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NEW YORK CITY POST-OFFICE.



COLLECTING LETTERS.

THERE seems to be no preserved evidence that for very many years after the settlement of what is now known as the city of New York there was any officially recognized post-office. The population was small in numbers, and there were no business inducements which would lead to much correspondence. The very first ships which arrived after the primitive settlement of course brought letters to New Amsterdam, and the commencement of our local office was naturally coeval with the foundation of the city; but it was many years before there was a population which called for any system looking toward revenue.

On the arrival of the vessel those letters relating to the cargo were delivered to the merchants; the members of the exulting, expecting crowd which welcomed their friends received their letters from hands warm with the grasp of friendship. If a solitary epistle found no owner, it was left in the possession of some responsible private citizen until called for. In time the intercourse with Holland increased, and there gradually developed a system of voluntary distribution which became eventually known as the "coffee-house delivery," which

maintained its popularity and usefulness more than a hundred years.

This system grew out of the custom of masters of vessels, and the people from the settlements of Breucklyn, Pavonia, and the distant Hackensack, leaving at some agreed-upon popular tavern letters intrusted to them which they could not personally deliver. Here these "waifs" were kept in a small box, conveniently placed within the reach of all, or gibbeted ingeniously upon the surface of a smooth board, by means of green baize, tape, and brass-headed nails, the "composition" displayed the while, like some choice picture, in the most conspicuous part of the public room. There were hangers-on at these popular resorts who unconsciously acted as agents for this arcadian post; for they acquired temporary importance, and sometimes a bit of tobacco or a glass of Schiedam schnapps, by circulating information regarding the "letter list." It was a curious sight, these old depositories of commercial speculations and homely friendships. Many were the neglected letters which were taken and examined by the simple-hearted old burghers, until the superscriptions were entirely defaced by the handling. Crabbed writing must, under the best circumstances, have made the characteristic and familiar Holland names of Guysbert van Imbroecken and Ryndert Jansen van Hooghten appear very much like an imitation of a Virginia fence; but when these same letters became here and there defaced and stained by soiling fingers, the superscription must have been a jumble indeed. It is asserted, however, that the possible contents of these "literary orphans" were sources of infinite gossip to the loungers at the tavern, for they would sit silently and smoke for long hours thinking over the important matter, occasionally uttering the vague speculation that they "were written by somebody;" and after this severe effort of conjectural thought would lapse again into dreamy somnolency.

The tradition, however, is doubtful that the earlier Dutch governors received their official dispatches through the coffee-house delivery, and continued so to do up to the time of the testy and resolute Stuyvesant, who conceived the idea that more rapid communication with the gubernatorial head-quarters might be had by sending these important documents, without any circumlocution, to his official residence.

For many years, even after the English took possession of New York, the coffee-house delivery was really the people's institution for the distribution of written information. The custom continued with the population of the seaport towns of turning out and greeting the arrival of every important vessel, and there followed the consequent exchange of congratulations, inquiries, and letters; and even after a more comprehensive and responsible system

was demanded it was difficult to get the people to wholly change their old and confirmed ways, to depart from habits associated with so many pleasant traditions.

But this simple style of conducting business gradually became inefficient; and the "mother country," after England assumed the maternal position, turned its attention to the establishment of post-offices throughout the few densely settled portions of the colonies. At this period, toward the close of the seventeenth century (1672), New York boasted of five thousand inhabitants. Both Philadelphia and Boston were her superiors in population and commercial importance, and their citizens entered upon the new arrangements with actively expressed zeal. But New York in spirit remained a mere village, for its old population was quite satisfied with things as they were, and resolutely maintained its correspondence, whenever it was possible, through private means. An innovation on this custom was evidently made by an official order, issued in 1686, that ship-letters *must* be sent to the custom-house; and we presume that the municipal government came to the rescue in 1692, by passing an act establishing a post-office.

In the year 1710 the Postmaster-General of Great Britain directed the establishment of a "chief letter office" in the city of New York, Philadelphia having been previously made the head-quarters of the colonial organization. In the succeeding year arrangements were completed for the delivery of the Boston mail twice a month, and propositions to establish a *foot* post to Albany were advertised. The *New York Gazette*, for the week ending the 3d of May, 1732, has the following interesting advertisement:

"The New York post-office will be removed to-morrow to the uppermost of the two houses on Broadway, opposite Beaver Street.

"RICHARD NICHOI, Esq., P. M."

In 1740 a complete road was "blazed" from Paulus Hook (Jersey City) to Philadelphia, over which road, without any stated intervals of time, the mail was carried on horseback between Philadelphia and New York.

Twenty-one years (1753) after the notice we have quoted of the removal of the New York post-office to Broadway we find it still in the same location, but designated as being opposite Bowling Green, and that it would be open every day, save Saturday afternoon and Sunday, from 8 to 12 A.M., except on post nights, when attendance would be given until ten at night. Signed, Alexander Colden, Deputy Postmaster, and Secretary and Comptroller.

Dr. Franklin must have been very active in the establishment of postal facilities throughout the colonies; for in the year 1753, much to his personal satisfaction, he was appointed Postmaster-General, with a small salary, which, it was quaintly added, "he could have if he could get it." But in spite of the establishment of a city post forty years previously, New York

did not attract any special attention, and the revenues derived therefrom are not mentioned, while those of Boston and Philadelphia have frequent notice. It is probable that the municipal and the colonial authorities carried on much of their correspondence through agents, who were left to their own ways, the habits of the mass of the people confining them to their old notions of volunteer distribution, which was also encouraged by the high rates of postage. So long, indeed, did the coffee-house delivery maintain its popularity, that we find "the constituted officials" complaining of the fact as injuring the revenue, and finally an attempt was made to break up the custom by the publication of severe penalties.

In Dr. Franklin's celebrated examination before the House of Commons Committee on the situation of the colonies we find the following questions and answers, evidently aimed at the coffee-house distribution of letters:

COMMITTEE. "Do not letters often come into the post-offices of America directed to inland towns where no post goes?"

DR. FRANKLIN. "Yes."

COMMITTEE. "Can any private person take up these letters and carry them as directed?"

DR. FRANKLIN. "Yes, a friend of the person may do it, paying the postage that has accrued."

But for many years, in spite of this governmental opposition, New York city kept up the custom. The coffee-houses maintained their popularity. To them resorted the chief men and the wits of the town. At them were to be met the sea-captains and strangers from abroad, and gossip answered the place of the daily paper; and there was kept up the "card-rack," sticking full of letters and business notices; nor would public opinion severely condemn this custom, so peculiar to New York. Even the first Tontine Coffee-house, as it was called, had its place for exchanging letters. It was not until it was found out by experience that a well-regulated city post was safer, of less trouble, and more expeditious, that the coffee-house letter distribution came to an end.

The oppressions of the colonies by the British government occasioned a novel form of indignation, which expressed itself by the decided patronage of what appears to have been a "continental post," which was carried on in opposition to the one under the control of the English Postmaster-General, for we find a notice that the deputy of the British government was vainly endeavoring to keep up a post-office.

Alexander Colden remained postmaster up to the breaking out of the Revolution, for in the year previous (1775) his name appears in the *Gazette* in connection with the office, and with the additional one of agent for the English packets, which sailed once a month.

Upon the British troops taking possession of New York, the old record of the post-office disappears. For seven years it was abolished by the exactions of the provost-marshal, and little



THE OLD POST-OFFICE AT 29 WILLIAM STREET.

correspondence ensued not connected with the movements of troops. William Bedlow was the first postmaster after the close of the war, as his name appears in that connection in 1785; but in the succeeding year (1786) Sebastian Bauman was postmaster; and in the first directory of the city ever published—in which we find 926 names of citizens, the members of Congress, etc., John Hancock, Esq., President—is the following advertisement:

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES OF THE MAILS AT THE POST-OFFICE IN NEW YORK.

ARRIVALS.

FROM NEW ENGLAND AND ALBANY.

From November 1st to May 1st.

On Wednesday and Saturday, at seven o'clock P.M.

From May 1st to November 1st.

On Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at eight o'clock P.M.

FROM THE SOUTHWARD.

From November 1st to May 1st.

On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, at nine o'clock P.M.

DEPARTURES.

FOR NEW ENGLAND AND ALBANY.

From November 1st to May 1st.

On Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday, at ten o'clock P.M.

From May 1st to November 1st.

On Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday, at ten o'clock P.M.

FOR THE SOUTHWARD.

From November 1st to May 1st.

On Sunday and Thursday, at two o'clock P.M.

From May 1st to November 1st.

On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, at four o'clock P.M.

. Letters must be in the office half an hour before closing.

Congress in those early days was more considerate of the personal comforts of the post-office clerks than at the present time; for, with busi-

ness that was scarcely worth noticing under the head of "labor," that deliberative body found heart to pass a solemn act directing "that all letters left at the post a half hour before the time of making up the mail must be forwarded therein." Therefore, advertised the sagacious Sebastian Bauman, all letters left at the office not conformable with this act will be left over until the next post! The income of the New York post-office the first year (1786) of this most excellent red-tape official was \$2789 84; and from this amount, as a starting-point, can be correctly estimated the annual increase of the postal business of New York city.

On the 30th of April, 1789, Washington was inaugurated President, and the establishment of the General Post-office as now organized immediately followed. Samuel Osgood was appointed Postmaster-General, and assumed his duties in the city of New York under the tuition of Sebastian Bauman. What should be done with this important official was evidently a subject of Congressional discussion; for we find officially recorded, that "the Postmaster-General shall not keep any office separate from the one in which the mails arriving in New York are opened and distributed, that he may by his presence prevent irregularities, and rectify mistakes which may occur." In fact, this now most important officer of the general government, and his solitary assistant and one clerk, then had nothing to do; so they took their first lessons in the service in the post-office of the city of New York. At this time there were throughout the United States seventy-five legally established post-offices and one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five miles of post-office routes.

In a very short time the national capital was transferred to Philadelphia, which had three penny-post carriers when New York had one—suggestive data of the comparative importance of the two cities at that time. The Southern, or Philadelphia, mail left New York daily, the Eastern mail tri-weekly, special mails for New Jersey and Long Island once a week. Mails to Albany were carried on horseback, contractor's remuneration, "postage collected."

"Colonel" Sebastian Bauman disappears in 1803; and his successor, Josias Ten Eyck, after what was to the public probably an uneventful year, gave way to General Theodoros Bailey, who received his appointment January 2, 1804, and who satisfactorily performed the duties of his office for nearly a quarter of a century. General Bailey was a gentleman of high standing in the community. He was a member of the House of Representatives two sessions, and a United States Senator in 1803, which position he held one year, and then resigned to assume the duties of postmaster.

The post-office was removed from Broadway by General Bailey, who established it in a house he had purchased, 29 William Street, corner of Garden, now Exchange Place. The building, even at that early day, was considered and spoken

of as an "old-fashioned house." The windows were wide apart, and between the two on the lower story was a narrow door, the entrance of which was protected by a stoop lined with the usual wooden benches. A single dormer-window broke up the monotony of the peaked roof. The window-frame on the left of the door was divided into the novelty of small boxes (now for the first time introduced), one hundred and forty-four in number. The office occupied was twelve feet in width and fifteen deep. The room was so small that it soon became overcrowded, and the increase of the newspaper mail became so great that William Coleman, publisher of the *Evening Post*, who kept a bookstore corner of William and Wall streets, used to take the accumulated newspapers, generally of an entire week, over to his store, and assort them at his leisure, tying up each distribution with a string, and then sending them back to the post-office to be distributed through the mails.

General Bailey occupied the upper part of the house with his family. In accordance with the custom of those times, between twelve and one o'clock he closed up the lower part of the door and joined his family at dinner. If any parties were delayed by this attention to refreshments, they would, if strangers, reach around, and, seizing hold of the huge lion-headed knocker, make a clatter that could be heard a block away. If the solitary clerk answered this clamor, he generally remarked that the banks closed between twelve and one, and why shouldn't the post-office? and, with other evidences of dissatisfaction, would dismiss the impatient citizens. But if General Bailey was forced to reply, he would answer the call with the courtliness of an officer of the army associated with General Washington, and he would dismiss the inquirer after written and sealed information with the same old-school bow with which he would have delivered an order from head-quarters or a bouquet to a lady. If any of General Bailey's personal acquaintances happened to call in an unpropitious hour, and no one was in attendance, they would help themselves, carefully leaving the money for postage on the table, which occupied almost the entire interior of the room.

The establishment of the "embargo" in the year 1807 paralyzed all business, and, of course, seriously affected that of the post-office. From this time onward for several years there was little that occurred of general interest. It was not until the agitation of the right of the British government to impress seamen sailing under the American flag that New York was aroused from what seemed to be a chronic apathy, and the name of General Bailey, the postmaster, suddenly appears, among others, attached to certain resolutions resenting this monstrous assumption on the part "of the self-styled mistress of the seas." The war of 1812 followed, and the post-office business continued to suffer. The clerical force, in consequence, was reduced one-third by the dismissal of a junior clerk;

Archibald Forrester, one of the two retained, acting occasionally as a volunteer in throwing up earth-works "above King's Bridge," and again in superintending laborers engaged in constructing the round fort which still adorns the Battery. Jimmy Mower, the junior clerk, was drafted, but saved his place by hiring a substitute. Thus the post-office took a front rank in the patriotic efforts made to save the national honor. This war excitement had a healthy action on the country; the post-office business began to increase, and from that time steadily developed in importance.

In the summer of 1822 the city was desolated by the yellow fever, and was almost absolutely deserted by its population. The infected district was separated from the outer world by a high board fence, which ran across the city through the line of Duane, and what was then known as Harrison Street. Persons who had the temerity to climb to the top of this barricade relate that in the height of the plague not a living person could be seen. The post-office, for the public accommodation, was moved to Greenwich village, the desks, mail-bags, and all making hardly enough to overcrowd a modern furniture cart. The building temporarily appropriated was a handsome two-story frame house, erected for a bank but not occupied, situated corner of Asylum, now Fourth, and what was subsequently known as Bank Street. The magnificent trees which surrounded the house still have representatives standing in Hammond Street. Between Greenwich village and New York at that time was a vast tract of unoccupied and broken land. Woodcock and snipe "from the Jerseys" still found shelter in the marshes, the waters of which drained through old Canal Street.

When the yellow fever was raging, the rural population of the village, much to their annoyance, found their houses filled with people flying for their lives; these infictions were borne with patience, since any fears were quieted by liberal pay for shelter; but when the post-office arrived, followed by the fear-stricken clerks, they concluded that disaster had indeed fallen in their midst, and that the letters and those grim road-worn mail-bags were but seeds and depositories of pestilence. With the sharp, biting frost of the latter part of November the post-office was removed back to its old quarters.

In the year 1825 there was an imperative demand for better, or rather for more roomy, accommodations, and the government leased the "Academy Building," opposite Dr. Matthew's church in Garden (now Exchange) Street. The free school which had been its occupant for many previous years was under the control of the "Reformed Dutch Consistory." It was a two-story wooden building, and familiar to the youthful population, and especially "the rising young men," for they had one and all within its inclosure been more or less severely disciplined in the principles of a useful education, and had



OLD POST-OFFICE IN GARDEN STREET.

been physically invigorated by the virtues of a sound thrashing.

The front of the building had some pretensions to novelty by slight attempts at ornamentation, and the unusual covering of a flat roof. On one side was a small pen, through which was the entrance into the yard, and underneath was a sort of dungeon for the confinement, if so ordered, of fractious boys, whom reason, mingled with Scripture, worldly advice, and birchen rods, had failed to reform. On the opposite side was Postmaster Bailey's residence, a narrow two-story house, with a single dormer-window, and a cellar in the basement, protected from observation by doors, which, from their propitious angle, formed the "summer sliding-pond" of Young New York.

In this new location two windows were knocked into one, and the acquired space was filled up with nine hundred letter boxes, and, to the astonishment of many, they were soon leased for business purposes. To make every thing satisfactory to the public, General Bailey obtained permission from the government to build a wooden shed over the sidewalk, so that people waiting at the delivery window were protected from the snow and rain. At this time there were eight clerks — W. B. Taylor, Joseph Dodd, George Abell, Courter Goodwin, W. S. Dunham, James Lynch, James Mower, and Charles Forrester. On the 1st of January, 1871, three of these clerks, after forty-five years of faithful service, were still at work, viz., W. B. Taylor, Joseph Dodd, and Charles Forrester; the two last named are all that are left of those who were on duty in the first quarter of the century.

In those days the prevailing spirit was one of

quiet. There was not apparently even a foreshadowing of the "lightning speed" which is characteristic of every event of this generation; for, thirty or forty years ago, a voyage from Liverpool to New York was "rapid" if accomplished within two months, and quite satisfactory if not prolonged to ninety days. Even after the lapse of this last-mentioned time, there was no anxiety in the minds of self-possessed friends. The vessel, they would say, has met with some accident and put in at Fayal, of Azores or Western Islands, then a sort of half-way station, where ships and passengers alike rested from their fatigues. After repairing sails and cordage, and supplying the exhausted stores of provisions, the good ship and easy-going passengers would renew their slow progress westward, possibly consuming a third of a year in the voyage. It was after one of these "long-drawn-out events," when the skipper probably consumed more time to get his craft from Sandy Hook to the "Dover Street dock" than is now necessary to make the entire voyage across the Atlantic, that a passenger, evidently born out of his time, so fully realized the misery of the programme that he indignantly, and with some tendency to hyperbole, asserted, "that if all the trees in the world were pens, and all the men in the world scribes, and all the water in the sea ink, they couldn't explain the calamity of such a voyage."

There were no telegraphs, no speedy movements by the aid of steam, and consequently nothing of what is now designated newspaper enterprise. As a consequence, the people, even like their Knickerbocker predecessors, depended upon, and were quite satisfied to wait upon, chance for information. A well-known citizen "from the interior," now designated the "rural districts," was button-holed ("interviewed," we would say) under the post-office shed regarding the corn and potato crop of his section. A "Southerner," or a live sea-captain, or a passenger "just from Europe," were severally perfect magazines of news. Information thus obtained—if used with spirit—would frequently appear within a week or ten days. Here at the post-office was to be met, every pleasant morning, Charles King of the *American*, Redwood Fisher of the *Daily Advertiser*, and the pleasantest man of all the press, Major Mordecai Noah of the *Courier*, and other distinguished editors, who, having exchanged the ordinary courtesies of the day, would in an oracular manner give utterance to startling political or social observations, the pleasant interlude very likely terminating in a practical joke, profanely indulged in by an irreverent bank clerk, or valuable assistant of a popular auctioneer.

But the post-office had among its clerks Jimmy Mower. He was a smart business man, of wonderful capacity for work, and of the most equable good-nature. In addition, he was pretty well read; he boasted that he got his information in connection with his business of distributing the newspapers. One of his jokes grew out of the fact that in the war he was

drafted, but, to avoid the responsibility, hired a substitute, who was killed at the famous sortie on Fort Erie, Canada frontier, and consequently that he (Jimmy Mower) had been killed in the service of his country, and that his bones were absolutely whitening on the battle-field. His efforts to get a pension for his heirs and get his post-office pay at the same time proved a puzzler to the best legal minds. The fashion of the times was rather "stately," but Mower, dead as he was, had life enough in him to amuse his fellow-clerks by sometimes joining in the conversations held under the shed outside of the post-office, and turning what was serious into ridicule. He generally hallooed his remarks through a broken pane of glass, at the same time making his hands almost invisible in the distribution of mail matter.

He was popular with the crowd, and if he could give the erudite Charles King, or the subtle Redwood Fisher, or the worthy Major Noah what the "boys" termed a "side-winder," it would set the post-office congregation in a roar. If Jimmy was turned on by some indignant individual who didn't see his joke, the light-hearted official retreated to the interior of the post-office, leaving the vehement eloquence intended for his head to be expended against the obtruding glass. Colonel Dodd and Charley Forrester, who are still clerks in the post-office, were great admirers of Jimmy Mower, and they still insist, after forty-five years of serious reflection on the subject, that Mower was the smartest man they ever knew, and that in his fights with "the editors and the big-bugs" he always got the advantage.

The post-office now began to be an institution, and this growing importance was pleasant to General Bailey, who, with more enlarged quarters and a private house entirely at his disposal, seemed to grow more courtly than ever, and dispensed his pleasant hospitality of conversation from the benches of his front-door, where he could often be seen side by side with the Clintons, the Willetts, and Schuylers, indulging in mutual congratulations upon the growth of the city and country, both of which they had assisted to rescue from colonial dependence and place on the high-road to national greatness.

At that time there were six letter-carriers, the extreme up-town boundary of their field of labor being a straight line crossing the island at Catharine and Canal streets. Colonel Reeside was now becoming of national importance by his connection with the Post-office Department. He carried the great Southern mail through from Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, delivering it by contract at Paulus Hook (Jersey City). Here it was taken possession of by Colonel Dodd, who brought over the bags in a skiff, and then trundled them up to Garden Street in a wheelbarrow.

At the foot of Rivington Street, in the year 1825, was an important spot of high ground, known as "Manhattan Island"—a place where were located the ship-yards, among them the

large one belonging to Henry Eckford. The proprietors of these yards had an extensive correspondence with the South, especially with Georgia and Florida, from which States they obtained their fat pine and live-oak used in ship-building. Mr. Charles Forrester, more than forty years an employé of the post-office, and who still performs his daily and arduous duties, then a boy, lived in the suburbs, and he would bring up the letters directed to these ship-builders, carry them across the wet meadows that lined the eastern side of the island, and deliver them to their owners.

The year 1825 was made memorable by the fact that Colonel Reeside obtained the contract to carry the mails from Boston to New York, the route being over the old post-road. Reeside's stages were very showy, drawn by four blooded Virginia horses, and driven by the most accomplished "Jehus."

On pleasant summer afternoons the people confined to the lower part of the island would purposely walk up the Bowery to see the "Boston mail" come in. Some time before the vehicle reached the old hay-scales, just where the Cooper Institute now stands, the driver would herald his approach by a melodious winding of his horn; then, laying aside this vulgar instrument, he would assume his legitimate sceptre, the whip, which he would harmlessly crack over the heads of his spirited steeds with a noise that, on a clear day, could be "heard a mile."

On Saturdays the jolly school boys and girls would gather together under the tall poplars and button-wood trees, and as the stage dashed along they would wave their hands as a welcome, and the most venturesome would catch hold of the straps, and thus have the glory of riding a few yards under the overhanging "boot." The characteristic gamins of that period would evince their enthusiasm by following the coach and rollicking in the dust of its revolving wheels; would cheer it and its passengers to the end of the route; and especially was this the case when the driver would make purposefully abortive attempts to drive these human flies away with his whip, or a jocose passenger would bandy wit with the boys, and make them crazy with delight by the scattering of a few pennies in the road.

In the winter these gay coaches were put aside, and in their place was a huge box on wheels, the combination not unlike a hearse, in the heart of which was deposited the load. The practice then was to abandon passengers, when the roads were heavy from mud and rain, and carry the mails; but nowadays, if the reports from many of the existing stage routes be true, under unfavorable circumstances the drivers abandon the mails to carry the passengers. Amos Kendall, the indefatigable Postmaster-General, by his industry and good management, reduced the carrying time between New York and New Orleans from sixteen to seven days. The event was celebrated at the Merchants' Exchange and the post-office by



COLONEL DODD.

the raising of the national standard, and there was a general rejoicing in Wall Street. Jimmy Mower had his joke by gravely asserting, that all newspapers delivered at the office from New Orleans less than sixteen days old were printed at the *Advertiser* office.

Progress was now perceptible in the whole city in the evident growth of wealth and population. The merchants (1825) were suddenly inspired with the ambition to have an Exchange worthy of their increasing importance, and an honor to the growing metropolis. To realize this idea they purchased a lot of seventy feet fronting on Wall Street, and at that time practically between William and Pearl streets. The foundations of the building were laid with imposing ceremonies, and its gradual erection, joined with the promising grandeur, was to the citizens a source of daily surprise and self-congratulation. In due time the structure was completed, and to give proper importance to the event, and a characteristic recognition of one of New York's greatest financiers and lawyers, a marble statue of Alexander Hamilton was placed conspicuously under the dome.

The "solid men" went from this stately pile around to the humble post-office in Garden Street, and the board front and "shanty" shed became distasteful to their eyes and unworthy of the city. This public sentiment was utilized into well-written articles for the newspapers, and the people grew suddenly ambitious for a better and more convenient post-office. The merchants favored the idea, and a part of the basement of the new Exchange was leased to the federal government, and in the year 1827 the post-office was established in its new and excellent quarters.

Wall Street at this time presented a picturesque mingling of the highest social life with churches, banks, and business stores combined. That it was in a transition state was apparent, yet we much doubt if the fact was fully realized by even the most sagacious citizens. The monetary institutions had a solid, unpretentious look, and the buildings in which they were lodged, in some instances, were occupied in their upper stories by the presidents, or cashiers, with their families. Then our most solid merchants did not find it incon-

sistent to live over their stores, and have at their tables their confidential clerks. Large trees still shaded the sidewalks, and private residences were to be seen, at the windows of which, after business hours, the ladies of the household presented themselves, or, standing at the front-door, according to the early custom of New York, chatted with neighbors. "Wall Street Church" and grounds occupied half the block that reached from Nassau to Broadway; while over the whole towered the venerable pile known as "Old Trinity," its grave-yard adding to the rural aspect, and giving an air of quiet to the surroundings. The Merchants' Exchange occupied only the eastern half of the square on which it was built; and directly adjoining it was a little candy shop, where they sold spruce-beer and "taffy" by the penny's worth. Then came the shop of a fashionable haberdasher, and on the corner was Benedict's well-known watch establishment, the regulator of which governed Wall Street time.

In the rear of the eastern corner of the basement of the Exchange was located the celebrated lunch-room of Charley King. How his restaurant would compare with the more pretentious ones of modern date we will not assert; but for hearty good-will, substantial fare, high respectability, and unquestioned manners, the proprietors of this now almost forgotten lunch-room have not, since its destruction, been surpassed. In the basement corner of Wall and Hanover streets James Buchanan, British consul, and David Hale printed a paper with the happily selected name of *Journal of Commerce*. It was at the commencement an unpretending sheet, and from the fact that it was semi-religious in its tone, and refused advertisements for the sale of liquors, was assumed to be a "temperance sheet." Among the well-known characters then living in New York was one "Johnny Edwards, scale-beam maker." He lived "up town," in the vicinity of what is now known as Fourth Street and Second Avenue. He was a man of the most harmless eccentricity, dressing himself in a Quaker garb, and riding about in a rickety old gig. He used sometimes to come down to Wall Street in business hours, and, taking advantage of the crowd in front of the Exchange, would proceed to harangue the "thoughtless generation" on the virtues of his patent scale beams, and the necessities of temperance. As he clinched his arguments regarding temperance with the distribution of tracts, he took great umbrage at the assumptions of the *Journal of Commerce*, pronouncing it a rival sheet on the great subject of temperance. The crowd enjoyed these interruptions of the usual routine of the street, to the great annoyance of David Hale, who considered the whole thing an undignified travesty on his gravely attempted efforts to bring about a moral reform.

Even at this dawning era the spirit of New York was unambitious, and the people, with few exceptions, were evidently unconscious of the

changes in its character which were impending. One mail delivery a day was all the merchants demanded. The newspapers were rarely excited about the receipt of their exchanges. The hurry and bustle and anxiety which now pervades Wall Street were totally unknown. Groups were constantly in and about the Exchange conversing upon trivial matters; the merry, hearty laugh was heard time and again through the day, expressing admiration of harmless jokes uttered by persons at the time enjoying the hospitality of Charley King's lunch; while the clerks, less able to pay, made merry at Billy Niblo's, or Clark and Brown's, where for a sixpence they commanded a plentiful dish of Fulton Market beef, and trimmings to match; and, if extravagantly inclined, they would pay another sixpence for a cup of coffee and a kruller, to make the equal of which has ceased to be possible outside of the "kitchen-houses" belonging to our old population.

The Exchange had a narrow front on the street, and ran through to Garden. The entrance to the basement was under a circular opening, which was made of the arch which supported the steps that led up to the rotunda. The post-office was established in the rear eastern half of the basement, where it had ample room and much to spare. Two delivery windows were established, and three thousand boxes for the accommodation of the merchants; and so seemingly enormous had now become the business that twenty-two clerks were employed, and twenty-two letter-carriers, whose routes now reached up as high as Houston and Ninth, now Fourth Street. Now for the first time was found a demand for the assignment of a clerk wholly to a special duty, and "little Sam Gouverneur" was appointed to the exclusive care of the money department, and dignified with the title of "cashier."

To facilitate the arrival and departure of the mails, and give light to that part of the basement occupied by the post-office, what is now known as Hanover Street (which had, thirty years previously, been used by foot passengers as a short-cut to Hanover Square) was cleared out and made a street, and a small court on this side of the Exchange conveniently opened itself for the accommodation of the wagons and other vehicles employed by the post-office.

General Bailey, who had been an acceptable and honored postmaster almost a quarter of a century, full of years and honors, on the 4th of September, 1828, passed away. The veterans of the Revolution, as they now began to be called, State and city soldiery, the various civic societies, and representatives of the army and navy, vied with each other in paying to his memory every possible respect. General Jackson, in compliment to ex-President Monroe, who was then living, appointed his son-in-law, Samuel L. Gouverneur, to succeed General Bailey. With this event the old-times history of the post-office of New York may be said to have passed away.



RUINS OF MERCHANTS' EXCHANGE, WALL STREET.

The business of the post-office steadily increased, and the public grew more and more satisfied with its location in the Exchange. The newspaper press centred in its vicinity; and even the sad summer of cholera (1832) did not altogether destroy a certain air of vitality, that maintained itself in spite of the most unhappy surroundings.

On Wednesday night, December 16, 1835, a fire broke out in a building in the rear of the Exchange, and in fifteen hours destroyed an area of fifty acres of the most valuable business part of the city. In this dreadful calamity the Merchants' Exchange, after resisting the surrounding fire for some time, was involved in the general destruction; and the post-office, of which the people were so proud, no longer existed. Through the almost superhuman energy of the clerks—for no volunteers could be obtained to help them—all the mail matter and most of the furniture were saved. This result was largely due to the fact that the fire made at first slow progress in penetrating the brick walls, but more especially to the plentiful supply of mail-bags at hand, which were filled and in-

stantly removed, by United States soldiers from Governor's Island, to what was then the new Custom-house, now the Sub-treasury, corner of Wall and Nassau streets. Jimmy Mower, who had charge of the newspaper department, was exceedingly disgusted when he subsequently discovered that the oil-cans and inkstands were promiscuously mixed up with his printed documents.

On the morning of the 18th of December, a day after its destruction in the Exchange, the post-office was extemporized in two brick stores in Pine, near Nassau Street. The destruction of such an enormous number of buildings made it impossible, even if economy was no object on the part of the government, to obtain a suitable building in the vicinity of the burned district. In this strait the city authorities offered the Rotunda in the City Hall Park, erected in the year 1818 by Vanderlyn, the artist, for a studio and the exhibition of panoramic pictures. When it was understood the government proposed to accept the Rotunda, busy as the merchants were in re-establishing themselves and counting up their losses, they found



THE ROTUNDA, CITY HALL PARK.

time to get up very demonstrative indignation meetings and protests against locating a post-office so far up town.

The post-office was, however, installed in the Rotunda, and the commercial pressure of 1837, which followed the great fire, diverted the public mind from the location of the post-office. Illustrative of the pecuniary disaster of the period may be mentioned that, in the "collapse," many of the merchants of the day owed the letter-carriers various sums, ranging from fifty to one hundred and fifty dollars, much of which money was never paid, the debtors being irretrievably ruined. This year the mail time between New York and New Orleans was reduced to six days and six hours. But the people, nevertheless, were impatient for more rapid communication, for we find in a Chicago paper of the time this notice:

"HIGHLY IMPORTANT.—By a foot passenger from the South we learn that the long-expected mail may be looked for in a week."

Fortunately for the interests of commerce and the unity of the country, rapid transit of news, cheap postage, and facilities for traveling were approaching consummation in the erection of railroad lines, with which private enterprise was threading every section of the country. One triumph announced seemed only to create a demand for another, and when Amos Kendall carried out the idea of connecting the non-continuous lines of railways by pony expresses, there was added a new value to the post-office of New York. It began to assume its present

central importance, and the promise of its brilliant future was almost realized, when the firing of guns from our national forts and vessels, with the ringing of bells, and cheers of thousands of exultant men, all joined in welcoming the first appearance of steam merchantmen in our harbor—the ever-to-be-remembered *Sirius* and *Great Western*.

The event which revolutionized the commerce and business enterprise of the world seemed to be most thoroughly appreciated; for, besides the incidents of welcome we have alluded to, crowds of curious spectators surged day by day at the foot of Clinton Street, where the vessels were at anchor, to admire and wonder; and even long journeys were taken from distant cities to behold the daring innovators. "Daddy Rice," the father of negro minstrelsy, then reigned supreme at the Bowery Theatre, and called forth his greatest shouts of applause when, as Jim Crow, he sang:

"And while they were discussing,
And making mighty talk,
The steamboat *Great Western*
Came to New York:
So turn about, and wheel about," etc.

The inconvenience of having the post-office so far from the centre of business was still complained of, and, to quiet dissatisfaction as far as possible, a letter delivery was established in the new Merchants' Exchange, where the Custom-house is now located, and placed in charge of Jemison Cox, an alderman and chief-engineer. For letters two cents, for pa-

pers one cent, extra, was charged, which sums were paid without complaint by the merchants, and the amount thus collected paid the letter-carriers' charges.

In the year 1836 Mr. Gouverneur had been removed, and James Page, Esq., postmaster of Philadelphia, commissioned to take charge, which supervision was maintained for six weeks, when Jonathan J. Coddington was commissioned postmaster. When the latter assumed the duties of his position the post-office was in the Rotunda building and in the house of a hook-and-ladder company adjoining, and a "hose-house on the opposite side of the way." Nothing could have been more inconvenient, contrary to good discipline, and injurious to expeditious business operations. To remedy these evils Mr. Coddington built a handsome extension facing toward Wall Street. With this important addition, and other improvements, he brought the entire business (now constantly increasing) under one roof. The mails were received in Chambers Street, the box delivery was on Centre Street, while the interior of the Rotunda was devoted to the general delivery.

The location of the post-office in the Rotunda seemed to be unsatisfactory to citizens living in every part of the city. An application was therefore made for the establishment of a branch post-office for the receipt and delivery of the mails in the upper part of the city. The reply was that such an office could only be a branch of the one already existing, and that no compensation could be allowed for services beyond the two cents per letter paid the carriers. It was also doubted if the extent of New York demanded such an addition to its postal facilities. The proposition was also submitted to Mr. Coddington, and was opposed by him and his clerks. The subject was finally referred to the Chamber of Commerce, which recommended that there be established a sub-post-office for the reception of letters at Chatham Square, but not any place for the delivery of letters other than the existing arrangements at the post-office and by the penny post. Such was the origin of the Chatham Square post-office, which maintained its popularity and usefulness until its occupation was destroyed by the present iron boxes now so familiar on the street corners.

So much esteemed was Mr. Coddington by the officials at Washington that the Postmaster-General, under General Harrison's administration, informed him that, though a political opponent of the administration, he might retain his position. One week after this notice President Harrison died, and his successor, John Tyler, promptly requested Mr. Coddington to renew his bonds. On this hint, after some hesitation, he did as requested, and forwarded them to Washington in June. The reply was promptly returned, in the form of a commission creating "John Lorimer Graham postmaster of New York, in place of Jonathan Coddington removed."

Mr. Coddington is still remembered among the old clerks of the post-office, and the old merchants of the city, as one of the best of officers. He tried to learn the details of his position, and took pride in making every improvement that would render his department efficient. He was a man of great personal independence, and though a decided politician, he would not allow his bias that way to affect his official conduct. On one occasion a committee of ward politicians called upon him, and stated, through their chairman, that he had been assessed fifty dollars for partisan purposes. Mr. Coddington heard the proposition with patience, and then rising from his seat, said:

"I refuse to pay any such assessment as this you speak of. I'd have you understand that I am postmaster of New York city, and not postmaster of a ward committee."

The pressure to get the post-office "down town" still continued, and advantage was taken of the fact that the "Middle Dutch Church" was for sale to procure it for a post-office. There was nothing in the world so unsuited as the building for such a purpose; but the location was desirable, and the merchants went to work to press the matter upon the government. The property was offered for \$350,000, but the Postmaster-General decided not to give more than \$300,000. Lest the purchase might not be consummated, the merchants in a few hours raised by voluntary contributions the additional \$50,000, and the old church was secured for secular purposes.

The extravagance and folly of the federal government in buying property erected for a church, and attempting to alter it to accommodate a post-office, or in leasing any kind of private property and fitting it up for public service, finds an illustration, but not an exceptionable one, in this "high old Dutch Church post-office of New York city." It may not be out of place to mention to the general reader that this old church was dedicated, in 1732, as a house of Christian worship. Until the close of the century its services were carried on in the "Holland language;" after that it was alternated with the English language. In the year 1776 the British tore out its pews, and (with the adjoining building, the old sugar-house) used it as a prison for American patriots, taken and treated as rebels. When no longer needed for this purpose, it served in rainy weather as a school-house for cavalry. When the British evacuated New York the congregation again took possession, removed the pulpit and altar from the eastern side to the northern end, and erected the heavy formidable galleries, destined eventually to become so conspicuous in the economy of the post-office.

Perhaps no building could be invented more unsuited for the purposes to which it has been appropriated. John Lorimer Graham, who had the responsible and difficult task of making it available, commenced by expending on the attempt what was then the large sum of \$80,000.

He then issued a printed circular, surmounted by a picture of the old church, dated New York, January —, 1845, which read :

"The postmaster has great pleasure in announcing to his fellow-citizens that the *new* post-office building (112 years old), in Nassau Street, will be ready for

occupation in a few days, and respectfully invites etc., etc., to view the interior arrangements of the establishment."

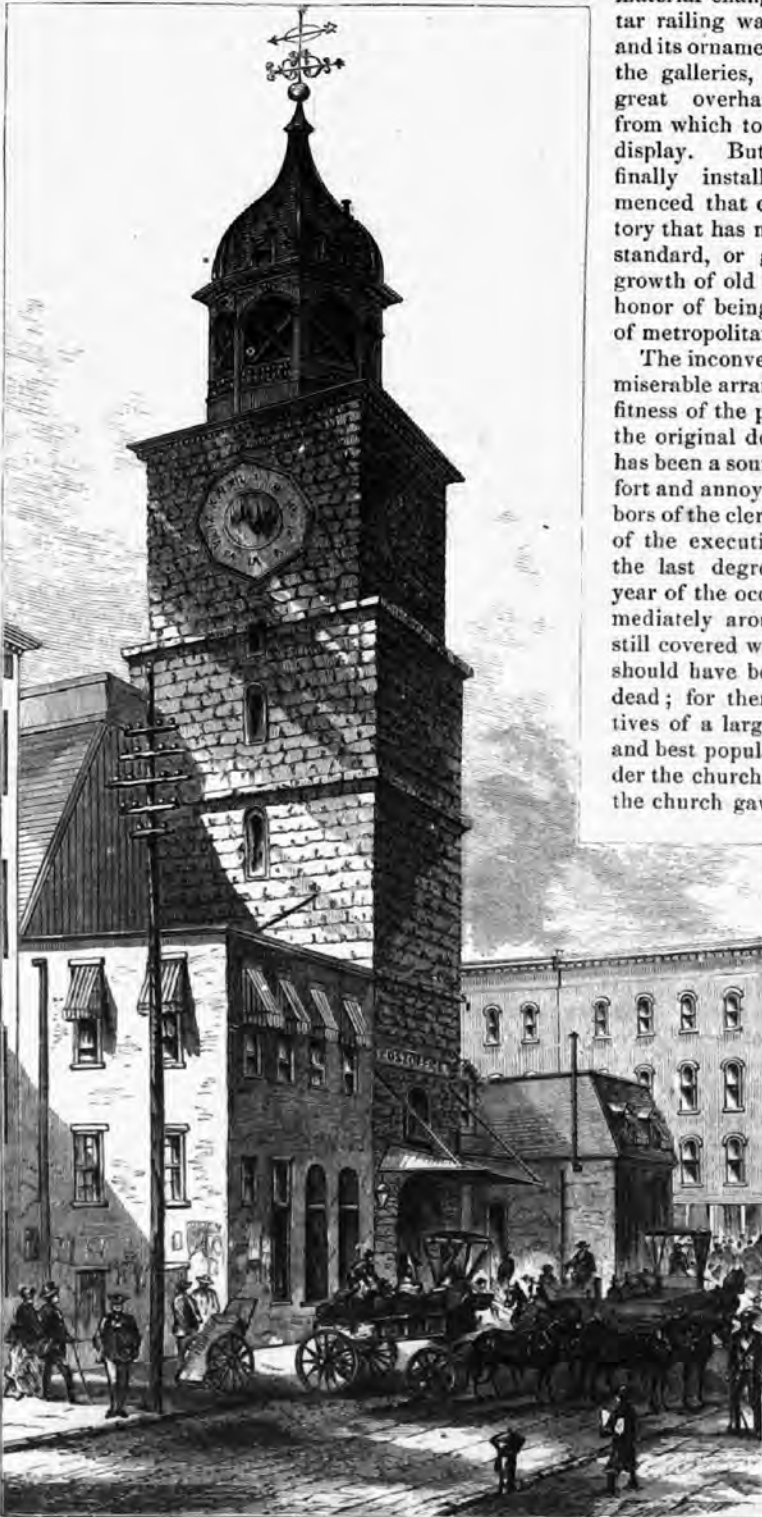
It was a grand time when the citizens crowded into this old church to look for the post-office.

The eighty thousand dollars had made no material change ; to be sure, the altar railing was gone, but the pulpit and its ornamentation remained ; and the galleries, left intact, resembled great overhanging amphitheatres, from which to witness a gladiatorial display. But the post-office was finally installed, and then commenced that era in its business history that has made it a sort of visible standard, or gauge, of the mighty growth of old Manahatta toward the honor of being one of the mightiest of metropolitan cities.

The inconvenience, the necessarily miserable arrangements, the total unfitness of the place—inherently so by the original design of the building—has been a source of constant discomfort and annoyance, and made the labors of the clerks, and the supervision of the executive officers, onerous to the last degree. During the first year of the occupation the space immediately around the building was still covered with the tablets of what should have been the truly honored dead ; for there lay the representatives of a large part of our ancient and best population. The vaults under the church and the vaults around the church gave up their dead when

the profane feet of the busy multitude pressed forward toward the church, not for prayer, but from absorbing interest in the living, active, bustling world. For a long year the spectacle was presented of coffins and mailbags, of carts and extemporized hearses, jostling each other while engaged in their allotted work ; but at last this incongruous mingling of the dead population and the living ended ; but the forbidding look of that old castellated church remained.

The tower, bountifully made of stone, continued, and still continues, to look



NEW YORK POST-OFFICE IN THE DUTCH CHURCH.



THE RAT-IFICATION.

down sullenly on the bustle beneath, while the strong walls of the church, inside, announcing, in Dutch, that "My house shall be called a house of prayer," and the rough plastered walls, outside, speaking of the wasting storms of nearly a hundred and fifty years, repudiate all harmonious minglings and sympathies with the secular business of distributing the mails.

But the place is not without its living defenders of old traditional possession. The mynheers are gone; the Knickerbockers know the place no more; but the rats, descendants of the original stock, keep high revel still, and continue to dispute possession with Uncle Sam and his salaried cohorts. And they, the rats, have had a queer history—these old Low-Dutch-Church-post-office rats.

For many years they lived a hard life, suffering starvation and dyspepsia under the preaching of Dominie Bogardus; but when the old sugar-house was erected adjoining the church, they felt that their trials and tribulations had brought them great reward, for the sweets of the Indies were at their disposal, and they revelled, until, in an evil hour, the sugar-house and church were filled with sad men, who starved and suffered and perished under a prison discipline that made the bodies of its victims not even passable fare for famished rats.

Then came the jolly times when the church was turned into a stable, and oats and hay and profanity were abundant; again another change, and the old-fashioned times returned, and the rats went into mortifications and fastings as a punishment for the good fare of the past. And tribulation was not soon to end; for, to their discomfort, the sugar-house, even as a place to hide their sorrows, disappeared, and the old church itself was finally consigned to the evil doings of the post-office.

Under this new administration even the dead bodies in the vaults underneath the church were carted away, and nothing, for the time being,

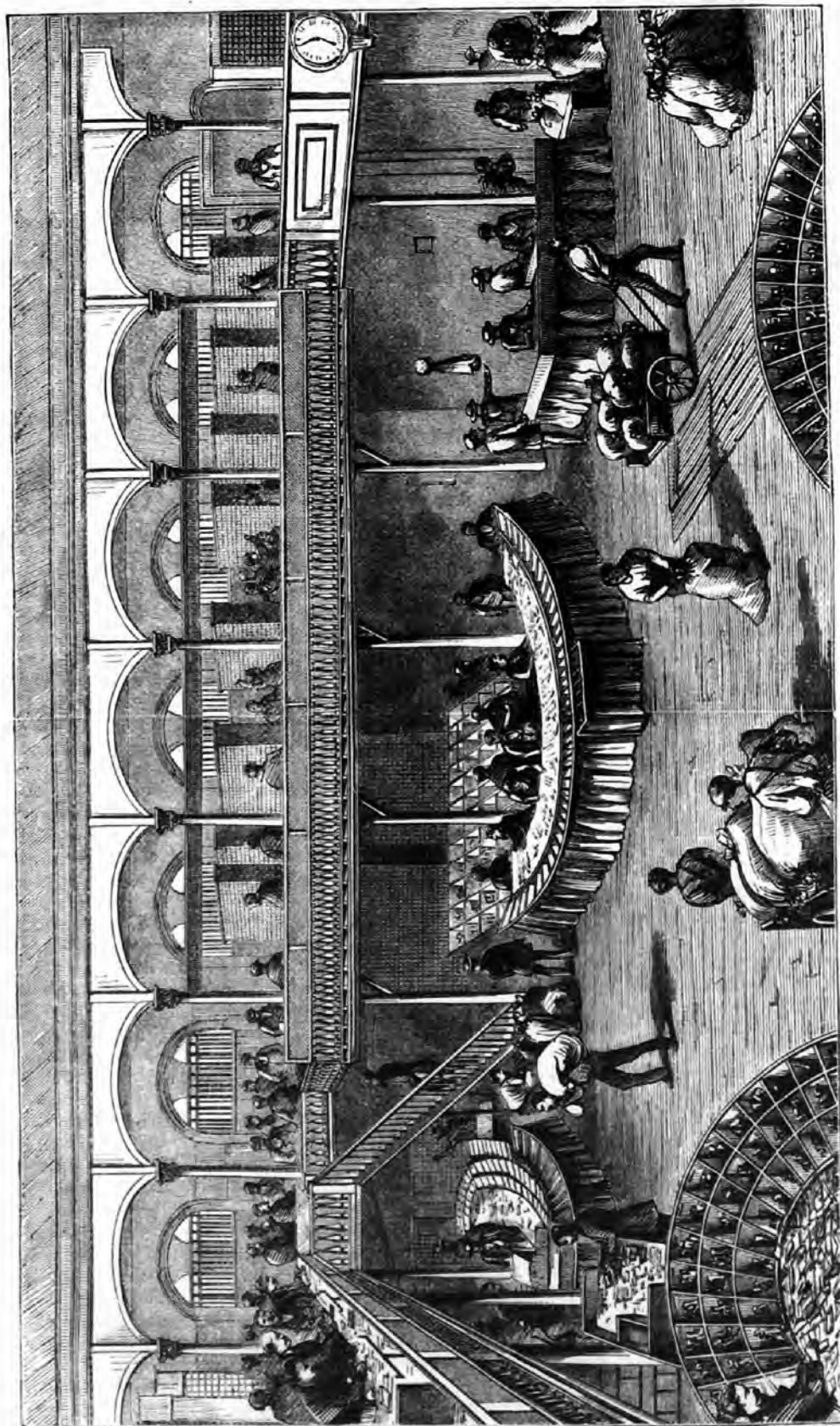
was left to prey upon but the poorly paid post-office clerks. But this resource, together with brown soap, the paste-pots, bits of apples, and the lunches of the night watchmen, left matters even worse than the most solemn times, when they heard sermons without any refreshments six hours long. But relief was to come to these historically interesting and brave old rats.

The Agricultural Bureau at Washington commenced an annual distribution of "choice seeds" through the mail, and good times dawned again for these old Dutch-Church rats. Once possessed of the secret of the rich contents of the plethoric mail-bags, the rats soon became such experts that they could smell a paper of marrowfat peas buried in newspaper walls as solid as an iron safe. In the pursuit of an honest living they have sharpened up their teeth until they can bore through a pile of compressed

mail matter with the precision of an auger. They revel in cutting into leather pouches, laughing at the tough exterior, and treating the "patent, compound, burglar-proof padlocks" with infinite scorn. It is asserted by some of the old clerks, who have been hidden away for a quarter of a century in the damp vaults of the church until they are as gray and as sharp as the rats, that these rodentia read the agricultural papers; and the annual announcement in the *Tribune* of the distribution of seeds is celebrated in the lower vaults by a grand "rat-ification."

From this era onward the New York post-office becomes of too much magnitude to permit individuals to figure prominently in its history. Its leading characteristic, from the time it was established in Nassau Street, has been a constant increase of business. Robert H. Morris, W. V. Brady, Isaac V. Fowler, John A. Dix, William B. Taylor, succeeded each other as postmasters without any marked change in the routine except the employment of additional clerks. Abraham Wakeman accomplished a long-desired reform by abolishing the independent offices of Washington Heights, Bloomingdale, Manhattanville, and Yorkville, making the whole island one postal district. The names of James Kelly and P. H. Jones bring the succession down to our day.

The hard-working employes, who have carried on the department with such marked success that they have made its leading features the rapidity and correctness with which the mail matter is received and distributed, seldom appear above the surface. There are a few whose efficiency, knowledge of details, and unvarying faithfulness have secured them against the unhappy law of removals, which is especially an evil in the post-office. Among these "permanents" we must mention Colonel John Dodd, regularly in service for fifty-four years, and now the oldest clerk in the department. Fifty

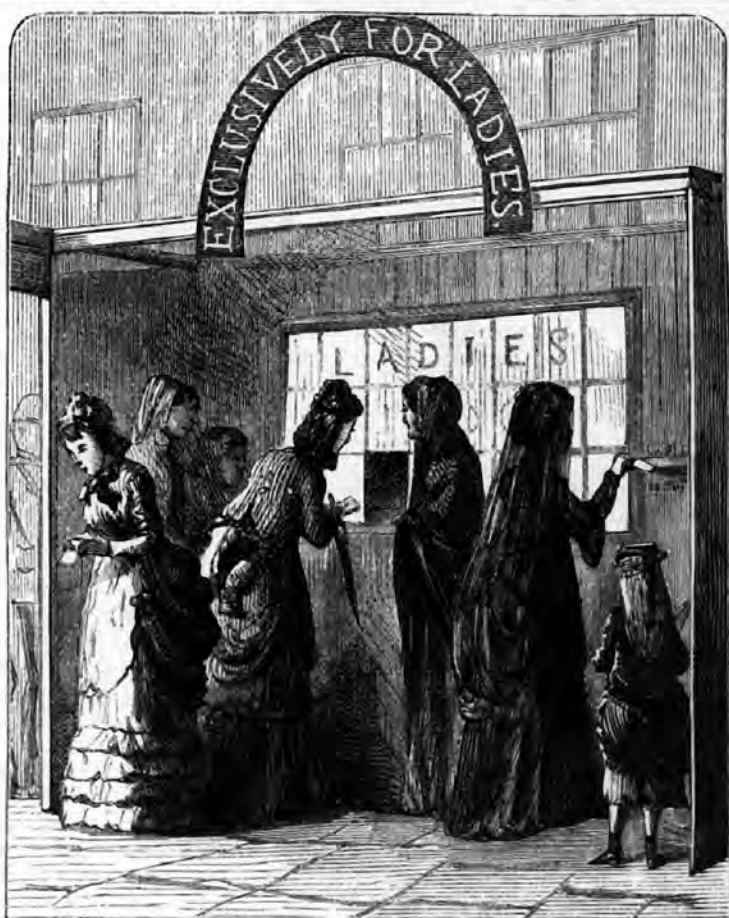


INTERIOR OF THE FORT-OFFICE IN THE DUTCH CHURCH.

years ago it was his business to carry the Southern mail on his shoulder down to the Cortlandt Street landing, transport it by skiff to Paulus Hook (Jersey City), and receive the Southern mail in return. The change may be vaguely realized when we consider that it takes four stout horses each day to draw the same mail to the "Washington train."

In spite of the infirmities of advancing years, at eighty the colonel was faithfully at his post in the letter-delivery department. A year or more ago his desk and its business, when he was absent from duty, were moved up stairs. The old colonel, after this change, went to his accustomed place, and found it occupied by another; where there had been letters were piles of newspaper packages—all was changed. He was shown where was in future to be his desk, but he objected, and wanted to be put on duty in his old location; the spot and its surroundings had become necessary for his happiness. This, of course, was impossible, and he has never recovered from the disappointment. In the month of June, 1869, when the foundations of the new post-office were laid in the Park, he was a prominent actor. When all had been concluded the old government officer observed, "Now let me live to see this building completed, and I will die content."

The windows of the post-office for the distribution of letters and the selling of stamps, "in sums less than one dollar," are interesting places to study the cosmopolitan character of our busy population. It is not uncommon to witness people of every nationality "in line," waiting for their turn to inquire for correspondence. The ladies' window is especially a centre of observation; and the appearance of the sex dressed in gay colors and wreathed in smiles lightens up the otherwise care-worn, pell-mell, rushing, and sombre-looking crowd. Here the "young lady of the period" contrasts with the old crone whose undutiful son is "off at sea." The widow in her weeds throws sly glances at the dashing clerk; her hopefulness of the future contrasting strongly with the face of the suffering wife, who, sad and discontented,



THE LADIES' WINDOW.

turns abruptly away because her absent spouse "had failed to write."

During the rebellion the post-office clerks, by virtue of their duties, were often made unwilling participants in many sad scenes and associations. There was a terrible significance in the hymn or prayer book returned "from the front," often saturated with blood or marred by the bullet. Then there were the packets of unclaimed letters, dictated by loving, patriotic hearts, returned to the mother, wife, or sweetheart of the soldier, bearing the formal but terrible indorsement of the adjutant of the regiment, of "William Brown, killed in battle." It was often almost like stabbing the recipients to the heart to hand them such a fatal gift, and the look of unutterable anguish that sometimes followed haunted the day musings and midnight dreams of the sympathizing official. But there sometimes, nay, often, came a letter that conveyed to wife and family a respite to agonizing suspense, and then the old post-office was for the moment bright, and the dangers of war for an instant were forgotten. Lessons of human nature are taught at the delivery window of a post-office in the classified peculiarities of the universal patrons of the "republic of letters," among which are developed the common facts, that "clergymen, as a class, and women, universally,

are the most difficult to please;" certainly they seem to complain the most.

Romantic incidents are not unusual in the history of specific mails. When the Japanese empire was opened to the outside world, the first mail from that legendary country was sent to New York in a sailing vessel *via* San Francisco, Panama, and Aspinwall. By a coincidence a mail from China *via* England arrived at the post-office simultaneously, and the written ideas and wishes of these two Oriental nations for the moment reposed side by side. In their route of destination they separated, and made the circuit of the world, to meet again in our great Western city of "mushroom barbarians." But speculation is brief in the post-office when work is to be done; the words, "Who separates?" are heard, the "travelers" are "broken up," and piecemeal sent to their various destinations.

Some years since a steamer running between Liverpool and Quebec was involved in a terrible storm that swept over the mouth of the St. Lawrence. The stanch ship was lost, and all living creatures on board perished. Two months afterward the divers, among other things, recovered from the wreck the New York city mail, and it was promptly forwarded to its place of destination. When opened the contents were found comparatively safe; the letters were carefully dried and duly distributed; and these frail, delicate, paper memorials of thought remained intact, while the iron-ribbed ship and the brave men who commanded her still repose in their ocean grave.

No service in any department of the federal government is more exacting in hours of labor and hard work than the post-office, and no government service has more enthusiastic and faithful officers. On a recent occasion a ward politician was appointed to a place in the post-office. He was set to work "killing postage stamps"—that is, defacing the stamp on mailed letters. He worked away from 8 o'clock A.M. until noon, then deliberately quit his table, went up to the postmaster, and drawled out, "Look here, general, I wanted an app'tment, not hard work; and of this is the best thing you can do for me, I'll quit." And the "wielder of powerful political influence" quit, and departed to the more genial quarters of a drinking saloon up town.

The pay of the post-office clerk is exceedingly small, and, however earnest he may be as a partisan, the political tax annually levied is by no means a bright spot in his hard fortunes. We have mentioned how Mr. Coddington treated this custom; another example may not be out of place. When General Dix was postmaster he was approached on the subject of allowing a subscription to be taken among the clerks for party purposes. He appeared to promptly coincide with the idea, making only one condition—that it should be taken up in his own way. He accordingly took a small blank book and wrote the following:

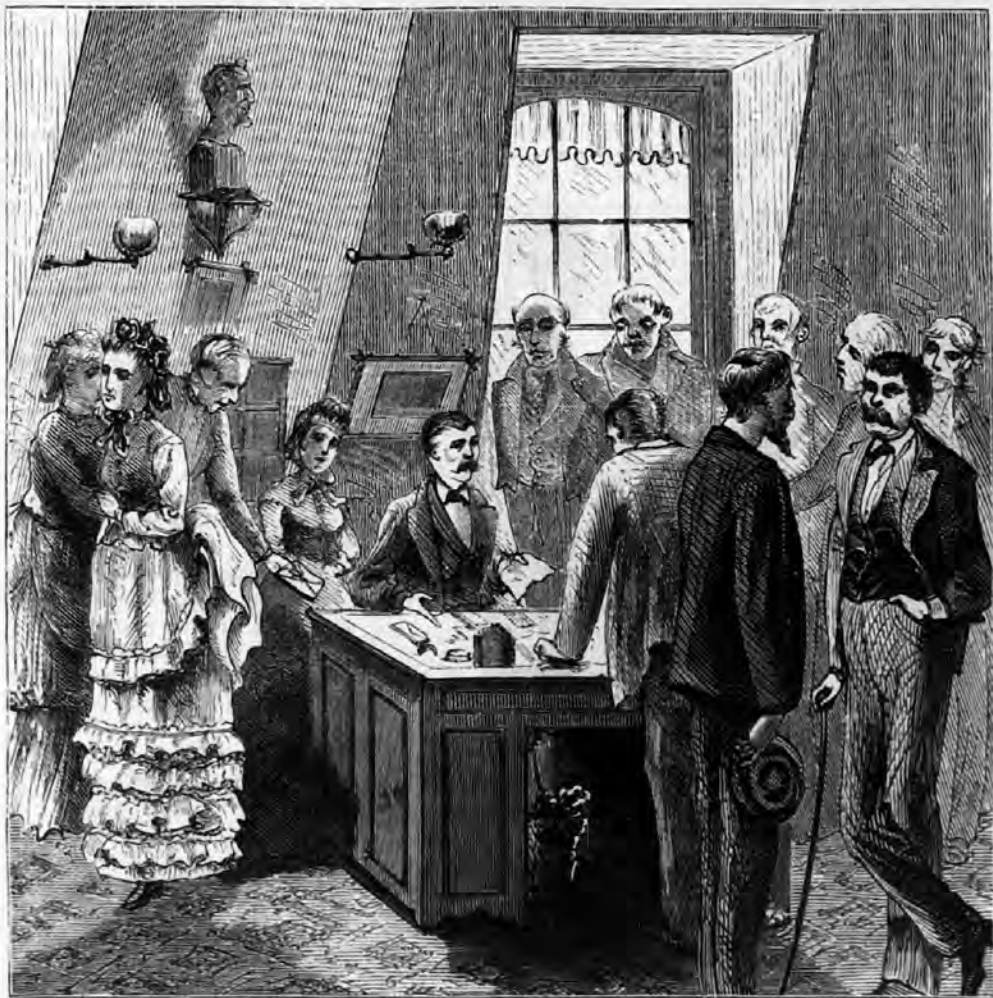
"This book will be handed to you by Mr. —, who is authorized to collect moneys of the clerks for political purposes; but I wish each clerk distinctly to understand that giving funds for such a purpose is at his own option. Those who give will not be helped by it, and those who refuse will not be injured."

Possibly it is necessary for us to state that while the clerks saved their money, and the party wasn't injured, the "grand central committee" was deprived of nothing more nor less than the means of indulging in a Champagne supper.

A post-office clerk, under the most favorable circumstances, has a delicate and responsible position to hold, for he is constantly subjected to suspicion. Money letters can be robbed before they reach the office, and can be robbed before they reach their owners after they leave the office. One day a person called on the postmaster with a letter written by a lady of great respectability, in which it was stated that "inclosed you will find ten dollars in liquidation of your bill against me." But the letter had apparently been opened, and the remains only of the edges of the remittance, sticking to some paste, were left behind. The bill, save the remains of the slight mutilation alluded to, was gone. By examining the fragment still adhering to the paste the word *one, one, one*, oft repeated, presented itself. Thus this base attempt to swindle an honest creditor and defame the credit of the post-office was exposed.

People who come to the post-office and make complaints of being robbed, when they discover that they were mistaken never call and make reparation, or relieve the department of the charge made against its employes. A merchant, much excited, complained that a letter sent to him "by a most responsible house," containing \$500, had not been received. This charge was fortified by showing a letter from the postmaster who mailed the missing letter, certifying that it was forwarded, and contained the \$500. Detectives were at once set to work to unravel the iniquity, but all efforts proved unavailing. Finally the post-office authorities, after weeks of hard work, called on the complaining merchant and asked if he had heard any thing about the missing money. "Oh," replied the gentleman, with great vivacity, "that's all right; by mistake that letter was thrown into the safe, and remained unopened nearly four weeks. Funny, wasn't it?" Not even an apology was made for charging the post-office with purloining the money, or for giving its officers so much unnecessary trouble.

Charges of dishonesty against the post-office are made where nobody but "extraordinary circumstances" are to blame. A letter containing two \$1000 bills in it was delivered by the carrier, who, according to custom (ignorant of its contents, of course), at the house of its owner, shoved it into the hallway, under the door. The letter was missing. Complaint was made at the post-office; evidence was produced that the money had been forwarded. The detectives were set to work to trace out



POSTMASTER'S OFFICE.

the robbery. The poor carrier, and the clerks in the office who handled the letter, were placed under surveillance. The clerks where the letter was mailed were "shadowed." Every dollar they expended after the probable robbery was secretly inquired into, to see if any of them had been at any given time, after the letter was lost, unusually "flush;" but all signs failed. After a long time the floor covering of the hall was taken up, and there was the letter, "safe and sound:" the unfortunate carrier had thrust it *under*, instead of *over*, the oil-cloth.

The misdirection of letters is the cause of serious charges against the post-office. A letter containing \$700 was mailed from Albany to New York. It was sent from a well-known person, and the package which was supposed to contain the letter, made up in Albany, was not opened until it reached New York. Both ends of the line were under suspicion. It was stated that the letter was addressed Mr. ———, Broadway, New York. After a long search it was found that the letter had never left Albany at all, being directed by mistake Mr. —

——, Broadway, Albany, and the faithful clerks had thrown it into their own city delivery box instead of forwarding it to New York. The confusion in the mind of the writer of the letter grew out of the fact that there is a Broadway in both cities, and from force of habit he wrote the wrong address.

Miserable chirography is one of the most prolific causes of post-office inefficiency. It is safe to say that unmistakably written directions would remove nine-tenths of the complaints. What is a nonplused clerk to do with letters addressed to "Mahara Seney," "Old Cort," or "Cow House," when Morrisania, Olcott, and Cohoes were really intended?

One day, possibly four years ago, Mr. Kelly was sitting in his private office opening his *personal* letters, and enjoying the delusion that every thing was working satisfactorily, when, to his surprise, he found one letter from Washington calling his especial attention to the "inclosed editorial," cut from the *Tribune*, in which the carelessness of his clerks, and the generally unsatisfactory manner with which he carried on his business, were dilated upon, ending with



DELIVERING LETTERS.

the startling announcement that, under the present management of the department, it took *four days* to get a letter from New York to Chappaqua, distance about thirty miles, and made literally no distance by a fast railway! Consternation ensued, and Mr. Kelly, to commence examination into these serious charges, sent a special agent to Chappaqua for the envelope of said delayed letter. At the place named the official fortunately not only found what he went after (the envelope), but also Mr. Greeley and "Miles O'Reilly." After due explanations the envelope was handed to Miles O'Reilly, with the query of what he thought was the meaning of the superscription.

"Why," said that genial wit, who had once been a deputy postmaster, "the devil himself couldn't make it out."

The envelope was then brought to the attention of the berated clerks, who looked at it with glazed eyes, the hieroglyphics suggesting somewhat the same intellectual speculation that would result from studying the foot-prints of a gigantic spider that had, after wading knee-deep in ink, retreated hastily across the paper.

At the post-office, when they distribute letters, those on which the direction is not instantly made out, to save time, are thrown in a pile for especial examination; if a second and more careful study fails, they are consigned to an especial clerk, who is denominated the chief of the bureau of "hards." To this important functionary the envelope of Chappaqua was at last referred. He examined it a moment, and his eye flashed with the expression of recognizing an old acquaintance. "This thing," said he, holding up the envelope with the tip ends of his fingers, "came to me some days ago along with the other 'hards.' I studied the superscription at my leisure a whole day, but couldn't make it out. I then showed it to the best experts in handwriting attached to the office, and called on outsiders to test their skill; but what the writing meant, *if it was writing*, was a conundrum that we all gave up. Finally, in desperation, it was suggested, as a last resort, to send it to Chappaqua," which happened to be its place of destination. Such is the *literal* history of the reason of an earnestly written denunciation of the inefficiency of the city post.

We have traced the growth of the post-office of New York

from the time when it found but partial employment for one postmaster and a single assistant to the present, and what a change! Language fails to give an idea; statistics pall on the ear in unmeaning sounds, and only confuse the mind. A few random illustrations must therefore suffice.

The discipline and efficiency of the city post is shown in the reminiscence that, twenty years ago, before there was a postal treaty with England, people in that country, according to their caprice, indorsed on the outside of their letters by what line of steamers they desired them to be sent. By some accident neither of the two composing the American line crossed from England in six months! The consequence was an extraordinary accumulation of letters indorsed "by American steamer;" and when the *Washington* did reach this port, having "broken her shaft," and been frozen up in the harbor of Bremen, she had a six months' mail on board. This enormous collection of letters was taken to the post-office, and the clerks, without neglecting their daily routine duties and working "overtime," distributed this ac-

cumulation in *ten days!* The same number of letters, without interfering with the daily business of the office, would now be distributed in *one hour!*

Large publishing houses and newspaper establishments afford great assistance to the post-office by making up their own mails according to printed lists and instructions furnished by the Post-office Department. If this were not the case, the facilities afforded would not be adequate to perform the required service. To illustrate: If it were not advantageous to publishers to aid in the prompt circulation of their papers and magazines, and they should send their daily distribution to the post-office in one indiscriminate mass, that institution would be literally "avalanchéd;" floors, desks, clerks, and every available place for storage would be buried under one vast pile of accumulated mail matter.

Instead of there being as formerly only a few straggling letters, two hundred and fifty thousand postage stamps are, on an average, daily canceled, and that is a representation of the number of *domestic* letters delivered at the post-office every twenty-four hours.

It costs the government sixty thousand dollars annually for cartage to haul this vast amount of mail matter to the stations and railway lines.

One comparative statement more. The city of New York is divided into twelve postal stations, each one having its distinct officer and clerks. Station A, situated in the heart of New York, does a larger business than either of the cities of Buffalo, New Haven, Hartford, Hudson, or Troy.

Such is the epitomized history, illustrated by the post-office, of the growth and prosperity of the city of New York.



POSTAGE STAMPS AND THEIR ORIGIN.



MULLERADY ENVELOPE, ISSUED IN 1840.

ALTHOUGH postage stamps are among the most familiar objects of daily use, it is probable that very few persons have troubled themselves to consider when and where they originated. In a pamphlet by M. Piron, *Sous-Directeur des Postes*, published in Paris in 1838, and entitled, "Du Service des Postes, et de la Taxation des Lettres au Moyen d'un Timbre," we find that the idea of post-paid or stamped paper originated, early in the reign of Louis XIV., with M. De Velay, who, in 1653, established a private penny-post, placing boxes at the corners of streets for the reception of letters wrapped up in envelopes, which were franked by bands or slips of paper tied around them, with the inscription, "*Post-paid the — day of —, 1653 or '54.*" These slips were sold for a *sou tape*, and could be procured at the palace, at the turn-tables of convents, and from the porters of colleges. When Louis XIV. used to quit his habitual residence the personages of his suit were accustomed to procure these labels intended to be placed around letters destined for Paris. M. De Velay had also caused to be printed certain forms of *billets*, or notes, applicable to the ordinary business among the inhabitants of great towns, with blanks which were to be filled up by the pen with such special matter as might complete the writer's object. One of these *billets*, filled up by Pélisson, and sent to Mademoiselle Scudéry, is still preserved in Paris, and is one of the oldest of penny-post letters extant, and a curious example of a pre-paying envelope. These primitive slips and forms were irregularly used, and soon fell into disuse. In 1758, however, under Louis XV., one M. De Chamouset, a wealthy Parisian, established a modest post for the metropolis, charging two *sols* for single letters under an ounce, which were prepaid by stamps similar to those now in use. Government, perceiving the gains thus derived from the new enterprise, took it from him, compensating him by an annual pension of twenty thousand francs; but so

meagre were the arrangements of the government that the stamps were seldom used, and soon were entirely forgotten.

The next country to issue postal stamps was Spain, their issue having been authorized by a royal decree of the 7th December, 1716, which stipulated that the secretaries to the crown, etc., etc., will have the privilege of apposing on the letters addressed to the other authorities a seal, impressed in ink, bearing the royal arms of Castile and Leon, which will pass them free. By the general regulations of the post (8th June, 1794) notice was given that the stamps mentioned in the decree of 1716 were to be used only for letters concerning public business. These official stamps remained in use until the beginning of the present century, when their issue was entirely abandoned.

We have now to introduce to our readers a description of semi-official stamped postal envelopes used in Italy (Sardinia) from 1819 to 1836. On the 7th of November, 1818, the emission of stamped postal paper was announced, and the conditions on which it might be used. This paper was prepared under the immediate supervision of the *Directeur des Postes*, and could be procured at post-offices, and from vendors of tobacco, who received a commission upon their sales. There were three values: fifteen centesimi, twenty-five centesimi, and fifty centesimi, all bearing the same device. We give an illustration of the highest value, by which a clear idea will be gained of their appearance. These covers were but little used, however, and were finally withdrawn by the seventy-third article of a royal decree of the 30th of March, 1836, in consequence of a modification being made in the postal regulations by the seventy-second article of the same law.



SARDINIA, 1818.

The next attempt at issuing postage stamps was made by one Treffenberg, of Stockholm, who proposed to the Assembly of Swedish Nobility to issue stamped paper to be made into envelopes for letters. The proposition was warmly supported by Count de Schwerin, on the ground that it would be both convenient to the public and to the post-office, but the proposition was rejected by a large majority.

But to Mr. Rowland Hill are we indebted for that postal reform which was introduced by him into the British Parliament in 1837, which, among other reforms, proposed that letters should be prepaid by means of stamped covers, or envelopes. His proposition met with much opposition. Fortunately thousands of petitions poured in for the furtherance of this bold project, and Parliament, moved by such a general manifestation, caused a commission to examine the plan. After many stormy debates it was adopted, and put in operation on the 6th of May, 1840. To Mr. Hill, then, do we owe the adoption of the idea, and its practical development. As soon as the postal scheme was matured in England, and the emission of postal stamps decided on, the authorities issued a prospectus offering a reward of £500 for the best design and plan for a stamp. The conditions, which were widely circulated, stated that the chief desiderata were simplicity and facility in working, combined with such precautions as should prove effectual against forgery. Thousands of designs—many of the most elaborate workmanship—were sent in; but none were so simple as that furnished by Heath, of London, which was subsequently chosen. We give an illustration of this early stamp, which gives a good idea of its complete



TRIAL STAMP, 1840.

GREAT BRITAIN.



1840.

simplicity. It is, however, in use at the present day, its color only having been changed from black to red. About the same time a prize was offered for the best design for an envelope, which was gained by Mulready, R.A., who produced that peculiar combination of allegories representing England attracting the commerce of the world. It was engraved on brass by John Thompson (the pupil of Branstön), who devoted many entire weeks in cutting it in relief. By the stamped envelope and adhesives of the present day it has an almost medieval appearance. England, therefore, has

the honor of creating the first postage stamps (those previously mentioned having little in common with those now in use), where they were created, to be successively adopted by all civilized countries. Upon this simple foundation has been built a postal reform which vies with any other reform in this reforming age. After a currency of a few months the "Mulready" envelopes fell into disuse, and were superseded by the small adhesive stamps furnished by Heath, of London. In July, 1840, a two-penny stamp was issued, and subsequently a complete series, ranging in value from one half-penny to five shillings. We give illustrations of some of the values, with dates of issue. In



1840.



1855.



1862.



1865.

ENGLAND.

the latter part of 1870 post cards were introduced into England, unusual taste having been shown in their arrangement. The cards are about four and a quarter inches in length, by three and a half in breadth. The design consists of the queen's head in a circle, with ornaments, etc., and a broad label in the lower margin, inscribed "Half-penny," the whole forming a rectangle. The main inscription, which occupies the upper portion of the card to the left of the stamp, is thus disposed: "Post card. The address only to be written on this side. To —." The cards are printed in a beautiful light lilac. The stamps of England, both postal and fiscal, are printed at Somerset House, London.

England, having taken the first step in this path of postal reform, was soon followed by some of the Swiss cantons in 1843-44, Brazil in 1843, Russia in 1845, United States in 1847, France in 1848, Schleswig-Holstein in 1848, Tuscany in 1849, Belgium in 1849, Spain in 1850, and the other principal nations and their colonies (with but few exceptions) at intermediate dates, thus generalizing their use throughout the world.

In 1843-48 the Swiss cantons of Zurich, Basle, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Geneva, and Winterthur issued stamps for use in their several can-

tons. They were, however, in 1850 replaced by the stamps of the federal administration, which issued stamps for both French and German cantons with corresponding inscriptions. These remained current until 1854, when they were superseded, in turn, by a uniform type for all Switzerland, with the values expressed in rappen, centesimi, and centimes. These enjoyed



1843.



1844.



1854.



1854.

SWITZERLAND.

a currency of eight years, and were then replaced by a new series with the name "Helvetia" and corresponding numerals of value. The entire set, ranging in value from two centimes to one franc, are still current in Switzerland.

In February, 1871, the Swiss government issued stamps for the use of Bourbaki's army interned in Switzerland, which freed their letters through the post. They were very simple, being printed in black on colored paper, with the inscription, "*Militaires français internés en Suisse. Gratis.*"

The next stamps claiming our notice are those emanating from the empire of Brazil. It would overshoot our postal mark to indicate all the regulations and decrees published by the government since 1829 for the amelioration of Brazilian posts. We would but remark that this country, far distant from Europe as it is, was the second to follow the example of England in the adoption of postal stamps. A decree of November 29, 1842, signed by the minister, C. J. d'Aranjo Viana, orders the creation of postage stamps. The idea was to reproduce, as in England, the features of the sovereign; but the Director of the Mint, fearing the respect due to his emperor would be wounded were the sacred effigy obliterated, made representations to that effect in a letter dated February 13, 1843. The minister yielded to this reasoning, and had introduced for the values—thirty reis, sixty reis, and ninety reis—a large figure upon an oval of intricate engraving. They were engraved by Carlos d'Azevedo and José de Faria, the mint engravers, and printed at the National Treasury. There have been several series of Brazilian stamps manufactured by

native artists, all bearing the simple numerals of value. But in 1865 the contract for the manufacture of postal stamps was transferred to the American Bank-Note Company, of New



1843.



1844.



1850.



1866.



1866.

BRAZIL.

York city, which has produced a very artistic and elaborate series. The portrait of his Majesty Dom Pedro II. is remarkable for its excellence and truthfulness, and reflects great credit upon the manufacturers. Quite lately there has appeared a new value—three hundred reis—which is a beautiful addition to the stamps of Brazil. It is printed in two colors, and is from the atelier of the Continental Bank-Note Company of New York city.

Stamped postal envelopes were introduced into Russia in 1845-48, bearing the arms of that empire in a circle. There were four values only, viz., five kopeks, ten kopeks, twenty kopeks, and thirty kopeks, for use in the empire. Our illustration of the five kopeks is similar in design to the higher values. In 1869 a new set were issued, corresponding in value to the preceding issue. The design consists of the Russian arms in a circle, surrounded by appropriate inscriptions. Adhesive postal stamps were emitted in 1857-64, and have passed through several series. Those issued in 1864 have a very beautiful appearance; but neither their description nor engraving can give a correct idea of the elegance and attractive appearance of these stamps, in which beauty and simplicity are so marvelously combined with the most elaborate execution. The Russian provinces of Finland, Livonia, and Poland have, by

royal favor, issued stamps peculiar to themselves; but they are of simple design and execution. There have been several series of stamps used in Finland, and we give illustrations of some of the current issue, which were emitted in 1866-67. The stamps of Poland, similar in



1845.



1857.



1864.



1864.



FINLAND, 1866.



FINLAND, 1867.

RUSSIA.

design to those of Russia proper, are now obsolete, having been superseded by those of the empire.

The postal stamps of the United States next claim our attention, their issue having been authorized by act of Congress of 3d March, 1847. Two values only were introduced, viz., five cents and ten cents, bearing respectively the portraits of Franklin and Washington. They were finely engraved by Rawdon, Wright, Hatch, and Edson, of New York, and were issued July 1 of that year. They remained current until July 1, 1851, when, in consequence of an alteration in the rates, they were withdrawn, and replaced by three new values, viz., one cent, three cents, and twelve cents. In May, 1855, a ten-cent stamp was issued, and subsequently, at intermediate dates, a complete series, ranging in value from five to ninety cents. They were manufactured by Toppan, Carpenter, and Co., of New York, and remained current until the breaking out of the great rebellion in 1861, when, it being considered desirable to change the issue of stamps, a contract for the manufacture of the United States postage stamps was awarded to the National Bank-Note Company, of New York city. A new set

of stamps was prepared and issued August 14 of that year, with two new values, the designs being somewhat similar to the preceding issue. The entire set still pass current. In March, 1869, the late current series, corresponding in value to the preceding issue, was, by direction of



1847.



1847.



1851.



1851.



1851.



1851.



1860.



1861.



1861.



1869.

UNITED STATES.

the government, also prepared by the National Bank-Note Company; but the public feeling being wholly against them, on account of their small size, the government in 1870 authorized the company to prepare a new set, and in the spring of 1870 (April) they produced an elabo-

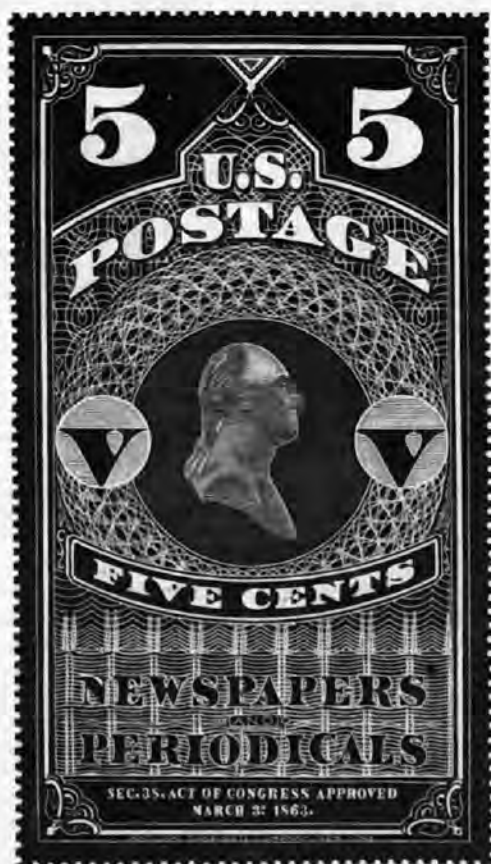
rate series. The portraits upon them are mostly engraved from standard marbles, and are wonderfully truthful in every detail. They are of the following denominations and description :

Cents.	Profile Bust after	Color.
1.	Franklin . . . Rubright	Imperial blue.
2.	Jackson . . . Powers	Velvet brown.
3.	Washington Houdon	Milori green.
6.	Lincoln . . . Volk	Cochineal red.
10.	Jefferson . . . Power's Statue	Chocolate.
12.	Clay Hart	Purple.
15.	Webster . . . Clevenger	Orange.
24.	Scott Coffee	Pure purple.
30.	Hamilton . . . Corrahi	Black.
90.	Perry Wolcott's Medallion.	Carmine.

To which has lately been added, for German postal service, a seven-cent stamp, bearing a portrait of the late Secretary of War, Stanton, photographed from life—color, red. Of these stamps the National Bank-Note Company has furnished the government the past year with nearly five hundred millions. The Post-office Department has received the congratulations of several foreign governments upon the beauty and workmanship of this issue of stamps. They are undoubtedly the finest set of stamps in the world, and for delicacy of engraving, symmetry of design, and general contour remain peerless. The United States has the honor of having used the largest stamps for postal purposes in the world, known as the "Periodical Stamps," which were used for newspapers carried outside the

mails. These were furnished by the National Bank-Note Company, of New York city, and were surface-printed from steel plates, and not fine line engraving like the letter stamps. The three values—five, ten, and twenty-five cents—bear respectively medallion portraits of Washington, Franklin, and Lincoln. They were issued October 1, 1865, and withdrawn in February, 1869, having been used only in Chicago, Illinois, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As but few of our readers have probably seen these gems of postal art, we give an engraving of the lowest value. Stamped postal envelopes were introduced in the United States in 1853, having been authorized by act of Congress of 31st August, 1852. There have been several issues, all of which were engraved by Messrs. Nesbitt and Co., of New York city. Quite recently the contract for the manufacture of United States stamped envelopes was awarded to G. A. Reay, of New York city, who manufactures those now in use.

Postage stamps were permanently introduced into France in 1848, having been issued by the republicans. The series, ranging in value from ten centimes to one franc, had as a central device a beautifully impressed head of the Goddess of Liberty. They enjoyed but a limited cir-



UNITED STATES NEWSPAPER STAMP, 1865.



1848. 1854. 1863.
FRANCE.

lation, and were soon replaced by the stamps of the Presidency, bearing a profile of Louis Napoleon, with the same inscription; which shows how astutely that consummate politician was preparing the public mind for his appearance in imperial effulgence. Upon his accession to the empire a new set were emitted, ranging in value from one centime to one franc; but although bearing the same device as the preceding issue, the inscription "Repub. Franç." was changed to that of "Empire Franç." In 1863 a new set were issued, corresponding in value and design to the preceding issue, but with the brow of his Imperial Majesty crowned with the laurel of the Cæsars. These remained current until the fall of the empire in 1870, when the republicans issued a new set similar to those issued in 1848. They range in value from one centime to eighty centimes, and were issued during the siege of Paris from the provisional capital of Bordeaux. The stamps of France are the most complicated and inimitable of all stamps in use. They are usually prepared at the *Hôtel des Monnaies*, or mint, in Paris, and are under the control of the state, but yet form a special enterprise. All the stamps of France, both postal and fiscal, with those of her colo-

nies, and Greece, emanate from the same source. The sheets on which these stamps are printed are subjected to four successive operations, the result being sure proof against forgery by the



GREECE, 1861.



FRENCH COLONIES, 1860.

transferring process. After the stamps have been printed, gummed, and perforated, they are inspected by the officials, who destroy those showing any imperfections, the remainder being forwarded to the central *Administration des Postes*.

After Prussia had decided to annex to her dominions the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine that government issued stamps for their especial use. The design is very simple indeed, consisting of the numeral of value, with the inscription, "Postes," "Centime," printed upon tinted paper.

Postage stamps were introduced into Belgium on the 1st of July, 1849, two values only—ten and twenty centimes—having been issued. The design was a three-quarter-face bust of the then king, Leopold I., in military uniform. There have been several issues of Belgian stamps, all showing the national arms or portrait of the sovereign.

Following Belgium in the emission of postage stamps came Bavaria in 1849, Austria, Prussia, and Saxony in 1850, and the other states at intermediate dates, thus generalizing their use throughout continental Europe. Austria has the honor of having first introduced the "post card," and has been followed in their emission by England, the North German Confederation, Hungary, Belgium, Holland, and other countries. After all that is said about the progress of our own country, does it not strike our Post-office Department that it is rather curious that all these countries should have got out post cards ahead of us? But, unfortunately, such is the fact.

Postal stamps were permanently introduced into Spain in 1850, having been authorized by a royal decree of December 1, 1849. By a ministerial order of December 14, 1849, these stamps were to be manufactured in the national manufactory of deed stamps, and sold by the tobacco vendors, with an allowance of three per cent. The first issued according to the decree consisted of two values, six cuartos and twelve cuartos, to frank home letters. The second issue comprised two sorts, five and ten reales for home, and six reales for foreign postage. They were all similar in design to our illustrations of the six cuartos and five reales. The following year a new set was issued, similar in design to the preceding issue, since which time (except for a

twelvemonth when the arms were substituted) a new series has appeared almost annually, bearing the portrait of her Catholic Majesty Isabella II. Some time after the dethronement of her



SPAIN.

Majesty a new series was emitted by the provisional government, having as a device an impressed head of the Goddess of Iberia. A new set is being prepared, with the portrait of King Amadeus; and *La Correspondencia*, a Cadiz paper, informs us that the designs have much greater artistic merit than their predecessors. The postage stamps of the Spanish colonies are manufactured in Spain, and are forwarded ready for use to the colonies.



LUZON.

Our space is too limited to give a detailed account of all the stamps issued by the countries of the world. We should simply have to describe over three thousand distinct emissions, issued by one hundred and thirty-three different governments. But suffice it to say that nearly all have issued postage stamps.

Until within a few years Mexico stood alone, as a stamp-employing country, among the states of Central America. The most unsettled government of all was the earliest to adopt a system which generally requires order for its maintenance. Stamps were authorized by the "Supremo Decreto" of February 21, 1856, and were issued on the 15th of July of that year. They were engraved at the National Treasury by Francisco Iacomet, and bore the portrait of "Hidalgo," the first hero of the independence. On the 18th of April, 1864, "La Regencia del

Imperio issued a decree authorizing a new issue of stamps. They were issued on the 16th of May following, and bore as a device the Mexican eagle and cactus. These remained cur-



1856.



1864.



1868.

MEXICO.

rent until 1866, when, by virtue of the decree of July 15 of that year, a new set was issued bearing the profile of "Maximiliano Emperador de Mexico." They were engraved by M. Joubert, of London, and remained current until the fall of the empire in 1867. Those at present doing duty in the Mexican republic, ranging in value from six to one hundred cents, are of simple design and execution, and were issued on the 8th of September, 1868, by virtue of the decree of August 3 of that year. They were engraved at the National Treasury by Antonio Orellano; and from a Mexican postal document before us we learn that the head of Hidalgo still figures upon the stamps of the republic. (*Art. 2. La administracion general de correos, abrirá sellos que representen el busto del primer heroe de la independencia, E. S. D. Miguel Hidalgo, espresandose en ellos el valor que cada uno debe tener, que será el de seis cent, etc.*) The rest of the Central American republics have at intervals issued complete series of stamps, and now all are postally represented.

The West Indian Islands have furnished an interesting array of postal stamps, and at the present time only Tobago is unrepresented. The stamps of Nevis are the most interesting of the entire group: deviating from the practice of multiplying impressions of the queen's head, the parties having in charge the creation of the Nevis stamps happily preferred an emblematical device representing the Goddess of Health, "Hygeia," administering the water of a mineral spring in the island to a sick person.



NEVIS, 1861.

Brazil having been the postal pioneer among the states of South America in the emission of postal stamps, was followed by British Guiana in 1850, and subsequently by the republics, all of which have produced creditable series of stamps. The stamps of New Granada are



BRITISH GUIANA, 1860.



COLOMBIA, 1859.

perhaps the most interesting of the entire number, and since 1859 that country has produced a new set annually. The stamps of Chili are the only ones bearing the portrait of Columbus.

The British Asiatic colonies of Ceylon, Hong-Kong, India, Shanghai, and Straits Settlements, the Dutch Indies, Spanish Indies, Cashmere, Burmah, and Deccan, are the only countries of Asia postally represented. Ceylon uses



CEYLON, 1857.



SINGAPORE, 1868.



CASHMERE, 1867.



BRITISH INDIA, 1858.

a larger number of stamps than any other country in Asia, her adhesives and envelopes together amounting to over twenty values. Ceylon may with justice claim to possess the finest set of stamped envelopes in the world. Chaste in design, excellent in execution, they unite the requisites to superiority in an overwhelming degree. They are prepared at the establishment of De La Rue and Co., London.

Passing from the postal emissions of Asia, let us briefly notice some of those issued by the countries of Africa. Natal, the youngest Anglo-African colony, commenced issuing stamps in 1857, and has been followed at intermediate dates by St. Helena, Sierra Leone, Mauritius, Cape Colony, Liberia, Egypt, Orange State, Gambia, the Azores, Madeira, Angola, Mozambique, and the Transvaal Republic.

Much is left to the imagination in the first issue of Natal. The design is embossed on colored paper, there being nothing to distinguish it from its surroundings except its being in relief. The

Highness M. Kekuanaua, the king's late father, and that of his Majesty, depicted upon them, are the finest postal portraits ever engraved.



1861.



1860.



1857.



AFRICA.



1857.



1857.



1862.



1856.



1849.



1859.



1859.



1855.



1855.



1860.



1854.

island of Mauritius has been the largest contributor, the number of varieties emanating from that place being over forty. Mauritius is the only country of Africa which possesses stamped envelopes, but they are handsome enough to represent the whole continent. The stamps of the Cape of Good Hope are perhaps better known than those of Mauritius. The early issues were of a triangular shape, and bore as a device an emblematical figure of Hope. Our illustration will give a good idea of their unique appearance. The stamps of Egypt were introduced by Muzzi Bey in 1866, and bear upon their face the Pyramids and Sphinx, presenting a very strange appearance.

The British Australian colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, and Western Australia, with the Hawaiian Isles, New Zealand, Tasmania, Sarawak, Java, Luzon, the Fiji Islands, and New Caledonia, are represented in the issue of postal stamps. Our illustrations will give a good idea of some of their designs, etc., although it is quite impossible to reproduce on wood the intricate tracery of the originals. The current set of the Hawaiian Isles are the neatest and best executed of the entire number, and are the work of the National Bank-Note Company, of New York. The portraits of the late Princess Victoria, his

Postage stamps were introduced into Canada June 1, 1851, and subsequently by Nova Scotia in 1856, New Brunswick in 1856, Newfoundland in 1857, Prince Edward Island in 1861, and British Columbia in 1861. The early stamps of Canada were prepared by Messrs. Rawdon, Wright, Hatch, and Edson, of New York, and the later issues, with those of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland, by the Ameri-

can Bank-Note Company, of New York. The Prince Edward Island stamps were manufactured by Charles Whitting, and those of British Columbia by De La Rue and Co., of London,

mond. These remained current until 1863, when they were replaced by a five-cent stamp prepared in England, and subsequently by a two-cent, ten-cent, and twenty-cent stamp, prepared



1859.



1857.



1861.



1869.



1868.

BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES.

England. By her Majesty's proclamation, issued in the spring of 1867, the provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick were to form one grand confederation or dominion, which took effect on the 1st of July, 1867. Among the departments thus centralized was the Post-office Department, which passed into the hands of one person; and there is now but one corresponding postal rate throughout the confederation, and but one set of postal stamps. These stamps, ranging in value from half a cent to fifteen cents, were issued April 1, 1868, and were prepared by the British American Bank-Note Company, of Montreal and Ottawa. The design is chaste and beautiful, the principal ornament being a profile of her Majesty, turned to the right. Quite recently the Canadians have introduced the post card, also engraved by the British American Bank-Note Company.

Among the most historical stamps are those issued by the so-called Confederate States. After the passage of the ordinance of secession the postmasters of New Orleans, Nashville, Baton Rouge, Mobile, Memphis, and other towns, finding it impossible to do business without stamps, issued them on their own responsibility until a set for the confederation could be manufactured. The first regular series, of three values—two, five, and ten cents—were prepared by Hoyer and Ludwig, lithographers, of Rich-



1861.



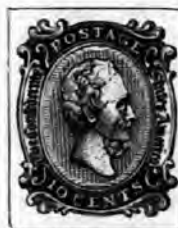
1861.



1861.



1861.



1863.



1863.

CONFEDERATE STATES.

by Archer and Daly, of Richmond. Archer and Daly failing in their terms of contract, a new one was entered into with Messrs. Keatinge and Ball, of Columbia, South Carolina.

The early stamps of Romagna, Mauritius, Hawaiian Isles, Parma, Modena, Moldavia, and Brunswick were of the most primitive design



MAURITIUS, 1857.



MODENA, 1856.



MOLDAVIA, 1862.



ROMAGNA, 1850.

and simple execution, and were the productions of native artists. Many of the finest postal productions emanate from the American Bank-Note Company, of New York, which are those of Newfoundland, Brazil, Bolivia, La Plata, Chili, Costa Rica, Salvador, Peru, and Nicaragua, with the



1867.



1862.



1863.



1860.

late current stamps of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. They are all remarkable for their fine colors and artistic perfection, especially those of Nova Scotia.

Postage stamps have an infinite variety of designs. Those of England and most of her colonies have as a central ornament a portrait of her Majesty. The English stamps have for the last quarter of a century given precisely the same representation of the queen's features, which has influenced the colonial stamps, particularly in the position of the face. Out of over two hundred colonial "queen's heads," the greater number are turned to the left. Some of the handsomest portraits of Queen



1861.



1860.



1862.

Victoria are to be found upon some of the West Indian stamps. Those of St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Antigua, though differing in general design, have all the same style of head. The engraving is remarkably delicate, and the effect is heightened by the shading at the back, which brings out the portraits in semi-relief. There are over two hundred portraits of Victoria upon the English and colonial stamps, none of which, however, have any resemblance to that royal personage. This is a mistake that our English cousins would do well to rectify. The stamps of Austria, Prussia, Italy, Belgium, and many other countries bear as a central device either the portrait of the reigning sovereign



ITALY, 1857.



ITALY, 1863.



NAPLES, 1858.



TURKEY, 1863.



AUSTRIA, 1861.



ROUMANIA, 1869.

or the national arms. Those of Rome bear the papal tiara and keys. Those of Trinidad, Barbadoes, Liberia, Buenos Ayres, etc., bear a representation of Britannia or the Goddess of Liberty. Those of Turkey the Sultan's sign-manual, and so on without end.

Postage stamps are still in their infancy, and we hardly know to what extent they are capable of being utilized. We trust ere long to see stamps used for international correspondence. International money-orders have been issued for some time, and why not international postal stamps. The idea seems to us a good one, and we trust that international stamps may be current at no distant date, thereby bringing into closer union the bonds of human brotherhood.

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