

His trade was fairly booming; his "friends" were true to their promises and patronized him liberally. Of course he could not refuse old acquaintances who asked "credit for a few days" just for groceries, for he was too good a fellow to serve them in that way. And so his account book soon contained the names of A—, B—, C—, D—; indeed, ran the gamut of the alphabet, while his cash entries were yet at the beginning of the scale.

Our friend Joe was indeed a popular merchant, and was a regular Charity Bank for impecunious acquaintances. To the festivals, dinners, benefits, etc., of a long line of church organizations and secret societies Joe was always a liberal giver, and the more he gave the more was expected from him. The army of "solicitors" always struck him for a good sum to head their subscription list, with the remark, "Twill be a good advertisement for you, you know." Yes, the bread he had cast on the waters when he was a good fellow, was being returned to him—but was there some mistake in the kind of bread?

Of Mr. Brown's further business career, and his efforts to collect what was due him, we will not write at length. It is sufficient to say that in his character of a good fellow he did not make success of the grocery business, but he did learn a great deal about human nature, the depth of which he had never before sounded. How hard men will strive to get something for nothing, how many lies they will tell and to what little meannesses they will stoop to beat the groceryman out of his goods, no man can fully comprehend until he has stood behind the counter for a few years and had it revealed to him. And with this state of mind we will take leave of our friend, and simply remark that a tradesman needs to be something more than a good fellow. As Sam'l of Posen says in the play: "beesiness is beesiness."—*Monetary Times*.

SENDING A TELEGRAM.

One man reached a long arm over the little crowd clustered at the operator's window, and asked for a "blank telegraphic form," explaining that he "wished to send a telegraphic despatch to his family." Now, when a man speaks of a "telegraphic despatch," I always wake up and look at him, because the

cumbersome title is all at utter variance with the spirit of the telegraph. It's too long. The use of it betrays a man who has little use for the telegraph. The more he uses the wire, the shorter his terms. The more nearly he can come to saying "msg" the more content he is. And he doesn't call it a "telegraphic form;" he asks for a "blank" black or red as the case may be. And he never "telegraphs" anybody. He "wires" them. And he doesn't explain to the operator what he wants to do with the blank. Presumably he wants to write a message.

So I watched this passenger write his "telegraphic despatch." First he asked the operator "what day of the month is this?" There was nothing unusual in that. All men ask that. It is the opening line in the regular formula of sending a "msg." He spoiled three blanks before he got a "telegraphical despatch" written to suit him. But even that is not very uncommon. A man always uses stationary more extravagantly in another man's office than he does at home. Then he wrote every word in the body of the despatch very carefully and distinctly but scrambled hurriedly over the address as if everybody knew that as well as he did, and dashed off his own signature in a blind letter style, as though his name was as familiar to the operator as it was to his own family. But even this is not uncommon.

Well, my tall man with the thin neck got along a little better than that when he handed the operator the following explicit message:

Mrs. Sarah K. Follinsbee, Dallas Centre, Iowa:

MY DEAR WIFE: I left the city early this morning after eating breakfast with Prof. Morton, a live man in the temperance cause. I expected to eat dinner with you at home, but we were delayed by a terrible railroad accident, and I narrowly escaped being killed; one passenger was terribly mangled and has since died, but I am alive. The conductor says I cannot make connection so as to come to Dallas Centre this morning, but I can get there by 8 o'clock this evening. I hate to disappoint you, but cannot help it. With love to mother and the children, I am your loving husband.

ROGER K. FOLLINSBEE.

The operator read it, smiled and said: "You can save considerable expense and tell all that is really necessary, I presume, by shortening this message down

to ten words. We have no wire direct into Dallas and will have to send this message part of the way over another line, which adds largely to the cost of transmission. Shall I shorten this for you?" "No, oh, no," the man with the shawl replied, "I'll fix it myself. Ten words, you say?" "Yes, Sir." It was a stunner, for a fact, and the man heaved a despairing sigh as he prepared to boil his "letter" down to ten words. He sighed again after reading it through once or twice, and then scratched out "Dallas Centre, Iowa," as though everybody knew where he lived. Then he erased "early" and drew his pen slowly through "breakfast with" and "in the temperance." Then he scratched over "dinner with" and went on to erase "and narrowly escaped." And at last after much scratching and erasing and with many sighs, he came to the window and said, "here is this telegraphic despatch to my wife. I have not been able to condense it into 10 words, and do not see how it can be done without garbling the sense of the despatch, but if you can do it, you would oblige me greatly, as I do not wish to incur any really unnecessary expense. And with that he handed the operator the following expunged edition of his original message.

Mrs. Sarah H. Follinsbee:

MY DEAR WIFE: I left the city—this morning after eating—Prof. Morton alive—cause I expected to eat—you at home. But we were delayed by a terrible railroad accident on the railroad. I—being killed—terribly mangled and since died; but I am—the conductor.—I cannot—come to Dallas Centre—but I can—I hate—mother and the children. Your loving husband,

ROGER K. FOLLINSBEE.

The operator smiled once more, and in his quick, nervous way that grows out of his familiar association with the lightning, made a few quick dashes with his pencil, and without changing or adding in the original message, shriveled it down to its very sinews, like this:

Sarah A. Follinsbee, Dallas Centre, Iowa.

Left city 'smorning; delayed by accident; all right; home 'sevening.

ROGER K. FOLLINSBEE.

"There, that is all right," he said in the cheery, magnetic way these operators have. Fifty cents, sir; only 25 cents if we had our own wire into Dallas, sir; we'll have one next spring too; saves