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THE WORLD'S TERMINUS.

(F. A. A. IN CHRISTIAN WORLD.)

Walking up Broadway the other day I noticed at the end of a street a building of immense size and striking beauty, which looked like a gigantic library, or art gallery, or a stately palace of justice. It turned out to be a railway station—but by far the biggest, most amazing railway station in the world. With the exception of such places as the Vatican and the Tuilleries, which were the work of generations it is the largest building yet erected, and it was finished in six years. It occupies twenty-eight acres, and it is constructed of a wonderful marble from the Roman Travertine quarries at Tivoli, with fifty thousand tons of steel to keep it erect. You enter by a wide, lofty arcade, occupied by some of the finest shops in New York. Passing four palatial restaurants, you descend a staircase forty feet wide into the grand hall, which is of altogether bewildering proportions. Your first thought is that, considering the enormous traffic at this station, there are very few people about. Then you begin to realize that many thousands of travellers could gather in this huge hall without the slightest crowding or inconvenience. Your second thought is that if this is a railway station, where are the trains? You may wander all over the building and never see a train. The fact is that all the platforms and tracks are down below. Every train that approaches New York is brought into the city by electricity, and consequently all modern terminals will be below the street level. Passengers descend or ascend by immense elevators or by moving stairways, and it is impossible for incoming and outgoing travellers to meet, as trains never depart from the platforms at which they arrive. Crowding or confusion is absolutely impossible. There are eleven platforms and twenty-four tracks. Every hour 144 trains arrive and depart. The station-master has five assistants and a staff of 250. The station has sixteen miles of tracks, and the station platform tracks are 22,000 feet in length. There are storage tracks for 400 cars. The lighting, which is as brilliant as it is tasteful, requires 500 arc lights and 20,000 electric lamps.

Figures are seldom illuminating, and it is difficult to express by statistics the vastness and daring of this amazing enterprise. It is much more interesting to see the clever and luxurious arrangements which have been made for the comfort of travellers. Busy, inventive, fertile brains have been at work, limitless capital has been poured out, and the result is a wonderland of beauty and utility. The building has all

the conveniences of an expensive and up-to-date club. The ladies' reception room, with its cosy lounges, armchairs, library, writing tables, and courteous attendants, is wonderfully inviting and home-like. A mother may bring her baby into the city, and yet feel reluctant to take the little bairn on a fatiguing shopping expedition. So there is a well equipped creche, where babies are fed and cared for. There is a hospital, with clever physicians and surgeons in daily attendance, and there if a goal with two cells. The workers are as well looked after as the passengers. For the railroad men there is a magnificent recreation-room, with games, books and magazines, and upstairs there are 150 comfortable beds, so that trainmen who arrive at night and depart in the morning may get a night's rest without expense. This kindly and thoughtful provision for the welfare of wage earners on the part of a great corporation is, perhaps, the most remarkable and significant feature in this unique achievement of American genius—this stupendous monument of American enterprise.

The man who directs the traffic at this great terminal has to bear a responsibility which few of us would care to undertake. He stands in a tower in front of what is called the bulletin. It is really the line in miniature, showing every track and every switch. The position of every train is indicated by a moving light. When a train moves a green arrow records its direction. When a train has passed a certain point no other train can pass until the first train has reached the next section. If by some almost impossible mistake a train entered an occupied section its electric power would be automatically cut off. The man in the tower is an interesting personality. He started life as a messenger boy, became a telegraph operator, and worked his way up to his present position of honour and responsibility. With his telephones and telegraph wires he controls hundreds of trains, and knows at a glance where they are and what they are doing. To him the intricate complexity of this faultless mechanism is perfectly simple, and he manages it with a quiet and easy dexterity.

On the baggage platforms we find up-to-date motor trucks for the prompt and easy disposal of luggage. A wonderful series of chutes and moving platforms carry the mails direct from the trains to the New York Post Office Station without friction and delay. In a similar way bags of letters are thrown into the chutes in the sorting-room at the post office and are dumped down outside the mail van of the train.

Somehow one associates a railroad station with noise, confusion, shrill cries and piercing whistles, the

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