

Post Office Curiosities.

There are a great many people in all parts of the country who seem to be firmly impressed with the idea that postmasters, and others connected with the post office, should at all times, and under all circumstances, hold themselves in readiness to act as general agents for the public.

Indeed, there seems to be a wide spread impression, particularly in the remote interior districts, that a postmaster, in addition to all his other duties, should act as a sort of walking directory and universal giver of advice.

For instance, it is no uncommon occurrence for some harmless, but none the less tiresome, lunatic to take up his or her stand beside the desk of a busy superintendent and go into an elaborate and detailed history of a dark and of course imaginary, conspiracy entered into by letter carriers and clerks for the suppression or destruction of a correspondence involving immense sums of money and the happiness of many deserving people.

From long experience the unfortunate officers who have to do with the class of visitors described have discovered that the only way to get rid of them is to take copious notes of the astonishing revelation contained in their narratives, express congratulations at the wickedness of the clerks and carriers, and promise close investigation and then swift punishment of those engaged in the conspiracy.

These assurances having been given, the class of visitors referred to usually go away satisfied that they are in a fair way of having justice done. In due time, however, they nearly always return with such additions and alterations to their stories as further thought may have suggested.

Still another class of harmless madmen who give the post office employees great trouble, is made up of quite a numerous company of gentlemen who are filled with mysterious plans for the improvement of the postal service. It was only last week that one of these unfortunate—a very well dressed, well spoken, and respectable looking old man—gravely assured the postmaster that he had been "magnitized by the angels and had acquired the power of swift and invisible aerial flight."

He was informed with as much seriousness as possible that because of "a lack of appropriations"—most convenient and much employed excuse—that his valuable service could not be secured. He seemed to be very much surprised at this, and left the office declaring that he "would see the authorities in Washington about it."

Miscellaneous.—Pistols, loaded cartridges, torpedoes, medicines, glassware, clothing, soiled undergarments, baby clothes, hosiery, hair brushes, combs, carpenter tools, pieces of machinery, fence-wire, gold and silver watches, jewelry, novelties and notions of all kinds, shrubs, roots, scions, herbs, fresh and dried, fruits and flowers, six cases of dynamite, which were thrown into the East river to prevent serious disaster.

But it is not only in posting matter which cannot be mailed that the public is careless to a degree almost beyond belief. Hardly a day passes that letters unsealed, unaddressed, and containing sums of money, checks, and other valuables are not dropped into the boxes. During the past six months 1,153 unsealed registered letters were received at the New York office. They contained in cash, \$6,849 21, and in checks, drafts, etc., \$205,615 56, making a total of \$212,464 77 posted in unsealed envelopes.

Not long ago a well known city bank posted \$1,500,000 worth of United States bonds, which were unregistered and easily negotiable, in an envelope so flimsy that it broke open before it left the stamper's table. Similar instances of carelessness could be repeated almost without number. Indeed, it is hardly to be wondered at that the officer who related these circumstances felt called upon to exclaim in conclusion: "The post office has to deal with a great many curious people."—N. Y. Times.

A Strange Arctic Region.

When the ice closed up in the Vega, and left the stout ship enslaved in those northern solitudes, Professor Nordenskjöld wrote a letter to Dr. Oscar Dickson, the main contributor toward the fitting out of the expedition, describing the scenes along the coast. The letter, dispatched on the 20th of February, has at last reached its destination, and is now published in the London Standard.

The letter calls attention, in the first place, to a group of islands which are very remarkable from a scientific point of view. These islands, the new Siberian, open the book of the history of the world at a new place. The ground there is strewn with wonderful fossils. Whole hills are covered with the bones of the mammoth, rhinoceros, horses, ur, bison, oxen, sheep, etc.

The sea washes up ivory from the sea shores. In this group it is possible to find the solution of the question of the ancestry of the Indian. The main contributor toward the fitting out of the expedition, describing the scenes along the coast. The letter, dispatched on the 20th of February, has at last reached its destination, and is now published in the London Standard.

At Cape Schlegeloff the Vega passed the point where the Siberian merchant Schalaroff ended his persistent and untiring attempts to reach Behring Strait from the river Lena, by a lonely death, with his whole company of men in a hut on the snow clad shore. Upon rounding this cape Nordenskjöld met the first natives seen along that whole coast. They spoke a tongue utterly unknown. Not a comprehensible sentence could they utter in any European language.

Decaying Races.

The native difficulty in New Zealand again calls the attention to the fast-dwindling Maori people, one of the most remarkable races of savages with which Europeans have been brought in contact. The race will vanish because there are not enough children born to supply the gaps caused by death. It is a curious fact that this tendency to die out, observable in so many savage races, does not depend upon their capacity for civilization, nor even upon their willingness to abandon the life of hunters and to cultivate the soil.

Certain branches of the human race have a robust vitality, rendering them capable of withstanding any change in their condition of life, and causing them to send up fresh shoots like hardy plants, under the most disadvantageous conditions. Of such races are the African negro, who cannot be exterminated, and who are increasing in all countries to which they have been brought as slaves and to threaten in some instances to swamp entirely the white and colored population.

The Kafirs, also, when brought under British rule in such a colony as Natal, show a distinct tendency to increase. Other races lacking the robust vitality pine away and die. The Caribs of the West Indies, once numbering many millions have vanished, leaving only a faint trace here and there of petty communities formed by escaped negro slaves who married Carib women. The allied races in Central and South America have also dwindled at a rate which cannot be accounted for by any amount of war and massacre.

The sentence of death which seems to lie on both branches of the human race appears to issue from the action of some unknown physical law, and not be averted by any improvement in their condition. We have a striking illustration of this law under our actual observation. Leaving out of consideration our own aborigines, it is evident that the whole Polynesian race is liable to encumber under the same mysterious blight that destroyed the Caribs. As a people they are remarkably ready to accept the lessons of civilization, not merely with the parrot-like acquiescence of the American negro, but with intelligent appreciation of men who understand what they learn.

The Maoris illustrate our meaning. The Hawaiians give a more striking instance of it. The short history of this interesting little people since Capt. Cook discovered their group of islands discloses an adaptability never before displayed by any community; no such complete change from utter savagism has ever been made in so short a space of time, and in no other instance has a race taken the initiative in self-improvement so marked a manner. Yet the civilized Hawaiians are dying out as swiftly and surely as the more barbarous Maoris. That school of social philosophers which is so often and so greatly troubled by the probable future overcrowding of human beings on the face of the globe does not give sufficient attention to the rapid process of depopulation which in one quarter of the world equals the increase in another.

Then we come to the middle room, which is fitted up as a parlor, and is fit for the reception room of a queen. In the center appears a monster mantel mirror, French plate, with gilt frame, and many a handsome belle casts admiring glances at her pretty face and fine figure as she passes in review before this perfect reflector. Ever since the day our grandmothers beheld herself reflected in one of the mirror pools of the garden of Eden, her daughters have an irresistible impulse for looking in a mirror.

A Home Industry.

An Excellent Description of the Oregon Furniture Manufacturing Company—One of Oregon's Great Industries.

The following description of the Oregon Furniture Manufacturing Company appeared in a late number of the Portland Daily Bee, and will be read with great interest:

The pioneers of Oregon who first struck their axes into the trees of this State to form their rude huts and work the maples, ash and cedars into benches, tables and other rustic household furniture, little dreamed that in so short a time as the year 1879 a grand Fair would be held on the Willamette in which would be displayed some of the most elegant furniture that had ever adorned the palatial residences of the most favored sons of the East.

In the department of furniture in the north gallery of the Pavilion are three rooms devoted to the exhibit of the Oregon Furniture Manufacturing Company, of which Mr. Samuel Lowenstein is President, and Mr. William Kappas is Secretary. Nearest the northeast stairway we have a room, in which is displayed a bedroom set of the old English style, made of blackwalnut, veneered with blackwalnut burr, or ornamented richly with moldings and carvings of tasteful designs.

An elegant footrest with head and silk needle work of beautiful designs and elegant finish wrought by Miss Hattie Jagger, for whom the O. F. Co. has done the upholstering, and is shown as the exhibit of both. The chairs and other furnishing of this elegant room correspond in richness and tasteful display with those already described. The bed is made up with white Marseilles covering, and a pair of lace work shams, the admiration of all the ladies, made by Mrs. Breden of this city.

Before leaving this room our attention is attracted by a splendid capacious bath tub in heavy black walnut casings and moldings with ample padding, and lined with prepared copper sheeting that shines like silver. The newly invented attachment for letting the water in is here applied. Both hot and cold water is made to bubble up from the bottom, and by the turn of another faucet from the top the waste water is let out apparently from the same plug as that by which it entered. The plumbing of this and the wash stand was done by Mr. John Barrett, and is a part of his excellent exhibit.

Then we come to the middle room, which is fitted up as a parlor, and is fit for the reception room of a queen. In the center appears a monster mantel mirror, French plate, with gilt frame, and many a handsome belle casts admiring glances at her pretty face and fine figure as she passes in review before this perfect reflector. Ever since the day our grandmothers beheld herself reflected in one of the mirror pools of the garden of Eden, her daughters have an irresistible impulse for looking in a mirror.

Here our sofas, easy chairs, patent rockers, ample in size and elegant in style, covered with rich silks of an uniform pattern, and the latest colors and designs. One of the most elegant things ever put on exhibition in Oregon in the way of a chair, stands in the right hand corner of this room, being an Egyptian easy chair upholstered in black satin with a broad stripe running down through the center richly embroidered in a magnificent row of really beautiful and natural looking flowers, by a Portland lady.

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