

token it is hard work, exacting work, high-pressure work, a real man's work.

The Red Letter Makes Another Move.

From the other end of the train comes Mr. Gardner to say that the Red Letter is about to make another move. From its resting-place in the working car in which are distributed mails for twenty-one States (including the province of Ontario) aggregating thirty thousand post-offices, the pouch with the red tag is unlocked (letters travel always under lock and key, while papers and packages go in lockless sacks), and a cascade of letter packages, one flashing a red top to catch my eye, tumbles across the table. The pouch, which was marked, it will be remembered, "New York and Chicago No. 2," contains "mixed" mail like the paper mail I have just been distributing, so I need no assistance in dealing out these packages into their respective pouches and sacks in the rack before me. Letter packages are wonderfully easy to throw. They are all about of a size and heavy enough to go straight and true with little effort. I shoot the Red Letter package into a Wisconsin sack, and when in a few minutes all the "mixed" mail is thus assorted, I "tie out" the sack and see it lugged off into the storage car to wait the next stage. The Red Letter will now remain quiet again till the next morning, when the clerks of the West division will take it in hand.

At the Letter Case

The novice now tries his hand at letter separation at the "mixed letter" case. This, for reasons which will appear in a moment, is, with the "mixed paper" distribution, the only kind of separation for which he is yet qualified, or can be without a deal of hard study and experience. The "mixed letter case" is like the primary separation case in the Madison Square Station (and in every

other post-office in the country, for that matter). Its boxes stand for States and a few large cities. It is obvious, therefore, that it requires no special acknowledge to do such separation—merely familiarity with the case, which is soon learned.

The primary separation is not so hard. But when we come to the next step, "making it up fine," it is quite another story—

A Bite to Eat—at Half Price

But here we are at Albany, and before we consider that story, we may as well have a bite to eat. It is early morning now, between twelve and one, and a sandwich, cup of coffee, and piece of pie at the railway lunch counter are very welcome. There are a few travelers at the other end of the counter, and when I have the unique experience of paying only half-price for my food because in overalls and jumper I am accepted at face value as a railway (or R. M. S.) man, I find myself looking at the mere passengers with a little sense of superior tolerance. No. 35 takes on two more cars here from the Boston and Albany R. P. O. One is a Chicago storage car, like the one already in the train, except that it comes from Boston; the other is known as the Wabash storage and runs from Boston to Toledo. It is loaded with mails for the Southwest which are despatched by way of Toledo and St. Louis, and with "working" mails for South Dakota, Wyoming, Idaho, and California. At one-fifth No. 35, now nine cars long, pulls out for the second stage of its run.

The Adepts

Back in the letter car, I turn to watch some of the clerks who before the spreading letter cases are performing the more esoteric functions of their craft. A glance at the cases and a word of explanation give a hint of the difficulties of their task. Here, for instance, is the New York letter case. It contains three hundred and forty-eight boxes ranged