when the man, speaking with suppressed feeling, said,

"Florence!"

There was evidence of surprise in the woman's manner as she paused and half-turned herself, now for the first time looking at him.

"Florence, you are very pale to-night." The voice was not steady.

What a strange, startled look came into the woman's face!

"Come!" He spoke tenderly, and held forth one hand in invitation. "Come, dear!"

The woman moved away from the door, crossing the room toward him, her eyes fixed searchingly on his countenance. There was a shade of doubt in her manner.

"Sit down." He moved a chair close to the one he occupied, but a little in front, so that he could look at her directly, and, taking her hand as she approached, drew her down into it. Still holding her hand after she was seated, and still gazing at her with eyes full of interest, he said:

"Are you not so well to-night, Florence? You look unusually pale."

Her cheeks found, on the instant, unwonted color. Her eyes shone with the flushing of tears. There was a motion of her lips, but no words parted them.

"It hurts me, darling, to see you drooping about in this sad, weary way. Can nothing be done? Have you pain to-night?"

The tenderness of voice was genuine. The man's heart was stirring from a long, dull sleep—and it was time.

"I have no pain." She bent forward quickly and hid her face against him, catching her breath and holding back a sob that was leaping past her throat.

With a touch that sent a thrill of joy along every awakening nerve, the man laid his hand upon her head, smoothing back the hair with soft caresses, then stooping over, he kissed her.

"What does this mean, Harvey?" The woman moved away from the door, crossed the room toward him, her eyes fixed searchingly on his countenance. There was evidence of surprise in the woman's enchanted ground. She stood still, rooted motionless, the old health to your checks, the old gladness to your heart! "What can I do, Florence?"

"Love me as of old," she answered, passionately, flinging herself on his bosom. "Oh, my husband! I am starving for lack of love."

"Not starving, Florence! Oh, my wife! how can you say this when you are the most precious thing I have in this world? When the fear of losing you forever haunts me day and night?"

She raised herself again. As her face became visible her husband saw that it was almost radiant. "Am I awake or dreaming?" she said.

"You are awake, dear—wide awake, after a long nightmare," was answered.

"Perhaps I may sleep again." Her voice fell.

"Not if in my power to hold you away from enchanted ground. I may have seemed cold on the outside, Florence, but my heart was warm. It carries no image but yours. Trust me, for the future."

"Our lives, Harvey, touch the outside of things," she answered; "and if that be cold, how can we help feeling the chill? If there is no tenderness in the eyes and voice, if loving speech is withheld, how can we be sure that love is in the heart? There may be rain enough in the clouds, but if it fall not on the thirsty flowers they will perish. Don't forget this, Harvey; and if you love me say the sweet words often, that my soul may have assurances and joy."

If Hermann could have looked on this scene he would have known what kind of harvests ripened from seed he was scattering—in doubt and hope—broadcast among the people, weared often, and sometimes fainting. But he could not know. And it was as well. Self-discipline and strife with doubt were needed for the perfecting of his life. The unrest, born of vague questionings as to use and duty, gave vitality to thought, quickened his mind for higher efforts, and held him to work that needed to be done. And it was a good work if such fruit as we have seen crowned many of its harvests. Faint not, Hermann! "In the morning sow thy seed, and withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether will prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

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THE DEAD-LETTER OFFICE.

Of the governmental Departments at Washington there is none with which the whole people are so closely connected as the General Post-Office. From this great centre stretch out and ramify in every direction, up and down and across the continent, ten thousand channels of intelligence, reaching, not only the great marts of commerce and the seats of learning, but the loveliest hamlet and the humblest cabin of the backwoodsman. With the greater diffusion of learning and general intelligence there is an increased demand for greater freedom of intercourse. People do not care so much whether the tariff adds five or ten cents to the cost of each pound of coffee, for they can do without it altogether if necessary; but their messages of business or pleasure must be carried with speed and delivered with certainty, or they will make a tumult about it at once. The newspaper, too, has become a popular necessity, and the man who does not take one is considered as living just beyond the pale of modern civilization. The newspaper is "daily bread" to the minds of the million, and if flood or tempest should delay its coming any amount of hard thoughts and open abuse is heaped upon postmasters and mail carriers.

The present Postmaster-General has won the
THE DEAD-LETTER OFFICE.

just plaudits of the people and the press for the ability and efficiency with which he has managed and improved the complicated machinery of this Department. Soon after he assumed control of the postal affairs of the country the whole system was interrupted or temporarily destroyed by the rebellion, in all the territory of the seceded States and portions of the border States. This necessarily imposed some heavy losses upon the Department, and caused considerable embarrassment for a time. The wisdom and energy of the Postmaster-General, however, have already relieved the system from these difficulties. Among other efforts to increase the efficiency and general usefulness of the Department under the present Administration, is the plan to lessen the number of "dead-letters" by returning them, as far as practicable, to the writers.

An hour's visit to the Dead-Letter Office under the courteous guidance and instruction of the "Third Assistant Postmaster-General," will show us why letters become "dead," and how they are brought to life again. The room where the first operation is performed upon the defunct missives is occupied by some twelve or fifteen clerks, and the appearance is strongly suggestive of an old-fashioned husking match. Huge piles of letters, that have come from every point of the compass and almost every country in the world, are lying upon the tables, and the operatives are very busy inspecting and classifying them according to their character or value. Each clerk makes five classes of the letters as he opens them.

First, and most valuable, are the "money letters," containing bank-notes or coin to the amount of one dollar or more. Whenever a letter of this description is opened, the contents are examined and immediately returned to the envelope, upon which the clerk indorses the amount that persons would rather pay postage to get care and vigilance is exercised in this branch of the work. The daily average of money now found to be shreds by a machine, to render them illegible, be found or heard of at the address given in the others of an utterly worthless class, are first torn from the letter. The daily average of money now found to be shreds by a machine, to render them illegible, be found or heard of at the address given in the others of an utterly worthless class, are first torn from the letter.

The second class of letters made by the clerks are technically called "minors," and contain notes of hand, drafts, checks, bills of exchange, deeds, mortgages, insurance policies, and other papers that are or may become representatives of money value; and besides these a great variety of articles of more or less value, including jewelry, pictures, etc. All letters of this class are re-enveloped and indorsed by the clerks who open them, and, after being carefully registered, are sent to another office to be returned to the owners.

Many letters are received at the Department making anxious inquiries for money or valuables sent through the mail and known to have failed in reaching the persons addressed. These letters can not expedite their return. The lost letter must remain two months advertised at the local office before it is sent to Washington, and then it must be found before it can be returned to the owner. Formerly there was quite a collection of curiosities at the Department, composed of articles found in dead-letters without any one to claim them. This has been dispensed with, and every letter containing any thing of value is returned to the owner if it is at all practicable.

The third class of letters consists of such as contain stamps, coin in less sums than one dollar, receipts for money or property, legal documents, etc. These, being of less value, are not formally registered with a description of their contents, but a special clerk devotes his time to returning them to the owners.

Last, but not least in number of the preserved letters, are those which contain no valuable inclosure, but are so dated and signed that it is possible to return them to the writers. The Department is now acting upon the conviction that persons would rather pay postage to get back their lost letters, though of little importance, and thus know that they were not received by the persons addressed, than to have them destroyed. As these letters pass twice through the mail, coming to and returning from the Dead-Letter Office, a law of Congress authorizes double postage upon them. These letters constitute about one half of all the dead-letters returned to the General Post-Office. The other half of this great multitude of stray epistles is composed of such as are not dated at any post-town or office (the post-mark itself being frequently illegible), and have no proper signature. These, and some others of an utterly worthless class, are first torn to shreds by a machine, to render them illegible, and then sold to the paper-makers. There are now about thirty clerks engaged in opening and returning dead-letters. They dispose of from ten to twelve thousand a day, amounting to several millions in the course of a year.

It is pertinent to ask the question, why do so many letters fail to reach the persons to whom they are addressed? It is evidently no fault of the mail-carriers, for each dead-letter has been to the office to which it was directed, and remained there several months. Is it because our
people are so migratory in their habits that they can not remain stationary long enough to have a letter delivered through the mail? This principle accounts for it in part, but there are many other causes. Thousands of letters are directed to the wrong post-office by the writer, who merely guesses that he is sending it to the right one. Other thousands have the name of the party addressed so imperfectly written that the owner of the letter himself could not tell that it belonged to him. Others have the name of the State so imperfectly written that the letters are quite as likely to go in the wrong direction as the right. It is better generally to avoid abbreviations and write the name of a State in full, thus preventing the possibility of going in the wrong direction.

We have seven States—Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Mississippi—beginning with M. The abbreviations of these States imperfectly written will frequently send a letter two or three thousand miles in the wrong direction.

But one of the most active causes in the production of dead-letters at present is the existence of the war. The Union army, of more than half a million of men, is composed, to a large extent, of those who have left homes, fathers, mothers, wives, or sweet-hearts to fight the battles of the Republic. Most of these men can and do write letters at short intervals to friends and relatives, and, owing to the changes that are constantly going on in society, many of them fail to reach the desired destination, and after a few months turn up in the dead-letter office to be consigned to the paper-mill. The confusion and changes of residence in the Border States contribute to the same result. Every effort which administrative ability can suggest is being made to lessen the number of "dead-letters," and with the return of peace and the restoration of the Union, their number will be reduced to a very small per cent upon the countless millions that are sent through the mail.

If you wish your letter to reach its destination, or, failing to find the person to whom it is sent, to be returned, you can secure this, almost beyond the possibility of failure, by observing the following directions:

1. Direct the letter legibly, writing the name of the person to whom it is sent, his town, county, if possible, and State, upon the envelope. It is well also to repeat this either at the head or foot of the letter itself. If he is to be found there, the letter will reach him almost without fail.

2. At the head of the letter write your own address—town, county, and State in full. It is not enough to give the town merely, for there are so many places of the same name in different counties and States that this alone gives no sufficient clue to the one in question. If your letter is dated merely "Jackson," how can the office know which of the 150 "Jacksons" in the country has the honor of being your residence? Then sign your name clearly at the end. If you indulge in a fancy signature, which only yourself and the teller of the bank where you keep your funds can read, do not use it. The Office has not the pleasure of your personal acquaintance, and has no means of identifying your cabalistic signature. Write your name in full. It is not sufficient to sign "Your affectionate brother Bob," or "your own loving Maggie." For all the office can know there are in your town a score of "Bobs" and "Maggies" just as "affectionate" and "loving" as you are. If you observe these directions, and the letter fails to reach the person for whom it was intended, you will, in due time, receive it through the Dead-Letter Office, provided always that you have not in the mean while changed your residence.

Monthly Record of Current Events.

The capture of New Orleans proves to have been one of the most brilliant exploits of modern warfare. The brief mention made of it in our last Record was drawn wholly from Southern sources, our own official reports not having come to hand. We are now able to furnish a resume of the whole series of operations. Our fleet, the largest ever assembled under the American flag, consisted of 8 steamships, 16 gun-boats, and 21 mortar schooners, 45 sail in all, carrying 286 guns. The whole fleet was commanded by Flag-officer D. S. Farragut; the mortar-vessels being under the special command of Commodore David D. Porter. This fleet entered the Mississippi, and ascending about 25 miles reached Forts Jackson and St. Philip, on opposite sides of the river, about 12 miles below the city. Here a chain had been thrown across the river; this, with the forts, the steam-rams, and gun-boats, had been supposed, as afterward appeared, to be quite sufficient to protect New Orleans from any possibility of attack. Yet it had been announced that the whole course of the river above the forts was guarded by batteries and intrenchments. The bombardment of these forts was opened on the 10th of April. This continued for six days. As afterward appeared great damage was done to the forts, although the vigor of their fire was not sensibly diminished. Fire-rafts were sent down in hopes to destroy our fleet. These were found to be useless. They were quietly taken in hand, towed ashore, and suffered to burn out. At length Commodore Farragut determined to pass the forts and proceed to the attack of New Orleans. At two o'clock on the morning of the 24th the steamers and gun-boats destined for the expedition received the signal to advance. They were formed into two columns; that on the right under Commodore Farragut, that on the left under Captain Theodarus Bailey. There were in all 16 steamers and gun-boats, two of the latter, however, did not succeed in passing the forts. They were soon discovered, and a furious fire was opened upon them from the forts, which was replied to with vigor, the vessels, meanwhile, pressing on. The Farina, Captain Charles S. Boggs, having