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## Stories of the Mail.

An advertisement recited that for fifty cents a receipt would be supplied for catching all the fish in any given body of water. When fifty cents was sent, a slip was returned, telling the victim to "dip all the water out and then pick up the fish."

Another ingenious person advertises that for the sum of one dollar he would give a permanent cure for stammering. When the dollar was sent, an answer was returned, saying, "Keep your mouth shut."

Still another advertisement of red silk remnants for sale, at one dollar for so many yards. He filled all orders according to promise. However, it was not silk cloth, but silk thread that purchasers received.

Parts of North Carolina are infested by illicit distillers. An inspector approaching them is in danger of being mistaken for a revenue officer, and treated accordingly. One of the post office detectives speaking of a trip into that part of the country, says:

"I had a case where it became necessary to hunt up a man and his son to get their testimony. Accordingly, I secured a horse and buggy at Albemarle, and, with a man to drive me, started off in search of my witnesses. We drove many miles over a lonely road, the hills getting steeper and the scenery wilder. I noticed that my driver was uneasy. Presently he broke out with:

"Say, stranger, do you know this is a dangerous business you are on? These yer people take you for a revenue, and they are just as likely as not to shoot first and ask you about it afterwards."

"Is that so? I asked, 'Well, there's one thing satisfactory, anyhow.'

"'What's that?' he inquired.

"'If they do shoot, they are just as likely to hit you as me.'

"John scratched his head for a moment, and, after taking it all in, replied:

"'That's so; but I don't see what in thunder that's got to do with it.'

"I ordered him to drive on. The road faded away to a mere trail. Seeing a small rise ahead, I decided to reach that and take a look around. Just as we got to the summit, there suddenly appeared before me such a wild, weird scene that I shall never forget it. Right in front, and not more than a dozen yards away, several rough-looking fellows were busily engaged in distilling brandy. It was a secluded spot, shut in by high wooded hills!

"The men gazed at me with startled looks. It was a critical moment. Ordering the driver to stop, I leaped out of the buggy, and before they had time to recover from their astonishment I was in the midst of them. My manner assured them of my peaceful intentions. The individuals I was after were there. I secured

my evidence, which was willingly given, and before I left they wanted to sell me some poor brandy at fifty cents a gallon.

On one occasion an inspector was called on to visit a remote post office at Sand Mountain, in Northern Alabama. The woman in charge was very indignant. She said:

"Why, you uns think that we uns can't keep a post office up here."

The inspector pretended that the department at Washington labored under no such belief. He had simply been ordered to examine the office as a matter of routine.

"Come with me," replied the woman, grimly, taking a pine knot for a light, and conducting the visiting official into a room which had no other furniture than a large oaken bedstead in one corner. From under the bed she abstracted a cheese-box containing three or four letters and a few postage stamps. A throwing of the cover, she said, in tragic tones:

"Here's the post office; now inspect! I jez got in twenty-three cents last quarter, and it cost me twenty-five cents to swear to my account. Take the post office. You can have it; I don't want it!"

During this colloquy the men folks, who were lounging about the post office, had been holding an animated discussion. It was fortunate that the inspector made the chance discovery that one of them was a Mason. Confidential intercourse being thus established, the man said, frankly:

"We was just calculating whether to shoot or hang yer."

"For what?" was the startled question.

"'Because we uns are opposed to revenue officers.'

It seems that the fellows were a gang of desperate moonshine distillers. They were finally persuaded that the inspector did not intend to interfere with their business, and let him go. The Sand Mountain post office was discontinued.

On one occasion an inspector had travelled from 6 a. m. to 10 p. m. over a star route in Southern Alabama. He tried to get lodging for the night at a lonely cabin. In response to his hello, an old man came out, and finally consented to be his host. After supper, which consisted of corn bread, buttermilk, and "turnip greens," the traveller ascended what were called the "stairs," and went to bed. There were only two rooms in the hut, one below and one above.

Soon after going to sleep, the inspector was aroused by snore's as if some one was trying to get into his room. He presently discovered that it was a very large and evidently ferociously bulldog. The animal was leaping violently against the door, which was so frail that it seemed likely to give way any moment and let him in. The old man came to the rescue just in time, but the visitor was glad to saddle his mule at daybreak and get away.

Frauds perpetrated through and against the

mails are multifarious. At one time a box was rented at a post office in West Virginia, and all mail addressed to J. Smith went into it.

J. Smith was a fictitious name adopted by two young men in the town, who were active church members, one of them being at the head of the local Y. M. C. A. They put an advertising notice in the papers, which read:

"West Virginia Investment Company. Send twenty-five cents, and you will receive full instructions."

This was attractively mysterious, and many persons sent the money, asking what to do. The answer that came back was simply: "Fish for suckers, as we do."

An inspector, who wrote and received this suggestion, proceeded to fish, and very soon he had the fellows hooked. They were fined fifty dollars each and costs; but it was the exposure that hurt them.

One day, as I sat in the store of a Kentucky mountain town, which was also the post office, a long, gangling youth of 22 or 23 came in. The town of 2,000 was a great city to him, and he was one of the most voracious variety of yaps.

"Is 't is the post office, mister?" he asked of the P. M.

"Yes, sir," was the polite response.

"Is thar a letter here for Miss Liz Smith, that I writ from Short Rum las' week?"

The P. M. looked over the list, but found no letter.

"Shore thar ain't none?" he asked, persistently.

"Sure."

"Is thar any other post office in town?" he asked.

"Two more," responded the P. M., who was catching on, and the young man went out to look for them.

In half an hour he returned.

"Say, mister," he said, sheepishly, as the P. M. appeared, "I made a mistake. Her name ain't Smith, it's Gipson. My name is Smith, and I got kinder tangled up, never bein' in town much. Is thar a letter for Miss Liz Gipson?"

The P. M. looked over the G's, but there was no letter.

"Well, mister, I'm obliged to yer," said the caller. "I writ her a letter t'other day, sayin' as how I'd be comin' up to see her—she lives over on Cross Creek—and I reckoned I'd just stop and take the letter along with me. Good-bye," and he went out without showing in any way that he wasn't doing the thing just as it should be done.

In the mountain villages of Germany the letter carriers are the hardest worked people in the country. They carry all the mail, and are compelled to go at about the rate of five miles an hour. You know that in running even a short distance you quickly get "out of breath," as you say. The German letter carriers, to avoid this shortness of breath, carry a quill in the mouth, so that the air cannot be so rapidly expelled from the lungs.