THE "PRIVATE" LETTER BOX

Crime, Vice and Foolishness Lurking Behind Its Metal Doors.

AIDING CROOKS AND GREEN GOODS MEN

Silly Girls' and Scheming Men's Resources to to Cover Folly and Treachery—Congress Appealed to in Vain—Graphic Account of Dark Postal Doings.

[Copyrighted, 1893.]

"I will rent one for two months; have the letters remadressed."

"Yes, sir."

"Remember, I do not care to figure in the matter."

It was a big, fat dude who was talking. As he gave the directions to the man, the blood rushed to his face and he was very uneasy. With much nervousness he finally pulled on his oz-hood gloves, gripped closer his goose-necked cane, and hastily moved toward the door, leaving behind him a trail of fragrant odors from his "soup plate" bouquet.

Let us hope that he will meet her.

The visitor was only one of New York's chappies who was seeking to begin a romance through the agency of the "private" letter box. Gay and foolish, with plenty of money and time, he will never know, until he reads this article, that his little escapade was being watched by the eye that never sleeps.

"Give me a cigar."

The man who said this had one eye covered by a bandage. He didn't look at all like your stock detective in the dime novel, but for once appearances did not signify.

Ten or fifteen people passed in and out of the big drug store in the next few minutes. The detective and I, standing unobserved near the window, saw enough in that time to convince us that we were on the right track at last.

It was to be an afternoon of strange revelations.

The "Private" Letter Box.

New York city is literally honeycombed with illegal "private" letter boxes. They are found in cigar stores, barber shops, saloons, drug stores, florist establishments, and in the shops of small tradesmen. Some of the boxes are advertised in the newspapers, the proprietors thus calling public attention to their illegal trade in a fashion at once brazen and defiant. Many of the boxes are in stores on the most frequented avenues. Others are in places known only to the department. The proprietor is usually a man who makes no pretence of knowing anything of his customers. If you talk with him a little while you will find that he is, to all intents and purposes, the most stupid fellow you ever had dealings with. But that's only a ruse. While he is saying that he knows nothing of the men and women who patronize him, he is surreptitiously packing up some letters to be forwarded to some noted confidence man or crook. Often, too, there is every suggestion that the dealer is in league with his customers.

In the private letter box lurks crime.
In the private letter box lurks vice.
In the private letter box lurks foolishness.

Conviction is Difficult.

Postoffice inspectors say that more swindles are perpetrated through the agency of the private letter box than through any other one postal means. The private boxes are used, so say the inspectors, only by persons who desire to maintain clandestine correspondence. They are used by persons who have some underground enterprise on hand. Again and again congress has been petitioned to pass a law prohibiting the boxes, but never yet has the idea been carried through.

The boxes themselves look innocent enough.

After buying our cigars, the detective and I strolled leisurely around the block. He said to me:

"It is hard to get evidence against the frauds and sharpers who use the private boxes. The law says it is a misdemeanor to put anything in the mail that is in the nature of a swindle, but in order to arrest a man for sending or for perpetrating postal frauds it is absolutely necessary to catch him in the act of depositing or getting his mail. Backed up by the illegal postmasters, as the confidence men are, it is wellnigh impossible to convict one of them. Let us now go back, take a position in a quiet corner, and see how the private letter box is conducted. Incidentally, keep your eye open for a fellow with red hair, gray-blue eyes and broad shoulders. He is a dangerous 'green goods' man. He is wanted at headquarters. I am trying to find him today."

Weaving the Snare.

We hadn't been in the corner of the snug drug store more than a moment or two when in came a stylishly dressed matron. Her diamonds twinkled like great stars, and when she pulled her point lace handkerchief out of her pocket and pressed it to her lips, there was a delicious cloud of rare perfume.

She was a handsome woman.

A drizzling rain was falling outside. Why was this woman here? Why was she not at home? She takes a little key out of a black satin hand bag, goes up to the tier of private letter boxes, opens one, and peeps slyly inside.

She takes out a pink missive.

Her pet poodle, on a string at her side, looks up in her face.

Poor dargie! he can never tell.

The woman takes her letter, hides it instantly in the recesses of her bag, and going up to the counter inquires the price of soap.

She buys a couple of dollars worth of perfumery as a blind. You can see that she does not care particularly for it.

She trips away, the blushes of embarrassment in her cheeks.

That woman is carrying on some correspondence which she is afraid will be made known to her family.

In the mist and rain away she goes, on a day when no other woman would think of stirring outdoors.

Such is the fascination of the private letter box.

Beaux by the Score.

A moment later in came a young girl. The blushes of boarding school life were still on her cheeks. With an air of hesitation she came into the drug store, glanced nervously about, fumbled for her key and opened her box.

She took out four letters.

From where we stood we could note the rising color in her face. There was some unnatural excitement about the girl. She was a prey to the delicious sensations of receiving letters from unknown correspondents. Such was her eagerness that she plumped herself down in a seat near by and proceeded to hastily inspect her mail matter. There was a blue envelope, a pink envelope and two yellow envelopes.

She whipped a hairpin out of her low-coiled brown hair.

Swish! The first letter was opened. Her eyes devoured its contents. She read it over again, then passed it to her pocket. She read the second letter with equal animation. She read the third letter with heightened color. She read the fourth letter in ecstasies. As she did so a small clipping, evidently out of some paper, fell unnoticed to the floor. In another moment she was gone.

I carefully picked my way over to where the bit of paper had fallen, and, under cover of the passing and repassing of people in the store, managed to obtain possession of the slip without attracting attention. It read as follows:

"Boys! Boys! Boys! Here's fun for you. Am tall, considered good looking, brown hair, brown eyes, voluptuous form; would like to correspond with handsome college graduate; one living out of New York preferred; photos exchanged. Address,

"BROWN EYES, Box X, Eighth Avenue."

That was "Brown Eyes" who had just slipped like a vision of loveliness out of the door. The sly little rogue had thus early in life learned the way to the private letter box. The advertisement had been inclosed, so I concluded, by some hopeful swain who didn't want to make any mistake.

"Beats all!"

That was the detective's comment.

A Sample Examination.

"What does a letter box cost?" asked the next man, a foolish fellow with banged hair.

"One dollar a month."

"You remail letters?"

"Yes."

"Well, give me a box for a month."

The proprietor produced a book.

"Name, please?"

"Mr.—Mr. Harold Cherry-Bounce."

"To be delivered to?"

"Mr.—Mr. Sinclair Drew."

"Very well; here is your key."

After the fellow had gone the detective said to me, in a low tone:

"Now, there is a foolish young fellow who is out on a lark. You notice the proprietor did not ask him his business. Letters to Cherry Bounce are to be remailed to Sinclair Drew, under separate cover."

"Do crooks use the boxes?"

"Well, here comes a fellow now. Judge for yourself."

Crooks Use the Boxes.

A tall, shabby-looking man came ambling up to the counter. He was as seedy as though he had been sitting beside the fountain in Central park all summer. His nose was a sight. That he was a heavy drinker went without saying. The man was altogether disreputable in appearance. Above all else he had a bad eye.

That he was a bad man the detective must have concluded by instinct, for he stepped on my toe to attract my attention. I looked alive.

The man first of all, like all crooks, kept watching the rest of the people in the store. He paid no attention to the wares for a given length of time. His eye slowly raised about the place. It is a trick of pickpockets to watch other people. This is exactly what this man did.

He did not notice us in the corner. Satisfied at last with his inspection and apparently convinced that the coast was clear, he stepped up to the metal boxes, quickly selected the proper one, applied the key and took out a handful of letters.

In a flash he had snapped the door shut again and was off down the street.

I looked at the secret service man in amazement.

"Why do you not arrest the fellow?" I gasped.

"Easy, easy, there; on what grounds? We have no charge against the man. On general principles, I should say that he was a bad man; but the mere fact that I think so would have no weight with a judge and jury. Crooks of all kinds use the boxes. If a crook wants to enlist his pals in some dirty work, he rents a private letter box and carries on his negotiations under some assumed name. Now, it is necessary to arrest him in the very act of taking legitimate mail out of the box. That, you can see at a glance, is extremely difficult to do. Supposing that we obtained wind of a case, there is every probability that the fellow would likewise be informed, and would give us the slip at the last moment. If he did not call for his mail, what are we to do?"

Here's a Shrewd Game.

The next visitor to the private letter boxes was a whistling boy. He held a box under one arm. He was a messenger boy. The usual inseparable dime novel stuck out of his pocket. He consulted a card, went to a box and took out some mail matter. He then went whistling out of the store.

"Somebody has sent the boy after the mail," was the comment of the detective.

"That is another way of defeating the work of the secret service."

"Yes. You see a man need not come after his mail. We might shadow the boy, but then we would have to be very spry to outwit him. If there is any reason why he should be cautious, he has already been so informed by his employer. He might keep the letters a week before he delivered them."

"Maybe he is working some green goods man."

"In all probability. If the private letter box system were destroyed, the biggest aid of the green goods men in plying their nefarious trade would be broken up. Today nine out of ten green goods men operate through the private letter boxes. They send out their lists to their country victims, telling them to write or telegraph to such and such a number. In all probability the number given is some such illegitimate postoffice as this one. In due season the letters begin to pour in. The green goods man or some messenger calls for the mail. He gets it without trouble. That is the beginning of his great game of confidence. Now, then, a letter carrier may have his suspicions aroused, and will report the case at headquarters; but what are we to do? We must, first, be prepared to prove positively that the matter in the box is illegitimate; then we must actually catch the man at the box, taking his mail out. This is next to impossible. In many instances the proprietors of the shops are in league with the crooks. The shopkeepers will then never put the mail in the box, but dispatch it by special messenger to the rooms of the confidence sharks. What are we to do then?"

"Nothing."

"That is it, nothing."

Clutching at Straws.

"But how about identifying a man before mail is delivered to him?"

"That," said the detective, smiling, "is the only check our department has on the wily green goods swindlers. The average green goods man has a good many false names. There is a rule of the postoffice which says that if the postmaster has reason to believe that the one calling for the suspected mail matter is not the one to whom it is addressed, the caller must go to the trouble of satisfying the department as to his identity. Now, since the green goods man has mail coming under half a dozen names, his business is to a very material extent decreased when it is necessary for him to choose between the names. He makes up for it by renting other boxes in other parts of the city. Still there is no doubt that in the end he will gradually be driven into pastures new, and he will then begin his business all over again in some other part of the country, for this purpose quitting Gotham."

"How about the man you were looking for?"

"Well, it's getting late. I see the man behind the counter is becoming uneasy. Let's take a walk before we attract attention. Maybe we'll have better luck tomorrow."

The next time you get a circular stating that the New York lover of his race is anxious to exchange $4,000 for $250, notice particularly the address to which you are to write.

It'll be the drug-store-barber-shop-candy-store-postoffice.

If you have read this article carefully, you will then be just $250 ahead.

JOHN HUBERT GARNSM.

IMPIETIES.

"The itinerary of a Methodist minister may have its unpleasant features," remarked a well known divine to a Cincinnati newspaper man yesterday, "but it has its advantages, too.

"There is one little dried-up Scotchman who used to be on the Southern Ohio conference list who never failed to get even with his congregation. At one station he fared badly, and on the last evening he addressed the church, he began, as all settled back to listen with ease:

"'Now, brethren,' he said, 'it is nat fair to go asleep as ye always ha' done until I get along wi' my sermon. This is my last one—so wait a wee till I get along; and then if I'm nat worth hearing, sleep awa' wi' ye, and I will nat care; but cimmat go before I ha' commenced. Gi' me this one chance!'

"And they were all pretty well awake by that time, so he went on.

"'I shall take for my last text amang ye the two strong words, "Know thyself," but I will say before I begin the main discourse, that I would nat advise this congregation to make mony such profitless acquaintances.'

"You may believe there was not a snore or a nod in the house that evening."

* * *

The Rev. Dr. Black of the Barony church, Glasgow, and another minister once spent a vacation in Cumberland, and on the Sabbath attended a little Scotch kirk, sitting in a remote corner, so that the minister should not notice them. But the eagle eye of the minister detected them; and in the intercessory prayer he so expressed himself as to make quite sure of some ale from them. The good man's words were these: "Lord, have mercy on Thy ministering servants who have popped in upon us so unexpectedly; one of them will preach in the afternoon and the other in the evening."

* * *

"There is one thing I like about the religion that this here Sam Jones dishes up," said a Hoosier, with red clay on his boots and hayseed in his beard. "It don't interfere none with the language a feller uses when he is a-drivin' mules."

* * *

"Which of your congregation is the most regular, doctor?" was asked of the head of a fashionable flock. "The sexton, undoubtedly," was the reply.

FRAGMENTS OF THE FEAST

Choice Selections from the Attractive Pages of the Monthlies.

STIRRING LIFE OF THE ARGONAUTS

Lack of Industrial Stability—Objects of the Catholic Summer Schools—Ingalls on Kansas—Estimated Attendance at the World's Fair.

Among the interesting articles in the March number of Home and Country Magazine is the recital by Joseph A. Nunes of a trip to California in 1854. Mr. Nunes thus describes the frantic rush to America's gold fields:

"The Argonauts were adventurous enough to brave the perils of both oceans, even in old hulks, many of which were unseaworthy and could furnish accommodations of only very questionable character. American enterprise, however, can always accomplish the possible, and at a very early stage of the gold fever there were steamers running from New York to Aspinwall, on the Isthmus of Panama, and from thence the victims of the epidemic had to navigate the tortuous and difficult streams in most primitive boats and under circumstances calculated to daunt the hearts of any but the most daring and persistent. Even such would have been discouraged and turned back in despair but for the dazzling vista that loomed up beyond all present peril, and the fabulous wealth that seemed inviting the grasp of the fearless and faithful."

One of the author's exciting personal experiences is related as follows:

"We were riding slowly and carefully down a steep hill. The road was winding through a rocky mountain gorge barely wide enough for two horsemen abreast. The sides were rugged and almost perpendicular. In the midst of our absorbing conversation a sharp, shrill, discordant cry suddenly rent the air. It startled us. In a second it was repeated, and sounded nearer. The judge looked around as if questioning the direction from whence it came, satisfied himself on that point, uttered an emphatic exclamation, and, while giving some directions that were imperfectly heard and not comprehended, he galloped back in desperate haste, leaving me perplexed and amazed. In less time than it takes to tell he had disappeared behind an angle in the road. At that instant the same sharp, weird cry was repeated, and immediately I was confronted by the head of a long, heavily-laden mule train. The mules with their panniers monopolized the entire width of the road. The animals, painfully laboring, were on the run, impelled by the muleteers' cries and whips. Before I realized my danger or could turn to avoid it the caravan was upon me with irresistible impetuosity. It doubled up my mule and whirled him around as if he had been a child's toy or a wisp of hay.

"Fortunately the saddle girth broke, and I was spilled on the opposite side of the collision. How I rose and clambered up that perpendicular wall in time to avoid being trampled to a pulp beneath the remorseless heels of those panting beasts I could not comprehend at that time, nor have I ever been able to do so; but there I was and there I adhered, as if glued to the rock, until both mules and danger had disappeared. The muleteers never cast even one lingering, lingering look behind.

"To my astonishment my poor mule was alive. He was amazed, completely so, but unhurt, for the which I thanked my auspicious stars. Had he been broken in two, shattered in pieces or torn to shreds I should not have been more surprised. The saddle only required repairs, and while devising ways and means to that end my absconding friend returned, looking unfeignedly anxious.

"'Why in the name of common sense did you not ride on with me when you heard that warning cry and my explanation of its meaning?' the judge exclaimed as he dismounted and stood beside me.

"'I heard the diabolical cry,' I replied, 'but had no reason to understand it as a warning; and as for your explanation, that assailed me as an unintelligible jumble of incoherency. I heard nothing and saw nothing until you wheeled like a recreant and most ignominiously took to flight.'"

Lack of Industrial Stability.

"While the political movements of the century have changed the personnel of domestic servants in America, the development of the material resources of the country has affected their status. Before the present century employes of every kind were in a sense stationary," writes Lucy M. Salmon in the April New England Magazine. "This was due partly to a system of indenture which bound a servant for seven, five or four years, and to the system of slavery, which bound the servant for life; partly to the system of apprenticeship which made the servant a member of the family of his master; partly to the custom prevailing in country districts and small towns for unmarried workmen in all industries to board with their employers, and partly to the lack of facilities for cheap and easy means of communication between different sections of the country. There was no mobility of labor as regards either employment or place of employment—a fact true alike of domestic service and of other occupations. But this condition of affairs is changed. The establishment of the factory system of manufactures and the consequent substitution of mechanical for skilled processes of labor broke down the system of apprenticeship, and workmen in every occupation, except domestic service, ceased to be members of the families of their employers. A greater mobility of labor was made possible. At a later time the great era of railroad development and similar enterprises gave opportunity for a certain mobility as regards place of employment.

"All of these industrial movements have been important factors in changing the condition and character of domestic service. It is true in a general sense that every great change in economic conditions affects all other occupations, even those not primarily concerned in it. But domestic service has been affected in certain specific ways. The employe who disliked housework, but to whom no other occupation has been open, could go into factories and mills since no time was consumed in learning the simple processes of mechanical work. Every invention formed the basis for a new occupation. Domestic service had a hundred competitions in a field where before the era of inventions it stood alone. Moreover, these new occupations required little skill, no preparation.

"In view of these changed and changing economic conditions it may be said that that immobility of labor which has seemed to some economists so great an obstacle to the industrial advancement of women practically has ceased to exist in the case of domestic service. Industrial development has been carried so far that the problem has come to be how to make this form of labor not more mobile but more stable."

The Catholic Summer School.

The object of the Catholic summer school, writes George Parsons Lathrop in Donahoe's Magazine, is to bring to people of all ages—the busy people, as well as to those of leisure; to the rich, as well as to those of small means—an opportunity of hearing lectures or pursuing lines of study in various departments of knowledge, without going through a long curriculum at a college or university. It is not a teachers school; it is not a young people's school; nor an old folks school; nor a special or limited school of any kind; but a place where everybody, of any degree or condition, illustrious or obscure, so long as he or she be of good life and clean occupation, may come and learn those things which belong to a higher education. Here, in the leisure of a summer vacation, every such person may, for the payment of a trifling fee, listen to the best thought of the world condensed and presented simply by unselfish masters of study. They may thus, as in an interval of recreation, put themselves abreast of the latest knowledge or discovery in history, natural science, literature and the arts, or philosophy, as the students in these great old Catholic universities, which preserved and increased all human learning through the middle ages and passed it down to modern men, were able to do.

All these branches are to be offered to those who attend, in the light and with the consecrating touch of universal, i. e., Catholic Christian, truth. The original prospectus held up as a maxim Cardinal Newman's declaration that "Truth is the object of knowledge of whatever kind; and truth means facts and their relations. Religious truth is not only a portion, but a condition of knowledge. To blot it out is nothing short of unravelling the web of university teaching." To that maxim the Catholics Summer School of America holds, always.

A Phenomenal Commonwealth.

In a notable review of Kansas history in Harper's ex-Senator Ingalls dubs the state the testing ground of social and political phenomena. He says: For a generation Kansas has been the testing ground for every experiment in morals, politics and social life. Doubt of all existing institutions has been respectable. Nothing has been venerable or revered merely because it exists or has endured. Prohibition, female suffrage, fiat money, free silver, every incoherent and fantastic dream of social improvement and reform, every economic delusion that has bewildered the foggy brains of fanatics, every political fallacy nurtured by misfortune, poverty, and failure, rejected elsewhere, has here found tolerance and advocacy. The enthusiasm of youth, the conservatism of age, have alike yielded to the contagion, making the history of the state a melodramatic series of cataclysms, in which tragedy and comedy have contended for the mastery, and the convulsions of nature have been emulated by the catastrophes of society. There has been neither peace, tranquility, nor repose. The farmer can never foretold his harvest, nor the merchant his gains, nor the politician his supremacy. Something startling has always happened, or has been constantly anticipated. The idol of today is execrated tomorrow. Seasons of phenomenal drouth, when the sky was brass and the earth iron, have been followed by periods of indescribable fecundity, in which the husbandman has been embarrassed by abundance, whose value has been diminished by its excess. Cyclones, blizzards and grasshoppers have been so identified with the state in public estimation as to be described by its name, while some of the backeversements of its politics have aroused the inextinguishable laughter, and others have excited the commiseration and condemnation, of mankind.

Probable Attendance at the Fair.

Director General Davis of the World's fair presents in the North American Review instructive estimates on the probable attendance at the fair. He says:

The average daily attendance at the Centennial was 62,333; the largest attendance was 274,919; the smallest 12,720. The daily average at Paris was 130,000; the largest single day's admissions, 400,000. While the circumstances and conditions surrounding the Columbian exposition differ materially from those of either the Centennial or Paris exhibition, the divergence is not great enough to affect a very clear conclusion from the figures given. The unavoidable inference drawn from every international fair is this: The attendance is very largely drawn from the population within a limited radius from the site of the exposition. Thus, for instance, the statistics of the Paris exhibition show that on days when the attendance averaged 250,000, at least 190,000 came from Paris and its environs. Allowing for the difference in national habits which makes the American regard a trip from San Francisco to Chicago with greater readiness than the Frenchman does a trip to Berlin; allowing, too, for the unlimited stimulus to travel given by the excursion system planned by the railroads of this country for the coming event—taking every possible factor into account, it seems hardly possible that more than an average of 200,000 non-residents will be in Chicago during the exposition. Assuming, then, that 200,000 will be the largest average of strangers needing food and lodging in the city, no one familiar with the situation would hesitate to declare that the ordinary rule of supply and demand will prevail throughout the six months, and that the price of living will be as reasonable as could be expected.

Women in Factories.

"The change from individual to collective enterprises, from the domestic to the factory system, has released a vast amount of labor formerly performed in the house by women, with three results: either this work has been diverted to other places, or into other channels, or has become idle," writes Lucy M. Salmon in the New England Magazine for April. "The tendency at first was wholly in the former direction. The house— spinners and weavers became the spinners and weavers in factories, and later the home workers in other lines became the operatives in other large establishments. As machinery became more simple, women were employed in larger numbers until in several places and in several occupations their numbers exceed those of men. One illustration of this is found in Massachusetts, where by the census of 1885 it was found that in eight towns in the state, one of them Lowell, the number of women employed in the manufacturing industries was greater than the number of men.

"Ten years ago a weaver in Lawrence complained, 'One of the evils existing in this city is the gradual extinction of the male operative.' In 1885 in Massachusetts women predominated in fifteen occupations, including those for the manufacture of buttons and dress trimmings, carpetings, clothing, cotton goods, fancy articles, hair work, hosiery and knit goods, linen, mixed textiles, silk and silk goods, straw and palm-leaf goods and worsted goods."

Our Army of Pensioners.

We still have on the pension rolls twenty widows and two daughters of the revolution, writes Colonel W. C. Church in the North American Review. There are 165 survivors and 6,657 widows of the war of 1812, and 15,215 survivors and 7,282 widows of the Mexican war. This leaves 687,962 survivors and 158,893 dependent relatives of the war of the rebellion, with 426,398 claimants for pensions for this and earlier wars on the list for consideration at the date of the last report, October 12, 1892, besides 361,963 claimants for increase of pensions. In the five states of Washington, Oregon, Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas there are now nearly three times as many pensioners as there were soldiers furnished by these states to the war, viz: 72,960 pensioners to 26,236 soldiers. This is due, of course, to the movement of population to the west, but is a striking illustration of the extent of our pension roll. There are 38,330 pensioners in the ten states that formed the southern confederacy, and 108,436 in the six states that held to a divided allegiance, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Maryland and Delaware—in all 146,766 in the old slave states. The banner state on the pension record, Ohio, has 93,386 pensioners, Pennsylvania has 85,376, New York following with 77,020, Indiana with 65,129, Illinois with 63,230, Michigan with 42,258, and Wisconsin with 26,362. The annual payment to pensioners, excluding arrears of pension, amounted last year to $116,817,867.24, and it will probably soon reach a round $150,000,000. Including arrears, it will probably exceed for a time an average of $200,000,000 annually.

THE THEATERS.

With the dawn of Easter Sunday the Lenten sackcloth is put aside, and the theaters will be more largely patronized. Though the past past forty days have seen theatrical attractions in Omaha that will rank with the greatest, the post-Easter programs have features that will cause paterfamilias several seasons of searching cogitation, while the younger men aspiring to the dignity of the paterfamilias will feel called upon to restrict some of their little luxuries that their lady friends may not miss the entertainments provided by the local managements. All tastes theatrical will be suited during April. Emotional comedy and farce comedy, romantic drama, comic opera and grand opera are all billed. This is the menu of the month.

At the Boyd—Effie Elisler, from the 2d to the 5th; Lilliputian Opera company, 6th, 7th and 8th; "The White Squadron," scenic drama, from the 9th to the 12th; Joseph Jefferson in "Rip Van Winkle," for one night, on the 13th; Boston Howard Athenæum company, 14th, 15th and 16th; "The Lost Paradise," 17th and 18th; Paderewski on the 19th; "Tar and Tartar" Opera company, 20th, 21st and 22d; Lewis Morrison's "Faust," 23d, 24th and 25th, and the Bostonian Opera company closing the month, opening on the 26th.

At the Farnam farce comedy will fill most of the days or nights rather, of April, though for three nights in the middle of the month Robert Mantell will present one or more of his great romantic interpretations. This is the Farnam's list: "The Voodoo," from the 2d to the 5th; "The Merry Cobbler," 6th, 7th and 8th; James A. Kiely in "A German Soldier," 9th to the 12th; Robert Mantell, 13th, 14th and 15th; Bobby Gaylor in "Sport McAllister" once more, from the 16th to the 19th; Pat Peter Jackson with Parson Davies in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," 20th to 22d; "A Breezy Time," 23d to 26th; "The Smuggler," 27th to 29th, Ezra Kendall opening a four nights engagement in "A Pair of Kids" on the last day of the month.

Miss Effie Elisler is in Omaha this week, and at the Boyd. The bare announcement is sufficient to the thousands of theater goers, who have found more genuine pleasure and profit in witnessing this great actress tender delineation of "Hazel Kirke" than in looking on half the "popular" plays of more recent production. "Hazel Kirke" will be presented tonight on an elaborate scenic scale, with Miss Elisler, the veteran C. W. Couldock and Frank Weston in the cast. It is to the credit of both Miss Elisler and Mr. Couldock that, although, both have appeared in the same play time and time again, yet people never seem to tire, and their applause is as great now as when "Hazel Kirke" was first produced. Miss Elisler's Hazel is said to show an improvement this season in many respects, principally in an addition of emotional strength, the dramatic passages being more intensely rendered. Couldock has played Dunstan so often that it is no longer acting with him, but a matter of fact representation, with no change to his tremendous power or physical vigor. Other members of the company are all excellent.

Tomorrow evening Miss Elisler will produce a play which will show her versatility as an actress in a wonderful degree, "Egypt Allyn." In it is introduced a dream that is probably more original and affords a wider scope to the actress, than any known to the stage. The characters are drawn from life and, to speak briefly, it is a strong play abounding in dramatic interest.

Miss Elisler's new play, "Doris," will be seen for the first time in Omaha on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. It was given its first production on any stage in Detroit, February 23, when the Free Press of that city proclaimed it the strongest emotional domestic comedy Miss Elisler has been seen in since "Hazel Kirke" was written for her. In "Doris" Mr. Couldock assumes the part of an old clergyman very much on the order of Dr. Primrose in "The Vicar of Wakefield," and in Doris Vane Miss Elisler has a worthy successor to Hazel Kirke.

"The Voodoo, or the Lucky Charm," will be presented for the first time in Omaha at the Farnam matinee today, continuing until Wednesday. This farce comedy has the highest endorsement from the Boston, Philadelphia and Providence papers, and is said to be an entirely new departure. Its plot hinges on Voodooism, a superstition that exists among a certain element in the southern states and the West Indies. The author has used for a central figure a young married woman who is told by an old Voodoo woman that her fondest wish will be granted her if she succeeds in getting seven hairs out of the beard of a red-whiskered man. Many funny situations arise from her efforts to secure the required slugger. Thomas E. Murray, considered one of the best Irish comedians the stage has known in recent years, has made the hit of his theatrical career in the part of Michael McMahon, an easy-going hail-fellow-well-met Irishman. The supporting company is said to be excellent, including John G. Sparks, so long a bright light in Edward Harrigan's force, and Ada Bothner, famous through her long association with "A Bunch of Keys."

The new play to be produced at the Bijou and Wonderland tomorrow, "The Inside Track," was one of Oliver Doud Byron's greatest successes. The management has secured four star performers and materially strengthened its company, so that a great performance will be given. John D'Ormond, who has already become a great favorite with Bijou audiences, will divide the honors with Ralph Cummings, who makes his first appearance tomorrow. Mr. Cummings for years has filled the position of leading man with the Morosco stock company at San Francisco and is highly recommended. The star female character will be played by Agnes Fuller, already a big favorite, and Miss Leslie Leigh, formerly of the Pitou stock company of New York. "The Inside Track" is a melodrama of more than ordinary merit, through which a vein of comedy is woven which makes it snappy, and it has always proven a pleaser. The costuming and scenery are both magnificent.

The specialties preceding the drama introduces the Miltons, an excellent musical team; the Austins in their artistic statue posing, and John Sheridan, an eccentric Irish comedian.

Every lady visitor will receive a handsome souvenir at each performance during the week.

"The Pupil of Magic," a spectacular play, well spoken of by competent critics, which finishes the week at the Boyd, opening Thursday evening, introduces a novelty in the appearance of a number of midget actors, who, ranging from 20 to 35 years of age, do not measure more that from 28 inches to 30 inches in height. But small as their size, they are said to be accomplished actors and singers, with no vulgarity or horse play in their acting. "The Pupil of Magic" gives all of the little people an excellent chance to display their talents, and the catchy music, the topical songs and the bright and witty dialogue keep the spectators interested from beginning to end. The spectacular features are very pronounced. Two carloads of scenery, costumes and accessories are necessary for the production of this play, for the mounting of which more than $40,000 has been spent. The ballet of the company, sixty handsome and graceful dancers, will be seen in two grand ballets. Some of the scenery, especially "The Wandering Woods," are masterpieces of scenic art. For months the Lilliputians have crowded the theaters of the principal cities of the country.

"The Merry Cobbler," a comedy drama, with John R. Fraur Campson in the title part, opens for three nights at the Farnam Thursday evening. It has a plot of considerable intricacy, bearing on the fortunes of a German nobleman, who, through a very unusual set of circumstances, becomes a street cobbler in New Orleans. The interest is sustained throughout the action. Opportunities are given for some excellent character acting, and the company presenting the drama is said to be fully competent to improve them all. The work has plenty of humor, while the appearance of the children has created enthusiasm everywhere.

Readers of George Kennan's articles in the Century were prepared for the man when he appeared in this city some months ago, but the pleasurable extent to which his wonderful word pictures carried them was a most delightful surprise. He was known as a vigorous magazine writer, but the fascination of his oratory proved far greater than had been anticipated. Taking into consideration these facts, with the further attraction of the presentation of many rare views by the aid of a fine stereopticon and calcium light, Mr. Kennan's lecture at Exposition hall next Thursday evening is certain to be very largely attended. The reserved seat sale, at usual prices, will open at Chase & Eddy's tomorrow morning.

Paderewski, the peerless pianist, will give a recital at the Boyd on the evening of Wednesday, April 19.

Preparations are well forwarded for the great musical festival to be given in Exposition hall in May, from the 15th to the 19th. Damrosch's full New York orchestra, Sousa's new military band and a chorus of 300 voices, under Prof. Torrens, will provide a season of song and melodious sound such as Omaha has never had before.

RHEUMATISM.

A Remarkable Cure of One of the Most Stubborn and Aggravating Diseases That Afflict Mankind.

A News reporter learning that Mrs. N. M. Peters of East Des Moines, who was long afflicted with rheumatism, had been completely cured, concluded to call on the lady and get the facts directly from her for the benefit of any of our readers who may be similarly afflicted. He found Mrs. Peters to be a very pleasant lady of middle age, in good health and doing her own house work. On being questioned she said: "I had suffered with rheumatism the greater part of the time for nearly seven years. At times I was helpless. I had doctored a great deal for it with physicians and tried electric belts and almost everything that is recommended for rheumatism, as no one will suffer with it as I did without doing all that can be done, I believe it. Finally a neighbor woman advised me to try Chamberlain's Pain Balm, and was so sure that it would help me that I procured a bottle. It did help me right from the start, but it took five 50-cent bottles to cure me, so you can guess how bad I was, as one or two bottles will cure any ordinary case. It is a grand good medicine and has done me a power of good. And I hope you will publish the facts in your valuable paper, that everybody may know it."—Des Moines Daily News.

People who are interested in knowing what the temperature of their feet was after traveling over street car tracks and other places where salt was used to melt the snow during the past winter, should remember that a mixture of two parts of pounded ice and one of common salt will reduce the temperature of a body surrounded by it from 30 degrees to zero.

In England trade takes away a man's social standing, but street doesn't. An impecunious nobleman may breed horses and sell them and still be in the prince of Wales' set. But let him sell beef or butter and he is ostracized. He may train horses for a salary and still be a gentleman. He may be a starter and still retain his social standing. He must not go into trade.

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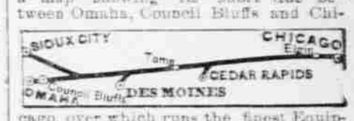
The Omaha and Chicago Short Line of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Ry., was opened for freight and passenger traffic. It these ten short years the "Milwaukee" as it is affectionately termed, by its patrons, has taken front rank amongst its older competitors, and to-day stands unrivaled for speed, comfort and safety. Here is a map showing its short line between Omaha, Council Bluffs and Chicago, over which runs the finest Equipped Electric Lighted Steam Heated Vestibuled Trains with Magnificent Dining Car service enroute, F. A. Nash is the General Agent and the Omaha City Ticket Office is at No. 1501 Farnam St.,



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