ALVIN ADAMS.

Funeral of the Founder of the Great Express Company.

SIMPLE RITES OVER THE REMAINS.

Reminiscences of a Successful and Honored Life.

ORIGIN OF THE EXPRESS BUSINESS.

Incidents Gathered from the Way Bills of an Old Expressman.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE HERALD.]

BOSTON, Sept. 5, 1877.

The obsequies over the remains of Alvin Adams, the venerable founder of the Adams Express Company, were solemnized at his late residence, in the suburb of Watertown, this afternoon. Although the services were of a private and unostentatious nature they were attended by several hundred of the intimate friends of the deceased, many of them from distant cities and including among the number some of the most eminent business men in the country. Not only were there delegations present from such neighboring localities as New York and other easily accessible points, but from the far West and distant South there were those who came to show their regard and affection for their distinguished friend. All branches of Boston commerce were represented among the mourners, and there were also present at the solemn services numerous representatives of the national, State and city governments. The attendance of men who have passed the allotted three score and ten was particularly noticeable, including such as the venerable Colonel Greene, Charles Theodore Russell, Charles Levi Woodbury, Moses Kimball and Mayor Prince. Probably not less than four or five hundred were present altogether.

THE SIMPLE SERVICES.

The services, which were very brief and simple, were conducted by Rev. J. F. W. Ware, pastor of the Arlington Street (Unitarian) Church, in Boston. They consisted first of the reading of appropriate passages of Scripture, and were then concluded by a short prayer. These and nothing more were the funeral rites of one of the most distinguished business men of a generation now fast passing away.

The features of the deceased, which seemed as natural as in life, were then viewed by the assembled friends and then the remains were conveyed to their final resting place in Spruce avenue, Mount Auburn.

THE PALL BEARERS.

The officiating pall bearers were William B. Dinsmore, President of the Adams Express Company; E. S. Sanford, of New York; ex-Governor James E. English, of Connecticut; Colonel James M. Thompson, of Springfield; S. M. Shoemaker, of Philadelphia; John Hoey, of New York; Alfred Gaither, of New York; Henry Sanford, of New York; C. Spooner, of the Adams Express Company, and H. B. Plant, President of the Southern Express Company.

NATURE OF THE DISEASE.

An autopsy in the case revealed clearly the nature of the disease which caused the death of Mr. Adams—to wit, water around the chest, about three quarts of which was drawn off after death. It was the opinion of one of his consulting physicians several months since that this was the difficulty, and he advised the drawing off of this water by the more modern means, which is now fast taking the place of the old method of tapping, which, however, was not done.

REMINISCENCES OF OLD EXPRESSMEN.

The death of Mr. Adams, who, from humble beginnings, by persevering toil and well directed enterprise, earned fame and wealth in his vocation, has recalled many interesting episodes incidental to expressmen and expressing since the inauguration of the business in 1839. It is a popular error that the Adams Express Company was the first institution of its kind, that common mistake being shared on account of the great prominence of the company before the country during the last twenty years. The credit of establishing the first express was due to the late W. F. Harnden. Mr. Adams did not commence the business until two years after the advent of Harnden. Several parties did a regular express business before Harnden, but were not known by the title of expressmen. Mr. William C. Gray, of Lowell, and still living at that place, ran over the road between Boston and Lowell with money packages and freight as early as 1836, three years before Harnden. Dean & Davenport (now Davenport & Mason) carried freight and packages between Boston and Taunton in 1836 and 1837, Mr. Mason, of the present firm of Davenport & Mason running as messenger. But W. F. Harnden was the first to adopt the name "expressman."

THE FIRST EXPRESSMAN.

From a work entitled "Waifs from the Way Bills of an Old Expressman," written by T. W. Tucker, and published in Boston in 1872, I collate many of the interesting facts which follow regarding the origin and continuance of the express business:—

Mr. W. F. Harnden, the energetic pioneer in a business now standing second in importance to any in the country, was born in Reading, Mass., in 1812. His father was a house painter, in moderate circumstances, and gave his son a fair common school education. He (the son) was of slight figure and fragile constitution, but of great courage and energy. He was employed as ticket master at the Boston and Worcester Railroad depot as early as 1835 and 1836, but the sedentary nature of his employment, and the close application required, gradually undermined his health, and he cast about him for other and more active employment. This he did not find until the early part of the year 1839, when he commenced an experimental trip to New York, via steamer from Providence, carrying only a valise and paying passenger fare. This was indeed the day of small things, and his encouragement for a time was not great. He, however, kept up good courage, and after a short season, by dint of sheer hard work and earnest endeavor to please his few patrons, his business so increased that he made arrangements with the Stonington route to run a messenger on that line. He now arranged with Mr. Luke Damon and his younger brother, Adolphus Harnden, to run each way on alternate nights. Mr. Damon was in his employ for several years and was afterward employed by Kinsley & Co. as their Boston agent. He has now retired from the express business, after a service of nearly thirty years, and resides in California. Mr. Adolphus Harnden was an active, energetic young fellow and bade fair to become eminent in his profession.

BURNING OF THE LEXINGTON.

He continued to act as messenger for his brother until the awful burning of the steamer Lexington, on the fearful night of January 13, 1840, when he perished in that dreadful catastrophe. In addition to the affliction caused by the loss of a dearly beloved brother by the burning of the Lexington, Mr. Harnden's loss of property was ruinous to a man of his limited capital; but he was not called upon to make good any portion of the property belonging to other parties which was entrusted to his charge. The most serious loss on this occasion was that of $30,000 in specie consigned to the Merchants' Bank of Boston.

Among the prominent victims sacrificed on that fearful night were many well remembered citizens. Prominent among them were Professor Follen, of Harvard University; Henry J. Finn, the great comedian; Abraham Howard, firm of Howard & Merry, an eminent mercantile house; John Brown, head of the large house of John Brown & Co., Commercial wharf; Isaac Davis, a well known dealer in fancy goods, No. 28 Washington street; J. Everett, Jr., firm of Everett & Searle, No. 51 India street; George Lemist, an old and wealthy merchant of Roxbury; Euerle, the actor; A. Harnden, the expressman, and many other citizens less known to the public. Only four persons survived that awful night, and of the miraculous escape of one member of that little party an account will not be uninteresting. This man was David Crowley, mate of the steamer, whose wonderful escape and almost superhuman endurance were and are without a parallel in the history of struggles for life. He says the recollection of the harrowing scenes then passed through ever continues to haunt his dreams.

The steamer Lexington left New York on the evening of January 13, 1840, with a full complement of passengers and with a fair prospect of a safe and pleasant trip, although the night was intensely cold. The steamer was a comparatively new boat and was considered the handsomest and fastest on the Sound. Compared with the present floating palaces she was a most ordinary craft, but in those times a model of beauty. She was commanded by Captain Child, an experienced captain, and was noted for her speed. She made good time for three hours out of New York and had passed Huntington Light, about forty miles from New York, some four miles, when fire broke out in the engine room from some cause which has never been fully explained, and the doomed boat was soon all on fire amidships. The flames spread rapidly on account of the combustible nature of her deck load, consisting of cotton bales. In the sudden effort to head her for the shore in a rough sea, the hide tiller rope on the larboard side parted, and the boat was at the mercy of the waves.

The scene that now ensued amongst the ill-fated passengers and crew was fearful. Mr. Crowley, upon the first alarm, was about "turning in" until his "watch" was called. His berth was in the lower cabin, and, not knowing the extent of the danger, he rushed upon deck, clad only in his woollen drawers, woollen shirt, stockings and boots. He was bareheaded and nearly barefooted, as his stockings were cotton, and boots thin—rather a meagre outfit for the perilous voyage on which in a few moments he embarked. As the flames rapidly enveloped the deck the doomed passengers and crew wildly rushed to the windward of the fire, some frantically praying and crying, or rather shrieking, while others were stoically resigned to their fate. Mr. Crowley well remembers the appearance of the lamented Follen, who alone appeared composed amid the harrowing scene. The most affecting sight he witnessed, which can never be effaced from his memory, was the conduct of two gentlemen, merchants of Boston, who, standing upon the narrow space between the raging flames and the seething waters, commended their families to the care of God, in fervent supplication and in tones which were heard above the crackling flames and roaring waters bade goodby to wives and children, and then disappeared beneath the boiling waters. The only boat belonging to the steamer was a yawl boat, about twelve or fourteen feet in length, which, in the hurry of launching, was partially crushed under the paddles, so as to disable it from floating with any one on board. This wreck floated on shore, and was the means of informing the inhabitants of the vicinity where it landed of the name of the steamer burned, as it contained the overcoat of Captain Child, and in the pockets were found several letters addressed to its unfortunate owner.

TO GOD AND THE WATER.

Mr. Crowley, when he took to the water, was fortunate enough to secure a floating bale of cotton, on which he committed himself to God, the wind and the tide. What a prospect before him! with hardly sufficient clothing for a July night, no foothold, no object to grasp but the tightly fitting ropes which held the bale together—useless to his stiffened fingers—the bale continually rolling and bobbing in the rough sea, which ever and anon broke over him, the thermometer below zero, and the pitiless wintry blast howling like a demon over his almost denuded person. How long would an ordinary person survive such exposure? Mr. Crowley survived it from nine o'clock Monday evening to Wednesday evening at nine o'clock—forty-eight hours—during which time he drifted fifty-three miles, maintaining his position on the bale notwithstanding he indulged in several short naps. He took to his bale about nine o'clock in the evening, and left it for the shore on the following evening at about the same hour. He landed at a place called Old Friar's Head, a bluff adjoining the town of Riverhead, Long Island, on the opposite shore from New Haven, the widest portion of the Sound.

When the bale struck the ice, some few hundred yards from the shore, he felt, although slightly delirious at intervals from the intensity of his sufferings, that he was saved, and immediately commenced a struggle to gain the shore. Covered with ice, with no sensation in his frozen limbs, the instinct of self-preservation urged him to effort, and slowly and painfully crawling over the rough and slippery surface he at length managed to reach the shore. But what a prospect before him! a steep, icy bluff to be surmounted, the whole landscape enshrouded in thick darkness. After a season of incredible exertion he at length surmounted the formidable bluff, and oh, joy! he discovered in the dim distance the faint glimmer of a light. With that indomitable will which characterizes Mr. Crowley, and to which he owes his preservation, he at once hobbled and crawled in its direction. The distance from his landing was one and a half miles, and he succeeded in reaching the house about ten o'clock P. M. The family fortunately happened to be up much beyond their usual hour on account of the arrival of a son from New York city. This son, Mr. Samuel Hutchinson, now a well known merchant of New York, had but a few moments before arrived, bringing news of the Lexington's loss, which had been communicated to him by the stage driver who brought him over. When Mr. Crowley knocked at the door it was opened by a lad who started back in affright at the strange apparition which met his view. And well he might have been startled, for Mr. Crowley presented a figure shocking to behold. Bareheaded, his hair matted with ice, his woollen shirt and drawers covered with the same material, his eyes wild with delirium, his haggard appearance would have frightened the boldest. Young Mr. Hutchinson comprehended the case at once, and approaching Mr. Crowley, as he stood trembling at the threshold, asked him if he was from the wrecked steamer. Mr. Crowley replied that he was, and he was immediately assisted into the house and properly nursed and cared for. He was confined to the house until the following April, when he returned to his home in the city of Providence. He escaped with the loss of two toes on each foot, but experienced no permanent ill effects from his unparalleled exposure, and to this day has never experienced a day's illness.

HARNDEN'S BROTHER.

Mr. Adolphus Harnden, who was lost, was brother to William F. Harnden, the pioneer of expressing. He was, like his lamented brother, an active, energetic fellow, and perished after a protracted struggle to save himself and preserve the valuables committed to his charge. The only expressman living who was on the Sound that night was Luke Damon, who was for many years the faithful agent of Kinsley & Co.'s Express, but then in the employ of Harnden, and now in California. He was on board the boat bound for New York, and passed over some hours later the spot where the Lexington was burned, but was ignorant of the disaster until after his return trip.

HARNDEN'S EARLY ASSOCIATES AND EMPLOYES.

Shortly after the commencement of Harnden's enterprise he engaged, as clerk and general assistant, Mr. Dexter Brigham, Jr., a young man from Westboro', Mass., and a brother of the late lamented E. D. Brigham, President of the Metropolitan Railroad Company. Young Brigham possessed remarkable business talents, and was well appreciated by Mr. Harnden. He afterward became, upon the decease of Harnden, the leading proprietor of the express.

Among other earlier clerks and employés of Mr. Harnden several have risen to eminent positions in the business world. Several are particularly worthy of mention. J. L. Stone, now of the banking firm of Stone & Downer, Boston, was an efficient clerk for Harnden as early as 1839. Mr. Stone, and his worthy partner, Mr. Downer, also an expressman of the olden time, have achieved success in their present vocation. M. M. Ballou, the successful publisher; James M. Thompson, the Springfield millionaire; J. W. Lawrence, now Lawrence & Ryan; Mr. Oliver C. Wyman, noted as a successful dramatic and humorous writer; W. N. Melcher, now proprietor of the American Express Company, and many other well known individuals, were connected with him. James Gay, now deceased, was an efficient messenger for Harnden. He afterward founded the noted firm of Gay, Kinsley & Co., which has recently become absorbed in the Adams Express Company. Of all the original employes of Harnden & Co. none are now connected with that express. Eben Cain, who commenced as driver shortly after Harnden's decease, "still lives," and is now the oldest express driver in the business. Levi Hoagkins, the original driver for Harnden, now drives a job wagon, employed principally in business connected with the Custom House. Among the valued and confidential employés of Harnden none stand higher in his esteem than Mr. J. W. Lawrence, of the well known firm of Lawrence & Ryan, passenger agents, No. 10 Broad street, Boston.

HARNDEN'S FOREIGN EXPRESS.

The great impetus given Harnden's business by the advent of the Cunard steamers aroused in his breast the most ambitious aspirations, and he began to feel quite dissatisfied with the limited field of his operations. In 1841 he established his Boston and Albany Express over the Western Railroad. This was a move in the right direction, and, had he continued pushing his business over that road and its connections, a princely fortune would have been the result; but he became infatuated with the idea that a European express was the one thing needful and desirable. In August, 1841, he sent out to Liverpool Dexter Brigham, Jr., and J. L. Stone to establish expresses in Liverpool, London and Paris. They were successful in procuring good agents in those cities, and for two or three years the "English and Continental Express" was an apparent success, but the great expense of establishing and running it left no margin for dividends. This enterprise was the great mistake of Harnden's life. In addition to the ruinous outlay without equivalent returns he concentrated his energies upon this hobby, to the great detriment of his domestic expresses. The now great and important Western route, which has made imperial fortunes for the present proprietors, was disposed of for a mere song to J. M. Thompson, a clerk in his Boston office, and R. L. Johnson, of Albany. This magnificent route was literally thrown away by Harnden, causing him, even before his death, many regrets for the infatuation, which, like many of the remote missionary enterprises of the present day, ignore a field of home usefulness for possible and problematical results in a distant quarter.

HARNDEN'S DEATH.

Harnden's health now began rapidly to fail, and during the fall of 1844 it was very evident that the "sands of his glass" were nearly run out. On the 14th day of January, 1845, he bade adieu to earthly scenes, at the early age of thirty-three. His remains were consigned to Mount Auburn, where a marble monument was erected to his memory. The pecuniary results of Harnden's hard labor for so many years of unremitting toil and mental anxiety were very small; in fact, he died poor and left nothing but the inheritance of a good name to his wife and young family. The great outlay required for his European business had exhausted all his pecuniary resources, and his really paying routes had, as before mentioned, been disposed of for a mere pittance. He was a large hearted man, of a hospitable nature, and under the most favoring pecuniary circumstances could not have accumulated a fortune.

The present Harnden Express exists only in name. The great cormorant, the Adams Express Company, has "gobbled up" Harnden & Co., Kinsley & Co., Earle & Co., Leonard & Co., and last, but not least, the Merchants' Union Express Company. The present office, which does business under the style of Harnden & Co., is under the superintendence of Mr. Freeman Cobb, a gentleman who has few equals and no superiors as an express manager. Mr. Cobb, who is a Cape Cod boy, is a fair sample of the intelligent and enterprising sons of that barren region, prolific only in men and women remarkable the world over for intelligence and enterprise. He commenced as clerk for Adams & Co. in 1850, but subsequently went to Australia, where he accumulated a handsome fortune in staging and expressing.

THE ADAMS EXPRESS COMPANY,

which has acquired a world-wide renown for the magnitude of its transactions, realizing millions of dollars for its fortunate proprietors and making fortunes for scores of enterprising men, commenced its career under circumstances of a very humble character. The extraordinary success of this great corporation could never have been foreseen by its senior proprietor, Mr. Alvin Adams, when he commenced in the year 1840, in connection with Mr. P. B. Burke, a humble opposition to William F. Harnden. Mr. Adams is a native of Vermont, and a good specimen of the physical productions of the Green Mountain State. He had no capital or influential friends, and for several years the path of life was a "hard road to travel." He was engaged first as an assistant at the Lafayette Hotel, opposite Boylston Market, in Boston, and afterward in the produce business, which did not prove remunerative; his business talent was reserved for something better adapted to his peculiar faculties. The plodding occupation of a retail produce dealer was every way unsuited to a brain capable of great combinations, and he was ever on the alert for some thing of a progressive character. He had the foresight to perceive that the express business inaugurated by Harnden would in process of time become a necessity to the mercantile community, and he fully made up his mind to start in the competitive race.

The first few months of his undertaking were truly a season of "up-hill" work. Mr. Burke, after six months' experience, retired in disgust, a disheartened man; but Alvin Adams, notwithstanding the unpromising aspect of affairs, kept bravely at work. Many business men considered him an interloper upon the domains of Harnden, although he entered the field as an honorable competitor in a perfectly legitimate manner, because he was an opposition expressman. Mr. Adams very properly estimated these merely technical objections at their proper value, and "pushed things" with characteristic energy and courage. For a long time he acted as messenger, clerk and boy; the business did not pay enough to employ wagon and driver. Mr. E. H. Brainard, the now celebrated wagon builder of South Boston, did the first wagon business for Adams. Leonard's Worcester Express, occupying the same room with Adams at No. 9 Court street, had arranged with Brainard to deliver their freight, and Adams "improved the opportunity" to arrange with "Ned" to do his work. It was not a very "paying" business for Brainard; but he is one of those good-hearted, generous souls who cannot help doing a good turn whenever the occasion offers, and he generously assisted Adams by every means in his power. Mr. Hall, a brother-in-law of Adams, entered the Boston office as clerk, and W. B. Dinsmore, a Boston boy, assumed the agency at New York. Dinsmore possessed many good qualities for his position. He was active, energetic and industrious, of a chatty, sociable nature, and made many friends and customers.

HARD SLEDDING.

The first three years of Adams & Co.'s Express were years of hard sledding; nor did their business improve to any extent until Harnden & Co. became so absorbed in their foreign operations that their home express suffered considerably by want of attention to its details. Adams, ever on the alert to improve his opportunities, took advantage of this state of things and redoubled his efforts to secure patronage. As a natural consequence, he began gradually to prosper. He had also the sagacity to secure good, capable employés. "Uncle" Woodward, formerly a New Hampshire stage driver, was engaged to drive and collect freight. Woodward proved himself a valuable acquisition, his industry, faithfulness and affable manners combining to make him a profitable and popular employé. "Uncle" Woodward, after an active career as stage and express driver for more than forty years, retired from the business about five years ago, and with the hard-earned proceeds of his useful toil purchased a small farm out West, and is living, we hope, in a state of comparative ease. Among the early employés of Adams mention should be made of Charles H. Brainard, now a popular lecturer, and one of the best elocutionists extant. Thomas O. Goold, one of the early messengers of Adams, was an energetic, capable man, and greatly distinguished himself by his efforts to save their property when the ill-fated steamer Atlantic was wrecked on Fisher's Island, on the night of November 25, 1846. This fearful disaster, which involved the loss of so much life and property, happened a few miles out of New London, when battling with the furious gale, she broke some portion of her machinery, and soon became unmanageable. She began to drift, and after an unequal contest with the howling gale, struck upon the rocks of Fisher's Island, and in a few hours went to pieces. Most of the boat hands and the passengers of experience in steamboat travel escaped safely by jumping from the leeward as each wave ran out, but others, in their fright and ignorance, jumped over board from the windward side into deep water, and were immediately drowned. Mr. Goold succeeded in saving the money and valuables of Adams & Co., and was instrumental in saving the lives of twenty individuals. For his gallantry on this occasion he received a splendid gold watch and chain from Adams & Co., and a medal from the Boston Humane Society.

BRAVE CAPTAIN DUSTAN.

Brave Captain Dustan, who commanded the ill-fated Atlantic, was also commander of the steamer Lexington, and his conduct on the occasion of the first disaster is well worth referring to. The story, perhaps, cannot be better told than it was in the column of the NEW YORK HERALD in December, 1846:—

A few years since—and the circumstance is still fresh in the memory of our readers—he commanded the ill fated Lexington. On her passage to this city from Providence, with some two hundred passengers, a terrible storm overtook her, such, perhaps, as was witnessed in the loss of the Atlantic. After beating about and struggling for a long time, and when the gale was at its height, she unshipped her rudder! A fearful cry went up from all on board and all was given up for lost. The boat beat about, and the wind was fast driving her to the shore, where in a short time she would have been dashed into pieces, and every soul on board have perished. Captain Dustan called on his men, and asked which of them would jump into the sea and lash a rope to the rudder, that it might be reshipped. No one had the courage to do it. Five hundred dollars was then offered as an inducement, but it was not accepted. Fifteen minutes more and the boat would be dashed in pieces—the breakers were almost within reach. A thousand dollars was then offered—the passengers clung round the Captain in fearful suspense, and waiting with dreadful anxiety to hear some one accept the offer; but the risk was too great, the fate too terrible to attempt. No one, either among the passengers or crew, dared accept it—a thousand dollars was no consideration for such a fearful risk. Captain Dustan withdrew and the passengers gave themselves up to hopeless despair. A few minutes of awful, horrible reflection ensued, when a cry was heard:—"A man overboard! A man overboard!" It ran like an electric shock through the chilled and frightened multitude, as an omen of the fate which momentarily awaited them. But still greater was the shock when the cry was heard:—"It is Captain Dustan! It is Captain Dustan!" It was Captain Dustan, he had tied a rope round his body, stationed two or three of his men at the sterns to pay it out, and leaped into the sea. Manfully he buffeted the waves; now seen riding at the top of the highest wave, and now swallowed up in the trough of the sea, to sing, struggling and working his way to the loose rudder. At length he gained it, he lashed the rope to it, and in ten minutes he was dragged on board the boat—the rudder was hung and 200 lives saved by his daring intrepidity.

EARLY EMPLOYES OF ADAMS AND CO.

Two of the most efficient men ever employed by Adams & Co. were Charles and D. H. Haskell, two brothers. They were both prompt, active and thoroughly efficient business men, popular with customers, and by their successful exertions Adams & Co.'s Express gained much of its early renown. Charles Haskell has resided at the South for a number of years, and D. H. Haskell is in California. To the latter individual Adams & Co. are indebted for the foundation of their present prosperity. The company, although gradually increasing its business, and beginning to make its mark in the mercantile community, did not accumulate anything to its capital, as the running expenses often exceeded the receipts. To any one familiar with express business, it is hardly necessary to say that it takes a host of packages daily, at twenty-five cents and upward for each package, to pay office rent, the salary of clerks, the board of horses, the wear and tear of teams, harness, &c., and the actual living, which the proprietors must have.

THE TIDE OF FORTUNE TURNS.

The great event in the history of Adams & Co.'s Express, which turned the tide of fortune in their favor, was the establishment of the California Express, in September, 1849. This great enterprise was given in charge of D. Hale Haskell. He secured a small building at San Francisco, and at once commenced vigorous operations. The enterprise was a success from the start, and the little office was daily thronged by an eager crowd of miners, armed with their bags of precious dust, each one anxious to be the first served. The rapidly increasing business soon demanded larger accommodations and the small building was enlarged to double its former dimensions. More help in the clerical department was imperatively demanded, and the force was increased from time to time by able and experienced express clerks. Among them were John M. Freeman and William H. Hall. Mr. Hall was formerly in the employ of his brother, John K. Hall, Superintendent of the Eastern Express, in Boston. He was in the office of Adams & Co. at San Francisco for several years, and finally, upon the retirement of Adams and Dinsmore, in 1854, with D. H. Haskell and J. C. Woods, assumed the proprietorship of the express, but still retained the name of Adams & Co., which retention afterward, upon the failure of the new concern, involved Mr. Adams in vexatious and expensive litigation.

The extensive operations of Adams & Co., in connection with their California Express, gave them a notoriety the world over, adding to their renown fame of a profitable character and solid pecuniary results. Their great success induced other enterprising expressmen to enter the promising field, and the present well known firm of Wells, Fargo & Co. commenced operations. This concern has met with some reverses, and has suffered from many robberies, but has always maintained its standing and integrity.

BUSINESS DURING THE WAR.

No person outside of the express business can conceive of the magnitude of the Adams Express Company's transactions during the war. On the nearest and most remote fields of our army's operations the agents and employes of this great company were ever on the alert, venturing often where a picket guard would hardly venture, collecting of the hardy soldiers moneys, letters, lockets, watches and other valuables for transmission to the "loved ones at home." Upon the paying off of a regiment the express agents gathered an immense harvest of these packages. But the most melancholy duty devolving upon the agents and messengers was the transmission, after an engagement, of the bodies of the killed to their friends. Many a painful scene has an "old expressman" witnessed at the home office, when the corpse of a poor soldier has been delivered to a weeping and heartbroken wife, child or parent. The money package portion of the business proved immensely profitable, the risk being small, the charges high and the number of packages almost innumerable. During the war the Adams Express Company made big dividends to the stockholders, and at one period the stock rose to the enormous price of $500 per share, the par value being $100. These were harvest days for all the large express companies—days which will "never come again."

ADAMS EXPRESS COMPANY OF TO-DAY

is a mammoth affair, growing great by its legitimate growth, but continually swelling its huge proportions by swallowing its competitors, be they of great or small dimensions. Into its capacious maw have disappeared some dozen or more expresses noted in their day and generation, representing capital and business to an immense amount. The great moneyed resources of the Adams Express Company make it a formidable opponent to ambitious competitors, and the solid, substantial character of the company, ever able to meet any loss which it may incur, gives it a power and influence in the business community which a weaker organization can never command. The present "head centre" of the company, No 57 Court street, is one of the notable places of Boston. The iron front building, which is an ornament to Court street, occupies in part the site of the celebrated Brattle street parsonage, a building of historical renown. Alvin Adams, the lamented and respected founder of the great company, until his last few weeks' illness could be seen daily at his desk, his energy unabated by the care and toil of years and his thoughtful countenance ever reflecting through genial smiles the goodness of his heart. He leaves behind him a corps of able workers in every department of the concern. His sons, Waldo and Edwin, having received a thorough express education, are fully competent to manage the trust transmitted to them, and they will take a professional pride in carrying out the liberal ideas of their father.

THE AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY.

The next express in point of magnitude, but not in age, is the great American Express Company. It was commenced by Henry Wells, now its president. Mr. Wells, previous to embarking in the express business, was engaged at Albany in the freight and passenger business, as a forwarding agent. He was early distinguished for his great energy and intelligence. By his good judgment in the selection of the right sort of men as associates in his enterprise his success from the start was assured fact. His first partners were George Pomeroy and Crawford Livingston, both men of first class ability. William G. Fargo, John Butterfield and other persons of acknowledged business talent were subsequently connected with the company, and in the course of a few years it became a "power in the land."

THE BAGGAGE EXPRESS.

One of the most useful express institutions is the baggage express. What countless hosts of travellers, tired and worn out with the fatigues of travel, "rise up and bless" the baggage expressman, as he graciously relieves them of the perplexing care of their numerous trunks, valises and hat boxes! Everything, from a carpet satchel to a Saratoga trunk, is taken in charge by the enterprising agent and promptly delivered at a reasonable charge in any portion of the city or its suburbs. This great convenience is extensively appreciated and patronized by the travelling public. The credit of organizing this useful institution is due to Warren Studley, for many years a messenger between Boston and New York for Kingsley & Co.'s Express. He had the sagacity to foresee the usefulness of this branch of the express business and the energy to put it into operation. He commenced by delivering baggage from the New Haven trains in New York, but soon extended the business to other roads and to the various steamboat routes with extraordinary success. His example has been extensively copied throughout the country, and the baggage expressman is now everywhere seen.

MAGNITUDE OF THE EXPRESS BUSINESS.

Very few, even of our business men, are aware of the immense amount of valuable business daily transacted by a first class express company. The piles of bank packages, representing often many times the capital of a large banking institution, are handled about by the messengers and clerks with a seeming carelessness, but in reality with a perfect system of careful management. Each package being receipted for to the bank official is then entered at the express office, each parcel checked when called off to the entry clerk, and then again checked by the messenger when placed in the safe. Losses of large packages seldom occur unless the messenger is forcibly robbed, or his safe imperilled by the dangers of steamboat navigation. Everything movable is sent by express, from a box of pills to a locomotive engine! Men, women, dogs, cats and nearly all members of the feathered creation are intrusted to the care of the indefatigable expressman.

THE DEAD ACTOR.

OBSEQUIES OF E. L. DAVENPORT—A LARGE CONCOURSE AND IMPRESSIVE CEREMONIES.

Since the funeral of Horace Greeley no more impressive ceremonies have occurred in the Fourth Universalist Church (the Rev. Dr. Chapin's) than those which attended the exercises yesterday morning over the remains of the American tragedian, Edward L. Davenport. At an early hour the streets in the neighborhood were thronged by an eager crowd anxious to obtain admittance to the church. At the early hour of half-past eight o'clock A. M. the capacious edifice was nearly filled, the especial seats reserved for the mourners and pallbearers being alone unoccupied.

A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE AUDIENCE.

Among the audience might have been noticed a large number of ladies and gentlemen prominently connected with the theatrical profession, while a number of others, who were expected to be present, were conspicuous by their absence. Probably they could not obtain entrance through the throng. First to be noticed among the notables was Harry Palmer, whose warm affection for the deceased had become almost a proverb; then there were to be seen in various parts of the church Charles Fisher, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Fiske, Harry Crisp, Harry Watkins, W. J. Florence, John E. McDonough, of the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia; C. D. Hess, manager of the English Opera Company; Sol. Smith, Shirley Smith, F. S. Chanfrau, Louis Aldrich, George F. Browne, B. T. Ringgold, Charles Rockwell, Harry Weaver ("Prince Hal"), George Geddens, Harry Pierson, John Carroll, Vining Bowers, Charles Leclerq, T. Allston Brown, G. Metkiff, Milnes Levick, Fred. B. Warde, George Becks, T. J. Hind, Thomas E. Morris, John Matthews, James A. Mead, Charley Backus and David Wambold, of the San Francisco Minstrel troupe; H. T. Cutter, of Philadelphia; the Davenport Amateur Dramatic Club, wearing badges draped in mourning. Among the lady professionals could have been seen Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, Mme. Ponisi, Miss Ada Dyas, Emily Rigl, Marion Chester, Sidney Cowell, Amy Ames, Amy Lee, Bijou Heron, Ada and Minnie Monk, Virginia Buchanan, Louise and Lillie Eldridge, Mero Charles, Addie Gilman, Dora Goldthwaite, Edith Chanice, Nellie Mortimer, Mrs. Lafiite Johnson, of Philadelphia, dramatic writer; Mrs. Ed. Marble, Miss Emily Melville, prima donna of the English opera troupe (in the quartet), and many others.

Among the civilians notable for their early friendship for the deceased were Hon. John B. Haskin, Colonel T. B. Thorpe, Samuel O. Aborn, of Boston; George Roberts, Judge B. F. Russell, Charles B. Place, Mr. Gallagher, of Connecticut; John C. Bushnell, E. F. Knowles, the Count Johannes and hundreds of others.

THE FLORAL TRIBUTES.

These were more numerous than usually seen on similar occasions. They covered the altar and the space in front. Conspicuous among them was a magnificent cross, five feet high, composed of laurel leaves and appropriate flowers, surmounted by a white dove with outspread wings, from the daughters of the deceased, inscribed simply and pathetically, "Our Father." A pretty device was a crown of tuberoses and other delicate flowers from Lochie M. Adams, inscribed "He is not dead whose fame survives." Mrs. G. H. Gilbert sent a floral decoration of much beauty. Ida Jeffreys supplied a floral star. Jarrett & Palmer presented a noble floral array, with the legend, "Thou noblest Roman of them all, fare thee well." A basket of flowers came from E. A. Sothern. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Mayo presented a shield transcribed "Memory." An original and unique floral design was presented by Lewis and George S. Leland, of the Sturtevant House. It represented the American flag. The groundwork consisted of white pinks, tearoses, tuberoses and mignonette. The stars were composed of single tuberoses on an azure field of blue adjuratums. The stripes were made of red pinks. The staff consisted of solid white pinks. The ball of the staff was made of yellow immortelles. The base presented the letters "E. L. D." in red pinks. This floral novelty, the invention of the Lelands, was about four feet high, and is one of the first of the kind ever presented on any public occasion. There were many other floral contributions.

ARRIVAL OF THE BODY.

At precisely half-past nine the Rev. Dr. Chapin ascended the pulpit, and immediately the organ commenced a dead march. The audience rose. The casket containing the remains of the dead tragedian was carried to the front of the altar and there properly deposited. The pallbearers preceded the casket. They were Chief Justice Daly, Judge Brady, Colonel John W. Forney, George K. Goodwin, Edward D. Stephens, Frank Mayo, Henry C. Jarrett and Augustin Daly. Then came the mourners, members of the deceased's family:—Miss Fanny Davenport, Miss M y Davenport, Miss Florence Davenport, the deceased's two sons, Edgar and Harry, and the deceased's brother, Charles F. Davenport, of Boston. The wife of the departed was prevented from attending on account of serious indisposition at the Davenport home in Canton, Pa.

The family were dressed in deepest mourning, and the sobs of the young daughters told how keenly they felt the loss of their life-long guide, instructor and devoted paternal protector.

The casket simply bore the inscription upon a silver plate:—

EDWARD L. DAVENPORT,
Died September 1, 1877.

Upon the breast of the body rested a snow white dove, placed there as emblematic of the purity of his life and character. The features of the dead tragedian were somewhat changed, but the same warm and genial smile, the ever present talisman of friendship, seemed still to hover about his lips.

REMARKS OF REV. DR. CHAPIN.

After reading the Scriptures applicable to the occasion the Rev. Dr. Chapin proceeded to descant upon the character of the deceased. He had known him when, many years ago, they both were quite young. He always knew him to be an honorable, high minded young man. In the profession he selected he strove to excel. He conscientiously and faithfully endeavored to study the art and reach its highest aims. He rose andore throughout his life a stainless reputation. The assemblage here is not only a tribute to his genius, but to his probity as a man. He urged the mourning and weeping relatives not to look downward, but to look upward. "Your tears," he said, "will make a rainbow in the night of your tribulation." A prayer for the mourning ones was then pronounced, and after the immense audience had an opportunity to take a last view of the remains the casket was closed, and the body, accompanied by the family of the deceased, with the pallbearers and other sympathizing friends, was conveyed to Woodlawn Cemetery, where they will remain in the receiving vault until they are finally interred in a suitable sepulchre.

The musical exercises were very impressive. They were conducted by Mr. William Castle. The organist was Mr. A. J. Holden.

BEN DE BAR'S MONUMENT.

A meeting of the committee appointed at an assemblage of the friends of the late Ben De Bar, for the purpose of raising subscriptions for a monument to be erected to the memory of the deceased theatrical manager and actor, was held yesterday afternoon, in Simmonds' theatrical agency, Union square. It was proposed that the monument should be erected in Central Park, but that point has not been definitely settled upon. The President, F. S. Chanfrau; the Vice President, H. D. Palmer, and the Secretary, William B. Harrison, were authorized to take such action on the subject as they thought proper and expedient. It has been suggested that joint benefits, upon a day to be named, be given in every place in the country where there is a theatrical company, for the purpose of raising funds for the erection of monuments to the memories both of E. L. Davenport and Ben De Bar. This proposition will be introduced before a meeting of theatrical managers in Philadelphia, at the Girard House, on Friday next.

THE LEONARD ROBBERY.

Detectives Woolsey and Crowley, of the Central Office, yesterday applied to Judge Otterbourg to make some disposition of Charles Gerard and Alfred Louis, two desperate French burglars, charged with robbing the store of Mr. T. W. Leonard. The prosecutor is desirous of having them tried in New Jersey, and the Judge remanded the prisoners to enable the proper requisition to be made on the New York authorities.

THE STATE PRISON MURDER.

Curious Developments Showing the Method and Objects of the Crime.

A VENAL KEEPER.

Davis Conveys Arms and Pistols to the Conspiring Convicts.

HIS FLIGHT.

Indictments Found by the Grand Jury Against Hamlin and Allen.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE HERALD.]

HARTFORD, Conn., Sept. 5, 1877.

A singularly interesting criminal romance surrounds the plot for the escape of the convicts Hamlin and Allen from the Connecticut State Prison last Saturday night, which resulted in the brutal and cold blooded murder of the watchman, Wells Shipman. The plans were skillfully conceived and had other authors and agents than the two murderers. Partial developments yesterday led to the unravelling of the whole mystery to-day, and it is conclusively shown that the master spirit was Hamilton, alias Brown, who is implicated in the $65,000 check forgery on the New York Life Insurance Company, and that his friends provided money for bribery and deadly weapons for use in an emergency. It has been evident from the first that there had been treachery in the prison, and the traitor suspected yesterday is now definitely known to be one of the keepers, J. H. Davis, who has been employed in the prison several years. Suspicion was first directed to him by his nervous and singular action since the murder, and noticing this he last night sought safety in flight. This afternoon Warden Hewes offered $500 reward for his apprehension, and every effort will be made to arrest and convict him. It appears that Davis was readily open to bribery, as he had a family and only a paltry salary of less than $30 per month. Nearly a year ago, when Dobles, alias Rice, a well known New York crackesman, and who burglarized the Collinsville (Conn.) savings bank, escaped from this prison, one of the keepers was dismissed on well founded suspicions of complicity and is known to have subsequently had plenty of money. Brown came to Weth