required in an office.

In addition to this, he should, as far as possible, acquire the habits of an "old soldier"; that is, the power of making himself comfortable when thrown on his own resources under adverse circumstances.

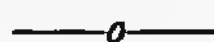
To this end he should take every opportunity of attending summer drills alongside regular troops, so as to fall into their ways and find out how things are done, and should, above all things, remember not to neglect the art of cooking. An empty stomach is a bad thing to fight on, and a bad thing to telegraph on.

Now there seems to me to be only one way of organising a system which would produce the requisite men, and that is by the formation of a Volunteer Telegraph Battalion, whose companies might be raised throughout the kingdom. The men should be telegraph soldiers and trained as such at their weekly musters.

Instructions in the use of the rifle, and to a certain extent in infantry drill, would be necessary; but their *raison d'être* would be Field Telegraphs, and as such they should exist in peace time while volunteers; when war broke out there is little doubt large numbers would come forward to offer their services in the field.

CHAS. F. C. BERESFORD,
Major, R.E.

RECOLLECTIONS OF OLD POST-OFFICE DAYS.



MY friend who asks me to write these lines says he will have them printed in a projected ANNUAL. I hope, as the gardeners say, the annual will be a "hardy one," as I am hardy enough to suppose he will think these words of mine worth printing.

To begin,—I was about to say, like a great writer of olden

time, "'tis sixty years since," but that is a little too early,—however, I may say it is about fifty years ago since a small boy first made acquaintance with the post office, and that shortly afterwards he entered the Post-office service as a clerk. His first acquaintance was made in this way: his father commanded a West Indian merchantman trading between

Jamaica and one of the southern ports of England, and once a month it was his work to watch the arrival of the mail coach, to note whether a West Indian mail had arrived or not. There was only one mail a month in those days. Before the penny-post days mails were carried in leather bags made of pig-skin, and had brass labels attached to them. Inland mails were carried in brown leather bags and Colonial mails in white leather bags. The postage on inland letters ranged from 4d. a single letter up to 1s. 4d., according to distance the letter was carried, and postage from Jamaica for a *single* letter (that is to say, a single sheet of writing paper without envelope) was 2s. 1d. ; one enclosure, however small, doubled the postage, two trebled it, and a letter weighing one ounce quadrupled it. What a difference exists between the mail coaches of old and the mail trains of to-day, and between the old mail packets and the Cunarders! The West India mails were carried by the old "ten-gun brigs." The writer recollects, when a boy, seeing one of these brigs starting, homeward-bound, from Port Royal, Jamaica. Pretty-looking craft they were, too, apple sided, with a clean run under the counter, to describe them in nautical phraseology. They were not, I believe, considered good for naval warfare, hence perhaps the cause of their being utilised to carry ocean mails. They made the voyage between England and the West Indies in about twenty-eight days.

The office in which the writer began his official life opened to the public at 5 a.m. and closed at 8 p.m. ; it was open on Sundays same hours as on week days. Four clerks besides the postmaster formed the staff of the office ; now the total number, all told, is 591, besides auxiliary helpers for part of the day on postmen's work.

A great feature of the days about which I write was the mail coach, another the mail guard. I propose to finish the present paper with a few words about the coach or coaches, and a larger number about the mail guards.

In the town to which I refer might have been seen, fifty years ago, five or six of the finest and, I believe, the best horsed mail coaches out of London. They went out and came in daily, north, east, west, and south (by the way, I suppose all men know that the initials of north, east, west, and south make our word "news"), and it was a fine sight to see these coaches rattle up to their respective hostelries, the cattle steaming, and to see the burly coachman throw down the whip and reins to his obsequious helper from the hotel stables, and jump down (I say jump, he could be nimble *sometimes*) to

collect his fees. Then to see him start on his outward journey; early in attendance at his office to get his waybill, see to his parcels and passengers, arranging the "box seat." "The best tip," of course, got the seat, if possible, but the Jehu was not always lucky in his selection. It is reported, on one occasion, that a noted pugilist got the seat, and his "tip" not being satisfactory, the Jehu offered to fight him; he, a big, burly man (one of the type so admirably described by Dickens) thought he could soon polish off, as he said, the "little whipper snapper of a customer," "such a stingy little beggar"; but Jehu soon found out his mistake, he himself was soon polished off and knocked completely "out of time." To return to the start. The coachman, having got his waybill, mounted to his seat leisurely; then, when time was up, he got hold of "the ribbons," shouted "Let go their heads, Bill!" and, with a professional crack of his whip, off the coach started, four or five passengers seated in front with the coachman, and at the back the scarlet-coated mail guard of olden days seated in all his glory, too-too-tootling on his long, slender horn, and his blunderbus ostentatiously poking out from its socket beside him.

And now for the mail guards. Men of mark were the old mail guards, and often men of money too. A much coveted post was that of mail coach guard. There is an old story current that a certain individual in the Georgian era asked the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV.) to use his good offices on his behalf and procure him an appointment as a mail guard. I should say the prince wished to do the man a favour, and asked him "What he could do for him?"

The guards, as a rule, were unlettered men (we must recollect there were few schools in their boyhood); their endorsements ont heir waybills showed this. I recollect one such endorsement. It was written by a guard who worked the Northern road. A delay took place in the arrival of the mail, and this was how it was accounted for: "As we wos comin over the Brumsgrov Likey* one of the leders fell and wen we com to im he wos ded." Very graphic, if illiterate. You can picture to yourself the old guard getting down from his seat, hobbling to the front of the coach, cutting the trace of the poor dead horse and fixing, as our Yankee cousins say, the one leader left unicorn fashion. You have here a picture of the old coaching days, and here I may mention that very many graphic pictures of the old coaching

* Broomsgrove Leckey (Worcestershire).

days may be seen, and anecdotes read of, in the back numbers of the *English Illustrated Magazine*, in sketches of "Old Coaching Days and Coaching Ways."

The old guards were often humorists. One of them was interrogated by a barmaid as follows: "Well, Mr. ———, how many children have you?" He replied, "Well, my dear, better than a dozen." "Oh! Mr. ———, how can you manage with such a large family?" "Well, there, my dear," he said, "you see you draw wrong conclusions. I have a little boy and a little maid, and you must admit, yourself, that be better than a dozen."

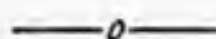
Many of the men accumulated much property if their official pay was small. Their fees were good and their commissions too (trade transactions). Their pay from the Post Office was but 10s. 6d. a week. Some among them got stingy as their wealth accumulated (not an uncommon result, I believe, and not one solely applicable to the race of mail guards). The following anecdote is told of an old guard. The circumstance occurred after the coaching days. After the mail coaches ceased to run, the Post Office kept on a few guards to travel with the mails on the railway (but without their horns and blunderbusses), and their pay was increased from 10s. 6d. a week to, I think, a scale of pay beginning at £50 to £90 a year, there or thereabouts, with an annual increment of £1 (I am sure of the increment on account of the indignation it excited, when the annual rise came. Fancy about 4d. a week rise, and imagine the look of the man in scarlet when he got his weekly wage, plus the 4d.). But to come to the anecdote above referred to. At the railway station whence one of the old guards started (one of the stingy ones) there was an old woman who trafficked in fruit. She used to pass up and down the platform and offer her fruit at the carriage windows. One day, when she had some fine strawberries for sale, she noticed the guard in question look out longingly at the strawberries several times. She knew the man and his ways, and on one of her perambulatory walks she purposely stopped in front of the Post Office van, when the guard was not looking out, and shouted, "Mr. ———, have another sniff; the train will start soon!"

I am afraid I have exceeded my limits as regards space, so end my present chit-chat about Post Office doings and Post Office ways of fifty years ago.

E. C. SAMPSON,

Postmaster, Bristol.

TELEGRAPHY IN CANADA.



THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY SYSTEM.

THE telegraph system of Canada, unlike that of the Mother country and most of the colonies, is not under Government control, but is owned and operated by companies, that receive from Parliament the legislation necessary to enable them to construct their lines and to operate them. The field has always offered so fair a return upon the investment, that there never has been any difficulty in obtaining the additional capital that was needed from time to time, to provide such facilities as were necessary to keep pace with the rapid development of the country.

The fact that timber, such as cedar, could be procured in most localities in abundance, greatly reduced the cost of construction. As a matter of fact, the pioneer company in Canada received a very large proportion of the poles they required, laid down where they were wanted, as a bonus from the different towns and villages that were anxious for telegraphic communication.

In, by far, the greater number of places the company's offices were located in the post office, or country store, where some one was taught to operate the Morse system, using the paper register, and receiving as remuneration a percentage of the receipts, varying from 25 to 50 per cent., according to the volume of business. The company thus secured a line at a moderate cost, and arranged for its working on a basis that assured large profits, thus enabling them to gradually reduce rates, until a uniform tariff of 25 cents (one shilling) for ten words, and one cent for each additional word, was

established between all points in the older provinces of Ontario and Quebec A prompt service was assured by competing companies, that sprang up from time to time, and the public pointed with justifiable pride to the excellency of their telegraph system.

If matters had continued thus, no agitation in favour of a Government control of telegraphs would likely ever have risen, but in 1881 the entire telegraphic business of Canada passed, in a few months, under the control of the Western Union Telegraph Co., of New York, operating the lines in Canada under the name of the Great North Western Telegraph Company. That a system that had been built up by Canadian enterprise, and that had given its promoters a more than generous return upon their investment, should have been turned over to a foreign corporation, caused much discontent, and created more or less uneasiness, owing to the Telegraph Company having control of the collection and distribution of the press news. It was feared that this great power might be used to the advantage of rival interests in the United States, and to the detriment of this country. A sentiment, in favour of the Government's owning a line of its own, was gradually growing, but before it had an opportunity to make much headway, relief from an unexpected quarter was at hand.

Up to this period the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, with the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, were the only ones that were considered of any moment, either in the commercial or the telegraphic world. The western portion of Ontario and the province of Manitoba, the great North West and British Columbia were it is true, part of the Dominion of Canada, but they were so far away and were felt to be so hopelessly beyond reach, that little or no attention was paid to them.

The general public read, from time to time, accounts of the vast resources of these new countries, but felt that any advantage likely to arise from a closer and more direct connexion with them, was an inheritance the benefits of which they would willingly leave to the enjoyment of a succeeding generation.

They in fact felt that the idea of the construction of several thousand miles of railway across the continent, through an unexplored and unknown country, furnished an interesting subject over which the speculative politician might wrangle, but that it had scarcely elements enough

about it of a serious nature to engage the attention of practical business men.

While the politicians were fighting over its varying fortunes, and a large section of the press were decrying it, and seeking to ruin its credit, there were at work, however, men who had faith in it, whose genius, iron will, and determination overcame difficulties that, in any other age, would have been all but insurmountable.

The history of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway is one that has challenged the admiration of the world, and its history is necessarily the history of the construction of its line of telegraph. The two works went forward, step by step, the lesser one, the telegraph, being absolutely essential to the former, as instantaneous communication was indispensable in the movement of both its great army of men and huge quantities of supplies. As the work proceeded westward from Winnipeg it spread farther and farther away from its base of supplies until, when it reached the Selkirks, it was over a thousand miles from it.

The present Canadian Pacific Railway Company took charge of the work in 1880, and had, under its contract with the Government, until 1891 to complete it. The first year witnessed 160 miles of railroad constructed, the second 450 miles, the third year found them at the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and the fourth in the Selkirks, over a thousand miles from Winnipeg. This work advanced at the rate of more than three miles each working day for months in succession, and frequently reached five and even six miles in a day. The 7th day of November, 1885, saw the last rail laid in the great trans-continental railway, and the last splice made in its great telegraph system. The railroad was thus completed six years before the contract with the Government stipulated. The first through train, however, did not start from Montreal, on its long journey of nearly three thousand miles, across the continent to Vancouver, B.C., until July, 1886, since which time a daily service (Sundays excepted) has been maintained with uniform regularity.

In the meantime independent connexions with the Atlantic seaboard were secured, so that the close of 1885 found the company, not yet five years old, in possession of no less than 4,315 miles of railway, thoroughly equipped with a telegraph, including the longest continuous line in the world. At the close of 1887 it had increased its railway mileage to 4,690 miles.

So astonished was the country at the gigantic strides that had been made in the construction of the railway, that little or no attention was paid to other enterprises that were incident to it, and among these was the company's telegraph, which had also been extended to points in Eastern Canada. Connexions were made with the Postal Telegraph Company, of the United States, at several points on the United States boundary, and a connexion was made, viâ New York, with the Mackay-Bennett cables for Europe.

The lines were thrown open to the public in September, 1886, when a telegraph service was offered which had, as it were, grown up in a night, and was as perfect and more extensive than the other systems then in operation, and which had taken over a quarter of a century to complete.

A further line from Vancouver to San Francisco, a distance of 1,200 miles, was completed during the fall and winter, and by the close of the present year, Halifax, Nova Scotia, will be reached, when the company can boast of a continuous telegraph line of over 4,800 miles from Halifax to San Francisco, the line to San Francisco being practically operated as a portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's system.

Special attention was paid by the managers of the railway to the character of the line, on account of the very long circuits that it would be necessary to work, and the heavy wires used. The poles are of cedar, being from 6 to 7 inches in diameter at the top, 25 to 30 feet in length, set 5 feet in the earth, and averaging over 35 to the mile. For the main circuit a No. 6 wire, having a low resistance and great tensile strength, was specially manufactured under the company's own specification; as also were the porcelain insulators, the latter in addition to affording the best insulation, it was found, did not break so easily as glass under the great pressure they are subject to, from the contraction of the wire during the winter season on certain sections of the line.

Direct circuits (duplexed) are worked regularly between San Francisco and New Westminster, 1,200 miles; New Westminster and Winnipeg, 1,472 miles; Winnipeg and Montreal, 1,423 miles. After six o'clock, Winnipeg and New York work direct with each other, a distance of nearly 2,000 miles, and on Sundays, New York and San Francisco are put in direct connexion, a distance of over 4,600 miles.

The electric current between Montreal and Winnipeg varies so little, that week after week goes by with scarcely a change in the balancing of the duplex between these points being

necessary. Between Winnipeg and New Westminster, however, the adjustment varies, owing to the different climatic changes in the mountains and on the Pacific Coast. The dry winds of the prairies, after blowing for three or four days in succession, produce a frictional electricity, which causes more or less trouble.

During the first winter and spring, the wires were interrupted somewhat by snow slides. These troubles have since been obviated by the company increasing their railway snow sheds, and by the burying of the wires at the most exposed points. The extent of these snow slides can be realised when it is understood that 250,000 cubic yards, weighing 100,000 tons, have come down in one slide, the engineers claiming that the force of air set in motion by these avalanches, has been known to mow down large trees not struck by the snow itself. The company has a great number of snow sheds in the British Columbia mountains, and so well protected is the railway that trains were not delayed, during the past winter, a single day from this cause. The wires run through these sheds in most places, but at some points poles 70 or 80 feet in height carry them over the sheds, allowing the snow to pass underneath them. The snow sheds are constructed so as to practically form a part of the mountain slope, and, not offering any resistance, the snow glides over them, and goes tumbling down into the valley or gorge beyond.

In the construction of so large a system, and especially that portion of it that runs through the mountains, and north of Lake Superior, many difficulties were encountered and hardships endured by the telegraph builders, but their work suffered so much by comparison with the other and more gigantic labour of the construction of the railroad itself, that the splendid work doubtless accomplished by them has provoked but little comment. The telegraph as well as the railway engineer has been called upon to solve many a problem which has never been met in any other sphere of work; that he has succeeded, and that too in a practical and satisfactory manner, the operations of both the railway and the telegraph bear daily testimony.

In the operating room of the company at Montreal, which is its head office, can be seen telegrams passing to and fro between San Francisco and New York, Chicago, &c., and also messages going back and forth between San Francisco, Vancouver, B.C., and other Pacific Coast points, and China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Batavia, &c. Let us

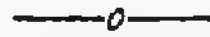
presume that one of the regular steamers of the Canadian Pacific Railway has just sailed from Vancouver to Yokohama, a distance of 4,232 miles, which she makes in from twelve to fourteen days. The telegram announcing her departure to the agents in Yokohama would go viâ Montreal to New York, 3,500 miles, thence across the Atlantic to England, 3,000 miles, England viâ Gibraltar, Malta, Alexandria, Aden, Bombay, Madras, Singapore, to Hong Kong, 8,500 miles, Yokohama, 1,600 miles, or a total distance from Vancouver to Yokohama of 16,600 miles, or nearly four times the distance covered by the steamer.

When a cable is laid under the Pacific Ocean connecting Vancouver with Australia and other points in the East, as it is likely to be within the next few years, the operating-room in Montreal will witness the business of half a continent reversed, and set travelling in a direction in which old Father Time, whom the proverb says "waits for no man," will be beaten in his own race, at least over half a hemisphere, telegrams reaching Vancouver eight hours ahead of the time they left London. When this is done it will be a matter of some pride for Canada to think that the enterprise of her citizens enables her to furnish so lengthy and so important a link in the chain that completes a girdle around the earth. Let the Mother country do but a hundredth part of what Canada has already done and this girdle will soon be complete, and the British Empire will be bound together by a telegraph system whose every electric beat will awaken an answering throb of loyalty in the hearts of those who, along its entire length, proudly acknowledge allegiance to the British Crown.

CHAS. R. HOSMER,
Manager,
Canadian Pacific Railway Telegraphs.

Montreal.

IN THE SIDE EDDY.



THERE are times to the most active minds when the stream of life seems to have swept the restless spirit into some still side eddy. At first one is hardly conscious of the rest, so fast and furious has been the rush of events or emotions. Then comes a period of blissful relief, but to those in a physically as well as a mentally healthy condition this does not last long; one soon becomes tired of the stagnant waters and longs once more for the sweep of the full tide. In such a mood on some bright morning the well-seasoned telegraphist sits and gazes at the patch of sky visible from the window, and feels that the official building is a prison, and "duty" a chain manacling the unfortunate operator to the monotonous treadmill of practical telegraphy. Let any one follow, for hours daily, any occupation for some length of time and he or she will find the mind soon leaves fingers, eyes, or ears to do the work required, and occupies itself with more personal details. The memory of what has been, or the anticipation of what is approaching, perplexes itself with the tangled skein of the thread of life, and broods remorsefully over the errors and failures of the past; looks eagerly forward planning how to retrieve lost ground and ensure success in the future; hopes much, but fears more. Now comes a lull,—we are in the side eddy. The tangled thread is unravelled by time, hopes and fears hang evenly balanced in the scale. The quarrel is adjusted, the letter written, the fight finished, the wrong forgiven, the breach healed, the debt discharged, the match played out, the fête over, and things are really a trifle flat. Then one looks out on life with a yawn, whilst incipient rebellion rises against the powers that be, with an erratic wish that electricity was still an unmastered power, flashing upon our sight but in the

lightning leap, and not yet harnessed to the heavy machinery of the Post Office Service of which this particular personal atom is a wearied portion.

Yet, though I make a moan and a groan over the sameness of the official life, I am in my heart proud to be a public servant, and in that capacity useful to my Queen and country. Not that I am so *very* loyal to the first, but we will let it stand, it has such a rich important roll,—sounds like some gallant commander leading his troops on to victory "to do or die for Queen and country." So, Mr. British Public, I will do my best with your messages, each of which is of more or less importance, even though in dealing with them *en masse*, there is a danger of their losing their individuality and becoming just the day's work to be despatched as quickly as possible. Is it not always so? In a solitary waste a human figure assumes an immense interest, but the same figure in a crowd sinks to the insignificance of a unit. Yet, a crowd is made up of separate fragments of mankind, each with his own life, his own hopes and private sorrows. So each message so mechanically despatched by preoccupied me, is a representative of an individual necessity, desire, or aim.

Let me dwell upon this matter from my post of enforced mental inactivity,—this "still side eddy"; look out upon the rushing torrent and catch some fragments of the stories being told, some glimpses of the dramas being acted, some echoings of busy active life, some whisperings of evil tidings, or some transient sympathy with aching hearts.

However, a very large proportion of the work has to do with business, and my poor brain becomes bewildered in even *trying* to be correct in despatching horrible stock quotations with commands to "Buy 86 legs," to "sell 16 cats," or a complaint that the sender "can't get on in inks." How is an uninitiated person to know what all this means? I can only *hope* I am guessing rightly at what is intended, but these stock gentlemen do write (to put it mildly) rather badly. I have heard, though, that they scribble off their important despatches in the street, using a convenient wall or post, or each other's backs, for a temporary desk; so we will excuse them, and do our best with their mysterious hieroglyphics. I was almost touched to sympathy with one of Walter Besant's heroes (?), Olinthus Galloway, who is used as a puppet by a financial speculator, and vainly tries to grasp some of the initia of this black art by reading over and over again the money market column of the daily papers. He

knew as much about Debs, Milks, Cans, Beers, Trunks, or Turks as I do, and would have been equally at sea as to why a broker thought it worth while to telegraph his national prejudices, "Don't like Yankees—same opinion of Mexicans."

But the money market is not the only market which meets and transacts its business over the huge network of postal telegraph wires. I buy or sell cattle, corn, hops, potatoes, fish, eggs, butter, iron, copper, tea, etc., etc., and the jargon of each trade grows familiar to my sight. This is as well, or my hand might tremble when I have to write, "Send ten heads and hearts fresh slaughtered," or "Brayne gets all our hearts when killing." Then there are shipbrokers' affairs. What cargoes of jute, bones, guano, petroleum, linseed, oils, boneash, wheat, and barley have I consigned! with at length a glimmering of the meaning of such terms as spot or coast, f.o.b. and c.i.f., demurrage or b/lading. But when I have to do with some richly-laden vessel just into port, I seem to see such a lovely harbour as Falmouth or Plymouth, where the big ship floats serenely on the tranquil waters, here sheltered by the thickly wooded hills, from various points of which the coastguardsman watches through his telescope and tells the curious tourist what manner of boat she is, where from, and what her cargo, while to and from the jetties go the little boats carrying the brokers' agents and the sailors; the telegraph office is all in a rush, and the wire is blocked, whilst captain and crew greet their wives and sweethearts, and the cargo is bid for and consigned.

We have, too, a great deal of work connected with racing and training of horses, and sometimes get quite interested (from some foolish connexion of ideas, perhaps) in a particular horse, and can see a faint shadow of the fatal fascination of betting. I have never seen a race, but should think it would be a glorious sight if only one was sure all was fair and honest, and that there were no frightful stakes at hazard, no wrecked lives and ruined fortunes to pay the price of the winner's prize.

It is always a pleasure to deal with a message destined for or proceeding from a well-known or beautiful place. So I will take what jealous comfort I can from this one to Brighton, engaging rooms for "self and friend." I wonder whether "self and friend" will wait for a good dinner before strolling down to the sea. Will they saunter up and down the Esplanade, or scramble on to the beach regardless of clothes, and court a personal acquaintance with big tumbling

waves. Will they wrap themselves up sitting sheltered on the pier, or stand at the end of a breakwater eagerly drinking in the intoxicating breeze?

My next message is to a lady, and states, "Lady F. will present you; have given your name to Lord Chamberlain's office." Will she be pleased or excited? Is it a long-cherished hope dawning into fruition? Will the question of dress be easily decided, or will she have to scheme and plan? Who will give her her flowers? Will she look pretty in her court finery and be a credit to Lady F.? Will any one beloved see her in her full war paint? Will she practise her curtsey and the lifting of her train before the family circle, or is she fighting her way alone to social distinction with the determination of a Becky Sharp?

By and by the answer came. "The best of your sex, a thousand thanks." So she is all in a flutter. I am really quite interested, and think I must look for her name in the list of ladies attending the Drawing Room. But then I shall not know whether the fatigue and excitement, the tedious waiting in the long line of carriages, and the cruel criticisms of the vulgar crowd, are too costly a price for a second in the Royal presence. Whether she will cry with the preacher, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity," or exclaim in a fit of modern realism, "And we call *this* pleasure!"

"Dinna write ony mair, Jock; I'm married noo," comes from Edinburgh. It sounds pathetic enough to be a repetition of the story of Auld Robin Gray's luckless bride:—

"My faither urged me sair, but my mother did nae speak,
But she look'd in my face, till my heart was like to break
So they gied him my hand, though my heart was at the sea,
And Auld Robin Gray was a gude man to me."

Poor Jock, will he feel as if all the glory had departed from the old home? He does not wish to return now; have not he and she who is married noo', together climbed the Hill to Arthur's seat and wandered hand in hand over the downs? Did they not as children play together on the seats and steps of Calton Hill, and did they not stand there the night before he left and gaze over the dear romantic city with its spires and monuments, its slopes and gardens, with its guardian castle and famous Princes Street? There, too, is the jeweller's shop where they bought the modest betrothal ring.

Ah me! "Dinna write ony mair, Jock; I'm married noo."

Here is a strange one. "A potted wish is Nathan's law." What does it mean? Is it a proverb or what? A potted wish. It can't mean potted like potted bloater. The only Nathan I know is the one mixed up with the Shepherd King and the ewe lamb. Well! the Royal Wisher certainly got poor Uriah "potted off." Perhaps his was a potted wish and Nathan's law was the one that made the regal sinner condemn himself out of his own mouth. And this message may be a warning or condemnatory sentence to one getting his wish, but by such means that the frightful price would far exceed the gratification of the "potted wish." There is plenty of food for speculation here, but knowing no cookery book that gives a recipe for pickling or preserving wishes I find it rather ambiguous. If the sender knew how worried I am he might explain it, unless it is thieves' Latin, back slang, or the language of another sphere.

But I might have worse worries, look at this. "Adam laid up days, all children down with measles, baby boy this morning." It would be a stony heart that did not rush to that rescue. And yet the distressed one is happy in having some one to appeal to for aid. The original Mrs. Adam had neither mother nor sister, nor even mother-in-law, to come to her assistance when Cain and Abel's young brothers and sisters came into the world.

The next is from another worried lady, but she only wants to know "May I have dance, Tom?" Perhaps she has been disagreeable and feels contrite, and is now asking for what she refused before. I wonder whether Tom will be pleased when he gets this, and if it was any effort to her to humble herself to asking. It is not compatible with feminine pride to petition, and one feels mostly that it is better to do without anything, however greatly desired, than to ask for it. I believe this independent spirit is very unlovable, though, and that those people are the most dearly beloved who require much at other hands, and that the very act of making a gift or rendering a service binds the recipients to the givers, and gives them a claim upon their affections. In the same way that an injured or unjustly treated person becomes obnoxious to the perpetrator of the injury or injustice.

"B—'s shirt at once." I suppose poor B— has only one, then, and that he is in the same condition as Dick Swiveller, when he recovered from his illness and found the Marchioness had consigned his apparel to the care of the proverbial uncle.

I am afraid B— has a similar reckless disposition to that of the immortal Dick, or he would economise his sixpences towards buying another shirt instead of sending a telegram to his laundress and lying in bed while she introduces his whole stock of linen to the washtub and the flat iron.

The next is on a more vital subject, and is from a gentleman to a lady, to the effect that he sails for Australia in four days, and if she reaches London in three days they can be married by special licence and proceed to the Antipodes as man and wife. It is reply paid, and ends, "If you decide not to come all is over between us." Naturally I looked for the answer. It came within two hours. "Am sorry notice too short. Good bye." Perhaps he is well rid of her. For if she loved him for better or worse she would not stop to think about her frocks, but would have reached London by hook or crook in three days. However, something may be said for her. There is a selfish, overbearing tone about the proposal, a kind of take it or leave it, and an omission of any expression of hope or desire on his part, and no apology for its abruptness. This might well make a nervous woman hesitate before she took such a step and uprooted herself from home and friends. Women have not that fervid desire for adventure that men have, and as the old proverb says, "Women and cats are best at home." They grow to love the very chairs and tables that they are accustomed to, giving a vast amount of sentiment to their belongings and surroundings; in fact, are true Tories in their conservative tastes. Seriously, though, I think the most unselfish woman would want the assurance of being loved to nerve her for the wrench of emigration.

Here is a plaintive note from one who has been led into indiscretion by the rash advice of some one—a young wife probably—safe at home. "Why didst thou promise such a glorious day and make me travel forth without my gingham?" How she will fret and fume, hoping he won't catch cold, put his slippers to the fire, and if the need of the gingham still exists I should think she would send the maid to the station, or go herself, perhaps, make him change his coat, and with fear and trembling watch lest he sneeze a sneeze. Happy pair!

"Won my bet; big daughter—five ock—send the five pounds to-day—child takes your wife's name—same good luck to you."

What a miserable creature, to bet about his wife and unborn child! May the five pounds enrich his soul.

This is something breathing of a healthier tone, and proves the senders to be upon a spiritual as well as a temporal higher level. It comes from Ben Nevis: "Nine sleepless hours of night we passed the rising sun to see; sullen and grim he rose again, sullen and grim rose we." Though they sound disappointed, at least they have aspired and foregone their ease and comfort to see one of Nature's grandest panoramas. It reminds me of my own toil up Snowdon, the summit of which was, as usual, wrapped in a cloud, from which we emerged wet through and shivering with cold. But, oh! what a glorious sight lay beneath us. Clouds below us, above us, and around us. But through the rifts the most exquisite glimpses of the sunny earth, like gems of pictures framed in cloudland, and we remembered this cloud that had enveloped us in its damp embrace was at the present moment enhancing the grandeur of Old Snowdon's Peak to the people in the valleys,—those hundreds who had not strength or time to climb to where we stood, grasping to the fulness of our capacity all the glories revealed. It is not the fashion for us inhabitants of Great Britain to admire clouds,—we have too many perhaps,—but I maintain that cloudless skies are *not* always fair, and that one would grow weary of days beneath a perfectly azure sky; also that hills and mountains are more solemn and majestic with clouds resting and floating round them. In life, too, do not clouds give the effect, the colour, and intensity which makes it interestingly earnest?

Ah! I have wandered in thought far from practical telegraphy, but am recalled by finding I am sending something remarkable: "Put ten ton of coal in my coat collar, store the rest." Well! I know dressmakers have a dodge of putting cunning weights to adjust the drapery and keep portions of the costume in order; and it would be an improvement if some tailors would try some method of the sort to keep coat collars from riding up into a man's hair, and make tidy fingers itch to put them right; but ten tons of coal would be rather a burden even for a modern Atlas. Of course, it is a mistake; it is "coal cellar," not "coat collar."

Here comes a rush of matrimonial congratulations: "May life be happy and both find that nuptial contracts are the poles on which the heavenly spheres revolve." Flowery.

"God, the best maker of marriages, combine your hearts in one." Very nice.

"We drink your health, but wonder, with Shelley, what can lure maidens to leave the heaven serene and pure of parents' smiles for life's great cheat, a thing bitter to taste, sweet in imagining." From a blighted being, evidently. If anything but love lure the maiden, though, she will certainly find it a great cheat. Only, please, Percy Bysche, let us believe that "love will last; love will last for evermore."

"May ye baith hae wisdom, health, an' weans." I should think the bride would say thanks to that with rather a cold smile.

"Congratulate you, Jack and Missus, confine yourselves to hugs and kisses; when settled here then comes the blisses,—aye, and the blizzards." Fancy talking about blizzards to a wedding party; evidently that is from one of the wet blanket species, and it is just as well he is absent. Of course, there will be blizzards, but we don't want to be reminded of them just when we are enjoying the sunshine.

"May the fresh sails hoisted to-day catch the fair breeze of matrimony, and may it blow you over calm seas with no lee shore into the haven where you would be." From a sailor.

If following was taken literally, we should think it came from paterfamilias's mouse: "Have a piece of cheese for me,—home early,—hungry." But though I cannot assert that mice have *not* a system of telegraphy, I don't think they were represented at the International Congress, and, at all events, their addresses are not given in the Post Office Directory: so we must conclude the sender of this indulges in hyperbole in the style of a message I sent yesterday: "Shoot here Tuesday; if no elephants, may trap mice." That reveals an amiability of mind and contentment of temperament truly enviable. I can only wish that all aspiring to elephants may be able to accommodate their desires with mice, and that those humble enough to ask for mice's fare may find something tasty to satisfy their hunger.

This must be from one of the minor prophets: "I said you'd forget key last moment,—posted." What uncomfortable creatures these prophets are. Really one suspects them sometimes of wishing that their evil prognostications may be fulfilled. I have such a one in my mind now, who shakes her head over the health of a mutual friend until she (the mutual friend) cries in tones of exasperation, "I believe that she would like me to die so that she could say, 'I told you so.'"

The next is very matter-of-fact, "Sick,—cannot dine to-night,—will meet entrance theatre 7.40." One imagines this poor dear nibbling a dry biscuit and starting off, pale and woe-begone, to keep his appointment.

"Gone for a flirt, expect when you see me."

There is nothing like candour, and calling a spade a spade. But in some cases it certainly takes the gilt off the gingerbread. If, as I take it, flirtation is "playing at lovers," it must detract from the ardour of the game to have it labelled. But there are some cautious male minds which prefer the thing unmasked. They have so great an appreciation of their own value that they regard themselves as being in danger of being "caught," so "For fear, you know," they ticket the poor, feeble imitation "Flirtation." What a compliment to our sex! Being such poor, blind creatures, it is not likely we can tell the real from the artificial unassisted. I am afraid, however, I do not appreciate the "cautious male mind."

The next is from a well-known undertaker, and is a sad mixture of pathos and business. "Please get clothes and top curl of hair at hospital—will bury Tuesday—bring body then." Who wants that top curl? The mother surely, poor soul! How hard that her boy should die in the hospital, and not be nursed and tended by her who rocked him on her bosom years ago and twisted that top curl lovingly round her fingers. Do the love and pride which fill the parents' hearts when their children are young compensate for the pain of losing them or of seeing them go astray? I think so, and yet—

"Who would dare the choice, neither or both to know,
The finest quiver of joy or the agony thrill of woe;
Never the exquisite pain, then never the exquisite bliss,
For the heart that is dull to that, can never be strung to this."

The following does not display the lucid accuracy one would expect from a member of that great public who, as a whole, are so cuttingly satirical on any clerical errors of their servants:—"Keep me bed to-night with fire in it." The hotel to which it was addressed was evidently full, for the proprietor could afford to be jocose, and replied, "Sorry insurance people won't allow me keep bed with fire in it."

I suppose the hurry and fluster in which telegrams are despatched must account for some of the curiously ill-worded ones we see, such as, "George vamped with your daughter—very serious results may follow his silly act. What can I do?" Now vamp is something to do with patching shoes, and a vampire is described by Nuttall as "an imaginary demon fabled to suck blood from human beings in the night." But my intercourse with budding manhood has taught me that George's act is a more sensational one than a duet of cobbler's work, and not so bloodthirsty as the vampire business. Surely, the father will think vamping with his daughter something more or less than "silly." If, as I imagine, it bears the same significance as one I sent the other day, "Eloped, sloped, skedadled, skebunked, and with a potman." Here is such a tone of jubilation, an evident chuckle of satisfaction, which, if intended, is very bad form. Certainly, the "skebunker" is not regretted, nor the potman envied. But it seems to disclose such uncongenial society I am glad the stream carries that tragic comedy past before we can see any details.

There is not much love lost between the sender and receiver of the following:—"Received letter—cheque will be mailed to-night. Abuse—the only thing you ever gave away—makes even the heels of a mule respectable." And so on. Messages come piling in thick and fast, bearing hurried references to births, deaths, and marriages, scandals, money losses and worries, all sorts of businesses, pleasures, pains, and woes. It is possible that if the originators of these telegrams on which I have commented knew of my conjectures, they would smile at the difference between the real and the imaginary cases represented.

The other day I saw a message from an illustrious lady, expressing sympathy with her darling child. Now, when it is a matter of history that the said "darling child" is a grandmother, it certainly strikes one that there is a little discrepancy in the relative ideas of different people for the same object. I once heard a gentleman describe fourteen stone of aggressive womanhood as a tender plant. She was his wife, so he ought to know to what family of exotics she belonged, and perhaps he had studied botany. But I must confess I had other preconceived notions of a "tender plant" which received a shock.

However, from our post we can but have caught partial glances of what has hurried down the stream. The corner of a submerged box hinting at mystery. The neck of a bottle

and the bottom of a basket suggesting a picnic, a portion of some object unexplainable exciting conjecture, an inverted boat telling of catastrophe, or a swollen limb whispering of tragedy. We may be wrong in each case. The box may be broken and bottomless, the discarded plaything of an idle boy ; the bottle might reveal poison, and the basket something ghastly ; the unguessable might prove its commonplace ; the boat but one loosed from its moorings ; and the evidence of the supposed tragedy nothing more dreadful than a poor, dead doggie. In fact, we get but fragmentary glimpses of most things. There is so much " under the surface."

But the time has nearly come for me to leave this side eddy and become identified once more with the swing of the full tide. In another minute the clock will strike the signal for my release, for my launch into the stream. Hark ! There it is ! Good-bye, girls ! good-bye, I'm off.

RHODA READING.

C. T. O.
London.

LEAVES FROM MY NOTE-BOOK;

OR,

RECOLLECTIONS OF A BUSY POSTMASTER.

—o—

"CAN you gi'e me a queen's head," quoth gruff old Jamie H——, a coal carter, as with letter in hand and whip under his arm he presented himself at the counter of the post-office at L——. A queer customer was Jamie, dressed in a suit of dirty moleskins and a broad Kilmarnock bonnet pulled low down over his shaggy eyebrows.

"Can you gi'e me a queen's head, laddie?" says he. The stamp was promptly snipped off (no perforation in those days), and after sundry visits to Jamie's capacious mouth, and much thumping with his grimy fist, was securely stuck on. "It's a letter to my dochter," quoth he, confidentially. "God reward ye for it, laddie, for I canna"; and with a leer in his eye, the grimy old sinner walked coolly out and posted the letter, leaving me poorer by one penny, but wiser in the ways of a wicked world.

Many years have elapsed since the above incident took place, it being one of my first experiences in the postal service. Many changes have occurred since that time, but with these changes it is not my present purpose to deal; my purpose is rather to reproduce for the amusement of my readers one or two of the incidents that occur in the daily life of every post-master in his intercourse with the public, and to convey some idea of the multifarious uncovenanted duties that devolve upon him which have no place in the "Book of Instructions to Post-masters."

The post-master's clients are of all grades of society, high and low, rich and poor. The upper strata consult him when they cannot help themselves, the lower strata gravitate towards the open door where no fees are exacted.

Twenty years ago numbers of poor people used to bring their letters to the post-office to have them read, and many a time also to be answered as well.

The contents of these letters were as various as can well be imagined,—a birth, a marriage, a death or a gossipy letter from a married daughter, telling grannie that some wee body had cut his first tooth, that Mary had been very bad with the "brown kites"; but that, thank God, they were now all fairly well, and John had plenty of work. Sometimes, indeed, it was a harrowing tale of sickness or want of work, and consequent starvation; and then I always found that help to the utmost extent of their friends' ability was sent, or the poor ever help the poor.

In the olden time lords and ladies, for lack of learning, used to do their wooing by trusty messenger who carried a ring or other token as his credentials. I know an old lady of the present day who, though unable to write, could read writing. Her sweetheart was a jolly young farmer, and sent his ploughman with a letter containing an offer of marriage. After reading the letter she turned with ready wit to the unsuspecting ploughman and said: "Tell Jock M——m I'll dae yon." To show that the token is still in use, hear the following:—A widower of mature age and the widow of an ancient mariner lived each a lonely life, a few miles apart. The old man was of clerkly attainments, but the widow's correspondence had to be carried on by proxy. The critical question was at length put, and determined that no strange ear should hear, or strange hand write the fateful word the old gentleman directed that if it was "to be," the widow should signify her assent by enclosing in the envelope—not a ring—but a scrap of brown paper and nothing more. It is almost superfluous to say that the brown paper was sent.

In the interest of bashful maidens, who find difficulty in suitably expressing themselves in like trying circumstances, could not De La Rue bring out an æsthetic high art card in the newest shade of brown. Carte blanche would not suit, but the brown card, which means everything and on which you can found nothing, would be the very ticket.

"Here, sir, is a letter to my son on board a man-o'-war. I put down the address the same as he wrote it in his letter,

but none of the old sailors here know where it lies. I took it to the minister, but he doesn't know either.

James B—— A.B.
on board H.M.S. Impregnable
Ragin Harry
or elsewhere."

"Ragin Harry" being interpreted Rio Janeiro, the old fellow left quite satisfied.

Talking about the addresses of letters, the route or the name of the packet with some people becomes stereotyped and loses all significance. "Viâ Marseilles," for instance, conveys no more idea to some folk than the word "Express." A young lady came one day with a letter for Canada, asking if it was in time for the mail. When told that the mail had gone, she said, "Oh, no matter; I suppose for another threepence I can send it viâ Marseilles"!

In the same way, long after the Australian mails had been transferred from the Liverpool clippers, of which the *Marco Polo* was the most famous, to the overland route viâ Red Sea, letters would pass through addressed, "Overland, per Marco Polo."

Some clients consult the postmaster on rather delicate questions, such as lovers' quarrels and family dissensions, but more frequently the latter, certain members of a family objecting to their letters being seen or handled by certain other members who are "not what they should be." Next day, perhaps, the other side of the house claims our attention, the only difference being that there is a change in the characters cast for the piece.

"Can I have a word with you?" said a well-dressed, lady-like person of, say thirty years. "I have been corresponding with a gentleman in your town, but latterly his letters to me have changed very much, and now he writes me that, as I have not written him in reply for six weeks, he breaks off the engagement. The letters are addressed to his residence, and I have written three letters within the last six weeks, and here is an envelope similarly addressed." After a brief consultation with postman No. 4, the lady is informed that two letters, at least, bearing the postmark of D——, have been delivered within the past four weeks. "When does your friend go to business?" "At nine in the morning." "Then

he would not be in the house when the letters were delivered. Has your friend any sisters?" Ah! yes, three. I see it all now. If his sisters are so fond of him they can keep him. Thank goodness, I can support myself, and," with a stifled sob, "him too, if it came to that. I am very much obliged to you. Good-morning." And a brave little woman and a sensible one left the office.

A heavily got-up specimen of the young man who knows a thing or two, whom an old friend of mine would have described as a "half-boiled swell," introduced himself thus:—

"Look here, Postmaster, a very awkward thing has happened, you know. My Guv'nor has taken to opening my letters, you know; a very serious thing, and very awkward for me, you know. Would you mind dropping him a note warning him that the Post-office authorities might make a case of him—nothing serious, you know—just to frighten the old man, you know?" "Your father, sir, is welcome to open all your letters, so far as the department is concerned, so long as they are properly delivered." "But isn't it a serious crime to open another person's letters?" "It depends upon who opens them. For me, it would mean penal servitude; but for you, sir, a horsewhipping at the hands of the aggrieved party would meet the merits of the case. I cannot assist you, sir."

"I am Miss Z——, and I live at 461, S—— Street; my brother lives in the flat underneath at the same number, and my niece, a chit of a girl of twelve, claims to be also Miss Z——. I don't blame her, but her mother. What can I do to prevent my letters falling into their hands?" "Could you not ask your friends to address you with the addition of your Christian name?" "That would do no good; my niece is named after me." "Then ask your correspondents to address you as Miss Z——, senior." "No, no! that would never do. I hope I haven't reached that stage yet." "What do you say to Top Flat?" "That is quite too awful." "Well, suppose you remove to another house?" "For that chit of a girl!' "Well, then, you must just go home and agree about it." Advice not at all to the taste of Miss Z——.

A postmaster's visitors are not all Miss Z's. The story of a visitor of another stamp, which follows, will be like a blink of sunshine on a cloudy day. A little old woman used to come to the office every month with the inquiry, "Is the Australian mail in yet?" She was evidently very poor, but always neat, and her cap and kerchief spotlessly clean. A basket with bobbins on her arm and a bundle of yarn over

her shoulder showed how she earned as much as kept her alive. One day I asked her if she had any relatives in Australia. "I dinna ken," she said. "You see, my son Davie was a stirring sort o' laddie, and took to the sea. He left on a voyage to Australia three years past in May, and I havena heard a word of him since. I canna think what has come o'er him, for he was aye guid to me. The neighbours say he maun be dead. But he's no dead, na! he's no dead." "Has he been seen in Australia by any of his acquaintances?" "No that I ken o';" but lowering her voice, she added, "If he were dead, the Lord would not let me pray for him. Na, na! he's no dead." Some weeks afterwards she came to me smiling through her tears, with a letter in her hand. "I have just come to tell you that the Lord has brought licht out o' darkness. Here's a letter frae Davie, and he's well and he has sent me mair than I need. I kent he wouldna forget his auld mither."

A postmaster's clients, however, are not confined to his district or even to the United Kingdom. From across the Atlantic he has many notes of interrogation. It is very curious to note the pedigree-hunting proclivities of our democratic American cousins, whose forefathers left this country a generation or two ago. Every postmaster in the kingdom receives his yearly quota of inquiries after the relatives of A. B. or C. D., who left Scotland about the year 1790 or thereby, and the strange thing is, that with all their anxiety to find their relatives there is never the slightest hint of any benevolent intention towards them. My own idea is that the publication *Heirs and Next of Kin wanted* has a considerable circulation over the water, and that the intentions of our American friends are the reverse of benevolent. Inquiries involving the search of Sasine and Parish records, or of half the burying-grounds in the county, are coolly asked for and expected as a matter of course. One lady who says she is compiling a family history, inquires if I can give her authentic particulars of her grandfather's life and also where he was buried. "He was a native of your town, eminent in literature, and was" she believes "at one time Editor of *The Times*."

To attend to all these queries a postmaster would require to spend all his spare time, like Old Mortality, among the tombs.

Another lady writes to ask who purchased her father's portrait at the sale of her uncle's effects thirty years ago.

In our own country the same questioning process prevails to a great extent. A fishmonger writes, "Please send me the names of the fish dealers and curers in your district and I will send you a barrel of prime Newfoundland cod sounds." But, odd zounds, the cod sounds never come to hand.

A lady writes from one of the largest English towns, "Could you oblige me with the names of one or two honest respectable drapers where I could obtain really good articles at moderate prices?" Answer, "Sorry there are no honest drapers in this town." She was evidently a member of the *Long Firm.*

A firm of money-lenders ask "full particulars of the burdens on a particular estate, and if it can be ascertained whether the heir presumptive has expectations apart from the estate? A handsome fee will be sent for valuable information." "No, Moses, not in our line."

The wife of a wheelbarrow man writes to ask if he has yet passed through the town and when, as she has lost trace of him.

The cruellest case of all, however, is that of a young gentleman who wrote from York:—

"Dear Sir,—I left London ten days ago with the intention of spending my holidays in Scotland, but unfortunately I have not got further than this place. As I would not like my friends to know that I have not followed out my intention, would you kindly post the enclosed letter so that it may bear the post-mark of your office, and oblige," &c.

Enclosed was rather a bulky letter, addressed, of course, to a lady, and containing no doubt a vivid description of his tour the highlands, how he drank her health in "Scotch whisky" on the top of Ben Nevis, &c. But, alas, his confidence was misplaced; the department does not connive at even such mild deception, the letter was sent on endorsed "Enclosed from York to the Postmaster with a request to post at Z——." I fear some explanation would be required when next the young gentleman presented himself at C—— Square.

These recollections would be incomplete if they did not include some reference to parties within the charmed circle of the Post Office; indeed, the happiest of my recollections refer to the servants of the Department. To spend an hour with a country sub-postmaster of the old school was a real treat. He was usually a perfect encyclopædia of the folk lore and family history pertaining to the big houses of the neighbourhood. "If you will wait a wee till I snod myself

up a bit, I'll let you see the finest view to be had in the parish." If you are antiquarian in your tastes he would take you to see a Druid's Circle or a Crannog. One of these worthies recited "Death and Dr. Hornbook" for my special benefit, and he assured me that we were then standing almost on the very spot where the scene is laid. From another I received the true and particular account of the erratic pranks of the "waterhorse" that infested a remote Highland loch.

One sub-postmaster had been a schoolmaster, and a school globe occupied a prominent position in his little parlour. He and his wife were found one day busily engaged with the globe between them, scanning by the meridian every inch of its surface, from North Pole to South, looking for a place not mentioned in the official "List of Places abroad." He had a quaint way of endorsing letters which could not be delivered: "Gone away, and not known whither gone." One day, however, when returning a letter for a person who had been long dead, he endorsed it, "Long since deceased, and not known whither gone." Old David had his doubts about that person.

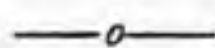
I will back an old rural postman to know more about the people on his beat than minister, lawyer, or doctor, or all three combined. The postman is everybody's body, executes endless commissions, lifts a bill or makes a deposit at the bank for the guidman, and does any amount of errands for the guidwife. As you walk alongside of him you can hear him ask, "How is your lassie the day?" at one door, and "Is your father better?" at another, and so regular is he in reaching the various houses on his road that he acts the part of a clock to the whole countryside, and the people say, "It must be —— o'clock, for there's the postman." An amusing instance of this may fitly bring these recollections to a close for the present.

A gentleman complained that a rural postman was regularly half an hour later than he should be in reaching his house. To test the matter, I walked with the postman one morning. Before we had got a mile out of town, a man working in a field hailed the postman with, "You're early the day, Willie," but Willie was dumb. Thereafter every one we met had the same salutation for Willie, whose face got blacker and blacker, but never a word spake he. The climax was reached as we entered the village, the end of his journey, when a man, looking first at the postman and then at the

kirk steeple, shouted out to a boy to run and tell the beadle the kirk clock had run down three-quarters o' an hour syne, for there's the post. The limit of endurance had been reached, and Willie's pent-up wrath found vent in a volley that sent the astonished weaver back to his loom in double-quick time. Need I say that the task of inculcating regularity on the postman was rendered very easy for me by the morning's experiences?

W. K. B.

SKETCHES OF CABLE LIFE.



No. I.

HAVING been honoured by a request to contribute to the pages of this ANNUAL, I take up my quill to write the first of, what I hope may be, a series of sketches relating to Cable Life. These sketches, I trust, will not only interest my telegraph colleagues in the British Isles, and elsewhere, but may also add some not quite insignificant quota to their stock of information relating to telegraph life in our part of the world. The scene opens at Porthcurno, *alias* P. K., a well-known cable station on the Cornish coast, belonging to the Eastern Telegraph Company, but will in due course be removed to what I may term "our part of the world," namely, those regions spanned by the cables of the Brazilian Submarine Telegraph Company, Limited, whose pay I am proud to have drawn for the last twelve years and more.

The following, then, will be descriptive of the experiences and impressions which come to the average cable-telegraph clerk during a career which, starting with a probationership at P. K., carries him abroad, and places him for various periods of time at one or another of the cable stations belonging to the Brazilian Submarine.

The first personal pronoun must necessarily occur a good many times, and for this I beforehand frankly apologise. But I cannot relate another fellow's experiences, and I only tell my own as I am hard up for a subject, and, as far as I am aware, no one in the profession has, as yet, related his.

But enough of preliminaries. . . . . A busy time it is in the Porthcurno cable office one evening late in April, 1876. Lamps have been lighted some time, imparting cosiness and geniality to otherwise strictly official surroundings. The instrument-clerks are well into the swing of their work,—rather too much so, in fact, for the long-suffering "check," a recent arrival, whose life is made a burden to him by the seemingly unending peremptory demands made by instrument-clerks upon his time and attention, and whose fair curly wig, which only lately a fond mother had stroked, has now a decidedly unkempt and dissipated appearance, and threatens to turn white or fall off altogether with the harassing worry over check-books, nomenclatures, services, and routes. His pen goes into the gum-pot, and the gum-brush into the ink-stand, and in his best endeavour to attend to everybody, pleases no one. He has just manfully gulped down a sob of despair, not in time, though, to prevent one big hot tear from splashing down upon a still wet entry in the check-book, when, lo! he finds himself relieved for tea, and straightway he forgets all his troubles. He is a sinewy plucky little chap, and grips his work. Soon he will fall into the grooves right enough. . . . . Yes, a busy evening it is, and the rapid throb and impatient clatter of the London Duplex Morse, rise in noisy contrast to the more dignified hum of the stately Syphon-Recorders. Round with ceaseless monotony whirr the glass-housed "mouse-mills," and silently the tubes of gossamer crystal with life-blood of aniline blue, electrified and vivified by myriads of blue-white discharges, trace on the ever-passing paper bands a lasting record of signals sent from Carcavellos and Vigo.

The evening wears on apace. The distinct black pointers of the office clock which surmounts the big notice-board over the mantelpiece, mark the relentless passage of time, and push on towards midnight, the time for the relief of the evening watch by that of the night.

The overseer, a good-hearted though gruff old buffer, whose bearded face wears the stereotyped official scowl, doubtless the gradually evolved result of much pre-occupation over traffic troubles and pert practice-room probationers, is taking a last look through the piles of messages and other items of office routine work previously to clearing up for the evening. Already the night watch are about, and are apparently in an extra good humour over their hot coffee or chocolate, judging from the distant peals of hearty

laughter which now and then penetrate to the office, through passage and baize-padded doors, from the neighbouring mess-room. . . . .

"*Sg. Howe to Fuller.*
. . . . send junior soon as possible."

"Hello! what's this?" exclaimed I, as the service message of which the above is a part was rapidly traced out by the siphon before which I sat and wrote at our *Carcavellos Recorder*. The senior to whom I, a probationer, was acting as assistant looked up at the "slip" and smiled at my evident enthusiasm. Ah! one must have been a "prob." on *nil per annum* at old P. K. to realise the ecstasy which the prospect of a third-class clerkship at a foreign station will create in the breast of a pushing youngster of nineteen summers. It is not so much the pay, but the feeling of independence and increased responsibility which raises one to the seventh heaven. There are moments when presentiments come upon us with unerring certainty. One of these came to me, and before the short message had been sped on its way to London, I felt convinced that the vacancy would be offered to and accepted by me. And it so happened. But where was this vacancy? At St. Vincent, Cape de Verd Islands, where Mr. Howe, chief of the B. S. T. Co.'s Pernambuco Station, was in charge during the temporary absence of the St. Vincent superintendent proper.

"Offer St. Vincent to No. 32" was wired to the P. K. superintendent the following day. I turned out to be No. 32, and after a last and successful exam. for speed on the practice-room mirror, and having joyfully accepted the offer of banishment to "the cinder heap," at length got orders to start for London previous to getting all good-byes over before taking passage by the Royal Mail steamship *Elbe* from Southampton for St. Vincent. Ah! there's a lot,—of space, at any rate,—covered by that last sentence; but not so fast, my good fellow! I was just going to remark,—If there be a vile sensation on earth, it is that of being examined on mirror. The occasion is made exceptionally impressive,—at least, it was in my case,—by the awful solemnity given to the proceedings. A first-class clerk is given you as a writer, and an overseer is put on to send. I'm not quite so certain that the battery man is not had in to re-trim the lamp and to tidy up the room a bit from the awful

mess in which it is generally left by "those *something* probationers, &c., &c., &c." (old P. K.-ites will remember the classic phrase, and the purity of the old Cornish battery-man's utterances in general!). The solemn looks on the face of the overseer as he moves off to the keys in the next room, and of the first-class clerk as he sits down by you with pencil and paper, quite take all the starch out of you, and as you fix a demented gaze on the mirror "spot," you feel as if you had taken a whole box of Cockle's pills (this is not an advertisement) the night before. All breath goes clean out of your lungs; your heart beats audibly, and it's all you can do to gasp out: "L, O, N, D, O, N," only to find that it is "Liverpool" after all. Then the serious first-class one remarks: "Take it easy, old man; you're all right." The kind fellow's condescension at calling you "old man" puts you to rights in no time, and, in sheer gratitude, you read away like fun, including several mis-spelt words and other such traps for guessers. . . . .

And now good-bye to P. K., on the 27th of April, 1876, after spending seven months to a day in the old place to which, notwithstanding one's longing for foreign service, one gets very much attached. Also, seven months is quite sufficient time for firm friendships to be cemented, and it is hard to say good-bye to a set of jolly fellows, most of whom, very likely, you'll never see again on this earth. How our little set has been scattered! Old D. D., the mighty man of valour, who'd face a mad bull with a war-whoop worthy of a Chawnee, now smokes his calumet under his own banana trees in far-off Pernam. Truelock, where are you? Ill-fated Anderson, foully murdered for loot in brigand-infested Crete, rest to your soul. Keneth Stevens out in the far, far East. *Salve* Richardson,—ponderous old "Tichy,"—gone to his rest, and buried at sea on his way home from Bombay. To you Algoe, Blackwood Price, Carew, Carey, Cheesman, Galbraith, Headley, Hereaghty, Hodsoll, Hogge, Sullivan, Taylor, Turner, Wilkinson, Youngson, a hearty shake-hands to you all, in spirit, wherever you may read these lines.

Yes, goodbye; but what a business a goodbye is at P. K., with the "last evening" in the mess-room, and *Auld Lang Syne* sung by almost the whole *personnel* of the station, with joined and crossed hands *en masse*. The wags in the establishment amuse themselves and others by designing on big sheets of paper conspicuous designs of a strictly funereal character, and in which huge skulls and cross-bones of not

very correct anatomy predominate. Coffins, too, with enlivening inscriptions, such as "*E. R. B. turned up his toes on the Cinder Heap, May 20th*, 1876"; all this referring to what my friends pretended to believe would be my fate, the day after I was due to arrive at S.V. This was lively; in fact, I thought it most considerate . . . . . . The goodbye sing-song winds up with God save the Queen, which vibrates the ceiling and brings down flakes of white-wash. Soon all is quiet, and after some lingering in bed-rooms here and there, for last chats and good-nights, every one goes to his own room, and all is silent, except for the scarcely distinguishable burr *felt* more than heard in some of the rooms, due to the instruments in the office.

My last night in P. K.! It would be a shame to leave the place without indulging in at least a brief retrospect of life at this sequestered spot, almost the *ultima Thule* of old England, —that is to say, in a westerly direction.

In the same way that foreign service is the great goal towards which the P. K. probationer strives, so P. K. itself appears in the light of a haven of rest to other anxious youths not yet nominated to a probationership, and to whom that distinguished grade at P. K. on *nil per annum*, is synonymous with an assured career, for, of course, once you are at P. K., unless you're an awful duffer, you are sure of an appointment at some time or other.

On my obtaining a nomination to P. K., I had already had some experience, having been through the full course at the Conduit Street (London) Schools,* where cable signalling and testing was a speciality, and it was only on my handing to the "Eastern" Company's traffic manager a certificate from Conduit Street, that my nomination was confirmed. So on my arrival at P. K., a real cable office, I knew quite enough about everything to take an intelligent interest in all I saw. I was already the possessor of copious lecture jottings and diagrams, but my work in this line, was nowhere when compared with that of a fellow probationer, H. D. Wilkinson,† a former fellow pupil at Conduit Street, who had a most complete set of notes in beautifully-written shorthand.

---

* Since removed to Princes Street, Hanover Square.

† H. D. Wilkinson was six years in Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, but is now senior lecturer at the Princes Street Schools of Electrical Engineering. He is the author of the admirable series under the modest title "Letters for Learners and Unprofessional Readers," now in course of publication in the *Electrician*.

As for P. K. itself, notices and papers about it have already been published in various periodicals, so that a set description here is needless. It is certainly an ideal situation for a training station. It lies ten miles from the nearest town, Penzance, and has a healthy, bracing, and at the same time mild climate. It is located two or three miles from Land's End. There is no lack of amusements. Cricket is started as early as March. I with others bathed daily, either in the sea or in deep pools among the rocks, up to the 13th of December!

There is splendid walking, and the climbs among the stupendous granite rocks are glorious. Sickness is unknown at P. K. As regards religious duties, the majority of the staff attend at the neighbouring hamlet church of St. Levan, an interesting picturesque building so little changed since the old times, that the holy-water stoup is still in its place in the quaint little porch. The Telegraph Staff, greatly to their credit, take a warm interest in the maintenance and well-being of this church, of the congregation of which they form the large

majority. Organ, choir, decorations, and even the bell ringing, all are undertaken by the telegraph community. Catholics, though, have ten miles to go to the nearest church, which is at Penzance, and as I am one, Sunday church-going for me involved a good long walk; but this was no drawback, not even an inconvenience, owing in great part to the kind hospitality of Canon Shortland, the priest at Penzance. Also after the really enjoyable ten-mile trudge back, sometimes through heavy rain, and across those bleak mist-swept valleys, there was a bright prospect in view of the well-lighted and warm, cosy mess-room, with nearly the whole staff at tea, to the accompaniment of much good-natured chaff and banter.

Ah, that mess-room, under what different aspects I have seen it! Take the first breakfast, for instance, for the staff and "probs" going on morning duty. One sees fellows rushing in, in the act of adjusting collar and tie, and with hair almost dripping, in a manner which reminds one forcibly of calling over before morning chapel in bygone school days. Oatmeal-porridge, a couple of poached eggs on toast, and cocoa: this was the staple breakfast for most of us, and a very good one too; but how hard it was to bolt all this down if you had given yourself only two minutes to do it in, and you could see through the window Mr. O———, the morning-duty overseer coming down over the hill, punctual to the minute. There was one of us probs—a moustached and whiskered prob, too, so he ought to have known better!—who could never manage to be in time for breakfast before appearing in the practice-room at 8 a.m., into which, therefore, he used to go breakfastless, only to have his poached eggs and cocoa brought round to a side window overlooking a yard, by one of the servant lasses. Then I have seen our whiskered friend with an egg on toast in one hand, and pumping away quite unconcernedly on the practice-Morse with the other—a sight for the gods. Well! I won't tell any more practice-room yarns. "Honour among thieves," they say,—not that we were thieves, but some of us were decidedly harum-scarum,—and besides, this was more than twelve years ago. But we were on the subject of the mess-room. It is so easy to fly off at a tangent when one gets on to one's reminiscences. About lunch and dinner there is nothing much to remark, except that as far as I have seen, all P. K. appetites are voracious, owing to the grand sea breezes, and to the amount of manly exercise which we all delighted in. Ah, the Christmas dinner; I assisted at this

once, and I shall never forget it, nor the perfect manner in which the president performed his genial duties. I sat next to him, so I ought to know. The room blazed with geniality and fun. The brew of punch at the wind up was just right, and the *coup d'œil* presented by all one's merry comrades in different stages of not only loquacity, but also agility, and wearing and posturing in the miscellaneous contents of costume-crackers, without observing any particular fitness as to gender, is more easily imagined than described.

One cannot write of P. K. without all kinds of old scenes and incidents crowding one's memory. The mad tumble helter-skelter down to the beach to bathe from our glorious *white sand cove*, the arena of which is all formed of minute and broken sea-shells . . . . The rush, and finally one huge long jump, once one came to the soft sand, and it didn't matter what position one came down in, sitting, sprawling, head first, or any other way. There! we pick ourselves up from our bed of sand and fresh delicious briny seaweed—hie to our "dressing-room" behind that big rock—off with all impedimenta—climb to our favourite dive, and . . . . oh, isn't it grand? With what a sense of supreme liberty we strike out through the cool, limpid, dancing, shimmering, sun-shiny water. Not that it was always so. Often it was too rough to bathe in the sea, and we then betook ourselves to one of the many deep pools among the granite rocks, a crystal pool kept fresh and shaded by over-hanging monoliths, and wholly lined with sea plants (one cannot call them *weeds*) of all hues, and with shy sensitive sea anemones nestling down cosily in its nooks and corners.

When big waves were breaking over everything, and bathing anywhere was out of the question, young blood in its over-flowing health and vigour went in for other pastimes. As the wash after each wave swirled back, races would be run for a certain rock which then lay uncovered. One could just touch this rock and rush back for dear life before the next wave came thundering up the smooth wet stretch of sand, a hoary avalanche of snowy brine. Boys—even big boys—are thoughtless, and in the enthusiasm of the moment wrongly imperil lives most precious to others, and all for what? For a mere romp. One sees this afterwards, if one does not at the time.

With daily walks to the Logan Rock, and towering castle-peak, or to the Blow-hole, the Land's End, to coves and caves, points and bays innumerable, of which I do not remem-

ber the names; expeditions to St. Just, Penzance, Marazion, Mount St. Michael, and lastly, free access to a very good station library, ample recreation rewarded hard work. Since the time of which I write, other facilities for relaxation have been started, and one hears of a lawn tennis-court, a lecture-hall or theatre, also a museum. I must not forget the school for the children of the married staff. Altogether, dear old P. K. is a complete little world in itself, comprising life in all its stages, from infant to superintendent.

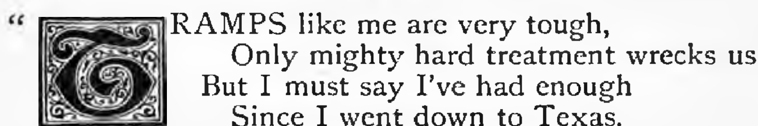
. . . . Good-bye, Porthcurno. Ellis's trap is at the door for the drive to the railway at Penzance. The last moment has come. Hand and heart ache with good-byes . . . .

. . . . Days have passed. Other good-byes more painful than the former are over. The mail train from Waterloo has arrived at Southampton, where, at length, I find myself, amongst heaps of luggage and a crowd of fellow-passengers, on board the tender which is to take us to where the R.M. s.s. *Elbe* is lying further down the harbour; for in this ship I have booked a passage for St. Vincent C. de V. . . . . Here I bid my long-suffering and indulgent readers *au revoir* till our next Annual.

EDWARD RAYMOND-BARKER.

Madeira.

WESTERN TELEGRAPHERS.



"TRAMPS like me are very tough,
Only mighty hard treatment wrecks us
But I must say I've had enough
Since I went down to Texas.

Sometimes we die in railroad cars,
Or ocean storms capsize us,
But by the shade of Professor Morse.
Down there they paralyse us."

Such was the plaintive wail of a "tramp" telegraph operator on his return from a trip in the Lone Star State.

General Phil. Sheridan once said that if he owned Texas and Hades he would rent out Texas and live in Hades. Of course, he was a safe distance from Texas when he said it, and he did not use precisely those words, but more expressive ones to the same effect. He probably, while in Texas, found a tarantula in his boot, or sat on a log that had a hornet's nest in it, and all the family at home, or maybe the vigilants mistook him for a horse thief and gave him a séance, or he struck a band of cowboys out on a "toot," or perhaps he listened to the seductive fairy lore of the real estate man, and bought some town lots on the Staked Plains. Anyway, whatever experience the General may have had to cause him to speak with such severity, his judgment was unduly harsh and a libel on the State, for the average man would vote Texas a pretty good country.

However, the tramp's touching description of his experiences had, probably, a good deal of truth in it, for the lot of the telegrapher in the newer States and territories of the

Union is not always a gorgeous pathway of flowers by day and a bed of roses by night,—not all deer stalking and "bar" hunting, Indian adventures and romance,—but it has, nevertheless, its bright spots and its sunny side.

There are in the United States two distinct classes of operators. One is the "commercial operator," working for the companies that transact public business similar to the Post Office Telegraphs of Great Britain. He must be well posted in the general run of telegraph business and in all the wrinkles pertaining to Stock Exchange and broker business, market reports, baseball, racing, and all the many kinds of newspaper "reports," &c.

The other class is the "railroad operator." Theirs is more of a routine business, but the class embraces all grades, from the man whose sole lightning-jerking consists in reporting the passing of a train to the operator at a large division point or at head-quarters, who has to be gilt-edged in a knowledge of all the technicalities of railroading and railroad telegraphing and a "pretty slick" manipulator, and who is in no way the inferior of a first-class commercial operator.

In the West, however, a man must combine experience both as commercial and railroad operator. After crossing the middle States, the cities are few and far between, and the farther west the more the towns are scattered, till one of about a thousand inhabitants, and which will, as a matter of course, boast of about three times that number, is quite a business centre, so that there are but few large telegraph points except where trans-continental business is relayed (transmitted). What public telegraphing there is, besides that of the principal towns to which the telegraph companies run their wires, is done over the railroad wires and by railroad operators.

To get along in this sort of a country a man has to adapt himself to circumstances entirely, and be able to take a position as owl (night operator) at Hard Times side track, or to copy report for the Squedunk *Daily Bladder*, just as the fluctuations in his favour with the gods may decide.

At the smaller towns the operator is a man of many parts. Express agent, ticket-seller, station agent, baggage-handler, or, as he is more correctly termed, baggage-smasher, and operator. Occasionally he has more menial duties to perform, such as keeping switch-lights in order and acting as general utility man. There is a large number of men who never rise above mediocrity in the business, and who gravitate from one jim-crow station or side track to another, where the

duties consist solely in handling an occasional train order and reporting the passing of trains.

The salary is graded by the amount and quality of the work, and while there are exceptions to this rule in keeping up with the higher grades of work, it works in the other direction with an accuracy that is phenomenal.

I presume most every one is aware that all western railroads are single track roads, and that trains are moved by a system of train orders issued by a despatcher. At the stations the track is doubled or a side track put in, so as to allow trains to pass. The train despatcher, who must, of course, be a first-class operator, has a division of the road in his charge, and all trains while in that division are under his control, and he is responsible for them. He must keep track of their every movement and arrange their meeting and passing at stations without causing delay, and when he has a considerable number of trains on his division it may be easily imagined that his task is no light one. He must, of course, use his best endeavours to prevent two trains attempting to pass each other on the same track, and to avoid this is not so easy as it may appear, as the sad fact that the feat is sometimes attempted goes to prove.

When a new road or an extension is built it takes considerable time to get all the offices fixed up, and until this can be done the usual thing is to put a box-car at one end of the side track, and the operator lives in his private car, just like the magnates of the road occasionally do when they travel around. The operator's car, however, cannot be called a Palace car, at least not by any one who is not in the real estate business and who has a decent regard for the truth, or who was not raised in a Ute wigwam. A box-car is used to transport almost every variety of merchandise, from rock ballast to water melons and guano. After it has seen a few years service and is too ripe for moving coal or railroad ties, and is rich with relics of travel and odours of the spices and salt fish it has carried, they make a side track operating-room and telegrapher's boudoir out of it. It is then fitted up with every luxury that the surrounding country affords, but it is a mighty hard country for luxuries, and if it boasted of anything but the telegraph instruments, a camp bedstead, a rickety chair, and a dilapidated table, one would be justified in doubting the existence of any foundation for the boast, though sometimes the occupant has a taste for ornamentation and *bric-à-brac*, and gives his taste full scope.

Of course there is no town nearer than a few hundred miles more or less, and is likely to be more as less, because in a new country the towns are built up after the road has opened up the country some, and the later traveller on discovering that the railroad runs through all the towns can account for it by the same hypothesis as that about big rivers running by large cities. If there is no section house or labourers' camp handy the operator must hustle his own provender; be his own caterer and cook, stock his larder with bacon and canned beans and other delicacies, and get his water-barrel filled from the tank on the supply train.

If any one pines to be far from the madding crowd what he needs is to be appointed to a position in a box-car on a side track in Western Texas, Arizona, or some similarly favoured locality. A splendid prospect of level prairie or desolate sand hills, here and there patches of sage brush, beds of cacti with spikes like rosettes of bayonets, and occasionally a rich growth of broken rock. There the thoughtful operator, his soul sickened with the hollowness of life in the crowded haunts of men, can lie under the grateful shade cast by the telegraph wires and commune with Nature. Nature, represented chiefly by the insect world, will reciprocate and commune with him. Ants, in their eager desire for close communion, will affectionately fill his apparel with their warm presence, and the mosquitoes will find a way almost into his very soul. In time he will become quite an entomologist, and have his car filled with specimens,—live ones. He will become so wrapped up with entomology that he will carry quite a cabinet of specimens secreted on his person, and his collection will become very much attached to him. He can, and will, in a very short time, and with little exertion on his part, gather round him more varieties of bugs and ants than he could classify and enumerate in a lifetime.

At night the sweet-voiced coyote will hover around and sing his lullaby. I may say that if a full orchestra of cats could once hear a coyote when he is pouring out his soul in harmony they would all commit suicide from sheer envy.

One railroad used to supply each office with a gun so that the operator could occasionally join in and help to fill the midnight air with melody and desiccated animal remains.

Strange that a man cannot be content to remain in such an elysium, but it seems very much like it, and the operator usually is not, or not for very long.

This, however, is a picture of only one section, but one chapter in the volume of an operator's experience in the West. His lot may be cast in a country where there is good fishing, hunting, and many other kinds of sport and amusement. He may be in some pleasant, little sociable kind of a town, and there are lots of them, where he can have a very pleasant time indeed. He usually samples all localities and will on the shortest notice pack his grip, if he is so fortunate as to own one or have any possessions that would necessitate his owning one, and depart for parts unknown, and uncared. Some probably believe in the old saying that it is cheaper to move than to pay board bills.

Usually the benevolent conductor will allow him to ride free on the strength of his letters of record, if not on a passenger train then on a freight, and it is but seldom that he is driven to the extremity of stowing away in a box-car. Sometimes a conductor on finding an operator tourist on his train without a ticket or a pass will deal with him as with the rest of humanity,—stop the train and put him off, but is rarely hard-hearted enough to put a man off between stations. Such a calamity *does* sometimes overcloud the brightness of an operator's life, and then commiserate the poor soul, oh ye gods! Dropped off between two stations twenty miles or more apart, picture him as he plods over the dusty track under a burning sun, wearily counting the ties and plaintively repeating to himself the pathetic remark made by the Governor of North Carolina to the Governor of South Carolina, to wit, that "It's a long time between drinks."

In summer time there is usually quite a large number of operators "on the road" travelling from one place to another, subbing here for a man on leave for a month, and there for one sick for a day or two. To-day making one of the sixty or more operators who in the course of a year are "permanently appointed" at a water-tank on the western plains, next week subbing for a man up among the mountains of Colorado or down in the swamps of Louisiana, or probably "doing" old Mexico.

Such a life, naturally, is full of variety, and not always of the pleasantest kind. Being a tramp he often gets much the same treatment as a tramp. He may strike a streak of hard luck and run out of funds, for such a roving life does not offer many opportunities for amassing a fortune, or at least not a colossal one; then he has often to rely on the kind

assistance of a brother operator, and can always find a helping hand. As a class operators are real good-hearted fellows, always ready to help out, in any way possible, a fellow-grinder, and such assistance is generally given and accepted as a matter of course.

There are black sheep and dead beats among the members of the craft just as there are such everywhere, and such men, being of necessity driven to much travelling, have to some extent thrown discredit on the profession. The great fault among the boys is too much conviviality, and in many, a more or less consuming desire to be "tough" and be "one of de gang." To-morrow is usually too far ahead to worry about. A man will have a soft time all summer, plenty of work and lots of fun, and in the fulness of his joy forget the march of the seasons until the chill winter finds him with a paper suit, a linen duster, and no steady job. Then to help to cut down expenses in the way of clothes he wends his way southward, hunting for a stray job and sadly humming, "Now is the winter of our discontent, worked all summer and spent every blamed cent." Fate is sometimes pretty hard on him, and he has a tough time till spring; has to sand-paper his spine and put red pepper in his shoes to delude himself into the belief that the winter is a kinder mild one, for the kindest charity is apt to get cold as it mellows with age.

On applying for a position a man is not required to file a six-page application giving a detailed history of his ancestors for three generations back and of the present standing, social and moral, of each individual member of his family. He has no medical certificates or school board diplomas to produce, nor is he required to give any references as to his personal highly respectable character, nor give his last employer's business standing and explain minutely his reasons for leaving (the last question might sometimes be an embarrassing one), as is the case in the telegraph service in some parts. The chief operator, who is equivalent to the C. in C. in England, hires all the operators and the newly-arrived grinder calls on him and "strikes" him for a job. The chief usually inquires where he has worked and what his record is,—that is, what grade of work he is able to do; then gives him a trial on a wire for a short time, and, if his work is satisfactory and there is a position vacant, puts him to work, and that is the end of the matter. The process by which a man is relieved from his position is even more simple.

In most large cities there is an institution called the waiting list, or the extra list, and new arrivals are placed on this list waiting for vacancies. They report at the office every morning and evening, and if the chief requires additional help on account of regular men being away or of rush of business, he puts some of the extra list men to work. Sometimes the extra men get in more time than operators on the regular force, and sometimes they do not get in enough to pay their room rent. The railroads have a kind of waiting list, too, and the men on it act as reliefs in case of sickness, &c., of regular men.

This waiting-list business is rather unsatisfactory, as it is a case of no work no pay, and in the dull season when a man stays about the office for some six hours every day waiting to "catch on" and only gets about eight hours' work a week, it is a very aggravated case of hope deferred making the heart sick.

This list, however, is more of an Eastern than a Western institution, as in the West the "boys" keep moving pretty freely and there is no use for a waiting list, or they will not do any waiting, but go right on and strike the next town.

Most operators have, as a rule, a spread-eagle idea of independence; think themselves at all times and under all circumstances as good and important as the chief, and usually much more so. This sometimes leads to trouble, and in order to coerce or punish the unruly, the companies "have got a little list," the Black List. To ordinary notions of justice this black-listing is an outrage. The list is sent periodically to every office of the company, and the unfortunates whose names appear thereon are debarred from any further employment by that company. It is a dangerous weapon, and its use has been declared illegal by the civil courts of many States.

It looks very bad, but usually the man who happens to get on the list does not lose much sleep worrying about the matter, but apparently accepts the inevitable with more or less resignation, and often indignation, and retires into private life. Soon a new star appears in the telegraph firmament, and he of the black list gets his mail from the post-office under another name. The erstwhile Jim Smith evolutes into the James W. Smithers. That kind of thing is pretty well understood by the "boys" and those in authority are not by any means ignorant of the "racket," but it is rarely that any

trouble occurs, for it is a pretty mean kind of man that will hunt another down unless such a thing is richly deserved.

It is somewhat amusing to see one operator approach another and accost him in a mysterious whisper with, "Say, I guess I've met you before. What was your name before you came to Texas?"

Of course it is the business of the night operator,—the owl,—to keep awake for orders and to watch out that a train does not get by his station without his reporting it to the despatcher, because if a train does get by and the despatcher not know, the said train is very liable to meet another one coming the other way on the same track. The owl generally seems to consider this requirement an imposition, reasons that it is unnatural for a man to keep awake at night, and many and varied are the schemes he resorts to for causing a passing train to awaken him. A very common one was to tie a thin string across the track from a telegraph pole or a post, pass it through the keyhole in the door of his office and fasten it to a piece of wood or other object placed on the table, so that the locomotive catching and pulling the string drags off the wood on to the floor, and the racket awakens the sleeper. The string of course breaks after accomplishing its work.

On one occasion a tired operator came on duty at 8 p.m. and before retiring as usual proceeded to fix his alarm. His thin twine was not to be found, and the only string available was a piece of stout bell-cord, but he reasoned that would answer just as well, so tied it across the track, passed it through the wicket in the door, and tilting his chair tied the cord to the leg, allowing that the chair would be upset and so arouse him.

All being arranged he lay down by the stove to sleep the sleep of a man with his conscience devoid of reproach, feeling that he had done his whole duty. In the midst of a happy dream about pay cars and square meals, he was startled from slumber sweet by being yanked across the room by the leg, and then thoroughly awakened by a terrific crash. He beheld the chair sailing wildly out into space and in its mad break for freedom it had upset the table, made a total wreck of the room and carried away the glass upper half of the door. His first thought was that about two cyclones and a stray earthquake had visited the vicinity, but the next instant the cold facts of the manifestations broke over him like a crate of eggs, and reaching for his key he calmly ticked out to the despatcher "Number 26 passed on tig."

Probably the incident itself was eclipsed by the explanation, made to the superintendent by the operator, of the wreck of the office. How he was attacked by an infuriated steer which pursued him to the office, and detailing in thrilling language his marvellous escape and the heroic efforts he made to save other of the company's property from destruction. He half expected to get promoted on the strength of it, but began to lose faith in the gratitude of corporations when the superintendent advised him that he would be relieved from further duty in a few days.

The Lineman's life, too, is one of considerable variety. He must be a man of much resource to cope successfully with the varied troubles that come to wires in the western country.

One instance worth mentioning is that of a repairer who, going after a break, found that the storm had carried away about 150 yards of wire. Not having that quantity with him, and being a long distance from supplies, he brought down one end of the line and made a splice with it and the top wire of the barbed-wire fence running alongside the track, then did the same at the other end of the break, and freeing the fence wire went back to the depôt for material to make permanent repairs. For the few hours following the business of the road was carried on through the 150 yards of barbed-wire fence, and I don't know but that it was an improvement on many of the streaks of rust that do duty for telegraph wires in some parts of the country.

Where the stations are far apart a wire is run down the pole at convenient points and connected through a key and sounder in a small box, so the repairer can communicate along the line (wires are worked on close circuit in this country). I remember on one occasion a repairer on opening one of these boxes was assailed by a cloud of wild bees that had made their home inside, and he had quite an interesting and lively time with them, too.

The following week he discovered another similar nest, but managed to avoid having the bees discover him, and he decided to get even. Next day he took along a lot of oiled rags and waste, and getting close up to the box, lighted the rags and thrust them inside, intending to smoke or burn the bees out. The scheme succeeded admirably, and more, for the pole being dry as tinder took fire and was burned down, giving the repairer three days' work getting things fixed up again.

Taken altogether, and without running to extremes in any direction, the life of an operator in the West is not the most monotonous, arduous, or unpleasant kind of life that a man can lead. It is a very different one to that of the staid and settled telegrapher in the East and in old England. The country is new, and many things and ways about it are pretty rough, but it has many advantages that sort of balance matters. There is a vast difference between Wyoming, or Idaho, or Texas, and New York, or Boston, or London, and also a great difference between States like Kansas, or Iowa, Minnesota, and the eastern States or England, but the majority of people seem to prefer the West after living there awhile and getting accustomed to its ways. It is not a conservatory suitable for nurturing dudes or mashers, or any such species of the higher order of creation, but it is a pretty good country for everyday men.

Telegraph and railroad business is conducted with an almost entire absence of red-tapeism, and in a free and easy way that would startle many people in the post-office telegraphs and railroads of Great Britain. As in the courts there one perhaps does not get many fine expositions of nice points of law, but does get lots of sound sense and equity, so with the railroads and telegraphs there is little red-tape and overpowering display of official dignity and importance, but the efficiency of the service is not in any way impaired thereby; things run very smoothly, and a man's life is rendered proportionately happier. Every man is presumed to be the possessor of at least a moderate quantity of brains and is expected to use them, and is not supposed to be a mere automaton, moving in certain unalterable grooves and only responsive to the touch of a superior possessed of omniscient and infallible wisdom.

In fact, all the people of the West have ways of doing most things that are decidedly original, and they are usually very different ways to those of the Old World, perhaps better, perhaps equally good but a little different; any way, the record the great West is making goes to show that it "gets there" all right.

It takes a great many different people, and countries, and methods, of conducting the affairs of life to make up this world of ours, and even with the wonderful variety that exists there are not enough sorts to go round and everybody's likes and prejudices to be accommodated. Narrowing the varieties down to professions and businesses, life in the

telegraph service the world over can, I think, be fairly said to embrace a more varied field of interesting experiences than most other callings, and the foregoing sketch is an honest though feeble effort to relate a few bits of experience that an operator rubs up against in following his vocation (chasing it would be more correct) in the great West.

S. J. PRYOR.

New York.

STRANGE MISSIVES.

—o—

HE Post Office, like all Government departments, has a vast number of printed forms. Form "Postmasters—No. 15" is as under:—

"Postmasters—No. 15.—Post Office,——— 188—.—A Packet addressed to you containing ——— is detained at this office, it being contrary to law to forward by Post anything likely to injure the Officers of this Department or the contents of the Mails, as will be seen by reference to page —— of the Post Office Guide. If you will cause application to be made at this Office for the Packet referred to, it will be delivered to the person applying for it; but, if not applied for within a fortnight from the present time, it will be disposed of in the Returned Letter Office.—I am, Your obedient servant, ——— Postmaster."

On page 15 of the "Post Office Guide," amongst "Articles not allowed to be sent by Post," is specified "*Any living creature.*" But attempts are often made to send living creatures by post, and when these creatures are intercepted, and form "No. 15" is sent to the addressees, some curious correspondence sometimes takes place.

For instance, a gentleman in Cheshire once attempted to send to a lady in Lincolnshire a very large toad. This was not intended as a "goak," or even as a love token; but the addressee was an ardent naturalist, who kept a "Newtery," and wished to add Master Toad to her collection. The reptile escaped detection at the office of origin and one or two others, but when about midway on his journey he was discovered and tried by court-martial. Sentence was speedily pronounced on him as a "Prohibited Article," and form

"No. 15" was sent on in his place. This evoked a very indignant protest from the lady-naturalist. The waylaid traveller was no other than the well-known *Bufo vulgaris*—of a perfectly harmless disposition. It was quite impossible that he could "injure the Officers of the Department," even if he had any such malevolent intent. He must be sent on immediately; as newts, frogs, slow-worms, and lizards were all anxiously awaiting his arrival.

To this the postmaster replied that though he and his men had no personal dread of *Bufo vulgaris*, and did not for one moment suppose that he would willingly do them any bodily damage, *Bufo* himself would run great risk of injury if consigned to a mail-bag; or if, in the necessary process of stamping, the cover enclosing him were to receive some unlucky thump, letters or other "contents of the mails" might suffer considerably from bufonic juices!

All this correspondence took time. Meanwhile poor *Bufo* was in durance vile in a departmental fire-bucket, wherein—it being summer time—he was not devoid of nutriment; as he fed sumptuously on flies, which he caught for himself with wonderful dexterity. But one night some of the junior clerks taking him out of his den to play with, he made his escape. They made diligent search for him in vain; but lighting on a fat yellow frog, they placed this in the bucket to await the coming of the learned lady from Lincolnshire. It was well for them that she never came to claim her prey.

On another occasion one of the sorters handed to the postmaster a small pill-box, which had been found loose among the correspondence. This on examination was found to contain the head and thorax of a very fine hornet. The postmaster thought it probable that it was an entomological specimen of value, which had fallen out of some letter. Accordingly he enclosed it in a well-secured packet, and sent it registered to the Returned Letter Office to await inquiry.

A day or two afterwards the owner,—another lady naturalist,—called to see him, and asked with some asperity whether he was aware that he had thieves in his establishment. As this is a charge which is often recklessly made against the Post Office, especially by the *fair* sex, the postmaster was not taken aback, but calmly asked for proof. "Why, a letter addressed to me has been wilfully broken open, and its contents stolen."

"What were the contents, Madam?"

"Part of a hornet."

"Oh, that is perfectly safe. It was not stolen, but it was found here, and has been sent to the Returned Letter Office for safe custody, but I will get it back."

Accordingly he wrote to the "R.L.O.," accurately describing the packet, and received by return of post a little diamond beetle. At the risk of a severe snub for "unofficial" language, he sent this back with the remark, "Overhaul your 'Linnæus,' and when found make a note of; a diamond beetle is no part of a hornet." By the next mail the valuable thorax arrived, and the fair entomologist was pacified.

Yet another toad story. A clerk one night, when, as in duty bound, examining a book-packet to see whether it contained any "unauthorised enclosure," found to his horror four monstrous toads of divers colours. These—save the mark!—were snugly ensconced in a Clergy List, in which a kind of well had been dug out with much skill and trouble for their reception. These too, were addressed to a lady—this time in the Emerald Isle. The packet was of course detained, and form "No. 15" was duly sent, with an *addendum* to the effect that when the book and its contents were called for, there would be some 7s. 6d. extra postage to pay, as the whole package was liable to letter rate, at that time much higher than it is now.

This notice brought—not the lady, but a plaintive letter from her; and, shortly afterwards, the *fons et origo* of the whole affair, in the shape of a jovial English parson, who received back his packet; paid the extra postage "like a bird"; said he was not aware he was breaking the Post Office regulation; and explained that the young Hibernienne was particularly anxious to have the *Bufones* as pets, she never having seen one in all her life, living as she did in the favoured land of St. Patrick, who

> "Drove the frogs
> Into the bogs,
> And banished all the vermin."

In a pleasant village some four miles from its county town lives a reverend schoolmaster, an ardent disciple of Cuvier. He, therefore, like another White of Selborne, encourages the study of natural history among his scholars

and, as a consequence, they have frequent dealings with a London purveyor of "rats and mice and such small deer."

This gentleman, despite the Post Office Guide, undertakes to send his commodities alive and safe through the post. No doubt they often reach their journey's end undiscovered and scatheless. At other times, their lot, like the policeman's, "is not a happy one."

One day the office-keeper of the Post Office referred to in this article saw three or four green lizards crawling about in one of the passages. It never occurred to him that they were "living epistles," and either from horror, or moved by the Englishman's natural instinct of killing something, he brained them on the spot. Soon after a pretty little dormouse arrived in two pieces, *i.e.*, the outer coat of his brushy tail, wrenched off no doubt by a ruthless steel stamp, and the rest of his body all alive and otherwise uninjured. Form "No. 15" brought his owner—a chubby-faced schoolboy.

A day or two afterwards several live snakes put in an appearance. These were not called for for several days. In the interim Sir Pædagogus had sent a somewhat caustic letter, in which he professed to suppose that all the officials were in a state of abject terror at the serpents, and momentarily expected to share the fate of Laocoön and his sons. It therefore had to be explained to him (as to the Lincolnshire lady) that the word "injure" in the form referred, not simply to "the officers of the department," but also to "the contents of the mails"; and that it would not be fair to the rest of the community if "slimy things . . . . with," or without, "legs" were to be allowed to make a "slimy sea" of their correspondence.

This brought over the Reverend Cuvierian. Ushered into the chief clerk's room, he immediately "saw snakes!" and then ensued a scene second only to that described in the twenty-fifth canto of "The Inferno," or the tenth book of "Paradise Lost," as the reptiles

"glide off
Hissing along the"

linoleum, hotly pursued by the mammal, who is however at last victorious, and triumphantly carries off his quarry safely knotted in a white cambric pocket-handkerchief!

SPERABENE.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

A TELEGRAPH ENGINEER'S STORY.

THE story I am about to tell has at least one merit. It is absolutely true in all respects except the names. What is related happened shortly after the transfer to the State of the property of the old telegraph companies. At the transfer I was appointed to the engineering control of an important district, and in the following summer the Great Eastern and Western Telegraph Company—a company not at first included in the Government scheme—became merged in the great national undertaking. A large section of the company's system fell to my care, and a number of its foremen and linemen came under my charge. One of the latter was a smart intelligent young fellow, about twenty-five years of age, named Charles Preston, dark and rather swarthy complexioned, but of light, athletic build. He was an active lineman, had a fair technical knowledge; was master of the special class of apparatus with which he had particularly to deal. He was fairly educated, respectful to his superiors, and was well liked by his fellow workmen, so that that there seemed every probability that he would ultimately rise to a good position.

One day, to my surprise, I heard of a serious breach of discipline by my model lineman, and he admittted the charge, saying he had been led into temptation which he regretted. The misconduct was overlooked, but very soon other complaints were made, and ultimately his transgressions became so

serious that he was "permitted" to resign. All who knew the man were grieved at his fall, but were puzzled as to the cause, for his habits were sober and steady and his home life happy. He did not blame any one, so that his foolishness was a mystery. Several months later a knock came to my office door, and in response to my "Come in," Charley Preston entered, looking the very ghost of his former self. His pale wan face, deeply sunken eyes, and thin figure told of pinching want. He tried to put on a bold front, but soon broke down and sobbed like a child. He upbraided himself for his past follies, and told of punishment in want of bread. His wife, whom he asked God to bless, was ill, and she had tried to support them both, and on his account was almost heart-broken. Now he had a chance of work under a railway telegraph engineer if he could give a reference. This the poor fellow could not do, and so he came to ask my aid. The engineer happened to be an old colleague of mine, and after hearing Charley's story he agreed to give him another start in the "game of life." The look of gratitude on Preston's face when he heard the good news I shall ever remember with pleasure, and he went home with a lighter heart and a somewhat heavier pocket than had lately been his lot.

In his new employment my old lineman won back his good name. Everybody had a good word for him, and his superior, too, was greatly pleased. His wife regained her good looks and cheerfulness, and a little son brought sunshine to the hearts of the parents, and all bade fair for the future.

Perhaps a year had passed when I was surprised by the visit of a detective, who told me my late lineman was in custody on a charge of dealing in a quantity of silver plate, which he affirmed he had found buried at the foot of a telegraph pole, which he was digging out for renewal.

Preston gave all particulars as to the place, but the bare idea of such a "find" in such a spot seemed so ridiculous to the officer, that he scouted it as absurd. The prisoner had asked him to tell me the story and request me to employ a solicitor on his behalf. The case was so clear that the detective thought it would be a waste of money to do this. "Why, the case is perfectly clear," he said, and he told me how he had been instructed to watch the place of old Barker, whose shop was in Fellgate, a low part of the town. Tony Barker was more than suspected of being a "fence," or receiver of stolen goods, and while watching his place one evening, a man

carrying a sack, was seen to pass and re-pass old Barker's, where ostensibly was carried on the business of a marine store dealer. The sack was evidently light, but the sharp eyes of the detective noticed there was a heavy substance at the bottom of it, while the excited appearance of the man led the officer to suspect there was something wrong, and as at last the hesitating figure entered the shop, the officer watched until he saw the two men conversing; then the sack was opened, and on the detective entering, old Barker was found examining a heavy silver cruet-stand, while on the counter lay pieces of silver plate, weighing over a hundred ounces. The owner of the bag was for the moment too nervous to tell how he came by the plate, and was therefore arrested. "Do you think Preston is worth spending money on?" asked my visitor. "Is it the act of an honest man to be disposing of silver plate in such a place and in such a way? How came an honest man to know old Barker, and why was he sneaking into the old fence's shop after dark? No, no, he is not a new hand at the game."

I listened in astonishment. I thought of the last time I had met Charley, when everything seemed to augur well for his future. I remembered the many satisfactory reports I had heard. I thought of his great fondness for his home, for his wife, and for little Charley—as his baby had been named—and I found it hard to believe that after all the man was only a commonplace thief. I decided to send a solicitor to see Preston and learn all about the case, and I at once called on my friend Duncan, who was making a good name for himself as a shrewd lawyer, and his "police practice," as he called it, was rapidly growing. I told him what I knew of Charley's life and the circumstances of his arrest, but received little encouragement.

It was astonishing, he said, the number of his clients who were model husbands and parents, but he had a very poor opinion of Preston's honesty.

The following day the accused was brought up in custody charged with unlawfully dealing in silver plate of which he could give no satisfactory account. He looked pale and haggard, and his appearance was not improved by a black eye and an ugly contusion across the nose, which had recently been bleeding. When, a few minutes later, he recognised his wife and child, a glance of mingled sorrow and pleasure beamed from his sound eye, such as could not have come from one hardened in crime. The court heard the

story of the scene in Tony's shop, of the silver plate found on the counter, and of the prisoner's arrest, and his unsatisfactory explanation as to how he came by the articles. The answers to questions asked by prisoner's counsel only strengthened the case against the accused, and when old Barker was called, he confirmed the detective's evidence. "I never see the man in my life afore," said Tony, "never, an' never want to see him again. Why 'e should 'ave gone to my place I can't tell. Anybody as knows me knows I'm a honest tradesman as makes a 'ard livin' out o' rags and bones an' owd metal." Counsel reminded him that it was "owd metal" the prisoner had offered to trade, but the old fence warmly resented the insinuation that he was known in that particular line of business. A titter in court and a quiet smile on the magistrate's face, however, told that there he was not considered quite a virtuous tradesman.

The defence was simple. "The accused," his counsel said, "was in the service of a railway company, and in the course of his duties as telegraph lineman, had to dig out an old telegraph-pole, and in doing so found the old silver wrapped in canvas." Every one in court appeared to ridicule the account of the "find" except his wife, whose belief in her husband was unshaken, and it was evident that he was aware of this from the glances they exchanged.

The plate had evidently borne either a crest or initials, but whatever the marks they had been roughly filed and were unrecognisable. The filing, however, was not recent, as the filed parts were as discoloured as the rest, and this told somewhat in the prisoner's favour.

In order to allow the owner to be sought for a remand was granted, and Mary was permitted to see her husband before he was removed. I heard afterwards that the parting was most painful, but still Mary was comforted and her belief in Charley's truthfulness strengthened.

Time wore on, a second and a third remand had been granted, and the day of the fourth examination Duncan said Preston would be committed for trial. When the case was called the prosecutor said no response had been made to the announcement in the *Police Gazette* describing the plate. He asked that the prisoner be committed, as the articles found in his possession were doubtless the proceeds of a robbery. In one of the seats usually reserved for privileged persons sat an elderly gentleman whose handsome face was bronzed apparently by travel. He had followed the case closely and

during a pause rose from his seat and, handing his card to the clerk, asked leave to see the articles. After a brief examination, the gentleman took up the bowl of a punch ladle and handed it to the magistrate. He then drew from his pocket a stem and asked if the two fitted. They did fit, and the gentleman at once claimed the articles as his property, but said that in whatever way the prisoner obtained possession he was not the thief.

By this time all in Court were keenly interested. Mary Preston was dumb with joy, mouth and eyes were opened as she listened attentively to the gentleman, whom the magistrate invited to make a sworn declaration, which he did, as follows: "I am a retired merchant and shipowner, and some six years ago, resided at Oakleigh, on the estate of Lord Walton, at Weston. Several burglaries had recently taken place, in the neighbourhood, and Griffiths, a discharged under-gamekeeper, from the Walton Estate, was suspected. On the morning of January 6th, 1869, my housekeeper told me, the plate safe was open, and almost the whole of the plate was gone. My housekeeper (continued Mr. Thornton), had left the safe keys in her basket, and the thief or thieves had therefore an easy task, after getting into the house. The police were informed of the robbery, and this theft was credited to the discharged under-gamekeeper, for whom a search was made, and on the morning following, the police informed me that Griffiths was hiding in the Weston Woods, and that his capture was only a question of time. While walking with the police sergeant, we saw Griffiths running across a meadow and several men in pursuit. As he ran his foot caught in a snare, and before he could recover himself he was a prisoner. In stumbling the stem of the punch-ladle fell from his pocket, and this article—all that was found of the plate—led to his conviction. He was sentenced to five years penal servitude, and the sentence has expired. After his conviction Griffiths admitted his guilt, and said that he 'planted the swag' where he hoped to find it on his return. The distance between my late house at Weston and the spot where the buried plate was found, is under a mile, and as the telegraph pole was directly opposite a signal post, no doubt Griffiths hid the property where Preston got it. The man thought the post would be a guide, but I learn that line has recently been widened; the signal post has been removed, and if Griffiths has attempted to find the spot, he has failed.

"A curious feature in this case is, that the broken stem of

the punch-ladle sent one man into captivity, and, as if to make some atonement, it is now the means of proving another's innocence."

In answer to the magistrate, Mr. Thornton explained that shortly after the conviction of Griffiths, he gave up his house at Weston, and had since been travelling in South America, and it was only on the day previous that he heard of the police inquiries for an owner to certain plate, and that after a visit to Scotland Yard, felt satisfied that the property referred to was his.

The magistrate sent for a well-known justice of the peace, to whom Mr. Thornton had referred, and that gentleman on entering the court cordially greeted Mr. Thornton.

All doubts were thus set to rest, and the magistrate, before releasing Charley Preston, told him that although his innocence was proved, still he had brought all this trouble upon himself. His duty, on finding the silver, was plain, in this he failed, but he hoped the lesson he had learned would be taken to heart. "You are released."

I have little to add, Charley Preston did take the lesson to heart, and helped to a fresh start by Mr. Thornton, he went abroad, taking with him Mary and little Charley, and a few months ago I had the satisfaction of hearing that he was a respected and prosperous man, and blessed in his Mary and a troop of little ones.

JOHN DOHERTY,
Superintending Engineer.

Manchester.

JOTTINGS FROM JAPAN.

—o—

CHAPTER I.—GENERAL.

MR. J. L. TOOLE, the evergreen comedian, sings a ditty to the effect that "We are getting so Japanesey, 'tis enough to make a chap uneasy," and with this delectable couplet ringing in our ears, it strikes me as somewhat hazardous to attempt to add anything to a subject which might have a tendency to bring about, like fluctuating markets, general "uneasiness." However, we will take the risk. The salient features, at any rate of Japan and Japanese life, may be said to be now tolerably well known; although only some few years ago works of any reliability relating to the country could have been numbered on the fingers of one's hand. The facilities of modern travel, familiar intercourse with the people, and a knowledge of their language, the improved art of the photographer and engraver have changed all that, and now we have in various directions really admirable studies of the country and its institutions. But ever since her unique social and political organisation was rudely disturbed by the guns of the navies of the West at Kagoshima and Shimonoseki, the interest taken in the Land of the Rising Sun has been universal, incessant, and absorbing, and certain it is, in spite of exhibitions, travellers' tales, and comic opera, that interest has in nowise abated. The marvellous political superstructure erected on a basis of feudalism which met the eyes of Commodore Perry, a short thirty years ago, has entirely dis-

appeared, giving place to a new order of things embracing the adoption of all that is held in highest estimation by the most advanced nations of the earth. Never before has such a transformation scene been witnessed on the world's stage. And it is not too much to say that Japan deserves all the admiration which this achievement has evoked. Her triumphs, too, in other respects, have not been less brilliant. Everybody knows the influence which Japanese art, with its distinctive original features and its spontaneity of treatment, has had upon æsthetic circles in Europe and America. She has been represented at all the latter-day exhibitions, and in every section of art and industry has been awarded high honours; in science also she has taken a most creditable position, in connexion with which it may be of interest to note that the telegraphic materials and apparatus manufactured in Tokio, which were exhibited at the New Orleans Industrial Exhibition of 1885, received a First Class Diploma.

Radical, however, as have been the changes and reforms of the past few years, it must always be borne in mind that the social and ethical features of a civilisation, old when Europe was young, are not eradicated in a day. A few miles from any of the Treaty Ports—were it not for the "wonder-working" wire which stretches everywhere and tends to keep the imagination in check—one might well fancy himself still living amid the peaceful scenes which followed the victories of the mighty Iyeyasu, and amongst manners and customs for which we should have to go back to the days of Pompeii and Herculaneum to find a parallel. Probably in no other country in the world will we find the reproduction of so many interesting elements of ancient civilisations.

The traveller comes to his journey's end for the day; he is welcomed at the threshold of the inn by both master and servant; he leaves his shoes behind him; his room is almost utterly devoid of what we call furniture, but he stretches his weary limbs on the clean mats, while a nut-brown maid brings him a tiny cup of refreshing, unsweetened tea, and inquires if he does not feel much fatigued. Then the bath is ready for him, and afterwards his simple dinner of fish, eggs, vegetables, and rice is laid out on miniature stands, and while he plies the chop-sticks there is the bright-eyed little *musumé*, with her graceful manners to replenish the rice-bowl, and her cheerful chatter to beguile the time and give him the gossip of the "petty burgh." Finally, the *futon* or mattress is carried in and spread before him—sitting, dining, and bedroom in one,

you see. He "turns in," and there again is the same thoughtful inquiry if all is to his satisfaction, and a last gentle "*O yasumi nasai*," or "pleasant rest to you." Is it a matter for wonder, then, that he composes himself to rest with a reflection it may be that there is an element of comfort in this, a something in the philosophy of living that Europe with her huge hotels and her electric lights has not attained? Indeed, it is in this idyllic simplicity, together with the natural charm of the people themselves, that has left such a pleasing impression on every visitor to Japan.

You take a walk along the main street of this interior town. It is a lengthy line of wooden houses, with open shop-fronts, and, it must be said, nothing very remarkable in them. The *fac similes* of those dainty cabinets which stood in the niches of the rooms of the Duchess of Portsmouth in the time of Charles the Second are not to be found here; nor will you meet with specimens of porcelain like those with which Mary, the consort of William, Prince of Orange, amused herself in embellishing Hampton Court during the mania for collecting china from the Far East. You will have to go to the big cities of Tokio, Osaka, and Kioto, to look for these and the other treasures of art so eagerly sought by connoisseurs.

CHAPTER II.—PARTICULAR.

BUT what will probably attract your passing attention, and serve to recall the fretful stir of this nineteenth century, are two or three European-looking buildings, their roofs projecting above the dead-level of the native houses. Amongst them will be the inevitable police station and the telegraph office. With the former, of course, you have nothing to do. But the telegraph office? Ah! well, we may make a call there. There, at all events, you will find some one able to respond breezily to your "Good morning," and glad to avail himself of the opportunity of exercising his knowledge of the English tongue. Behind the counter you will hear the ticking of the Morse instrument, and may be able to distinguish the "Yes" or "No" from a distant office in reply to some inquiry on the line; for the telegraphs in Japan have been framed on the British system, and the telegraphist still retains those useful monosyllabic reminders

of his early instructors. But your acquaintance with the art of sound-reading will avail you little further here. A Japanese telegram is being transmitted in its own code. The Japanese language, unlike Chinese, can be represented or written by a syllabary as well as by ideograph. This syllabary is composed of forty-nine characters, and the Morse code adopted for it has been made up of the International Code and additional signals of five dots and dashes. For instance, the word "Nagasaki" appears as follows:—

Roman syllables	Na	ga	sa	ki
Katakana syllabary	ナ	カ	サ	キ
Morse code	·—·	·—··	—·—·—	—·—··

Of course, side by side with it, the International Code has to be used for the transmission of all telegrams other than Japanese. "Right here," as the Americans say, you will observe the extra and indispensable qualifications required of the Japanese telegraphist. And, in reality, much more is demanded of him. As a student, he enters the Imperial Telegraph School in Tokio for a period of two years, and here is the curriculum for his last term, as culled from the school calendar for the present year:—Manipulation of the Morse, Sounder, Duplex, and Wheatstone automatic instruments, and the ordinary counter duties of an office, thirteen hours per week; the English language, five hours; mathematics, four hours; telegraphy, four hours; physics, three hours; drawing, three hours; and book-keeping, two hours. The two following questions given to the "Telegraphy class" at the final examination and before the student enters on his practical course, which lasts one year more, although not the most difficult, will sufficiently indicate the standard aimed at:—

1. Describe the differential method of Duplex telegraphy, and give a sketch of same.
2. Describe Van Rysselberghe's system of simultaneous transmission by telephone and telegraph on the same wire.

This may appear a somewhat rigorous training for a youth destined for a small office in the interior like that we have made our temporary halting-place, but all the departments of the service are recruited from the same school, and

the brightest students naturally find their way to the best positions.

The Japanese telegraphist is an adept in his art; the profession is one suited to his taste and disposition. Perched on

a chair, perhaps, with his legs tucked under him, if he be in native dress, he will sit all day with imperturbable good humour (provided always there is not "a duffer at the other end!"), working at a good average rate of speed, and demand-

ing only five minutes' respite for his modest meals, and an odd moment or two for a whiff from the inevitable Lilliputian pipe. The European officers formerly in the employment of the department suggested to him the advantages of a daily duty and shorter hours, but, after a brief trial, he fell back on the system he loves best—one day on duty and the next free.

When I state that for more than thirteen years I only know of one case of tampering with telegrams or divulging their contents, it will be admitted that the public business of the country is in safe hands.

A lineman calls at the office previously to going over his section for the day. He is known by his blue cotton dress, on the back of which is imprinted the ideograph "Den," signifying lightning. As a rule, he is not of the educated class of the people, but to those familiar with Japanese handicraft; it need scarcely be said, he soon becomes a skilled workman, and thoroughly trustworthy in whatever is expected of him.

I may be pardoned here a personal reminiscence. Some years ago, in the month of November, I made a long journey across rough country roads, in order to reach in one day the town of Takewo, a place noted for its hot mineral springs. I arrived late—about nine o'clock—almost chilled to the marrow; fortunately in time, however, to have the luxury of a hot bath. The baths are public, and I had scarcely got well into the water when a middle-aged Japanese entered the same bath, bowed politely to me, inquired after my own august health and that of my family, and then proceeded, with apologies, to rub down my back with his own bath cloth! This was very delightful, but also very embarrassing, for, in spite of his acquaintance with my affairs, I knew not the man from Adam. It seemed unkind, under the circumstances, to tell him he had the advantage of me, while I really very much had the advantage of him! And when I thanked him for his attention, out he got, procured my towel, and save for his loin-cloth, naked as he stood—protest being of no avail—dried me thoroughly, and handed my clothes to me, piece by piece, until I was dressed and ready to go to my hotel. There, too, I soon found he had been making himself master of the situation. Instead of the ordinary Japanese dinner, a dish of oysters first appeared, followed by a chicken cutlet and other laudable gastronomic efforts in European style. I was, indeed, much bewildered, but, as I have said, the attention was gratifying. The only person I knew in the town was the

clerk in charge of the telegraph office, and when that gentleman called, which he shortly did, I appealed to him, and discovered my unknown benefactor to be the local lineman! Some years before, it appeared, he had been a cook in the employment of a friend of mine, one of the European telegraph inspectors. Are you surprised, then, that Master Yajiro is remembered by me for other than his skill in the setting of poles and jointing of wires?

The Japanese telegraph system was established in 1871, when a number of engineers and operators were engaged from England. It was an independent section of the Ministry of Public Works until the abolition of that department in December, 1885, when a ministerial reconstruction took place, and the Ministry of Communications was formed, Admiral Viscount Enomotto—one of the most prominent men of the Revolution of 1867—taking the portfolio and a seat in the Cabinet.

The Telegraph section continued independent until March, 1887, when the Post and Telegraph services were amalgamated.

It may be of interest to those who have been in various ways and at different periods connected with the Telegraph Department in Japan, to know that only three Englishmen remain in the service; Mr. W. H. Stone, the genial friend of every telegraph man who at one time or another has landed on these shores, now secretary to the Ministry of Communications; Mr. James Stewart, of Edinburgh, now at Nagasaki; and the present writer.

W. B. MASON,
Imperial Japanese Telegraphs.

Tokio.

MORE RECOLLECTIONS
of the Post Office of Fifty Years Ago, and Notes of its Advance after Penny Postage was established.

THE writer in a former paper contributed to this ANNUAL gave a sketch of the Post-office of fifty years ago, but chiefly with reference to mails and mail guards; he has been asked to supplement that sketch, and asked in such a flattering tone that he could not do less than try to please his friend, and the following, he fears, rambling tale, sums up many of his recollections of the working of a department of the State which, the reader will see, gathers as time marches on within its borders duties many and various besides that of simple letter-carrying for which it was at first established.

About fifty years ago—there or thereabouts—and before the days of penny postage letters could be sent through the post-office unpaid at the same rate as those prepaid—unpaid letters were taxed, as it was technically called, in black ink (large figures on face of a letter denoting the amount of postage paid), in contrast with those prepaid, which were marked in red ink. It was quite an art, acquiring the style of making the figures in question.

But in addition to unpaid and prepaid letters, there was another class known as "franks." Every member of Parliament was, in the days of heavy postage, allowed to send a certain number, or weight (I forget which), of correspondence daily. Above the superscription of the letter was written place and date, where and when posted, and in left hand bottom corner of the address the name of the member of Parliament franking

the letter. The privilege was no doubt given to enable members to correspond with their constituents (there were no post-cards in those days), but it is well known that all packets franked did not cover correspondence addressed to constituents; instances have been known where a business letter remained unanswered for some days, the reason for delay being that a "frank" could not be obtained sooner, business in question not being considered worth postage. It was whispered, too, that the franked packets did not always contain literary matter, but sometimes clothing, perhaps a brace of partridges, or a cream cheese ; there was no parcel post, be it remembered, and means of communication with places distant from one another were few and far between.

Posts were sent, specially, from a very early date, but the first general post established by law was in the reign of Queen Anne, or about 1711 A.D.

Seeing that postage was so dear at the time referred to in this paper, it may not much startle the reader to be told that instances are known in which after an official had written his official communication (of course, to a brother officer) he added to it little postscripts like the following :—

"P.S.—I hope the baby is well"; or,

"When will you send, &c. . . . ."

After it had been settled to adopt penny postage, it was arranged, lest the shock of such a change should be too great, to have for a few weeks a uniform rate of fourpence per half oz. Great was the expectation of what would happen ; smaller mails were made up and received for a few days, before the plunge from rates of postage varying from 1s. 4d. to 4d. for a single letter, *i.e.*, one sheet of paper, to a uniform rate of 4d. took place. But when the 4d. day came the increased work was nothing to be compared to that which took place when the uniform rate dropped from 4d. to 1d. per letter, under half-ounce in weight. As far as the writer remembers only two additional men had been added to the original staff of four clerks at his office, and the two counter clerks employed had to stand for about eight or ten hours on the first day, taking in bundles of letters and marking each letter with a stroke or figure, one in red ink to signify a penny postage had been paid on it. Then came the work of the three or four sorters, and heavy was their portion of the work.

It must be remembered that there were few if any railway-borne mails in those days, and that business ways

were not those of the present day. The work was heavy for the force employed to do it; but the work in its present volume had to come. Here in passing it may be remarked, there was no overtime pay, no sick pay, no holiday for workers then.

Let to-day's counter clerk imagine at the close of his day's work having to count up pounds worth of copper coin. At first no decision could be come to as to disposal of our coppers; for a few days, bags containing £5 worth of copper coin in each were tied up and sealed. The first day's work brought in £15 or £20 worth of copper coin. When about £300 worth had been collected, means had to be taken to get rid of it, and a percentage was paid to buyers of the copper coin, and for some years after the penny postage began this course had to be adopted to ease the Post Office coffers of its heavy cash.

At the introduction of penny postage, "franking" was abolished, but the public was still allowed to prepay in money, a check being placed on the privilege by the levy of a double charge, as at present, on letters posted wholly unpaid.

Some time elapsed before postage-stamps were issued for payment of postage, and then only stamps (black colour) of value of one penny, and stamps (blue colour) value twopence were issued, with stamped paper and envelopes (of value of one penny and twopence). The envelope was the one known as the Mulready envelope, but both stamped paper and Mulready envelopes had but a short life. The stamped paper died out, and the Mulready envelope was soon replaced by the present style of envelope with embossed stamp. The stamped paper and envelopes were first manufactured with a line or two of silk woven in the paper, the silk was intended to be a protection against fraud, but this, too, has passed away. There have been rumours of fraudulently made or printed postage-stamps, but the writer knows of no case having been proved.

The difference between the postage-stamps of the days referred to can be seen by reference to a current Post Office Guide. How they attained to their present shape and value would be a long tale to tell, but if the reader can get a sight of a complete collection of postage-stamps, if such a one there be, the progress made would astonish him. From one penny and twopenny stamps the grades have risen to £5, and, side by side with postage-stamps, Inland Revenue stamps have made their way.

As regards the advance in the work of the Post Office, no

one but an old post officer could contrast the change; that is to say, only such a person could fully appreciate the advance which has been made. When penny postage was introduced, only letters pure and simple were dealt with; newspapers bore an impressed duty stamp, and such stamp entitled them to travel free by post as many times as could be got in within a certain limit as to date. Newspapers then were often made the medium of conveying information of the nature of a letter. Such addresses have been seen as "Mr. V.W. Smith," the "V.W." meaning that the sender of the paper was very well in health; and communications, written in invisible ink on the margin of the paper, were often indited. If you write with moisture of an onion and when dry hold the writing to the fire, as the old nurse used to say, "You shall see what you shall see." There were, also, other kinds of invisible ink. In cases where writing was discovered, the paper was charged heavy postage; since the abolition of the newspaper stamp, these heavy charges have been given up. Let those who receive newspapers written on now note and send "Conscience money" to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Now letters, books, circulars, newspapers, and parcels make up the contents of the mail bags, baskets, and receptacles, the two last named having come in with the parcel post.

Does any one (very few, perhaps, do) remember the barred windows through which the public used to be served fifty years ago? Truly very great care was then taken of the officers and letters. Now the windows have disappeared, and the public are served over open counters; then the mails were zealously guarded by men with blunderbusses, now postmen trot along the street with strings of bags swinging over their shoulders, and the railway train guard takes the place of the man with the blunderbuss.

Again, what a change has come over the money order department; the writer recollects when post office orders cost 8d. in the pound, and orders between £2 and £5 value carried an impressed stamp of one shilling value, and the business was a private one. The poundage went to the holder of the office, and the stamp to the revenue; postmasters got a percentage for their remuneration; and this calls to mind the fact, that postmasters were often newsagents fifty years ago, and got their percentage in that work too; now postmasters' percentages have melted away, and their salaries partly too. Ichabod! the glory of the old deputy-postmaster has departed.

But to return to money orders; instead of dozens in the year they now run to thousands and upwards, to say nothing of the new postal orders, the annual number of these issued are tens of thousands, if not millions.

New work, such as inland revenue stamps, inland revenue licences, life insurance annuities, patent stamps, &c., add to the postmaster's responsibility, but not to his income, while the telegraph—the monster of the new work—flashes along with its Duplex Quadruplex and Hexode, and jostles the old post-office work on every side, threatening its supremacy. The men of the lightning branch certainly push to the front, and when they learnedly talk of ohms, faults, resistance, &c., to old post officers, they certainly have most of the talk to themselves; the men who of all others help to bring distant friends into converse, whether by letter or by wire, ought however to fraternise: so mote it be.

A few words about travelling post offices, with one or two anecdotes of old brother officers, and the writer's yarn, as an old salt would say, is spun.

When railways made it practicable for large sized towns to get early morning deliveries of letters, the small sized-places, of course, cried out for similar treatment, and for the purpose of giving this accommodation as widely as possible, travelling post-offices were established, that is, post-office cars were attached to railway trains. These post offices have been well and fully described by other writers, so the present scribe only intends jotting down an anecdote or two in reference to such officers as have come under his notice. Fine appointments at first were travelling post-offices; men appointed, too, were sent to large post-offices to be trained; to name their pay, &c., would raise feelings of envy in many breasts, so let that matter pass. The writer remembers his brother officers wondering at the luck of the "traveller," but this cause of envy has now passed away, levelling down and levelling up of the scales of post officers' pay have done this.

It may be interesting to some, to know that one of the early travelling post-offices merely consisted of one compartment of a third-class carriage (old style), a few pigeon-holes were provided for the letters, and for the newspapers, when the question was asked "How about newspapers?" the answer came "Oh, the guard [one of the old style, too], can sort them in his hat,"—true it was a large sized one and had a broad brim. Contrast this with the splendidly-appointed travelling post-office carriages of to-day, and speculate on the

difference between now and then. The writer once travelled in one of these well-appointed carriages to inspect the work attached to his office, and a curious experience it was; after being in a spacious office where postal work was conducted to be cooped up in a box on wheels, and to be whirled through the dark night at the rate of about 40 miles an hour. However, the writer had been a sailor in his youth, and sailors have to put things ship-shape in a small compass, so he soon grew accustomed to the arrangements, and got through his work all right.

And now, having touched lightly on things mostly old, but some comparatively new, the writer will finish with one or two anecdotes of his *old* brother officers. To begin with the first stamper he knew, *our* "*only* stamper,"—his name was "John," familiarly called "Jack,"—discipline was not very strict in *early* Post-office days. John had a brother employed as a clerk in the office, and both were eccentric characters,—two eccentric, poor fellows, as will presently appear. They both thought they had histrionic talent, and, in addition to their official duties, used, when they could get an interval (such intervals often happened when waiting for mail-coach arrivals), to spout Shakespeare, and they often *did* the balcony scene in "Romeo and Juliet." Alas! poor fellows, they both ended their days in a lunatic asylum. Of course, it is not implied that Shakespeare drove them mad: they were no doubt demented before they read Shakespeare. Our senior clerk, too, was a character. He had a habit of asserting that every little thing out of course which astonished him never happened before: he used to say, "Such things never before happened under the canopy of heaven." He could look you in the face steadily and say also the most astounding things without a smile. Poor fellow, he came to grief at last, being of too convivial a nature for Post-office authorities' approval. Our postmen, too: does not memory recall the meek little man with splay feet who always spoke in such a deferential manner, with his hand to his lips, and our Jack of Clubs,—a man as broad as he was long? He was a great favourite with the public, who presented him with a scarlet coat (it was before the postmen were put in uniform clothing). He used to keep pigs, and his note-book contained a fine medley of official memoranda and notes of private matters; for instance, notes when his sow pig was expected to litter appeared in juxtaposition with an order for redirection of letters. *Apropos* of the scarlet coat, he wore it with pride, but when the department supplied *scarlet*

coats, some years subsequently, one or two of the old hands modestly hid their splendour, when they could, under sad-coloured paletots or overcoats. Again, postmen in those days had but two deliveries daily, and often accumulated much money by working, when off duty, at a trade; and again, the postman had his own walk all to himself, and the Christmas-boxes were good, and he got them all. One man got such a heavy collection one Christmas that the money broke his pockets down (capacious pockets, too, the man had), and half-crowns and silver coins rolled about the street. There was also our *only* porter, poor old "Sam." He had a perpetual duty, with *intervals*. In his intervals he slept on a mail-bag; but whenever Sam squatted or sat down he instantly went off to sleep, much to the consternation of persons who did not know Sam's habits, for it was difficult to waken Sam at times. He was, in fact, like the tropical bird which is known to sailors as the booby; as soon as this bird perches on the ship's yards, it falls asleep. Our post-master of fifty years ago (a fine old English gentleman, with hair full of powder, blue coat and gilt buttons) always put in an appearance in the sorting-office *to sign* the letter bill of our one daily mail from London. The chief clerk made up *the daily mail* for London, ordinary clerks dealt with the cross-road mails.

Accounts were rendered once a quarter, and were often not closed for two or three quarters subsequently. There was one general cash balance daily, closed the following day by the chief clerk. Sometimes the balance was over, sometimes under, or short. There were compensations, however, in those days. Postmasters had poundages, and a *growing yearly* poundage on postage-stamps. One of the men, whose duty it was to prepare the daily balance for the chief clerk, remarked one night—it was about midnight—as he pushed back his spectacles, making a peculiar noise with his lips (a habit of his), "Good balance, if it is not altered in the morning. Poor fellow!—peace to his manes!—he was no accountant; the balance made by him, as he too well knew, was often "altered in the morning." The same man, when on money-order work, one day, having entered all the items for the day, exclaimed with satisfaction, "There now, it is only a question of casting." Ay! but that, in his case, was the *crucial* operation.

The office, in early days, was a dirty place, the clerks wore aprons, and the chief clerk added gloves with the tips of the

fingers cut off to the apron. And here it may be noted the great improvement which has taken place in the office and its fittings, &c.,—*then*, cramped space, rarely washed or repainted, sanitary arrangements very primitive; *now*, large-sized rooms and staff of cleaners, and good drainage, &c. The writer recently noticed that experiments on the state of the air in certain crowded dwellings had been made, which showed that in the most crowded and dirty houses the "bacteria" were most numerous and of the largest size; had *our office* of fifty years ago been tried, the bacteria (unless they be new "beasties" evolved since) would no doubt have run their modern competitors closely in the race for supremacy.

And here memory returns to poor John (our only stamper), our Jack-of-all-work. How could'st thou do all the stamping and sweep and clean too?—and in addition find time to spout Shakespeare and adorn thy mass of hair with bear's grease? But, aye lad, was it bear's grease? Our postmaster strongly suspected thee of using the sweet oil with which thou wert entrusted for the purpose of anointing thy stamping pads. Poor Jack! he thought he was good looking; he certainly was a tall, stalwart fellow, and he no doubt was well satisfied with his personal appearance when he arranged his jet-black locks at the little looking-glass over the mantel near the office fireplace.

The story—if story it be—is ended. The writer hopes he has not rambled over much, been too prosy, and that, if read out by any brother officer, his reminiscences of old Post-office days will not fall upon the ear like a "thrice-told tale."

E. C. SAMPSON,
Postmaster, Bristol.

CHICAGO TELEGRAPHS.

By W. J. LLOYD, Western Union Telegraphs, Chicago.

—o—

THE space allotted me will, at best, admit of nothing more than a hasty sketch, in which much interesting detail must be omitted. From the bare outlines herein submitted, the English reader will find some room for the exercise of an active imagination.

In 1837, when your well-beloved Queen Victoria ascended the Throne, and began to toy with the great sceptre of "Merry England," Chicago received her charter as a city, and the first election polled 703 votes. The census for 1890 will show an easy million of people. From a geographical standpoint, her situation at the foot of the great Lake Michigan was fortunate, but her strides as a commercial city have exceeded the dreams of her most visionary pioneers, and to-day she stands the second city in America, and, viewed from the standpoint of architectural beauty and durability, the finest built city in the world.

The great fire of 1871 covered an area of 2,100 acres, and destroyed some 24,000 buildings, with an entailed loss of $200,000,000. Before the ashes were yet cold, the great task of rebuilding was begun, and the magnificent result of the past sixteen years can justly be viewed with pride, and it is certainly a great tribute to western pluck and energy. It is like one of those plants which the eastern jugglers cause to grow, to leaf, to blossom, and to bear fruit, while the gazer stands silent before the miracle. The miracle, by which time the great alchemist in his silent way takes months, or years, or ages, to perform, Chicago has done in a night.

On the corner of La Salle and Washington Streets, and in the very centre of the business portion of the city, is located the main office of the Western Union Telegraph Company. The operating-room is 100 feet square, and is light, airy, and well ventilated.

That you may judge of the growth of the telegraph in America, I will say that in 1857 six operators composed the force of Chicago office; now there are on the pay-rolls of the operating department of the Western Union Telegraph Company 457 names. Add to this the book-keeping, clerical department, and branch offices, and the number will approximate 1,000 employés.

There are in use some 30,000 cells of call and battery, and from the 850-strap switchboard is operated 100,000 miles of wire. There are in use 44 quadruplexes, 30 duplexes, and 236 single wires, a total of 504 circuits. Radiating throughout the city there are 81 metropolitan or city lines, and connected with these are 175 branch offices. At the Board of Trade branch office alone there are employed 52 operators, and here the most rapid telegraph work in the world is performed. Between the great trading points, such as New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Duluth, Toledo, and Detroit, orders are sent, the trade executed, and the reply at hand, in from one to three minutes. None but the most expert telegraphers are employed in this service, and though rapid the work errors are an unknown quantity.

From the main office are worked direct circuits to Winnipeg, Manitoba, some 1,500 miles to the north, to the great cotton port of New Orleans, in the "Sunny South," 1,000 miles away, to San Francisco, 2,500 miles distant in "The Golden West," and to New York and Boston, in "The Effete East," 1,000 and 2,000 miles respectively. The daily average number of messages handled will reach 75,000; and during the great National Republican Convention, one day's performance showed 750,000 words of press matter handled, with a total of over 4,000,000 for the six Convention days.

We have three Wheatstone circuits now in operation, one to Kansas City, Missouri, 500 miles, one to New York, 1,000 miles, and one to San Francisco, 2,500 miles direct working. The latter has attained the speed of 130 words per minute, or 260 as a duplex.

The underground and pneumatic tube systems are rapidly developing, and throughout the business portion of the city no overhead wires are to be seen, and another era is marked

in the tide of civilisation. Leading from the main office to the great dailies and to the Board of Trade building, is a complete and well-working system of underground pneumatic tubing, and before the ink is well dried, despatches are handed to the printer in the composing-room, or to the broker on 'Change.

The character of the American telegrapher is rapidly changing, and for the better. In former years he was a nomad, carrying his profession about with him, and depending upon the reputation which had preceded him to ensure him employment, as it usually did, and at the highest grade of salary. Now the case differs, and the new school, though not so expert as workmen, are more steady and domestic in their habits, and twenty now "marry and settle" to the one that did then. However, there yet remains a vestige of the old school, known to us as "floaters," who drift from city to city, and from State to State, and from territory to territory. During the summer months you will find them in the north, and ere the snow begins to fall they seek the genial south, where overcoats are not a necessity and the "straw" and "Derby" may be worn with impunity.

Compared with the English telegrapher, his American brother is not so scholastic, but the keen observation of the American, aided by the varied experience peculiar to the work in this country, soon brings them to the standard of excellence. Here all press despatches are taken from the sounder by type-writing operators, and the agate stylus and pen for this class of work are fast drifting into oblivion. The press associations lease their own wires, and the great dailies have attached to their composing-room an operating-room, equipped with type-writing machines, and from the main operating-room are detailed such men as the demands may require, usually three to seven per night. Operators detailed for this work at newspaper offices are expert type-writers, from whose hand the matter received goes direct to the printer, and thus the labour of the telegraph editor is materially lessened, and that of the typo facilitated.

It is a matter of note that many of the operators doing duty at the newspaper offices soon drift into newspaper work, and I can recall many whose names are becoming as well known to the "press gang" as they formerly were when in the ranks of the "telegraph corps."

The introduction of the type-writer has done much to lighten and facilitate the work. The task of receiving 10,000

words of matter without cessation is not so wearing, and we have the record of 3,000 words in one hour, the sending operator at Washington using the abbreviated "code," while the type-writing receiver here spelled it out in full.

In an office so large as this will be found all types and nationalities. Here we have the Englishman, the Irishman, the German, the Pole, and the Swede, and from the States will be found the Californian, the New Yorker, the Floridan, and the Minnesotian, all working side by side, and anon drifting along with the great tide of humanity in the noisy, hurrying, bustling streets of this great western metropolis, where all individuality is lost, and man knows not his next-door neighbour.

MY FRIENDS IN BLUE, YELLOW, AND GREEN.

By ADAM GORDON, Central Tel. Station, London.

—o—

READER—be ye gentle or simple, Æsthete or Philistine—let not the motley-coloured garb in which my friends are clothed serve you with excuse for declining their acquaintance. To the rigidly respectable, whose estimate of a friend rises or falls with the cost and fashion of his coat, I have nothing to say; they may smile and pass by. We shall both be the richer. Should there be any whose knees are yet unbent before the conventional Baal—who do not fear to compromise themselves by sharing the mental peregrinations of an old man—let them, in fancy, at least, accompany me to my home. But who may I be? you may ask. Ah, kind reader, my occupation, or shall I say profession, is not a very exalted one, it being that of a telegraph clerk. For well-nigh fourteen years I have wended my way up these stairs that lead to the instrument-room of the London Central Office—painfully sometimes, for the years have left me something of a valetudinarian—but always cheerfully. Besides this period passed in the present building of T. S., I have had fifteen years' service in the provinces, so that altogether my claim for the toleration due to a veteran is not an unreasonable one. A Conservative in politics—with which, however, of late years I have taken but little interest—my Conservatism has become intensified in my relations with telegraphy. Do not weary me with your "Dx's" and "Quads," your "Delaneys" and "Wheatstones," nor with the "totals," more or less apocryphal,

made on these modern abominations. All my interest, and I fear, respect for my vocation, passed away with the dethronement of the "Bell" from its supremacy, and the relegation of the old "Mag" code to the obscurity of the lost arts. Holding such ideas, and perhaps insensibly reflecting them in my actions, it will readily be believed that my position in this office is only a subordinate one. For years I have stood at the top of the senior class, and there I am likely to remain.

Do I complain? Well, no; why should I? It is but in keeping with the fitness of things, although at first a little jealousy disturbed the serenity of my existence, in witnessing the young ones passing over my head into positions I was incompetent to fill. That has long since died away, partly from my cultivation of a philosophic mode of thought, and partly from viewing the effects of enhanced responsibilities on the temperaments and digestions of my more ambitious fellows. After an experience of considerably over half a century, I have found few losses in life which did not bear with them their corresponding compensations, had I but known where to look for them.

But what has all this to do with my tricoloured friends, to whom I promised you an introduction? Patience, good sir, or curious madam. We are rapidly nearing that point; only, you must permit me to proceed in my own way. Does this request seem unreasonable, seeing it comes from one whose life has been one long digression? My way lies through St. Paul's Church Yard, and down Ludgate Hill, barely ten minutes' walk altogether. I have made my eyrie in Fleet Street for two reasons: one, its nearness to the office and consequent convenience in a fog such as we have to-night; the other, because there I am, as it were, in touch of the main artery of the great City, and able to feel the throb of its pulse, smile with it in its mirth, or weep with it in its sorrows.

Well, here we are at last—too late to come upstairs, you say. Oh, nonsense; the night is still young, and with the aid of a good fire, a pipe, and a bit of supper, we shall inter the rest of its existence pleasantly, if quietly. How many friends have I upstairs? That is rather a hard question to answer right off. However, if you like, we can count them, and as most of them are under lock and key, there is little fear of any taking flight during my absence. You seem surprised. Ah, well, we had better solve the mystery. My friends are not like your embodiments, more or less substantial, of flesh and blood. All save those of a later acquaintance have long ago

ceased to play their part in the world's tragi-comedy. For me, however, they are ever accessible. With no further aid of the necromantic art than a turn of this key and taking a volume from the shelf of my bookcase, I find myself, without the help of major-domo, or courtly old-world letter of introduction, in company with the master intellects of all times and nations. To-night, however, our purpose is not with the crowned dead or reigning sovereigns of literature, as in music in certain moods, the mind of the ordinary listener turns with relief from the grandeur of the organ fugue, to listen to the simple song music of the people.

So, in literature, do I, not irreverently, turn from the noon-day glare of the suns of Stratford-on-Avon, Weimar, and Florence, to enjoy a quiet moment under the paler light of the minor stars.

That quaint little man in calf you have in your hand is an early edition of Pope. It was given me many years ago, when I left Edinburgh, by a friend who has since died—or, rather, married; those terms mean the same thing so far as they concern an old bachelor like myself. Dear old Jack! you were the scoffer, in those days, at all womankind, and I their defender. Now, here I live midst the *débris* of my early hopes and loves, whilst you, in the persons of stalwart sons and comely daughters, flaunt your treason to the philosophy of your youth. Why am I not married? Do you know I have put the same question to myself for the last thirty years, but, like the Inquirer in that poem of Heine's, I remain, and am likely to do so, "a fool that is waiting an answer." Perhaps a constitutional shyness, joined to a certain plainness of feature and awkwardness of manner when in women's society, has kept me almost free from the amatory experiences of most people.

There, above your head, is the portrait of the only girl I ever thought of in that sense, and she, poor little mite, after much forbearance, very sensibly left me for another. Wonderfully fresh, isn't it? The photographers have lost the art of preserving the imprint of the features as in these old daguerreotypes. Yes, she is there just as she was then. The little mutinous mouth, looking at me through all those years, as if still waiting to be kissed; the wide, wondering black eyes and neatly-braided hair; the tiny, fragile figure, encircling a heart as capricious as tender—only its waywardness was present to wound me then. The memory of its tenderness lives with me now. But enough of this. Had

I foreseen the channel into which our talk has drifted, I should have left you to the keeping of the fog at the foot of my stair. But never mind. We shall try and be more careful in future, as the youngsters say in answering their reports.

Here is my yellow friend, over whose presentation I have dallied so long. As you have guessed from his garb and speech, he is no native of these parts, but only a Frenchman. How I admire the insular catholicity of your "only." But there now ; I remember Henri Murger—such is his name—has been too long asleep with Henri Heine under the limes in quiet Montmartre to have failed to catch something of the German singer's easy indifference for everything British.

This little yellow waif I rescued from one of the bookstalls that line the quais of the Seine at Paris, two years after the siege of '70. Some other time I may tell you the story of its former owner.

Although better known to France by his novels, which deal chiefly with the multi-coloured phases of Paris Bohemian life, it is in his quality of poet I wish you to know Murger to-night.

This book, which he has entitled "*Les Nuits d'Hiver*," opens with a sonnet, in which the author prays that all kinds of blessings may fall upon the head of the individual who is innocent and benevolent enough to give in these days of prose the large sum of a crown for his small collection of verse:—

To the Reader.

" Ami lecteur, qui viens d'entrer dans la boutique,
Où l'on vend ce volume, et qui l'as acheté
Sans marchander d'un sou, malgré son prix modique,
Sois beni, bon lecteur, dans ta postérité."

* * * * *

" Et qu'un jour sur ta tombe, en marbre de Carrare,
Un burin d'or inscrive—*hic jacet*—l'homme rare
Qui payait d'un écu trois cents pages de vers."

One of the most dominant notes in Murger's prose, and also his verse, is the intenseness of his love for the period called Youth. No writer has sung more sweetly or more lovingly the apotheosis of "Life's golden time" than he

has done. As an example, take the following, in which he preaches gaily from the text "Youth comes but once":—

* * * * * *

"Cuirassés de patience
Contre le mauvais destin,
Du courage et d'espérance
Nous petrissons notre pain ;
Notre humeur insoucieuse
Aux fanfares de nos chants
Rend la misère joyeuse,
La jeunesse n'a qu'un temps.

Si la maîtresse choisie
Que nous aime par hasard,
Fait fleurir la poésie
Aux flammes de son regard ;
Lui sachant gré d'être belle,
Sans nous faire de tourments
Aimons-la même infidèle . . .
La jeunesse n'a qu'un temps.

Puisque les plus belles choses
L'amour et la beauté,
Comme le lis et les roses
N'ont qu'une saison d'été ;
Quand mai tout en fleurs arbore
Le drapeau vert du printemps
Aimons et chantons encore,
La jeunesse n'a qu'un temps.

Notre avenir doit éclore
Au soleil de nos vingt ans,
Aimons et chantons encore,
La jeunesse n'a qu'un temps."

In his treatment of love the poet is in no way ambitious. His loves are neither Lauras nor Beatrices. His fancy takes a lower flight, and seeks its deities in that Parisian grisette world Béranger and De Nerval have made famous. You do not find with Murger the fevered exaggerations of passion, the sobbings and despairs so common with his countrymen; love presents itself to his poetic fancy only after its betrayal or death. For the love that is happy he has nothing to say. It is only after caprice has severed to-day the link formed

yesterday by chance, that he evokes past memories and sings love's requiem.

In the following stanzas the poet tells us that henceforth between himself and his mistress all is finished, and, sitting by the grave of their dead love, they wish to sing its dirge together:—

* * * * * *

"Et qu'un jour le hasard fit rencontrer nos pas,
J'ai mis entre tes mains mon cœur et ma jeunesse,
Et je t'ai dit fais-en tout ce que tu voudras.

Hélas! ta volonté fut cruelle, ma chère,
Dans tes mains ma jeunesse est restée en lambeaux,
Mon cœur s'est en éclats brisé comme du verre,
Et ma chambre est le cimetière
Où sont enterrés les morceaux
De ce qui t'aima tant naguère.

Entre nous maintenant,—ni, ni—c'est fini,
Je ne suis plus qu'un spectre et tu n'es qu'un fantôme,
Et sur notre amour mort et bien enseveli,
Nous allons si tu veux chanter le dernier psaume."

The words are there, and now he seeks for an air to which he may fit them:—

"Pourtant ne prenons point un air écrit trop haut,
Nous pourrions tous le deux n'avoir pas la voix sûre
Choisissons un mineur grave et sans fioriture,
Moi je ferai la basse et toi le soprano.

Mi, ré, mi, do, ré, la.—Pas cet air, ma petite!
S'il entendait cet air que tu chantais jadis,
Mon cœur, tout mort qu'il est, tressaillirait bien vite
Et ressusciterait à ce *De profundis.*"

Unable to find a melody that does not bring old memories of happy days surging back, they abandon the attempt, and allow their thoughts to wander back to the winter evenings they have passed together,—the long walks through the woods and the fields in the spring:—

"We were very happy in our little room when the rain was falling and the wind blowing, seated in the arm-chair near the fire, in December. By the light of thine eyes I have

often dreamed; the coals crackling as they kindled over the embers, the kettle singing its regular refrain, and formed an orchestra to the ball of the salamanders which danced about the fireplace."

"Perusing a novel, still and cold, closing thy sleepy eyes, whilst I was renewing my amorous youth, my lips on thy hands, and my heart at thy feet."

"Aussi, quand on entrait, la porte ouverte à peine,
On sentait le parfum d'amour et de gaîté
Dont notre chambre était du matin au soir pleine,
Car le bonheur aimait notre hospitalité.

C'était le vendredi de la sainte semaine,
Et, contre l'ordinaire, il faisait un beau temps:
Du val à la colline et du bois à la plaine,
D'un pied leste et joyeux nous courûmes longtemps.

Fatigués cependant par ce pélerinage,
Dans un lieu qui formait un divan naturel,
Et d'où l'on pouvait voir au loin le paysage,
Nous nous sommes assis en regardant le ciel."

Then one fine morning, when the roses they had planted together in the little garden put forth their first buds, the poet awakes to find himself alone. Without a word of reason, the bird he has tended through the winter hails the first glimpse of summer as a signal for its flight. The desire for change, leagued to the feminine craving for dress, wealth, and a life of idleness, prove too much for the fickle Phemie. She seeks for, and finds a lover sufficiently rich to provide these requisites. He sees her again, the centre of a languorous circle, at a grand ball. It is, and it is not, the same Phemie. The little grey boots, the simple print dress and broad straw hat which owed its perfume to its trimming of natural flowers, have yielded place to embroidered slippers a Cinderella would have found too tight; a moire antique dress with point lace trimmings, a costly bracelet glitters on the lovely rounded arm, rings cover the hands that were formerly brown, but which a life of luxury and ease has whitened. Seeing her thus the poet gives expression to his

feelings in these lines, than which I know of nothing more tender or graceful :—

"Pour moi je t'aimais mieux dans tes robes de toile
Printanière, indienne ou modeste organdi,
Atours frais et coquets, simple chapeau sans voile,
Brodequins gris ou noirs, et col blanc tout uni.

Car ce luxe nouveau qui te rend si jolie
Ne me rappelle pas mes amours disparus,
Et tu n'es que plus morte et mieux ensevelie
Dans ce linceul de soie où ton cœur ne bat plus.

Lorsque je composai ce morceau funéraire,
Que n'est qu'un long regret de mon bonheur passé,
J'étais vêtu de noir comme un parfait notaire,
Moins les besicles d'or et le jabot plissé.

Un crêpe enveloppait le manche de la plume,
Et des filets de deuil encadraient le papier
Sur lequel j'écrivais ces strophes où j'exhume
Le dernier souvenir de mon amour dernier.

Arrivé cependant à la fin d'un poème
Où je jette mon cœur dans le fond d'un grand trou,
Gaîté de croque-mort qui s'enterre lui-même,
Voilà que je me mets à rire comme un fou.

Mais cette gaîté-là n'est qu'un raillerie :
Ma plume en écrivant a tremblé dans ma main,
Et quand je souriais, comme une chaude pluie,
Mes larmes effaçaient les mots sur le vélin."

The Song of Musette which follows is penned in the same minor key. A student is mourning for that flown bird, when she returns to find the old love dead in both. This I give you from an admirable translation by Andrew Lang :—

Your memory has not had time to pass,
Our youth has days of its lifetime yet,
If you only knock'd at the door, alas!
My heart would open the door, Musette
Still at your name must my sad heart beat
Ah Muse, ah maiden of faithlessness!
Return for a moment, and deign to eat
The bread that pleasure was wont to bless

Come, you shall wear the raiment white
You wore of old, when the world was gay,
We will wander in woods of the heart's delight,
The whole of the Sunday holiday.
Come, we will sit by the wayside inn,
Come, and your song will gain force to fly,
Dipping its wing in the clear and thin
Wine, as of old, ere it scale the sky.

Musette, who had scarcely forgotten withal
One beautiful dawn of the new year's best,
Returned at the end of the Carnival,
A flown bird to a forsaken nest.
Ah, faithless and fair, I embrace her yet,
With no heart-beat, and with never a sigh,
And Musette, no longer the old Musette,
Declares that I am no longer I.

Farewell, my dear, that was once so dear,
Dead with the death of our latest love,
Our youth is laid in its sepulchre,
The calendar stands for a stone above.
'Tis only in searching the dust of the days,
The ashes of all old memories,
That we find the key of the woodland ways
That lead to the place of our paradise.

Although more frequently visible in his novels than in his poetry, we have in the poem, " Le Testament "—which to me is reminiscent of Heine in his most reckless mood—a glimpse of the keenly ironic side of Murger's nature.

A man is dying, and wishing to make his will, thus addresses his notary:—

> "Mon cher maître, dit-il, je suis un moribond :
> Comme un oiseau blessé qui fait son dernier bond,
> Mon cœur ne palpite qu'à peine.
> Je suis fini, fini ; le ciel n'a pas voulu
> Que je puisse m'asseoir parmi le groupe élu
> Des gens qui verront *l'Africaine*."

His physicians as a last resource have ordered him to Egypt, but he, "*tout Parisien*" as he is, holds in loathing the East, the seas, and all countries and cities not modelled after the plan of Paris, "*cette divine capitale*." He knows that with care he may live till the spring, but he prefers to die before the carnival season, as he fears his death if delayed until then might prevent the presence of his mistress at a ball to which she has been invited. Besides, have not all his friends ordered their mournings in anticipation of his early death? Everything, from the printing of the funeral cards to the design of his tomb and the wording of his epitaph, has been ordered. Then, how in common courtesy could he disarrange these preparations by continuing to live? All he possesses, his books, wine cellar, and paintings, he bequeaths to his mistress—everything save his mother's hair:—

> "Mes livres et ma cave, et jusqu'à mon portrait,
> Peint par celui qui fut le Raphaël du laid,
> Tout—hors les cheveux de ma mère,—
> Je lègue sans retour ma fortune et mon bien
> À celle dont le nom aux lèvres me revient,
> Comme un miel fait de plante amère."

In telling her of his death and bequest, he charges his executors to watch narrowly the manner in which she hears the news.

> "Vous la reconnaîtrez à ses cheveux ardents,
> Comme un soleil du soir qui se couche dedans
> La pourpre et l'or d'un ciel d'orage.
> Peut-être en la voyant vous découvrirez-vous ;
> J'ai devant sa beauté vu plier des genoux
> Qui ne prodiguaient pas l'hommage."

If in her eye a tear trembles—one only—they are to destroy the "will," for then she would no longer be herself:—

> "Vous lui direz ma mort, et que c'est samedi
> Qu'on doit me mettre en terre, onze heures pour midi;
> Mais, si dans sa claire prunelle
> Une larme tremblait, rien qu'une seulement,
> Vous pouvez déchirer en deux le testament;
> Alors ce ne serait pas elle.
>
> Telle est ma volonté, dont l'exécution,
> Cher maître, se confie à la discrétion
> De votre zèle ministère."

The volume ends with several ballads in prose, exquisite in form and suggestive, in their treatment of the varied subjects, of those penned by the late blind poet Philip Bourke Marston. From these few poems I have read you, you may think Murger's Muse was wholly cast in a lugubrious mould. This idea, however, is a mistaken one, as in several of his poems, notably "Chansons Rustiques," do we find the expression of that natural and careless gaiety which only years of the miseries of Bohemia have known how to sombre. It is however to his novels we must turn to find the writer at his best. The simple style and gentle irony, the poignant wit, and imprint of reality with which he has clothed his characters, bear for me a charm no English novelist, save perhaps Thackeray, disputes. As regards his life, it may be said to have been, like his poetry, alternate sunshine and gloom, the shadows deepening with the years that had left his youth behind. This "lover of all things young" had therefore little wish to become old. He had arranged his life in expectation of the early death which came to him at the age of thirty-eight, in the Hospital Dubois at Paris; his last words, which for me embody a history in their eloquent brevity, being "I would rather they had taken me to the Hospital of St. Louis—I should have felt at home there." With this simple peroration we may take leave of Murger. If I have lingered too long with him, you will judge the fault with the gentleness due to a reluctance in parting from an old friend. I fear you have found the company none of the brightest; but then, as he himself would tell you, "*La Bohème n'est pas gai toujours.*"

It is now too late to disturb this attenuated gentleman in blue, or his bulkier companion in green, although at one time to-night I had hoped to have brightened the evening with De Banville's literary reminiscences or a song from Beranger. Perhaps it is as well as it is. Murger has fitted in with my mood to-night, and it may be the intrusion even of those two would have broken the spell.

Another night, perhaps, when my spirits are free from the exhilarating influence of the fog and disinterment of daguerreotyped memories that were best left in peace, we may renew our acquaintance with more pleasurable results. The fog, I see, has lifted as suddenly as it came, so that after all, in returning homewards you will be spared the experiences of the London befogged. Should this be all you have gained from your evening spent with an old fogey and his friends, in these days of small things this in itself is something. Good-night!

NELLIE VALENTINE.

—o—

ON a warm afternoon last summer, Kevin Delaney stood gazing wistfully into the garden of Aspen Cottage, the residence of Miss Eleanor Downing and her pretty niece, Nellie Valentine. He saw Nellie flitting about among the roses like a dainty white butterfly; and a little further off the portly form of Aunt Eleanor, who was weeding her strawberry bed.

The perfume of the flowers floated over to him and whispered of the Garden of Eden. The young man sighed, and reflected sadly that he was in much the same plight as Adam, after the gates had been closed against him. For Kevin was deeply in love with Nellie, and that very morning he asked her to marry him, but had been refused; rather scornfully, too, he thought.

Both were clerks in the Castleryde Telegraph Office, where Nellie was a great favourite, and the object of much rivalry on the part of some members of the male staff, who were her devoted slaves. Of all her admirers, however, Kevin Delaney had been the most privileged; and as he was fortunate enough to be a favourite with Miss Downing, he was a frequent visitor at Aspen Cottage. But, alas! when the course of true love was running as smoothly and merrily as possible, its course was suddenly checked by the appearance of a handsome young artist from London, whose mother had been a schoolfellow of Miss Downing. This was sufficient to make Mr. Annesley a constant visitor at the cottage; and, as might be expected, he fell in love with Nellie, and Kevin soon found that he had a formidable rival.

Kevin Delaney was a clever young fellow who spent

most of his leisure time experimenting in his laboratory ; he also contributed papers to several scientific journals, and was already well known as an inventor.

He was tall and well-made, with steady grey eyes, and a fine, broad forehead; his face, though certainly not handsome, was pleasant and attractive. At present, however, he looked fretted and anxious as he stood there wishing that the ladies would see him and invite him inside, so that he might have an opportunity of pleading his cause anew. But both went on with their employment, and remained provokingly unconscious of his vicinity.

Presently Aunt Eleanor's deep voice broke the silence.

"What has become of Mr. Annesley this evening, I wonder?"

"He went to see about a boat for to-morrow," Nellie replied, with a little blush. "He wants us to go with him to Trevor Island, if the day is fine. Won't you come, Auntie?"

"Now, Nellie, you know very well that I never go on the water, and I am sure I wouldn't trust myself in a cockle-shell boat with that jackanapes. I can't bear the fellow. I always dislike men who wax the ends of their moustaches," she added, reflectively, "they're all so conceited and selfish."

"You seem to have taken a dislike to Mr. Annesley very suddenly, Aunt Eleanor,—you were quite in love with him at first. I'm sure he is a most interesting young man ; he has travelled so much, and talks so nicely about all the places he has seen. And you must remember that he sent a picture to the Royal Academy last year!"

"Yes, he sent one, I know ; but we never heard that it was accepted. He has been idling about here for the last three months, and,—dear me! how fast these horrid weeds grow, to be sure! Give me that hoe, Nellie. Yes, as I was saying, he is idle and good for nothing, and Kevin Delaney's worth a dozen of him. He is kind and obliging and so unassuming; yet the boy is quite a genius. Look at that splendid scarecrow he invented for me!"

Nellie turned to the object indicated. She saw a wooden figure, clothed in a ragged and weatherworn suit of black, with a battered hat placed jauntily on one side of its head, and a short black pipe in its mouth. By means of some curiously contrived interior mechanism, the arms flapped wildly up and down, backwards and forwards, in never-ending and highly-successful efforts to keep the birds from the strawberries. It was, indeed, a capital scarecrow.

Miss Downing glanced up approvingly,—almost lovingly,—at the automaton, and in doing so caught sight of Kevin, who was now coming up the path towards her. Nellie saw him, too, and vanished.

"The very man we were talking about!" cried the old lady. "I was just remarking to Nellie what a splendid success your scarecrow has been,—so unlike the old one, which didn't frighten those thieving birds in the least. They used to come in dozens, and destroy my beautiful strawberries with their horrid little beaks. But, oh, Kevin, it gave me *such* a fright! About three o'clock this morning I was awakened by an awful thundering at the door, and on opening my window, discovered an excited-looking policeman, who yelled, 'Ma'am, the house has been robbed,—I've just seen the robber in your garden! Look at him!'

"Oh, the wretch!" I exclaimed, hurrying down; and, Kevin, dear, my foot caught in my dressing-gown, and I came head foremost down the stairs, the policeman calling hoarsely through the key-hole that if I didn't come soon the robber would be gone. Dear, dear! I felt so flurried that I quite forgot about the scarecrow, and could hardly unlock the garden gate. 'Now, ma'am,—here he is!' cried the policeman, whipping out a pair of handcuffs. 'Come along quietly with me, my man; I arrest you in the——'; but alas! *he* was arrested in his speech by a violent blow in the face from the strong arm of the supposed burglar, and knocked right into the middle of my precious strawberry bed, where he sprawled like an over-grown caterpillar; and, indeed, did far more damage than all the birds put together. By this time I saw the joke, and sat down nearly fainting, and perfectly helpless with laughing. He picked himself up, looking unutterable things at the scarecrow. 'By my song, ma'am, I'll make you pay for this!' he cried; 'nothing less than assault and battery! I'll report myself as unfit for duty, owing to your villainous trap!' I apologised to the poor man, and produced all the vinegar and brown paper I had in the house; but, oh, Kevin! his nose swelled up to such a frightful extent that I was really concerned about him. However, when I had applied the vinegar outwardly, and spirits of another kind inwardly, he went away slightly mollified. I do hope he won't take an action against me!"

Delancy laughed.

"And where have you been this long time, Kevin? Nellie tells me you are so much engrossed with Mr. Eustace

and his balloon, that you can't find time to visit your old friends."

Kevin's brown face flushed, and he murmured something inaudibly.

"You don't look well, my boy," continued Aunt Eleanor, kindly. "I've always said you study too much. You have worked very hard at this scarecrow for me, and I hope it hasn't knocked *you* up, as well as the policeman."

"Oh, no; it wasn't the scarecrow that worried me, Miss Downing," he replied.

"Well, you have been sitting up late at night, and worrying yourself over that old balloon," she persisted. "Mr. Eustace's valet told the postman, who told me, that his master sits up all night with you in the laboratory, arranging the valves, or whatever they are, belonging to the balloon. So I am not surprised to see you looking so worn and ill."

"It is not the balloon, either."

"Then I suppose you and Nellie have quarrelled. Though why you should quarrel——"

"Nellie has refused me, Miss Downing," said Kevin, sadly. "I—I proposed to her to-day in the office, and I think she was annoyed because the proposal was written on a telegraph form. She returned my note, with such a disdainful reply! . . . . I suppose she'll marry that fellow Annesley; he's just the kind of man to take a girl's fancy;—good-looking, fond of making poetry, and all that kind of thing. I couldn't compose a verse of poetry to save my life; but I love Nellie dearly, and I cannot live without her!"

"You'll marry Nellie yet, Kevin; so cheer up," said Aunt Eleanor, who was delighted at the thought of having Kevin for a nephew. "Nellie is a shocking little coquette, I am afraid; but I know she cares for you, and I prophesy that she will say 'yes' before the end of the week."

A sanguine old lady, was she not?

* * * * * *

The following day was beautifully clear and bright. Annesley's little sailing boat danced gaily over the rippling waves; the plaintive cries of the seagulls were heard as they circled overhead; and high above them floated some tiny clouds,—

> "Pure and white as flocks new shorn
> And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept
> On the blue fields of heaven."

The sunshine played upon the pretty hair which framed Nellie's piquant little face in a setting of gold. There was an absent expression in her blue eyes; to tell the truth, she felt rather bored, and paid little attention to Mr. Annesley's somewhat empty remarks. She was thinking remorsefully about somebody else.

"I have destroyed no end of canvas in my unsuccessful attempts to paint your face; but I cannot manage to catch that provokingly bewitching expression of yours, Nellie."

"Miss Valentine, please," corrected Nellie, coldly.

"Miss Eleanor Valentine, then. I should like to paint you as Tennyson's Madeline:

> "'Smiling, frowning, evermore,
> Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,
> In airy forms of sudden change,
> Ever varying Madeline.'"

"Please attend to your steering, Mr. Annesley. There are some rocks about here, I believe," remarked Nellie, beginning to yawn, but cleverly changing the yawn into a sigh.

At that moment a sea-bird rose from the water near them, and her eyes followed its graceful flight higher and higher, till it became a mere speck of white in the brilliant azure sky. Presently Annesley, who was looking at Nellie, saw her listless expression change to one of intense surprise. "What a wonderful thing,—a star in broad daylight!" she exclaimed, pointing upwards.

In the zenith shone a large, bright star, which seemed to be gradually increasing in size. They watched it breathlessly for some minutes, and Nellie was much frightened by the strange phenomenon. After some time, the star had become as large as the moon, and still kept on growing larger and larger, losing in brilliancy while it gained in size.

"Now I know what it is!" cried Nellie, triumphantly, as the last rays of brightness were fading from the star. "Kevin is up in Mr. Eustace's balloon, which we thought was a falling star!"

"Who is Kevin, and who is Mr. Eustace?" asked the other, coldly, as he pulled the moustache that Miss Downing cruelly compared to rats' tails.

"Oh, you've often met Kevin Delaney; and Mr. Eustace is a very wealthy and eccentric old gentleman who came to

Castleryde a few years ago to recruit his health. He loves everything connected with science, especially the science of sailing in the air; aëro—— aëra——"

"Aëronautics?"

"That's it; aëronautics. Since he was a boy he has had a mania for balloons and flying machines. Mr. Delaney believes Bret Harte must have written 'Avitor' in honour of Mr. Eustace:—

"'What made me launch from attic tall
A kitten and a parasol,
And watch their bitter, frightful fall?
Avitor?

'What youthful dreams of high renown
Bade me inflate the parson's gown,
That went not up, nor yet came down?
Avitor?

'My other failures let me pass·
The dire explosions; and, alas!
The friends I choked with noxious gas.
Avitor!'"

"Kevin has fitted up his balloon with electricity, which he believes will be highly successful as a motive power. Mr. Eustace is as fond of Kevin as if he was his own son, and does his best to induce him to give up telegraphy and live with him, but Kevin is too proud. Look! he is altering his course now. I wonder if he sees us!"

The balloon, having been steadily descending until it was about 200 feet from the boat, now made rapidly for land, which was ten or twelve miles distant.

"Never mind the balloon now, dear, but give me one little word of encouragement. I shall leave Castleryde to-morrow, perhaps for ever, unless you tell me to stay. I love you so much, Miss Valentine—may I say Nellie?—that I cannot remain a day longer in this suspense. Miss Valentine,—Nellie,—I have brought this ring and have dared to think you might wear it for my sake."

He caught the little hand that had been drawn slowly

through the water, and before Nellie had time to prevent it, placed a flashing diamond ring upon her finger, firmly holding her hand in his.

"Let go my hand at once, please!" she insisted; "you have forgotten yourself, Mr. Annesley! I am very sorry if I have seemed to encourage you, but——"

"Nellie, *don't!*" entreated the young man. "I love you so much that life would be unbearable unless you promise to be my wife. I have no wish to live if——"

Suddenly he was thrown on his knees; a cruel grating sound was heard, and the boat rapidly filled with water.

They had struck the sunken rocks. Nellie gave a cry, and gazed despairingly over the broad, lonely expanse of water. She thought of her dear, kind old aunt, and the tears coursed down her pale cheeks. Then she thought of Kevin, and in that moment of supreme danger, realised that she loved him better than all the world.

"Kevin!" she cried, and sank unconscious to the bottom of the boat.

Annesley was almost beside himself with terror. He shouted for assistance until the seabirds arose in masses and flew away screaming as though they were mocking the young man's despairing cry.

Kevin Delaney had been cruising in the balloon until his store of electricity was almost exhausted. He used a "secondary" battery, and did not work the balloon by the ordinary valve arrangement of aëronauts, preferring his own new and ingenious system.

He sat in the car holding the telescope, through which he had recognised the occupants of the boat, who had watched his descent with so much curiosity. From time to time he gazed at the frail little vessel, now so far away from him that it seemed a tiny speck. His heart was full of bitter jealousy and rage towards Annesley. But as he peered through the glass for the fiftieth time, the rage gave place to consternation. "The idiot is steering straight for the sunken rocks!" he cried aloud, "the boat will strike in another moment!" Even as he spoke he saw that this had actually happened, and groaned in misery. For he knew that he had barely sufficient battery power left to enable him to reach home, and his balloon was not constructed to hold more than two people; further, it was not one of the ordinary kind which would float upon the water, and might afford support to all until they should be picked up by a passing vessel or drift ashore.

It was with a trembling hand that he reversed his steering apparatus, and literally flew to Nellie's aid, hoping that his battery would hold out, and that he might yet be in time to save her life.

Annesley saw the balloon's approach, and ceased his agonised cries. The boat had sunk, and he was standing on the sharp, slippery rocks supporting Nellie, who was still unconscious.

"Here, catch this!" shouted Kevin from above, as he threw out a rope. "Now, hold it fast!" he cried, when, after several ineffectual efforts, Annesley succeeded in catching it. With great difficulty they managed to lift Nellie's inanimate form into the car of the balloon; and Kevin then begged Annesley to try to remain on the rock until he could bring a boat to his assistance, as the balloon was only capable of holding two people.

"Surely you are not going to leave me here to die!" moaned Annesley. "The tide is rising rapidly, and it will be impossible to keep my head above water much longer. If you leave me to die," he added, eagerly, "it is useless to save Nellie, for she loves me, and has promised to be my wife!"

As this falsehood left his lips, Kevin saw the ring upon Nellie's finger. He turned deadly pale, and murmured, "Nellie! if I cannot live for you, I can at least *die* that you may be happy!" Turning to Annesley; "Take my place, then, you dastardly coward!" he passionately cried, assisting the latter into the car, and placing the written steering instructions in his hand. Then he kissed Nellie's cold lips, and leaped into the sea. The balloon rose rapidly, and, fortunately for Annesley, who was quite bewildered, it encountered a strong current of air which was blowing directly towards the land.

The cool breeze soon revived Nellie, who opened her eyes in wonder. She raised herself up, glancing shudderingly at the dark water below, and shrieked as her eyes fell upon the white face of Kevin, just disappearing beneath the waves.

* * * * * *

Late that evening a sad little group had assembled in Aspen Cottage. The boats which were sent out had all returned without any tidings of Kevin, and nobody expected to see him alive again.

Suddenly Nellie heard a familiar footstep. She rushed to the door.

"Oh, Kevin, dear Kevin, I thought I had lost you for

ever!" she sobbed, as he clasped her in his arms. "Oh, *do* forgive me, Kevin. I never really cared for any one but you!"

I wish I could describe the joyful scene that followed. Old Mr. Eustace laughed and cried; Aunt Eleanor kissed everybody all round, and talked incoherently about heroes, coxcombs, cowards, and balloons, while Kevin told them of his rescue by some fishermen.

I am happy to say that nobody suffered from the effects of the ducking except Mr. Annesley, who had a slight attack of rheumatic fever. When he recovered he left Castleryde for ever.

Shortly afterwards there was a pretty wedding from Aspen Cottage. Aunt Eleanor got a complete new suit of clothes for her beloved scarecrow in honour of the event, and placed a wedding favour in his hat.

A few weeks later poor old Mr. Eustace died, leaving all his money to Kevin.

Aunt Eleanor still occupies her pretty little cottage, surrounded by roses and the accompanying earwigs, quite happy in the security of her strawberry-bed, which is well guarded by the faithful scarecrow. Kevin has just built a splendid laboratory, in which he works every day; and scientists look upon him as a future Edison.

FRANCES M. SAUL.

Belfast.

PODGER'S DOG.

By P. MARSHALL MACINTYRE, F.O.S.
Eastern Telegraphs, Glasgow.

I NEVER had much affection for dogs. Why, I cannot particularly say, for they show no disposition to avoid me,—rather the reverse. Indeed, the more ferocious dogs are rather fond of me. Perhaps the cause of this is that I am thin and bony; and, as every one knows, dogs are passionately fond of bones. They regard me with the same delight that a child displays on receiving a slice of seed cake, and they endeavour to demonstrate their affection in the same manner. I cannot, however, reciprocate their affection; and since a pair of thirty-five shilling trousers were ruined, and a portion of the calf of my left leg disappeared after a brief but affecting interview with a strange retriever, I have cherished a morbid dislike for all dogs. Dead dogs are not so troublesome. I, therefore, like them much better; yet even they have never afforded me pleasure, unless, unknown to myself, I have consumed them in the form of sausages or meat pies.

The only thing that would tempt me to keep a dog would be to insure it against accident, drop it accidentally out of a railway carriage window while the train was in motion, and devote my time and energies exclusively to railway travelling and the purchase of new dogs. I see, however, that this idea has been exploded. Taking a railway journey some months ago I purchased a *Tit Bits*, and with some disappointment, read the following paragraph in "Answers to Correspondents":—

"G. P. M. thus asks whether there is any limit to our Insurance System: 'I have a dog which I have trained to

carry my *Tit-Bits* from the newsvendor's. On the way we (the dog and I) have to cross a railway at a level crossing. The other evening the dog with the paper in its mouth was very nearly run over. Had this fatality taken place, could I, who am the nearest and dearest friend of the animal, claim the £100 insurance money?'———Yes, you could claim it, but we should doggedly refuse to pay."

Although dogs and I have nothing in common, the foregoing paragraph shows that some men make companions of dogs, and love them. It is of such an inexplicable friendship and its result I would treat, the moral being that too much familiarity with a dog may sometimes prove dangerous, and that there are occasions on which impulsive dogs unwittingly run the risk of floating their barks to another sphere.

Mr. Podger is not tall, but his fighting weight is in the vicinity of twenty-two stone. His dog, named Chawer, is much lighter; nevertheless, were their amicable relations to cease, and a struggle ensue, I would lay all my money on the dog. My betting would be strongly influenced by the superior condition of Chawer's teeth as compared with Mr. Podger's. But it will be clearly seen that in betting thus I do not lay my money on a "dead certainty." For instance, should they vary the monotony of the "rounds" by throwing each other, in the event of Podger falling upon his adversary, Chawer might feel so *low* and *depressed*, that he would, to put it literally and figuratively, "go under altogether."

Happily, however, Mr. Podger and Chawer were always on the best of terms.

Chawer is an accomplished dog,—a very accomplished dog, and Podger is his proud teacher. However, as I do not wish to be prosecuted by Mr. Podger for libelling Chawer, I will not enumerate his accomplishments; but I cannot refrain from saying that his chief accomplishment is successful begging, and that he is not a dog of strict moral principle. I shall not endanger my liberty by making any rash statements in support of my assertion. I will merely give one instance of his depravity. If he is tempted by a certain piece of meat, and begging proves of no avail, he watches his opportunity and purchases it on the most advantageous terms when the butcher's back is turned. This is a swatch from the piece. I therefore leave his other accomplishments to the imagination of my readers.

However, talking about this peculiarity of dogs, I quote an instance given by my eminent friend Job Jobling, of

Scottish People, in his interesting "Reflections" in that journal. He says:—

"After we had talked awhile, an excitable man in the corner of the room said it was all very well to talk about instinct, but he believed in reason.

"'Because why?' he said. 'Because I've seen them do it.'

"'And helped them,' said another man.

"'No; I didn't help them. They don't want any help. When a dog makes up its mind there's something to be done, it just goes and does it.'

"'Give an instance,' said another sceptic.

"'Well, if you want it, I may tell you there was a new butcher's shop opened in our street last winter. It was one of the pushing kind,—sold beef cheap and did a howling trade. There were three dogs in the vicinity which took a big interest in the new venture. They used to come down early in the morning and sniff at the door till their noses were filled with sawdust, and then they sat all day and sneezed in front of the shop when the butcher was to be seen, and making wild rushes towards the beef block the moment his back was turned. These dogs kept that butcher lively, you bet, and he used to make excursions out among them with a stick, but they'd be back in a minute, sitting as grave as town councillors, and their tails beating time to every beat of the beef chopper. But one of the cold snaps came after a thaw, and the first thing that butcher saw when he came down in the morning was a cold and glassy sheet of ice where the dogs were wont to sit. The butcher rubbed his hands with pleasure; these dogs were bowled out,—they wouldn't come that day! Five minutes after one of the dogs came and took in the situation at a glance. It went away, and presently returned with a wisp of straw in its mouth. It put it down on the ice and sat down on it. Then another dog came, and after looking at its pal's arrangement it went away and brought a bit of half-inch board and sat on it. Then the third dog came, and after it had looked sadly at both, it——'

"'Went away and brought an easy chair and a pint of hot porter!' said a scoffer.

"'No, it didn't; but it went for the dog with the board, and chased it out of the street. It knew at once that the board was bound to be a more comfortable seat than the straw. Talk about instinct—it was reason and nothing else.'"

Although the dog's name is not given, I think the one

that seized the board must have been Chawer,—it was one of that remarkable dog's principles to board for nothing whenever he could get the chance!

Nevertheless Chawer is a superior animal to be a dog, and is an obedient messenger. Podger has taught him object diving, and up till the occurrence of the incident I am about to relate, gloried in the fact.

Podger was about forty years of age, and yet he never had been married. Whether he had never felt the tender passion or had been jilted I cannot say. If the latter the woman must have been peculiar, for Podger taken by the pound or stone was a better bargain than most men. So Chawer seemed to think as he gazed proudly at the rotund figure of his master, and followed his elephantine steps with a trot that resembled nothing so much as the progress of a perpetual motion boomerang.

In due course the slow but steady pace of the master, and the semicircular advance of the dog brought them to a stream, along the bank of which they were accustomed to walk. What was their surprise to see what appeared to be a party of tourists on the bank of the stream just beyond the shady wood, and volumes of water shooting up from the stream to a great height immediately in front of them. Podger, in his anxiety to discover the cause of the phenomenon, swung his arms and increased his pace, and Chawer cocked his ears while his tail became perpendicular.

It happened to be a company of scientists who were engaged in testing the power of some explosive, but whether it was dynamite, bellite, greatmight, goodforafight or any other ite, or simply nitro-glycerine does not transpire. I believe, however, that a single charge of it was sufficient to instantaneously incorporate Podger and Chawer with the surrounding atmosphere, without leaving any trace that such an individual or his dog had ever existed.

"My dear sir," said Podger, addressing a merry looking gentleman who seemed to be bossing the concern, "Wherefore this thusness? Are you exercising a young whale in spouting, or have you discovered a baby volcano, or what?"

Every one laughed, and no one more than Podger himself. There was a lingering twinkle in the eye of the merry gentleman as he replied:

"No, sir, we are testing a new explosive. Each charge is timed to go off in three minutes; and we judge its strength from the height it shoots a volume of water."

The speaker then drew from a receptacle a charge, and essayed to throw it into the stream, but before doing so told Podger it would be advisable to send his dog away.

Podger did not immediately grasp his meaning, and when he did so it was too late! Before his fat brain could wrestle successfully with the object of the admonition the deed was done!! The charge was thrown, and Chawer, the champion object diver, seeing an opportunity to cover himself with glory (and cold water) before a distinguished audience, with a yelp of eager excitement dived in grand style!!!

It is not too much to say that the dive was viewed by the bystanders with much interest. Podger was seen to tremble and turn pale; and, as the dog reappeared, bearing the charge in its mouth, the whole crowd ran for their lives. Podger led at the beginning, but for a man of his weight he had not the advantage of the handicapping. Every scientist in turn passed him, and in a minute Chawer was up with his master. It attempted to lay the flotsam or jetsam, or whatever you call it, at his feet. But whether he was too modest to accept this homage before so many notable strangers or was only larking Chawer found it difficult to conceive. Podger nervously drew forth his watch, faced about, and in terror-stricken accents ordered Chawer to "take that away!" And as Chawer, instead of complying, attempted to lay it at his feet he swore. Finding that blasphemy was rather attractive to the dog than otherwise, he broke away and ran for all he was worth. However, as a sprinter, he was no match for Chawer. And, unfortunately, that zealous animal's reason or instinct was at fault on this occasion, for it failed to understand its master's eccentric conduct; and, thinking that his mind might be unhinged, deemed it advisable to keep close to his heels, in order to see that he did himself no injury. Chawer being animated with this noble feeling, it was utterly futile for Podger to order it home and threaten it. The noble animal stuck close to its colours, and these were contained in the variegated spats that adorned the busy feet of his demented master. In his extremity Podger would have kicked the dog, but he did not dare. He remembered reading of a pig that had eaten some saw-dust, in which was a quantity of dynamite. It then went into a stable and fooled round the heels of a horse. That aggressive animal kicked the pig, it exploded, blew the horse to atoms, annihilated the stable, and excavated a deep pit on the site.

It was vain to try and avoid the dog, futile to order it

away; and it would only hasten his doom to assault it. Podger was not prepared to die. He had never thought of it till then. His repentance was sincere, but was it complete? He repented of every sin and act of folly he had ever committed, and of none more than in teaching Chawer object diving. Too terrorised to think of prayer, he fell back in a dead faint!

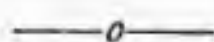
When he recovered he was surrounded by a number of scientists, who were endeavouring to revive him by pouring cold water on his temples, and pouring more of it down the back of his neck than the limited space between his garments and his person would contain. He did not feel, however, that he could thank them warmly for their trouble; indeed, he received their attentions rather coldly.

"Are we in another world?" he asked. For it was beginning to dawn upon him that he had somehow got into a damper atmosphere than he had ever experienced in his travels; and yet he did not expect to find the atmosphere of his spiritual abode damp: on the contrary, he expected to find it excessively torrid.

"Another world!" ejaculated the merry gentleman. "Why, no! The charge didn't go off." Then he added cheerily, by way of encouragement to the victim, "There was no explosion, therefore it was not the charge of the *light* brigade. I knew your dog would dive for it and threw in a dummy."

The latest bulletin from one of the victim's friends states that the relations existing between Podger and Chawer are now somewhat strained. Why this should be I fail to see. Podger ought to be thankful that he is still able to grow and increase, and Chawer ought to be equally thankful that he has so cheaply been taught the lesson that as all things that glitter are not gold, so all things that are thrown from the hands of a stranger are not necessarily safe objects for which to dive.

HALF HOURS WITH THE "OLD TIMERS."



PART I.

[Just as the ANNUAL was going to press, a kind friend in America sent me copies of the "Old Timers' Reunion," containing accounts of the annual gatherings of the Old Time Telegraphers. It was too late to communicate with gentlemen belonging to that body, otherwise the readers might have had one or two articles on early telegraph days in America. As it is, I have taken from the accounts of these *réunions* what will interest many readers. For this liberty my friend, who favoured me with the accounts, and ex-President Hine, from whose addresses the extracts are taken, will, I hope, pardon me.—ED.]

THE TELEGRAPH OF THE ANCIENTS.

I REPEAT the current remark, that the world ran on in much the same ruts century after century, in many respects without change or improvement, and with only here and there an advance at a single point along the line. There was an age of classic literature among the ancient Greeks; there was an era of high art among the ancient Romans, and there were marvels of architecture among the old Pharaohs and Ptolemys; but the plough which was sculptured on the old Egyptian stones four thousand years ago is about the same implement as the one which was in use the world around at the beginning of the present century, and just the same as I myself have seen among the Pueblo Indians on our western

plains. The Yankee plough of a hundred years ago was made of wood and covered with sheet iron, and resembled the great gang-ploughs now run by steam in the North-west, about as much as a hand-cart resembles a lightning-express train, and what was true of the plough was true of a thousand other things, and especially true in regard to means and methods of communication. Shank's mare has been the chief reliance since the creation, the only competitors being swift animals, down to the recent date of steam and electricity.

We are all familiar with the work of the messenger-boy in the delivery of the modern telegram. In the ancient times he had to take the place of the wire and *run all the way* Memory will perhaps suggest illustrations; I will cite but a single one. In the battle in which Absalom lost his life, 2,910 years ago, Cushi, a swift messenger, was ordered to go to King David with despatches. "And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab and ran." * * And behold, Cushi came, and Cushi said, "Tidings, my lord the King, for the Lord hath avenged thee of all them that rose up against thee."

Posts.

Webster tells us that a post is a piece of timber or other solid substance placed firmly in an upright position as a stay or support; a place at which anything is stayed or fixed; hence a station, as a military station; hence further, a messenger who goes from station to station; therefore an established conveyance for letters, especially the government system in any country. Some system of this latter sort has been in existence from the earliest days. The Assyrian and Persian monarchs had their posts stationed a day's ride from each other, with horses saddled ready to carry with the utmost despatch the decrees of the emperor.

That wily old premier, Haman, who got so close to the Persian king, 2,461 years ago, wrote letters which "were sent by posts into all the king's provinces." And those who remember the history of Esther will recall how that wise queen beat Haman at his own game, and when her uncle, Mordecai, was installed premier in Haman's stead, he "wrote in the King Ahasuerus' name and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries. So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment."

In the Roman Empire couriers on swift horses forwarded the imperial edicts to every province, while private letters were sent by slaves or entrusted to casual opportunities. Charlemagne in the eighth century inaugurated a system of stations for the distribution of imperial decrees, but after his death they were abandoned. Louis XI., in 1464, revived the system of mounted posts, stationing them four leagues apart and requiring them to be ready day and night to carry Government messages as swiftly as possible. Similar posts were established in England in the thirteenth century, exclusively for the transmission of Government despatches, private correspondence looking out for itself as best it could. As late as the fifteenth century, butchers and drovers who went about the country buying cattle, were the principal carriers of private letters. In the twelfth century the University of Paris established a body of pedestrian messengers, who carried letters from its students to the various countries of Europe from which they came, and brought back to them the money needed for the expenses of their studies.

The great development of commerce following the Crusades, and the geographical discoveries of the Italians, Portuguese, and Spaniards, created a necessity for business correspondence about the beginning of the sixteenth century, which the facilities then in existence were incompetent to meet, and many improvements and additions thereto were made. The custom of travelling by post was inaugurated about this time, the construction of roads, the introduction of carriages and the various improvements in travel making this possible. It was in 1516 that the earliest of these posts for general accommodation in Europe was established between Vienna and Brussels, by a person named Thurn, who received from the German emperors privileges of the imperial posts, which he extended over Germany and Italy.

The civilisation of Peru had progressed quite as far in this regard as the civilisation of Europe of the same date, for in 1527 the Spanish invaders found a regular system of posts in operation along the great highway from Quito to Cuzco, where messages were sent to the Inca by swift runners, who wound about their waists the quipu, a species of sign-writing by means of knotted cords. The original Peruvian language indicated a high degree of advancement. It was harmonious and highly cultivated, adapted to poetry and the drama. The bards and learned men preserved their annals by means of quipus or knotted cords, and I have no doubt that the

appearance of one of those old strings would remind an old-time telegrapher of the days when he had to let the paper run, and study out a message from the marks and dots along its undulated surface.

Mrs. Hemans has embalmed in verse the custom of the ancient Britons of rousing the country to war by foot-messengers who ran, bearing a bended bow as a credential, and spreading the alarm as they went,—

> There was heard the sound of a coming foe,
> There was sent through Britain a bended bow.

And she goes on in her song to tell how the reaper dropped his sickle; the hunter stopped midway in the chase; the chieftain and the prince armed for the fray, and the mother gave her boy up for the battle,—

> And the bended bow and the voice pass'd on,
> And the bards made song for a battle won.

Sir Walter Scott also gives us, in the "Lady of the Lake," a graphic account of the old Scottish custom of calling the clans to war. The old monk Brian made a crucifix of yew wood, muttered incantations over it, and scorched it in a sacrificial fire, and the messenger ran with it through bog and morass, over hill and crag, and wherever the fiery cross appeared Clan Alpine's warriors responded instant to the call.

For short distances we still employ foot messengers; it was an old invention, the organisation of our modern district messenger service, and the thought was doubtless suggested by the reading of some old scheme recorded away back in the centuries.

Beacons.—Signal Fires.

Notices found in the literary remains of Persia, Palestine, and Greece, indicated that the same practices existed among those nations as have been found among the Indians of the great plains of North America, who used, and still use, fires on elevated points at night, and dense clouds of smoke by day. Similar methods of communicating information are

still common among savage races elsewhere, and have existed from the earliest ages. Quite recently the despatches from the West told of the signal-fires of the Apache Indians, who were at that time on the war-path.

The Greek poet Æschylus, in the tragedy of Agamemnon, makes the great general communicate the intelligence of the fall of Troy to his Queen at Mycenæ by a long line of beacons on eight successive mountains. The news is supposed to have been conveyed in one night from Troy to Mycenæ, a distance about the same as would be covered by a modern night express train between dark and daylight.

About the same time as the alleged Trojan disaster, Isaiah, in pronouncing a woe upon rebellious Israel, said: "At the rebuke of five shall ye flee, till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain and as an ensign on a hill." And a hundred years later Jeremiah plainly alludes to the same thing when he says: "O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem; for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction."

Coming down twenty-six centuries at a single step, we find that in Scotland, in 1455, one fire was to give warning of the approach of the English, two fires meant that they were coming indeed, and four that they were coming in great force.

In England beacons were kept up by a county tax, and watches were regularly stationed at them with horsemen to spread intelligence when the beacons could not be seen. They were carefully organised while the Spanish Armada in 1588 was expected.

In the beginning of 1856 an old beacon works on Malvern Hill, in Worcestershire, which had served in former days to spread intelligence of the Armada, or of the young Chevalier, or of the Dutch fleet, was lighted up in anticipation of the close of the Crimean war, and afforded interesting amusement to scientific persons in estimating the distance at which the blaze could be seen from distant mountains.

Carrier-Doves.

The ruling instinct of the carrier-pigeon appears to be its love of home, and this from very early times has been utilised for the transportation of messages. This sweet

messenger has been immortalised in song, and his commercial value and political importance have been demonstrated even so recently as the Franco-Prussian war, when these birds were used to convey messages from Paris beyond the German lines, as they were used ages before in the siege of Jerusalem. The carrier-pigeon flies about thirty miles an hour, and he flew at the same rate three or four thousand years ago. He has always been good of his kind, but has never made any essential improvement upon himself.

Coaches.

It is probable that the average hack driver is unaware of the dignity which is his legacy, or he would be still more important and exorbitant than he now is; for it is not such a very great while since people of the highest rank travelled on horseback, and as late as 1550 there were only three coaches in Paris, and these had royal or noble owners. It was only towards the close of the century before that carriages began to appear. At first they were esteemed proper only for ladies and invalids, but in 1474 the Emperor Frederick came to attend the council at Frankfort in a close carriage, and the next year visited the same city in a magnificent covered vehicle. It was not until about the date of the settlement of New England that they became at all common, and it is only about two hundred and fifty years since coaches began to be kept for hire in London, and the date is considerably more recent when stage-coaches began to be a factor in the transportation of either passengers or mails. The highest speed of the English stage-coach in the eighteenth century was only about forty miles in twenty-four hours, and when in 1785—only a hundred years ago—"a two-end glass coach-machine, hung on steel springs exceedingly light and easy," was advertised to go through from London to Edinburgh in ten days in summer and twelve in winter, the whole United Kingdom thrilled with astonishment and pride at the improved rapid transit. It is not unlikely that the expression "post haste" came into use about those days.

Early Telegraphy.

If the union of the two Greek words signifying to write from afar which has become so familiar to modern ears

is recent, the systems of signals to which it may properly be applied are ancient. I have spoken of the signal-fire, the beacon, etc., one single signal which could only give an alarm or communicate one thing according to a preconcerted understanding, and was not susceptible of sending varied or continuous information. I come now to the more complex methods of signalling letters and words. Polybius, the Greek historian who lived midway between the prophet Ezra and Christ, say 2,147 years ago, describes two means of telegraphing by means of lighted torches, and an old book entitled "Mercury; or, the Secret and Swift Messenger," describes a method of conversing at a distance at night with three lights or torches, used so as to indicate the letters of the alphabet, these being divided into three classes, which were designated by one, two, or three torches, and then the number of the letter by the number of times the torches were elevated or displayed; a system so closely resembling the modern telegraphic alphabet of dots and marks, as to at once suggest the latter to the mind of any thoughtful operator. Captain John Smith, of Virginia fame, who was a free lance in his younger days and engaged in more than one of the wars on the Continent, is said to have used the system of Polybius during the siege of Vienna, about 1,850 years after the old Greek was dead.

The Roman generals along in the second and perhaps the first century of the Christian era had a system by which they spelled words by means of fires of different substances.

Communications at a distance were made in very early times by means of lights attached to long poles, and this clumsy method has continued down to the present day, practically without change or improvement. In the armies of the United States, and of other countries, the long pole with the lamp atop swayed backwards and forwards and up and down, is still in use, although it is now being superseded by other methods. Two hundred years ago, Dr. Robert Hook described in the *Philosophical Transactions for* 1684 a system of symbols made of wood. These were exposed in succession in an elevated frame at a conspicuous point, to be observed at another station, and repeated thence onward. At night torches or other lights were substituted for the wooden figures. In 1792, only ninety-five years ago, and within the lifetime of people now actually living, a man named Chappe invented a semaphore consisting of a tall post

with a cross-bar, having at each end a short arm movable on a pivot. The movements were controlled by ropes worked from the ground, and the apparatus was capable of 256 distinct signals. Improvements and changes on this plan by additional pieces of wood and otherwise, formed the basis of such telegraphing as was done up to the introduction of the telegraphic system now in use, but the semaphore system is still extensively employed on the railroads. In 1835, when I was a boy ten years old, a German named Gauss revived the old plan of employing a mirror for reflecting rays of light from the sun, or from an artificial source, as a means for communicating signals. A mirror, small enough to be carried in the vest pocket, could make flashes of sunlight which could be seen for twelve miles or more. A modern operator will perceive at once how, by long flashes and short ones, he could use this sort of apparatus in connexion with the Morse alphabet. This kind of telegraphing had the one advantage over other methods that sailing vessels have over steam,—it used nature's motive power, which cost nothing; but it was too cumbersome for general application, and it continued unimproved until modern times.

One noticeable fact which is as difficult to explain as it is conspicuous, is this persistence of primitive methods. In several lines of human effort the same means are still employed that were in use,—possibly before the flood, certainly as long ago as the beginning of history. In architecture, in some lines of cookery, in some sorts of fabrics, like Persian rugs, and in what Wendell Phillips used to call in his lectures, the *Lost Arts*, the ancients not only equalled us, but in some points surpassed us. All through the land of Bashan, which for centuries has been a forgotten region frequented only by the roving Bedouin, there stand to-day such marvels of ancient architecture in ruins, that members of our late Palestine Exploration Society declared that they would never have dared to have come home and tell of the wonderful things discovered if they could not have confirmed their words by the camera? I have in my house a series of great photographs, from Bashan, with exhibit columns, capitals, entablatures, etc., which have been pronounced by the architects of my acquaintance equal to anything of the sort in the known world, and it seems strange that people capable of such splendid achievements never found out any swifter way of sending a message than to have a man or a horse run

with it, or to signal it with a long pole or a swinging torch. And it is odd, how we return to natural sources and primitive methods and work them over again and improve upon them.

Some weeks after I had been digging in the libraries for skeleton facts on which to drape this paper, I was surprised by the receipt of a pamphlet from Lieut. John P. Finley, U.S.A., describing his improved method in the art of signalling for military and scientific purposes by means of his heliotrope or new helio-telegraph, which consists merely of a tripod like a surveyor's instrument surmounted by a telescope and fitted with a set of mirrors to reflect the sun by day and lamplight at night, arranged with appropriate mechanism, so that the flashes can be worked by keys like ordinary operating keys. It is the same old story, only it is told by means of a patented device, which through mechanical adjustments is easy to work and susceptible of broad application. During the struggle with Geronimo and his band, the Finley signal plan was in operation among our Western troops, and its use often disconcerted the Indians, and undoubtedly shortened that memorable struggle. Small bodies of our troops were moving about the country separately, and one could signal to a distance of twenty, thirty, or forty miles, calling for aid or co-operation. The Indians, with their scouts, supposed themselves to be thoroughly posted in regard to the movements and positions of all our men, and were non-plussed by some of their tactics being thus controlled. Indian sagacity and Indian cunning, however, discovered at last that the trick was done in some way with the sun and a looking-glass, and so forests were fired and brush-heaps were burned, filling the whole region with smoke for the purpose of covering the face of the sun so that he might not be used by the white men to the Indians' disadvantage. That sounds very much like one of the ancient legends, but it is a very practical fact, and occurred only a few years ago.

U.S. Marine Signal Code.

This work, constructed so recently as 1856, contains two hundred solid printed pages of arbitrary signals ; there must be 12,000 of them, and at the first glance they appear more complex than the Chinese language or the old cuneiform inscriptions. They are really arranged in a way so as to be understandable ; but at best they present an infinite compli-

cation as compared with the adaptation of the Morse alphabet to a signal-flag or pennant at masthead made to work by a line from the deck, or to a single light at night displayed and darkened for long and short intervals to correspond with dashes and dots.

Farrow says that every so-called system of signals has actually been without any system whatever. Just two hundred years ago, signals were expressed by flags hung in confusing numbers about different parts of a vessel. By the beginning of the present century the plan of hanging flags under one another was invented, which introduced the system of expressing things by combinations. Alterations in specific flags have been made, but this is really the system now in use.

Flashing lights have been introduced in the English navy, consisting of a bright light exposed for long and short intervals, not to represent the Morse alphabet, but to stand for the positive and negative symbols in the modern code.

The Electric Telegraph.

Benjamin Franklin with his kite, and key, and knuckles, was not the first discoverer of electric currents, but his experiments attracted very wide attention. In England, in 1728, Gray & Wheeler showed that electricity could be conducted to great distances, and Dr. Watson is said to have proposed the construction of an electric telegraph in 1747.

Dr. Jones, of New York, published in 1852 a history of the electric telegraph, in which he made what must then have seemed the bold statement, that the time would come when all proceedings in Congress would be daily transmitted, *in extenso*, to all parts of the Union; when New Orleans, the City of Mexico, San Francisco, and Astoria on the Pacific would be in constant, steady, and daily communication with New York, as Albany, Philadelphia, and Boston then were. And furthermore, remarked this sanguine gentleman, the time will come, be it fifty years or one hundred and fifty years hence, when great telegraph lines will unite all parts of the civilised world in daily communication.

Ocean telegraphs, however, he scouted. "All idea," said he, "of connecting Europe with America by lines directly across the Atlantic is utterly impracticable and absurd." He had ascertained that on land, messages could be sent only a few hundred miles without repeaters, and there being no

repeating-stations handy every few hundred miles between here and Europe, an Atlantic line was of course impossible. But the Doctor did not despair. When the dream of a line across the Continent should be realised, it could be carried up to Behring's Straits and so through Russia to Paris. How to get across the thirty miles of water which divide Alaska from Siberia he did not specify, but he was firm in the belief that in the progress of population and civilisation, the time would come when political movements, the state of trade, and the ups and downs of daily life would be simultaneously published in Paris, Vienna, London, and New York, thereby assuring a higher degree and a wider sphere of civilisation, and of peace on earth and good-will among men. Living, as we do, in a day that has seen the consummation of all that this sanguine gentleman then dreamed of, and more besides, we may be inclined to smile at his incredulity in regard to submarine cables, and the quick realisation of that which he foresaw 150 years off may make our smile the broader; but when we realise the undeveloped condition of the telegraph only thirty-five years ago, we may give this fearless gentleman credit for a courage equal to that which would inspire a man to-day who should prophesy the use of electric motors for the propulsion of aërial cars within the next century and a half.

FROM LONDON TO DURBAN.

By A. K. N., Durban, Natal.

A TELEGRAPHIST by profession, I am probably better qualified to transmit the thoughts, opinions, and experiences of others than to record my own, yet I venture to hope that my fellow-workers at home may find something of interest in my notes of a voyage from England to Natal.

We left London on a bright afternoon in March and were

towed a considerable distance down the Thames, the dirty appearance of which drew from a Scot on board the remark,—
It's a lang time sin' the sawmon thocht o' comin' up here."

Over the traveller who is leaving his native shores to seek a new home comes,—

> " A feeling of sadness and longing,
>   That is not akin to pain,
> But resembles sorrow only,
>   As the mist resembles rain."

There is a certain anxiety about the friendships to be formed, of the surroundings which will be so different from those to which the emigrant has been accustomed, and so, to get rid of the wild imaginings which rise unbidden at such a time, one turns with some curiosity to look round on his fellow-voyagers.

Is it the same on all ships? Are all sorts and conditions of men represented on every sea-going passenger-carrying vessel? Indeed, it may be said of our voyagers that they are,—

> " Men blown from every foreign land,
> Men desperate and red of hand;
> Of men in love and men in debt,
> And men who live but to forget."

Here there are Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotchmen, Americans, Germans, Danes, and the Jew who seems the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Some passengers are rich, many are poor, some are in robust health, a few are taking the voyage in search of it; others, again, are going in search of gold, lured by the stories which now and then reach home from some lucky miner. The appearance and bearing of a number of these gold-seekers give one the impression that they are the sort of men who sing,—

> " What is title? What is treasure?
>   What is reputation's care?
> If we lead a life of pleasure,
>   'Tis no matter how or where."

Well, if eagerness in the search for wealth means a life of pleasure they are in full possession of it. By and by, may

be, when some of the party have acquired riches, and others have miserably failed, the cry of both will be,—

> "And I am so tired! I fain would lie
> At rest a long long time."

But those who have won in the race will find it less easy to purchase rest than they thought, while for the failures there will remain!—What?

Just before sundown we lost sight of the flat uninteresting coast of Essex, and were soon getting tossed about in the German Ocean. There was a nasty choppy sea on with a thick fog, so that between people giving audible intimation that they were suffering from sea-sickness, and the almost incessant blowing of the fog-horn, it was difficult to get much sleep. Next morning we found ourselves off the Isle of Wight, and after a pleasant sail down the Channel we reached Dartmouth in the afternoon. Availing ourselves of the last opportunity we should have for some years of treading the soil of the old country, we landed and found Dartmouth a sleepy, quaint, old-world, picturesque place, beautifully [situated on a small bay which is nearly land-locked. During the summer months the town becomes a fashionable watering place, but, as we saw it, it seemed in a state of torpor.

After getting the outgoing mail on board we resumed our journey, and soon had a taste of the "Channel chops." They served as a sort of introduction to and preparation for the dreaded Bay of Biscay, which we were shortly to encounter. We, however, found that the Bay, like a certain personage, was not so bad as it is called. At the dinner-table the vacant chairs indicated that sea-sickness was again prevalent, but on the whole the passengers were disposed to congratulate themselves at escaping so easily.

Three days after leaving Dartmouth we reached Lisbon, our only port of call between Dartmouth and Cape Town. We had a few hours to spare, and these we utilised in sight-seeing. We engaged an English-speaking guide, and as we had determined to "do" the city, he found his position no sinecure. Amongst other places we visited the cathedral, where as we entered, mass was being said. We also visited what our guide described as "the holiest church in Portugal,"

—the Church dos Martires. Unfortunately, owing to the near approach of Holy Week, part of each of these buildings was shut up. The San Pedro gardens, which we also visited, contain statuettes to those whose names are "writ in gold" in Portuguese history,—in fact, these gardens form the Westminster Abbey of the country. One statuette, in which we took a special interest, was that to Vasco de Gama, who nearly four hundred years ago discovered the country of our adoption.

Some of our passengers found to their cost that the citizens were adepts at cheating. It is annoying to give 3s. for a bottle of wine and then to discover that its real price is 1s. 3d., and equally irritating to give 1s. for a small basket of oranges and then see a companion get the same quantity for 4d. One of our fellow-travellers was of opinion that Bishop Heber had never visited Portugal, or he would have found better specimens of total depravity than the Singalese. This gentleman thought Portugal was really the country,—

"Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

Without adopting this extreme conclusion, it is safe to say that during our short stay a good many passengers had their pockets considerably lightened, and returned on board wiser, if sadder, men.

After leaving Lisbon we only sighted land twice before reaching the Cape,—first one of the Canary Islands at a great distance, and on the following day Cape Verd, a few miles off. The Cape certainly did not answer to its name; everything around it had a parched and burnt-up appearance.

To pass the seventeen days or so intervening between Lisbon and the Cape various expedients were resorted to. In the evenings cards, chess, and draughts formed the staple amusements. We had also several concerts during the voyage, and, although the music was often below mediocrity, the audiences were not disposed to be too critical under the circumstances.

An attempt was also made to get up private theatricals, but it proved a decided failure. A mock trial was, however, held, which passed off in a fairly successful way.

For those who were disposed to exert themselves, cricket and quoits were provided. The former game was played on

the main deck, with an awning overhead and a curtain along the ship's side. Owing to the lurching of the vessel, the efforts of the players were oftentimes more amusing than scientific.

As we went further south the weather became so warm that most of the passengers preferred lounging on deck with a book to exertion of the mildest description, and when we reached the Equator,

> "The . . . . . sun at noon
> Right up above the mast did stand
> No bigger than the moon."

A day or two after crossing the line we got into the south-east trade wind, which considerably retarded our progress, so that it was not until twenty-one days after leaving London that we sighted Table Mountain, with that eternal mist over-hanging it.

Seen from Table Bay, Cape Town presents a rather insignificant appearance,—partly due to the mountain towering behind, and partly to the "dumpy" character of most of the buildings. On landing, our impressions were still unfavourable. With the exception of a few public buildings, such as the Parliament House, the Museum and Library, and the head office of the Standard Bank, the houses are the reverse of beautiful from an architectural point of view. They are nearly all built in an "icily regular" sort of style which offends the eye by its monotony.

We left the "liner" at Cape Town, and proceeded on our way in a "coaster," which was as uncomfortable as the ocean steamer had been comfortable. The only stoppages between Cape Town and Durban were at Port Elizabeth and East London. The former is a pleasantly situated town, much more English in its appearance than is Cape Town. These two towns (*i.e.*, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth) are rivals in commerce, but at Port Elizabeth the want of docks severely handicaps it in the struggle.

East London is a small place, but it is the port for a large number of inland towns, and the terminus of the eastern section of the Cape Railway, and has thus acquired some importance.

Speaking generally, the coast from Cape Town to East London is very rugged and wild, while from the last mentioned place to Durban it assumes a gentler aspect.

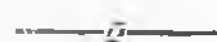
The coast journey usually occupies four days, but when we reached the anchorage off Durban, the bar was found to be impassable. It was excessively tantalising to be "so near and yet so far." For three days we lay in the bay before it was possible to sing,—

"Safe, safe in port!
Ah! blessed is that long-expected hour
When, safe from all the cruel sea's dread power,
From furied storms, and tides, and buffetings,
The driven ship folds close its beaten wings,
And o'er the peaceful waters of the bay
Is heard the seaman's gladsome roundelay,—
Safe, safe in port!"

DIFFICULTIES of the ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

(FROM A POSTAL POINT OF VIEW.)

By C. H. ALLPORT, Sheffield.



THAT the English language presents great difficulties to a learner, be his nationality what it may, nobody who knows anything about it will deny. Editors and printers have much to contend with in this direction, and deserve the sympathy of their more fortunate brethren. But to see the struggles of the middle and lower ten thousands, or "the masses" as Mr. Gladstone terms them, with their native tongue (when it becomes necessary to use pen and ink) to full advantage, you cannot do better than spend a few hours daily in a large provincial post-office.

Directing a letter seems a simple enough operation, and so it is to an ordinary business individual who is writing letters every day.

True, the most careful and business-like scribes sometimes forget a correspondent's address, or are not certain as to the spelling of a name; but these may be fairly considered as only the exceptions which prove the rule.

Quite different, however, is it with another class of people who only write a letter occasionally,—perhaps once in six months, or less often even than that, to a relative who has gone to a distant town, or to summon home a brother or sister to a parent's death-bed, or some other exceptional

circumstance. The troubles these people sometimes have with the address of a letter is almost incredible; any word that can be spelt wrongly generally is, whilst the arrangement of the different sections of the address is *peculiar.* The following is a good example of this class :—

Pontefrack
Militar
to the Kearnel
to the Dippo.

That some words are more difficult to spell than others is well known, and of all difficult words to spell surely Militia is the hardest. The following are a few variations of the word copied from the envelopes of letters addressed to members of one Militia :—

Maitlia, Maslach, Milenta, Miletsa, Militar, Militod, Milshur, Milsure, Mitilitia, Malatia, Mallita, Melsa, Milia, Mililia, Militer, Militara, Miltia, Mirlicher, Mitlia, Milatire, Milesur, Miliatia, Milito, Mitilla, Milta, Malisah, Michula, Meleshear, Malita, Militlar, Mitailay, Melitiora, Mitela, Malash, Meliticher, Malisha, Milicther, Milltery, Mitillee, Melition, Mellasa, Mililiche, Millito, Matilda.

Names of people, and in a somewhat lesser degree, names of places, are commonly considered legitimate ground for faulty spelling, and an error in this respect is usually passed over as a very trivial offence. But even in this respect there are limits, and when we find fifty-seven incorrect ways of spelling Ipswich, and nearly as many changes rung with the name of our excellent friend, Mr. Walliker (Postmaster Birmingham), we may well feel a doubt as to whether we are after all, "the most favoured nation," and whether the School Board is anything more than a delusion and a snare.

Independently of spelling, the direction of a letter affords great difficulty to many people, a large number seeming to be very hazy in their own minds as to what they really mean or want to say.

"To Her Majesty's
Service,
London."

"To the Clergyman
Officiating at the interment of
Elizabeth Ashworth"

"Mr. Vickers
Exhibitor of
Potiphar's Wife
Sheffield"

are genuine examples of this; while such as the following show that there are people who take pains to explain to the postman where to find their friends:—

"For David Smith, Lodger at a house
Next door to a Publick house
near a Church, opposite A
Narrow Street in which his
a Primitive Methodist
Chappel at the feet of a high
Mountain at Ventnor
Ile of White
N B. Please excuse these
directions, it his the Best we have."

As samples of the vague, unfinished style of people who might regard the Post Office as omniscient, it may not be out of place to quote just two more addresses:—

"Thomas Smith, Esq.,
London."

"Dr. Sorby
The Yacht
Glympse
The High Seas."

There is an envelope in the possession of the present writer, where the sender's powers as a scribe were confined to one word, the name of the village where his friend lived. For the rest he obtained a photograph of his correspondent (an old lady) and pasted that on the envelope.

It need hardly be added that the letter was duly delivered.

A different class of people are those who write so badly that it is often almost impossible for any one to read the address, whatever may be the case with the communication itself. To copy these is the work of an artist rather than what an indignant reader once termed a "depraved and dissolute ink-slinger."

Funny Folks recently gave us a good example of the difficulties and doubts entertained by some people, and the ingenuity they display in getting at the meaning of missives of a private nature. A servant girl, whose "education had been neglected," persuaded the postman to read her lover's letter to her; but, being anxious he should not know the contents, took the precaution of holding her hands firmly over his ears while he read aloud the interesting document.

Telegrams, perhaps, do not show people's difficulties with the language so much as letters, as they are, as a rule, used chiefly by experts; but they do show some curious traits in the English character. The rage for cheapness and the desire for economy are often carried to a fearful extent. In order to get full value for their sixpence and avoid spending an unnecessary halfpenny, people often leave the addressee to guess who may be the sender. The disadvantage of this system was brought forcibly home to the officials in a certain post office one evening, when a man rushed in and exclaimed excitedly, "I have had six telegrams to-day, and I have not the least idea who any of them are from!" "Well," said the clerk addressed, "I don't care." "More do I," said the addressee; "give us a pinch o' snuff."

According to *Punch*, a sixpenny telegram once cost £1387. 11s. 11d., sundry cabs and messengers, a consultation with a solicitor and counsel's opinion, a special train, and sundry other expenses being incurred, by the meaning being misunderstood.

Probably another penny or two spent by the sender in making his message clear at first would have saved all that.

If the postal system generally could be considered as an integral part of the English language, it would not be difficult to fill the entire magazine with the difficulties people find in understanding an enterprise where it may fairly be said that the "exception proves the rule."

But enough has been said to show that there are more things in heaven and earth than ever enter into some men's philosophy, and we will conclude this paper with one incident showing how a word may be misunderstood.

A lad about to post a letter in a pillar-box is told by a companion to "take it to the General." On being told it is "all the same," the wiseacre replies, "That's all tha knaws. I poasted one in thear to ahr Jack, and it kum back through t'deead letter office, and he be noan deead; he'd nobbut joined t'milisher!"

OLD LOTHBURY'S YARN.

ONE bright morning in early summer, a good many years ago, before the majority of you, my young telegraphists, had come into this world of worry, or had conceived telegraphy to be your lot, I had just entered the office, had taken off my hat, and was preparing for the day's official grind, when the secretary's messenger, a fussy and pompous individual, but not bad at heart as men go, came to me and said in a dignified tone that the assistant secretary wished to see me. (Let me say, in parenthesis, that in this connexion I am speaking of the Head (London) Office, of a now defunct Telegraph Company.) The communication did not alarm me, as it might have done in different conditions and circumstances. There was in those days a genial and considerate rule towards men who did their duty, and one man was pretty nearly as good as another so long as he kept himself straight, and was conscious that he had not gone beyond the official line.

I proceeded at once to the sanctum of my superior officer. He was a genial, gentlemanly fellow; there was not too much official *buckram* in his constitution; he was manly, and treated as men those who came in contact with him,—an important essential in those who are set over others. "Good morning, Mr. ——," said to me this official; "I have been thinking whether you would like to run down to B—— for a week; we are opening an office on the race-course there, and if agreeable you may go and take charge." Agreeable! Would you like!

"Certainly, sir; I should be very pleased to go, and I thank you for selecting me for the duty."

I had not been very long in the service, and it was the more gratifying to me, therefore, that I had been called upon to undertake a work which, although unimportant, perhaps, as compared with the race meetings of later years, yet as all things are relative, had its measure of onerousness and responsibility. In my generous moods—when I had any—I attributed this action of my genial superior, to a small joke which he had a short time before perpetrated upon me, somewhat to my chagrin. The joke was this: he had informed me that the Directors of the Company, on the occasion of the Derby, provided gratuitously a coach and four to take to Epsom such officers as might wish to enjoy that great racing festival of the year. I had presented myself at the alleged rendezvous only to find myself hoaxed. (If it had been on the *Oaks* day matters would have been worse.) Fancy a superior officer taking such a liberty with a subordinate! Oh, shades of discipline! But the line was drawn judiciously. As I have said, my official friend was a gentleman, which, as the Yankees say, is something to start with; and he had the real respect and regard of those about him.

In due time I started for B——. Remembering the Derby hoax, I felt by no means sure of my mission until I had the railway pass in my hand. "Good-bye; don't hurry back; make a week of it, and don't stint yourself in the matter of expenses." No *per diems* in those days, my young friends; hotel and other expenses were tabulated, the bills subsequently submitted to the secretary and paid without a murmur.

Bright and happy B——! I have seen it many times since, but it has never been to me what it was when I went there in the circumstances which I am trying to relate. Years make a difference naturally; we sometimes think that no enjoyments are like those which associated with our earlier years; but conditions have much to do with the matter, and not less in official than in social life. Untrammelled, unhampered men, whether young or old, accept responsibility much more cheerfully when the official screw, so to speak, is not turned too severely upon them. Well, in my case, certainly, there was not any hampering or trammelling. I was told simply to do my best, and I was encouraged in the endeavour to do it. Who wouldn't? It is best to deal liberally with people, if you desire to get the most out of them.

I took with me my staff of three skilled telegraphists, and

I reported myself at a fixed hour to the District Superintendent at the chief office, B——, a genial fellow (they seem *all* to have been genial fellows in those days), who told me what had been done in the matter of wire communication, and added that, as there would be difficulty at the race-course in getting refreshments, he had ordered sandwiches and bitter beer to be sent daily from the hotel in B——, a part of the premises of which hotel was occupied regularly, as offices, by the Telegraph Company. Thoughtful superintendent!

The next morning away we went by fly from the hotel. Charming morning! All was sunshine inside as well as outside our human economy. Life was worth living then, but nevertheless it was not all beer and skittles. We had our little function before us and we were going to do our best to discharge it.

The first day passed off well in every way. The new office was regarded as a great convenience, and the racing men showed their appreciation of it by enabling me to record and report a very respectable number of messages forwarded and received. So far so good.

We had hardly opened the office the next day when LY (the old code for TS, as many of my readers, if I should be fortunate enough to have any, will remember) called us up and offered SU (it is SG nowadays). "Secretary LY to ——." I was standing over the instrument, an old double needle, at the time, and I was a little apprehensive as to the subject matter of the message, as it was only in very exceptional circumstances indeed that the secretary used the wires. The service message informed me that there were loud complaints from the leading racing men as to the telegraphing of the results of the previous day's races; that grave charges had been made of priority having been accorded to telegrams sent by a well-known betting agent. This was the burden of the complaint (burden enough, I thought at the time), and the secretary requested immediate inquiry and a report by telegraph. Here was a disappointment after having taken to oneself such comfort as might be found in the belief that all had gone off so well. How and where was my inquiry to begin? I could answer, I believed, for the integrity of my men. I had not been out of the office at all during the day, and I felt fairly sure that nothing irregular could have taken place between the telegraphists and the racing agents without my knowledge. However, I determined to keep my own counsel and to watch. I could do nothing until the first race

was run. As soon as the results were handed in I kept one eye on the counter and the other on the instrument. (Let me here say that there was but one wire from the race-course to the Strand, London,—with LY cut off during the racing hours and with B—— railway station intermediate.) Just as our result messages were being prepared for transmission I heard the old double needle rattled up. I saw SD (Strand) being called. SD answered. B—— Rlwy. Stn. replied and then went on with a message the particulars of which I noted. Particulars! Why, they comprised the names of the first, second, and third horses of the very race that had just been run! Here seemed to be the explanation. There was priority over the race-course messages undoubtedly, but where on earth did the railway station, a mile or more away, get the message from?

"Boy,"—to the messenger,—"get me a fly, sharp." The sharp boy got me a fly, and away I went on serious inquiry intent. Arrived at the station very little time was necessary to obtain what I needed. The first thing that met my eye was a huge telescope on the wall of the railway bridge, which commanded a complete view of the grand stand, together with the telegraph board on which, of course, were hoisted the numbers of the winning horses. There were two agents; one shouted out the numbers obtained by means of the telescope to the other who, correct card in hand, did the necessary translation on the office door-posts.

I saw the messages go through to the Strand before B—— race-course could get possession of the circuit. I traced one irregularity, and one only, which I had of course to stop. The agents had arranged with the telegraphists to call SD as soon as the horses had started; to signal as far as DQ and then to *hold on* until the winning numbers had been hoisted and telescoped! But even when this was rectified the railway station office beat the race-course by a not inconsiderable start. Ingenuity has or ought to have its reward. Ah, some of my telegraph friends will say, there is nothing new in all this rigmarole; telescopes, pigeons, and, better still, telephones are common expedients and have been for years. Right, my friend, ever right; but permit me to tell you that that was the very first occasion on which the telescope had ever been used for such a purpose.

I found, but I made no official use of the discovery, that there was a perfect understanding between the telegraph clerks at the railway station and the racing agents there,—an

understanding that seemed to give to the station hotel proprietor covering authority to provide unlimited luncheons, dinners, drinks, and cigars, not only to the telegraphists, but to any friends who might by chance come near them.

I reported by wire in due course to the secretary the result of my inquiry and he expressed himself quite satisfied.

The genial assistant secretary, on my return, congratulated my small staff on its labours; paid our bills without a murmur, and promised a further *holiday* on the very earliest opportunity. Turning to me on leaving he said, with the ever-genial expression of countenance and roguish leer of eye, "Managed to make a week of it, eh?"

"Yes, sir, a week exactly. I was anxious to obey orders!"

"Ah! ah! ah! quite right, quite right."

OLD LOTHBURY.

OUT WITH A BUNDLE OF LETTERS.

By AN EDINBURGH POSTMAN.

—o—

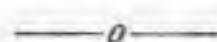
IT is now 7.30 a.m., and I am about to begin my morning delivery, the "Royal Mail" having carried me, as usual, to my starting-point. The work will be very pleasant this lovely June morning; it is sometimes not so, but the letters have to be delivered in all sorts of weather — sunshine or rain, storm or calm. There are, all things considered, many worse callings than that of a postman, and certainly few with so great an amount of responsibility attached to them. Just consider; here am I, beyond all supervision for the time being, in complete charge of two or more large bundles of correspondence, containing two or three hundred letters, postcards, circulars, and newspapers, all of more or less importance, and very probably many of much value. Certain individuals are fond of saying that postmen are better paid for their labour than the majority of the working classes; this may be so, but when the measure of responsibility is taken into account, I venture to say they are not too well paid. Allowing this to pass, however: if those bundles of letters could be exposed to view, what a history they would reveal; what tales they would tell of love, joy, sorrow, and anger in all the relations of life, and from every part of the country and of the world! It is with the outside of the letters, however, that the postmen have to deal, and not with the inside; they have no desire to be inquisitive, yet the countenance of the recipient very often reveals the feelings

of the mind and heart. As a rule, the postman is a welcome visitor; of course, there are sometimes exceptions, but that is generally owing to the nature of the communications which he may chance to carry, so that it is not really the postman, but the news which he brings that is not welcome. Speaking of the outside of letters, there is sometimes more than the addresses on them, and there is a particular class of letters that a postman finds rather disagreeable to deliver, viz., "summonses," or citations. It has become the custom in certain instances to register these legal documents; and on the envelope, in bold type, is stated what it contains, so that one cannot help knowing this class of letters. Many amusing and yet touching incidents, especially when this method came first into vogue, might be related by postmen of poor people signing for those letters in the belief that they contained money or something of value, and of the disappointment they would receive when they discovered what they really were. On the other hand, I once had the greatest difficulty in persuading a poor Irish woman to sign for a letter which actually turned out to contain half-a-sovereign sent by her son, she persistently remonstrating that it was a summons for her "rint." This morning I came on duty at the General Post Office at six o'clock, and for over an hour was busily engaged sorting and arranging my letters, &c., according to the prescribed route of delivery. Some people are quite surprised when informed that the postmen have to be thus early at work, imagining that they have merely to go and lift up their bundles, all sorted and arranged, ready for delivery. This is not the case, however; the postmen's room here, with its two hundred men, is a very hive of industry previously to the morning despatch. A minute description of the work as it goes on there would, no doubt, prove very interesting, but time will not permit at present. Without any unnecessary delay, I must proceed with the distribution of those promiscuous missives now in my possession. I cannot help thinking how much easier and more pleasant a postman's work is in this part of the city, where there are bells and name-plates at all the "common stair" entrances, and letter-boxes in the doors of most of the "main-door" houses, than in those districts where there is none of this and the postman is left to call out the names in the stairs, or find out the doors in the best way he can. And in this respect I think the postmen of Edinburgh are better off than their brothers in the sister city of Glasgow,

where there are comparatively few stair-bells even in well-to-do localities ; consequently, the poor postmen there have to trudge up the stairs and walk to every door. Almost immediately I pull the bells the stair door is drawn open, and at the well-known cry of "Post!" there is an eager rush down the stair of smiling and expectant faces, anxious to relieve the postman of part of his burden, and also to save him climbing up all the stairs. Although this is invariably the way the postman is treated in the course of his work, there are always some exceptions to prove the rule; on every district persons are met with who are not so considerate, and who would very soon tell the postman, what he already knows, that he is paid for coming up the stairs. My progress is interrupted occasionally with the "trial" of bad letters, *i.e.*, letters with their addresses imperfectly written, and others insufficiently addressed. The wrong number of the street may be given, or there may be no number given at all; and letters may be addressed to a party residing in a "common" stair, not a householder, without the householder's name being given on the address. All these omissions and mistakes on the part of the public entail a good deal of extra labour on the postman, and might be avoided with a very little extra care and consideration. I often think that the public are more indebted to the postmen than they are perhaps aware of, for while it may be the case that a few letters are returned which might have been delivered, it is really the case that hundreds of letters are delivered which might have been returned. In the course of an hour and a half my delivery is completed. I do feel a little wearied, but some hours will intervene before I require to go on duty again; and the prospect of a substantial breakfast, and, what is better still, a loving welcome from wife and bairn at home, cause me to hasten my steps in that direction.

AT EVENTIDE.—A MEMORY.

By Col. CHARLES E. TAYLOR, W. U. Telegraphs, Frankfort, Ky.



> " They are all coming back to me radiant and strong,
> The feelings and fancies of far-away years."—MRS. SIMPSON.

AS I sit in my quiet office, the glorious sunshine and balmy breezes finding a welcome entrance, my thoughts go backward to the peaceful home nestling cosily among the hills, near the beautiful little city of Frankfort, Kentucky, where, more than half a century since, I first saw the light of day, and where, some weeks later, I was named Charles Edward after the Pretender, whose memory was held in loving remembrance by my parents, whose Scotch ancestors had doubtless taken an active part in the doings of '45.

Memory carries me back to the early springtime of 1847, when the easy-going folks in our neighbourhood were astonished to find that thin wires were being erected over turnpike and dirt roads, and their astonishment was not lessened when the builders announced that by means of these wires the people of Washington would be able to speak to people in New Orleans.

This line was built three years after the experimental wire between Washington and Baltimore was put up to test the invention of Morse, and over which the first message flashed was *What hath God wrought?*

As I watched the linemen of forty years ago building the telegraph line in Kentucky, I little thought that I was to be so closely connected with it; yet so it happened, and now I am

going to give some incidents in the life of one who has spent thirty-eight years in what he considers the grandest profession on earth—Telegraphy.

In 1850 I entered the office of my native place,—the picturesque little city of Frankfort, Kentucky,—and dear old "uncle," Billy Tanner, very soon sent me to Paris, Ky., with orders to take the receipts for salary! How independent I felt! I would not have changed places with the President. Well, I got to Paris, took over the office, and when the operator I had been relieving returned after three days' absence, my receipts were exactly 75 cents, of which I had to turn over two-thirds. I went home for a good round meal a sadder and a wiser boy. But there were more jobs for me, and on New Year's Day, 1851, I got orders for Versailles, Ky., the receipts, as before, to be my own. I went to Versailles with rather less confidence than I had gone to Paris, but still with a feeling that I was about to make my mark in the world. I moved the office, stayed three days, took in 25 cents, concluded I had adopted the wrong vocation, and once more turned homewards. My good old mother gently chid me, and with kindly words of sympathy put new hope in my breast, and when my brother quit telegraphy in May, the Frankfort office was turned over to me. The Civil War found me located at Cincinnati, O., and although not anxious to engage in strife, yet my sympathies being all with the people of the South,—my own people,—it is not surprising that the day after the firing on Fort Sumpter, I threw up my position and went south to Memphis, Tenn. There my old friend Col. James Coleman, manager of the office, put me to work. In July, '61, General Leonidas Polk needed my services for special duty with his division, and he was afterwards kind enough to say I had rendered good service. A fine old man and gallant soldier the South lost when Polk was killed. A bishop of the Episcopal Church when the war broke out, he took up arms for his sunny South, and was appointed Major-General. Dignified and kind he was, strongly resembling in form and feature the Father of our country, George Washington. I was stationed at Humboldt, Tenn., and after Columbus was evacuated, General Polk ordered me to report at Corinth, where the South had concentrated a large force. Shortly after the hard-fought and fateful battle of Shiloh the place was evacuated, and I left for Memphis and went to Brounsville, Tenn., to get my wife and children further south, as I knew that that part of the

country would soon fall into the enemy's hands, as it did in ten days. The railroad officials had removed all the rolling stock from the road and burned the bridges between Brounsville and Memphis, with the result that a brother operator, Ned Tomlinson, and myself with our families, were cut off. Securing private conveyances, we reached Memphis, which was occupied by Northern troops. We had hoped to send our families home by boat and then cross the Mississippi into Arkansas and get south again into the army. But the fates were against us. We were captured next day by my own cousin, an officer on the Staff of the General in command. As it turned out, we were lucky in falling into his hands. I tried to persuade him to keep his eyes shut and let us take our chance, but he was firm, and said, "No: both of you shall go home with your families," and so he stuck to us and saw us off by boat for Louisville, where we arrived in a few days. We were at once re-arrested and imprisoned till kind friends came to our aid, and we were set free on giving bond and security not to go south during the war. After a stay of several months at Louisville, where I met my brother Robert, then a captain in the Federal Army, I went to Cincinnati; but "rebel" operators were at a discount, and I failed to get employment. Finally, General Stolger, military superintendent of telegraphs, sent me north to Buffalo, N.Y., where I was stationed for two years and made many warm friends. Next I moved to New York, where I remained until peace once more reigned throughout the land, when I returned to Cincinnati, and in '68 found myself once more back in dear old Frankfort, having decided to quit telegraphy and go at something else; but I couldn't do it,—how few old telegraphers do tear themselves away from their mystic profession, which has an attraction all its own,—and I listened to the persuasive voice which asked me to take charge of an opposition office at Memphis, Tenn. Opposition office! The words remind me of a little story told in one of our journals, and perhaps I may be pardoned if I give it here.

"In the year 18—, I went to Alention, a summer resort on a noted river in New York. The superintendent had told me that I would find everything locked up in the office, and that all I would have to do would be to 'cut in.' When I arrived, after an all day's ride, I found as bad a state of things as could possibly exist. After tramping all over the place, I secured a boarding-house, and then went to the place where the office had been the season before. The operator

had skipped his board bill, and his landlord had seized the battery as collateral security. After some trouble I managed to convince him that the property he held was only worth about two dollars, and that it did not belong to the operator. Having secured this, I began my search for the instruments. I looked high and low, but could find not even a binding post. Finally, I gave up in despair and went to look at my loop wires. Here again things looked bad. Some enterprising fisherman, in need of a clothes-line, had appropriated the loop wires, and a diligent search in the back yards of the village disclosed those wires cut up beyond all use for further telegraph service. I am a patient fellow, but I got mad. Going to the nearest office (which, by the way, belonged to an opposition company), I borrowed a box-relay and carried it out on the loop to the first pole that had a wire on it. Cutting the wires from the pole (and in so doing, receiving a shock that nearly knocked me off the cross-arm), I connected my box-relay, and then the boys in the superintendent's office must have thought a cyclone had struck them. I was mad, clear through, and the way I wriggled the key was a caution. As I sat there in the road with the relay in my lap, I attracted the attention of a farmer driving into town with a load of hay. He stopped his team, and as his jaw dropped and his eyes opened he looked the picture of astonishment. Finally, he found his tongue sufficiently to say, 'I say, mister, are you one of those dynamiters, and is that there business in your lap an infernal machine?' Vainly endeavouring to keep my face straight, I told him as politely as possible that I was not a dynamiter, and that the little machine was a telegraph instrument. His mouth closed with a snap, and he gave this stunning question: 'Be you one of them fly cusses that's goin' aroun' the country skipping board bills and mashing girls?' I answered that I hoped I did not belong to that class, but with a shake of his head that seemed to say he had his suspicions, he drove on. After I had notified headquarters of the state of things, I put a jumper on the loop and wended my weary way back to the office. In two days a new set of instruments arrived, and a backwoods lineman came on the same boat. After giving him directions where to find the jumper, he started out, only to return in a few minutes to ask where he could find a ladder. In answer to my question as to what he wanted with a ladder, he said that the poles were wet and that he couldn't climb them without a ladder. After much searching,

he found a ladder sufficiently long for his purpose, and did a job of linework that would make a city man gaze in wide-eyed surprise. It was indeed a fearful and wonderful piece of work. Just think of climbing a pole with a ladder and tieing your insulators to the brackets with a piece of cotton cord 'to keep them from falling off in case they should become unscrewed.' Think of making a splice by bending the ends of the wire into the shape of a fishhook, and hooking them together, and then covering the whole with a wrapping of No. 16 copper office wire. It would have been no sin to worship that splice, for it was like nothing on earth, under the earth, or perhaps in heaven. One week from the time I got off the boat at Alention I was open for business, and when I left they didn't have to seize my trunk for my board bill."

From Memphis I gravitated to my old home among the hills, and here I hope to end my days. In looking back a feeling of sadness creeps over me as I think of many an old comrade who has been and is not, whose place shall know him no more for ever :—

"We shall meet no more in the sodden fields,
With the faded bent o'erhead ;
But perhaps I shall meet thee and know thee again
When the grave gives up its dead."

During all these years of telegraphing many strange telegrams have passed through my hands. During the war many of them showed that the senders were frantic with grief at the loss of father or brother or son. Sometimes, indeed, of father and son fallen perhaps fighting on different sides. "Are you still alive?" was a common message, too often undelivered because the addressee had gone under. Now the messages are more commonplace than those sent by the soldiers and their friends.

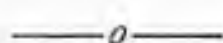
I have now been at the telegraph key constantly for thirty-eight years, and excepting my old friend, John Gibson, at Maysville, I fancy I am the oldest operator in the State. John has been in that office for forty years, having learned the art in 1848. We are getting a bit ancient now, and, perhaps, our fingers are not so nimble as of yore ; still, we do manage to keep up with the youngsters,—ay, and even to worry them a little *sometimes*.

The eventide is lengthening into night, "day is declining and the sun is low." It is getting dark,—too dark to write,—the twilight has fallen on my heart. I feel now as if I were but a spectre, and you, my friends, but shadows. We will part now, if you will, and over the past,—"our dead and well-buried love,"—we will sing the requiem, for what more I would say is fit for the ear of some sympathetic old timer only :—

> "What will it matter by and by,
> Whether my path below was bright,
> Whether it wound through dark or light,
> Under a grey or golden sky,
> When I look back on it by and by?"

HALF HOURS WITH THE OLD TIMERS.

PART II.



MY EARLY DAYS AT THE WIRE.

MY connexion with telegraphy dates back to the early years of the enterprise. It was in 1845 that Henry O'Reilly stretched the first wires through Ohio. A line ran down from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati, and a branch, running through New Lisbon and Massillon to Cleveland, tapped it at Wellsville. I was a young fellow in Massillon, Ohio, when James Bellows, of Rochester, took charge of that office, its first operator. A friendship which sprang up between him and myself took me much into his office, and he taught me to handle the key. I think it was in the fall of 1846 that I received my first appointment, the office at New Lisbon, Ohio, on the munificent salary of 300 dollars per annum. That meant rather more forty years ago than it does now; for I boarded at the best hotel in town and occupied a room as good as any in the house for three dollars a week, which left me enough for washing and incidentals, and at least one suit of clothes per annum! Next I went to Detroit, Michigan, but I always wanted to go to Toledo, because I had a musical ear and the rollicking sound of the letter X, which was the Toledo call, was very attractive to me; I had no other reason for preferring that office!

Speaking of music reminds me of a compliment to my voice which I received in the city to which I did go, the like of which I venture to say was never bestowed upon any Old Timer in this Association, however great his proficiency in vocalisation. Those who are familiar with the beautiful city of Detroit will remember the magnificent width of its streets and the corresponding amplitude of its sidewalks. Our office was in the second story, and a wide awning stretched from underneath our window over the curb, completely shutting off the sidewalk below. The amount of business transacted in the office in those early days was not so great as to wear the finger-ends off from two operators, and I employed much of my leisure time in tormenting the catgut on my guitar, and exercising the dulcet tones of my voice, while sitting completely secluded in the open window just above the awning aforesaid. One day I was singing away to my own infinite satisfaction, when a man stepped out from under the edge of the awning into the street beckoning to me wildly, and of course immediately attracted my attention. I ceased. "See here, young fellow," said he, "*if it hurts you like that, I would recommend you to have it pulled!*" He disappeared under the awning ,and I disappeared into the office, crushed. I never sang before Detroit audiences any more.

Securing my instructions and an outfit at Peoria, I returned to Peru, rented an office, and fixed up the instrument and local battery, not forgetting a ground wire, ready to hitch on the moment the wire arrived. After that I opened the office in Ottawa. I remained for the rest of the year in Peru, which was a "repeating office," a branch line starting off from there to Dixon, Galena, and Dubuque, if I remember correctly. In January, 1848, I found myself in St. Louis, which, with the exception of parts of years spent in Jacksonville, Illinois, and New Albany, Indiana, was the scene of my principal labours in early telegraphy, from 1848 to 1852. Without attempting to put things in chronological order, I will refer to several matters which are of interest because they were among the early things of telegraphy.

The wire between St. Louis and Louisville was put upon any sort of poles that could be procured through the prairie country which constituted the greater part of the distance, and they promptly rotted down! During my connexion with that line (the Ohio and Mississippi) I rode on horseback from St. Louis to Louisville and back contracting for new poles to rebuild. It was a primitive mode of travel, but the

only one available; there were no railroads, and only one stage per day, so that each stop from the stage meant twenty-four hours lost.

I assisted in laying the first three cables that were ever put across the Mississippi River; J. N. Alvord was our efficient and ingenious superintendent. The laying of the first cable was a matter of public interest. Commerce on the Mississippi River was temporarily suspended for our accommodation! A sufficient number of scows were anchored in the river, so that the gutta-percha covered wire could be passed by means of a row-boat from one to another until it reached from shore to shore, and was held by men on the down-stream end of the scows, free from the water. While so held, lead sinkers were fastened to it, and when all was ready Alvord gave the signal by waving his handkerchief, and the entire stretch across the river was thrown into the water at the same instant, all the men on all the scows heaving simultaneously. This wire was unprotected save by three coats of gutta-percha, which covered it. My recollection is that it did not work particularly well, and it lasted only a short time. The second experiment made by Mr. Alvord was by enclosing the gutta-percha covered wire in a lead pipe. The gutta-percha covered wire was laid in this pipe. This time I think the cable was paid off from the stern of a ferryboat and commerce was not suspended. Its fate was very similar to the other, it lasted but a short time, when a third attempt was made. This time Alvord was determined to succeed, so he went over on the Illinois shore of the Mississippi River, and selecting two cotton-wood trees as far apart as the river was wide, he stretched between them strands of ordinary telegraph wire enough to form a longitudinal coating around the gutta-percha covered wire. These were drawn taut with a block and tackle; then the gutta-percha was wrapped with strips of canvas dipped in tar so as to remedy every possible defect of insulation and give the inside wire an additional defence against the metallic armour by which it was to be surrounded; then the gutta-percha, so wrapped, was laid inside of these longitudinal wires, and the whole was wound outside with annealed wire, which was tied at short intervals to prevent unwinding: thus making a very clumsy cable, but it seemed to us to be a very strong and well-insulated one. This cable we hitched to a tree on one side of the river and paid it off a great reel on the stern of a ferryboat. It worked charmingly for a little while, but in

the course of a few weeks began to fail. Practical telegraphers in those days were not electricians, and our only method of forcing a current through was to *put on more battery.* This we did, until the relay, short-circuited by the river leak, chugged and thumped as if its heart would break! We could not bear to give up this cable and return to our old method of river crossing, from mast to shot tower, and we persisted in our endeavours to use it for some time. I go into all these details not because they would be regarded as of any special importance now, but simply because they relate to the infancy of river cables, and because they have never been recorded, so far as I know, and there are not more than two or three living men to whom the facts are known; when they pass away, as they all must soon do, the knowledge of these events, trifling perhaps in themselves, but valuable because of their pioneer character, will perish!

Our river crossing was our *bête noir!* Up to the time of successful cables we crossed from a mast on the Illinois side to the shot tower on the St. Louis side. The stretch must have been half to three-quarters of a mile, and the wire could barely support itself. Sleet, heavy rains, and sometimes the wind would break it, so that "wire down over the river" became an alarm as familiar in the St. Louis office as it was unwelcome.

Being, as before remarked, only a telegrapher and not an electrician, and being very deeply impressed with our experience in getting across the Mississippi River by cable, I scouted the idea of an ocean telegraph when it was first publicly broached in 1856; and when the first attempt failed in 1857, it was only what I *knew* must result! Had I not personally aided in constructing and laying a cable less than one mile long, insulated and armoured more perfectly than it would be possible to insulate and protect an ocean cable? Had not that consummate effort failed within a month? Was it not simply impossible to do under three thousand miles of water what could not be done under one mile, and did not I *know* it was impossible? The idea was absurd, impracticable, I had no patience with it; and up to this day I have scarcely had the grace to forgive the Ruhmkorff coil and the galvanometer for accomplishing what could not be done with a Grove battery and an old-fashioned relay magnet.

The repeater has been invented a great many times, and our obstinate cable above named occasioned it to be invented one of those times. At this distance of time I

am unable to give all the particulars, but I think J. N. Alvord is entitled to the credit of the contrivance by which we got our work forward to Louisville without rewriting on the east side of the river. If not, then I am ; the honour, such as it was, rests between us somewhere. Anyhow, I was stationed on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River, at a little place called Venice (after this cable became so unmanageable that we could not possibly force anything through to Louisville) to receive from St. Louis and forward eastward. I was using one of the old harp instruments. I insulated the standard on which the pen lever struck, and with some bits of copper wire, a few nails driven through a dry pine plank, and a system of old-fashioned window snaps, I made a repeater, and sat there at my ease, reading by sound and turning the window snaps, while Alvord and Billy Barr did the work. This was to all intents and purposes a complete repeater, crude in its construction and clumsy to the last degree, but a repeater, nevertheless, and the date of its use I am quite certain was as early as the year 1850. Whether this antedates the use of repeaters elsewhere I do not know. Neither Alvord nor myself had ever heard of a repeater, and while I have several times spoken of the contrivance as one of my own getting up, my impression is as I think about it, that Alvord is quite as much entitled to the credit of the idea as myself, if not more.

We had all sorts of personal experiences over in Illinois town during the periods when our river crossing was broken. Frequently there was no place to board, and we had to take care of ourselves as best we could. We found an unoccupied house and lived in it ; at night we spread beds down on the floor with our feet toward an open fireplace, and Bobby Smith, Alvord, and myself bunked in together in the most promiscuous fashion. We got our supplies from the St. Louis side, and we got along with our cooking in the most satisfactory manner possible ; but when it came to washing dishes none of us ever developed the slightest ambition, and so we concluded to mark our plates and each go as he pleased in regard to dish-washing. I knew mine by a three-cornered fracture ; Alvord was a great eater of molasses, and his plate was easily identified ; while Bobby Smith's had some equally distinctive label,—mustard, I think. One of our patent inventions for toasting bread was a split stick about four feet long, with which we could do our toast exceedingly brown without burning our hands or damaging our lily white complexions !

That split stick was regarded as a great idea in a small way, and has often been spoken of since. We were all very fond of bread and milk, but our table furniture was exceedingly limited, one spoon being our only possession, so we used a large battery tumbler for milk, into which the bread was crumbled, and from which one would take a dip with the solitary spoon and push it to the next, and so on around our three-cornered circle! I do not think that battery tumbler had engraved upon it the words, "Liberty, fraternity, equality," but they ought to have been there.

Among my household treasures there are few things that I value more than a couple of pictures which I cherish as souvenirs of those early times. One is an old daguerreotype (photography was not yet in vogue) of Alvord, Bobby Smith, and myself taken in a group, and the other is a large photograph reproduced from an old daguerreotype of the St. Louis office corps in 1849.

When the June rise comes down from the Rocky Mountains and out of the Missouri River into the Mississippi the overflow is sometimes very extensive. On one occasion the "American bottom" opposite St. Louis was inundated clear back to Belleville Bluffs, fourteen miles, and the water in the streets of Illinoistown (now East St. Louis) was from five to ten feet deep according to topography. That was just a beautiful time for our river crossing to break, and it met our expectations and broke accordingly. We had to occupy the second story of an old house in Illinoistown, and we reached it by skiff from the ferry float. A board was nailed across the front door about two feet below the top, and from that a plank was laid on to the stairs. By crawling along on hands and knees on this plank, our backs rubbing the ceiling, we made our way from the skiff to the second story, where our instruments were located, and there, in a wild waste of muddy water, with all manner of things floating past, with skiffs, and scows, and flatboats going hither and thither, the early telegrapher did his arduous work.

It was along about this time that my inventive genius disported itself on a "Facsimile telegraph." A St. Louis friend had a favourite conundrum which he was fond of asking: "What is the difference between a facsimile and a sick family?" and it may be that it was my effort to solve that great question which led me into this line of invention; if so my success was not brilliant, for my facsimile drawings and things never got out of the sick-family category; they

never got so far as the *model* stage of existence, but I retain and still fondly look over, on rare occasions, the drawings which I made of my projected machine nearly forty years ago.

Seriously, I have never entertained a doubt, and do not this minute, of the feasibility of the plan just as it then occurred to me. My notion was to lay a sheet of tin foil on a yielding surface like wax or cork, and write on it with a stylus, indenting the inscription. When laid bottom side up this tin foil would show elevations for the writing. This was to be placed on a metallic table or movable platform which was to be a part of the base of my machine, which table was to have a ratchet movement of one-sixteenth of an inch or less. Transversely and at right angles to this movement was to swing a pendulum. This pendulum was to carry a sort of shuttle on a guide, and from this shuttle was to drop a fine and finely-adjusted wire. This wire was to touch the elevations on the written tin-foil and close the circuit at each touch. At each extreme of the pendulum's oscillation there was to be a magnet, like an old-fashioned relay magnet, both being in the circuit, or rigged to connect with local battery, as the exigencies of the case might demand. An ordinary key was to complete the apparatus. All being ready, and an instrument of precisely similar construction being at the other end of the line, having Bain chemical paper spread on its table over which its wire was to travel, and both pendulums being held at the right side by the magnets located there, the sender was to open his key and instantly close it again; the pendulums would be liberated, swing across their arcs, and be caught by the other magnets. A line of irregular dots would appear on the Bain paper of the receiving instrument, both platforms moving a ratchet breadth, the sender opening his key again, and the pendulum returning. This repeated a few times would reveal a line of writing, and, as each oscillation would occupy only a part of a second, my idea was that, by a table as wide as experience might demonstrate to be practicable, I could beat the Morse plan in speed three or four times as quickly, or possibly ten to one; but my scheme never got beyond a dream and a drawing, and I have since been informed that almost identically the same plan forms the basis of presumably valuable patents taken out twenty-five years later; thus are roses born to blush unseen. It is quite obvious that I was never born to the *rôle* of a great inventor,—nor a great singer!

So far as I know, I was the first who called public attention to the disturbance of the wires by the aurora borealis. It was on a beautiful, clear evening, while we were enduring one of our Illinoistown banishments. I had got my supper and was preparing to "clean up my hooks," when I found that I could make my instrument talk nothing but gibberish. I tried for, perhaps, half an hour to communicate with Louisville, recognising now and then a part of a word which Billy Barr would say, but finally had to give it up. Going out of doors I observed that there was a magnificent display of the northern lights.

After a while I returned to the instrument, and finding it still indulging its antics, the query arose in my mind whether the auroral display were not electrical and the cause of our temporary disturbance. This continued far into the night, and the next morning the line was in perfect working order. I wrote a communication to the St. Louis *Republican* embodying these facts and querying whether the aurora was not chargeable with the disturbance of the wires. This is, of course, an old story now, but everything was new then; and if the files of the St. Louis *Republican* for 1849-50—then or thereabouts—are extant, the item which I wrote on that subject may be found therein.

A good deal of splurge was made through the papers three or four years ago on the occasion of one of President Arthur's messages, which was sent and received without a break; but Billy Barr and I did that identical thing on the night of March 5th, 1849, with President Taylor's inaugural message. As usual, our river crossing was broken, and the newspaper reporters, swift writers, of course, came over to Illinoistown to take the message as I should read it from the instrument. Those were the days when we were compelled to use paper Everything being ready, Billy Barr commenced, and in about two minutes and a half I had about two yards and a half of paper unread, with the reporters yelling "Hold on! hold on!" That we were not going to do: so organising our own forces, I took Harry Graham and a man named Maas, both swift writers, and they alternated; reading by turns to the reporters in another room. Barr began again, and with the exception of an occasional "77" and a responsive ay, ay, from my end, the entire inaugural address was sent without a break or the repetition of a single word! I think public mention was made of the fact in St. Louis papers at the time; whether such was the case or not, it was a fact, and telegraphy did

not have to wait for President Arthur to construct a message which should be sent through without a break,—the feat was accomplished at least thirty-two years before Arthur sat down in the presidential chair.

I have been listening to myself ramble, and am quite amazed at the constant and prominent use which one can unconsciously make of the personal pronoun singular number! Telegraph men are proverbially diffident and unobtrusive; if there are any others more shy and unpretending, they are the insurance men, and of this latter class the most modest species is the insurance editor. I would be horrified at having done anything to jeopardise my well-inherited and well-earned reputation in this direction, but I am at a loss to see what I could do in the line of *personal* reminiscences without talking about myself. I trust, therefore, that I may be pardoned, and that my disclaimer of ostentatious desire may be accepted without a single grain of salt.

ATLANTIC CABLES.

—o—

IT is now thirty years since Britain and America were first connected by submarine cable. The first cable, which cost £400,000, was completed on the 5th of August, 1858, but owing to defects in the manufacture, increased by the injudicious use of powerful induction coils and batteries, it failed on the 1st September, having only worked for twenty-three days. During that time 1,474 words were received at the Newfoundland station and 2,885 at Valentia. Congratulatory messages passed between the Queen and the President of the United States, and the British Government saved £50,000 by being able to stop the transportation of the 39th and 62nd Regiments from Montreal and Halifax to England. Seven years passed before another attempt was made to join the two countries. In 1865 the Atlantic Telegraph Company was formed by 345 gentlemen contributing £1,000 each, for the manufacture of a cable, and that year the *Great Eastern* started, with capacity greater than any ship before or since, and a cable more perfect than had been made yet. After laying 1,200 miles, and when endeavouring to recover a fault, the cable broke, and the great ship had to return to England, and could do no more that year. The following year the Anglo-American Company was formed, with a capital of £600,000, and laid a cable which was opened to the public

on the 29th of July, 1866, with a tariff of £20 per message. They also succeeded in picking up and finishing the 1865 cable, and had therefore two complete lines. Since that time ten cables have been laid from Europe to America, and so rapid had been the improvement in perfecting the modern cable that the resistance to the electric current has been reduced to one quarter what it was twenty years ago, while the duplex system doubles the capacity of every new cable laid.

The first words received on the 1858 cable at Valentia were by means of Sir Wm. Thomson's mirror galvanometer, the power used at Newfoundland being very large induction coils, over five feet in length; and so strong was the current that those who had the misfortune to touch the cable when the current was discharged from the coil received such a severe shock that they were almost ready to faint from it. They also used 480 Daniell cells, but this number was reduced to 50. The battery at present used would not exceed in strength one which works a line between Edinburgh and Leith. The speed attained on the first cable did not exceed two words per minute.

Sir Wm. Thomson's mirror is still in use upon three of the cables, the seven others being worked by the same gentleman's siphon recorder, and twenty to twenty-five words per minute can easily be done, working singly, and very nearly double that number duplex.

About fifteen years ago, when the Anglo-American Company had the monopoly of the Atlantic traffic, not more than one thousand messages passed between Europe and America daily; at present the number crossing every twenty-four hours cannot be far short of nine thousand.

Since 1858 about twelve million pounds have been expended in laying thirteen cables between Europe and America, ten of which are in working order at the present time, the first three having been abandoned. The oldest in use is the Anglo-American Company's line from France to St. Pierre, which was laid in 1869. It is the longest cable in the world, being 2,560 miles, and is stated to be in good condition, although during its life of nineteen years it has cost its owners something like £200,000 for repairs.

A large number of operators are employed by the five Atlantic Cable Companies; although only two are British companies, all the lines to America are almost exclusively

worked by British telegraphists. At the cable stations splendid quarters are provided for both single and married men. The members of the staffs at home stations are allowed one month's holiday yearly, and those abroad get three months every third year.

CONDENSER,
Ballinskelligs, Killarney.

OUR INFLUENCE.

IS it true that no one lives without an influence, no matter how humble in position, and that the poorest and those living the most retired lives, in some way affect the balance of events in this world for good or evil?

I believe so, and consequently submit that we are surrounded with an enormous power or force which is continually acting so as to disturb the balance of things.

Take a simple illustration.

A youth in the company of a friend used an oath in conversation. The friend at once remarked, "I have never before heard you swear."

Simple as this looks it proves that the one mind was studying the other, and was so acted upon by the departure from ordinary usage as to be startled into reply.

While the man influences the child, the same process is going on as regards the man.

What a sterile world would be this without the sweet power and influence of child-life, which checks, restrains, and often is the means of bringing the careless one to think and reform.

A child attended our Band of Hope, and only when visiting the widowed mother did we learn how the father had been influenced by his child's simple way of relating what was said and done at the meetings; possibly the efforts of well-meaning friends would have been resented.

The writer was holding a meeting in Wavertree Park, Liverpool, some years ago, and at the conclusion was accosted by a man who expressed his thanks for the good he had

received, and stated that he would return to his church from whence he had wandered years ago. On being asked what part of the address caused this change, the reply was, "Not the address, but the portion of Scripture read reminded me of what I learned in Sunday School, and brought me to my former self." How simple the cause!

At another meeting a change in the life of a woman was brought about by the words, "Christ lifts you into the Life-boat," and this woman, casually meeting the writer, related the trouble she was in until she listened to these words.

I am persuaded that every word has an influence which tells unconsciously.

Take two men who are constantly together, how the weaker mind is moulded by the stronger.

Often have I noticed in churches, where the clergyman is an eloquent preacher, his curate, as a rule, copies style, and in many cases even the phrases. To-day, in listening to men who were under the late Rev. Hugh McNeil, the style and mannerism is a near copy.

Are we a world of copyists? I say to a large extent we are; but there be minds so strong that they cut out a path for themselves and influence a nation by their words, and are so powerful that you are compelled to listen spellbound, in a way which you cannot explain, when they are impressing their views upon an audience.

It has been asserted that men are raised up to perform certain work; we know it was so in the past, and I believe it is so still.

When we look at such an one as Edison, is he to be praised, or is his a case where it is an impossibility to stand idle? I am persuaded that if the wealth of America were his, it would not prevent him persevering in his favourite studies, which form a part of himself and cannot be divided. Therefore we look higher and realise that man is an agent ministering to creation as destined by the Divine will.

We look at ordinary mortals: take a home, where the first great teaching begins, and it is there the influence for good or evil is brought to bear when outside influences cannot in any way interfere, and if the work be faithfully done the future is almost certain to be satisfactory.

A minister proceeding to his church one Sunday evening noticed a number of boys at play; one was staggering about, and on making inquiry found he was acting the part of his father. May I venture to mention the influence springing

from a visit to the sick wards of a hospital. There I have realised a double influence, that upon those cast aside from the busy world and also upon the visitor, not only giving but receiving a blessing to his or her own soul.

The dark influences of our great cities. O how many young men who leave a happy country home are influenced, by those who know better, to enter the drink shops and gambling hells, only in the most of cases leading to blighted hopes and death. Follow this and see how it travels to the home, and the influence upon those looking forward with sanguine minds is terrible to contemplate. I say again an awful war is going on continually between good and evil or light and darkness. In all seriousness I say, let us in God's name see that our influence is on virtue's side.

On my readers I would impress the important fact, that the higher the position the greater scope there is for influencing others, and some men have a special advantage in this way who are continually coming in contact with their fellows.

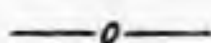
Opportunities once lost can never be recalled, and seeing that our lives are so short at the longest, we should concentrate all our efforts and energies in trying to influence others for good. How many men think little or nothing of their responsibilities! They meet fellow-travellers to eternity, do their business in a harsh, unfeeling, but not intentionally offensive way. A lady visited by one such afterwards referring to the conversation, quietly remarked, "She supposed he knew no better." How often the refined and kindly nature of one in humble position shrinks from contact with the coarse, unintellectual froth of an empty mind.

I am persuaded we shall all be allowed or compelled to look back on our lives when too late to change them. My earnest desire is that those who read this may henceforward use every effort to influence fallen humanity in the right path, and when the curtain falls be enabled to feel, "I have in all my ways endeavoured to strew flowers not thorns on the path of life."

E. BOND RAILTON,
South Shields.

OUR HERO.

By An "OLD TIMER."



JAMES FRANCIS LEONARD was born at Frankfort, Kentucky, September 8th, 1834; his father, John Leonard, was wounded by an Indian at the siege of Fort Weigs during one of the early Indian wars. He recovered, and spent the remainder of his life in Frankfort, where he died in 1837.

Young Leonard, as a boy, exhibited in no small degree the qualities which characterised him as a man. Amiable, gentle, generous, truthful, and scrupulously conscientious in the discharge of every duty imposed upon him, his many virtues caused him to be beloved and trusted by all who were associated with him. In 1848, he entered the office of the U. O. and O. Telegraph Company in Frankfort as message boy, with Robert B. Taylor as chief, and before a year had elapsed he evinced such aptitude in his profession, that he was transferred to the Louisville office as clerk. He remained there until 1861, when he went to Memphis, Tenn., and in 1862 was sent to take charge of the Columbus, Miss., office, where he died of typhoid fever on 29th July, 1862. His chief claims for recognition by the telegraph operators of the world are, that in the summer of the year 1848 he received messages by sound, and that his record of 55 words per minute has never been broken in America or any other country. These statements seem to be established beyond a doubt, and it may not be out of place here to quote the testimony of gentlemen who were personally cognisant of his wonderful genius. Col. Sellers,

of Vincennes, Ind., in writing some reminiscences a few years ago, says:—"The writer well remembers the fame of 'Jimmie' Leonard, who copied messages by sound, and replenished the stove with coal at the same time. No one but an 'Old Timer' can understand or appreciate the wonder and astonishment of such an accomplishment when it was first heralded over the wires in 1849. Your humble servant thought it of sufficient importance to warrant his going to Louisville, 117 miles, by stage in the dead of winter, to witness the feat. I shall never forget what 'Jimmie' said to me on the occasion, 'Sonny, if you can distinguish the office call and signals by sound, why not the remainder of the message?' I returned home a wiser if not a sadder boy, and I soon realised the truth of the statement."

The Hon. Joseph B. Kinkead, of Louisville, referring to the above, says:—"Although true so far as it went, one interesting and important fact has been omitted. 'Jimmie' Leonard could send and receive a message at the same time. Barnum wanted Leonard to travel with him, as he was the most remarkable man he ever saw. Hearing of Leonard being able to 'send' and 'receive' a message at the same time, he visited the office, wrote a message and handed it to an operator, who sent it to Cincinnati without letting Leonard see it. Leonard was sending to Nashville. He took his pen, as soon as he was through sending, wrote Barnum's message on a blank, compared it with the original and found it word for word as Barnum wrote it."

Mr. N. M. Booth, of Evansville, corroborates this, and pronounces it the most wonderful feat ever accomplished in telegraphy.

Jas. D. Reid, president of the Old Time Telegraphers' Association, at a meeting of this association held at Cleveland, O., August, 1886, said: "He (Leonard) had the faculty of receiving a message and talking at the same time; his mind seemed to be divided, so that he could use it for two purposes at the same time."

Col. Chas. E. Taylor, of Frankfort, Ky., says: "Leonard's record for receiving in 1856 or 1857 on a trial for Prof. Morse to take to Europe, as evidence of what could be done with his system in this country, was fifty-five words per minute in plain, legible copy, sent by Joseph Fisher, at Nashville, Tenn., and that record has never been reached by the fast senders and receivers of modern tests."

To Col. Chas. E. Taylor—the originator of the "Old

Time Telegraphers' Association"—has also to be placed the credit and honour of bringing before his brother operators in America the claims of the subject of this sketch to recognition as the pioneer of sound-reading. On the 7th November, 1885, he, acting in conjunction with a committee appointed by the "Old Timers' Association," issued a stirring appeal to his comrades throughout America for funds to remove the remains of their deceased brother operator from Columbus to Frankfort, his old Kentucky home, and there to erect a monument to his memory. This appeal met with such generous response that on the 29th July—the twenty-fourth anniversary of his death—the ceremony of unveiling this monument took place in presence of a goodly number of friends and citizens of his native town, including among others, the Rev. Joseph T. Leonard, only surviving brother; Mrs. Mary E. Overton, his sister; his Excellency J. Proctor Knott, Governor of Kentucky; Judge Craddock, an "Old Timer"; the Rev. George Darsie, Col. Chas. E. Taylor, Mrs. and Miss Fannie Taylor.

Governor Knott, in a brilliant eulogy delivered on the above occasion, said: "James F. Leonard was the first operator in the world to suggest and demonstrate the fact that a telegraphic message could be received by sound, without the aid of the costly and complicated instruments which had theretofore been considered indispensable to that purpose. The establishment of that simple fact has saved to the gigantic corporations which control the telegraphs of the world hundreds of thousands, nay, millions of dollars. . . . His bosom friends, the associates of his brief but brilliant career, the veterans of his profession, have guarded for a quarter of a century his silent resting-place among the graves of strangers, and with fraternal hands gathered up his sacred dust and brought it to this hallowed ground, so often pressed by the innocent patter of his own infant footsteps, there to remain until it shall be revivified by the Immaculate Spirit, which is, perhaps, at this moment looking down upon us from its bright abode. It was the 'Old Timers' of the corps with whom he served, who out of their scanty savings reared this beautiful shaft as an unbought tribute of a genuine, heartfelt affection to the memory of their dead friend. It was not needed, however, to perpetuate the memory of James F. Leonard. Every sound-reader hears in the busy click of his instrument a constant reminder of his virtues, a perpetual eulogium upon his genius. But it will stand there, a mute

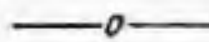
but eloquent memorial to coming generations of the generous friendship of Colonel Charles E. Taylor, George W. McCann, and their associates, for the loved companion of their early manhood—a friendship which will survive when this monumental marble shall have crumbled into dust, and animate their noble souls through the countless cycles of eternity."

Ablaze with genius and aflame with zeal,
He caught the spirit of electric force ;
The FIRST SOUND-READER, he interpreted
The telegraphic alphabet of " Morse."—

MARY E. OVERTON.

IN THE DEAD LETTER OFFICE.

By RETURNED LETTER OFFICERS.



DURING the present century the development of the machinery of the British Post Office has been so rapid and its effects so far-reaching that now even the smallest village enjoys its regular postal service. This development is the more remarkable when we remember that it dates only from the introduction of the penny post.

Originally intended for the carrying of letters only, the Post Office, while still finding its main business in the conveyance of correspondence, serves the public in many other useful ways It promotes thrift among the working classes, by encouraging them to save even the smallest sums, which may be banked at the nearest post office. It undertakes life insurance or it makes a provision for old age. By means of postal and money orders it transmits the money of its customers; by its parcel post it carries a bride's bonnet or a wreath of flowers for the grave of some dear one who has gone over to the majority; while, by its admirable telegraph service, the marriage of a daughter or the birth of a son may be announced, the absconding forger may be intercepted, or the devoted mother summoned to nurse her dying prodigal.

That the public has confidence in the various undertakings goes without saying, notwithstanding a growl now and then from some unfortunate whose post-card has travelled to Timbuctoo within the folds of a newspaper; and that confidence is not misplaced, for it rarely, indeed, happens that anything entrusted to the department's care fails to be delivered to the addressee or returned to the sender.

It is with the work of the department whose lot it is to deal with returned letters that this paper will treat. This department may be said to exist through the carelessness of the educated, the mistakes of the ignorant, and changes affecting communities, or what the Scotch folk term "flittins." That some people are grateful for the trouble taken by the post office to find out those for whom it holds letters is apparent from the following, which appeared in the eighteenth report of the Postmaster-General:—

"An American gentleman recently arrived in England, and, not knowing the whereabouts of a sister, addressed a letter to her late residence thus, "Upper Norwood or elsewhere," and received a reply in ordinary course of mail saying it had been delivered to her on the top of a stage coach in Wales. "I venture to say," wrote the gentleman, "that no other country can show the parallel, or would take the trouble at any price."

When the "dead" letter branch became necessary is doubtful, but from an old letter-book, which dates in the early days of the century, it appears to have been in existence before Waterloo. The practice was for postmasters—then known as deputies—to send undelivered letters to the metropolitan offices quarterly, though cases are recorded of deputies keeping letters for four and sometimes even for five years. Shortly after the introduction of penny postage, however, the quarterly returns gave place to weekly and latterly to daily ones.

The bags are checked and opened by the junior assistant, and the contents passed to officers who examine the letters, &c., to find the cause of non-delivery. These officers having put aside the post-cards, book-packets, patterns, and newspapers to be dealt with by others, open the letters and take a note of those containing money or other valuables, then pass the ordinary letters to the returners, who at once send them back to the writers.

Strange and mysterious are many of the missives which pass through the examiners' hands. Love epistles, which

compare favourably with those penned by a clergyman to a lady, and whose lawyer made such excellent use of them in a recent breach of promise action, and messages of death which draw tears from the most indifferent, are not uncommon. Herrings, snakes, lizards, beetles, mice, humming-birds, frogs, butterflies, mutton bones, soot, sawdust, wigs, whiskers, and beards, packets of manure, polonies, bottles of medicine, and pills, mince pies, fish—not always fresh when they reach the "dead" office—jewellery, real and sham, birds' claws, cupids, post-offices, missionary boxes, and quite recently an owl and a squirrel are among the curiosities which the confiding public entrust to the tender mercies of the post office, and of course many of these consignments find their way to the hands of the returning officers.

The parcels are dealt with separately, and curious, but seldom pleasant, are the odours which pervade the atmosphere when these are being dealt with. Frequently whisky predominates, sometimes stale fish, at other times the perfume arises from a box containing eggs of an uncertain age, while occasionally it comes from a broken medicine bottle, or a manure sample, or it may be from game which if not returned promptly the department will be no longer able to truly classify "dead" property, for already the birds resemble the cockles and mussels wheeled about in the wheel-barrow of the fair Dublin girl.

If the articles reaching the returning officers' hands are odd, not less so are the addresses observed from time to time, and a few of these may prove interesting. We will begin with that of the little girl who, childlike, sent a delightful New Year's greeting to her dear friend and favourite Santa Claus. It did enter the fair little head that there might be some trouble in finding out exactly where Santa lived, but she wisely left the department to solve the difficulty, merely adding, with perfect confidence, "the postman is sure to know his number in Fairyland."

Ah! if the writers had only known it, how readily would they have volunteered to deliver that odd little letter. Well, after all, "dead" letter officers are but human, and surely it was not wrong of them to act for once the part of good fairies, and if the little maid was somewhat disappointed to learn that the postman didn't know the "number in Fairyland" the tears were speedily dried when she opened a parcel and discovered one of the prettiest dolls which the "dead" men could buy. Royalty has peculiar charms for half-witted folks.

One of these creatures fancies Mary Queen of Scots still reigns and holds court in a certain northern town, and the poor fellow has sent letters to "Princess Mary" for many years. Crazy rhymers patronise the Returned Letter Branch frequently, and their envelopes and post-cards are sometimes amusing. One, whose verses had failed to attract the notice they doubtless deserved, addressed a letter to "The Recorder of Good and Evil, Celestial City," another, in addition to the address, wrote on the cover, "Postman, this letter requires all thy speed, that love requires to be delivered early; I wud it not one moment stay from him I love so dearly." Another wrote, "This notes for a maid whose Christian name's Sally; But she's not like the much be sung maid in our alley. For she lives on a hill whose surname is Brook, Though no rivulet's seen if for it you look, The road's named from a sculptor of glorious repute, Chantry's name is immortal though his body is mute. Her father's named England of business renown, In the precincts of Moscow my friend's native town." Whether the young lady relished the rhyme on her lover's letter is not known, but the receiver of the following was not well pleased.

> "Take this to my lass, who is also my queen,
> At Vinepath Terrace, number fourteen,
> Down Whitethorn Lane this stands if you please,
> And this Whitethorn Lane is at Stockton-on-Tees."

A postcard bore on the one side "Mrs. Saml. —— Dundee, correct address not known, see other side." On turning the card the following doggerel was found: "In memoriam—There's a musical box in the town of Dundee, 'Tis kept in a chest and waiting for me, Will the postman please note and heed what I say, And deliver this card to Mrs. Sammy."

A strange and noteworthy fact is the "doggedness" of correspondents of both sexes. One lady sought to carry on a correspondence with a gentleman who as persistently refused to receive it. Although her letters were again and again returned to her, she continued to write for fifteen years! Whether at last disheartened by the obstinacy of him at whose door the postman knocked so often in vain, or whether she has gone where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, is not known; but her letters have at last ceased, yet curiously enough her place has been taken by one

of the sterner sex, who for several years has acted similarly, though his letters too are invariably declined by the lady.

Scarcely less interesting than the letters themselves are some of the people who call regarding "dead" correspondence. Inland letters are returned to the writers without delay, but some senders fancy they are retained by the department until it is convenient for them to call; not so the son of the Emerald Isle, for he, finding out that his addressee had changed his abode, took the first train from Paisley to Edinburgh, as he explained, "to bring the letter back himself." Unfounded complaints sometimes give very great trouble, as the following—taken from one of the annual reports of the Postmaster-General—will show: In the spring of last year a young lady was sent to a boarding-school. Her mother was suffering from illness, and letters were written from time time to the daughter at school announcing the state of her mother's health. The young lady declared that she wrote to inquire how her mother was; that that letter was not delivered, and that one morning a brown paper parcel was placed in a very mysterious manner in the hall of the house at which the young lady was at school. This parcel contained a letter which stated that her mother was dead, and that the parcel had been conveyed by a friend, which accounted for its not bearing any postmarks. Other circumstances were related by the young lady, such as her having seen a man galloping on the road who halted and informed her that he had left the parcel announcing her mother's death. A letter enclosed in an envelope was posted in the town in which the parents resided informing the daughter that her mother was much better. When the envelope was opened the young lady produced another letter requiring her immediate presence to attend her mother's funeral! The case excited great interest, and suspicion arose that a conspiracy existed, aided by some person in the department, to carry off the daughter. After investigation it was reported that the whole proceedings were but the plot of a schoolgirl to get home, and its contriver afterwards confessed this to be the case."

This paper may fittingly close with a few specimen addresses borne on letters, &c., handed to the Post-office for delivery, and a few fac-similes of badly-written addresses which have been deciphered and re-issued from the "dead" letter branch. The names of addressees are in every case suppressed or another substituted.

"My Mother Mary Ann Bulls Yard Pea Croft Sheffield."

"For is Royal Hinest Commander and cheefe Duck of Cambrig."

"Ax Mester ——— Flat Street To t'Groinder Kandydat to t'Skooil Boord alias Jack wheelswarf."

"Calafurney Co Derren nr Ferry Hill in care of Nat Ryan for Pat Heenan."

"Gunner James Sullivan A.B. 27th bridage rial Aretaly Cent."

"To be left—forgot name ontell cald for at Sheffield postoffice Sheffield."

"Mr. —— Groom to the late Mrs. —— who is married again and name not known near Mousehole Forge Sheffield."

"Harry Johnson on board of the smack Luarall at Sea from Hull."

FAC-SIMILES OF ADDRESSES.

FAC-SIMILES OF ADDRESSES—*continued.*

Mrs
Thurby
Mill
Hummel

Mr.
Sucky Bay
Devon-Square.
Lower Scotland

Mrs.
Drumlanford
Benbulb
Gildam
N. B.

WYMAN AND SONS, PRINTERS, GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, W.C.