

THE CLEARING HOUSE

Methods of the Big Bank Exchange in New York City.

MARCH OF THE MESSENGERS.

The Way Millions on Millions of Dollars in Checks Change Holders in a Few Minutes in the Daily Balancing of Accounts Between Banks.

"Clearing" That word is the order for the shuffling of many feet and the pattering of thick envelopes upon hard wood. Men with leather bags hung against their chests like bass drums pass up and down rows of desks at which other men sit and as they go by deftly hand out brown paper packages containing the equivalent of millions in gold. Thus do the banks of New York transfer money each business day.

As vast as the figures involved in the operation are, they do not make an impress upon the mind. One is more apt to wonder whether the gray haired messenger in the blue serge suit would succeed in disorganizing the line if he gave the wrong envelope to bank No. 49 and, if so, whether he would be condemned forever by his associates. But no one seems to make a mistake, and the visitor has no reason to worry about the possibility of misplacing \$28,000,000 even for half a second. The machinery of the clearing house is almost too perfect to slip a cog.

The clearing house begins to show signs of activity as early as 9:30 o'clock, when the vanguard of bank runners makes its appearance. They travel in pairs and are mostly young men, although the veterans have not all retired. Their badge of office is a bag, any sort of bag, suit case, telescope, kit bag, canvas bag. Sometimes it has the name of the bank it came from printed across the end. More often it bears no distinguishing mark.

Further, its identity is frequently hidden behind an exceedingly shabby exterior. That is perhaps a virtue. At all events, it is not considered good form in banking circles to be ostentatious. A strong bag even though it be old and chafed is just as good a vehicle for a fortune as a new one and is less likely to produce burnings in the heart of a thug. So this is the reason why the young men who sweep up the marble stairs look as if they were carrying bags filled with their own clothing instead of other persons' checks. Self conscious they are not despite the loads they carry, and one might well imagine they were going upstairs to change their garments for gymnasium suits.

But when the visitor reaches the floor above and climbs to the little gallery at one end he realizes that not basket ball, but another game, is to be played. Already the players are preparing to take their positions. At the side walls are benches on which delivery clerks are sitting, their bags at their sides, and opposite is a solid counter divided into about seventeen compartments, to the front of which are affixed, if occupied, the name plates of different banks. Beyond the first is a second counter and between the two a rack for hats and overcoats. A broad aisle with more benches and hatracks separates the two rows of counters from duplicates on the opposite side of the room.

Settling clerks, who take their places on high stools behind the outer rows of counters, face the walls. Those at the inner counters face the center aisle. At the elbows of the settling clerks stand their assistants, who are required to sign the exchange slips presented with each package of checks.

As the clock nears 10 one glances from the high dome, with its row of electric lights, to the scene below. The clerks at the compartments have made themselves comfortable. The messengers standing at ease before them have slung their bags and are ready. A minute passes. A man appears at the rostrum in the gallery and rings a gong twice. Eyes below are uplifted as he makes an announcement about out of town banks that will hereafter clear through different correspondents. That is not of particular interest, but he pauses briefly and then utters the magic word, "Clearing!"

The messenger for bank No. 1 crosses the room at one end of the counters and takes the place of No. 97, who has moved down a pace. Simultaneously fifty other men have taken a step forward, and the tramping and scraping of feet come regularly. No. 1 has slipped an envelope down before the clerk at No. 97's compartment, dropped a ticket into a slot, offered an exchange slip for signing and passed on to No. 96 without uttering a word. Each of No. 1's fifty associates has duplicated his performance in every detail, and so the exchanges, as they are called, have been fairly started.

In the meantime the settling clerks are doing their share of the work. Long sheets of paper in front of them are being filled out with the total amounts of the checks presented by the men who are circling about the counters, making monotonous but not unpleasant sounds with their feet. Suddenly, when you are just beginning to understand what it is all about, a halt is called. No one says anything, but every one stops. You ask why, and some one says the exchanges have been completed. You ask how \$300,000,000 can change hands in exactly fifteen minutes by the clock, and the same person looks at you with a pitying smile and remarks, "Why, you've just seen it done."

There is marked silence for a moment after the feet have stopped moving. The crowd in the room begins to thin out, for the delivery clerks are

going, taking with them the packages of checks which have been deposited with the settling clerks. The latter still have work to do. Their assistants rescue the little tickets from the compartments into which they were dropped, and the settling clerks scan the amount of them to see if they agree with the totals on the exchange slips.

When first he entered the room the settling clerk gave the proof clerk in the manager's gallery the amount of the checks he brought with him. Now he ascertains the total of the amount deposited with him. Soon he is able to tell whether his bank has a debt or credit balance, and this information he communicates to the proof clerk. Then the clearing house knows exactly how much cash will have to be moved from bank to bank in adjusting balances.

Forty-five minutes is the limit allowed for making the exchanges and proving the balances, and fines may be imposed if the allotted time is exceeded. But it is rarely necessary to impose fines, so rapid is the work of the messengers and so simple the system of exchange. Most of the work is done before the messengers get to the clearing house. The checks for exchange with other banks are inclosed in separate envelopes, and these envelopes are arranged in consecutive order in the delivery clerk's bag, so all needless delay in depositing them is eliminated.

To make the clearing finally complete it is of course necessary to exchange the cash. "Accordingly," says James G. Cannon in his book on "Clearing Houses," "before half past 1 o'clock each debtor bank, in compliance with the requirements of the constitution, pays into the clearing house the amount of its debit balance and obtains a receipt for the same signed by the assistant manager. After half past 1 o'clock the creditor banks receive at the clearing house their respective balances and give their receipts for the same in a book provided for that purpose, but in no case can a creditor bank receive its balance until all the debtor banks have paid in."—New York Post.

A MARKET IN MOROCCO.

The Best Place to Study the Ways of the Wily Natives.

The place of all places to see the Moorish people is at their markets, for every class and kind of them is there, and when you have seen one market you have seen them all, for there is a racial similarity in the Moors the world over.

The first thing about a Moorish market that attracts the attention of a traveler is the far-reaching odor or, rather, the multiplicity of odors, for there is a composite character about the smell of a Moorish market that cannot be equaled anywhere outside of China. Before you can even hear the continual wrangle and jangle of the market place you can smell it.

Once there the interminable jumble of things and folks is disconcerting, and the evidence of dirt everywhere takes from an American all desire to deal in eatables, for the Moors seem to be wholly insensible to dirt of any kind and every kind and have no objection to fruit and berries that have come in unprotected over miles of dusty and sandy roads.

These people are natural traders, second to none in their ability to obtain the highest possible price or equally ready willingness to let the article go for a mere pittance rather than miss making a sale.

They will begin the price of a lamp at 3 shillings and after a little haggling will come down to 1 shilling, but if you move on they will thrust the lamp into your hand and ask you to give them anything for it that you will, and it is a sale, no difference how small may be your offer.

In nearly all countries the everywhere present and always the same donkey is an inevitable adjunct of a Moorish market. The whole animal kingdom would be searched through in vain to find any creature more wholly devoid of impatience and sentiment than this imposed upon little beast.

Like a fatalist philosopher, he is wholly resigned to the order of things, and nothing can cause him to stir from the even tenor of his ways. Carousing and even food do not seem to add any to his satisfaction, and beating and abuse do not detract from his tranquility. His features are perfectly immobile.

As he stands in the market place one may pet him and give him bits of grass or fruit and he will not raise his head or even open his eyes. He is the supreme, ineffable resignation in flesh and blood. And no Moorish market is complete without him by the score.—World's Events Magazine.

How to Stick Stamps.

"Say," remarked the postoffice clerk who was off duty as he watched a friend affix two stamps to the corner of an envelope, "why don't you put those stamps on horizontally instead of vertically? Don't you know you would save a lot of work for us stampers if you put your stamps beside each other instead of under each other? We always have to make two strokes when canceling vertically pasted stamps by hand, and they don't work well through the stamping machines either."

"Is that so?" inquired his friend as he took another envelope and proceeded to affix two stamps to it in a vertical position. "Then, by the great horn spoon, why doesn't the government sell its stamps in horizontal lines? Look at these. Here I bought 20 cents' worth of two cent stamps, and they come to me in vertical lines. If I buy five twos, I get them attached one to the bottom of the other. Do you think I'm going to the trouble of tearing each stamp off just to please a government clerk by pasting them side by side? Guess again."—New York Press.

WORD ODDITIES.

Some Interesting Curiosities of the English Language.

Here is some English that seldom is written and some other interesting curiosities of Mother English.

Honorificabilludinatus is a rather long word. You cannot find it in the dictionary, but you will find it used in Shakespeare and some of the other early English writers.

The word is meaningless. The only interesting point about it is its length. Twenty-seven letters in a breath are quite a few. But our dictionary gives some almost as long—for instance, the following two of twenty-four letters each:

Transubstantiationista.
Insupportableness.

Here are some of the other box constructors:

Twenty-three letters:
Disproportionableness.

Twenty-two:
Intercommunicabilities.

Twenty-one:
Interconvertibilities.

Twenty:
Histomorphologiesly.
Supersensitiveness.
Hypersensitiveness.

It is safe to say that the ordinary reader would not run on to one of these in a hundred years, and if he did he would run the other way.

It is interesting to know that the entire alphabet can be arranged in one intelligible sentence without the repetition of a single letter—just twenty-six letters in the following sentence, and no two alike:

J. Q. Vandy struck my big fox whelp.

That simple sentence is the hardest possible one to write on the typewriter. So many of the letters in the alphabet are used so seldom that even a good typist has to study out the combination before finding some of them. This sentence is the only known one that contains every letter in the alphabet but once and makes sense.

Another interesting word group in which the entire alphabet is put into seven words and only thirty-two letters are used is: "Burst, fed, jingle, quip, vim, hack, zyxomma." This is the smallest number of words that the alphabet can be included in.

Two intelligible sentences, however, of eight words and thirty-two letters apiece have been found. They are: "Quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. Pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs." The first sentence is often used in testing the types on typewriters on account of the shortness and the fact that it includes every letter and has the advantage of making sense.

Here is a list of the longest monosyllables in English:

Seven letters, through; eight letters, strength, thoughts, starched, thrilled, straight, squallid, schnapps; nine letters, strengths, squelched, scratched, sploshed, stretched.

Probably the most interesting word curiosity is the one made up of the greatest number of other words in the regular sequence. That word is Indiscrimination. In-discrim-in-at-ion contains seven words and is only sixteen letters long. That is allowing a fraction more than two letters to each word, and only one word is repeated.

Here are two that have six separate words within the one:

Ass-ass-in-at-i-on—
Assassination.
In-fm-it-at-i-on—
Initiation.

There do not seem to be any that can be split up into five sensible parts, but here are several quads:

In-sat-i-late—
Insatiate.
Ass-ass-sin-ate—
Assassinate.
In-vest-i-gate—
Investigate.
In-i-tiate—
Initiate.

Two three-part words that make sense when the parts are taken separately are:

To-get-her—
Together.
In-no-cent—
Innocent.

The dictionary is full of funny and curious things. This is only a small part of the unusual things that you can find out about words in an hour's perusal of the most wordy book in the English language.—New York Press.

The Wisdom of Experience.

There was no doubt in the minds of the Hobart family that young James had a remarkable gift. It remained for an obscure uncle from the Cape to drop a word of caution and of worldly wisdom.

"You say he's wonderful farseeing and can tell folks just how things are going to turn out," he inquired.

"Yes, it seems so," said James' adoring mother.

"Well, now, if you want him to be the most unoppor'tun man anywhere round, you just let him foretell and prophesy and forecast," remarked the old uncle grinsly. "If you want him to keep a few friends you must shunt him off on to some other track. Let him work out suns in his head. That's a harmless practice."

"But why?" faltered the mother.

"Just this," answered the authority from down on the Cape. "When he prophesies things 'll go wrong and they do go wrong the best of the blame will be laid straight on his shoulders. When he says they 'll go right and they do folks 'll be too busy enjoying themselves to remember your James, and when he says they 'll go wrong and they go right they 'll call him a fool. Now, I'm above seventy, and you mind what I tell ye!"—Youth's Companion.

Her Bad Accident.

"Did you ever have a bad accident?" The lady chauffeur bit her lip. "I met my husband by accident," she admitted.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

A FINE SIGN LANGUAGE

Droll Incident in the Reign of James I. of England.

A TRICK ON AN AMBASSADOR

The Different Interpretations of the Same Acts Performed by a Crochety Spaniard and a Hard Headed and Canny Old Scotch Butcher.

It is said that King James I. on removing to London was waited upon by the Spanish ambassador, a man of erudition, but who had a crochety in his head that every country should have a professor of signs to teach him and the like of him to understand one another.

The ambassador was lamenting one day before the king this great desideratum throughout all Europe, when the king said to him: "Why, I have a professor of signs in the northernmost college in my dominions—viz. at Aberdeen—but it is a great way off, perhaps 600 miles."

"Were it 10,000 leagues off I shall see him," said the ambassador, "and am determined to set out in two or three days." The king saw he had committed himself and wrote, or caused to be written, to the University of Aberdeen, stating the case and desiring the professors to put him off some way or make the best of him. The ambassador arrived, was received with great solemnity, but soon began to inquire which of them had the honor to be professor of signs.

Being told that the professor was absent in the highlands and would return nobody knew when, the ambassador said, "I will wait his return, though it were twelve months."

Seeing that this would not do and that they had to entertain him at a great expense all the while, they contrived a stratagem. There was one Geordy, a butcher, blind of an eye, a droll fellow, with much wit and roguery about him. He was got, instructed to be professor of signs, but not to speak on pain of death. Geordy cheerfully undertook the role. The ambassador was told that the professor of signs would be at home next day, at which he rejoiced greatly.

Next day Geordy was gowned, wigged and placed in a chair of state in a room in the college, all the professors and the ambassador being in an adjoining room. The ambassador was shown into Geordy's room and left to converse with him as well as he could, the professors awaiting the issue with fear and trembling.

The ambassador held up one of his fingers to Geordy; Geordy held up two of his. The ambassador held up three; Geordy clenched his fist and looked stern. The ambassador then took an orange from his pocket and held it up; Geordy took a piece of barley cake from his pocket and held that up. After which the ambassador bowed to him and retired to the other professor, who anxiously inquired his opinion of his brother.

"He is a perfect miracle," said the ambassador. "I would not give him for the wealth of the Indies."

"Well," said the professors, "to descend to particulars."

"Why," said the ambassador, "I first held up one finger, denoting that there is one God; he held up two, signifying that these are the Father and Son. I held up three, meaning the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost; he clenched his fist, to say that these three are one. I then took out an orange, signifying the goodness of God, who gives his creatures not only the necessities, but the luxuries, of life, upon which the wonderful man presented a piece of bread, showing that it was the staff of life and preferable to every luxury."

The professors were glad that matters had turned out so well; so, having got quit of the ambassador, they next got Geordy to hear his version of the signs.

"Well, Geordy, how have you come on and what do you think of you man?"

"The rascal!" says Geordy. "What did he do first, think ye? He held up one finger, as much as to say, You have only one eye. Then I held up two, meaning that my one eye was perhaps as good as both his. Then the fellow held up three of his fingers, to say that there were but three eyes between us, and then I was so mad at the scoundrel that I steeled my navel and was to come a whack on the side of his head and would ha' done it, too, but for your sakes. Then the rascal did not stop with his provocation here, but forsooth, takes out an orange, as much as to say, Your poor, beggarly, cold country cannot produce that. I showed him a whang of a bear bannock, meaning that I did na' care a farthing for him nor his trash neither as lang's I ha' this. But, by a' that's guid," concluded Geordy, "I'm angry yet that I didn't thrash the bible o' the scoundrel!"—London T. P.'s Weekly.

The Wily Owl.

A party of horsemen were traveling along Bridge creek, a tributary of Bad Water river, Wyoming, when their horses suddenly shied off the track at the sound of a "rattle." Search was made for the snake, but it was finally found that the sound proceeded from the burrowing owl, which lives in the burrows of the prairie dog, often, it is said, in company with the rattlesnake. Seated on a post the party heard the owl give a third rattle. And whenever they passed the spot it gave warning by its rattle, and the horses always shied off the track in alarm.—American Naturalist.

Beware of no man more than thyself.—Terence.

CRYSTAL GAZING.

If You Want to Try It, This Will Tell You How to Proceed.

Having satisfied myself that some people really would see hallucinatory pictures in a glass ball or in water, I examined the ethnological side of the question. I found by studying works of travel and anthropology that many savage and barbarous races gaze into water, polished basalt, rock crystals, and so on, for the purpose of seeing distant events, foreseeing the future, detecting criminals, and so forth. It does not seem to me credible that so many and so widely separated peoples should agree with ancient Greeks and should agree with ancient Greeks and should agree with ancient Greeks in staring the races of western Europe in staring away if they did not see hallucinatory pictures. So I believe that some people do see them. Nor is this fact now denied by professors of psychology.

I have never been able to foresee from character, complexion, habit of mind and other indications what persons would prove capable of describing even fancy pictures in a glass ball. The best gazers of my acquaintance, those who hit on pictures coincidental with actual events unknown to them or with the secret thoughts of a companion, are both of them not unfamiliar with other curious experiences. But I have tried with the glass ball two or three other friends who have seen what are vulgarly called "ghosts" in haunted houses, and in the glass ball they can see nothing, while people who never saw ghosts do see "coincidental" pictures in a glass ball.

If any readers care to make experiments they can begin by purchasing a ball, or, of course, a glass jug of water will do, or even a teaspoonful of ink, in some cases, but both are inconvenient and may spill. Having got the ball, it is best to go alone into a room, sit down with the back to the light, place the ball at a just focus in the lap on a dark dress or a dark piece of cloth, try to exclude reflections, think of anything you please and stare for five minutes, say, at the ball. That is all. If after two or three trials you see nothing in the way of pictures in the ball, you will probably never succeed.—Andrew Lang.

Circumstantial Evidence.

During a discussion in regard to circumstantial evidence a lawyer told of a remarkable case which, he said, appears in the Virginia reports. It was this:

A man was discovered drawing a knife from the prostrate form of another man near a roadside. The witnesses rushed upon him and took the weapon from him. It was still dripping with the warm blood of the victim. He was accused of the murder, but asserted his innocence. He claimed that he had happened along the road but a few moments before and saw his alleged victim struggling with another man. Before he could come up the unknown had driven his knife home and had fled into some brush close by. Seeing the knife still in the breast of the fallen man, he stooped over and drew it forth just as his accusers came on the scene. That was his story. The knife being identified as the property of the accused, no credence whatever was placed in his tale. He was tried, convicted and hanged.

A year later the man who had really committed the crime while on his deathbed confessed that he was the murderer and told how he had stolen the knife from the innocent man who had been sent to the gallows.

A Perfect Marriage.

Most people know and admire the work of the versatile William Blake, poet and artist, but few people know the story of his perfect marriage, for a perfect marriage it was indeed. In 1780 Blake fell in love with a pretty girl called Clara Woods, but she did not care for him, and the blow was a severe one to the impressionable young man. He left London and took up his abode at Richmond, where he lodged with a nursery gardener named Boucher. Mr. Boucher had a beautiful daughter, Catherine, and she became the confidant of the poet's love affair, and her generous sympathy so cheered Blake's mental sufferings that he gradually fell in love with the gentle girl. His affection was warmly returned, and Catherine Boucher married William Blake on Aug. 18, 1782. It was an ideal union. The young husband took a delight in teaching his wife who was all eagerness to learn, and the modest gardener's daughter became eventually a cultured woman, who was an ardent hero worshiper of her clever husband and who cheered his life more than any one else could. Mrs. Blake learned to color her husband's drawings and was extraordinarily adept in the work.

Discovery of Osteopathy.

The man who discovered osteopathy was a great sufferer from headache," said a man who claims to know. "He tried every remedy on earth almost, but could get no permanent relief. One day he had a terrible headache and went out into his front yard to lie under the shade of a big tree and rest his throbbing head on the cooling grass. Suspended from a limb of the tree was a rope swing used by the children. The man lay under this swing for awhile and finally put the rope under his head to act as a support. In a few moments he was surprised and pleased to find that his headache was much better. In half an hour the pain had gone. He began an investigation. He discovered that the rope swing pressed on the nerve in the back of the head. This pressure stopped the headache. With more study he decided that many pains could be relieved if nerves could be given the proper treatment—a massage. He started an osteopathic school and has made a grand success."—Nashville Tennessean.

ETIQUETTE IN KASSALA.

A Chat Between a Male Heathen and Two Native Ladies.

Some of the traditional observances in the polite society of other lands at ford, in addition to amusement, considerable opposition to the free intercourse to which modern conditions have accustomed us. Mrs. Speedy, one of the first English ladies to visit Kassala, gives a good instance of this in her "Wanderings in the Sudan" when relating how she and her husband received their first callers. Their patroness was an Italian lady who had long been a resident of the city.

"In the morning a rap came to the door," writes Mrs. Speedy, "and on opening it I saw madame, with two Arab women, standing outside. She inquired cautiously if Charlie were within, and on my saying that he was she made a sign to the two ladies, who drew the thickly concealing shawl more closely over their hidden faces and moved off to one side in the passage, turning their backs to the doorway.

"She then explained to me that they were of very high rank and of a very strict sect and must on no account be seen by a strange man, especially me by one who was of another nation and an infidel. They were, however, very anxious to see me and had come to do me that honor, and if Charlie would not object to go below or into some other room for a few minutes they would make their visit very short.

"I represented the state of the case, and he at once consented to absent himself, his only regret being that he should not have a chance to converse with the ladies, as there were many things which he wished especially to know and which he was not likely to have any opportunity so good as the present for ascertaining. In turn, I represented 'this side of the question' to madame, and after much hesitation and whispered conversation in the passage a compromise was effected.

"It was arranged that, completely veiled, the ladies should enter the room, not venturing to turn their heads in the direction of the masculine heathen, and that he should before they entered turn his back to the direction by which they would come in.

"This was all strictly carried out, and thus, back to back and a considerable distance apart, an edifying conversation went on for half an hour, questions being put in bland, inquiring tones and dulcet replies given, which appeared to be quite satisfactory to both parties."

The Longest "Straight."

To the Buenos Aires and Pacific railway belongs the peculiar distinction of having on its system the longest straight stretch of railway in the world. The length of this is 200½ miles, and it is situated on the main line, between 158 and 303½ miles from Buenos Aires. The straight was formerly broken by reverse curves forming a detour around Lake Sorla. The longer portion was then 175 miles long and was even then the world's record. The lake having, however, practically dried up, the company suppressed the curves, and the cutoff was opened to service on Oct. 15, 1907. It seems that when the line was set out in the seventies, at which time the country was in the hands of the Indians, after leaving Junin, which was a military outpost and the last point of contact with the Buenos Aires civilization, a course of about west-northwest was set and the line run straight across the flat pampas until it met another line about sixty miles long, which was pushed out eastward from the western terminus, Villa Mercedes. There were no obstacles of importance to avoid, and hence the phenomenal bee line.—Engineer.

Cain's Wife.

"I never discuss marriage," said the late General Fitz-Hugh Lee, "without thinking of an old colored preacher in my state who was addressing his dark skinned congregation when a white man rose up in the back of the building.

"'Mr. Preacher,' said the white man.

"'Sir to you,' said the parson.

"'Mr. Preacher, you are talking about Cain, and you say he got married in the land of Nod after he killed Abel. But the Bible only mentions Adam and Eve as being on the earth at that time. Whom, then, did Cain marry?"

"The colored preacher snorted with unfeigned contempt.

"'Huh!' he said. 'You hear dat, brethren an' sisters? You hear dat fool question I am axed? Cain, he went to de land o' Nod, just as de good book tells us, an' in de land o' Nod Cain gets so lazy an' so shifless' dat he up an' marries a gal o' one o' dem no 'count pore white trash families dat de inspired apostle didn't consider fittin' to mention in de holy word.'"

Departed Glories of Rome.

Fox the "fertile" the Rome of the western Arabs, still retains traces of the magnificence which made her in the middle ages the rival of Mecca. In the twelfth century the holy city, to which when the road to Mecca was closed pilgrimages were made, contained as many as 700 temples, fifty of which were adorned with marble pillars. In those old days the city was the haunt of philosophers, physicians and astronomers. A mere formal pretense of study is now all that is practiced. "They have Euclid in folio volumes," a traveler writes, "but neither copied nor read. The teacher sits cross-legged on the ground and repeats in a drawing tone between singing and crying words which are echoed by the scholars sitting around him." Fox, however, is honest enough in one respect—he does not believe in outward show. In the interior of the houses are apartments decorated with paintings and arabesques, while the outside walls are often built of mud.