The Morning Call.

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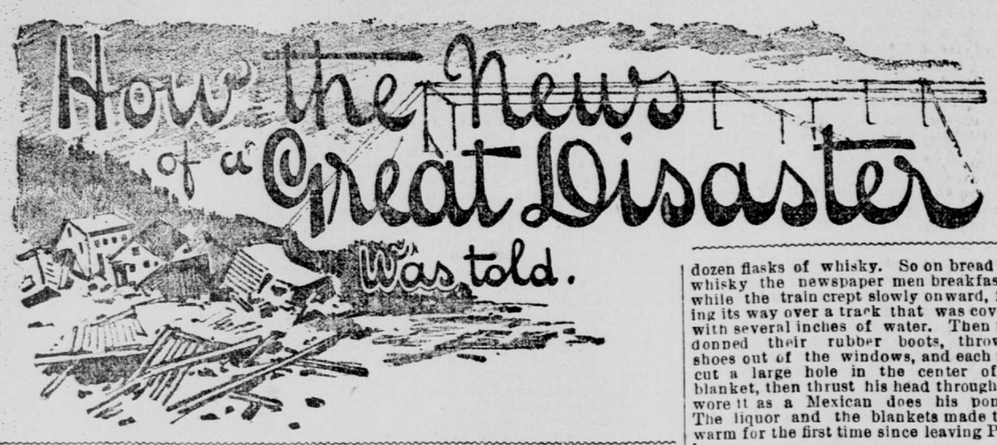


Flood, storm, loss of life! It had happened somewhere, way up the valley. Wires were down. Where had it happened? No one knew. Get out of town! Get to the scene of the disaster! Money from the business office to meet expenses! Hurried instructions from managing editors. Correspondents for out-of-town newspapers hurrying in, breathless with haste, to inquire, between gasps for air, "What—is—it—anyhow?" Telephones jingling. "Yes, yes, these are the editorial rooms. No, can't answer you now. Central, oh central! what is the matter with the railroad people? Ah, is that the train-dispatcher? Yes, train all ready you say? Thanks."

Cabbies whipping their horses into a run. Vehicles dashing through the streets. A jerk up at the railroad station. A rush for the platform. Out into the damp, raw night dashed an engine hauling a single coach to be closely followed by another and similar train.

The newspaper correspondents were away, rattling forty-five miles an hour over the Pennsylvania Railroad, bound for somewhere up the country—somewhere in an adjacent county.

It had been a wet, disagreeable day in Pittsburg. It was Friday, May 31, 1889, and the flowers that had been laid on soldiers' graves, in accordance with the beautiful custom, were rain-soaked long before they nestled in the waving grass. Managing editors drearily planned the next day's paper. There would be the usual routine of Memorial day services, the order of exercises, a few of the addresses and a description of the parade. The telegraph queries indicated nothing of importance abroad. A murder, a fire, a lynching; the usual routine—but nothing of great moment. It would be a dull newspaper in the morning.

A short bulletin from the Western Union and the newspaper awoke, as did the others in the city. All was excitement and seeming confusion. Orders issued. Money secured. Trains asked for. Men gathered in from restaurants and work and hurried away. In one hour it was over, and speeding toward the Conemaugh Valley were the news-gatherers who in the morning, and on many a subsequent morning, would tell the world of the great disaster at Johnstown.

While the two trains were rushing through the darkness the men on board had opportunity to ascertain, by asking questions of one another, where they were going and what had happened. Still the information was meager, but it was added to little by little as the cars stopped for a second or two at stations, and telegraph operators bawled out a sentence to those on the platform.

The first train had been chartered by the Pittsburg Dispatch and Times and the United Press. Train 2 had on board Robert Herbert and Jack Murray of the Pittsburg Post, James Henry of the Commercial Gazette, William Connelley, manager of the Pittsburg office of the Associated Press, Harry Orr, a telegraph operator and the Pittsburg correspondent of the New York World. Henry was clad in evening dress and patent leather shoes. He had been taken from some society assignment. Connelley was also in evening attire. It was found there was no "copy paper" in the crowd, so a raid was made on the conductor's order blanks.

"Bolivar!" shouted a brakeman.

"Can't go any further," said the conductor. "Tracks washed out ahead and the other train is stalled as well."

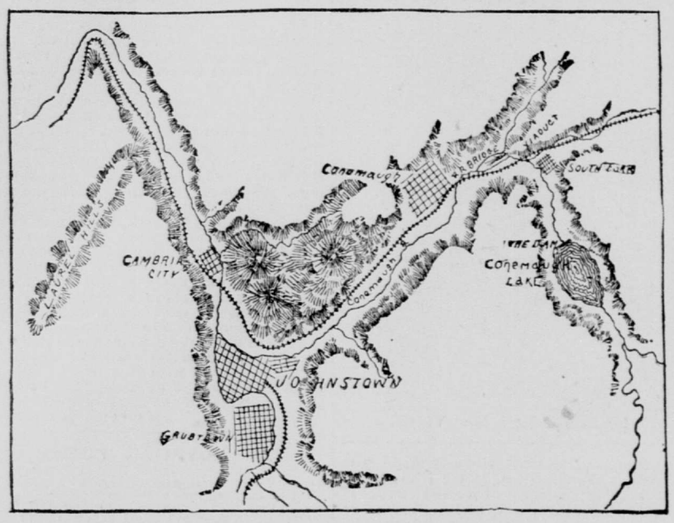
Out in the rain hurried the newspaper men. Lights were flickering here and there, casting grim shadows around. The roar of the swollen Conemaugh could be heard at hand, but the worst of the flood had passed. However, deep cuts could be seen in the streets where the waters had swept by. Twenty miles away was the scene of the disaster, yet the townspeople had particulars. For some men standing on one of the bridges and seeing houses laden with human freight come tearing down the river had secured a rope and as one mass of debris passed had lassoed a boy. There the lad was in a farmhouse, shivering with cold, crying with fright. Again to the newspaper men he told the awful story. Other information was gleaned and in twenty minutes enough facts to fill column after column were gathered.

But how to get the news to the papers! That was a puzzling question, for the men who had taken the first train were already in possession of the telegraph office. Finally a plan was evolved, and each man started in to get his "copy" in shape. Some lay down on the floor of the station, and wrote by lantern-light; others kneeled beside seats. In three-quarters of an hour a halt was called, and four different specials—one to the Associated Press, one to the Pittsburg Post, one to the Commercial Gazette and one to the New York World—were entrusted to young Murray. He and Harry Orr, the operator, boarded the second train, which was then run back to Blairsville Junction, six miles distant. There Orr insisted upon the Western Union operator yielding up his key, and the first thing the new arrival did was to ground the wire from Bolivar to prevent the men up there sending anything more, and then he began rattling off the specials that Murray had. By 11 o'clock the news had reached the offices.

That is how the first story of the great flood was sent out to the world. The columns that appeared here in San Francisco on the Saturday morning after the disaster were based on the disjointed sentences of the lad who had been lassoed from that bridge at Bolivar, and upon interviews secured from trainmen and people who had seen wreckage pass; for not a newspaper man reached Johnstown that night—indeed those nearest were twenty miles away.

When Murray and Orr had left for Blairsville the other men looked about for something to eat and for conveyances to start over the hills, for the trainmen had positively refused to try to push on any further that night. By 12 o'clock a farmer's wife had prepared a steaming meal and waiting outside was a rickety wagon and one saddlehorse. A half-hour later the start was made. Just before leaving one of the men went down to the telegraph office and learned that Orr's scheme had been carried out successfully. The correspondents who had arrived by the first train were gathered about the one little telegraph instrument and the operator was nearly frantic trying to find out why he could get no answer. Of course they had no idea that their wire was grounded. Each moment they expected to have connection re-established, and so they decided to stay at Bolivar. That is why, in spite of the rain and mud, the men who had come by the second train were happy as they started on their trip over the hills.

Lots were drawn to ascertain who should ride the horse. It was an enviable mode of locomotion, for the exercise would keep one warm, and the wagon bid fare to be a cold place. Jim Henry pulled the long straw, and he needed to win for he was already shivering in his evening dress in spite of the horse blanket which he had bought for a dollar. So onto the nag he climbed, his coat tails falling down, ringing wet back of the saddle. Connelley got on the seat with the driver, and Herbert and the World correspondent rolled into some straw on the bottom of the wagon.



MAP OF THE FLOODED VALLEY.

[Not until several days after the disaster would trains run farther than to Sang Hollow, which is at the bend in the railroad, above Laurel Hills. The old mill where the correspondents had their headquarters was located just above Cambria City.]

A rougher ride could not be imagined. At no place could the horses go faster than a walk, for ruts one and two feet deep had been wrought in the roadway by the swollen streams. Small bridges had been swept away, and wading breast high through creeks that seemed rivers the animals were forced, while water oozed up through cracks in the buck-board. Several times the farmer threatened to turn back, but financial inducements urged him onward, and before the journey was ended the newspaper men nearly owned the conveyance.

At 5:30 oclock A. M. the lights of the little town of Nineveh were sighted, and 15 minutes later the worn-out horses were panting at the door of the telegraph office; eight miles from Johnstown!

Connelley, who was a telegraph operator as well as correspondent, jumped up the stairs two at a time, and literally pulled the operator from his chair and seizing the key called up Pittsburg.

"Yes," came back the answer, "the newspapers are 'keeping open.'"

So, while Connelley kept the wire busy the others hastened around town and gathered what information they could. A man was found who had walked in from Johnstown during the night hours. He was hurried up to the telegraph office, and as he told the story Connelley flashed it over the wire without any one bothering to write it down. Meanwhile Herbert, Henry and the World man were interviewing here and there, and then they sat down and for an hour their pencils flew.

At 7 o'clock a whistle was heard down the track and in a few minutes the two newspaper "specials" came puffing in. It was seen that the one ahead had Orr and Murray on board. How they had managed to get their train in the lead was not told. But upon its arrival Connelley yielded up the key to the regular operator and the correspondents "filed" all the manuscript they had written during the hour at dawn of day.

That is the manner in which the early morning copy was sent to the newspapers, and enabled the morning dailies to get out extras and the afternoon sheets to contain column after column of fresh matter. Still not a correspondent had reached Johnstown, eight miles away. But to the south in the distance could be seen a column of smoke reaching skyward, and the man who had walked in from the scene of the great disaster said that hundreds of houses were burning with people in them, houses that had been piled against the stone viaduct by the force of the current.

FIRST MESSAGE FROM THE SCENE OF THE DISASTER.

While the correspondents were preparing their copy at Nineveh the farmer who had brought them there had aroused the storekeepers, and from a list furnished him had made a number of purchases. He arrived with the packages just as the train pulled out. They contained six pairs of rubber boots, the same number of coarse blankets, twelve loaves of bread and half a dozen flasks of whisky. So on bread and whisky the newspaper men breakfasted, while the train crept slowly onward, feeling its way over a track that was covered with several inches of water. Then they donned their rubber boots, throwing shoes out of the windows, and each man cut a large hole in the center of his blanket, then thrust his head through and wore it as a Mexican does his poncho. The liquor and the blankets made them warm for the first time since leaving Pittsburg.

"Sang Hollow!" called out the brakeman. Four miles from Johnstown! But there was wreck and ruin on every side—houses lying topsy-turvy on the bank, great pieces of machinery twisted around trunks of trees and buried in the earth. It was evident the train could go no further, for there was no track. It was gone—swept away. Connelley decided to remain at Sang Hollow. He had to furnish the afternoon report for the Associated Press, and he could see enough from the window of the telegraph office to tell a story from. He kept Orr with him, and there they sat until 2 o'clock in the afternoon. They did not need to write anything. They simply sat at the keys and clicked away, telling what they saw from the windows; and that is the way the story was sent over the wires for the afternoon newspapers.

Henry, Murray, Herbert and the World correspondent, representing morning papers, pushed on on foot. It was rough walking that four miles; indeed, it was scrambling over debris rather than walking. A cry from Herbert. He had slipped and sprained his ankle. He was helped to a railroad town and left there. Two miles from the scene of the disaster a grand piano was found on the roadway. It was uninjured; hardly had the woodwork been scraped. The great wave had dropped it lightly on the spot where it lay. Henry was strewn. One of them walked up to Murray and exclaimed:

"How heartless you are. Have you no respect for the dead?"

"Yes, miss," he replied, touching his hat, "but if I didn't laugh I should go crazy."

A bend in the roadway and Johnstown was before them—the funeral pyre near the bridge, the acres of devastation behind. At exactly 9 o'clock Henry, Murray and the World correspondent stood beside the stone bridge, the first newspaper men to arrive at Johnstown.

A lineman was noticed up in a tree. He was bringing down a wire that was caught on a branch. Under his arm was a small box which contained a sending and receiving key.

"Wake up, old man."

"It is a railroad wire," he said when he had climbed down.

"Can't we send a short message?" asked Murray.

He asked permission of the Pittsburg office and it was granted.

"Don't try to send news," suggested Henry; "Connelley will attend to that. Why not send out an appeal?"

The others agreed, and the first message to go over the wires from the scene of the disaster was:

"This city is nearly wiped off the face of the earth. At least 5000 people have perished. The survivors beg aid, and that quickly, of their fellow-creatures."

This was signed by the correspondents and was bulletined in the windows and on all the boards of all the newspapers of the country. Then the wire was kept busy with railroad messages, for relief trains were being dispatched from Pittsburg. The three correspondents passed the morning and afternoon gathering material for their story at night. There was nothing to eat save the loaves of bread that they carried in their pockets, and the noon meal consisted of crusts washed down with whisky and water. It was shared with some women, whose elegant dresses spoke of their having been at some entertainment when the flood came.

At 3 o'clock Connelley and Orr came up from Sang Hollow, bringing Herbert with them. He limped badly, but said he felt somewhat better. A relief train had pulled into Sang Hollow, and more newspaper men were on board. Then preparations were made for the night's work. Near the bridge was an old mill that had long been given over to rats and mice. It was selected as newspaper headquarters, and Harry Orr, assisted by some linemen who had come up on the relief train, soon had two wires "run" into the place, and fixed his instruments inside an old hopper. Meanwhile the correspondents had rigged up a table, which consisted of a long board resting upon two barrels, and they secured kegs for seats. Several lanterns and a number of tallow candles were also procured. Supper consisted of more bread and whisky. Then they started in for the nights' work. From 6 o'clock in the evening until 6 o'clock Sunday morning Harry Orr and his assistant sat inside that hopper and kept the instruments busy, stopping only to eat a mouthful of bread and take a drop of liquor. Meanwhile the correspondents toiled at their copy. Silently they would leave the building, visit the hastily constructed morgue and other points where information might be obtained, then return and write their matter.

THE OLD MILL BY THE STONE BRIDGE.

[Correspondents' headquarters during the first week after the flood.]

The old mill was cold; there was hardly a whole pane of glass in the windows and the chilly gusts swept through it, whisking pieces of copy-paper from the writer's hands, causing lanterns to flicker and tallow candles to sputter and go out. But through all the night the men struggled, and daybreak found them still at it. Herbert, suffering from his lame foot, had kept on with the others, and half reclining on a bale of straw in a corner had written column after column of descriptive matter.

About 6 o'clock in the morning the World correspondent received a message. It read: "Be sure and send us a page of matter to-night. Keep it up. Five men have been dispatched from here and will soon relieve you."

It was signed "Julius Chambers," then managing editor of that newspaper.

"Can you do it?" asked Henry as he and the other man were munching their breakfast of dry bread.

"I suppose I have got to," was the reply. "But I would give all I possess for six hours' sleep."

The others nodded assent, they were too tired to talk. But they all agreed that although they had not slept since Friday morning there was no time to think of it then. So more whisky was taken and they kept awake. During the first few days the newspaper men lived on that fiery liquor, yet not one of them was intoxicated. They simply had to drink in order to endure the terrible mental strain.

All that Sunday morning and the early afternoon the newsgatherers were busy. At 3 o'clock Orr said it would be impossible for him to handle the page of matter for the World in addition to the other specials, so the correspondent for that newspaper was compelled to leave for Pittsburg. He started at 3 o'clock, walking to the train at Sang Hollow and the men behind prepared for another night of toil in the old mill.

That evening at 9 o'clock Mellville E. Mix was seated in the editorial-rooms of the Post when in walked a ragged, uncouth looking personage. His face, the portions of it not covered with grime, was pale as death, his eyes protruded, and a blanket was around his shoulder.

"Mix," said he, "I have got to get a big story off to-night. I am not able to write a word. I want to dictate to you. I am going to lay right down on the floor and begin. Please keep messenger-boys running back and forth to the telegraph office and please send out for some whisky. Kick me if I fall asleep."

Then the correspondent began to dictate his story. He did very well until 10 o'clock, then began to mumble and soon was dozing. Mix shook him. He "braced" up, took a drink of liquor and kept on. A half hour later he dozed again. This time Mix had more trouble to awaken him, but a vigorous shake and more whisky did it. From 11 o'clock until 1:30 A. M. it was a continual fight between sleep and news. Mix had become thoroughly interested and was bound his friend should finish his story.

Talking of the incident later he said: "Shortly after midnight I had to literally carry out his injunctions and kick him till he awoke. Indeed, I did it many a time. Boys were running back and forth to the telegraph office, and I realized that it was a splendid story he was dictating. The strangest part of it was the fact that when he would wake up from one of the naps, none of which lasted over a couple of minutes, he would continue the story just where he left off, never once asking me to repeat a sentence. He was so thoroughly impressed with what he had seen that he could tell it all with only half his senses about him."

When shown the page story in the World a week later this correspondent could hardly believe that it was his. "Parts of it seem familiar," he told me, "but others I cannot remember at all."

Yet he was assured later by Mr. Chambers that his story was used just as it came over the wire into the office.

When he had finished dictating to Mix and while the latter was urging him to go to a hotel near by and get some sleep somebody in the next room said that a train would leave for Johnstown within a half hour. Nothing would satisfy him but to go on that train, and he has subsequently said that he believes he was a monomaniac on the subject at that time. Once more at the scene of the disaster, and there again he met Herbert, Murray, Henry, Connelley and Orr, who had been at it all night. But human strength could stand it no longer. Besides, relief had come up on that early morning train, so at 6 A. M. on Monday the six men took the needed rest. They slept for twenty hours, not in a bed, but in the hay mow of a large barn near the old mill, a place found by Connelley. There they buried themselves in the straw, clad in all their garments, and remained in a sound sleep until Tuesday morning at 1 o'clock. Then refreshed they took up work again. Although many newspaper men had arrived by this time, a score coming from New York and Philadelphia, yet the week was a hard one. Cooked food could not be obtained until Friday and Saturday and there was no place to sleep save on floors and in hay mows. After that it became easier.

One poor fellow died from the exposure and several were laid up in the Pittsburg hospitals until June.

This is how the news of the great disaster was sent forth.

CLAUDE H. WETMORE.

WAITING.

As those, on some lonely mountain height,
Watching through all the weary hours of night,
Await the pale rose of the morning light,
I wait for thee

As one who, waking on a bed of pain,
And helpless in his agony is fain
To wait the sweet return of sleep again,
I wait for thee.

As he who, in some vast cathedral, dim
With shadows, silent waits, on bended knee,
The music of the eucharistic hymn,
I wait for thee.

As deaf men crave for song, blind for sight,
As weary sons of toil long for the night,
And as the fettered spirit longs for flight,
I wait for thee.

ARTHUR T. FROGGART.

RACE WITH AN AVALANCHE.

A Monster Ice Glide Came Crashing Down Toward Him.

McClure's Magazine.

Let Mr. Tuckett himself describe that thrilling race for life.

"I remember," he writes, "being struck with the idea that it seemed as though, sure of its prey, it wished to play with us for a while, at one moment letting us imagine that we had gained upon it, and were getting beyond its line of fire, and the next, with mere wantonness of vindictive power, suddenly rolling out on its right a vast volume of grinding blocks and whirling snow, as though to show that it could outflank us at any moment if it chose.

"Nearer and nearer it came, its front like a mighty wave about to break. Now it has traversed the whole width of the glacier above us, taking a somewhat diagonal direction; and now—run, oh! run, if you ever did, for here it comes, straight at us, swift, deadly and implacable! The next instant we saw no more; a wild confusion of whirling snow and fragments of ice—a frozen cloud—swept over us, entirely concealing us from one another, and still we were untouched—at least I knew that I was—and still we ran. Another half second and the mist had passed, and there lay the body of the monster, whose head was still careering away at lightning speed far below us, motionless, rigid and harmless."

The danger was over, and the party examined the avalanche at their leisure. It had a length of 3300 feet, an average breadth of 8000 feet and an average depth of 5 feet. This is to say, its bulk was 611,000 cubic yards, and its weight, on a moderate computation, about 450,000 tons.

He Was Around on Time.

Atlanta Constitution.

A man in a North Georgia county—an outlaw, with a reward out for his apprehension—pursued by the Sheriff and his deputies, was hidden and sheltered by an old negro at a little cabin in the dense woods.

With the first glimmer of dawn he stole from his "city of refuge," but ere he left he said to his black deliverer:

"If ever you git into trouble I'll try an' be aroun' on time."

Some time after the negro was arrested, charged with stealing a horse.

A few excited men dragged him into the woods and strung him up to a tree.

Then a rapid-riding horseman appeared, dashing toward them, and bullet after bullet whizzed by the frightened lynchers.

They fled in terror, believing that the Sheriff with a posse was upon them.

Then a keen blade cut the rope that held the writhing form, and quick hands slipped the knot from the neck.

The man the old negro had sheltered was "around on time."

A Considerate Wife.

Tammany Times.

Mr. Harlem Heights—How is your wife coming on?

Mr. Riverside Parke—She is all that a husband could desire. She is always trying to make it as pleasant as possible for me. Why, she even went so far last week as to dream that I was a widower.

In manufacturing occupations the average life of soapboilers is the highest, and that of grind-stonemakers the lowest.

BISSELL'S BIG JOB.

The Postmaster-General Is Reducing Expenses.

WHY ECONOMY IS NECESSARY

Postal Revenues Falling Behind—Effect of the Depression in Business.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov. 20.—The most overworked men in Washington today are President Cleveland's Cabinet Ministers. Every one of them has his hands full. Carlisle has been boiling his brains for months over bonds and bullion. Gresham is almost distracted by the situation in the Sandwich Islands. Hoke Smith is wondering how the soldiers' vote can be gotten back to the Democratic party by new pension legislation, and Wilson Shannon Bissell is worried to know how to make the small postal appropriations meet the immense deficit which the lack of business and the hard times is creating in our postal revenues.

I have devoted the past week to a study of our new Postmaster-General. He is by no means an ordinary man. He is not only a hard worker himself, but he understands how to get work out of others. His experience as a railroad president and a railroad lawyer stands him in good stead in the Postoffice Department, and he seems to have grasped its work and its impossibilities remarkably well. Bissell's mind is an analytic one. He gets at the nut of a question at once, and he doesn't bother himself over details.

Wilson S. Bissell.

The new Postmaster-General works perhaps just as hard, but he seems to do his work more easily. He gets to the office at 8:30 in the morning and he works away here until 6:30 at night, putting in twice as many hours as any of his clerks. Still he does not look overtired. He is a well-dressed, healthy looking giant, with a big head fastened to broad, fat shoulders by a strong neck. He stands over 6 feet in his stockings, and I venture that he weighs 300 pounds. He is a clean-looking man and he seems to be as healthy in mind as he is in body. He is noted for his reticence concerning himself and his department, and he is one of the few public men who do not like to see their names in the newspapers. He will talk freely enough, provided he knows he will not be quoted, and he is not an aristocrat. I sat some time and watched him as he received his callers. A number of them were business men, and among others were some who had questions to answer or propound concerning contracts. I was surprised to see how quickly he seemed to grasp each situation as it came up, and how positively and quickly he passed upon them. I find that he is making many radical changes in the organization of the Postoffice Department. He is cutting down expenses to the lowest notch wherever they do not impair the efficiency of the mails.

The Postmaster-General finds it imperative to reduce our postal expenses. The hard times have considerably lessened the postal revenues. There is no business barometer more sensitive than the postoffice. The mail increases or decreases in proportion to the amount of business done, and it is safe to say that there has not for years been such a falling off in postal receipts. For the past thirty or forty years there has been an average increase of about 7 per cent a year in the postal revenue over that of the year preceding. This increase has been so regular that when Congress has made its appropriations it has allowed for it. It did that last year. Well, the revenues went along all right up to the 1st of June, and during the first three months of Mr. Bissell's term the percentage of increase was more than eight per cent over the receipts of the corresponding months of last year. In July the hard times began, and the percentage of increase dropped during that month from eight per cent to three per cent. At the close of August it was found that the receipts were four per cent less than they were during the August of 1892. This was a decrease of eleven per cent over what had been anticipated, and the same story will probably be told as to the other months of this fall. The result is that the appropriations will not equal the expenses, and the Postmaster-General is having his hands full in trying to make the ends meet.

It is interesting to note how the Postmaster-General is economizing. In a big business like that of the postoffice it is the little things that count and $100,000 has just been saved by cutting off an order for a billion of the big Columbian stamps. There is little difference between the ordinary red 2-cent stamp and the Columbian stamp in size, but the difference is big enough to make the Columbian stamp cost just about one-hundredth of a cent more than the red stamp. The Columbian stamps cost just about 17 cents a thousand, while the red stamps cost only 7½ cents a thousand. The change means a saving of ten cents on every thousand stamps, or of $100 on a million stamps, and of $100,000 on a billion stamps. The last administration made a contract for three billions of these stamps at seventeen cents a thousand. It was thought that there would be a great demand for them, but they did not sell. The people did not want them, and it was to the interest of the department to be released from their contract. After considerable negotiation the American Bank Note Company agreed to let the Postmaster-General off from the last billion, he consenting to take up to the amount of two billions of the stamps. The contractors could have held the department, but they did not, and thus Uncle Sam will have just $100,000 profit off the operation.

Another economy has just been inaugurated in the making of the postal cards. During the past few years we have been using three different styles of cards. There was a little white card for a cent for the ladies, a yellow barn door at the same price for the big business man, and a middle-sized card for general use. It has cost considerably more to make the three different styles than one, and the Postmaster-General has decided to use but one card, and the one fixed upon is of the size used by the International Postal Union, and postal cards will now be the same all the world over. We use such an immense quantity of these cards that the saving in the new contract amounts to $70,000 a year. The contract is made for four years, and the total saving will thus be $280,000. It is a one-cent business, but the saving means a fortune.

It will be surprising to many people that the postal service of the United States by no means pays its own expenses. Uncle Sam has for years been carrying letters and mail below cost, and it is estimated that the Postoffice Department will need about $5,000,000 every year from the appropriations of Congress. This is so notwithstanding that the mails are carried over the Pacific roads without any cash outlay on the part of the postoffice. These roads owe the Government, and the amount of money due for carrying the mails is credited to their account. If it were not so the department would have to pay out about $2,000,000 additional every year, so that it really costs $7,000,000 a year more than it brings in. The most expensive part of the business is the carrying of second-class matter, which pays only a cent a pound, and which costs on an average about 7 cents a pound to deliver. All of these items are being closely looked into during these hard times and every bit of postal revenue is being scrutinized. The Postmaster-General, in fact, has been materially helped through the money order fund. We have had a money order system since 1864, and during all this time orders have been issued and paid for, but the money has not been called for at the other end. Either the orders have been lost or stolen, or the parties receiving them have failed to collect them. The sums have accumulated until they have now between two and three million dollars of such money in the Treasury Department. From this fund there was recently credited to the Postoffice Department $1,250,000, and this is now being applied to the deficiency of the current year.

I made some inquiries at the department as to whether any improvements were contemplated in the postal service, and I find that it is the Postmaster-General's idea not to attempt any experiments at the present time. He is a great advocate of thorough organization and of complete development. He believes that the postal service can be improved by investigating its needs, strengthening its weak spots and perfecting its present system. He is not at present seriously considering any matters connected with the postal telegraph, postal telephone or the pneumatic tube system for cities, evidently believing that such experiments, necessitating the expenditure of great sums of money, should be left to more prosperous times.

During my call I had a few words with him about the service, and find that he is thoroughly in favor of civil service rules and thinks that these should be enforced as far as possible. He told me that these rules had been extended to fourth-class postmasters, and that these are now allowed to remain in office for four years whether they are Republicans or Democrats, unless good reasons are given for their removal. The appointments of postmaster are now made almost entirely on petition from the people, and the Postmaster-General cited a case of a city in which there was a delegates' convention called by the members of the Democratic party of the city, where the delegates elected their postmaster. The different candidates came before it and one of the defeated ones moved that the nomination of the successful man should be made unanimous. This was carried and the name of the successful nominee received the appointment of the department here.

While talking to the Postmaster-General the other day the subject of Government clerks came up, and I asked him whether he would advise young men to try to get places under the Government.

He replied that he would not, and said that the short hours and the work seemed to demoralize the employes. Said he:

"It seems to me that the hours and the work here are injurious to character. The clerks work from 9 until 4 and there is a tendency for them to become machines. They have not the incentives to good work that you find in other branches of business, and had I a boy I would not want him in the department. Just in this connection I have a protege in Buffalo, who wrote me the other day wanting a place in the department. He is now a letter-carrier in Buffalo, and when I first met him he was blacking my boots in a barber-shop. He attracted my attention by his knowledge of the geography of the United States. A man who was being shaved asked whether Detroit was the capital of Michigan, when this boy broke in and said: 'No, it is not; it is Lansing.' I then asked him what was the capital of Louisiana? He replied: 'Baton Rouge.' 'And Connecticut?' said I. 'Hartford is the capital now,' was the boy's reply. 'It used to have two capitals, Hartford and New Haven, but they have changed that, and it has now only Hartford.' I then asked the boy where he went to school, and he told me that he was going to night school and learning as best he could. I gave him an order on one of the bookstores for what books he wanted and took an interest in him from that time on. Well, he got a fair education, and one day he surprised me by coming into my office and telling me that he had passed the civil service examination and was working for Uncle Sam. He had received an appointment as letter-carrier and is now making $1000 a year. He has been saving his money and investing it, and he is now worth a nice little property. He is a bright young man, and though I did not tell him so, I think he is far better off in Buffalo than in a Washington department."

At this point the conversation turned to President Cleveland, and the Postmaster-General chatted interestingly of his early association with him. It is now nearly twenty years since the two began their practice in the law together at Buffalo, in connection with Lyman K. Bass, who had been a member of Congress. Mr. Bass left the firm in 1876, and from that time on it went under the name of Cleveland & Bissell. In speaking of it I said: "Suppose, Mr. Bissell, you let your mind run back fifteen years to the time when you and the President were practicing law together at Buffalo. Had you any idea at that time that Grover Cleveland might be President of the United States and yourself a Cabinet officer?"

"I can answer e asily for myself," said the Postmaster-General, "and almost as well as to the President. I never had any ambition to engage in politics, nor to hold office, and at that time I was devoting myself to the practice of the law. During the first years of legal association with Mr. Cleveland it was my idea that he might go on the bench, and I was at one time very anxious to have him accept a place as one of the Judges of the Superior Court of Buffalo, and I spoke to him about it, but he did not take to the idea. He has an eminently judicial mind, and I have always thought he would have made as great a reputation as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States as he has as President. It is the judicial character of his mind that fits him so well for his present position. His head is always clear as to great questions. He makes up his mind after considering all sides of a question, and he is generally correct. His judicial ability was recognized in the courts of Buffalo. It used to be that the Judges there in deciding a point of law would ask the opinions of some of the lawyers present upon it before making their judgment, and I have often noted that if Grover Cleveland was in the courtroom he was the man whose advice was sought. This was so when he was quite a young lawyer, and he made himself noted at the bar as a safe and conservative counselor."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Great Britain got two of her possessions from pirates—the Leeward Islands near Borneo and the Sarawah in the northwest of Borneo.