LIFE OF A CONGRESSMAN

Traced by the Experienced Hand of Thomas Brackett Reed.

DISTANT VIEWS FAR FROM THE REAL

Old and New Members and Their Many Perplexing Duties with the Departments—Useless Speeches—Morale of the House.

Hon. Thomas B. Reed, speaker of the house of representatives, contributes to Youth's companion an interesting sketch of the life of a member of congress, interspersed with chunks of advice and criticism. Speaker Reed says:

In the constitution of the United States the senate and house of representatives together are called "the congress." Hence, in strictness, senators and representatives are alike members of congress; but in everyday language the name is given to representatives only, and they alone write M. C. after their names. It is the life of the representative only which I shall try to sketch, and of that life I can hope to give but the merest outline.

It is a fact of almost universal application that we see the bright side of every other man's occupation, and seldom the dark side. The dark side of our own lives we clearly know, and we are quite as apt to exaggerate its blackness as we are to magnify the good another enjoys.

Probably a great many young people think that the life of a member of congress, with $5,000 a year, is a life of pleasure, comfort and luxury, full of power and dignity. If they do not, they have changed very much from the young people of my day. Of course they have changed in other ways, and much for the better, but probably not in this estimate of things.

Of course, the young people are right in a measure. It is an honorable duty to perform—that of representing 150,000 or 200,000 people in their relations with the 70,000,000 of other people in a great nation, the prosperity of which may be affected by the representative's wisdom, either in giving good advice or following good advice given by others, either in acting or refusing to act.

PERSONAL DUTIES.

But the picture has some shadows as well as lights. A congressman has labors to perform as well as position to enjoy, and as a man gets older he sets less and less value on place and position.

The duties he has to perform are not by any means uniform. They depend upon the wants and needs, real or imagined, of his district. All districts are not equally interested in things at Washington. Some districts, especially those in the east and on the Atlantic coast outside of the great cities, have very little to do with the bureaus at Washington.

In the west, and especially in the newly settled states, and relations with the Interior department, and particularly with the land office, are very close and very important to the individual constituent. To have 100 letters a day, all relating to business before the departments, is not an uncommon experience for a member from Kansas or Nebraska, for in those states all land titles come, or are to come, from the government; and many of them have to be finally adjudicated at Washington in case of dispute.

All the members have much to do with pensions. They bring special cases to the notice of the bureau, and hasten decisions. Here, again, the western member is much more harrassed than we of the east, because so many of our soldiers, broadened by contact with brother soldiers from all over the United States, were emboldened to try their fortunes in the frontier communities.

So all the distribution of revenue raised by taxes along the rivers and harbors, the Indians, the navy, agriculture, public buildings and all other items of government expenditure make much correspondence and business for members.

In addition to these labors, it may be mentioned that any one of the 150,000 constituents is at perfect liberty to write his views on religion or finance to his member, and expects at least an acknowledgment. Luckily nowadays, thanks to reform in the civil service, considerable time is saved which used to go to the service of those who wished to assist their country by holding its offices.

NEW MEMBERS.

The official duties may be more or less, according to the prominence of the member. Every new member, like a young lawyer or merchant newly come to town, has to show what there is in him and win his own way.

Distinction won in other fields of endeavor will gain a man a hearing for the first time, but not afterward. If he wishes to talk and be listened to, he had better have something to say and know how to say it.

Most men are not listened to. Most of the long speeches sent to constituents have no effect on the house, and might as well have been delivered in an attic or poured into a fanning machine. That they are delivered at all is largely owing to the strange mistake which our country has not got over—that a good member must be an orator. Now every man wants to be thought a good member; hence he spechifies in the "Congressional Record."

In early days, when there was little to do and few members, no doubt the country owed much of its education to such speeches, but in these days debate—that sort of speaking in which a man says only what he knows so well that he does not need to put it on paper—would seem to be a far more advantageous consumption of time. General education, such as it is—and I do not under-value it—comes from newspapers and other sources.

The early impression a new member gets when he listens for the first few weeks is that there are in the house an astonishing number of men who know how to talk well; but after awhile he sees the limitations of each man, and finds there are in the world but few Clays, Blaines, Schencks and Garfields, who can talk well about many matters.

Another thing which rather surprises the new members is that the vote does not seem to follow the argument. He does not comprehend that people who do not talk may think, and may not think to the same conclusion as those who talk. Nor does he comprehend the tremendous diversity of interests in the house. He knows vaguely that this is a great country; indeed, he has frequently heard persons say so, and has said so himself; but he does not understand that a thousand miles of distance is a tremendous change of the point of view.

If we could only make the intelligent men all over the country realize the sectional differences of opinion which our greatness occasions, the whole people would look with more reasonableness upon those who try to do what is feasible, and with less patience upon those whom only the whole earth in the way of legislation will content.

The new member in his first term, and often long afterward, finds the rules a perpetual stumbling block and rock of offense. He wants to talk and to get his measures before the house, and somehow he never can. If he stops to reason about it, he will find himself again in contact with the greatness of the country.

Three hundred and fifty-six members seem to be a large number to collect together for purposes of deliberation, and numbers are a great hindrance to that deliberation which means frequent speaking and voting. Many people wonder why each decade the number is increased instead of diminished, but the increase is likely to go on for some time in the future.

Large as our number of members is, Great Britain and France, with half our population, have each a great many more.

Indeed, when you look at the constituency the wonder ceases. Each member of congress represents 150,000 citizens, and in many districts 200,000. The business which all these people have in Washington centers in the congressman, and as I have already pointed out, it makes for him plenty of work. So great has this work become that by law each member has a clerk. Although the expense to the nation is not trifling, and the assistance was voted with some fear and trembling on our part, there has not been, so far as I know, the slightest criticism of the act.

MEASURES BEFORE CONGRESS.

Of what congress does in the way of public acts, everybody has some idea. All great questions which agitate the nation come there for final settlement. Of course, the settlement is always on some basis which the members think will satisfy all or most of the people. That often turns out to be a mistake, for people often think they want what they do not want at all, and they are always ready to punish legislators who give them the bad things they thought they wanted.

Appropriation bills settle a good many congressional questions. By them, for instance, our great lake commerce, fostered by improvements in rivers and harbors, has been built up until it much surpasses the great foreign commerce which we have with the whole outside world; and what Madison and Monroe thought we could not constitutionally do at all we do every session with the full agreement of both political parties.

All these great questions, like the example just given, are known and noticed by many of the people. But one great business which congress does passes without anybody's notice. Congress is the great and general court. All the complaints, demands and wishes of the people come to it. In the great majority of the cases nothing is done, but of 10,000 proposed laws perhaps 6 per cent or less become law. So in a court of justice many cases are brought, and but few tried.

But the existence of a court where complaints can be made with a chance of redress is a great help to human life. Before and after a man has brought his suit the fact that he can have even an unsuccessful hearing goes a great way toward calming his spirit. So in congress, if a man can have a committee examine his case, even if no remedy is found, he becomes more reconciled to the inevitable.

TEMPER OF THE HOUSE.

Members of congress, even when assembled in performance of their duties, do not always behave amiably. Some people think their behavior is growing worse, but it is not so. Such collisions as occasionally take place have always taken place, from the time when Griswold and Lyon encountered each other on the floor down to our day. They all happen in the same way; men get heated mentally, and sometimes physically; then they are bad tempered, they forget where they are, and they make spectacles of themselves.

One of the worst scenes I ever saw in the house was only the culmination on a hot day in July of the bad temper of the hot months. A hundred degrees in the shade is the boiling point of men.

Perhaps there never was a house that so lived on the edge of a volcano as did the house of the Forty-fifth congress. Everybody was angry with everybody else. This was the congress after President Hayes was elected, when everybody thought everybody else had been cheating, and nobody could strike because in striking he must deliver his blow not only at his enemies, but at those with whom his reason taught him he had to act in the future. Yet in that case that there was no row, because everybody felt that we could not have one without it being too big a one.

It seems rather a misfortune that the nation has so little idea of what really goes on in congress. There are no regular reports in any of our papers which will enable even a student to acquire a knowledge of what goes on from day to day. Even a member home for a week can hardly make out what has happened. In London you know every day what Parliament has done the day before.

The difference is caused by two facts: England has but one center, and that is London. We have New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, New Orleans and many others. Then we publish at public expense a journal of all we say and do, and make such a waste-basket of the "Record" that few people have the patience to look at it regularly.

If we left the history of our doings to private enterprise, the public would insist upon and demand and obtain regular reports, condensed so as to be within the scope of human endeavor, which would be a good thing for both congress and the country. As it is now it is rather a forlorn territorial legislature which is not as well reported as the congress of the United States. I speak, of course, of regular daily reports and not of special topics.

All legislative bodies suffer in public estimation, because of the perpetual criticism to which they are obliged to submit without any chance or opportunity of reply. Hence the popular idea of such bodies is much lower than is just.

A representative body has to do the best it can to reconcile with the terms of its proposed action all the prejudices of the whole people, and to take into account their wrong views as well as their right views. Hence it is that individual members seldom are able to vote anything more than that modification of their own ideas which it is possible to enact. Of course, this falls far short of the freedom of an editorial, or a sermon, or the speech of a reformer.

Where things are done in the minds only, the best can always be done; where things are done in a world full of conflicts and opposing opinions, results fall far short of the ideal best.

MORALE OF THE HOUSE.

That there are legislatures which are corrupt I hardly doubt, but that many of them are corrupt I do not believe. So far as the house of representatives of the United States is concerned, I quit agree with what Samuel J. Randall once said to me after twenty years of experience: "I believe I could name on the fingers of one hand all the men I suspect could be bribed."

Of course, all men are influenced by the opinions and power of other men, and a representative body is no exception. So also, men like to represent the views of their people, for thereon depends the continuance of their official life. Of course, a good many of them in times of excitement are deluded by mere volume of noise, and mistake stage thunder for the roar of heaven's artillery; but as a rule they are reasonably patriotic, and quite capable of being right when to be so is dangerous.

If you will reflect a moment you will see that members of congress, from the nature of things, are, as a rule, men of standing in the communities in which they live. Something has caused each one of them to be prominent among the 30,000 or 50,000 males over the age of 21 whom they represent. That something may not always be intellect. It certainly is not always riches, or birth, or control of great industrial enterprises. In any event each member has run the gauntlet of a nominating convention and of an election afterward.

Probably each congress is the peer of its predecessor in the relation which it bears to the intelligence of the country. It is true that the growth in wealth and expenditure in this country has drafted into industrial and commercial enterprises many able men who have preferred riches to legislative work and its fame. Many of these men would in the earlier days have made politics a profession.

But there is yet glamor enough surrounding public life, though it has been stripped of riches, to induce many able men to strive for its honors and endure its disadvantages. These men are thus made members of congress, while they are, as a rule, men of standing, education and ability, are limited by the wishes of their constituents and the general progress of the nation.

In some of the large cities the congressional representation may and does partake of the degeneracy of municipal politics; but even there men like Samuel J. Randall, William D. Kelley and S. S. Cox, to speak only of those dead, quite often come to the front and go far toward redeeming their time.

THE ASSEMBLED HOUSE.

The appearance of the house of representatives when assembled is not very much in its favor. It seems and is a tumultuous and disorderly collection of men, except on those rare occasions when a great debate culminates in the speeches of the foremost men. Then decorous silence reigns. The galleries cease whispering and the members sit intent in their seats.

It would be impossible that this should be so every day. Three hundred and fifty men, with 100 more of clerks, ex-members and others, with noisy galleries above them, could not possibly keep still. For much of the bad order, however, the physical conditions are responsible.

The hall of the house is simply huge. The galleries alone can seat 1,500 people. Less than 100 spectators are or can be admitted to the gallery of the House of Commons.

In the house of representatives it takes voice as well as intellect to be heard. Some of our best men cannot reach a third of the members. This is no small misfortune. It helps to render true debate difficult, if not impossible. Men will strain their eyes a long time to see, but not their ears to hear. Hence conversation and general restlessness spread over the scene.

The size of the hall also precludes the use of needed space for the retiring rooms which would naturally attract members and relieve the house as they do the senate. It is to be feared that taking the desks out would not be a remedy, since the great hall and the large galleries would remain.

The members of the British House of Commons, approaching 700 in number, are lodged in a hall 45 feet by 75, and 41 feet high. Our hall is 93 feet by 139, and 36 feet high. To be heard by all present a member of Parliament has to cause to vibrate 138,000 cubic feet of air, while a member of congress must set in motion 465,000 feet.

The only real remedy would be to cut our hall into three parts, using the center hall for assembly, and the other two for work and reception rooms. The center hall would be as wide and 15 feet longer than the English hall, which has 417 seats. It is quite true that we should in this way lose the impressiveness of the vast hall, and it is an inspiring spectacle on the great days when silence reigns. But for everyday effect congress in a suitable hall would be much more pleasantly impressive than congress in an acre lot.

If the greatness of the hall was intended to reflect the greatness of the country, it signally fails, for the little republic of Venice, more than 300 years ago, had and still has a council hall 175½ feet long, 84½ feet wide and 51½ feet high.

This article is rather long already, and yet I must have another paragraph wherein to say that the members of congress on the whole fairly represent the people whom they undertake to represent. If they are not all Solomons, either individually or collectively, their constituents are also not sons of David or Bathsheba. If you point to any radical overturns at any time in our history, and say that the rebuked men did not represent their constituents and were not up to their level, then I venture to suggest that the people themselves may not have known what they wanted until they had experienced the effects of what they mistakenly thought their legislators should give them.

Something to Know.

It may be worth something to know that the very best medicine for restoring the tired out nervous system to a healthy vigor is Electric Bitters. This medicine is purely vegetable, acts by giving tone to the nerve centers in the stomach, gently stimulates the Liver and Kidneys, and aids these organs in throwing off impurities in the blood. Electric Bitters improves the appetite, aids digestion, and is pronounced by those who have tried it as the very best blood purifier and nerve tonic. Try it. Sold for 50c or $1.00

KING OSCAR OF SWEDEN.

A Man of 67, a Philosopher, Poet, Musician and Author.

An important figure in the Venezuelan controversy is one of the most respected monarchs in Europe, says the San Francisco Examiner. Oscar II, king of Sweden and Norway, is a man of 67, with a benevolent countenance, a full gray beard and a stalwart figure. In his youth he was a sailor, and he still retains the bluff manners of a follower of the sea.

He is the fourth sovereign of the line of Charles Jean Bernadotte, who, by a singular accident, was raised from the station of a simple burgher to that of a marshal in Napoleon's army. At the death of Charles XIII the Parliament of Sweden, acting under orders from the all-powerful conqueror, chose Marshal Bernadotte to succeed him, and he ascended the throne under the name of Charles XIV. He had wit enough to cut aloof from the emperor when the latter rushed on to his doom, and thus at the reconstruction which followed he retained his crown and bequeathed it to his son, Oscar I. That politic monarch managed to keep out of the Schleswig-Holstein dispute, and retained the good will of both Prussia and Denmark; so he died at peace with all men, though sorely stricken in body, in the year 1859. He was succeeded by his son, Charles XV, who united Sweden and Norway, and reigned until 1872, when the present sovereign ascended the throne.

The duties of reigning are not congenial to Oscar II. He is a poet, a musician and a man of science. He has written many books, some of which are as good as if they had not been written by a king. He wrote a drama in French, which has been played to full houses. He is a corresponding member of the Frankfort Academy of Sciences. His memoir of Charles XII holds a high place in historical literature. His inaugural address to the Rigsdag contained some stirring passages.

"I am deeply penetrated," said he, "with the sense that the royal crown, which has fallen to me as heir, is not lent to me for mere outer splendor; rather, I know and admit that my responsible royal mission, of which the crown is a symbol, has been laid upon me to promote the welfare of the brother nations. May these words be my motto, Brodrafolkeno Val!"

The task which fell upon his shoulders was, indeed, one which might have appalled a less intrepid soul. He had to administer the government of two nations which had been artificially put together in harness, and whose aims and temper are as far apart as the poles. He had to contend against such political foes as Ibsen and Bjornsen. The latter once actually challenged the king to mortal combat. He had to handle three houses of parliament—two in Sweden, one in Norway. There has hardly been a day in his reign when he did not need to remind himself of his own apothegm—"a king must ever know how to subordinate all the inclinations of his character, however legitimate, to the exigencies of political policy."

Whenever he could, Oscar has sought relief from the cares of public business in his country house in the Sound of Helsingborg. There, with his wife, the beautiful and gifted Sophia of Nassau, and their four stalwart boys, he has led the life of a studious country gentleman, working out problems in arctic navigation and writing verses on pastoral themes. There they sit at an open window, breathing the strong air of the north, inhaling the summer breezes and letting the sea vapor fan their brows. An awning covers a veranda, bordered with flowers bathed in sunshine, from which a long stretch of sea rolls under their eyes. Here the king tells his family the old, strange sagas of Sweden's past, and carries them back to the days of Wodin and the Northmen. He has a well-chosen library, full of his favorite authors. Here he loves to talk poetry and science and legend with a guest.

A brother of Oscar, Eugene, is studying to be a painter, and proposes to establish a studio in Paris. His aunt, the king's sister, Eugenie, is the Lady Bountiful of Sweden; when she failed in obtaining from the Rigstad an appropriation for a work house which was badly needed, she sold her diamonds and put up the building. When the king saw it, he cried: "But, Eugenie, where on earth did you get the money to gratify your whim?"

When it was agreed to submit the Alabama controversy to arbitration, it was suggested by Great Britain that it should be left to a European sovereign, or to the pope, or to the emperor of Brazil. The United States offered to leave it to the president of Mexico or Switzerland. An agreement was finally reached that several powers should choose each an arbitrator learned in the law, and that their joint verdict should be conclusive. The arbitrators were five in number, and were chosen by the United States, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland and Brazil. It is this precedent which has been followed in the Venezuelan case.

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THE FIELD OF ELECTRICITY

Annihilation of Time in Telegraphing Between New York and Chicago.

ELECTRIC AND STEAM LOCOMOTIVES

Extraordinary Progress in Electrical Science in Recent Years—Electrical Plowing—A Diver's Telephone.

What is the limit of speed in telegraphy? The question has been answered many times, but in each case it has been found necessary to revise the answer soon after it was given, as a few more seconds were clipped off the record. When the name of the winner of the Derby is known in New York a quarter of a minute after the contest is over, when the result of an international yacht race is announced in Glasgow forty-four seconds after the winner sails across the finish line in New York's lower bay, it seems as though the practical annihilation of time was accomplished. But the men who spend their time in trying to improve the telegraphic service have not been satisfied with these astonishing records, and have tried to drive the time limit still nearer the vanishing point. As a result of their efforts, it may be said that if time will not wait for any man it will at least almost stand still sometimes.

The fastest service, both in the public and special work of the Western Union Telegraph company, has regularly been between the great exchanges, especially the Stock and Produce exchanges of New York and Chicago. This has been so probably because it has had to be so, that is to say because the demand for the fastest possible service has been stronger here than anywhere else. The limit, for the time being at least, has now been reached by an improvement which was recently made in the connection between the produce exchanges in these two great centers of American trade. The floors of the two exchanges have for a long time been connected by direct wires, so that only a few seconds were consumed in sending information from one to the other. Some time ago, however, the Western Union's manager in New York suggested that time might be saved in sending quotations if a telegraph apparatus was set up in the wheat pit itself. This meant saving a trip of perhaps fifteen feet between the wheat pit and the telegraphic booth, but in slicing off seconds one must cut exceeding thin and even the smallest things have to be taken into account. The change brought about by the adoption of this suggestion may be best observed by taking a peep into the New York exchange at the opening of business.

CHOPPING OFF SECONDS.

At one side of the circle known as the wheat pit stands a high box, which looks like an old-fashioned pulpit, and in which two men are sitting. In front of one of them is a telegraph instrument, the wire from which runs directly to the floor of the Chicago exchange, and before the other is a set of keys, controlling the big indicator at the end of the room, which announces at every moment of the day the ruling price of wheat on the floor of the exchange. As soon as the first bid is offered, before the sound of the man's voice can travel across the floor of the exchange, the operator in the pulpit presses one of his keys, and the big indicator on the great dial flies around to the figures named in the first transaction. In the second, while we have been watching the performance, the "reporter," who has been standing just below the pulpit among the brokers, has scratched the same figures on a yellow slip, has passed this sheet up to the man above him, and the opening price in New York is written in a lightning flash at the Chicago end of the wire.

The booth in which the wire terminates on the floor of the Chicago exchange is at one side of the room next to the blackboard on which the New York quotations are displayed. The slip on which the message is received is handed directly to the man at the board, who chalks down the figures with the speed that long practice has given him. The whole transaction occupies perhaps five seconds, and is repeated every time a fresh transaction is made throughout the day. The difference between the time it takes a message to travel across the floor of the New York exchange, less than 100 feet, and to Chicago, 1,000 miles away, is so slight that the announcement may be said to be made simultaneously in both places. This represents the perfection of telegraphic communication as carried on at present.

REMARKABLE SPEED.

It is probably true, also, that a message may be sent and an answer received through the public offices on the floors of these exchanges more quickly than in any other offices. It is a matter of record that a message has been sent from New York to Chicago, delivered to a broker on the floor of the exchange, and an answer returned to the sender in New York, all in thirty seconds. In fact, this has been done several times. The New York manager of the Western Union is authority for the statement that in sending the thousands of messages which travel back and forth between the two exchanges the average time between receiving a message and delivering its answer is not more than two minutes and one-half. It is an interesting fact that if a New York business man sends two messages at the same time, one addressed to the uptown district of his own city, and the other to the business portion of Chicago, or any of the great cities, the chances are that the second message will reach its destination first. The reason for this is simply that the facilities for sending the second message are better than for the first.

Of course in accomplishing the quick work which has been described the completeness of the connection is not the only factor, though it is very important. The operators employed in this work are all men who have been carefully picked from the most skillful operators in the service of the company, the transmitters and receivers are of the latest pattern, and every precaution is used to secure accuracy and speed where the slightest lack of either may mean the loss of thousands.

ELECTRICITY BEATS STEAM.

A writer in Cassler's Magazine says the most striking thing about the behavior of the electric locomotive is the certainty with which it may be moved over short distances, varying from a few inches to a few feet. The obedience of the motors to the controller is practically instantaneous, thus doing away at one stroke with one of the chief drawbacks to steam switching engines with which there is a noticeable delay between the time when the throttle valve is opened and the pistons begin to move, in this way often causing the engineer, no matter how careful he may be, to overshoot his mark. This delay in action, while generally only a few seconds in each case, amounts up seriously in the course of a whole day's work and is the chief cause of the proverbial lateness of freight trains which have much switching to do at intermediate stations. From the fact that the movement of the electric locomotive can be graduated so nicely, a full third of the time usually occupied by steam locomotives can be saved.

A DIVER'S TELEPHONE.

An American inventor has perfected and patented a highly ingenious form of telephone system for the use of submarine divers. The device can be used in either deep or shallow water.

The first requisite, of course, in a diver's telephone should be that the added mechanism can change no conditions whatever, in so far as making any demand upon the diver's vigilance or activity. In other words the telephonic arrangements must not be allowed to hamper the person with whom they are connected. The De Veau invention accomplishes this. The receiver of the 'phone is within the helmet, close to the left ear of the wearer, and is of the ordinary watch-case type, No. 8½. The transmitter is just above the diver's head. The circuit is formed by two wires the lines running through the center of a manila rope attached to the helmet. There is, outside the helmet, a little junction box, and a little collar to relieve the strain that might come on the cable. Special pains were taken with the spirals of the strands lying closely like those of a spring. Unusual protection is thus given to the insulated wires within it.

The man on deck carries a box, strapped to his body, within which is the induction coil for the system, and all the accessories including four cells of Mesco's battery. To call the attention of the man below, all that has to be done is to jerk the life line. The deck set weighs only about four pounds, and that carried by the diver adds only eight ounces to the weight of the helmet. Needless to say a great gain in the speed of diving operations will be the certain result of the new submarine telephone.

EXTRAORDINARY PROGRESS.

During the last two years, when other branches of business have been standing still, the electrical distribution of power has grown as it never grew before. The development of electric railways in the United States, says the Boston Herald, is the product of the last ten years. In 1887 there were only thirteen such roads, with barely 100 cars. Writing two years ago, an electrical engineer estimated that there were then 850 electrical roads, operating over 9,000 miles of track and 23,000 cars, and representing an investment of capital of over $400,000,000. Another professional authority, writing the other day, places the present electrical railway mileage at 13,000 miles of track, equipped with not less than 30,000 motor cars. The railway motors at present in use aggregate fully 1,000,000 horse power, and the generating plants close to 500,000. Last year's contribution to electric railway construction was 1,900 miles of track and nearly 5,000 motor cars. It is stated that this increase means an aggregate investment of something like $35,000,000, a very respectable sum to be added to a single industry in a year so little remarkable for industrial expansion.

The authority last quoted, Dr. Bell of Newton Center, estimates the probable total of stationary electric motors operated by central or scattered stations and power transmission plants at 250,000 horse power. Including railway work, he thinks it is safe to say that the gross power of the electric motors used in the United States is at present not less than 1,250,000 horse power. Comparing such a list with the small group of power plants that were running five years ago, the strength of the business that has scored such gains in hard times is self-evident. The saving secured by the use of electric power is so considerable that ordinary prudence has, in many cases, demanded an investment sufficient to secure an advantage that covered, under such conditions as have recently prevailed, the whole difference between profit and loss. This has been especially the case in regard to mining plants situated where coal is very expensive and water power plenty. A sample instance is cited in which an electrical installation for mining purposes has paid for itself at the rate of 5 per cent a month.

But, remarkable as have been the advantages already made in the development by electricity of the natural power resources of the country, we are still only at the beginning of this movement. Every year seems to add something to the distance that can be successfully overcome in power transmission. California led the way in this advance the long-distance plants from the generating station in San Antonio canyon to Pomona and San Bernardino being the most important of the kind attempted up to 1893. Two years ago what is known as the Folsom-Sacramento three-phase plant went into operation, furnishing all the power and light used in Sacramento, twenty-three miles away, and making the longest commercial transmission that had yet been installed. Still later came the transmission of electrical power over a distance of thirty-five miles into Fresno. This bears the record, so far, as the longest commercial transmission yet accomplished, the line from Niagara to Buffalo being eight miles shorter. Of course, with every new demonstration of the commercial possibility of overcoming long distances the field for the employment of electrical power becomes enormously widened. This fact has a bearing not only on the possibility of utilizing the 5,000,000 hydraulic horse-power available in this country, but also on that of converting the great anthracite culm heaps into electricity, and of making the coal mines themselves the seat of great generating stations whence power might be transmitted over a wide area of surrounding territory.

ELECTROCUTING THE WHALE.

If certain accounts received from Nova Scotia are to be depended upon, whaling will soon be deprived of much of the spice of danger which has always made it such an exciting occupation. Hitherto the whale has in the majority of cases taken a very lively part in the affair, and has not infrequently managed to escape from his pursuers, even after being harpooned, but it is now proposed to give the hunted cetacean no quarter. The electric harpoon has for some time been talked of and it is said that Captain Hershell, an old whaler of Halifax, has at length taken counsel with the electricians and devised a practical apparatus for the electrocuting of whales. The apparatus consists of a dynamo of 10,000 volts capacity, to which is attached a wire rope, heavily insulated, and of sufficient length to be run out for a distance of 10,000 feet from the side of the vessel. The harpoon attached to the end of this wire is, of course, of rubber-covered wood, otherwise the harpooner would get the shock instead of the whale. The insulated wire is run through the center of the wooden harpoon, and terminates at the end in a sharp steel spear two feet long. When a school of whales is seen spouting, the whaling ship is steered in their direction. When within a convenient distance a boat is lowered with the crew, the electric harpoon and the 10,000 feet of wire for maintaining the connection with the ship's dynamo. This wire reels off as the boat nears the whale. When within striking distance the harpooniat will hurl the spear in regulation style, but the whale will never know what has struck him, for, as the tip of the spear touches his body, he will be shocked to death.

PRIZES FOR ELECTRIC PLOWING.

The Germans are very much in earnest about electric plowing. Their National Agricultural society has arranged a prize competition among power-driven plows, intended specially to encourage and develop the application of electric power to the working of plows and other agricultural implements. In the trials nonelectrical plows will also be tested, so that a comparison may be made of the relative efficiency of the different systems. Only plows will be tested, as it is considered that the power could easily be applied to other implements with but slight alterations. Special attention will be paid to the conveyance of the outfits from field to field. One prize of 3,000 marks and another of 1,000 marks will be given for the best plow driven by any kind of power, and there will be a special prize for the best electrically driven plow. A piece of heavy and a piece of light land will be assigned for tilling to each competitor. Points will be given for (1) the time taken for the plowing; (2) the weight of earth moved; (3) the consumption of fuel by the motor; (4) the power consumed between the motor and the plow; (5) the cost of the plowing, including fuel, water, lubricants, attendance, repairs, interest and depreciation.

Catarrh is a constitutional disease and requires a constitutional remedy like Hood's Sarsaparilla, which purifies the blood.

MR. WILSON'S GENEROSITY.

Striking Incident of His Career in the Forty-Eighth Congress.

Mr. Wilson of Iowa, who will be secretary of agriculture under McKinley, concluded his career in congress on the morning of March 4, 1885, by a dramatic exhibition of generosity that will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. He was elected to the Forty-eighth congress by a majority of just twenty-three votes over Ben T. Frederick, the candidate of a fusion of the democratic, greenback and labor parties. It was a democratic house, and the committee on elections reported in favor of Frederick, who contested Wilson's seat; but the republicans were determined that Wilson should not be turned out, and were filibustering to prevent a vote. The late Samuel J. Randall came down the aisle, while the house was in a terrible state of confusion, and asked to be heard. He delivered a brief but eloquent eulogy of General Grant, who then lay dying, and said that he held in his hand a bill which had passed the senate restoring Grant to the rank of general of the army, and placing him upon the retired list.

"Mr. Speaker," he said, "I ask unanimous consent of the house to offer that bill, and I move that the rules be suspended in order that it may be taken up for action without debate."

Mr. Covington of Kentucky objected. He vehemently declared that the only order of business before the house was the resolution of the committee on elections seating Mr. Frederick in place of Mr. Wilson, and that no other business could be transacted until that case was disposed of. Mr. Covington's threat was received with jeers on one side and cheers on the other. Mr. Wilson climbed into his chair, and, when the house at last consented to listen to him, he said:

"Mr. Speaker, if this house will vote to retire General Grant I am ready to be sacrificed, and with that understanding I hope that my friends will offer no further objection to the adoption of the report of the committee on elections."

The house took him at his word. Within five minutes, by a viva voce vote, Mr. Wilson was unseated and Mr. Frederick became a member of the Forty-eighth congress. At Mr. Wilson's request the republicans did not even call for the yeas and nays, and immediately after he had surrendered his seat in congress for the benefit of his old commander Mr. Randall renewed the motion and the bill to place General Grant upon the retired list was passed by a vote of 198 yeas to 79 nays. Out of respect for Mr. Wilson, Mr. Frederick voted yea.

Why is it that people use Salvation Oil? Answer: Because it is the best liniment.

ATTACKS A TRAIN.

Thrilling Battle with a Mountain Lion on a Railroad Trestle.

To do battle with a huge mountain lion, seven feet in length and 253 pounds in weight, on a trestle at night, is the thrilling experience that has just befallen Edward C. Depew, an engineer on the Cascade division of the Great Northern railroad. The fierce beast leaped at the engine and narrowly escaped crashing through the window of the cab. Altogether the episode was one of the most exciting that a railroad man has ever experienced.

A correspondent of the Philadelphia Times prevailed upon Engineer Depew to write an account of his adventure, believing that additional interest would be lent by the fact of the story coming from his own pen.

Mr. Depew's statement is as follows:

I was the engineer in charge of engine No. 219 of the Great Northern, which was attacked by a monster cougar, or mountain lion. You can have little idea of the horror of the experience. The glistening of the beast's eyes, as it lay crouched on the rails all prepared to make its powerful spring, was awful to behold. I frankly confess that I was so frightened that my hair seemed to stand on end. I would have shouted, I am sure, if I had not been too terrified to do so.

At the time of the adventure I was pulling the overland passenger train going east, and as we were a few minutes late, we were trying to make up a little time. After we had left Lowell, and almost two miles east of there, about half way across a long trestle, my fireman, George Lawrence, jumped down off his seat box and came quickly to my side of the engine. I noticed a startled look on his face, and turning quickly, asked what was the matter. The intensity of the situation can be understood only by a man who has traveled on an engine dashing at a high rate of speed through the darkness, with only confidence to keep his mind at ease. I knew that something was wrong, and it seems as if in that one short minute a million thoughts flashed through my mind. Again I asked Lawrence what was the matter, but he did not speak. His eyes seemed fixed. All he could do was to glare through the window of the cab and point ahead.

A cold perspiration broke out on my brow. I looked ahead and saw, through the darkness, some black-looking object on the track. My first thought was of some obstruction on the track. For a second the thought of jumping flashed through my mind, but I banished it.

This takes quite a while to tell, but it could only have been a few seconds, at the most, in which it all happened.

As soon as I saw the obstruction on the track I felt that a possible accident was at hand. Nothing could be done. We were too close to the danger and the fright had the same effect on me that it had on Lawrence. It took away my power of speech. Instinctively I crawled out of the cab on to the side of the engine.

The train dashed on, and an instant after I had discerned the form I saw the monster's eyes flashing through the darkness, green and yellow by turns. Lawrence was still in the cab, speechless, with fixed eyes, and finger outstretched toward the animal. His expression was frightful to look upon. The whole scene was so horrifying that it was photographed on my brain so clearly as to make me able to describe every detail that occurred in those few short seconds.

As the train approached the lion I could see it prepare to spring, and finally, when the leap was made, the situation was so dramatic as to be almost theatrical in effect. The headlight of the engine threw its rays on the crouching animal, and when it plunged into the flood of light it looked as if its mission of death would surely be successful.

The force of the jump was astonishing, and as the body of the beast crashed into the edge of the engine front the sound echoed through the silence again and again. To jump then was certain death, for we were right in the center of the trestle, and yet, as the lion made its leap, I could almost feel its hot breath on my throat.

When the engine crashed into the beast, or it crashed into the engine, whichever way you wish to put it, the lion fell back on to the trestle, writhing as if in frightful agony, and then, for the first time, I realized that the danger was over.

I learned afterward that the cougar, after we had struck it, lodged in the cross ties of the trestle. It was found there by the train crew of engine 498, who picked it up and brought it to Skykomish. There it was skinned. The claws were taken by some of the other firemen and engineers, who had watch charms made of them, which are very attractive and look somewhat like the emblems worn by the Knights Templar.

The beast was still alive when the men of No. 498 discovered it, but its hind legs were cut off, and when the men got down to investigate they kept at a safe distance until it was known to be dead. In fact, Foreman John C. Wright would not go near it until he had emptied a couple of chambers of his revolver into it. Then they fastened it to the cowcatcher and took it to Skykomish.

This is the whole story, and I assure you I do not want to pass through another such experience.

Engineer Depew is a fine specimen of manhood, and his statement that he felt frightened is not looked upon here, where he is known, as any expression of cowardice. Depew is five feet six inches in height, weighing 140 pounds, and is well known as the champion of the oppressed or weaker side in any dispute that calls for his action. His record as an engineer has on many occasions shown him to be a more than ordinarily brave man.

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Young Women Receive Diplomas.

At the Philadelphia hospital recently twenty-one bright young women received diplomas as trained nurses.

Bee 2-4-97

Big Men's Picnic.

Gracious! what a lot of big men there are. More of 'em came in here yesterday than we'd see in a month ordinarily. They came in twos and threes and sixes and they took the pants away as if finding pants to fit 'em was a novelty. Come to think of it it's a good deal of a novelty to see big men's pants selling at small boy's prices, and that's what all the fuss was about. Plenty on hand yet, too—enough probably to last over Saturday—but the earlier the call the better the picking. Here's the story again for those who haven't heard about it: About 500 pairs of large size pants—38-40-42 waists—left over from suits and going at about the value of the bare cloth that's in them—$1.75-$2.00 and $2.50 for pants that are easily worth $3.00 to $5.00 at The Nebraska. 'Tis an opportunity not to be overlooked, as the chances are you'll find a pair to match the identical coat and vest you're wearing.

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