

RURAL MAIL DELIVERY.

The Marvelous Growth and Popularity of the System.

Up to the present time there has been nothing in the history of the postal service of the United States," says the annual report of the first assistant postmaster-general, "so remarkable as the growth of the rural free delivery system." The daily delivery of mail at the farmer's door, by the Federal Government, is no longer an experiment. In the words of the report, the system has now "to be dealt with as an established agency of progress, awaiting only the action of the Congress to determine how rapidly it shall be developed." The current month finds rural free delivery of mail in successful operation from 383 distributing points radiating over forty States and one Territory, while other districts from Maine to Texas are anxiously waiting for those regular visits from Uncle Sam which mean so much in a variety of ways.

Better prices obtained for farm products, the producers being brought into daily touch with the state of the markets, and thus being enabled to take advantage of information heretofore unattainable. In the communities where it has been tried free delivery is considered the greatest boon that the Government ever has conferred on them. One Missouri farmer has calculated

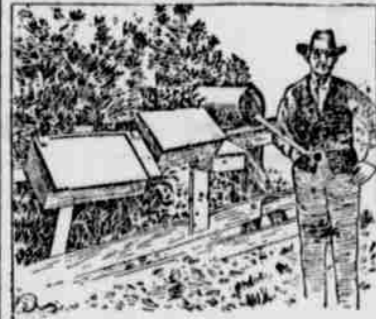


A SCENE NEAR LAFAYETTE, IND.

that in the last fifteen years he has driven 12,000 miles going to and from the postoffice to get his mail—all travel that is saved to him by the free delivery system.

In the last report of the First Assistant Postmaster-General there are some striking illustrations.

There is, for example, a scene at a country store, twelve miles from Lafayette, Ind., from which point three rural letter carriers start daily, each making a circuitous drive of twenty-five miles or more, without passing over the same road twice. At the particular point photographed four cross roads meet, and twenty or more families, most of them living half a mile from the store, have each put up an individual letter box of galvanized iron, lettered with the name of the person for whom it is intended.



RURAL DELIVERY MAIL BOXES IN VICTORIA, ILL.

Into this box the carrier, whose hour of arrival is known, and scarcely varies ten minutes, winter or summer, drops the letters and daily papers for each family, and collects in return their mails which are deposited in a Government collection box, placed in position at the same spot. The farmer's children, or such idle hands as he can spare, gather up the mail and

and he is gratified—properly so—for the recognition which the Government has given him in bringing the mails so near to his door.

Rural free delivery carriers, as a rule, "put on frills" in Indiana, which State, next to Ohio, has the lion's share of the existing experimental service. Most of them provide themselves with regulation uniforms, at their own cost, and furnish special wagons, with pigeon holes and other postal appliances—all for \$100 a year, horse hire included.

Out in Arizona, where in the genial summer sunshine the temperature occasionally rises to 110 degrees and stays there, the rural carrier rarely wears any insignia of his dignity, except his badge, which is a nickel plated arrangement made to fit any kind of hat. Instead of comfortably



A CARRIER AT CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND.

riding in a specially constructed postal wagon, he as often as not mounts a bucking bronco, or drives him to a buckboard, with only an umbrella for shade. But he makes thirty odd miles a day, nevertheless, and the Department has just issued orders to cut down this particular route from Tampa, five or ten miles a day, chiefly out of consideration for the bronco, because



A CARRIER AT CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND.

the carrier can probably sleep as comfortably in his saddle as anywhere else.

The hardships sometimes encountered by the rural carriers are shown in the photograph of a rural carrier in Northern Ohio returning from a trip when the thermometer was forty degrees below zero. Yet, though the First Assistant Postmaster-General reports that there are several girls acting as bonded rural carriers, few instances are recorded of their failing to make their daily trips, either in the coldest storms of winter or the blazing heat of summer.

One question which has received grave consideration by the Department is the insecurity and improper character of the mail boxes put up. On this subject the First Assistant Postmaster-General says:

In the early days of the service, when neither Congress nor the Postoffice Department, as then organized, held out any hope that rural free delivery would prove more than a transitory experiment, extreme carelessness was manifested as to the kind of receptacles put up as rural free delivery boxes. Tomato cans, cigar boxes, drainage pipes up ended, soap boxes and even sections of discarded stove pipes were used as mail boxes, and were frequently placed in hedge rows or other inconvenient spots out of reach of the carrier.

The Department has entered upon a systematic effort to correct this condition of things, and a recommendation is made that the Government provide uniform boxes and maintain them, charging a moderate rental.

Kaiser's Great Ring of State.

Whenever the Emperor of Germany is engaged in an important function, either imperial or royal, those near him notice that should he by any chance take the glove off his left hand he wears on the middle finger a large ring—a square, dark-colored stone set in massive gold.

The story is that the ring is an old heirloom in the Hohenzollern family, dating from the time when the ancestors of the Kaiser—the Margraves of Nuremberg—followed their leaders to the capture of the Holy Sepulchre from the Moslems.

Margraf, of Ulrich, who lived in the thirteenth century, was an adventurous prince, and it is believed that the ring which the Kaiser now wears came into Ulrich's possession after a hard-fought battle under the walls of Jerusalem. It belonged to one of Saladin's successors, and in some unexplained manner it found its way on to the finger of the German Knight.

Some one of the Nuremberg Margraves obliterated the sentence from the Koran which originally adorned it and engraved a Latin cross in its place.

A Hard Thing to Understand. One of the hardest things to understand in this workaday world is how so many incompetent men get such desirable jobs.—Puck.

Does All the Talking Himself. A clever woman can always give a slow man the impression that he has said a lot of bright things himself.—Chicago Record.

AN OFFICER'S DARING EXPLOIT.

Brigadier-General J. Fran King Bell, Single Handed, Whipped Seven Filipinos. Official reports received at Washington show that Brigadier-General J. Franklin Bell, Colonel of the Thirty-sixth Volunteer Infantry, who is also a Captain in the Seventh Cavalry,



BRIGADIER-GENERAL J. FRANKLIN BELL.

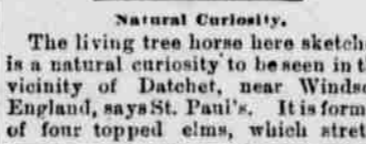
has performed one of the most brilliant exploits of personal daring during the war in the Philippines.

This special act of gallantry was performed by Bell, who was then a Colonel, near Porac, Luzon, when he was in command of some scouts ahead of the regiment. Just as the day was dawning the party encountered the enemy's patrol, consisting of one Captain, one Lieutenant and five privates. Colonel Bell was in advance of his men and spurred on his horse. The enemy was confused, and the men sought to run away. Colonel Bell pushed ahead alone and unsupported charged the seven insurgents with his pistol. He scattered the party and compelled the surrender of the Captain and two privates under a close and hot fire from the remaining four insurgents, who were concealed in a neighboring bamboo thicket. In the report it is stated that this feat was one of several heroic acts performed by Colonel Bell during the present war, and that the wonder is that Bell still lives.

Colonel J. Franklin Bell entered West Point from Shelbyville, Ky., in 1874, and graduated into the cavalry service. When the Spanish war began he was a captain in the Seventh Cavalry. At the beginning of the war he was sent to the Philippines with General Merritt and had charge of the Bureau of Military Information. He was subsequently appointed a Major of Engineers and then a Major and Assistant Adjutant-General of Volunteers. When the Thirty-sixth Regiment was recruited, Major Bell was appointed to be their Colonel.

Time and again the conduct of Colonel Bell in the Philippines has been commended by his superior officers, and he has been recommended for medals and for brevets. At the taking of Calocan last February, while our troops were shelling the town, Bell, then a Major, led a company of the First Montana Regiment in a clever and audacious outflanking maneuver whereby they penetrated the town and arrived unexpectedly on the enemy's left flank. The enemy, outwitted as well as outflanked, fled precipitately.

Natural Curiosity. The living tree horse here sketched is a natural curiosity to be seen in the vicinity of Datchet, near Windsor, England, says St. Paul's. It is formed of four topped elms, which stretch



THE LIVING TREE HORSE.

over a space of 150 feet and grow to the height of sixty feet. The tops have never been touched by the shears, or otherwise influenced than by nature's own hand.

Would Nurse Him Herself. They found her hurriedly packing a valise. "Where are you going?" they asked. "To the Transvaal," she replied. "But I thought you didn't believe in women going to war?" "I don't; but if you think I am going to let any of those red-cross women nurse my Harold back to health if he is wounded you are mistaken. I'm going to be there myself."—Golden Penny.

A Venerable Church. The Second Unitarian Church of Boston recently celebrated its two hundred and fiftieth anniversary. Samuel Mather was the first minister of this church. Afterward Increase and Cotton Mather filled the pulpit, and it was here that Emerson served his only pastorate.

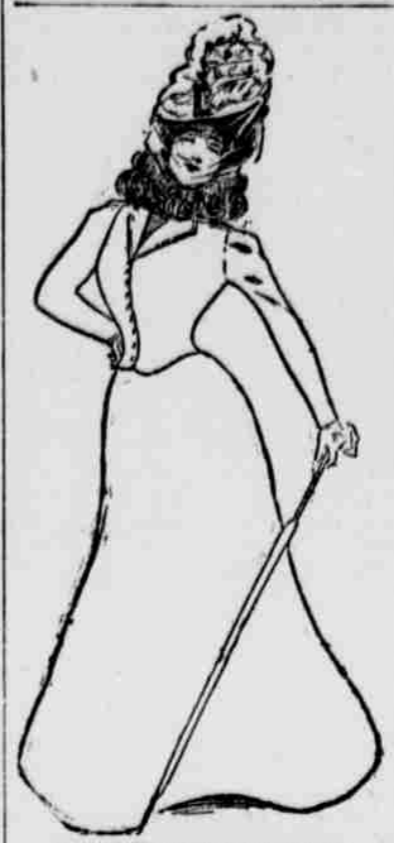
The Chinese Flag in Washington. The Chinese Embassy is the only one in Washington that flies the flag of a foreign country.

Queensland is being gradually converted into a large orchard. The Australian orange in particular has a great future, as it ripens at a time when Spain, Italy and California cannot provide the fruit.

NEW YORK FASHIONS.

Designs For Costumes That Have Become Popular in the Metropolis.

New York City (Special).—With the coming of the rude blasts of winter the veil becomes an important adjunct to the toilet of all lovers of trimness. Women declare that it is impossible



AN ARTISTICALLY DRAPED VEIL.

to feel well dressed with their hair blowing in every direction at once and an unbecoming redness decorating their noses and eyelids. The present style of hat is not especially

cate white osprey springing in place of antennae from his spangled wrought head. The second is a rose of black lisse, to the petals of which spangles in charming imitation of tiny diamonds, are attached like dew drops. This rose is to set right in the centre and front of my hair, and from its stem, at the back of the petals, springs a black osprey, rather thickly threaded with twinkling little rhinestones, and anything more sweetly becoming to a woman with blond lights in her hair you will not see this season. My third extravagance was a serpent. There now! don't gasp with horror, for it is not one of those wicked-looking reptiles made of frivolous metallic-colored paillettes, but a very up-to-date and lovely ornament, having the flexible, tapering body covered wholly with breast plumage from a pheasant. She had a whole family of these some covered with the blue-black raven feathers. These the blonds usurp, and a number are made with the rich mottled plumage of the breasts of wild ducks.

"Whatever one's prejudices may be, the serpents are already vigorously adopted, and so entirely fascinating did I think myself with my new coiffures that I have had my picture taken in every one just as the hair-dresser completed them, in order to have an authority to refer to when I begin to do my pompadouring and puffing at home." The coiffures for evening wear spoken of are shown in the large illustration.

Corduroy as a Waist Fabric. Corduroy as a shirt waist fabric promises to be very popular.

New Material For Tea Gowns. Something new in material for tea gowns and wrappers is a smooth-faced cloth, glossy as satin on one side, and woolly after the manner of eiderdown flannel, on the other. It is less



COUTURES FOR EVENING WEAR.

well adapted to the adjustment of elaborate veils, and the shops are showing mostly fine plain tulle in black or white, and thin nets with small chenille spots. Plain and figured nets in silk and cotton are also seen, and velvet spotted and fine hairlines are popular. The tulle veil with big velvet dots is becoming to fine complexions, but great care must be taken in its adjustment. Three or four dots to a veil is the rule, and if one dot is allowed to come under the eye, another to the side of the chin and a third well back on the cheek, or near the hair on the temple, the effect is piquant and striking.

A pretty French veil is of light weight net, bordered with a narrow ruche of lace. Chiffon veils with and without spots are worn on frosty days by women with delicate skins.

All the newest veillings come in eighteen-inch width, to fit the toque-shaped hats so universally worn. Few colors besides black, white, browns and grays are in demand, although navy blue and mauve are occasionally seen on well dressed women.

Ornamenting the Hair. One of the charms of the present fashion being eclecticism, one may select for ornamenting the hair other ornaments besides fringes without being outlawed. Just what styles in coiffures are most prevalent is revealed in the following chat by a New York woman of fashion. She said:

"Last week I went to see my hair-dresser. She is the one who gets up those stunning coiffures for Mrs. Willie Vanderbilt, Jr., and for those beautiful blond Levi Morton goddesses. Her quick fingers did up my locks in three styles, and all of them, she assured me, were bound to hold first place for evening attire for the next six or eight months. My hair she pompadoured, so to speak, all around in a soft roll above the face and then elaborately puffed the length of it on the crown. Just a love-lock or two she permitted to stray out on my forehead, and then she inveigled me into the purchase of three distinct styles of hair ornaments by the shrewd device of fastening them in among the coils and puffing and leaving the mirror and my vanity to do the rest.

"However, they are the smartest little aids to beauty. The first is a butterfly made of lisse, covered with opalescent spangles and with a deli-

clumy, however, than the latter, but very soft and pliable, and much thicker than the broad-cloths.

Chenille Fringe in Favor. Chenille fringe is greatly favored as a garniture. This is shown chiefly in colors, its width varying from three inches to twelve inches, according to the purpose for which it is required.

Charming Bodice Fashion.

In the accompanying cut is illustrated a "cunning little bodice" which has just been designed by a versatile modiste in New York. The owner describes it as follows: "My bodice is of plain and white spotted red silk, the collar toned down with straps of black taffeta and plenty of little clear glass buttons at the points of straps, on the cuffs and elsewhere. My only



A RED AND WHITE SILK BODICE WITH CLEAR GLASS BUTTONS.

objection to red is that it really appears less worn this winter than ever. You almost might take for granted that the whole world of women is in full or half mourning from the overwhelming preponderance of dead black, gray and deep dahlia or a-berry purple gowns."



RURAL CARRIER, BOWLING GREEN, OHIO. (Twenty degrees below zero.)

This country is learning that ethical considerations like these are most intensely practical, and that a study of such problems is what the country needs for a truly larger growth. But figures are deduced in the report to convince those to whom figures are the only tangible evidence. So the report sets forth that whenever the system has been started properly, it has been followed by these results:

Increased postal receipts. More letters are written and received. More newspapers and magazines are subscribed for. So marked is this advancement that many rural routes already pay for themselves by the additional business they bring.

Enhancement of the value of farm lands reached by rural free delivery. This increase in value has been estimated at as high as \$5 an acre in some States. A moderate estimate is from \$2 to \$3 an acre.



DELIVERING MAIL TO SUGAR PLANTERS IN LOUISIANA.



DELIVERING MAIL IN ARIZONA.

A general improvement of the condition of the roads traversed by the rural carrier. In the Western States especially the construction of good roads has been a prerequisite to the establishment of rural free delivery service. In one county in Indiana a special agent reports that the farmers spent over \$2000 to grade and gravel a road to obtain rural free delivery.

carry it to the house, and the farmer is thus spared a drive of twelve miles to the postoffice, which he would hardly feel justified in undertaking in the most favorable weather more than twice a week, and then at much personal inconvenience and pecuniary loss. Under the rural free delivery system he gets his mail and his paper daily without cost of time or money.