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### Passing of the "Pacific Mail"

A chapter in the romance of American shipping came to an end a few weeks ago when the stockholders of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company voted to accept the offer of W. R. Rouse and Company to exchange 150 shares of stock for all of the ships of the Pacific Mail except one. Thus the historic American institution passed by the board. For more than twenty-seven years, we are informed by The Nation, the Pacific Mail played a great role in the annals of American shipping. The reasons for withdrawing from the shipping business, as given by the President of the company, are that the five large shipping vessels which it operated have been sold to the Dollar Steamship Line, and that it would be impracticable to maintain transpacific service pending the purchase of a suitable fleet to replace these ships. Nor was the company in a position to finance the construction of modern ships, at an estimated cost of \$10,000,000, says a official statement in The National Gazette (New York). According to this journal:

The ships of the Pacific Mail fleet, with their gross tonnages, are as follows: "Columbia, 5,643; Ecuador, 6,702; Venezuela, 5,641; Solana, 6,702; Juan, 2,152; Corinto, 1,739.

The Pacific Mail Steamship Company has been a fixture in American shipping for more than seventy-seven years, having been incorporated under the laws of the State of New York on April 18, 1848. The founding of the company was the direct outcome of a bill passed by Congress on March 3, 1847, authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to contract for a mail steamship service from New York to Astoria, Oregon, via the Isthmus of Panama, with calls at way ports. The contract was necessarily split up into two parts, one covering the Atlantic end, which had bi-monthly sailings from New York to the mouth of the Chagres River and the other covering the Pacific end. Under the terms of the Act, the Pacific line had to furnish one month's sailing with five ships of 1,500 tons, and a subvention of \$199,000 per year was appropriated for such a line.

In a New York Times article we are told that:

The first steamer, the California, sailed from New York October 5, 1848, for Panama—on the western coast—via the Straits of Magellan. There were no passengers. It was a slow trip, with unforeseen troubles. When the California reached Panama, a crowd of people was on hand, clamoring for passage on any terms. The California had hardly left New York



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when word reached the East of the discovery of gold in California, and the stampede began.

The Pacific Mail responded to the demand for transportation to the "Golden West" by sending the Pacific Mail to Colon, on the east coast of Panama. Her passengers had no clear idea how they would cross the Isthmus, nor how they would get the rest of the way to San Francisco. They were lucky, however; they crossed the Isthmus and waited twenty-five days for the California. Twenty-eight days more brought them to the gold port. They were the vanguard.

The California had no easy time on that first trip. Near port the coal ran short and she burned the lumber with which emergency berths had been built for the Isthmus passengers. No sooner had she cast anchor at San Francisco than crew and officers—all but the sick master—were off to the mines though the destination was Astoria, Oregon.

In ten years the Pacific Mail carried 175,000 passengers to California and brought back gold by the ton. It was gold from the Western coast that enabled the United States to stand the economic strain of the Civil War, and by the time hostilities began the Pacific Mail steamers were carrying \$100,000,000 a year. Southern privateers lay in wait for them; they would have been a prize richer than Spanish gold. Yet none of them was taken. Speed and armament carried the California liners through.

The first steamers, the California and Panama and Oregon, were of 1,000 tons, all wooden side-wheelers. At once the company built ships twice as big. In ten years it had a fleet of twenty-nine. Eventually the New York-Isthmus Line established by George Law was taken over and the transpacific service was started in 1867, when the capital was increased from \$4,000,000 to \$20,000,000.

The Pacific was just being discovered by passenger ships. The Suez Canal was not yet done. The Pacific Mail had a subvention of \$500,000 for the Chinese and Japanese service, and it put four wooden steamers on the run, costly vessels and soon obsolescent. For this it was criticized. Iron steamers of 5,000 tons did not come till the 1870's.

The Pacific Mail looked on the Pacific Ocean as its monopoly. The line had a naval savor because the Government had stipulated in granting the subsidy that the captains be taken from the Navy. The tradition, though not always observed, lingered till recent years.

The Pacific Mail was fortunate on the whole, but there were no losses. The Central America was one of the first; she sank off Florida. In 1857 bound for New York with 582 passengers and \$1,500,000. She went down after leaving thirty-three hours, and 143 lives were lost.

The San Francisco sailed from New York two days before Christmas in 1855, carrying the Third Artillery. She became disabled; she drifted in a storm eight days in the Gulf Stream, and those aboard were taken off only a little while before she went down. Another liner named San Francisco was lost twenty years later.

Then there was the Golden Gate, which burned off Mexico and added \$1,400,000 to the total of sunken treasure. She caught fire Sunday afternoon. The captain headed her for shore, three miles away. Four men at the wheel dropped off, one by one; the last darted back to lash the spokes, with fire all around him. There were 328 aboard; 80 reached shore through the surf, and it was a desert shore.

The sea has few disasters stranger than the loss of the City of Rio in 1901. She had come from China and passed the bar into San Francisco Bay. Twenty minutes of clear steaming would have brought her to her dock. The city heard her whistles in the fog and the City of Rio vanished. Where she struck in the fog, how she went down, where she lies, is not known even now.

Till 1898 the Pacific Mail was the only American line in the Pacific. There were changes of many sorts in the interim. Subsidies lapsed after becoming a political issue; railroad interests got hold of it; the country. The side-wheelers gave way to twenty-one knot steamers of 27,000 tons displacement. But through all the changing conditions the Pacific Mail kept the glamour of a line that had charted new seas.

### What Happens

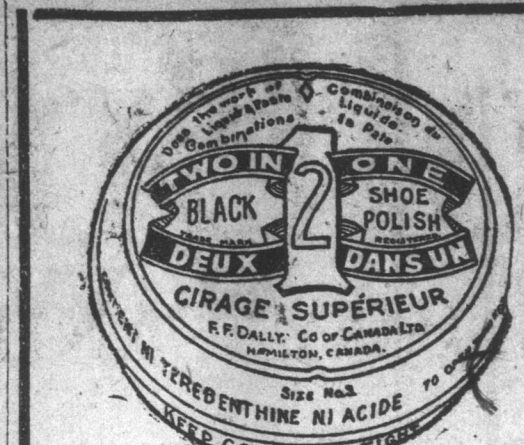
at a Seance

A writer who recently attended a spiritualistic meeting in London explains what happened in the following interesting manner:

At a big seance, everything is done by the medium—that is, the person who goes into a trance, and who, as the name suggests, acts as a medium between the spirit and the people present.

The things upon which a good seance are carried out are quite simple. Including the medium there are perhaps eight or ten people. The people sit round the room in a circle and hold hands. The medium may complete the circle, or he may sit alone.

In the latter case the people sit in the form of a horseshoe with the medium between the ends. The two people at the extreme ends of the horseshoe place both their hands in



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the hand of the person next to them. At many seances a kind of short service is held first, and then the medium goes off into a trance.

He cannot be seen doing this, because it is pitch dark, but he can be heard gasping, as if for air. Sometimes this lasts only a few seconds, at other times much longer.

And then a strange thing happens. A voice is heard speaking out of the darkness from where the medium is sitting. But it is not the medium's own voice! It sounds quite different.

It is the voice of the spirit, or control, as it is called, speaking through the mouth of the unconscious medium. The medium under the power of materializing spirits in the room. Certainly, one sees strange lights floating in the darkness. Sometimes one will see a dim hand holding them. They glide about, hover, and sink perfectly smoothly, and if you can manage to touch one with your face, as the writer did, they seem neither hot nor cold. They are just the same temperature as the room.

These floating lights are supposed to be the manifestation of spirits. A spirit in such a form is, apparently, unable to speak.

Then, perhaps, later you will hear

a voice. It appears to come from somewhere in the air just in front of your face. The voice sounds quite distinct, but has a far-away tone and a curious breathlessness about it. You may move your foot forward, but you will feel nothing in front of you.

During a seance you may talk. In fact the medium prefers it as it is supposed to make everything work more easily. The only rules imposed are that no lights shall be flashed on and nobody shall unclasp his hand or hands from his neighbors.

The reason for the first rule is that a sudden light on the medium while he is in a trance is very bad for him, for it brings him back too quickly. Unclasping hands break the circle and for some reason is also dangerous to the medium. On one occasion when this happened the medium was brought out of his trance in a flash and was ill for six months. On at least one occasion the sudden walking of a medium from his trance has proved fatal.

After the seance is over, a candle is lighted and shaded from the medium's eyes, which are still closed. When at last he struggles back to consciousness he has no recollection of what has happened during the time he was under the power of the control.

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### When They Were Boys

SCHOOLS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE FAMOUS IN LITERATURE BY THEIR FORMER PUPILS.

Jan Ridd's school, as readers of "Lorna Doone" will recall, was at Tiverton, and its modern representative is the famous Blundell's, the great West Country public school at which the late Archbishop Temple was also a scholar. Blundell's recently celebrated the novelist's centenary, for on the outside wall of the old school building, now used as a private residence, the school occupying new quarters, the name "R. D. Blackmore" may still be seen, cut in large letters.

Unlike Thackeray, Blackmore speaks lovingly of his school. The author of "Vanity Fair" was an Old Carthusian long before the removal of the ancient school from London to Godalming. He referred to it in private not as the Charterhouse, but as the Slaughterhouse. He had his nose broken there in a fight, and although he and his antagonist later became fast friends, he carried that broken nose to his grave.

#### Our Greatest School Story.

Probably the most famous of all literary panegyrics on a great school is "Tom Brown's Schooldays." Matthew Arnold's father, Thomas Arnold, lifted Rugby School from second or even third class among public schools to a foremost position, and during his famous headship it had many boys who later attained fame, like the headmaster's son Matthew, his chum Arthur High Clough, Tom Hughes, the author of the great school story, and Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, the famous Dean of Westminster. Tom Hughes probably did more even than Thomas Arnold to lift his old school to a pinnacle of fame.

For a long time Rugby kept its proud pre-eminence as the only school which had a classic all to itself. Then Rudyard Kipling wrote "Stalky and Co." The school which he glorified in his own peculiar way is the United Services College, Westward Ho! North Devon, of which, it goes without saying, the poet of the Empire is the most celebrated scholar.

But Charles Lamb must take precedence of all. In his famous essay, "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago," he immortalised the Old Blue Coat School, now at Horsesham, but then standing on the site now occupied by the General Post Office. Lamb and Coleridge were there together and were life-long friends.

CONFEDERATION LIFE. — aug17.3mcs

### Walking Round the World

A man and wife Mr. and Mrs. C. Roux, left Johannesburg in December, 1922, to walk around the world, having only 5 cents between them. They are supporting themselves by the way and carry everything with them, in a wheelbarrow, from a tooth brush to a frying pan. This strange couple, who sleep in the open on waterproof sheets, encountered snakes in Zululand that were 18 inches in girth. "I killed them at the rate of two a day," said Mr. Roux. "We found

the natives friendly, and more ready they took over 12,000,000 steps. Soon to give us a drink of milk than to they are going to America, and then kill us!" In their journey through to New Zealand, Australia, China and Holland, Italy, Egypt, and native At-Japan. They hope to complete their rice, these globe-trotters estimate 25,000 miles' trip in four years' time.



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