

## FUNNY DEAD LETTERS.

## Queer Collection of Stray Mail at the Capital.

## Piece of Frosted Wedding Cake that Missed its Destination.

Strange Things Included in Uncle Sam's Museum—Quaint Addresses.

(Washington letter in New York Journal.)

ONE of the most interesting places in the Capital city is the museum in the dead letter office. It is full of queer things that have traveled through the mail and at last found a permanent resting place. Whenever it is possible articles that reach the dead letter office owing to failure of the delivery are returned to the sender, but it often happens that not even the sender can be found.

Then the unclaimed article, if it be curious or interesting, is placed on exhibition in the cabinet that lines the walls of the museum. There are pictures and toys and jewelry in profusion.

Several Indian hatchets gave to a section of the cabinet an archeological appearance, and a pair of Indian pipes of red sandstone cross each other in peaceful style. A came in the form of a piece of parchment on which is penned the Lord's prayer in 54 languages. It is said to be a duplicate of a parchment which hangs in St. Peter's at Rome.

It came to this country in the mail from Europe in 1842 and, as it was never claimed and its origin could not be traced, it was sent to the dead letter office, where it has been on exhibition ever since. One of the prettiest things in the cabinet is a lady's fan made of stork feathers, the plumes being rarer and richer than the finest ostrich plumes.

It is most magnificent in appearance, and doubtless graced the costume of some court beauty in the old world. It came to this country from Europe many years ago, but no clue to its owner or sender was ever found.

On one of the shelves is a box of wedding cake, which came to the dead letter office 10 years ago as, "unclaimed." It is getting a little old and discolored and would doubtless be pretty dry eating. Considering its present characteristics it might be excellent "wedding cake to dream on." Certainly it has all the elements necessary to produce a fanciful nightmare.

Rosaries are quite common in the cabinet and crucifixes are also plentiful.

Resting in a corinthian case in one corner of the cabinet is a pretty crucifix of solid gold. It was found in one of the southern postoffices at the close of the war and was marked "Unclaimed." It had been sent probably by some pious mother to her son, who perished on the field of battle or in the hospital.

There was no name attached and nothing to tell its story. Near it in an envelope is a lock of dark brown hair. An inscription on the envelope, in a nervous hand, reads: "This contains my hair. Charles Guiteau." It was put into the mails by the murderer of Pres. Garfield without any address, just as it appears in the cabinet.

A few years ago there came to the dead letter office a tin can upon which no address could be found. The can was opened and 16 lively looking rattlesnakes made their escape. There was a stirring scene in the dead letter office for a minute.

Everybody got upon the chairs and tables, and the rattlers were left in full possession of the floor. Finally the snakes were dispatched, and 15 of them were pickled in alcohol. One was missing, though nobody knew it.

One sunny afternoon a few days later a big, sleek looking rattlesnake crawled from among the papers in the chief clerk's desk and unobserved made his way to where a young lady visitor was sitting.

His snakeship slyly crawled to her feet and gracefully winding himself about her slender ankle tightened his folds. The young lady noticed the intrusion, and hastily looking down saw the wily serpent, was horrified and very properly faint.

The rattlesnake offered no further insult or injury, but fled in alarm. He was killed and artistically incased in a glass jar which now adorns the cabinet.

It is one of the cases grins a human skull. It was broken with age, having apparently laid under the clay for a long time before its resurrection and its journey through the mails. There was no address nor postmark when it came. All that it bore was the inscription, "Jimmy McBuff," carved on the frontal bone.

Jimmy McBuff is the name of a murderer who perished on the scaffold about twenty years ago, but the skull is not believed to be Jimmy's. Somebody evidently sent it as a joke to some friend acquainted with the circumstances of Jimmy's taking off.

Another exhibit is a negro doll baby black as if Rider Haggard's African hero Umbagogas. It was addressed a few years ago to a young society lady in New York by some joking friend, but ascertaining the contents of the package declined to pay the postage that was due and it came back to the dead letter office.

A huge axe, such as is used by firemen, came in the mails a short time ago and landed in the dead letter office because it was "unmailable" for three reasons: It is sharp pointed, it is overweight and it is oversize.

Axes are not allowed in the mails, though some people seem to think no limit is prescribed. There are persons who would send a threshing machine or a sawmill through the mails if they could only find a postmaster reckless enough to give it a start.

One of the most curious exhibits is a collection of envelopes showing the desperate but futile efforts made by various persons to address them properly. "Pinto rocks, M. D.," is a pretty fair stagger for Point of Rocks, Md., but it takes an effort to determine that "St. Traler, Illonay," is meant for Centralia, Ill. There is not much poetry about "Yummar talh," considering that the writer meant Umattila, which is in the State of Oregon.

But the sentimental goes all to smash when we realize that a young lady of presumably scholarly attainments wrote "Sarah Gardner" for Cerro Gordo, an Illinois town.

A forger of the Bulgarian persuasion made a strenuous effort to write "St. Louis." He didn't get it exactly, but when he wrote "St. Sokloys" it was not because he didn't try to confuse the idea and the name.

One correspondent who had this failing wrote "Rising Sun Colo." for Sunshine, Colo. Another writer addressed a letter to "Rat Trap, Miss," when he should have written Fox Trap, Miss.

He knew it was a trap of some sort, but he was not quite certain as to the kind. One of the envelopes copied and on exhibition indicates that some people are very particular.

The person who addressed a letter to Fred Clark, 3 South Liberty St., Hartford, Conn. wrote "Fair Clark, in the cair of Bery Clark, Hartford, 3 S. Lib. st., Ct. Harf. Co." Fred got the letter, but it was a close call.

## One of the Wanderers of the Age.

Equatorial Africa, where a half score of great explorers have made themselves famous, is now embraced in the postal union, so that today a letter or newspaper will be carried to the head waters of the Congo for 5 cents.

Some one has calculated that London letter carriers walk, in going their rounds 48,360 miles, or twice the circumference of the earth, every day.

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A two or three-line advertisement under this heading \$5.00 per year, payable in advance. Extra lines \$1.50 each.

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## THIS WEEK'S BARGAIN

In our Packet No. 4, which contains two varieties of stamps from Ecuador, Romania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Tunis, Argentina, Gibraltar, Spain, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Chili, India, etc. This is our bargain for this week, and it is far superior to any 100 variety packet ever offered by any dealer; sent post paid to any place in U. S. or Canada for 25 cents. Address—

W.M.C. BENSON, 204 Victoria St., London, Can.

## ADVANCED COLLECTORS.

We have on hand an unsevered pair of the U.S. 1897 2c. green, unperfected, with fine margins, on part of original paper. These stamps are very rare in this condition, and will be sent on approval to responsible parties. They are a bargain at the price, which is only \$20.00.

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## OUR WEEKLY BARGAIN LIST.

We invite your attention to the following list of Special Offers, which are entirely changed each week.

\*Moss unsevered. Postage extra on orders under \$1.00. Orders under 25 cents are respectfully declined. Comparison of our prices with those of other dealers requested.

*New Brunswick, 1, 2, 3, 10, 12½ and 17c.	10
New Brunswick, 10c. letter	20
Nova Scotia, 1c. black	30
Nova Scotia, 2c. mauve	35
Nova Scotia, 3c. blue	40
Nova Scotia, 3d. blue, a very fine specimen on original letter	50
Newfoundland, 8 varieties	10
United States, 1857, 1c. blue	20
United States, 1857, 10c. green	20
United States, 1861, 3c. green	15
Angola, 1896, 50 and 100 reis.	14
Puallula State, 5 varieties	15
Argentine Republic, 12 varieties	15
Brazil, 11 fine varieties	15
Bulgaria, 10 varieties	15
Canada, 1857, 5d. pink, on original letter	30
Canada, 1859, 1d. red	18
Canada, 1859, 2d. red	18
Canada, 1859, 3d. pink and 3c. vermilion	30
Canada, 1896, 5c. to 15c., 7 varieties, complete	45
Canada, 1897, 2c. blue, 100 reis, complete	20
Canada Registration, 8c. blue	125
Canada Officially Sealed, blue	150
Canada, 1859, 2c. 10 and 100 reis	10
Nicaragua, 1897-1913, 5 varieties	25
Nicaragua, 1898, 5c. varieties	35
British North Borneo, 1877, 1c. 8 and 10c.	30
Guadaloupe, 1874, provisionals, 3 varieties	10
Canada, 1896, 1c. 5c. varieties, complete	10
*Hawaii, 1897-1907, 7 varieties	20
*Paraguay, 1891, 1 and 2c.	10
Salvador, 1897, 1 and 2c.	6
Portugal, 1897, 2c. 10 and 100 reis	10
*Helioland, 21 varieties	5
Honduras, 1st issue, 5 varieties, complete	10
Quebec Republic, 1897, 7 varieties, complete	25
Canada Weight and Measure Stamp, 5c. black	35
*Prince Edward Island, 1c. mauve	10
Newfoundland, 1897, 2c. black	20
Canada Postage and Revenue, 50 varieties	100
U. S. Postage, Revenues and Locals, 100 varieties	100
Jamaica, 10 fine varieties, including Officials	15

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