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"UNCLE SAM'S" DEAD LETTER OFFICE.

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IN the days of our childhood, the Dead Letter Office was to us something mysterious, ghostly and solemn. Even when our awe-struck questions received the reply that it is the bourn to which all uncclaimed letters are sent, either to be destroyed or by means of internal information forwarded to the owners, it seemed as though it must be a dark, sad place. Of course, as we grew older, our childish ideas vanished, to be replaced by the adult indifference to all offices of the kind not directly concerning ourselves; and never again did we try to picture to ourselves the place from which occasionally some letter returned to us bearing the cabalistic letters D. L. O., signifying that strangers had first read the thoughts intended for ourselves. But this office is one of the objects of interest to a Washington visitor, and should be entertaining to all readers of Washington descriptions.

The D. L. Office is contained within the general post-office, located on the corner of C and F streets, and forming a handsome block of white stone with iron trimmings; the lower story is in pilasters and the upper stories in Ionic columns. Ascending to the second floor we found ourselves in a long hall, and announcing the object of our visit to the scribe seated there, we were directed to a door labeled "Museum," and thus informally admitted to a large, sunny room, furnished with immense glass cases, two chairs and a table at which was seated a pleasant-faced man, who kindly answered our questions, and gave us many suggestions.

We learned that the heterogeneous collection in the cases is articles received in the mail and detained, either because of deficient postage or address, or excessive weight, which must not be over four pounds. Many of the articles are not mailable, as fluids, uncess packed in tin-foil, explosive substances, live animals, or anything that may injure the regular mail, or endanger the lives of the postal employees. When it is possible to find the address of the owner of an article, he is notified to send for it, and instructed as to the reason of its detention, or else the article is kept in this museum till the annual auction sale sometime during the holiday weeks. Printed catalogues are made of these things, so if the article has been received at the office the owner inquiring for it and proving his right, can very soon gain possession of it.

An hour may be spent in viewing this collection. We noted quantities of cards for Christmas, and other holidays, card-cases, medicines in boxes and bottles, the Lord's Prayer printed in forty-four languages on an inch square paper, mirrors, stuffed birds, false teeth, a life-size washboard, saw, hatchet, hand-drill, Sandwich Islander's dress which when it arrived was mistaken for a fancy ball dress, as it was of gray cotton printed all over with playing cards. They only dangerous articles received were seventeen live rattlesnakes and a loaded revolver; the snakes were speedily killed.

For the auction sale the articles are made into apparently indiscriminate lots, and the catalogue afforded us so much amusement, we copied some of the items into our note book. We give them in their order. One lot, brown wall, worsted trimming, garters, and corset. Do., one and a half pounds of pug tobacco, eleven pairs gent's hose. Do., gent's overcoat, cotton shirt, pair silk cuffs. Do., two horse-blankets and a zither. Do., lady's dress, child's dress. It must, indeed, have been a hopeful person who confided a