

A MOTHER'S GRIEF.

"All that left of my darling is hid in this little space."
The mother drew with trembling hands the drawer from its resting place.
And I saw a baby's garments,
Fashioned with dainty grace
Out of the finest fabric,
Edged with the richest lace.

DEAD LETTERS.

Dear Friends of the Writers—The "Openers" at Work—An Hour with the Experts—The Retaining Department—Some Old Notes.
In my last letter we stood for half an hour at the sorting table of the Dead Letter Office and listened to our guide as he told us of the different classes of letters that are sent here from all the post-offices in the country. We will continue our stroll and note what is done with these fugitive letters.

"Here is where the opening is done," says our courteous attendant as we approach a long table around which are seated eight men. Each has a pile of letters before him and is armed with a thin, sharp knife. With a rapidity acquired by long practice, he slips his knife through the fold of the envelope and takes out the contents. A glance shows whether it contains an inclosure of any kind. If it has money or anything of value it is laid aside and passed into the hands of a clerk whose duty it is to take charge of such letters. Those which contain nothing, or only photographs—as 50,000 every year do—look of hair and such articles, are carried, each with its own envelope, to the "return department," which we will visit before we get through.

"It keeps the boys pretty busy," says the guide, "to open letters as fast as they are carried in. In fact we are running behind in spite of all we can do. Each man opens from 1,500 to 1,800 letters a day. That man"—pointing to one who seemed to handle knife and letters with a singular adroitness—"has opened 3,000 in a day, but there are not many who can do that."
A VETERAN.
"You see that old gentleman at the head of the table? His name is E. S. Evans. He is nearly eighty-three years old, but he is just as spry as any of them in opening letters. He was appointed to the Post-office Department by Andrew Jackson in 1820, and with the exception of two or three years that he published the Baltimore Patriot, he has been here ever since. He has served this department for more than fifty years. He was in the army, and when the war broke out, he was strongly opposed to slavery, and during the excitement, early in 1861, a mob completely destroyed his house, and he very narrowly escaped with his life. Mr. Evans has seen some changes since he first came into the post-office."

"Yes," remarks the pleasant-faced patriarch, laying down his knife for a moment, "I was here when two men did all the business that now keeps two hundred busy."
I may remark in passing that the employees are not permitted to converse with visitors. One of the clerks did speak to me and I replied briefly, or rather started to do so, when the attendant gently but firmly, and in an unobtrusively speaking, and politely informed me of the existence of this rule. I begged his pardon, remarking that I was but answering a question by the clerk to me. "Of course it's all right as far as you are concerned," said he, "but that clerk knows what the rules are."

she puts it into the box ready for re-mailing.
"This is a harder one. Let's see what can be done with it." The post-office is written "Frank coalyoun." She looks intently for a moment or two, refers to a directory and writes "Franconia." "That corresponds with the State and county and I think it will go."
"Now here is one that should not have been sent here at all. Any postmaster ought to be able to read that." It is addressed "Tuppke, Kansas." I venture the suggestion that the design of the writer should be carried out by sending it to Topeka, Kansas. "That is undoubtedly right," says the lady, and the letter properly addressed is tossed into the box.

"This one is directed to the 'Wood County Sentinel, O.'" That paper is published, I believe, at Bowling Green. That is easily fixed.
"Here is one of a kind that sometimes troubles us. It has the street and number, but no city or State is given. This is directed to '2518 St. Mary's Avenue, corner of Twenty-sixth Street,' and that is all. I look at the directories and find that several cities have streets so designated; but these streets cross each other in Omaha. So St. Mary's Avenue, corner of Twenty-sixth Street, must be there. It is strange how thoughtless many people are in addressing letters, and then they blame the Post-office Department because they do not go. There is more excuse for those who make mistakes through ignorance. We get a good many so badly written that we are utterly baffled; and we can't read them. Such letters have to be opened, and if we get no clue by that means they are destroyed."

"This letter is addressed '496 Tchoupitoula Street, and no city, county or State is given. But we know that street is in New Orleans and we send it there. Here is another with nothing but '210 Woodland Avenue,' that goes to Detroit. If in an address of this kind the name is a common one such as 'Washington,' or 'Jackson,' we are at sea, for it may go to any one of twenty cities. By opening such letters we often find the full address, or something that enables us to complete it."
"This is a comical one. It was evidently written by an Englishman. He writes 'London, Hillingdon, Hillingdon, and Hillingdon, Ill.' will do better and we'll send it there."
"Look at this: 'Norag, Conicut.' We will mail that to 'Norwich, Conn.' The lady thinks very closely to the way she pronounces it.

"Here is a letter addressed, as you see, in a very plain business hand, to 'Crotty, La Salle County, Ill.' The nearest I can come to La Salle County is 'Ottawa,' and I presume that was what he intended. We'll try it."
"Mrs. Rose Story, Montana." That will have to go to the openers.
This is pretty good: 'Pat O'Donnell, State of West Scoussen, Orenotown, Sea Co.' I think if I change that to 'Ironton, Sank Co., Wis.' Patrick will get his letter.

"THE HARD ONES.
In many cases it is not nearly as difficult to solve these riddles as might at first appear. If we can decipher the writing we can almost always get the name in some way that the addresses are intended to be. Illiterate persons, who have not mastered the intricacy of our post-office orthography, can only write from the sound as they hear the names pronounced. It is painful to think of the struggles such persons have with many of our post-offices, that often suffer the best of us. It is not strange that people make a mess of such letters. barous words as Ypsilanti, Kalamazoo, Okoshob, Skowhegan, Waukesha and hundreds more that might be mentioned."
"Now let me show you how comparatively easy it is, sometimes, to correct an address that at first sight seems utterly unreadable. Here is one I came across a little while ago. If you can tell at a glance what that was intended"—covering the corrected address—"I will pronounce you a first-class expert."

essential that those employed in this department be versed in foreign languages as well as in the post-office nomenclature of our own country. Very many letters from Germany, France, Spain, Italy and other countries in which the English language is not spoken are utterly beyond the power of human skill to decipher. These, with all dead letters mailed in foreign countries, are returned unopened to those countries. Letters from Italy are said to be more difficult to correct than any others, owing to the illiteracy of the people, and a greater portion have to be returned as illegible."
Here are also received the pouches of letters mailed in the United States to foreign countries, undelivered, and returned here as dead. These are treated the same way as other dead letters—opened and returned, as far as possible, to the writers. It is a fact which might at first excite surprise that more than three times as many dead letters are returned from the United States to other countries as are received from them. This is due to the moving of emigrants from one place to another, they get finally settled. The same disparity exists in the number misdirected and illegibly addressed. The superior intelligence of our people will, in a great measure, explain this. Dead letters are returned to and received from seventy six different countries. With the fifteen principal countries these exchanges are made weekly, and with the others once a month.

Upon the floor of the room are a large number of pouches that have arrived by recent mails, and many of them have made long journeys. We saw sacks from Chili, Persia, China, Java and New Zealand. There is a grim humor in the fact that the pouches used for dead letters in all countries under the British Government are blue—the color that is always associated with death. Each month about 12,000 letters are received from and 38,000 returned to foreign countries.

"We will pause just for a moment as the lady clips the string around a package of misdirected foreign letters just arrived from New York. The first one is addressed only '228 Chicago Street, America.' The next one is but little less vague, 'Conn. Box 140, U. S. A.' Another, marked 'urgent,' is addressed 'Trumbull County, O.," and nothing more. Here is one with a heading border, mailed at Bristol, Eng., addressed, 'Mr. Luke Tucker, between Burwell Street and King, on York, 84.'" After consulting the directory the lady thinks that very closely to the way she pronounces it.

"THE RETURNING BOARD.
One other department will entertain and amuse us, but our stay must be brief. Ascending to a sort of gallery that extends entirely around the main office, we see sixty ladies at their desks. Their part in this wonderful machine is to examine the opened letters and to remit them to the writers, as far as possible. Nineteen-twentieths of them do so returned. The remaining twentieth—amounting to about one letter a year—are destroyed. The 'openers' make no examination of letters, except to see at a glance whether they contain anything of value. This is done by the mixing of languages equal to the 'confusion of tongues' at Babel. As may be imagined, their skill is more often baffled.

"You can readily understand that we have much difficulty with letters from foreign countries. They come addressed in all languages, and the writer may make sad work with our town and county names. But you will learn more of this class of letters if you will visit the foreign department."

FARM AND FRESIDUE.
A compost of good muck with lime has been found as a effective measure, load for load, upon light and heavy soils.—Chicago Journal.
If you are doubtful about the economy of using the finest pot-crow seed try a bushel at least, and see for yourself which will produce the most and largest tubers.—N. Y. Herald.
Green clover turned under will increase the fertility of land five times as much as the same crop left on the surface to ripen and dry up and then ploughed under.—Western Agriculturist.

The Germantown Telegraph advises Illinois farmers to be before building expensive silos, but they need not hesitate to cut down the rations of corn and feed more root.
Farmer's Feeding: One-half pint of molasses, half a pint water, two teaspoonfuls of saleratus, one teaspoonful of any kind of berries rolled in flour; thicken with flour and steam three hours. Raisins are nice to use in place of berries.—N. Y. Times.
Brahmas, says an exchange, are often sick. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the sickness is caused by overfeeding. They are naturally disposed to lay on fat, and it is a matter to scratch around a little for themselves. They are bad fowls to be kept in lots with other varieties, as they require different treatment.

To a farmer the idea of currying a cow, milk or otherwise, is an absurdity; but to dairymen, who have highly bred cows, who take a pride in their business and get the top price of the market for their produce, it is a matter of moment, in that it is known to increase the flow of milk and the butter produce by ten to twenty per cent. We say this is known, and will say further that it is so far an established fact that few, if any can be found to dispute it.—Rural World.
Rasp the horn with a file to bring it to a smooth, even surface, then scrape with glass in the same manner as a shoemaker scrapes the soles of boots. This if carefully done will leave a fine, clean surface. Then rub with a piece of cloth and electro-silicon wet to a paste with water. The polish with a cloth and oxide of tin wet with water to a paste. Sometimes the horn is rubbed down for a final polish with French polish instead of the oxide of tin. Whiting and chalk in water is also used.—Scientific American.

A nice cup pudding is made from this recipe: Weigh three eggs, and use an equal quantity of butter, flour and sugar. Cream the butter and sugar, beat the eggs very light, and when all is well mixed pour into cups; fill only half full. Bake for ten minutes and serve with wine sauce, and have plenty of it. Good wine makes wine sauce is to melt two tablespoonfuls of butter, drain it from the salt which will settle at the bottom, add the grated rind of half a lemon, and the juice, also; white sugar to suit taste; let this come to a boil, then stir in one glass of white wine.—N. Y. Post.

Variety in Farming.
It is the idea of many that any one can learn to farm. But as there are so many branches of the business, and which will require years of steady and close application to master by the best minds, it is deemed advisable for all farmers to avoid undertaking too many things. There are some vegetables, grains and fruits which have been raised so long and are so well understood that their production does not require so much study and can be used profitably in making up a variety on the farm. And yet, these simplest things require active minds and close attention to business to produce profitably, and great care and thought to sell to advantage.

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