

RURAL FREE DELIVERY.

Postmaster-General Gary is Taking a Great Deal of Interest in the Matter.

Postmaster-General Gary is taking a great deal of interest in the matter of the extension of free mail delivery in the rural districts. The Department was given \$50,000 with which to make experiments in this line during the present fiscal year, and those already tried have proved very successful.

In Great Britain the free delivery of letters was begun about fifty years ago. All mails are delivered at the offices of the addresses without extra charge, the rural postmen making a daily walk of from fifteen to eighteen miles, and receiving a compensation of 18 shillings, or about \$4.50 per week. Pensions are granted in case of permanent incapacity after ten years of active duty. Rural posts are believed to be self-supporting.

In 1830 rural delivery was established in France. Even the most outlying hamlets of the country received at least one free delivery per day. The postmen have a right to retire on a pension after serving fifteen years and reaching the age of 45. Eight hours is the maximum time of employment.

In the German Empire a small charge of from 10 to 20 pfennings (2 to 4 cents), according to weight, is made for the delivery of mails in the rural districts. The hours of service of foot carriers are from eight to nine daily.

In Austro-Hungary a small extra charge, ranging from 1/2 cent to 1 1/2 cents, is made for delivering letters and small packages in the rural districts. The service is not self-supporting.

Rural free delivery prevails all over Belgium, the pay of the carriers being graded according to the cost of the living in the localities where they serve. Their average trips are sixteen or eighteen miles daily. Participation in political campaigns is forbidden, and their tenure is secure during good behavior. After a certain term of service they are entitled to a pension.

In Switzerland, the home of the Universal Postal Union, there is at least one free delivery a day in every hamlet. The system has been in operation since 1848.

Why Beef Was Cheap in Texas.

The civil war that raged in our land a third of a century ago operated in a diametrically opposite manner on the two sections of the United States known as the Southwestern and the Northwestern States. In the former, composed chiefly of the State of Texas, all access to outside markets was cut off to live stock. The Union forces patrolled with gunboats the Mississippi River, and no herds could be taken across to feed the main rebel armies; cattle could not be shipped to Cuba for fear of almost certain capture by war vessels on the Gulf passages, and they could not be safely driven north or west.

So Texas's 3,000,000 cattle multiplied like vermin in an army camp, upon the ranges of Texas, where they ceased to have a cash value and became only an article of barter, seventy-five head being exchanged for a good saddle horse and 100 head for a two-horse wagon. The stores in the grazing regions exchanged goods and wares for them, fixing a ridiculously low scale of prices for the live stock, payable in goods, &c., from the store. This state of affairs continued until two years after the war closed.

In the Northwest the supply of live stock was depleted to feed the Union armies, and for two or three years after the close of the war remained scarce and dear in price, so that the masses of laboring men and factory operatives could scarce afford beef upon their tables oftener than once a week, and then it was of the cheaper cuts of the carcass.

Canals of the World.

The Suez Canal is about 100 miles in length, and cost \$1,000,000 per mile for its construction. The Corinth Canal is 4 miles in length, and cost, completed, with its approaches, \$1,000,000 per mile. The proposed Nicaragua canal will cost per mile, with its terminals and approaches, certainly not less, and probably more than the sum named. The canals of Suez and Corinth are real maritime canals, built without locks, upon the sea-level. The one, that of Corinth, is situated in the temperate zone, where the rainfall is 37 or 40 inches per annum. The other, that of Suez, is located in a region without rain. Neither of these is threatened in its course by streams liable to sudden and perilous floods, so common in the tropical region of Central America. These two great works afford no real parallel to the Nicaragua project, either as to cost or feasibility. The one work parallel to this undertaking is very near, very like it, both in place and circumstance; it is that of the Panama Canal across the Isthmus of Darien.

A Maddening Ride.

For an hour and a quarter a mine engineer near Bourne, Ore., was whirled around with the fly wheel, into which he had fallen, but when he recovered consciousness after the wheel was stopped it was found that he was not seriously hurt. The wheel was a twenty-foot one and was making 125 revolutions a minute.

Divorce Court at Home.

Judge Macdougall, of Toronto, Ont., urges that the Dominion of Canada should have a divorce court of its own, to which the humblest citizen could appeal, and have his case heard without going, as now, to the Dominion Parliament, where the great expense is almost prohibitive to him.

LUCKY LARRY LONNIGAN.

A Fairy Story for the Childher.

Sure, childher, 'tis a largt toime since I tould yez a fairy story. An' 'tis wondherin' I am if I iver tould yez about Lucky Larry Lonnigan. Be me sowl thin, an' he was th' caution to cats. Egobbs, sorra bit of bad luck 'ud set upon him at arl at arl. He lived in that part of Oireland that yez can't find on the map.

Whin he was a young lad about sixteen the furest of his good luck fell upon him, an' the way of it was this way: Egorry, an' a vi'lent, crass woman was his mother, always boxin' his ears for no thing at arl, an' so wan day whin Larry med the innercint observashin that divvle a bit more wood would be cut up, th' ould woman raiched out her oggly roight hand an' gev' him a cuff.

"An' is it a cuff ye gev me?" says he, rubbin' his ear, an' wid that he leps out of the doo-r an' starts fer town. New some byes would ha' cried at resavin' the cuff, but Larry was not the cryin' kind, but bein' of a shrewd temperamentalty he noticed that the cuff had a handsome button in it, an' he thought he'd take it an' sell it to the jewelery man that I tould yez about one toime. An' egobbs! the jewelery man gev him two shillin' for it. Well, Larry felt that rich that he went to the fair at Lantrim, in the county of Buscobb.

'Tis the fine booths they do be havin' at that fair, an' Larry soon spint the whole of his money until he had but a happenny. An' wid that he bought a beautiful peach.

An' thin he tharht what a big amadhaun he was to be spindin' arl his money upon the belly of him. For it was cakes an' pies an' sweets was inside of him till ye could not rist. Well, he wint on atin' mechanical loike an' wid his moind annywhere but in his head till he kem to the pit. 'Twas the furest paich he'd iver aten, an' the pit surprised him. But he'd heard till of the fortunes made in pits an' wid-out so much as sayin', "Here's an' aisy dear, to you," he wint down in the pit widout a light. 'Tis as brave as a sparrer, he was.

Egobbs! childher, 'tis lucky he was, for he found that at the bottom of the pit was a mine of soft coal; coal that soft it would please yez to bump ag'inst it, an' he kem up to the mouth of the pit, an' seein' an English capitalist handy, he sold him the roight to mine in it for noine hundrad an' noiney noine yairs for a hundrad thousand pounds.

CHARLES BATTLE LOOMIS.

Tale of Two Citizens.

CHAPTER I.

"Hoskins, lend me a dollar, will you? I want to buy some postage stamps. I came away from home carelessly this morning, with only 25 cents in my pocket, and that went for lunch at noon."

"Sorry, Lusk, but I've got only enough money to pay my carfare home."

CHAPTER II.

A few hours later.

They met again—accidentally. At the box office of a theater where a sparring match was on the bill of fare for the evening.

"It seems to me, Hoskins," stifferly remarked Lusk, as he threw down a silver dollar and picked up the bit of pasteboard the ticket-seller gave him in exchange for it, "that this is no place for a man who has only enough money to pay his car fare home."

Having exchanged the dollar he held in his hand for a similar pasteboard, Hoskins turned to his friend.

"Lusk," he said, in a tone of mingled sadness and reproach, "if you paid out all the money you had for lunch, and couldn't even buy a postage stamp, what the St. Louis are you doing here?"

What She Needed.

She was looking over a fashion paper when he entered.

"Trying to make up your mind what you ought to have?" he asked.

"No," she replied; "I know what I ought to have."

"What?"

"Money."

It is always unsafe for a man to fest with his wife upon any subject connected with raiment and such things. He knows that now.

A GERMAN CYCLIST BRAKE.

Ingenuity on a Swiss Mountain That Made Some Americans Stare.

"We Americans traveling abroad are apt to be very proud of our reputation for cleverness," said a tourist who went bicycling in Europe last summer. "And no doubt we have reason to be. But I am going to tell you how I had some of the conceit taken out of me.

"We were going through Switzerland and had reached the close of the first day's descent toward Geneva. The road had been too steep to coast without the aid of a brake, and as we were afraid to use our breaks for fear our tires would not last us through our trip, we back pedalled all the way.

"As we were sitting after supper on the veranda of the lodge, discussing the fatigue of our unusual exercise, and dreading the morrow, which meant more of the same sort, our attention was suddenly called to a cloud of dust descending the mountain side. Then we saw a cyclist, coasting as nice as you please, towing a good-sized sapping by a rope tied to the rear of his wheel, which acted as an effective brake without injury to the tires. One of the boys ejaculated: 'Well, why didn't we think of that?' The rest were simply dumb. That man was a German. I now take off my hat to our German brethren of the wheel."

Mount Vernon's Guard.

Edward Parker, the little old colored man who occupies the sentry-box at the tomb of Washington at Mount Vernon, lives in Washington. That is, his family live here, and he comes over by special permit of the organization which has control of the old home of the first President of the United States.

For years the tomb of Washington has been constantly before this old colored man's vision. He has never missed a day from that dingy sentry-box since Mount Vernon passed into the charge of the ladies, and before that, dating from 1841, he had lived on the place. He was a slave of John Washington, and is the last of the old servants now living.

Every other Saturday Parker comes over to Washington, always carrying with him an old-fashioned carpet-bag, so common in the days of reconstruction. The following Monday morning he may always be seen a half-hour at least before the first train starts for Mount Vernon, waiting around the corner of Pennsylvania-ave. and Thirteenth-st. He has never missed the first train since the electric cars began running to Mount Vernon. Before that the first boat to Mount Vernon, on alternating Monday mornings, always found him a passenger.

Parker is, indeed, a character. He assisted in burying the last person consigned to the vault in Washington's tomb. After that the key to the vault was thrown into the Potomac. This was in the early fifties.

Something Like a Search.

A Welshman who was in London when extensive sewerage operations were in progress lost his watch. He reported the matter to Scotland Yard, and the officials said they would leave no stone unturned to find the missing timekeeper. Shortly afterward Tuffy again visited the metropolis and saw street after street turned up. He was told that in all thirty-six miles of road were in the same condition. He rushed down to Scotland Yard and exclaimed to the wondering inspector: "I didn't think I was giving you all that trouble. If you don't find the watch by Sunday, I wouldn't break up any more streets."

Stone Boot Soles.

An inventor has hit upon a method of putting stone soles on boots and shoes. He mixes a waterproof glue with a suitable quantity of clean quartz sand and spreads it over the leather sole used as a foundation. These quartz soles are said to be very flexible and practically indestructible.

Better Than Cats.

A savant has discovered how to slay mice and rats by means of a bacillus, which he has named after himself, and which is supposed to be far more fatal than the cat.

Don't Tobacco Spit and Smoke Your Life Away.
To quit tobacco easily and forever, be magnetic, full of life, nerve and vigor, take No-To-Bac, the wonder-worker, that makes weak men strong. All druggists, 50c and \$1. Cure guaranteed. Booklet and sample free. Address: Sterling Remedy Co., Chicago or New York.

SOME persons say it is natural for them to lose flesh during summer. But losing flesh is losing ground. Can you afford to approach another winter in this weakened condition? Coughs and colds, weak throats and lungs, come quickest to those who are thin in flesh, to those easily chilled, to those who have poor circulation and feeble digestion.

Scott's Emulsion
of cod liver oil with hypophosphites does just as much good in summer as in winter. It makes flesh in August as well as April. You certainly need as strong nerves in July as in January. And your weak throat and lungs should be healed and strengthened without delay.

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bosses many a body and burdens many a mind. You can't enjoy the food you like because you are bilious. You take all sorts of precautions, and yet the bilious attack leaps on you like a tiger from ambush. You know the feeling! The blood seeming on fire with a dull heat; the boring pains in the eyes; the head seeming to open and shut; the horrible nausea. You know the irritability which precedes and the languor that follows the attack. It's miserable, isn't it? Why not cure the trouble? There's a pill that will cure biliousness. Dr. J. C. AYER'S PILLS are an acknowledged specific for this derangement.

A. Swanger, Texarkana, Tex., writes: "For fifteen years I have used Ayer's Pills, and find them very effective in bilious complaints. I have yet to see the case where they have failed to cure."

Try AYER'S PILLS

One Man Builds a Church.
Religious enthusiasm in the case of Andrew Bonner, a Georgia colored man, is manifesting itself in a unique but substantial way. His ambition for years has been to build a church for the benefit of some of his own race, the material used to be procured with his own earnings, and no workman to assist him in the rearing of the edifice.

Andrew Bonner is a simple-minded negro, filled to overflowing with what his admiring wife terms "de ol' time religion." He resides with her in College Park, a village only a few miles from Atlanta.

With utter disregard of legal measures, Andrew selected, two years ago, a site for the church of his dreams, which he expects to be a monument to his memory long after he has returned to dust. The fact that he does not own the ground has never disturbed him. When far sighted white friends urged him to wait until ground could be bought for the purpose he paid no heed to the proposition but kept on in his original purposes.

Every spare penny was spent by him for lumber and nails. The work has necessarily been slow, but now, after twenty-four months of patient labor, Andrew gazes with pride upon the building, which is almost covered. It is rumored that the old dary has sometimes denied his family bread that he might save money for this pet project.

This Burglar Used a Hook and Line.
With a fishhook and line the safe at the barn of the Stockton, Cal., Electric Railroad Company was cleverly burglarized the other night. The money taken in on the cars at night is deposited in bags, which are placed in the safe through an aperture at the top, and forced down through a slide running at an angle. By the exercise of skill and patience the burglar succeeded in fishing up three bags, securing about \$20.

Usefulness of the Owl.
"Can there be any possible harm in killing owls for women's hats?" exclaimed a New York milliner to a member of the Audubon Society the other day. "Of what use are the horrid creatures to anybody?"
The pretty milliner was quite surprised when told that owls were very useful birds. Owls eat the field mice, and other small rodents that work great injury to the farmer, and every one that is lost not only means a menace to the farmers, but a distinct loss to agriculture.
Dr. C. Hart Merriam, ornithologist of the United States Department of Agriculture, has estimated that in offering a bounty on owls and hawks, which resulted in the killing of more than 100,000, the State of Pennsylvania sustained a loss of nearly \$5,000,000 in one year and a half.

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Brick for chimneys, always on hand. Nails, steel cut, \$1.45 per keg. Western Washer, \$3.50, best made; Building paper, 35c per roll, 500 sq. feet; Poultry Netting, 1 ft. to 6 ft. wide, 1-2 ct. sq. foot.

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We have a very large stock on hand and will sell this month at cut prices. It will pay you to make your purchase now. We have a full line of Ladies' Slippers at bottom prices. Also Ladies' Skirts, Wrappers, Shirt Waists and Corsets. Prices cheaper than you can buy the material. Ladies' Capes at half price. Come and see them while they last; it will pay you. Come and see; it will be to your benefit. The prices we are offering now when you see them you cannot help buying.

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