

WITH the ruling of Postmaster General von Meyer against messenger boys being employed to carry special delivery letters, and the almost uniform child labor laws of the several states, the American cities are about to lose the famous training school for great business men—the messenger service, a democracy which is at once courageous, pugnacious, unafraid and irreverent, but in many ways the making of boys. Substitute mail carriers, full-grown men, will now carry the special deliveries instead of the lads of tender years; youths of 14 or over have taken the place of the little fellows, some of them little more than children, who formerly carried the telegrams for the Western Union and the Postal, and incidentally delivered all sorts of things for the general public.

About the telegraph office the older messengers are not given the encouragement to play with the lads, who are attracted to the smart little fellows. The percentage of messenger boys who become telegraph operators is constantly decreasing in Omaha, and the supposition is that other cities show the same condition. The young man of 14, 15 or even 16 who rides a "wagon," as the messengers call their bicycles, is less apt to have the sympathy of a good-natured superintendent than the little fellow of 10 or 12 years, and many of the older boys are not even allowed to come into the telegraph office, but receive the messages for delivery on the outside of a wire cage. Years ago the little fellows who served the great telegraph companies slept in the chairs, and it was no unusual sight for the superintendent to find his chair well occupied by a kid messenger. The older boys get business treatment and make almost as much as the men at the keys. The pay of a telegraph operator has little or no attraction for a youth of 16 who is making from \$5 to \$6 per month as a messenger. He looks upon his "profess" as the equal of the man at the key.



POSTOFFICE SPECIAL DELIVERY BOYS WHO ARE TO BE SUPPLANTED BY EXTRA CARRIERS.

nothing of the anti-pass law and its penalties and frequently ignore the conductors or pick up a talk. This gives them the tickets on which they try to buy sandwiches or "makings."

But the Omaha messenger boy is a good citizen. Save perhaps his inability to make up his mind to go home as often as he should, he is as good or even better than the average boy who works, and he will help a policeman catch a bad actor or keep faith with a grafter or law breaker, depending on which secures his promise first. He is almost always true to whichever side he is playing with and is no double dealer in any sense of the word.

In Omaha there are over 120 messenger boys. They are of all nationalities, but the largest number are Americans. Then come the Irish, and below that the Jews, Germans, Canadians, and now and then a Greek. But the Italian and Greek boys of Omaha have lost their place among the messenger boys of Omaha and moved upward into superior financial stratum. In which they black shoes and sell newspapers.

Some of the boys have objects in view and work for them independently of their contributions to the support of home. Almost every boy owns a good bicycle. The bicycle, or "wagon," as they call it, is stolen on the average of once or twice a year. Some times the boys recover the wheels without cost with the assistance of a friendly "cop," but usually they are compelled to give up \$2 or \$3 to a pawn shop, where the stolen wheel has been sold by the thief. Theaters get a good bit of the messenger boys' money, especially the 5-cent theaters and penny arcades. In the summer time the parks and places of amusement secure some of the velvet. Pie counters and restaurants secure nickles, dimes and street car tickets, some is devoted to gambling and a little to charity. J. J. Mahoney, the clerk of the police court, is authority for the statement that messenger boys are as scarce on his books as the names of newspaper men on the big book of fate at the penitentiary, where there are no newspaper writers.

"We can give the profess a clean bill of health," said the police clerk. "I don't know of a native Omaha messenger boy who has gone wrong. We had two fellows from Chicago here a year ago for a few days; they broke into a house and we got rid of them. The Omaha messenger boy is a good citizen—or rather he makes one, but as a boy he knows more than many citizens and is better able to know right from wrong."

Within the last few years the Omaha messenger boys have been spared turning many pages in the book of experience. The two big telegraph companies at least, do not cater to the business of the Red Light district. There is but one messenger office now in the center of the proscribed district. The telegraph companies do not maintain it. It is a private enterprise. To the credit of the incorporators it may be said that the managers send only the older boys to the brothels when telegrams are to be taken, and usually have no boys to spare to go to the district with packages from the office in the district, where there is but little business except that of the disorderly houses. The managers of telegraph companies in Omaha say very frankly that they do not desire to share in the profits of vice and it is unusual when their boys are compelled to go to the district, especially at night.

How many successful men about Omaha can look back to the days when they were messenger boys will never be known. Now and then one admits the fact without a feeling of shame, of course, but most of them are modest about referring to their humble beginning in Omaha.



BOYS WHO HANDLE WESTERN UNION MESSAGES.

W. C. Brown, now vice president of the New York Central Railroad company, was at one time in Omaha messenger boy and his opportunity came when a railroad superintendent engaged him to pile wood in the good old days when the engine used it for fuel. Mr. Brown was a plain telegraph messenger, and never knew what it was to start to work at night as the messenger boys of Omaha do now, just as the arc light starts to sputter out bravely against the evening darkness, when every street car seems outward bound and the street newsboy is trying to sell out at bargain-counter prices.

One of the best finished types of the Omaha messenger boy is a young man who is now the local editor of a Nebraska daily paper. When in Omaha he was known as "Forty," because he was the new boy on the force and the last number was "40" when the badge was issued for his cap. "Forty" came to Omaha in 1891 or 1892 from a newspaper office in Herman, Neb., where he had been the devil in the office until his printer came on, when the editor burned all

the cyclone relics and then closed down. Through all the seven years since the boy came to Omaha he has been known as "Forty" and when he was visiting Omaha recently he stepped into a downtown elevator. The young man at the steering wheel looked around at the opulent looking editor and said, "Hello, Forty, I have not seen you for a long time. Fide me, if I don't believe you're onto the ropes better than we used to be."

And "Forty" will probably carry this name for years to come, as he never earned any other distinctive title in the messenger service. He took up the burden of supporting himself when he arrived in Omaha, penniless, and influenced a bicycle repairer to rent him a "wagon." Then he went into the profess and in a few days was enabled to do as the other messengers did and open the office door by pushing against it with his back, slide up to the counter over the polished floor and stop when he hit it with a thud. He took parcels, telegrams, bombon spoils of thread, flowers, letters and drinks to places which led his footsteps to where the lights streamed out of the front doors in the Red Light district; he found men drinking at downtown bars and made dates with them for other men or sometimes for other women. He was out to Dundee, where the air was pure, and in the dark corners of South Omaha, where it was not. He carried a few cents worth of merchandise to fashionable residences and several hundred dollars worth of revenue stamps to the distillery. One day he carried a package of type from the printer to an upstart printing office and stood and grinned at the type cases and printing presses when he arrived at his destination. That proved his undoing and before he knew what he was saying he offered to "throw the type in" or "lay the font."

Forty cut out the messenger business, which was bum back in 1901 and good for something like \$30 per month without a place to "cooper bottom." He got a job in the printing office at \$4 per week and a bunk, which he pulled out every night from beneath a table where the "print" was stored.

From that day on "Forty" stuck type and stuck to his position, compositor, foreman and then manager of a good-sized printing shop. He considered that he was half an orphan, though both his father and mother were living, and got married two years ago, accepting a place on a Nebraska farm, where he was a printer. His story has never been remarkable, but serves to illustrate the fact that the messenger service, which brings young boys into contact with business men as they go shuffling along among the thronging, picturesque incoherent characters in a city like Omaha, usually has an opportunity knock early and they get into the harness and "grow up" in some business, instead of succumbing by way of the school room.

Among all the remarkable stories told of Omaha messengers a recent story shows an interesting film in the moving picture show of a messenger's life.

Probably the messenger boy was known as "Twenty," and he was not that age by almost five years. There is a woman in Omaha who owns a big disorderly house in the Red Light district and she has left her husband. Her boy, a lad of 11, was brought to Omaha and the mother showed her maternal care by securing for her own son a place as a messenger boy to work in the district that she might have him under her protecting care. But one day the boy's father arrived in Omaha and demanded the boy. He was surrendered by the mother and taken to Kansas City, where he was cared for at school and kept at his boarding house with his father, six months went by and the mother wanted her boy with her, even if she had to give up the life she was leading. To secure possession of the boy all she had to do was to ring the messenger box, for she called a messenger boy from the office and told him she was a messenger's mother. He left that night for Missouri, and hunted up the former messenger boy in Kansas City.

"What you playin'," said "Twenty," when he found the boy for whom he was looking. "Bark for Omaha wild me; this is a pull-out of a town and we get no business here."

Both boys made for the depot, "Twenty" producing two tickets to Omaha. The boys arrived the next morning. Asked how much the woman paid him for the kidnapping of her son and bringing him back to Omaha, "Twenty" said "Kansas City." The boy's father at first notified the police, and then decided to allow the boy to remain in Omaha.

But the little messenger boy is not to live all his life at once in the future, nor is he going to live it until he is prepared in the school room, for going out into the world the equal in book education at least, of those with whom he will associate in the future, and he will secure his training from the teachers in healthy school rooms, instead of at the gatherings of the wisdom of the street in the cellar restaurants; his physical training will be in base ball, basketball and the gymnasium instead of pumping a "bike" or running over the cobble stones, dodging frivolous automobiles and changing street cars; his baths may be taken in the plunges of the gymnasiums instead of in the lakes. When the light of dawn breaks in the dawn town district, the messenger boy at Omaha will be resisting the efforts of a father and mother to pull him out from between blankets in an unreasonably impossible view of life in his young head, just pale-faced policemen and the thousands of people just going to work.

And the change has shown that the little boy is not needed to make the great city move and that grown folks can perpetually renew their strenuous and do all the work there is to be done and make money enough to make room for the messenger boy in the school room.



O. M. E. BOYS IN FRONT OF HEADQUARTERS.



NEWSBOYS IN THE BEE ALLEY, READY TO START.

paying tender at one of the banks by the time he reached 16 or 18, and it was a boy of courage who joined the ranks after he was 18 years of age unless his stature was small. But the wages have gone up again within the last few years and the messenger boys in the telegraph offices of Omaha are guaranteed \$30 per month, with a good "commish" and overtime allowance. The average age of the messenger boys is 16 years and the average time will be closer to 12 than ever before.

But with the advancing age of the messengers the general public and superintendents of telegraph companies have noted but few changes in the habits of the messengers of Omaha. They still shamble along with the peculiar, live and snappy shuffle of their kind, which tells of their three months in the service. They still quarrel over who goes out next and who goes to the places where tips are surest, and they still lounge languidly back to headquarters, where managers are wondering whether the messengers have any more of their kind, accepted another position, gone in search of a stolen bicycle or over to Council Bluffs to welcome the first machine in the New York to Paris automobile race.

Anyone of the numerous things which attract a youth may take a messenger of which on the return trip, live and snappy faithful going out and gets rid of the message first. The independence of the messenger boy is caused by the \$30 per month. They are earning a definite wage instead of being out for themselves as independent commercial adventurers. He takes a distinguished view of the "commish" and is not much worried as to what happens to him, as he has a minimum income and the company usually needs boys.

About the office the Omaha messenger boy is much the same as in other cities. He is a creature of habit—or rather, acts with all the messenger boys in whatever they decided to do in a mass. Sometimes the fact is to wear uniforms and every kid on the force kicks for a new uniform. The company usually complies. A couple of months slip by and the uniform fades is forgotten. Almost every kid on the force then wears something different from the other fellows. One will have a yellow sweater and another a red one, or the stripes will run in different directions. Sometimes the novel-reading fad will strike the forty-five messenger boys in the Western Union office at once. Each boy buys a copy of a 5-center on the order of "One-eyed Dick," the "Samson," or "Wildy Name Only." Then without library tickets or the endorsement of taxpayers the boys pass the yellowbacks around and perfect a circulating library system which gives each boy the perusal of forty-five novels for the price of one.

Some of the innocent fads have passed away with the small boy, and the older ones take to cards now and then. They are drawn out of the pool rooms and billiard halls, but usually arrange to have a private club room in the basement of the office, where not infrequently shoes, caps, future earnings and street car tickets are placed recklessly on the turn of the other fellow's disc. Street car tickets are the medium of exchange between messenger boys during the long intervals between pay-day—the day from which messengers reckon time. The company furnishes tickets for many trips, but the kids know

Finding New and Useful Ways of Developing Electrical Currents

Rival for Union Pacific Motors.

A MOTOR car propelled by the Strang gas-electric system, combining the primary and secondary power principles, was recently given a trial trip on the Baltimore & Ohio railroad between Philadelphia and Wilmington. The car is entirely of steel and seats seventy-five passengers.

The Strang system consists of a gas engine with a direct connected generator, electric transmission and control, direct electrical connection between the generator and truck motors and a storage battery. The operation of the car is virtually the same as an interurban trolley car, but, unlike the trolley car, it produces its own current and is independent of trolley wire and powerhouse. In fact, it carries a complete powerhouse with it.

The generator and engine have a capacity sufficient for normal requirements, the generator furnishing all the current necessary; but when starting or when ascending a grade the current necessary would demand an engine and generator of much larger capacity were it not for the storage battery. The storage battery takes care of what is called the "peak" of the load, or that which is in excess of normal requirements. The storage battery is charged

while the car is "coasting" down grades, coming to a stop or standing still, the engine running until automatically throttled, when the batteries attain the full capacity. Elasticity of power application is recognized as a most important factor in the run of a heavy car. The storage battery in this case admits of the minimizing of the power plant. The car carries enough gasoline to propel it 200 miles, consuming about six-tenths of a gallon per mile. Its normal speed is about fifty-five miles an hour, and a motor car can haul several other cars. In the event of accident its stored electricity alone is expected to carry it fifteen miles.

Transmitted Water-Power.

Nearly a hundred cities in the United States alone are today using electricity supplied by transmitted water power. Ten years ago Niagara Falls was a scientific interest only, today it is distributing over 10,000 horse power to Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, Toronto and other smaller places. Spills falls, north of Saratoga, which supplies the industrial cities of Schenectady, Amsterdam, Troy and Albany with electrical current was practically unheard of; no man had so much as dreamed of harnessing the Kern river, the Feather river or any other stream in the

Sierra Nevada range, which now supply every city on the Pacific coast with cheap electricity. The great water power development in the south along the Yuba and Yaludin rivers were not even spoken of. The transmission of water power has increased manufacturing to a very marked degree. The population of cities provided with cheap current has increased as manufacturing plants flocked to the places where economical power was available. Millions of pounds of coal have been saved and the electrical industry has been stimulated to new and greater possibilities.

Writing by Wire.

Is the telegraph instrument, with its code of dots and dashes, doomed? One may well ask the question after hearing about the latest scientific marvel, by which it is possible to write a message which is produced simultaneously miles away in facsimile writing. This wonderful machine, reports the Stellar Ray, has already been brought to such a state of simplicity and perfection that it is in use in several London offices, and ere long will probably be used as largely as the telephone is today. As a matter of fact, the machine consists of a sender and receiver, with telephone attached, and it is connected to the ordinary telephone line without interfering in any way with its service.

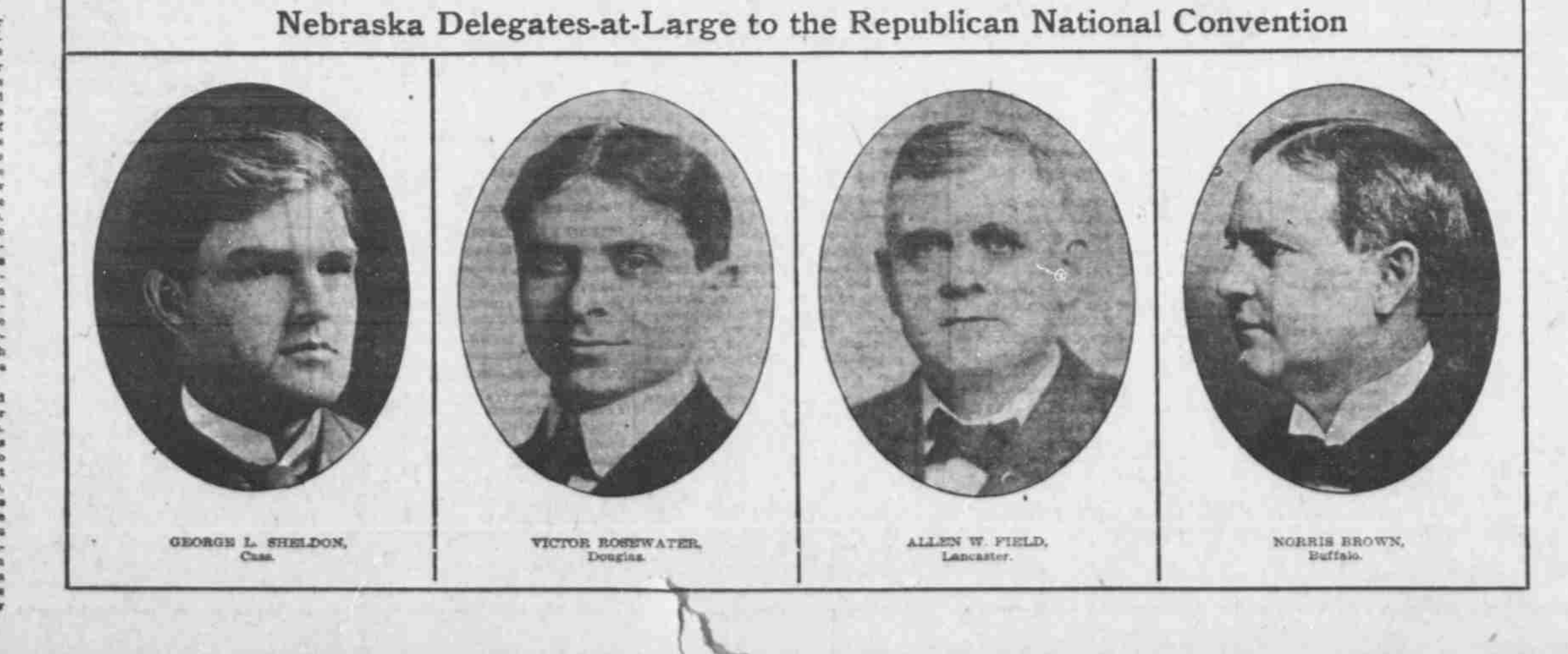
The instrument is used in a hundred ways where a telephone might be undesirable. For example, messages in the sender's own handwriting can be sent instantaneously to someone without any third party overhearing, as is possible in the case of a telephone. A message can be signed, and the signature is just as convincing as if it were the original, while the time which would be taken in sending a messenger is saved, and yet a record of the message can be kept. The chance of bogus messages is reduced to a minimum. A remarkable feature of this machine is that sketches and designs can also be sent by wire. As soon as the sender's pencil is taken up, the pen of the receiver, miles and miles away, comes out of the ink, and moving as if by magic, traces exactly what is written or drawn at the other end.

Electricity for Austrian Railroads.

It was stated in a lecture recently delivered by Professor von Forstel of the Department of Railways, before the Austrian Society of Engineers and Architects, at Vienna, that the constantly increasing price of coal tends to render steam traction on railways an unprofitable undertaking in Austria, and emphasizes the necessity for the immediate introduction of electricity for the working of the Alpine railways. The value of coal during the

last two financial periods for the state railways has risen 64 per cent. In these circumstances it becomes essential to substitute electric traction for the steam locomotive; generating the requisite current by means of hydraulic power, which can be had with advantage in those very localities which, owing to the steep gradients on the railway, involve a large amount of power for traction purposes. It is never-the-less doubtful whether the railway authorities of those countries supplied with abundance of hydraulic energy and forced to contend against the high price of coal would have taken such a lively interest in electrification questions if in electro-metallurgical science the progress made had not been so rapid, and the practical success achieved had been less perfect than it is. The authorities are greatly perturbed when they are confronted with the danger that all the water power available should be absorbed by manufacturers and speculators before the needs of the railways, which were largely worked by the state, had been satisfied. In order to provide against this danger, various measures were at once taken in all those countries in which the water power could be employed for traction purposes on the railways, so as to secure at least a portion of the hydraulic energy for railway use.

Nebraska Delegates-at-Large to the Republican National Convention



GEORGE L. SHELDON, Chas.

VICTOR ROSEWATER, Douglas.

ALLEN W. FIELD, Lancaster.

NORRIS BROWN, Buffalo.