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DENISON, IOWA.

EDITORIAL COLUMN

CONGRESSMAN AND POST-OFFICES.

If it were not for the postoffices the life of a congressman might be worth living. As it is every congressman dreads postoffice year with deadly hatred.

A congressman should have more important duties to perform than the selection of postmasters for every town and hamlet in his district, and his whole political career should not be harassed by acting as umpire in the hundreds of free for all fights which take place in every district at least once in four years.

No one man can have even a fairly perfect knowledge of the merits of candidates in from 200 to 300 different localities. He must rely upon the statements of others, and if aspirants knew how prone people were to make recommendations and then quietly inform the congressman that they did not mean anything by it, the congressman would have a great deal less cussing to stand. In this relation we are reminded of a petition for pardon once presented to Gov. Jackson. The petition was signed by many prominent men, but as the case looked dubious the governor had letters written to a dozen of the prominent signers asking a fuller statement of their views on the case. Of the twelve men addressed, one answered that he had no recollection of signing the petition and believed it a forgery, and the other eleven all answered that in reality they did not favor the pardon but that the applicant was a business man and they had signed the petition for business reasons.

We are not civil service reformers, we are perfectly willing that the democrats should hold the postoffices under democratic administrations, but we do believe that some action should be taken to remove this burden from the shoulders of the members of congress. The responsibility should be placed more directly upon the people of each locality. The present system provokes factions, is a temptation to dishonesty and a constant source of annoyance. There is no reason why any republican should be ineligible to a postoffice because he did or did not favor the nomination of the congressman. The men of the party should be on an equality and thus free to express their personal preferences without the question of patronage entering into the equation. The defeat of Mr. Hager is but another evidence of the evil results of the present system. While not a brilliant orator, Mr. Hager was an earnest and effective worker, and he was defeated, not because he had failed as a lawmaker but because he had made "unfortunate" appointments.

One delegate at Council Bluffs said as a reproach to Mr. Hager, that all the postmasters in the district were in attendance. Had he added that all the disappointed applicants were there also, he would have told the whole story of Mr. Hager's defeat. It is greatly to be regretted therefore that the test of congressional ability is not the wisdom of legislative action, but the shrewdness of postoffice appointments. We confess that we have no precise plan to offer in exchange for the present one, but we believe the subject is worthy the best thought of the leaders of all parties.

Considerable attention is being paid in the press dispatches to what the Spanish government may demand at the peace conference to be held in Paris.

It is said that they will demand that at least a portion of the Cuban debt be assumed by the United States and that they receive payment for the public buildings, etc., which they have erected in Cuba.

It would seem that the Spanish government is not in position to "demand" much of anything. The peace conference is to be a sort of give and take game in which the Spaniards are to learn that it is more blessed to give than to receive. The United States might have demanded an immense cash indemnity of Spain in addition to territorial demands, and the Spanish ministers should consider themselves fortunate in securing as easy terms as they have without making any demands. One thing is sure, and that is that the United States will neither assume itself nor force Cuba to assume a debt which was created by Spain in the attempt to force their inhuman government upon the Cuban people.

This government should not be in too great haste to disband its army; it may be that the Spaniards may need a little more punishment before they are in a really tractable frame of mind.

The friends of government ownership of railways should be in favor of the annexation of Cuba for in that event we would have the opportunity of trying the experiment of government ownership in Cuba. The railways of Cuba were owned by the government and in event of annexation the United States would fall heir to them. We might then try the experiment without competition and under the most favorable circumstances.

CASTORIA.
Bears the Signature
The Kind You Have Always Bought

The Governor Came Out Ahead.

Des Moines Capital: Governor Shaw consulted with the surgeon-in-chief in Washington as to the advisability of sending certain medicines to the boys at Chickamauga. He offered the argument that the regimental surgeons were denied certain remedies which they were accustomed to use at home, and asked permission to supply these. The surgeon-in-chief opposed the plan, of course, and the governor made the case stronger by stating that digestive agents were much needed; that the bill of fare in camp was not up to the home cooking to which the Iowa boys were accustomed, and as their friends at home contributed money for the purchase of lactopeptine, etc., he thought there could be no reasonable objection to their use. He augmented this argument with the statement of certain of the surgeons that they were restless under the conditions which compelled the administration of medicine with which they were unfamiliar and would welcome the arrival of such medicines as they desired to use in the treatment of the ills in camp. The surgeon-in-chief knocked the governor out by deciding to leave the matter to a board of army surgeons, and the governor circumvented the other fellow most completely by deciding to send the medicine to the Iowa troops regardless of the surgeon-in-chief, or any other person.

THE GREAT DESERT.

Power of the Winds on That Barren Waste of Sands.

With a feeling that my words will carry little weight with those who think otherwise, I venture to suggest that the Sahara is not exactly what it is commonly assumed to be, and yet in many ways it is not very different. Its first sands, when approached from the side of El-Kantara, are giant rocks, turned brown and red under the glow of the southern sun, standing out in wild pinnacles from the gently undulating surface. This is not the desert that is ordinarily pictured by the mind—that flat, endless expanse which fades off unbroken to the limits of vision—but it is the desert, nevertheless, just as much as the mountain snows of the far north are a part of the great arctic "sea of ice." Beyond, however, is the great plain itself, its swelling undulations hardly relieving to the eye the appearance of absolute flatness which the picture offers.

The truth is, the Sahara presents itself in a double aspect, that of the flat and sandy plain and that of the rocky ridge or mountain, the Hammada. It is the Hammada that is more particularly dreaded by the caravans, for among their wind swept crags there are few cases, and only the blowing sands and a relentless sun are the companions of the footsore pilgrim. In many parts of the flat desert traveling is moderately easy, for over long distances the surface has become coated into a hard, slimy crust—a solid basement rock, one may call it. Along our route of travel there were no sand dunes of any magnitude, the highest perhaps scarcely exceeding 15 or 20 feet, but I was informed by the distinguished French explorer, M. Fourcaud, who was then stopping at Biskra, that beyond Tuggurt they rise to the prodigious height of from 1,200 to 1,400 feet. This speaks even more eloquently for the power of the winds than do the high tossed sands of coral islands.—Popular Science Monthly.

THE LAST MAN SHAVED.

An Explanation by the Barber That Did Not Quiet His Nerves.

There were five of us hunting and fishing in the Queensland bush when one rainy day a stranger appeared. He said he was a tramp barber, and as none of us had been shaved for a fortnight we gave him half a day's work. About four hours after he had left us a band of six men rode up, and the leader inquired if we had seen a tall, roughly dressed man pass that way. We told him of the barber, and he looked from man to man and exclaimed: "Good gracious, but you are all freshly shaved!"

"Yes, we gave the barber a job."
"And he shaved each one of you?"
"He did, and did it well."
"Boys, do you hear that?" shouted the man as he turned to his companions. "What of it?" asked one of our party. "Why, he went insane yesterday and cut a man's throat in his barber's chair over at Unadilla, and we're after him to put him in an asylum."
They rode away at a gallop and next morning returned to our camp with the man, who had been captured after a hard fight and was tied on his horse. He seemed to remember us when he was given a drink of water, and as he handed the cup back he quietly observed: "I say, gentlemen, please excuse me. I meant to finish off the last man who got shaved, but I got to thinking of something else, and it slipped my mind."
—Cape Times.

A Cincinnati man rushed into a long distance telephone office, carrying his grip as if fresh from his train, and asked to be connected with his home.

He had nothing in particular to say, but it seemed to give him pleasure to hear the voices of the dear ones in the home he had left. First the wife exchanged a few words, then one after another each of the five children came to the phone and "helloed," told about their school trials and triumphs and related the doings of the pet pony and the cat and the canary.

Every five minutes, as is the custom in costly long distance work, the manager notified the proud papa, but he always answered, "I'll take five minutes more," until, last of all, the baby had been held up to the transmitter and had piped, "Hello, papa."
Then the Cincinnati man paid \$108 and went away happy.—Exchange.

OMENS ON WARSHIPS.

SUPERSTITIONS WHICH GOVERN OLD SALTS OF THE NAVY.

Hoodooes and Spells Which May Work All Sorts of Evils on Board and Which Must Be Carefully Guarded Against. The Tattooing Habit.

The most picturesque superstitions of the seas are those which govern a modern man-o'-war. Every old salt in the navy believes in hoodooes and spells which may work all sorts of evils on his ship and must be carefully guarded against.

The powers of a ship's hoodooes commence before the ship has entered the water. It is a generally accepted superstition that if the first blow which is struck the keel brings sparks the ship is destined to suffer from a raking fire from the enemy.

The old time practice of stealing a piece of wood and imbedding it in the prow for good luck is, of course, impossible in the case of steel ships, though it is considered lucky to have a piece of stolen wood on board.

Another old superstition is satisfied by placing a silver coin in some crevice of the fighting top of the mainmast or some place below decks where it touches the steel mast. Originally it was a very common custom to imbed a silver coin, and preferably a Spanish coin, in the wooden steps near the mast.

Figureheads have been in high favor with sailors from remote antiquity. Originally they were carved to represent some god or saint. Even today a sailor would hesitate to sail on an iron-clad without such protection.

The ceremony of launching a ship is merely a concession to an old superstition. The various formalities of ship christening have been followed with little variation for centuries. In the early days of shipbuilding it was the custom for the captain and the crew to eat their first meal stowed away in the mold loft. Their meal invariably consisted of eggs and sulphur. From this custom has come the present day practice of providing cakes and wine for the crew. And the old libation which the priests used to pour over the prow of the ship as she slipped into the water has been replaced by the breaking of a bottle of champagne.

The modern man-of-war dashes into the water with flags waving from every masthead. In order to gratify this old superstition it has been necessary to expend hundreds of dollars for the christening of a single ship. But no one begrudges this extravagance. In a way it is necessary.

The good or ill luck of certain days is still a belief among the sailors. Friday is a day of ill omen, and Sunday is usually a lucky day. A superstition about women is a relic of the old belief in witchcraft. It is thought that a woman by throwing sand in the air on shipboard can produce violent storms. Not many years ago some women who traveled on English warships were tortured during a storm to make them quiet the waves.

These barbaric beliefs, however, are partially compensated by the superstition which sailors have held for centuries that beautiful children bring a blessing to a ship. The Neck was a handsome boy with golden curls. It is said that he is always accompanied by a black lamb and carries with him a golden harp. Our old salts have special confidence in a ship which is christened by a child.

The average sailor is superstitious about the ringing of the ship's bells. In olden times the bells were blessed before they were used. At present, if a mistake is made in striking the hour, the sailors insist that the bells at once be struck backwards to break the spell, and if by any chance the wind should catch the bells and swing them all the way around, or if they strike nine bells, it is believed that it will be the last of that ship.

All good warships go to the "shores of Fiddler's Green" as a final resting place. Just where this mythical harbor is situated no geographer has yet decided. It is in every way the antithesis of "Davy Jones' locker." A warship which goes down in battle with her flags flying, as occurred several times during the civil war, goes to "Fiddler's Green."

The tattooing habit is, of course, very common in the navy. It is believed that an arm or a leg decorated with the design of a gun or a sword or some such design will never be lost in battle.—San Francisco Call.

A Real Utopia.

Dunwich, Moreton bay, Queensland, consists of about 1,000 inhabitants. In four years there have only been two births and two deaths.

There are no streets, no omnibuses or trains, no soldiers, no police, no shops. There is a beautiful theater, and every one is admitted free. Clothes are free, and so are food and lodging. Very few do any work, and there are no hotels. Very little money is required, and medical attendance is free.

There is a lockup, but that is not used. There is also a postoffice, and if short of money the letters are stamped free. There is also a free hospital and library.—London Tit-Bits.

THE MONEYPON TRAIN.

By such a name does the 5:30 p. m. train from Sydney to the Blue mountains go by. The Blue mountains are to Australia what Switzerland is to England, the place where "the fashionables" go to find "coolth" throughout the summer months.

It is also the haunt of the newly married, and the train hardly leaves one day a week without having several happy couples on board—hence its name. To railway men it is known as "the fish train," the driver's name being Herring, that of the fireman Pike, while the guard has that of the lowly but honest Cockle.—London Standard.

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TERMS OF COURT.
1898—April 18, October 10, December 12.
1899—February 13, April 17, October 8, Dec. 11.
Zala A. Church and S. M. Ellwood, Judges.

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Assessor.....	A. J. BOND
Highway Commissioner.....	GEO. A. SMITH
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Third Ward.....	H. B. Cass and J. E. Sims

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