

MESSENGERS OF MODERN COMMERCE UNLIKE MERCURY

Some of the Men Who Toil Early and Late in the Cold of Zero Weather that the Wants of Man May Be Satisfied and the Comforts of Home May Be Preserved



Daily Papers for the Trains



Baker Man on a cold day



Grocer Boy and the Family Dinner



Coal Man Always Busy



New Type of Messenger



The Mail Man in the Suburbs

WITH hurrying feet the delivery man speeds about ministering to a city's needs. It is a long day of exacting service for those delivery folk. Through the storm and snow they come to your door bringing all of the materials of life. All that you eat or wear, the paper that you read, letters from friends afar or insistent creditors near by, your baggage, the fuel that fills the ever-voracious maw of the furnace, messages and missives of business and social life—these are all laid at your elbow at your bidding. Business or amusements may lead you where you will, but the things you live on are laid on the threshold.

The day's routine brings a train of servitors to your home, who have come to figure so mechanically in the running of life that you perhaps are hardly aware of their existence until a cog in the machine slips.

When the coal bin suddenly reveals an empty nothingness just when the chill comes climbing in, or when the paper boy goes whistling by with your evening daily in his sack, then you realize how much a part of existence these otherwise insignificant servitors have become.

Pull yourself away from the easy channel of accepting things as they are for a moment and see what these delivery folk are just now in the heart of the winter season when wants are many and imperious.

Just imagine that all the delivery men took a mid-winter vacation. Fancy yourself at the office telephone in the evening just before starting home, the mistress of your household on the other end of the wire.

"Now, John, would you mind doing a little shopping for me? Please bring home a ton of coal, two pounds of steak, a bottle of double cream, those carnations I ordered and—"

"Hello, and say, dear, you might stop by the postoffice and get the mail."

That would be a nice mess to get up against, wouldn't it? It takes some aviation of fancy to get the idea, but those would be the stern facts presenting the impossible problem. The delivery people are solving it for you now. Every man his own messenger boy and delivery man would make a large, cumbersome joke out of the social fabric.

Milkman Comes First

Early this morning before you get up the first of the day's very useful callers was at your back door, the milkman. He was busy loading his wagons out at the suburb establishment or maybe down-town at the creamery just at the tail-end of the night and was on his way rattling down the city street before the last of the stars were gone. He rises early and he's in a hurry all day, this milkman chap.

It is up to the milkman to get the cream around to the kitchen door in time for your breakfast coffee. The remarks that you make to the cook when he goes wrong and gets late are likely to get back to him, and you may be assured they will lose nothing of earnest fervor in transmission.

With about a hundred or so of breakfasts to connect with this milk dispenser has to be on the move. In his hurried flight in the early twilight he does, however, get a glimpse of your home life from an angle that you don't know anything about.

The milkman gets wise while you are sleeping, all from a little glimpse of the back yard, a bit of porch and maybe a glimpse into the kitchen. Of course he's mainly interested in his own work and forced by the lonely hours that are his to refrain from much of gossip.

The milkman is very fond of the home where the empty bottles are always on the back porch on time and each duly accompanied by the ticket or coupon for the new supply. He is willing to overlook most anything that does not mean delay. There are other breakfast tables waiting and he must be on his way.

Old Dobbins must trot down the alleys at a merry clip if someone does not have to drink black coffee or resort to the suspiciously syrup-like condensed product. So, if you would stand well with your milkman and save the spilling of a lot of lambent profanity on the cold, pure air of the morn, have your empty bottle out early.

Watching for the Postman

There is a lot more that is personal in your relations with the text of the early callers, this time a front door character, the postman. He is a much-anticipated and eagerly-watched-for visitor.

The postman's advance up the street these cold and blustering days is observed and watched with many a face pressed against the frosty window pane.

Fitting along from house to house this postman has a merry time of it. He gets a dozen confidences in a block like as not and he must vicariously bear the burden of reproach for a lot of neglected correspondents. If Brother Bill forgets to write his usual Sunday letter there will be a disappointed frown for the postman from the little sister who waits on the front step. It is up to the postman to deliver the goods whether it was mailed or not.

"It would be funny if it wasn't for the postiferousness of it all," remarked the letter carrier with a sudden burst of communicativeness. "You'd be surprised at the requests we meet these days. Why, those snowbound, shut-in people would hand the postman



Baggage Man Always on the Job

every errand from the purchase of a postage stamp to a pair of shoes for baby.

"It is an interesting study, this daily grind of studying a route, if one takes it that way.

"There are those lonely people to whom my daily visit is an event. They enjoy a chance to be just a trifle neighborly and drop a bit of confidence. Now, there's that dear old woman up there in the next block who is out at the gate waiting for me now. I'll be sure to hear how she's worried for fear Mary is sick and can't write.

"Then there's a little tot at the next house who always comes out in the front yard to lip a few of the family secrets before she is captured by her mother or I get through with the mail for the flat.

"It is just a series of little things that keep away the monotony. Why, a fellow gets to have a sort of personal interest in dozens of families."

Then the blue-coated servant of the public drew his pouch up with a hitch to adjust the strap across the shoulder, drawn low by



Milk Man never Stops

the burdens of many a year's letters. Down in the mail man's sack was a collection of messages in varying strains. To one home he leaves joy, to another sorrow. It is his function to scatter them all into the homes of the great city.

Coming of the Coal Man

A really important visitor in these days of gloomy chill is the coal man. His calls come high, but they are indispensable. The half-smothered rattle of the jetty chunks sliding down the chute into the basement makes a noise like a flock of dollar bills.

Cold weather means more work for the drays. Big heaping loads of fuel go crunching over the snow-coated pavements with rattons for an unusually hungry lot of furnaces.

There is a smile on the face of the coal man as he passes the ice wagon. It is his inning now but wait until summer comes—the other man will be wearing the smile.

There is something funereally serious about the countenance of

the coal man in spite of his smile. The coal man leads a dark life. He is a grim creature of profits and cellar ways.

There is a grave possibility that the next shameful discovery will be the combine for the illegal production of trade between the coal man and the weather man. Think of the limitless possibilities of such an unholy alliance.

You have to dig deep for what the coal man has dug.

A fitting, effervescent character among those who fetch and carry is the joyous messenger boy. His is the real variety life. He delivers you a telegram at your business office and returns from there, perhaps, to carry some gallant's note with a box of flowers. The day's errands place him in touch with all sorts and conditions of people. In the bright period of youth before things begin to look solemn and serious these lads gain a degree of experience that inevitably must make them seem worldly-wise little chaps.

Merry Little Messenger

The messenger boy has a chance. Some remarkable examples of success from lowly starts have been shown by messenger boys who learned to run their experience to account.

Even to be a success as a messenger boy calls for a degree of acuteness. One sometimes finds it quite a task to find even a familiar acquaintance in the rambles about the city. The messenger boy is put up against the problem of finding total strangers every hour. He generally gets away with his task, too.

The frivolities of the stage and comic prints have pictured the messenger boy as the child mind in the throes of the dime novel habit. The picture is hardly true. Look into the life of a typical group of Omaha's messenger boys and you will find a fair number of them in schools a part of the day. The competition for boys' jobs has raised the standard and the child labor law has got in its work as well.

Don't put up the messenger boy as an angel child, however. One guilty little rascal broke up an Omaha romance the other day. Jimmy delivered the note that went with the flowers with the package of bonbons while the flower girl got the bonbon note.

The mixture produced a situation in the affairs of the donor that was entirely beyond explanation. Then, besides, the flowers were frozen while Jimmy took a few slides with the coasters on his way.

The mischief don't always work harm. Denver has produced a messenger boy who has become the rescuing hero through pure meddlesomeness. He pried into a note which a young woman had given him to deliver and found it to be her farewell to the world on the eve of self-destruction.

Like the hero in the "ten-twenty-thirty," he came in with the life-saving stunt in the last act. The police got there in time and the prying messenger kid was crowned with public glory for his performance.

The field of experience for the rambling messenger boy are many. A woman living in the west part of the city last week was suddenly served with one of those appealing notices from the police to clear the snow from the walks. Nobody available to do the work; help was a problem. Ah, happy thought, the trusty messenger boy. A half hour later a busy boy with a badge on his cap was making the drifts fly.

He's an all-around convenience that messenger boy. He has to answer calls to climb trees to rescue ill-guided kittens, and in one rich instance a messenger boy was put at the task of rocking the baby to sleep in an Omaha home while the parents attended the theater.

The season of bitter winter has given the delivery people a situation to face. The people who carry the burdens had real work to do, too, for never did Santa Claus do a bigger business in Omaha than on the Christmas just past.

The heavy snowfall and iced pavement forced traffic in downtown streets to follow the lines laid bare by the car track sweepers. This forced the delivery folk into the formation of caravans which, of course, made the car men happy.

Look over the stream of traffic on the streets and you will find that practically all of it is concerned with some branch of the delivery business.

Detective Burns a Famous Worker

NEW YORK, Jan. 1.—William J. Burns, who has just started a national detective association and taken one of their biggest jobs from the Pinkertons, had been doing the protective work of the American Bankers' association for three weeks before anybody knew anything about it except himself, his clients and the Pinkertons, whom he superceded. It was not until he had been tried and had given satisfaction that the announcement was made, and then by the bankers' association itself. It is one of Burns' characteristics to do his work without any "noise."

If you find Mr. Burns in the offices of the William J. Burns National Detective association in the Park Row building you discover a man of about medium height, broad-shouldered, with prominent features and a pair of gray eyes that bore through you and the wall beyond. It is hard to guess his age, for his hair, which is of a reddish brown, seems untouched by age, while his mustache, which is of a lighter color, is liberally streaked with gray. His manner is alert and positive. He speaks slowly and distinctly, but you get the impression that while he is talking he is not only answering your questions, but weighing something else in his mind at the same time. Then, too, you get the impression that if you attempted to pull a gun on him he would have his pointed at you before yours was out of your pocket.

Mr. Burns said that his age was 49 and that he was born in Baltimore and was sorry he had a rule about not being interviewed. Yes, he had read "Sherlock Holmes" and liked it, but thought chasing crooks was more interesting than reading about them. To be a good detective nowadays a man must

be honest to begin with. He must have a gift of intuition; he must be persistent, and then he must be broad enough to make his theories fit facts instead of trying to mould No. 10 facts into a No. 3 theory. That was all, and good day.

He has his work cut out for him, has Mr. Burns, for he will have hundreds of men under him, and he expects to have offices in every city of importance in the United States and to exercise personal supervision over all of them. At present he has as correspondents all the principal detective agencies in the United States except the Pinkertons. The Pinkertons issued a statement the other day in which they predicted that crimes on banks by all classes of professional criminals would very greatly increase and that insurance on bank safes and vaults would go up, but Burns only replied that he was willing to be judged by results.

Before Burns went after the grafters in the Oregon land frauds, which was his big job preceding his trailing of the grafters in San Francisco, he had had a remarkable career in the secret service of the Treasury department. Chief Wilkie called him his star man, and Burns had run down not only noted counterfeiters, but smugglers and every sort of criminal with which the Treasury department has to deal.

Burns' father was commissioner of police in Columbus, O., and there he got in touch first with police work. He showed an aptitude for it, but his first real detective work was done in 1885, in connection with what was known as the "tally sheet forgery," when in the state elections the tally sheets in Columbus and Cincinnati were altered, in one case a candidate getting \$85 instead of \$25 votes. Burns assisted in running the

(Continued on Page Three.)