

# RECOLLECTIONS OF THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS SPENT IN RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE

By N. H. POWER

(Editor's Note—This article was written by Mr. Power upon request, the substance of which was delivered in an address by him at a Farmington Exchange Club gathering in January.)

(Continued from last week)

One of the valuable things a postal clerk learns through his connection with the service is the necessity of being on time. Fast trains do not wait. Nine o'clock does not mean ten and today does not mean tomorrow. Some dirt-novoking things used to happen. One day while I was a second clerk on the day run we had reached Kalamazoo after a trip that seemed filled with expediting experience. I now the clerk in charge of the car that day was a very efficient man, but also a very profane one when annoyed. Just as the train stopped at Kalamazoo while trying to tie a package of letters the string broke and they went spinning over the floor. There was nearly a hundred of them and he had to pick most of them up one at a time. He made some remarks that made that end of the car look blue. Just as the well-dressed gentleman came up to the car and addressing me said he had long desired to ride in a mail car and see the clerks at work. Could he be allowed to do so? I replied "Just speak to the clerk in charge at the other end of the car." This he did. The clerk said to him "What is your business, sir?" "I am a minister of the gospel," was the reply. "Get right on, I know of no place on earth where one is needed more than he is here." He got on rode forty miles with us, asked many questions of the clerk in charge and was treated with the utmost courtesy.

Unless one is in direct contact with the mail service in the large cities he has little conception of the magnitude of its operations. If I should say that more mail is handled in the M. C. depot in 24 hours than comes to Farmington in six months you might not believe me, but I think I would not be far out of the way. On the big trunk line railroads of the country there are solid mail trains of ten or twelve cars loaded to capacity and carrying crews of thirty clerks, distributing the mail en route. Hundreds and thousands of tons are received and dispatched daily in the big cities of the country and the business runs into vast sums of money. Christmas means a terrific strain upon the mail service. It is much better taken care of now than formerly. Now extra help is hired, buildings are secured at different places in the great cities giving the floor space needed and making it possible to mail parcels without going to the main office where the jam is apt to be great. Extra trains are put on and extra clerks are hired. Years ago the day before Christmas I saw in the old Michigan Central depot at Detroit fifty-eight pouches of Michigan mail. We could not touch it. Some of it had been there nearly a week. Our orders were to take care of the Christmas mail first. We were covered up. There was mail everywhere. Indoors and out because the clerks were worn out because of the long hours they had been on duty. Those days have gone and the department is using better methods and a more liberal policy handling the great volume of Christmas mail promptly and satisfactorily. With the years have come other improvements. One of the greatest and most appreciated and used is the parcel post. A mammoth business that brought thousands of dollars to the express companies in the years before the parcel post was created. Formerly the department allowed the registration of parcels of the fourth class for domestic delivery. This meant that a record must be kept and a receipt given and secured by all who handled them, entailing a lot of work that was exacting and time consuming. Parcels can be insured now at the office of origin but not registered. A great and decided improvement. One of the things dreaded by all clerks is the foreign mail, a large quantity of which is received daily from Europe. Clerks are working constantly on the great ocean liners putting this mail up by states. We received this mail in large sacks labeled Michigan. There was gloom in the mail car when this mail was received for we could work three sacks of domestic letters, while we were working

civilization. What has it meant to us here in Farmington? Over five years it has served us. January 7, 1926 Dr. Webb was commissioned its first postmaster. In the 101 years that have elapsed 21 men have served us as postmasters, including the present incumbent who was commissioned November 29, 1915. All of them have passed on with the exception of M. B. Pierce.

The years come and go as do all earthly interests but the post office still remains with its all important and efficient service. In conclusion I will say that in my long service I was under thirteen postmaster generals. Timothy O. Howe of Wisconsin was the first one and the present incumbent, John C. New, the last. Most of them were able men and gave the best department of the government splendid talents and increased its capacity for service. I am very thankful indeed to the great giver of life that I had strength and health to serve the best government and the most intelligent and forbearing people that the world has ever known.

### Radio and Architecture

Sound amplification, one of the by-products of radio, is having its effect on architecture. The size of buildings for big meetings is no longer limited by the range of the human voice. Chicago is talking about a municipal auditorium for political conventions and so on, to seat 125,000 persons. This will be about the size of the Yankee stadium roofed over. Even the voice of the most leather-lunged politician or circus announcer will need considerable assistance to reach to the purlieus of it.

### Better Health Habits

#### Due to Advertising

Advertising campaigns have done more to change the habits of the nation in the matter of sanitation and cleanliness than the speeches of all the uplifters who have uplifted their voices in the past fifty years.

Some do not remember the old tin bathtubs and unsanitary plumbing of an earlier day, but invention and advertising have actually changed the bathing habits of the American people to the everlasting good of our national health. The universal full-whiskered man of forty years ago has disappeared through the influence of the safety razor. We have been made by judicious advertising a nation of users of things, and of owners of things that add to the fulness of the lives of the masses. We are users of more soap, more paint, more tooth brushes, more electric fans and farm tractors and almost everything else, per capita, than any other nation.

This transformation from our old days of inconvenience and lack of things—a transformation dependent upon the advertising of industrial leaders—has resulted in an actual increase in capital. We haven't made people waste money on things. We have helped them produce more to be used.—Frank Presbrey in the World's Work.

### Ethics Had No Place

#### in Indians' Religion

The religion of the Fox Indians of Iowa, as revealed in their rituals, had little to do with ethics, according to Dr. Truman Michelson of the Smithsonian institution's bureau of American ethnology. Doctor Michelson has returned from Tama, Iowa, where he has been recording these rituals.

Unlike Christianity and other religions, the old Fox religion did not concern itself with rules of conduct. Its ceremonies were supposed to have been ordered by supernatural spirits in the long ago, and each of them has a distinct purpose in view, such as the avoidance of disease, prevention of anyone speaking ill against the chief's village, or the insurance of success in war and similar ventures.

Doctor Michelson found various rituals to be built on the same general pattern. In some cases songs recur and the speaking parts are repeated word for word. Some of the rituals are still practiced by living members of the tribe, but they have in large measure lost their religious significance and become mere occasions for social gatherings.

In 1911, says Doctor Michelson, a majority of the tribe lived in bark houses or wigwams of rush. Now nearly every one has a modern frame house.

Subscribe for the Enterprise.

**DANIELS AND KORNMAN AT DETROIT TEMPLE**

Mickey Daniels and Mary Kornman, youthful stars of the famous "Our Gang" comedies, have left the screen for a brief period in vaudeville, and will headline at B. F. Keith's Temple Theatre, starting Sunday matinee, February 20. Mickey is the frolicked kid of "Our Gang" comedies and Mary is the youthful leading lady. Mickey and Mary have actually made millions laugh with their mischievous screen antics. This will give their admirers an opportunity to see them in person. Others billed: Renee Robert and Jay Velle, twin stars in a single setting, featuring "Flet Bache and Luise Blackburne. Miss Robert will offer classic dance numbers and Mr. Velle will offer a program of songs; Willie Solar, the international entertainer direct from Europe in his own original offering; the Four Diamonds, Hughie, Phoebe, Tom and Harold present a routine of bright songs and flashy dances; James Kelso and Belle De Monde present a "A Revue for Two"; the Three Swifts, exponents of clever jugglery; Burns Bros., society gymnasts; Ora, an unusual bar gymnast in an astounding athletic routine, and the new screen subjects.

### Predatory Pussycat

#### Surprise of His Life

A big black cat got the surprise of his life the other night when one of the gray squirrels turned the tables and took the offensive itself.

Following the general instincts of tomcats, the animal was having a wonderful time springing at squirrels.

Suddenly one of the squirrels, not larger but far more belligerent than its fellows, held his ground and made a flying leap directly for the cat's throat. The cat dodged, but the squirrel continued the attack and soon was pursuing the cat, instead of being the hunted one.

Slowly but surely pass was driven back toward a wall. Then the squirrel went up a tree, but as soon as the cat, recovering his dignity somewhat, started to watch the tree the squirrel dashed down and began to chase the cat once more. No other squirrel joined in the attempt to harry the cat, but the one belligerent one did enough for a dozen.—Boston Globe.

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