

interesting canvases in oil and pretty bits of water color.

Mrs. E. A. Ross had perhaps the largest collection, and as this was the first opportunity the Lincoln people have had of inspecting her work it attracted considerable attention. Mrs. Ross has been a traveler and has availed herself of the best instruction in the art centres of the world. Others who exhibited pictures were Misses Clara Walsh, Sara Hayden and Mundy. Mrs. Henry Mayer exhibited two exceedingly handsome specimens of pyrography as did also Mrs. H. H. Everett. Mrs. Ralph E. Johnson had a number of fine specimens of pyrography done on wood, leather and velvet. Mrs. Johnson makes a specialty of faces, which is rare in this line of work. Miss Lippincott also had many pieces of burnt wood.

There was a display of handsome china shown by Mesdames E. P. Brown, A. G. Greenlee, Stephen Brock, and Misses Lippincott, Mundy and Craig.

Many ladies availed themselves of the opportunity to purchase Christmas presents during the exhibit as most of the articles offered were for sale or else the owners were willing to duplicate them.

Bridge whist is said to be more than ever popular in the east this winter. It is said, too, that many more play for money than ever before, the conscientious scruples of many of its votaries having apparently been overcome so that now a whist player who still refuses to "gamble" is made decidedly uncomfortable by finding that if she plays she is generally carried by her partner. Many conservative old card players who were last year loyal to "scientific old fashioned whist," as they said, have succumbed and are this season playing bridge.

Rural Free Mail Delivery

The growth of the rural free mail delivery in the last year has been a marvellous one. A striking comparison between the present year and 1901 is shown. On March 1, 1901, there had been 3,391 routes established. By May 1, 1902, the number had increased to 8,458, or 5,067 more than fourteen months previous. The routes in operation on March, 1901, with the increase by May, 1902, in several of the western states are: Nebraska from 68 to 207, Kansas from 187 to 470, Colorado from 28 to 41, South Dakota from 21 to 52, Missouri from 85 to 287, Iowa from 292 to 778, Illinois from 337 to 701, Wisconsin from 197 to 380, Minnesota from 120 to 270. There were 9,904 petitions for new routes on file on May 1902.

The appropriation by congress for the free delivery of rural mails for the fiscal year July 1, 1902, to June 30, 1903, is \$7,523,400. The service is no longer treated as experimental, but provision is made for it on precisely the same basis as for the older branches of the post-office work. The establishment of new routes is proceeding as rapidly as possible under existing conditions, and it is estimated that on June 30, 1902, the total population served by free delivery of rural mails will be 5,820,000, while the total number of country residents eligible for the advantages of such delivery is estimated to be 21,000,000.

This service, when fully inaugurated, will very nearly meet the requirements of article V of the international postal convention at Vienna, on July 4, 1891, by which the members of the Postal Union undertook the delivery of mail "at the residences of addressees in the countries of the union where a delivery service is or shall be organized."

The rural free delivery is organized under the first assistant postmaster-general, by whom the direct supervision of the work is committed to the general superintendent of the free-delivery system. The principal officials are a superintendent in charge of installation, a superintendent in charge of inspection of the service established and of the investigation of complaints, seven special agents in charge of divisions, and sixty special agents and seventy-five route inspectors detailed for active service in the field.

The delivery of mails by rural carriers is extended in response to petitions presented by the people desiring the service upon forms prepared by the department, which include a diagram of the proposed route. It is required that the route shall be from 20 to 25 miles in length, so laid out that the carrier will not have to traverse the same road on his return as on his outward trip, and so adjusted that at least 100 domiciles shall be included in the service. Such a petition,

when presented to the department with the approval of the congressional representative of the district or of one of the senators from the state in which the service is asked for, is investigated by one of the special agents in the field, who transmits the papers, with a map of the route or routes to be followed, to the superintendent in Washington for his adjudication.

Applicants for the position of rural carrier are subjected to a very simple examination in respect to their qualifications for the service and the esteem in which they are held by the inhabitants along the routes they are to serve. The limits of age are from 17 to 55 years, except in the case of physically competent veterans of the Civil war or the Spanish war.

The annual pay of the rural carrier is \$600, payable monthly, out of which he must provide his own horse and vehicle. The practice of wearing uniform is not obligatory, but is generally followed. Carriers are permitted to carry passengers and unmailable packages for pay, provided this does not interfere with the proper handling of mails. Under certain restrictions also a carrier may act as news agent and carrier for newspapers. The carrier delivers and collects mail all along the route, usually from approved boxes provided by the patrons along the roadside at such height that he can reach them without alighting from his vehicle. As a rule, the carrier leaves the postoffice at which his work begins as soon as possible after the arrival and distribution of the principal morning mail and returns in time to dispatch his collection by the evening mail. He cancels all letters collected by him, mailing them in the postoffice from which his service originates unless they require delivery en route. He is empowered to register and deliver registered letters and to give receipts for money orders. He carries a supply of stamps for sale and is authorized to affix the requisite postage to unstamped letters and packages, provided the necessary money is deposited in the roadside box with the mail.

Each carrier must furnish a bond for \$500 and furnish a substitute similarly bonded, who will perform the duties when the carrier is disabled or absent. The substitute receives the carrier's pay.

The number of routes in operation on May 1, 1902, was 8,438, and the number of petitions for new routes pending on that date was 9,904.

The portraits of Washington and Lafayette, which during the last session were exhibited in the corridor of the house of representatives, now hang in the chamber. The paintings by Bierstadt, "Hendrick Hudson Discovering the Hudson" and "The Expedition of Viscaiaus Landing at Monterey in 1603," have been hung at the east and west ends of the lobby.

French weavers employed by a Fifth avenue art dealer are now at work in New York on the tapestries which are to cover the walls of the dining-room of the mansion in course of construction for Charles M. Schwab on Riverside drive. The tapestries, which will cost in the neighborhood of \$50,000, are after the fashion of the period of Louis XIV and will not be completed for at least two years.

Martin Lane had been telling stories of his war-time experiences. "Strikes me you couldn't have been a very fierce one after blood, Martin," said one of his neighbors at the close of a tale of carnage. "Let's see; how many do you call late you actually made away with in that engagement?"

Mr. Lane's cheeks were still flushed with the excitement of the story. "I'll tell you one thing," he said, with mild resentment. "I made away with just as many o' them as they did o' me!"

A bashful young minister was once asked to preach before the students of Wellesley college. His embarrassment when he entered the dining-room for breakfast Sunday morning and found himself the only man among 350 girls was overwhelming. He was asked to say grace, and hastily delivered himself of the following: "Oh Lord, bless this food to our use, and may this meat make us all strong men!"—K. R. E. in Good Housekeeping.

"I wish I was a polly-wog." "Why?" "Cause I couldn't be spanked."—Life.

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