

ABOUT PIGEON POSTS.

BY WILL M. CLEMENS.

The first well-known and authenticated instance of the use of the carrier pigeon as a means of conveying letters by post was during the siege of Paris in 1870. No mention of the postal affairs of France would be complete without some notice of the pigeon service during the siege. The subject has been written about before, I candidly admit, but the financial side of the question does not seem to be unduly dwelt upon. It is somewhat startling to learn that during the siege of Paris each carrier bird in the postal service carried £11,520 in postage. The rate was in round numbers about four pence per word and there was a registration fee of about twelve cents in United States money.

The postage on letters during the siege sent by pigeon post averaged about one dollar each, so that on two hundred letters sent by this service the post amounted to over \$800. The letters were written in groups of two hundred on a screen, and were then photographed down as if for the microscope, on to one of the tiny pages carried by the pigeon. These pages were a sixteenth of each pellicle, so that each pellicle realized sixteen times £40 or £640, and as each pigeon carried eighteen pellicles, we get the total of each bird's mail as worth eighteen times £640 or £11,520, and it was well worth it, considering that a pigeon would sometimes bring in from Tours, as many as 50,000 despatches and that the balloon with the birds had first to make its way out of Paris over the German lines. The men in charge of the balloons had however much to be thankful for, for notwithstanding Krupp's postal guns and various other devices, only seven balloons were captured by the Germans.

At the present time a pigeon post is at daily work in the Fiji Islands. The letters and communications from island to island being carried on by birds. The Fijian exports are chiefly fruits, and as the fruit would spoil if left too long in store, means were necessary to give early notice of when the picking would take place and the news of the arrival of various steamers is now sent out through the colony by pigeon post. Until

recently the important telegrams in the English papers were sent by pigeons from Point de Galle to Colombo, seventy miles higher up the coast of Ceylon. In different countries and at different times the carrier pigeon has been a letter carrier ever since the days of Anacaron.

A PERMANENT STAMP ALBUM.

BY W. G. WHILDEN, JR.

At the present time, when the market is flooded with every kind of albums, collectors are sometimes troubled to know which kind is the best. All albums have certain merits. But the following plan, which I have successfully tried myself, is, I think, a method that will please the most fastidious. For collectors of United States stamps exclusively, it is especially adapted. Have an album made about $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ inches, containing 48 leaves (96 pages), of the finest quality of white paper, almost as thick as cardboard, with guards between the leaves to give the album the proper appearance. The pages on the left side are to be ruled, while those on the right are to be perfectly blank. The stamps are to be inserted on the blank pages, and a complete description, exact date of issue, etc., should be written on the left. There should be no spaces laid off for the stamps; therefore you can arrange them in any desired way your fancy may suggest. After which a neat border should be ruled around each stamp, to "show it off." If you are very fastidious you might first mount the stamps on rectangular squares of cardboard. This will make them look much better, but of course it will be more troublesome.

In regard to the cost of the album. I would say that it should not cost over \$3.00, if it is bound in morocco and gilt. Of course, a cloth binding would do. But a morocco one will look much better, and will not cost very much more.

I know that the above plan is a *good* one by personal experience, and therefore I can recommend it. Some persons prefer the stamps to be mounted, *first*, on a rectangular piece of white, and *second*, on sheets of grey cardboard; but you can use your discretion in the matter. In regard to mounting the