

Strange and Startling Noises in Omaha

Ding-ding-ding, ding-toot-to-o-t t-o-o-o-t. There comes the fire department. "Hello, central!" What's burning? Is that so? Thank you."

How often the busy people along the thoroughfares are startled by the horns and bells of the city's fire apparatus. During the old volunteer regime jingling bells were fastened to the carts and trucks by means of coil springs. These soon gave way to the brass gongs usually attached to the dashboard of the wagon and operated by the driver. Of recent years, however, with the introduction of the swiftly-moving trolley car, with its warning bell, and the strong competition to attract public

ber tires has done away with the rattle and the bells are more effective.

For nineteen years William Quigley has been blowing the big steam whistle of the Union Pacific shops and it has never missed a working day except once, when a defective pipe blew the entire affair off the roof. It consists of several whistles, was carefully tuned when put in and is the best modulated steam signal in the city. Thousands of people have been suddenly awakened to some stirring event in the city's history by this deep-voiced warning.

The Omaha and Grant Smelting company has been furnishing the daily signals for thousands of laborers and factories along

building of an auditorium the moment sufficient money has been subscribed.

The long sheets of thin metal used by the theaters to make "thunder and lightning" scenes in melodramas are always interesting.

An iron coupling pin is used by a well known restaurant for the cooks to signal the waiters when their special orders are prepared.

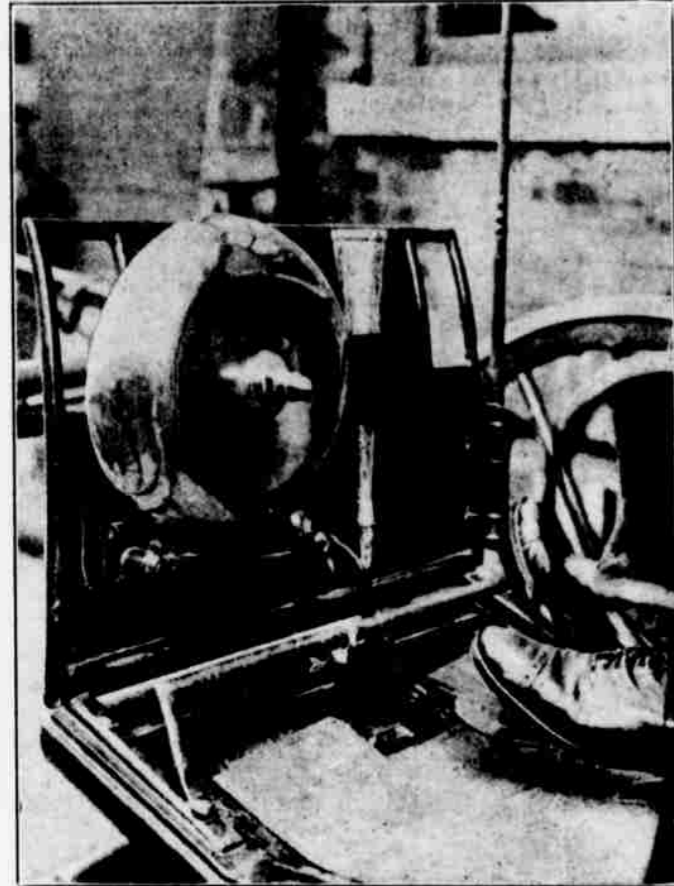
The department stores use big brass gongs in case of fire.

Those who live near the business portion of the city are constantly told the hour of the day and night by the big clock in the tower of the federal building.

LOUIS R. BOSTWICK.

Short Stories Well Told

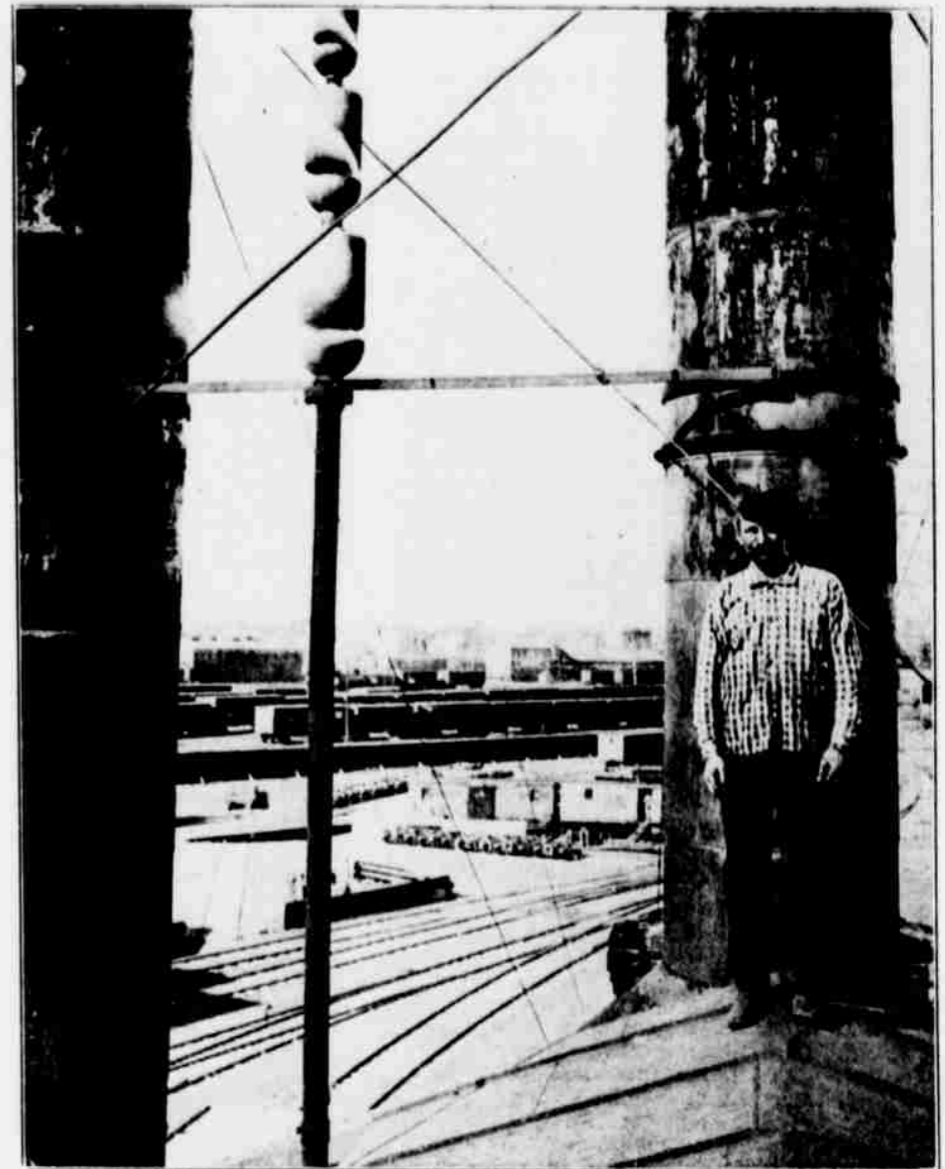
One night when Mr. Skinner was playing in "Rosemary" at Memphis, Tenn., relates the Clipper, several of the boxes were oc-



FIRE ALARM—THE OLD WAY.



FIRE ALARM—THE NEW WAY.



WHISTLE AT UNION PACIFIC SHOPS—IN USE NINETEEN YEARS.

lines, re-formed and charged back, doubling the rebels up and routing them.

"I shall always remember Sheridan as he appeared that day. On foot his figure was not impressive, because of his short legs, but astride his magnificent horse, leading the headlong charge, he was the finest military figure I ever saw. For his superb conduct of the battle of Boonville Sheridan was promoted to brigadier general. A little later he published an article in the Memphis Bulletin declaring that he owed his brigadier's star to the Second Iowa and Second Michigan cavalry.

"I remember Sheridan as he was the day of the funeral parade for General Grant in Chicago. He rode as fine a horse as he rode at Boonville and he wore a large black military cape that gave dignity and solemnity to his masterful military pose. He was a sick man that day and rode over a part of the route in a carriage, but when the procession reached Madison street he took to horse and seemed the very personification of soldierly reserve, dignity and grief."

The English papers are still filled with anecdotes of the late Lord Russell, chief justice of the realm. On one occasion his lordship was at Shrewsbury on circuit duty. The assizes concluded on Saturday and the lord chief justice, who had brought a horse with him, decided upon riding to Church Stretton, noted in those parts for

its big private lunatic asylum, and then proceeding to Hereford, the next assize town. He stopped, however, at a hamlet outside Stretton, and, dismounting at the door of the only inn, told the landlord to attend to his horse. The landlord's method of performing his task did not please his lordship, who spoke his mind freely to him. Having entered the house, Lord Russell brusquely, as was his wont, asked the host what he could have to eat.

"Some bread and cheese," was the reply. "I see some ham on the sideboard; let me have some and some bread," said his lordship.

"Indeed I won't," replied the landlord; "it is for supper and you binna goin' to 'ave it."

"Do you know who I am?" thundered the judge. "I am the lord chief justice of England."

In the course of this conversation the landlord kept cautiously by the door. Immediately on Lord Russell announcing himself as lord chief justice he bolted out of the room, locked the door and rushed breathless into the police station at Church Stretton, telling the police that a patient had escaped from the asylum and was in a dangerous condition at his house. The police went to the inn; the superintendent cautiously opened the door and was horrified to find that the supposed lunatic was really Lord Russell. Profuse and profound apologies followed.

attention by the popcorn man, the scissors grinder and advertising fakir, the fire department has been forced to change its signals and teach the people something more effective in order to clear the streets. Now we have the horn. Both man and beast are beginning to know its warning and it is interesting to watch a spirited city horse prick up its ears as the tooting is heard several blocks away and stand unmoved as the long line of apparatus rushes by on its way to quench the fire.

The same horn is used by the chief to signal the crew of a hose line to turn on the water after a coupling has been made. If cart No. 2 is ready, two blasts from the horn and the water fills the pipe. Three toots for No. 3 and the nozzle trembles as the water rushes from the hydrant. So on up till six or seven streams are playing on the blaze.

On the larger fire-fighting machines they have gone back to the old-time bell, but a somewhat large one and similar to those used on a locomotive. The use of the rub-

ber front for more than fourteen years. Perhaps the most startling and mirth-provoking whistle in Omaha is the steam siren of the Bemis Bag company. This noisy affair, with its sliding tones, was put up two years ago and is operated by Fireman Meyers. When the Nebraska troops left for the Philippines the Bemis company burned a ton of coal in making steam to give them a fitting sendoff. The whistling was repeated when the New York troops went west and again this fall when the railroads agreed to make the rates for Ak-Sar-Ben week.

Siren Announces Good News.

A large St. Joseph firm expressed its intention of locating in Omaha and the famous siren was turned loose to announce its coming ahead of the city papers. Mr. Peters says hundreds and hundreds of telephone calls were received begging to know what was the matter. He says he knows a good thing when he hears it and has several tons of coal ready to announce the

occupied by a gay box party consisting of the smart young set of the city. There was a great deal of laughing and talking going on in the boxes during the play, but at which Mr. Skinner took no offense—making allowances for their youth and exuberance. The production was an unusual success and the actor was called before the curtain for a speech, which he modestly delivered in a few words and low voice. After the performance the party came onto the stage to congratulate the company. One of the young women said to the hero:

"Oh, Mr. Skinner, why didn't you speak louder when you made your speech?—we could scarcely hear a word you said."

"That is strange," gently retorted the actor. "I heard almost every word that you said."

"I have lost my grip."

This phrase is applied by men to all kinds of failures, reports the Courier-Journal. One of the technical usages of losing one's grip is in the case of telegraph operators.

Many of the most skilled operators suffer at times from a loss of the "grip," and are compelled to give way temporarily to a substitute. This "grip" is the hold on the key, and the moment the operator begins to lose the control of this "grip" he realizes a rest, although for only a brief time, is due him.

Another but unpleasant term applied to this loss of "grip" is "telegraphers' paralysis." It shows itself in many curious ways, all showing that the muscles brought into play in working the key are badly worn.

One of the most skillful operators in Louisville, who is subject to these attacks, cannot send "P." The Morse manual calls for five dots for this letter. The operator in question has by some hook or crook lost the power to stop at the fifth dot, and it is a common thing for him to warn the taker to look out for his "Ps."

Recently he asked a fellow operator to watch him send "Ps" and to stop him at the end of the fifth dot. It resulted that, although he would be warned at the fourth dot, the fingers, no longer mastered by the brain, would continue dotting beyond the fifth.

"I was with Sheridan when he won his star," said a member of the Second Iowa cavalry to an Inter Ocean reporter. "This was at Boonville, Miss., in 1862, when Sheridan's brigade consisted of the Second Iowa and the Second Michigan cavalry. It was a cavalry battle from first to last. Our two regiments were attacked by a heavy confederate force, including battalions from eight different regiments. Sheridan, then a colonel, was fully informed as to the odds against him, but he resolved to fight.

"He formed the command himself, placed himself at the head of the squadron of direction and led us in one of the hottest and most brilliant cavalry charges the Second Iowa ever participated in. Sheridan, mounted on a large blooded horse, went forward like the wind and we after him. We rode through or over the rebel



THE FAMOUS BEMIS BAG COMPANY'S SIREN WHISTLE.



WHISTLE OF THE OMAHA GRANT SMELTER—IN USE FOURTEEN YEARS.