

and Austin Texas. Each division is under the supervision of an official known as postmaster inspector in charge.

The staff of each division varies in number according to its extent and general character. Inspectors in charge receive a salary of \$2,500, and inspectors \$1,600 per annum, besides a per diem of \$4 when actively engaged in work for the department. Their commissions run from January 1 to January 1, and appointments are made under the civil service act. Chief Rathbone is paid \$3,000 a year. The positions involve considerable responsibility, and call for a degree of intelligence and capacity far beyond the requirements of ordinary detective work. As a rule, the clues afforded by cases presented for their investigation are of the vaguest character.

There are about 60,000 postoffices in the entire country. When complaints are made of money being lost in the mails they are at once forwarded to the chief inspector at Washington, who classifies them under the head of A, B, C and F. It may be said in this connection that the loss of ordinary letters is classified under the head of B. All complaints are "jacketed," as it is termed, numbered and, with directions for the prosecutions of the case, returned to the inspector in charge of the division in which the complaints were made. Certain formal inquiries are sent to the writer and the person to whom the letter was addressed. It is estimated that at least 20 per cent of the letters at first reported stolen eventually turn up; perhaps having been misdirected or held for postage. The cases reported are subjected to careful investigation to ascertain if the number of losses center in any particular mail route or in any particular postoffice. If they do it is accepted as an indication of crookedness, and the suspected points are at once put under the closest espionage. Sometimes complaints covering a wide expanse of country seem to center on one railroad route.

When either a railroad route or postoffice has been selected for investigation there are various methods pursued to locate the supposed thief. Decoy or "test" letters, the latter being the official designation, are frequently called into play. As soon as suspicion is fastened upon an individual, half a dozen of these letters, each marked and containing money, are addressed to some obscure town and mailed the same day. If these letters come to hand all right the experiment is tried again and again until the inspectors are satisfied that they have been misled. When any of these letters fail to come through to their destination an arrest is made so soon that criminalizing evidence is generally found upon their person.

The location of offices of the above character in any town or city is selected by the inspectors, who also lease the premises. In fact, an inspector in charge can temporarily suspend any postmaster for cause. In some respects their powers are autocratic. Credentials issued by the postmaster general not only

command all railroads, steamboats and other mail contractors to afford them free passage, but require that they shall be "respected and obeyed." They are called upon to rate up the salaries of clerks, and investigate the demands of postmasters for additional help, as well as to sift every case where there is reason to believe that the mails are being subjected to improper uses.

The detection of dishonest postal clerks is almost certain in the long run, but there are instances where perulations have been carried out years before discovery. One dishonest clerk will temporarily cast a shadow of suspicion over many others. This class of work, however, is but one portion of inspectors' duties. They are also required to follow up cases where parties have put the mails to improper uses of any kind. One of the most important of their functions is the supervision of postoffices of the first, second and third classes, and the investigation of any charges of inefficiency or misdemeanors preferred against the postmasters themselves.

STORIES OF BISMARCK.

It was the 7th of May, 1866, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, Count Bismarck was walking abroad for the first time after his severe illness, returning from an interview with the king, and proceeding up the centre alley of the Unter den Linden, Berlin, when he was twice fired on. One of the bullets grazed his side. Turning swiftly round, Bismarck saw a young man before him who was raising his revolver to fire a third time. He seized the man by one arm and the throat, but the man managed to fire three other shots at him. One shot missed him in consequence of a quick turn, only burning his coat, but one of the other two struck him, and at the moment Bismarck believed he had been mortally wounded, for he felt that one of the bullets had struck him on the rib. But Bismarck mastered the sensation of weakness, and handed the criminal—whom he had firmly held—to the officers and men of the First Battalion of the Second Foot Guard Regiment. He then walked home, nobody noticing any change in his demeanor, made a report to the king and returned to the dinner party. As he was going out of the salon he tenderly remarked to his wife, "They have shot at me, but there is no harm done." A surgeon was sent for, who announced the fact of his very narrow escape. The king was soon at his house to inquire after the condition of his trusted Minister. The street in front of his residence was soon crowded with people, and Bismarck addressed them from the window for the first time in his life. Bismarck is said to have been the only party in his house who ate any dinner that day.

As showing Bismarck's habit of driving directly at the end he had in view, and exposing to his enemies, as it would seem, his plans with a rash and reckless candor born of a consciousness of superior

strength, and which took no account of an opponent's patriotic sensitiveness, his interview with Jules Favre September 21, 1870, brought about by Lord Granville, is a case in point. This was a conference to stop further bloodshed and prevent a German entry into Paris. In stating the conditions on which alone this could be done, Favre admitted he was moved to grief by Bismarck's demand that the invaders should have a fort commanding the city—Mount Valerien. Favre replied, "It would be much more simple to ask for Paris itself."

Bismarck plainly informed Favre that France would no more forget the capitulation of Sedan than of Waterloo, than of Sadowa, which did not concern her. The Prussian Minister told Favre substantially that he must have the two provinces which Germany subsequently obtained. Favre remarked that the assent of the people of whom he was thus disposing was more than doubtful, and that the public opinion of Europe would not be satisfied with it. "I know well," he replied, "that they are not with us. They will impose an unpleasant job on us, but we cannot suffer it. I am sure that in a short time we shall have a new war with you. We wish to make it all with our advantages." The new war had not come yet, and there is considerable curiosity to see how Bismarck's retirement will affect the Alsace and Lorraine question.—*Boston Transcript*.

Mahometan pilgrims to Medina and Mecca will encounter worse hardships and dangers this year than usual. Owing to an insufficient rainfall during the last few seasons in the province of Hedjaz—the Arabian holy land—famine prevails throughout the district and renders the natives eager to rob and plunder at every opportunity. The leading routes to Medina and Mecca are most insecure, robbers lying in wait for travelers and merchandise, while the tribes are constantly fighting among themselves to secure the scanty pasture for their cattle.—*London Graphic*.

Mr. Lang writes leaders for *The Daily News*; yet he goes and comes as he pleases, and his duties as a journalist are not suffered to interfere with his other literary work, his lectures, etc. A share of his time is spent in Edinburgh. It is said that when he reports at *The News* office he asks if any particular topic requires treatment at his hands; he is so thoroughly informed and so facile that, assigned a theme for editorial treatment, he will sit down in all the noise and confusion of the editorial room and reel off a delightful essay, full of learning, of wit, of allusion and of quotation; this, too, without referring to any book from which it may be desirable to take extracts, or to which it may be desirable to turn. In fact, Lang is looked upon by his journalistic associates as a cyclopedia of learning, a fountain of wit, and a master of all that is charming in style.—*Ex.*