

Woman Workers--

Telephone Girl

To the thousands of Omaha citizens who make use of the telephone as a daily, perhaps hourly necessity, "Central" is a disembodied voice, low and well modulated. Tempted by the sweetness of its tone audacious ones have even sought to lift the veil and behold the priestess only to meet with business-like rebuff, for Central is a busy young woman and the eye and ear of the chief operator are keen. Not to imply, of course, that the audacious one would meet with better fortune if the rules were less strict on the subject.

In the large exchange room of the telephone building sit eight young women with

the 'phone becomes engaged in conversation and fails to realize the flight of the minutes until he is confronted by his bill. Then there has usually been wrangling. Frequently also one girl looking at the clock from a certain angle would give an entirely different interpretation to the time from that of another operator differently located.

This difficulty has now been done away with by the "calculagraph," a clever device which registers minutes and seconds. When a patron begins a conversation the operator stamps the knob governing the machine and the exact second of the occurrence is registered. When the conversation is



MRS. M. J. FORD—TELEPHONE GIRL NO. 2—Photo by Louis R. Bostwick.

defert fingers and quick ears. Their work requires intelligence and education and the girls are above the average in dress and bearing. Each operator cares for 100 numbers, each of which surmounts a tiny trap door. When a patron makes a call a small electric bulb glows and the trap door falls. On a lower keyboard are columns of holes covering every 'phone on the list, and into the number sought for the operator thrusts the patron's plug. If the line is already in use the operator is warned by a slight jar in the transmitter pressed to her ear and she makes the stereotyped remark, "Talking now."

In addition to the privates in the ranks there are a number of young women who have proved themselves worthy of greater responsibilities. One of these is "No. 2," answering in everyday life to the name of Mrs. M. J. Ford. "No. 2" is a slender, business-like young woman and has been in the service in various capacities for ten years. While she has no other official title than her number, Mrs. Ford is to all purposes an assistant to the manager.

Duties of No. 2.

She works before a switchboard, as shown in the photograph presented herewith, and does in addition a large amount of office work. The switchboard is connected with the central exchange, the long distance exchange, the fire operator and every office in the building. Inquiries of every sort referring to the removal and setting up of telephones come to her desk and she is obliged to be thoroughly posted as to the prices of desk telephones, long distance batteries and all sorts of supplies and appliances. In addition to her labors, as a source of information Mrs. Ford carries a heavy burden of routine business and finds every hour of the day from 8 to 6 filled to overflowing.

Another number with an interesting personality behind it is "901," the long distance operator, who has under her charge five of the most intelligent girls in the service. When a customer announces that he wishes to speak to William White of Galesburg the operator must know where the city is located and how to obtain a wire straight to the desired destination.

Over the long distance wire a customer is charged by the minute and this time limit has been the source of much bitterness of spirit on the part of patrons. The man at

concluded the machine once more announces the time of day and any dissatisfied patron is confronted by the testimony of typewritten figures—which never lie.

Fire and Police Operator.

"No. 37," fire and police operator, is also a young woman of many cares and responsibilities. "In case of fire, call 37" is the flaming notice posted on every telephone in the city. When the location of the fire is announced, 37 presses a lever which sounds a gong in every fire house in the city. At the same instant the bars confining the horses are dropped by an electric connection and every animal springs to his place. The captain or lieutenant at each house hurries to his telephone and 37 announces the location several times in succession. If the fire is within his territory the captain shouts to his men and they are up and away. Under the old system of exclusive box alarms it was necessary to wait until the signal had been sounded on the gong, with a consequent loss of probably thirty seconds.

The emergency calls, however, make up the smallest part of 37's duties. Every hour, in the central districts every half hour, the eighty members of the police and detective forces call in for instructions from all over the city. If property has been lost or a crime committed it is 37's duty to give out the descriptions as read to her by the desk sergeant at the police station. Within sixty minutes, at an outside estimate, therefore, every patrolman on the force comes into any information which the captain in charge may wish him to make use of. If a patrolman fails to call in at the proper time, particularly at night, the operator at once notifies the station and detectives are sent to his beat to ascertain whether he has met with accident or foul play.

Comfort of Employees Provided For.

For the benefit of the young women employees the telephone management has provided every facility for comfort and good health. It is necessary that the windows should be located high above the floor to lock out the rumble of passing trucks and electric fans are largely relied upon for ventilation. Every girl comes under the grateful influence of these atmospheric disturbers and there is never a lack of cooling air currents. At the lunch hour most of the

girls open the baskets brought from home and spread them upon the long table in a cool room equipped for the purpose. There is an attendant who prepares tea and any small dish may be warmed at a moment's notice. There are also toilet and bath rooms with plenty of hot and cold water for those who wish to avail themselves of the bath facilities.

The hours of labor range between eight and nine, with a shifting scale. In order that the less desirable "tricks" may be apportioned among all alike. The full force remains on duty until 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening, when the greater portion goes home, the number dwindling rapidly until midnight, when only a half dozen are left to attend to the wants of those who sleep not.

While there is little leisure for the telephone operator, her work would not be considered exhausting and has many pleasant features. There are occasions, however, election nights and periods of excitement, when the public appears to rely upon the operator as a divinity who knows all things. People call her up to ask the time of day or to inquire whether it is going to rain. Two weeks ago, when it was announced in wholesale circles that a large jobbing house had decided to locate in Omaha, the fact was celebrated by a general blowing of whistles. The public had no warning of the news and every man rushed to his telephone. Almost every one of the 2,700 trap doors on the long keyboard dropped and the operators were hopelessly swamped for an hour.

Told Out of Court

A little Iowa girl was bitten by a dog at which she had thrown sticks and stones a few months before and this was pleaded in extenuation of damages, but the court laid down the doctrine that a "dog has no right to brood over its wrongs and remember in malice."

A newspaper item says the following is a will as it appears on the surrogate's record and published in the Syracuse (N. Y.) Herald:

"CICERO, August the 26, 1891.—I here By Draw up a Copy of a will in case of axident or death. I bequate the morgage on My Farm held by Richard Doyle to my wife, Mary Murphy, also the Money in Bank. Sined, TIMOTHY MURPHY.

"And I Bequate 20 Dollars per year from the incum of the farm to pay the det on the church until the church is Paid For. T. MURPHY.

"And I bequate 10 Dollars to St. Joseph society, New York, to have my name in the society and I bequate 25 Dollars to Allis Bauder and to put a suitable monument on my grave. Sined,

"TIMOTHY MURPHY."

The two last clauses were not held valid because not signed in the presence of witnesses.

A Maori chief who lost £40 through a white storekeeper going through the bankruptcy court has given the following lucid exposition of this particular branch of British jurisprudence: "The pakeha (white man) who wants to become pakarapu (insolvent) goes into business and gets lots of goods and does not pay for them. He then gets all the money he can together, say £2,000, and puts all of it except £5 away where no one can find it. With the £5 he goes to a judge of the court and tells him he wants to become pakarapu. The judge then calls all the lawyers together, likewise all the men to whom the pakeha owes money and he says: 'This man is pakarapu, but he wishes to give you all that he has got and so he has asked me to divide this £5 among you all.' The judge thereupon gives the lawyers £4 and the remaining £1 to the other men. Then the pakeha goes home."

Chinese Policemen--

Thirty Thousand in Peking

In costume a Chinese policeman is something between a circus clown and a foot ball player. His breeches are always baggy and very well wadded—so clumsy you wonder how he gets around in them—particularly when, as is often the case, he wears a coat, also thick and clumsy, coming well below the knees. Dark blue is the prevailing color, set off and accented with bands and facings of lighter blue, red, green, maroon and brown, but never yellow. That is the sacred or royal hue, permitted to nobody below the rank of a viceroys.

In the treaty ports, that is to say, those open to foreign influence and commerce, the police force is largely made up of Sikhs from northern India. The reason, perhaps, is that the Chinese themselves are so essentially unwarlike; they have a proverb

devils are to witness the review or the parade. The weapons are curious looking, but wicked in the extreme—the three-hooked spears they all carry in particular make jagged and ghastly wounds. Besides the 20,000 within the wall Peking maintains a force of 14,000 with which to regulate affairs in the outer city. They are under command of the same general officer and governed by the same regulations, though there are variations arising from the differences of situation. Men and officers alike furnish their own uniforms, but are armed by the state and receive a monthly rice allowance in addition to their pay. The chief gets a fair salary, but the men and subordinate officers are meagerly paid. Notwithstanding, they make and save money enough to retire after moderate terms of



Mother, Mrs. Ina Crandal. Grandmother, Mrs. Ursula Yasty. Great Grandmother, Mrs. Hannah Leah Zimmerman. Baby, Ruth Crandal.

PICTURE OF FIVE GENERATIONS RESIDING AT RIVERTON, Ia.—Photo by J. F. Lewis.

to the effect that "no good man is ever a soldier." As men in the pay of the Chinese government, whether natives or not, they have taken an active part in the present troubles in China.

The police rank officially as gendarmierie. In Peking the head of them is always a Manchu. Policemen must be plentier than blackberries in the Chinese capital. The sacred or imperial walled city keeps between 15,000 and 20,000 of them. This walled city is two miles square, with two great gates in each wall-face, half a mile from the corners, and a mile from each other. Broad streets stretch straight from one to another, thus cutting the space inside into a big nine-block. Police stations are scattered all along the nine squares, especially around their outer edges, which face upon the passway inside the wall. The head of the police has charge of all the city gates. They are nine in number—since the side next the palace proper has an extra gate in the exact middle of the two-mile wall. Policemen in this, the Tartar city, belong to what is known as the Eight Banner corps. They do not carry arms, not even so much as the baton of a civilized officer, but keep swords, spears, guns and cutlasses in racks at the stations and make a rush for them when they hear the signal gun. This is fired by an officer whose special charge it is, either upon orders, or if in his own judgment it is necessary. The penalty for firing it at the wrong time is severe—it may be degradation and banishment, or simply strangulation.

Upon parades and reviews the policemen are always armed, especially if foreign

service. "Influence" in the shape of cold cash stands the prisoner's friend in China even more than anywhere else in the world. In fact, but for the "presents" the force is allowed to squeeze out of natives and foreigners alike, there might be difficulty in getting men for the service, even though humanity is cheaper than dirt-cheap all over the Celestial empire.

A Memorandum

Detroit Journal: Being afflicted with an ingrowing nail upon his great toe, Socrates consulted the Delphic oracle.

"Cut a V in the edge of the nail!" said the oracle.

"But," said Socrates, who was nothing, if not disputatious, "there is no V in the Greek alphabet!"

The oracle perceived its faux pas at once, and was much nettled, hotly accusing Socrates of deliberately trying to make a monkey of it.

Plants that Reason

In order to find the true answer to this question a daughter of a prominent Mexican planter tried the following experiment: This young woman drove a nail in the wall some distance from the tendril of a morning glory plant. The tendril began at once to grow toward the nail. The nail was shifted; the tendril shifted its course. Finally a cord was hung up to tempt the tendril and it shifted its course toward the cord and left the nail which it had five times persisted in following.



CHINESE POLICEMEN—ARMED WITH THE CRUEL THREE-HOOKED SPEARS THEY CARRY ON PARADE.