The Dead Letter Office.

As I was sitting the other day in my study, lost to the world in de- by those who professionally defraud lightful recollection of my recent ramble in the forest-covered mountains of Europe, the shrill whistle of the postman was heard, and a moment later my attention was concentrated on a curiously-marked dispatched by a friend in America Thuringia, and after crossing the to return again across the stormy waters, bearing on its envelope the postmarks of many principalities. Close beside that of old Munich, famous for its act and its beer. crowded a curious triangular postmark, which I at once recognized as that of the Dead Letter Office. "Ah !" I said, "Now I know how that letter was returned to me, and through what final channel it arrived at its destination. And yet, this associates me with an institution beside which I have lived all my life and have never visited."

The next time I was in town, I ran into the Dead Letter Office and other branch is more interesting in these are a few of the novel attractions I saw there. One hundred cedure. No other department is elerks or more were busily engaged at various desks handling and disposing of thousands of letters which for one reason or another had been turned over to this department. Some were occupied in attempting to read the odd handwriting shown on the ill-fated letter. There they would take up, look at steadily, turn over, show around, hold up one end, and in most cases all of these evolutions resulted in successful deciphering. Then, when a record had been made of the truant letter, they would be dispatched with all haste to the point whither they ought to I take pleasure in recommending it. go. Other clerks, finding no clue on the outside of the letter as to sale by J. W. Sampsell, Penns Creek, whom it was intended for or from whom it came, quickly opened the missive and as quickly sought out inner address. Thousands of such letters as these must be opened here every year; and strange are the romances of love and the sorrowful tale of misfortune which now and then greet the eye of the examining clerk

And speaking of their faulty addresses, which result in far too many letter wanderings address supof any letplied both for 1 ter and because of the monumental stupiaity of the sender-the inscription of an eastern hayseed who wrote-"For My Sos out West, HE DRIVES RED ONES AND THE RAILROAD cors BT THAN"-is probably unique, No help could be offered this aged offender by the Dead Letter Office, but it is almost surprising that no solution was forthcoming, considering the extraordinary accomplishments of these sharpwitted, clearsighted officials. Not long ago a .letter reached its proper destination through the Dead Letter Office addressed merely "Mr. James Gunn, Power-loom Shuttle-maker, Mass., America," and a letter sent from Boston-Boston, the Hub, and the city of culture !--bearing the simple address, "Dr. Weshburn, Roberts College," was properly forwarded to Constantinople. Inscriptions in Greek, Syriac, Chinese, Bohemian and "modern English," both amuse and worry these long-suffering servants of the public. Naturally, many of the 7,000,000 letters and packages turning up annually in the Dead Letter Office have brought with them no clue to the owners, while they have contained articles of more or less value and curiosity. Some of these have been retained by the department and now constitute the museum of the institution. Here for instance. is a New Testament in Chinese, and near by a blood-stained knife used by Apaches in killing a' western mullearrier. Then, there is a copy of the Lord's Prayer in the fifty-four languages, and chips from the floor of the room in which Jesse James was brought to bay and killed. Coins of great historic value crowd the shelves as spread out for display, while stuffed birds, sea-shells, Easter eggs, bowie knives, and other curios, including of course, numerous specimens of minerals, are also to be seen. The exhibits comprise articles of both great and little value ; handpainted miniatures on ivory, a crucifix of gold and carnelian, a sapphire ring set with dimonds, and another of moss-agate. All bid for attention with boxes of wedding cake, false teeth, bottles, of salad oil, a coffee pot, and numerous dolls, a hat-box, and a coat suggestive strongly of Joseph's little garment where he is prepared to do of many colors. Kid gloves and first class work, other articles of feminine 'apparel,

wrapped in newspapers and various other covers calculated to aid some fair-sex smugglers, give one a suggestion of the methods resorted to the Government, or who are spasmodically tempted to become dishonest.

One of the most interesting collections in the museum, not displayed to view, but safely secreted and reletter which had been dropped into corded on the office books, is the my hand. It was a letter written fund of hard cash, collected from several sources. Some of it is found while I was exploring the forest of in letters which cannot be returned to the sender nor forwarded to those ocean it had followed me from city for whom they were intended : more to city, and country to country, only comes loose to the office in packages of a few cents at a time. This 'loose money," as it is called, was originally secured in letters and packages, but has been shaken out by the violent handling received while being transferred from the mail-bag crane at way stations to rapidly-moving trains. Thus it is a common experience for the mail laddies hustling about in our speeding postal cars to thrust their hands into the canvass COINC pouches and find there a number of rolling coppers.

No other division of the Postal BU Department serves the people better than the Dead Letter Office. No. its management and methods of promore frequently inspected by those who visit Washington. And yet, for all this, but little is known of the Dead Letter Office by the publie at large.

A E. Kilpatrice, of Fillmore, Cal., had the misfortune to have his leg caught beteen a cart and a stone and badly bruised. Ordinarily he would have been laid up for two or three weeks, but says: "After using one bottle of Chamberlain's Pain Balm I began to feel better, and in three days was entirely well. The peculiar soothing qualities which Chamber-lain's Pain Balm Possesses I have never noticed in any other liniment. Pa.





conducted for **NODERATE FEES**, the immediate vicinity of the Patent Officilities for securing patents are unsurpase del, sketch or p So No charge is made for an opinion as to patentability, and my fee for prosecuting the application will mot be called for until the patent is allowed. "Invantous" Guins," con-taining fail information sent free. All Computi-entions Considered as Strictly Confidential. FRANKLIN H. HOUGH F Street, WASHINGTON, D.



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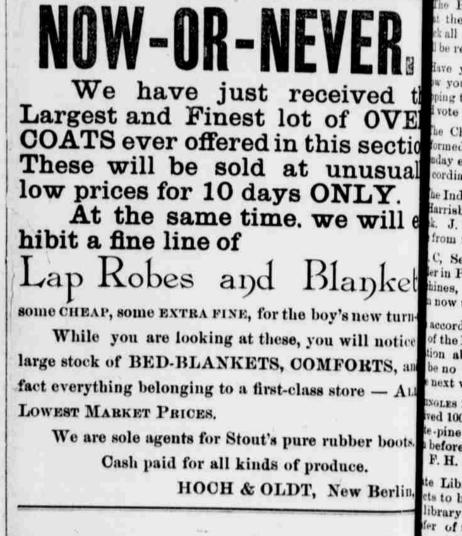
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