THE PARACHUTE JUMPER.

History of One of the Most Dangerous Professions.

Introduced by Sam Baldwin Because Ordinary Balloon Ascensions Failed to Draw Crowds—Sensations of "Human Cannon Ball."—Fatalities.

It was a long time after the first adventurous Frenchman "rode the bag," as balloonists term it, until the parachute jumper was evolved. In fact, it was only about fifteen years ago that the first parachute jump was made.

The story of how Sam Baldwin, the pioneer in this business of parachute jumping, came to make the first trial of the capacity of the umbrella to safely land the aeronaut is linked with the story of the decadence of the balloon ascension trade. Baldwin, with his brother and Van Tassel, all gas balloon men, were at Los Angeles in 1887 and all were down in the mouth over the condition of public interest in their ascensions, or rather the lack of public interest in them. It was agreed that some new feature must be introduced that would attract the attention of the public. Just what it would be was purely matter for speculation for a while until finally Sam Baldwin conceived the idea of using the parachute. His brother and Van Tassel were not ready to agree with him that the thing could be done; in fact, both contended that no man could make the jump and live. The originator of the plan himself was not ready to risk himself in the first experiments and a bag of sand was substituted to represent the weight of the man and this was hung to the parachute.

The gas balloon rose to a point a thousand feet above the surface of the earth and the string that held the parachute in place was pulled and the contrivance released. Like a plummet the thing fell swift and straight for 100 feet and then the "chute" opened, the rapid descent was checked and the sand bag came to the earth as gently as the snowflake on a calm day. Other experiments were tried and it was seen that the idea was practical. The balloonists were then eager to begin operations in a way that would show returns at the box office.

Van Tassel went to San Francisco to see the newspaper people and arrange to have representatives on hand when the first "dive from the clouds" took place. While he was gone Baldwin became impatient and got up an exhibition on his own account, and so was taken the first drop on the parachute. The direct result of the successful first trial was to cause a break between Van Tassel and the Baldwins, who had arranged to operate together, and the former began to make arrangements to start out on his own hook. The Baldwins came East and, realizing that the first in the field with apparatus and nerve to handle it would reap the cream of the profit, fitted out rigs and began giving exhibitions, getting the start by a short time of Van Tassel.

Then commenced the golden era of the balloonists. The thing appealed to the popular fancy and it was a rage to have a "chute" drop at every possible and suitable opportunity. The seeming danger of the balloonist coming down without the chute opening and the general impression that he had only a small chance for living through the performance, drew the crowds. It was no longer a time of hard luck with the riders of the bag. They were sought after and did not have to seek engagements. Like the popular stage performer, whose reputation is made and whose popularity is established, they could command their own price for a drop after an ascension. Outside of the two Baldwins and Van Tassel the other balloonists were generally afraid of the chute and did not dare to attempt its use. This left the field practically to them and they made good use of the opportunity. The Baldwins organized a campaign for the conquest of the world. With four assistants and a manager who understood the art of pushing the business they made a tour, circumnavigating the globe and in a year and a half they had cleared $100,000 in cash.

About this time the other balloonists began to get over their nervousness about the chute and to make the drop. The ranks of those who engaged in the thrilling act increased rapidly and the prices charged for the exhibitions dropped almost as quickly as the "chutes" did in the first few feet of the descent. Where the pioneers had been gladly paid their thousand dollars men offered to do the same thing for half the money. Still the reduction in the price went on with steady stride until the ruling rate was $250. There it hung for a short time and then descended lower and lower until during the past few years $25 or $50 is considered the regular price, it varying according to the needs of the performer and the necessities of the country fair or other employer.

There was brought about by the revival of the balloon ascension industry a large increase in the number of those who were ready to risk their necks for the big fees that were to be gained. Those who know something about the matter estimate that there are now from 300 to 500 persons in the country who are dependent upon parachute jumping for their livelihood. Not all of these are men, as the ranks of jumpers were quickly broken into by the women who dared the dangers and pocketed the returns. The public rather approved of the new field of work for women and there was an added excitement to the thing when there was a prospect that a woman might fall a thousand feet. The occupation has never been considered so safe as to make balloonists desirable risks for life insurance, but the modern jump with the parachute has hardly added to the dangers of the aeronaut. It has, in fact, enabled him to avoid some very ticklish places that under the old system he had to go into whether or no.

As the parachute jumpers increased in numbers and the public became accustomed to the sight there were introduced a number of features to add to the attractiveness of the original plain jump. One of the first of the innovations introduced was the addition of another parachute and a man and woman to make the ascent and each descend by his or her own chute. There were as many variations of this team work of the man and woman as the ingenuity of the balloonists could contrive. First the man and woman rode on the same bar and when the proper height had been reached the woman cut loose her "chute" and descended. This, of course, sent the balloon up with a rush when her weight was taken off and then the man made the dive from the greater height.

Before the addition of a second bar, on which the woman rode, both man and woman used the one parachute and came down riding on the same bar. Another variation of the performance was where two parachutes were attached to the one bar. There was a fancy at one time for the balloonist to carry up a cat, a dog or some other domestic animal and set it adrift, attached to a chute calculated to carry its weight. But the trick that caught the popular fancy strongest was that of the man who left the ground seated on a bicycle which he was pedaling as if his life depended upon it. The rapid working of his feet kept up as long as he was in sight of the crowd, but he stopped it when they could not longer see what he was doing. The secret of the popularity of this feat, like that of the jump itself, lay in the fact that it looked dangerous. It really was not dangerous and added no new perils to the performance.

The demand of the populace for something new kept the balloonists on their metal trying to invent some peculiarly attractive feature to be introduced, and there was always the incentive of a preference being given to the man who had the most tricks to show. The man who fired himself and the "chute" from a cannon while in midair came in obedience to the demand for a novelty. This was an exceedingly taking turn and it had about it a good deal of the fake. The "chute," folded up, was first placed inside the big tube of tin painted black to make it look like the iron gun it purported to be. This "cannon" was mounted on stanchions and carriages of the same flimsy materials as itself, every part being carefully made to resemble the real thing by the application of the black paint.

Then the performer crawled in. He had concealed in the breast of his "leotard," the half coat used by tumblers and trapeze artists, a pistol, provided with blank cartridges. The balloon was released in the ordinary manner and when it reached a proper height the aeronaut exploded his cartridge, and the "human cannon ball" dropped into view.

Another enterprising caterer to the demand for something new devised a light frame and accessories of a farm wagon on which he mounted, adding to the realistic effect by perching on the front seat with whip in hand and lashing at his imaginary horses as the big balloon soared away toward the clouds. Big balloons capable of carrying a team of four men each with his individual chute attached to a long bar was devised. From this the men one after the other cut loose and descended in orderly procession in their drop. Other "riders of the bag" carried up pigeons and other birds, which they let loose at intervals as they went up.

The sensations of the man who makes the "dive from the clouds," as the posters call it, have been described by them time and again. After a half dozen short swings to and fro the ascent is almost directly upward. The man who is quitting the earth is, curiously enough, the only one who doesn't feel that he is doing anything of the kind. As he sits in his trapeze and gazes downward there is no sensation of motion or of giddiness. The earth is dropping away from him. He is sitting still, suspended from nothing. It is just as though he had sat himself in a high swing and dropped a broad object downward. To the novice it is a wonderful sight. The earth seems to be saucer shaped. Just beneath seems the lowest point, while the horizon appears to be coming up to meet you. You are looking at the earth through the small end of your opera glass and someone is rapidly turning the focusing bar.

The first two or three seconds after cutting loose is the time when terror is felt. No matter how many times the parachute jumper repeats the experience, he cannot escape the sensation, the complete goneness at the pit of the stomach. When he is ready to let go he takes a long, full breadth—several of them, in fact—and sets his muscles hard. After he does cut loose one dares not breathe. To do so would cause suffocation, a fainting spell. If the chute did not open at all he would never feel the pangs of death. He would have lost all sensibility long before the earth was reached. Sometimes when the chute is slow in unfolding consciousness is lost, but it is only momentarily.

As seen from the bar of a parachute all things on the earth are grotesquely small, but distinct and clear cut. The appalling thing is the silence that prevails. A dog's howl or a bird's song is heard last of all as one ascends. After that a great silence comes. If there is a strong wind blowing the aeronaut does not know it. It never passes him. He goes with it and just as rapidly as it travels. A match can be struck in midair in the fiercest wind.

The spectacular part of the ascension is to be found in the acrobatic feats while the outfit is mounting. This is nerve-racking to the spectator, but not disconcerting to the performer. It must be remembered that he feels no sensation of the rush through the air. To him everything appears stationary, save the earth, which is dropping away from him. If he dangles by one hand he knows, though the crowd doesn't, that the web bandages which secures him by the wrist will grip him secure, and if he hangs head downward he knows that a pair of horses could not pull him away from a trapeze in the corners of which he has planted his toes.

At the same time it is a hard business. The man who faces danger daily may say that he becomes so accustomed to it that he fears it no longer. Externally this may be true, but the nervous system has its limitations, and if the warnings it sometimes sends out are not heeded death may come in a horrible shape. The ranks are swelled today by the young and daring; depleted tomorrow. Few men grow old in the profession. They marry and their wives will not hear of another ascent. They become crippled or frightened into something that promises longer life.

A Stiff Barber.

(From the Evening Wisconsin.)

A man who has been on a lecture tour through the South tells this story on himself: He was late in arriving in one of the cities in which he was booked, and had but half an hour to reach the hall where he was to give his entertainment. He needed a shave almost as much as he did his dinner, but he decided to cut out the latter. Going to his room, he rang for a barber. A bright-looking boy came in and announced that he was the barber. Mr. Bingham sat down on a chair and told him to go ahead.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but would you mind lying down on the couch?"

"Why?" asked the astonished lecturer.

"Well, sir, you see, I am generally sent to shave the corpses, and I can shave a man better when he is lying down."

MUSIC OF THE MEXICANS.

A Land Where Harmony and Composition Is Inborn.

Even the Lowest and Poorest Classes Understand Violin and Guitar. Village Bands Everywhere—How National Anthem Was Produced.

Most visitors to the "Midway" at the Pan-American Exposition, probably strolled into the so-called "Streets of Mexico." In doing so they found themselves, in all likelihood, in the courtyard of a hacienda, partaking of liquid refreshment and listening to the strains of a by no means unmusical set of musicians who evoked sweet strains from the guitar, the mandolin, and an instrument much like the old lute which figures so prominently in the delicious romances of Mrs. Radcliffe.

"Musical taste and skill seem inborn in the Mexicans," said a gentleman who sat at the same table with one of the visitors before mentioned. "I heard a very good band in Atzcapotzalco, which was composed of the poorest class of Indians. Not one of the musicians wore shoes, or coat, or any other than the grimiest looking linen trousers. And, as you will notice in these fellows, one characteristic of the musical performances of the Mexicans is precision of time, it is especially marked in the little serenading parties that wake you up in the mountain villages and provincial towns.

"As for the people of Mexico generally, it may be said not only that they appreciate good music, but that they will tolerate no music that is not good. This is nothing new, for Madame Calderon de la Barca, early in the last century, called attention to the love of music which pervaded all classes of society. And a writer upon Mexico, over half a century ago, cites a curious parallel to the story of Stradella. It was at a time when the stage coaches between the cities of Mexico and Vera Cruz were frequently waylaid and their passengers robbed of all they possessed by those counterparts of Italian brigands who have been practically exterminated by the drastic measures taken by President Diaz. Well, at the time when these robbers thrived a famous tenor was once a passenger on his way to the Gulf coast from the capital, where he had filled a successful engagement. Being recognized by the highwaymen who 'held up' the whole stage load, he was offered a chance to secure his life and liberty by singing. In his nervous condition his first efforts were futile. The robbers insisted that he could do better, and, furthermore, that he 'better had;' they strongly hinted that, unless he did as well for them as for the fashionable audiences of the capital, he would never sing any more. Regaining his self-possession after repeated efforts, he succeeded at length in satisfying his hearers. He afterward said that he had never done so well, nor did he ever have an audience at once so appreciative and critical.

"A few years ago the prima donna of Mexico was la Senorita Angela Peralta, who enjoyed something of a European reputation and had sung with success in some of our American cities. I heard her in 'Norma,' in a little barn-like theatre on the frontier. She died the following summer, some time in the 80's, of tonto fever. I subsequently had an opportunity to witness the hold she had on the affections of the people of her land. I was watching from a balcony on one of the streets of the City of Mexico the parade of the 16th of September, the birthday of Mexican Independence. Among the allegorical cars advancing along the street was one representing the music of Mexico. It had been arranged by the National Conservatory, and conspicuous thereon appeared the name Peralta. As the name caught the eyes of a dozen or so ladies upon the balcony adjoining mine there was a cheer, distinctly heard above the clamor of the street, and a shower of nosegays fell upon the car. As the car passed down the street it was everywhere greeted with cheers and flowers.

"The visitor is apt to be disappointed with the church music of Mexico. In some of the churches in the frontier towns on Good Friday I have listened to some of the most weird music imaginable, from guitars and violins—my flesh creeps yet at the recollection of those uncanny strains. Were I in the City of Mexico, however, I would not willingly miss the great double-organ played in the cathedral. In the 'dim religious light' of that beautiful, wonderful old building, the grand, reverberating strains have a most powerful effect.

"Noticeable at the performances of the National Conservatory was the prominent part taken by ladies. Not only harps and violins are played by them, but also violoncellos and base-viols. The ladies in Mexico give considerable attention to composing, and it is no uncommon thing at an evening party for a lady to be asked to favor the company with something of her own composition.

"'La Golondrina' is said to be, by most who have heard it adequately rendered, to be the sweetest, saddest, most pathetic song of any land. I have never been able to learn its history. Probably it is Spanish—not Mexican at all. The romantic story of its origin is, that it was inspired by Boabdil's lament over the expulsion of the Moors from their city; another version is that it commemorates the expulsion of the nuns from the City of Mexico half a century ago. The name signifies 'The Swallow,' in English.

"The story of the Mexican national anthem, or 'El Himno Nacional,' is interesting, especially as it furnishes a hint to us, who have no national hymn. In December, 1853, Gen. Santa Anna being President of the Republic of Mexico it was deemed by the Government right and proper that the nation should have a hymn worthily singing its praises and its destiny. The President issued a decree offering a prize for a poem 'truly patriotic,' to be approved by the Supreme Government. The time allowed for the composition of the desired work was but twenty days from the issuing of the decree. Nevertheless twenty-six poetical compositions were submitted at the end of that time, and from these was selected that of Don Francisco Gonzalez Bocanegra, consisting of ten verses of eight lines each, with a chorus. On the 5th of February, 1854, a decree was issued giving musical composers two months in which to submit music for Bocanegra's hymn in competition for a prize. Sixteen compositions were submitted, and the committee appointed to decide in the matter, consisting of the master of the cathedral choir of Guadalajara, a musician from Tepic, and the leader of the military band in Puebla, awarded the prize of Don Jaune Nuno, a Spanish professor of music permanently located in Mexico.

"The Mexicans have a style of music peculiar to their land. Generally speaking, the waltz gives place to the polka, the mazzurka, and the scottische, and all these give way to the 'jarabe' and the 'danza.' Some say that the danza is not indigenous to Mexico, but is an importation from Cuba. But the Mexicans have also the 'habanera' (derived from Havana), and make a distinction between it and the 'danza.' The 'jarabe' represents the rude, uncultivated, spontaneous notes of the native races. Mexico is, traditionally, the land of song and dance, and when the traveler has left it the silvery notes of guitar and mandolin, the gay dance, the fragrant air, and mellow moonlight linger deliciously in his recollections."

RUSSIA'S GREAT RAILROAD.

Its Progress and Influence as a Russian Possession.

In 1891 the first coupons were issued for the building of this railway. In December, 1892, the work was begun. A highway was to be pushed from St. Petersburg to the Pacific, a band of steel 5,852 miles long, binding the extremities of the empire and over its polished track affording an unrivaled route for the commingling of East and West and of their measureless products. From Paris to Vladivostock the journey by passenger and traffic was to be made in twelve days, and later on in ten. From Paris to Peking in thirteen days, to Hongkong in seventeen days, diminishing the expense in money and in time by a third or a half.

This railroad was to be financiered, constructed and administered, not by private enterprise, but by the State. Hence its object was not by financial returns to swell the revenues of giant corporations or individual capitalists. The profit and loss account on its pecuniary side was a minor consideration. Its single design and aim was to strengthen and develop the Russian Empire, and as an ultimate result to ensure that empire the dominion of the East, the mastery of Asia.

As the strategic position of Russia over against Asia is unique, so is this railroad unique in its possibilities. Whatever acquisitions Great Britain or Germany now holds or may hereafter obtain on the Asiatic contingent, those possessions are remote by thousands of miles from their base, and their efficiency depends upon a difficult and precarious connection through those thousand miles of sea and land. Nor can those possessions be brought into much more intimate relations with each other and with the home Empire than they are already are. That is, for Great Britain or Germany or any other power to devise a political or strategic rival to the Trans-Siberian Railway is an utter impossibility. It remains and must remain the most stupendous agent in determining the destiny of the globe that has yet been conceived by man. It is to be maintained, as it was originated, under the most favorable geographic circumstances which a state has ever enjoyed.

There is no assertion here that as an achievement of engineering skill this railway surpasses or even equals a trans-American railroad from New York to San Francisco, or a trans-African railroad from Alexandria to the Cape. Viewed merely as a railroad, it may in every respect be inferior to either; its trains may be less commodious or less luxurious, its locomotives less powerful or less swift, its technical management less efficient or less sagacious; but, regarding simply geographical position, having in mind only where it runs, what it connects, and what it must inevitably effect, nowhere can experience or imagination suggest a rival. The nearest approach to rivalry would be afforded by some line crossing China from west to east. But the western terminus of such a line would of necessity be close upon Russian Siberia or Russian Turkestan; it would traverse only a moribund or disintegrating Asiatic State, and whatever might be the governing board of its construction and administration, it would indirectly, if not directly, be subject to Russian influence.—National Geographic News.

THE TWIN CAPTAINS.

Two Sea Dogs Who Greatly Perplex Shipping Men.

Twenty-six signal flags were strung from the tops of the four tall masts to the deck of the new four masted schooner William H. Yerkes, which arrived in port Tuesday from Washington. The schooner was dressed in honor of her maiden voyage, and the flags are the first set of the new international code seen in this port. The Yerkes is in charge of Capt. Millard F. Wade, and has a capacity of 2,500 tons. She is 222 feet long, 42 feet 8 inches wide, and 19 feet 8 inches depth of hold. She registers 1,211 tons net and 1,198 tons gross. The vessel was built at Thomaston, Me., and was launched August 21, and cost $76,800. The vessel made a smart run down the coast with 2,500 tons of ice. She was but five days from Maine to Washington, D. C., and was taken in tow off Smith's Point by the Washington tug William H. Yerkes, jr. The schooner is named after the father and the tug after the son, who was a passenger on the coaster.

There are other odd similiarities in names connected with the vessel, as Capt. Millard Wade is a brother of Capt. Willard Wade, twins, of whom only two men in the shipping world can tell who's who. Capt. Millard Wade says the model of his schooner, the William H. Yerkes, is the same in every detail as that of his brother's schooner, the Thomas S. Dennison. The shipping interests distinguish the two masters as Captain Wade, of the Thomas S. Dennison, and Captain Wade, of the William H. Yerkes. Their Christian names are generally omitted, and the names of the vessels they command are used instead to designate one from the other. When both are in port at the same time, as happened here recently, confusion follows. They come from Waldorborough, Me., and are typical "down East" skippers, dressing exactly alike and having the same mannerisms and same Maine dialect. When they walk Gay Street together those having business with them stand off and wait until they separate, fearing to approach the wrong skipper and waiting for a clue to the identity of one or the other.

When both were here recently the captains had different ship chandlers. The mix-up was continuous. One brother has often had to listen to the business transactions of the other brother. While in Washington a party of ladies went aboard a vessel of one of the brothers to inspect the ship. They had a pleasant time, but they met the Captain Wade that they did not know.

Some time ago the twins came here in the same vessel, one as master and the other as mate. A seaman accused the mate of assaulting him, and swore out a warrant for his arrest. The twins heard of the movement. At sea the captain wears shore clothing, while the mate is dressed in working clothes. When the policeman and the seaman came aboard to make the arrest, both captain and mate were dressed in their Sunday best. The seaman stood dumbfounded, as he could not tell one from the other, and no arrest was made. Not long since the brothers were together at their home, in Maine. It happened that each had bought a new suit of clothes, in different Southern ports. They had never been worn, and by a strange coincidence both men put on the new suits on the same day. When they faced each other the twins were startled to see suits of the same style, color, and cut.—Baltimore American.

FORMER POSTAGE STAMPS.

Faces Which Have Appeared on the Issues Since 1847.

Many Are Now Worth Thousands of Dollars—The Two-Cent Denomination Printed in Black During the Civil War—Some Other Examples.

Since the establishment of the postal system in the United States it has been the rule of the department that the face of no living man shall appear upon postage stamps, and, no matter how popular the personage, this rule has never been disregarded. Now that Mr. McKinley has passed from this life, he at once becomes eligible to a place upon the postal issues of the Government.

If the face of President McKinley shall supersede that of Franklin, which has had a place upon the 1-cent stamp for exactly fifty years, it is quite likely that Franklin would in turn supersede Daniel Webster, who has had a place upon the 10-cent stamp since 1890. In case Mr. McKinley should appear on the 2-cent stamp, Washington might take Franklin's place on the 1-cent and Franklin suceed Webster on the 10-cent.

While the preference seems always to have been accorded the Presidents of the United States, yet Presidents have been sidetracked for army and naval heroes and statesmen. Of the dead Presidents the faces of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Taylor, Lincoln, Grant, and Garfield have had places upon United States postage stamps, while those not so honored were both of the Adamses, Monroe, Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, Tyler, Polk, Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan, Johnson, Hayes, Arthur, and Benjamin Harrison. As the last named has been dead but comparatively a brief time and no changes in postage stamps have occurred since his death, his name should really not appear among those who have not been honored by the Post-office Department.

There have been numerous changes during the fifty years since the first real series of postage stamps was issued by this Government, in the profiles upon stamps. Presidents have been shifted here and there as the department deemed expedient; some have disappeared altogether and others temporarily, but there is one philanthropist and scholar who has held his original place from the beginning of the postal service down to this day—Benjamin Franklin. Washington follows a very close second, he having lost his place upon the 3-cent stamp (then the same as our 2-cent stamp of today) in 1869, for a period of one year, a very primitive locomotive and tender occupying the central portion of the 3-cent stamp. However, even in that series, Washington's profile appeared upon the 6-cent stamp.

Prior to 1845 there were in the United States no postage stamps of any sort. Two years before that date Great Britain had been experimenting, with some degree of success, and in 1845 the postmasters of Alexandria, Va., and St. Louis, Mo., issued stamps on their own account. Up to that time it had been the custom to despatch mail without the prepayment of postage, the fee, according to weight and distance, being paid by the recipient as a general thing. The postmasters mentioned had printed at their local printing offices crude labels, the first bearing the words: "Alexandria Postoffice, paid 5 cents;" the St. Louis stamp representing the figues 5, 10, and 20 cents just above the picture of two bears standing with their paws upon the seal of Missouri. In 1846 postmasters in Millbury, Mass., Brattleboro, Vt., Baltimore, Md., New Haven, Conn., and Providence, R. I., followed suit. Copies of these stamps now sell readily at from $25 to $2,000, according to the number of copies in existence.

In 1847 the United States issued two stamps, of the value of 5 and 10 cents. The portrait upon the 5-cent stamp is that of Franklin, after a painting by Longacre. The venerable statesman and inventor looks the picture of contentment, his long curls hanging down upon his shoulders, a white neckerchief and fur collar about his throat.

A reproduction of Stuart's famous painting of Washington, within an ellipse, appears upon the 10-cent denomination the words: "Ten cents" and two large "X's" on either lower portion, and "U. S. Post-office" on the upper part, all in black, complete the stamp.

After two years' experience it was found that two values were utterly inadequate to meet the demands of the people; in fact, the issuance of postage stamps seemed to have given a wonderful stimulus to letter writing, and in 1851 what may be termed the first regular series of United States postage stamps was issued. There were eight denominations, 1, 3, 5, 10, 12, 24, 30, 90 cents, and Washington's face was upon five of them. Franklin appeared upon the 1 and 30 cents and Jefferson entered the arena upon the 5 cents. This series continued in use until 1861. Up to 1856 all stamps had been furnished the public in imperforate condition, requiring a knife or scissors to sever them, and copies of the 24, 30 and 90 cents, without perforation, unused, are worth a fortune each.

From 1861 to 1866 the denominations of 2 and 15 cents were added. The full face of Andrew Jackson appears upon the 2-cent, and it is claimed this is the poorest stamp from an artistic point of view the United States ever issued. The face is very large, covering almost the entire stamp, and printed in black, a most unsightly label. The face of the martyred Lincoln is imprinted upon the 15-cents, being a reproduction from a favorite photograph. This was Lincoln's first appearance upon a postage stamp, and since that time no series of regular postage stamps in the United States has appeared that he has not stood shoulder to shoulder with Franklin and Washington.

In 1868 it was found that certain persons were removing the canceling ink by means of chemicals, and using the stamps a second time. To obviate this fraudulent practice it was ordered that all postage stamps be embossed, and for three years every sheet of stamps was placed under a specially devised machine which made a little square of pin pricks, a third of an inch each way, upon the face of each stamp. When the stamp was canceled the ink penetrated these pin pricks to the back of the paper and prevented the successful cleaning of the stamps.

In 1869 the department issued its first series of stamps in two colors, or rather, a partial series. The head of Franklin appears upon the 1-cent, a postman, riding a horse going at break-neck speed is depicted upon the 2-cent; an old-fashioned wood-burning, funel-stacked locomotive is the central picture of the 3-cent; Washington's face is upon the 6-cents; a great eagle with outstretched wings, resting upon a shield, represents the 10-cents; an ocean steamer, badly tossed about, is the vignette of the 12-cents. The two-color stamps begin with the 15-cent value, which represents the landing of Columbus, after a painting in the Capitol building in Washington. The picture is in blue, with border and ornamental work in light brown. The 24-cent is a reproduction of Trumbull's famous painting, "Declaration of Independence," in Washington. The picture is in purple, border and ornamental work in green. The 30-cents represent an eagle upon a shield, in carmine, upon a background of flags in blue. The portrait of Lincoln, in black, appears within a background and border of carmine, in the 90-cents. For various reasons this series of stamps was not a success, and was superseded a year later, in 1870, by an entirely new set. In some manner a sheet of each of the 15, 24, and 30-cents stamps of the 1869 issue got out with the central picture printed upside down. These stamps are very scarce, and a fine copy, unused, will bring close to a thousand dollars.

With the issue of 1870 a number of new faces appear upon stamps—Clay, Webster, Scott, Hamilton and Perry, warriors and statesmen, but not a President. The series comprised 1 cent (face of Franklin), 2 cents (Jackson), 3 cents (Washington), 6 cents (Lincoln), 10 cents (Jefferson), 12 cents (Clay), 15 cents (Webster), 24 cents (Scott), 30 cents (Hamilton), 90 cents (Perry).

In 1871, to meet the demand occasioned by reduction in foreign postage, the 7-cent value was added and Stanton's face appeared, the stamp being printed in bright vermillion. In 1874 the foreign rate of postage was again reduced, this itme to 5 cents, and a former President, Zachary Taylor was selected to do the honors on this stamp. The new postal treaty rendered unnecessary the 7, 12 and 24 cents stamps and the faces of Stanton, Clay and Scott disappeared, the first and last mentioned not to return again.

Upon the death of President Garfield a new design, quite exceptional, was made for the 5-cent stamp and Garfield's portrait superseded that of Taylor, who disappeared from the stage permanently.

In 1883 the rate for letter postage was reduced from 3 to 2 cents and Washington and Jackson changed places, the 3-cent stamp disappeared entirely for the time, and Jackson's face illumined a new denomination, the 4-cents. In 1877 the 3-cent value was again put into use and the face of Washington appeared upon it as well as upon the 2-cent value. In 1888 the 30-cents was changed from black to orange, the 90-cents from carmine to purple, and the 4-cents green to carmine.

In 1890 a series with new designs, denominations and faces appeared. In this set Washington and Franklin retain their places upon the 1 and 2 cents; Jackson takes Washington's place upon the 3 cents; Lincoln supersedes Jackson on the 4 cents; General Grant, who had died a short while previously, took Garfield's place upon the 5 cents, the latter's portrait being transferred to the 6 cents. An entirely new value, the 8 cents, was added and the grim old warrior, William Tecumseh Sherman, appeared in the postal gallery. Webster takes Jefferson's place on the 10 cents. Clay comes to the fore again on the 15 cents, Jefferson is transferred to the 50 cents, a new denomination, and Perry appears on the $1 value, superseding the old 90 cents.

At this point two new values were inaugurated, the $2, with the new face of President Madison, and the $5, bearing a good likeness of John Marshall.

In 1893 a commemorative issue, known as the Columbian series, from 1 cent to $5 was printed, said to be the finest series of postage stamps ever issued by any country. There were sixteen designs, all relating to and descriptive of the discovery of America by Columbus.

In 1898 a series especially commemorative of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition at Omaha was printed. There were nine values, from 1 cent to $2. No portraits appeared upon the stamps, the designs depicting life in the great Northwest.

In 1901, beginning with May 1, the beautiful Pan-American stamps were placed on sale. These stamps are in two colors and pronounced by French critics to be works of art. As was the case with the two-color series in 1869, a few sheets of the 1 and 2 cent denominations escaped from the bureau with the steamboat and train inverted, and these stamps, unused now, command from $25 to $30 each.

Whether a commemorative series for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis will be issued cannot be said. However, the department has indicated its willingness to consider such a proposition.

A number of unique changes in the general new series referred to at the outset are contemplated. In this set the likeness of President McKinley will surely appear, and George Washington may, for the first time since his profile had a place upon a postage stamp, be seen full facing, instead of side view.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

BETTING ON CRICKET.

$250,000 Wagered on a Single Game in England.

For the cricket enthusiast there is a treasury of interesting material in the columns of the old newspapers, which show how the national game was played in days when our great-grandfathers were learning to wield the bat.

In the advertisement columns of the "Kentish Gazette" for April 29, 1794, may be seen this singular notice:

"Cricketing on Horseback.—A very singular game of cricket will be played on the 6th of May in Linstead Park between the Gentlemen of the Hill and the Gentlemen of the Dale for one guinea a man. The whole to be performed on horseback. To begin at 9 a. m. A good ordinary on the ground by John Hagien."

In a later issue of the same paper appears this strange advertisement, proving that, barely a century ago, cricket was on the same financial footing as cock-fighting.

"All lovers of cricket should assemble in their thousands tomorrow, for the greatest players of the day will meet in fair and honorable conflict to contend for the possession of a purse of 1,000 guineas, which has been subscribed by some true sportsmen and lovers of this noble game."

To such an extend was cricket made a medium for gambling in the days of George III that it is on record that as much as £50,000 depended on the issue of a single match.

In a Yorkshire paper a match is advertised to take place between the married and single ladies of the district, the stakes consisting of a dress, to cost not less than £2, for each of the winning team.

Matches between cripples were of constant occurrence, and excited considerable interest and speculation. One such contest was advertised as "Cricket on Stumps," which was a match between teams who had lost at least one leg each; and, singularly enough, the highest score fell to the lot of a batsman called Sharp, who had left both his legs, if not "in Badajoz's breaches," at any rate in the Peninsula.

A match which attracted a large crowd of spectators and on the result of which many thousands of pounds were wagered was between teams of Greenwich pensioners, one consisting of men who had lost one arm each and the rival eleven men who boasted only one leg.

Teams were regularly made up of men who had a common name or a common initial, the most famous of them being the victorious "B" eleven, which included such giants of the past as Broadbridge and Bull, Beham, Beauley and Beauclerk. Another highly successful team consisted of members of the Pagden family, and a third of eleven brothers who were called Colman. When it was impossible to make up an eleven of one name or initials matches were arranged between rival teams distinguished as A to L vs. M. to Z, or any other alphabetical combination that was found practicable.

It was no uncommon thing for a single player of repute to play a single-handed match against a number, often against a full eleven. Such a match was one played more than a century ago by Tom Walker, a professional of the old Hambledon Club, against half a dozen young members of the club, which he won by the large margin of an innings and 10 runs.

A well-known player, called Redgate, the "W. G." of his day, successfully tackled eleven players and beat them by 14 runs in two innings.

An equally remarkable match was witnessed fifty-five years ago in Shillinglee Park Sussex, between an eleven captained by the then Earl of Winterton and fifty-six rustic players from his estate. The match, however, came to an ignominious termination, for the fifty-six fielders got into each other's way so persistently that a free fight ensued and the match had to be abandoned in favor of surgical attendance and bandages.—Tit-Bits.

PLAYING WITH ETERNITY.

Nervy Toilers Who Handle Dynamite Every Day.

The Trade Not Conducive to Old Age. High Explosives Lose All Terrors to Experienced Laborers—Some Very Narrow Escapes Related.

It takes some nerve to toy with eternity every day and go to work every morning with the thought that you may come home at night to your sorrowing family in a basket. There are men in this city who face death six days out of seven, and think nothing of it, and it is death of the most horrible kind. These men handle the dynamite and nitroglycerine which are used in blasting rock in the different quarries, and they pay but little heed to a handful of the dim beyond in the shape of a stick of high explosive done up in yellow wrapping paper.

These men are experts in their trade, and hold the positions of foremen of the various gangs who do the drilling and blasting in East Longmeadow and Wilbraham. They are young men mostly, the trade not being conducive to old age. They begin as assistant foremen and remain such until a premature crash causes a vacancy. At first the fear of high explosives is drilled into them until they regard the sawdust-lined boxes with horror. But in a few months they become accustomed to their trade and handle the big sticks of dynamite as a boy handles a big firecracker. They claim that dynamite is not such a terrible thing after all, unless you eat it, and then it will give you a violent headache. Men have often done this, and it makes them very ill for a short time. A new assistant foreman is almost always broken in in this manner.

Dynamite is an uncertain quantity, however, and acts differently at different times. It burns without an explosion and can even be dropped on the ground without going off, but this is not a safe experiment to try. Let a stick be stroked with a piece of metal, however, and if the man who does it wishes to communicate with his friends he will have to use a long-distance telephone. Nitroglycerine is almost an unknown quantity, and even the most hardened quarryman handles it with the utmost care. Anything will explode it, and many men have been strewn over the landscape through its offices.

A Wilbraham quarry gang is an interesting study in humanity. The foreman is usually an American of more than average intelligence and courage, and the men under him are Italians. These latter men drill the holes in the rocks and make all ready for the blast, and then the foreman puts in the charge and fuse and lights it off. The Italians fear the high explosive, yet they are extremely careless in handling it, and the death rate among them is correspondingly large.

How the dynamite gets to this city is a mystery, and one that will not be divulged. The foremen say that when they want it they notify the people they work for and the next morning a box of dynamite, or "jelly," as the nitroglycerine is termed, is found beside the toolbox. It is against the law to carry such high explosives on trains, for dynamite ranks 50 and "jelly" 59 per cent. Both come in what are termed sticks and weigh about one-half pound each.

They are packed in boxes holding perhaps twenty sticks, each stick being carefully packed in loose sawdust. The sticks are about eight inches long and one inch in diameter, covered with yellow paper. The dynamite is yellow and looks like a mixture of vaseline and sawdust, and the "jelly" looks like a thick vaseline. Before using dynamite it is crumbled up in the hand into a powder, but the "jelly" is quietly and gently unrolled and placed tenderly in the hole which it is to blast. Of course, the quantity used depends on the size of the rock to be blasted, and it is necessary to "tamp" or pack either down, so that the full force of the explosion will not go out and up. When it is tamped the force will go down to a great extent.

In loading a rock with dynamite various methods are used, but the most popular one is to put the explosive into the hole quietly and then press it in even more gently with a stick. When the hole has been almost filled the percussion cap attached to a 30-second fuse is put in and then a bit of dynamite put in on top of it. The whole charge is then covered tenderly with a little sand and a match touched to the fuse. While this is being done, the innocent sons of sunny Italy have been seeking the long grass and tall trees for safety. Each one yells "fire!" at the top of his lungs as he runs, and just before the blast goes off there is nothing to be seen but the fleeing foreman. After the crash and when the shower of rock has subsided to some extent the sorrowing foreman goes in search of his Italians. He finds them peacefully slumbering or talking in the woods, and when told to go back to work each asks in a curious tone if the blast has gone off. It was heard in the three adjoining counties three minutes before. It takes some hours to drill a hole for blasting, and that is the sad part of the whole game. After the blast there is nothing left of the hole and no example of handiwork to hand down to posterity.

The local foremen are very careful of their high explosives, yet strange things are apt to happen to the little tin box in which the sticks are kept. This box is placed carefully in the big tool box each night and the keys of both boxes are placed deep in the pocket of the foreman during the night. Wild adventures often take place near the boxes, and one of the Wilbraham foremen told of a narrow escape which a gang of men under him had this spring. The dynamite was used freely during the day, and some loose sticks of it were left in the bottom of the big toolbox. When the 6 o'clock whistle blew the Italians flocked to the toolbox like homing pigeons. The men began to throw their picks and crowbars into the box at long range. Just then the foreman came on the scene and yelled at them to stop, as he dove behind the nearest tree. No one knows why the whole gang were not blown into bits. It was just one of the strange freaks of dynamite.

This same foreman had rather a bloodcurdling escape last fall while at work in the hills to the east. As he came up to the toolbox at night he found an Italian cuddling a stick of dynamite to his manly chest. The foreman gave vent to his feelings more emphatically than politely. To show that his wrath was roused the man lifted the stick of dynamite above his head and let it drive at the foreman. If it had hit the mark there would now be another assistant drawing more pay. Fortunately the stick went wide and fell in some soft grass. The next five minutes were probably the most interesting that the irate son of spaghetti-land has ever passed. When he emerged from the fray he passed a unanimous vote that he would rather be blown up by dynamite than by the foreman. There was less physical discomfort in it.

Of course as dynamite and "jelly" are not allowed to be carried on the trains, they never are, but there are some interesting times for men who sit in a seat holding a bag in their arms during the entire journey. One local foreman said he took a trip a while ago in a crowded car, and if anyone had hit his traveling bag no one on the car would have reached the next station collectively.

When he got to the end of his journey he went to a hotel to get luncheon, and while he was registering placed the bag on the desk beside him. A man came in while the foreman was presenting his autograph to the clerk, and was hurt because the bag was on the desk. To assert his rights as a true citizen of a free country he grasped the bag and threw it on the floor. The foreman, when he had stopped a hastily thought-up prayer, explained the contents of the bag. How "jelly" is taken about no one who knows will tell. It is never placed on the seat of a wagon, even while being moved from place to place, but is always held in the arms of the foreman. It is a pleasing way to travel, and is nearly as exciting and uncertain as touring in an automobile. The life of a dynamiter is eventful, and there never is a quiet or uninteresting moment in his business until the time when he is representing a Chinese puzzle and the undertaker is trying to sort him.—Springfield Republican.