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NATURAL HISTORY.

SPEED OF THE OSTRICH.

In the *Annals of Sporting* it is observed:—"If we are to place confidence in traveller's tales, the ostrich is swifter than the Arabian horse. During the residence of Mr. Adamson at Pador, a French factory on the south side of the river Niger, he says that two ostriches, which had been about two years in the factory, afforded him a sight of a very extraordinary nature. These gigantic birds, though young, were of nearly the full size. They were (he continues) so tame, that two little blacks mounted both together on the back of the larger. No sooner did he feel their weight, than he began to run as fast as possible, and carried them several times round the village,—and it was impossible to stop him, otherwise than by obstructing the passage. This sight pleased me so much, that I wished it to be repeated, and, to try their strength, directed a full-grown negro to mount the smallest, and two others the larger. This burden did not seem at all disproportioned to their strength. At first, they went at a pretty sharp trot; but when they became heated a little, they expanded their wings, as though to catch the wind, and moved with such fleetness that they seemed scarcely to touch the ground. Most people have, at one time or other, seen the partridge run, and consequently must know that there is no man able to keep up with it; and it is easy to imagine, that if this bird had a longer step, its speed would be considerably augmented. The ostrich moves like the partridge, with this advantage; and I am satisfied that those I am speaking of would have distanced the fleetest race-horses that were ever bred in England. It is true, that they would not hold out so long as a horse; but they would, undoubtedly, be able to go over the space in less time. I have frequently beheld this sight, which is capable of giving one an idea of the prodigious strength of the ostrich, and of showing what use it might be of, had we but the method of breaking and managing it as we do the horse."

PLANTS IN ROOMS.

It is very difficult to make plants grow in rooms. They must necessarily be deficient in the three important auxiliaries to vegetable life, light, air, and moisture; the latter of which cannot be maintained in apartments that are daily occupied. In large towns, plants cannot thrive even in the open air, as the minute particles of soot, which are constantly floating about, settle upon their leaves, and choke up their pores. The gases produced by the combustion of coal, &c., are also injurious to plants. Sulphurous acid, which abounds in the atmosphere

of London, turns the leaves yellow; and the want of evaporation and absorption by the leaves prevents the proper elaboration of the sap, and makes the trees stunted and and unproductive. *Lindley's Lectures.*

POMPEII.—Continued.

In one of the buildings was found the skeleton of a new-born child, and in one part of the square the skeletons of sixty men, supposed to be soldiers, who, in the severity of Roman discipline, dared not fly, and perished at their post. There were several advertisements of gladiators on the pillars, and it appears that at the time of the eruption the inhabitants of Pompeii were principally assembled in the great amphitheatre, at a show.

We left the square, and visiting several small private houses near it, passed into a street with a slight ascent, the pavement of which was worn deep with carriage-wheels. It appeared to have led from the upper part of the city directly to the sea, and in rainy weather must have been quite a channel for water, as high stones at small distances were placed across the street, leaving open places between for the carriage-wheels. (I think there is a contrivance of the same kind in one of the streets of Baltimore.)

We mounted thence to higher ground, the part of the city not excavated. A peasant's hut and a large vineyard stands high above the ruins, and from the door the whole city and neighbourhood are seen to advantage. The effect of the scene is strange beyond description. Columns, painted walls, wheel-worn streets, amphitheatres, palaces, all as lonely and deserted as the grave, stand around you, and behind is a poor cottage and a vineyard of fresh earth just putting forth its buds, and beyond the broad, blue, familiar bay, covered with steamboats and sails, and populous modern Naples in the distance—a scene as strangely mingled perhaps, as any to be found in the world. We looked around for awhile, and then walked on through the vineyard to the amphitheatre which lies beyond, near the other gate of the city. It is a gigantic ruin, completely excavated, and capable of containing twenty thousand spectators. The form is oval, and the architecture very fine. Besides the many vomitories, or passages for ingress and egress there are three smaller alleys, one used as the entrance for wild beasts, one for the gladiators, and the third as that by which the dead were taken away. The skeletons of eight lions and a man, supposed to be their keeper, were found in one of the dens beneath, and those of five other persons near the different doors. It is presumed that the greater proportion of the inhabitants of Pompeii must have escaped by sea, as the eruption occurred while they were nearly all

assembled on this spot, and these few skeletons only have been found.

We returned through the vineyard, and stopping at the cottage called for some of the wine of the last vintage, (delicious, like all those in the neighbourhood of Vesuvius) and producing our basket of provisions, made a most agreeable dinner. Two parties of English passed while we were sitting at our out-of-doors table. Our attendant was an uncommonly pretty girl of sixteen, born on the spot, and famous just now as the object of a young English nobleman's particular admiration. She is a fine dark-eyed creature, but certainly no prettier than every fifth peasant girl in Italy.

Having finished our picturesque meal, we went down into the ancient streets once more, and arrived at the temple of Isis, a building in excellent preservation. On the altar stood, when it was excavated, a small statue of Isis, of exquisite workmanship, (now in the museum to which all the curiosities of the place are carried,) and behind this we were shown the secret *penetralia*, where the priests were concealed who uttered the oracles supposed to be pronounced by the goddess. The access was by a small secret flight of stairs, communicating with the apartments of the priests in the rear. The largest of these apartments was probably the refectory, and here was found a human skeleton near a table, upon which lay dinner utensils, chicken bones, bones of fishes, bread and wine, and a faded garland of flowers. In the kitchen, which we next visited, were found cooking utensils, remains of food, and the skeleton of a man leaning against the wall with an axe in his hand, and near him a considerable hole which he had evidently cut to make his escape when the doors were stopped by cinders. The skeleton of one of the priests was found prostrate near the temple, and in his hand three hundred and sixty coins of silver, forty two of bronze, and eight of gold, wrapped strongly in a cloth. He had probably stopped before his flight to load himself with the treasures of the temple, and was overtaken by the shower of cinders and suffocated. The skeletons of one or two were found upon beds, supposed to have been smothered while asleep or ill. The temple is beautifully paved with mosaic, (as indeed are all the better private houses and public buildings of Pompeii,) and the inner court is bordered with a quadrilateral portico. The building is of Roman Doric order. (I have neither time nor room to enumerate the curiosities found here and in other parts of the city, and I only notice those which most impressed my memory. The enumeration by Madame Stark, will be found exceedingly interesting to those who have not read her laconic guide-book.

We passed next across a small street to the tragic theatre, a large handsome building, where the seats for the vestals, consuls and other places of honour, are well preserved and thence up the hill to the temple of Hercules, which must have been a noble edifice, commanding a superb view of the sea.

The next object was the triangular forum, an open space surrounded with three porticos supported by a hundred Doric columns. Here were found several skeletons, one of which was that of a man who had loaded himself with plunder. Gold and silver coins, cups, rings, spoons, buckles and other things were found under him. Near here, under the ruins of a wall were discovered skeletons of a man and a woman, and on the arms of the latter two beautiful bracelets of gold.

We entered from this a broad street lined with shops, against the walls of which were paintings in fresco and inscriptions in deep-red paint representing the occupations and recording the names of the occupants. In one of them was found a piece of salt fish, smelling strongly after seventeen centuries! In a small lane leading from this street, the guide led us to a shop, decorated with pictures of fish of various kinds, and furnished with a stove, marble dressers, and earthen jars, supposed to have belonged to a vender of fish and olives. A little further on was a baker's shop, with a well used oven, in which was found a batch of bread burnt to a cinder. Near this was the house of a midwife. In it were found several instruments of a simple and excellent construction, unknown to the moderns, a forceps, remains of medicines in a wooden box, and various pestles and mortars. The walls were ornamented with frescos of the graces, Venus and Adonis and other similar objects.

(To be continued.)

REMINISCENCES.

There are certain frames, to which the human mind may be wrought up, so that any common events will seem to it like the forebodings of evil—like the precursors of some unusual, some monstrous event. The mind of mankind is prone to solve singular events preternaturally. The beating of the little insect in the wall, of the howl of the watch dog at the dead of night—or even the spilling of salt, are deemed warnings of danger and even death. I am not now about to discuss the philosophy of this bias of our minds; nor will I, though I might with effect trace it back to our education in childhood. I simply wish to allude to the fact, as introductory to an event which occurred to myself.

I was acquainted with a family so amiable and excellent, that the thought of them lingers about my heart as does the first love of our childhood about the path-way of manhood and old age. The father was a

man of intellect and energy—and when I say this, it is perhaps needless to say, he was acquiring a competency—for intellect and energy are the pioneers of wealth in our flourishing country. The wife and the mother was such a wife as throws a halo about the fireside of cottage or palace. Such a wife as makes earth under its sternest and deadliest convulsions, a paradise. The children were lovely, and promised well for the future. This family were residents of Portland.

I had been lingering upon Munjoy late in the evening of a lovely day in the fall of the year—under the mild and tranquilizing influence of a moonlight night—for I had been ill, and the breezes from the Southwest which came full and pure from the Atlantic, were as the breath of some eastern fairy upon the Spell-bound victim of malicious geni. I was alone, and in a good degree shielded from observation. Thinking of returning to my residence, and about to move, I noticed at a distance a human form faintly visible in the waning moonlight. Its direction was towards me. I waited with some trepidation from weak nerves to learn whether it was friend or foe. I soon perceived, as plain as eye could tell, that it was the man of whom I have spoken. I was surprised; when calling to see him a few hours before, (after my indisposition) I had been told he was from home, and would not return for some days. Notwithstanding, it was the man, and I watched his motions with an intensity all can appreciate. He did not move in a direct line towards myself—and as he drew near to me, I perceived he was laboring under some strange influence. That he should have arrived home so soon, when I had learned that his earliest time of coming was a number of days distant, was a matter of much surprise, but his actions were yet more astonishing. As he drew nearer to where I resided, I perceived that he was laboring under a fierce mental conflict. He evidently was dead to every outward influence and the tempest was raging within with terrible severity. At length he stood still—the strife had apparently terminated in unqualified despair. He wrung his hands and wept like a child. I would have spoken to him, for I was moved even to tears by the genuineness of his grief.—But it seemed to me the refinement of cruelty, when he had probably come away from the busy world to relieve his full heart of its burthen, that I should humiliate him by exposing him. My thought was that some fearful calamity had happened to his household.—I knew that there was garnered up his deepest happiness, and I knew that his wife or his children were dead. I had seen them in the morning, well, but death had been there and touched them, or my friend would not have been before me, with the boisterous grief of manhood when his idols are destroyed, upon him.

But he spoke, audibly. "Alas! my wife and children, ye are beggars, ye are beg-

gars! The fiendish arts of gamblers—my own rashness—have made ye beggars; would to God I that had never been born!" My astonishment was without bounds, at these words. I knew him to be so honorable a man, that it seemed impossible to associate him with gamblers. My mind was in chaos. I could not solve this deep mystery. When I looked up, my friend was gone! I had been in thought but a moment—but in that moment he had taken himself beyond the widest sweep of my vision.

The whole scene was one so strange and even mysterious, that I returned home without being able to arouse a thought that could give me a solution of it. That I had seen my friend, I did not doubt. That he was in deep distress, that gamblers had ruined him—I could not hesitate to admit, for I had seen his grief, and heard his lamentations, as he unburthened his overflowing heart, as he thought, to the solitude around him.

I slept none that night. There was an incubus on my spirits, that while it weighed them to the earth, lacerated them so that I could not lose a sense of misery in forgetfulness. In the morning, as soon as a fevered system would suffer, I was on my way to his home. With fearful forebodings, and a heavy heart, from the certainty of my knowledge, I drew near this once happy home of my friend. I was met by his wife with one of those radiant smiles, which, though the earth were again enveloped in the darkness of ancient Egypt, would spread the effulgence of paradise about the hearth stone of domestic felicity. Their children came around me too, with that appearance of cheerful and pure happiness, which is soon lost as the busy world draws them into its vortex, and which, I have often thought, is the truest type man has here of the quiet happiness of heaven.

I was unburthened of half my grief—for although the blow was inevitable, it had not yet fallen where it would kill.—Life and happiness were still theirs—who were just about to be impaled. I inquired for my friend; my inquiry was met with a look of astonishment, as though my illness might have unsettled my brain. I repeated my inquiry. His wife answered—"Had she not told me but yesterday, that he would not return for some days?" He had not returned!

It was then, for the first time the thought came to me that I was labouring under a delusion. The truth was then confirmed, when, a few days after my friend came home, as expected.

Years passed away. Our friendship was in a measure broken up. He was estranged. But this scene lingered about my memory with a vividness like that which clings to the man far away from the land of his nativity, when he thinks of the home of his childhood—every incident and locality of these scenes are distinct. Thus it was

with me. I whispered them to none—but, I feared they were ominous.

It was about ten years from the time I have spoken, when our city, (then a quiet town) was aroused from the apathy of a dull winter, by the report of a suicide! Death in so frightful forms as those of suicide and murder, arouses us as the ordinary dissolution of mortality cannot. The common mass of matter around us becomes for a brief time, a thinking mass—and you can see intellect in their dull and inanimate countenances. While those whom God has blest with deep powers of thought, draw from those events,—in which “man plays such tricks before high heaven as make e'en angels weep,”—food for such discipline of mind as makes them wiser and better.

It was so pre-eminently, in this case.—The suicide was well known in our little town. At first his name could not be learned. There seemed to be a desire on the part of kind friends, to keep this burning shame from the world. But what could do it?

As a raging fire, when by some powerful effort it is checked for a moment, will then rage on with redoubled fury—even so did this receive new impetus from the very efforts made to stifle it. Curiosity broke over all bounds. The truth came out with all its horror. *My friend was a suicide.* The cause was soon known. His property had been wasted on the gaming table! His wife and children were beggared! Himself in a dishonoured shroud.

I stood by the coffin-lid of this miserable man, after he had been arrayed for the grave. His appearance on the occasion I have cited, was again before me. He had died with that look of anguish upon his face—and that awful pang at his heart, which had so won my pity ten years before. It seemed to me, as I mused there, that the curtain had been drawn away, ten years before its time, that I might see a skeleton, and be warned to beware of gambling—for which I had an ardent propensity. It may have been my salvation. I think it was, and I would that this incident might stay the hand of the young man from this engrossing and ruinous evil—which blights the fairest prospects, and plunges all allied to the gambler into unutterable misery.

A long time has passed away, since the events spoken of transpired. My hair has become thin. Later events have become dimmed or forgotten—but the memory of this awful sequel to the life of a gambler clings to me like a mother's love. And when I see a man endangering every high and holy purpose by dallying with the fascinations of gambling,—oh, how I hope he may see the “hand writing on the wall,” as I have without the occurrence of the horrid sequel.—*Portland Courier.*

Never ridicule sacred things, or what others may esteem such, however absurd they may appear to be.

VALUE OF SCIENCE TO PRACTICAL MEN.—*Some years ago we knew a mechanic, respectable for skill in the business which he pursued. He had learned the business of making common suction pumps: he knew well how to construct every part of the machinery, in a workmanlike manner; his pumps had always worked well; and he had become the most popular pumpmaker in the whole country. At length, unfortunately for him, he was employed to make a pump for a well something like forty feet deep. The well being thus deep, it was necessary to splice the timber of which the pump was formed, this he did in the neatest and best manner, finished his pump and placed it in the well; and with the utmost confidence began to work the pump, but could not raise a drop of water to the top of the well. He now felt that his reputation was at stake, and he continued to labour and tug at the pump handle, but the water was still obstinate and would not rise above the lower box; when the handle was by great strength forced down, it would fly back with great violence; and, in short, it required so much power to work the pump, that had it raised the water it must have been useless. To our practical men, all this was perfectly inexplicable. He had spliced pumps before, and found no difficulty in making them work; and, as he supposed the difficulty in this case must be a leak in the joints of his pump, he took it up and examined it, and re-examined it, and caulked it, and re-caulked it, and put it back again. But all would not do. The pump would not work. And after wasting some thing more than a week's labour, and suffering all the perplexities and mortifications of disappointment, he was compelled, though with great reluctance, to give it up. Now, all must acknowledge that, in this case, a little science could have been of great practical use. Had our practical man possessed a competent knowledge of the principles of hydraulics, and of the agency of the atmosphere in raising water in a common suction pump; and that water could not be raised in this way more than thirty-two feet, or to such height as to be equal to a column of the atmosphere in weight (which in very few situations exceeds that elevation) he could not have been subjected to all this chagrin and loss of labor.*

THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 1835.

By arrivals from England and the United States during the week, London and Liverpool Papers to the 17th July, and American to the 22d inst. have been received.

Some of the London papers say, that a change of Ministry may be expected. Upon this subject the Standard says: “We exult in being able to assure our fellow subjects that the King is still firm. Lord Melbourne, if he pleases, can tell with perfect truth that

the last interview he had with his abused Sovereign was the reverse of satisfactory. All his Lordship's attempts to obtain favour for the Sacrilege Bill and the Irish Corporation Bill proved utterly abortive. There are some among His Majesty's official advisers who do not wish to engrandise Mr. O'Connell's power by the gift of the corporations. Perhaps, by about the King's birth-day, the 21st of August, Lord Melbourne may have a free opportunity of giving his deferred explanations.”

With respect to Canada, the same paper says:—“At the late meeting of the Council, at which Sir George Grey, one of the Canada Commissioners, was sworn in, after that Gentleman had taken the oaths, his Majesty took the constitutional and wise, though of late unusual, course for the King, to address the Commissioner at some length upon the nature of the duties he was to discharge. If we are rightly informed he pointed out to Sir George Grey, how far his line of duty was marked out in his oath, and then, reminding the Commissioner that the Canadas had been won by British valour, had been bought with British blood, had been improved and enlarged at the expense of this country—warned him that these provinces must not be lost or given away. “Remember, Sir,” said his Majesty, in words which we believe we quote literally—“Remember, Sir, these provinces must not be lost or given away.—Whatever others may say to you, I tell you this, the Canadas must not be lost or given away.”

FRANCE.—The Havre Journal of the 9th, says—“we are assured that the despatches recently received from Washington, have transmitted to the French Government the assurance that the explanations exacted by the Chamber, would be furnished without difficulty by the American Government.”

Other papers say, that the American Government raises great difficulties in making the least reparation to France, and has become more haughty in proportion to the concessions made to it, declaring that reparation is due from France.

The Canada Papers contain several addresses that have been presented to Lord Aylmer on his approaching departure—in his reply to the address from the Constitutional Association. His Excellency says, that he considers the Assembly imperatively called upon to renew their demand to the House of Commons for his impeachment before the House of Lords, it is what he ardently looks forward to. Before that august tribunal he says, assertions will not pass current for facts, neither will vituperation be mistaken for argument.

A destructive fire took place at New York on the night of the 12th inst. which destroyed about 30 buildings, 2 lives were lost, and several persons injured.

POETRY.

A NOON SCENE.

The quiet August noon is come,
A slumberous silence fills the sky,
The fields are still, the woods are dumb,
In glassy sleep the waters lie.

And mark yon soft white clouds, at rest
Above our vale, a moveless throng;
The cattle on the mountain's breast,
Enjoy the grateful shadow long.

Oh, how unlike those merry hours
In sunny June, when earth laughs out,
When the fresh winds make love to flowers,
And woodlands sing and waters shout.

When in the grass sweet voices talk,
And strains of tiny music swell
From every moss-cup of the rock,
From every nameless blossom's bell.

But now a joy too deep for sound,
A peace no other season knows,
Hushes the heavens and wraps the ground—
The blessing of supreme repose.

Away! I will not be to day
The only slave of toil and care!
Away, from dusk and dust!—away!
I'll be as idle as the air.

Beneath the open sky abroad,
Among the plants and breathing things,
The sinless, peaceful works of God,
I'll share the calm the season brings.

Come, then, in whose soft eyes I see
The gentle meanings of thy heart;
On day amid the woods with me—
From men and all their cares apart.

And where, upon the meadows breast,
The shadow of the thicket lies,
The blue wild flowers thou gatherest,
Shall glow yet deeper near thine eyes.

Come, and when mid the calm profound
I turn those gentle eyes to seek,
They, like the lovely landscape round,
Of innocence and peace shall speak.

Rest here—beneath the unmoving shade—
And on the silent valleys gaze,
Winding and widening till they fade
In yon soft ring of summer haze.

The vill'ge trees their summits rear
Still as its spire: and yonder flock,
At rest in those calm fields, appear
As chiselled from the lifeless rock.

One tranquil mount the scene o'erlooks—
There the hushed winds their Sabbath
keep;
While a n ar hum from bees and brook,
Comes faintly like the breath of sleep.

Well might the gazer deem that when,
Worn with the struggle and the strife,

And heart-sick at the wrongs of men,
The good forsakes the scene of life.

Like this deep quiet that, awhile,
Lingers the lovely landscape o'er,
Shall be the peace whose holy smile
Welcomes him to a happier shore.

VARIETIES.

Drawing an Inference.—Dr. Monsey, with two or three old members of the university, in the course of an evening walk, differed about a proper definition of man. While they were severally offering their notions on the subject, they came to a wall where an itinerant artist had drawn various representations of animals, ships, &c. After complimenting him on his skill, one of the gentlemen asked him if he could draw an inference. "No," said the artist, "I never saw one." Logic then gave way to jocularly, and a man coming by with a fine team of horses, they stopped him, spoke highly of the condition of his horses, particularly admiring the first. "That horse, carter," said another of the gentlemen, "seems to be a very strong one, I suppose he could draw a butt." The man assented. "Do you think he could draw an inference?"—"Why," said the man, "he can draw any thing in reason." "There," said Monsey, "what becomes of your definition, when you met a man that could not draw an inference and a horse that could?"

The Timber Trade.—We met an old friend yesterday returning from New-York, where, as he informed us, he had just sold a quantity of Lumber, which he had rafted down. In reply to some questions as to what kind of Timber he had taken to market, he said it was "hand spike, chisel-handle, and corset stuff!" We were startled at the idea of rafting Corset timber, in the log, to New-York; but a brief explanation set us right. You must recollect, said our friend, that there are nearly or quite six millions of females, in the United States; and that they all, white, yellow and black, wear corsets. Now when you reflect that it requires nearly as much Timber to put a lady "in stays," as it does to set up a flour barrel, can you wonder that Corset Timber forms an important item in the Lumberman's account?—*Alb. Jour.*

Impudence.—Capt. Marryat, the sea novelist, says that before he went to sea, he had always considered a London cock-sparrow to be the truest emblem of consummate impudence; but he afterwards discovered that he was quite modest, compared to a midshipman. As a specimen, take the following: The first lieutenant informs the captain that Mr. Malcolm, a young middy, had chopped off four inches of Porter's tail, at the beef block. Middy is sent for, and appears. "Mr. Malcolm," cried the captain in great warmth, "how came you to cut off my dog's tail?" "Me, sir," re-

plied the youngster, demurely, "I did'n't cut off his tail, sir," he cut it off himself!" "What, sir," roared the captain. "If you please, sir, I was chopping a piece of beef, and the dog, who was standing by, turned short round and put his tail under the chop-per."

Benefits from a taste for Gardening.—I think nothing contributes more to the sobriety, comfort and cleanliness of a laborer, than a taste for gardening, when it can be instilled, and which I think a proprietor ought to promote by every means in his power. I have seldom known a laborer who was fond of and kept his garden neat, whose house and family also, were not so, and who did not spend his leisure hours with them, and in his garden, instead of in an ale-house. I have generally found them fond of gardening; but, for want of sufficient knowledge, they often get disgusted by their not succeeding to their wishes.

"*MANY A SLIP 'TWIXT THE CUP AND THE LIP.*"—*The English Papers* give an account of an enamored youth of the tender age of sixteen, who like young Norral, "left his father's house," without informing his tender parents where he was going. Rumor, however, informed them that the young man had, on several occasions, shown a remarkable predilection for the state of matrimony, and that he had probably gone off for the purpose of consummating his wishes.—The father started in pursuit, and reached a parish church in the neighbourhood just as the parson was in the midst of the interesting formula, to bind the Adonis to the lady of his love, a plump desirable little girl from the same village. "I forbid the banns," said the father, rushing into the church. "Does any one know just cause why these people should not be joined together," said the parson. "I know a dozen," replied the old gentleman. The parson went on heedless of the interruption, until he came to the last clause of the ceremonial, "whom God hath joined let no man put asunder." "By —, I'll do it if I can," roared the irritated parent, and laying hold of his amorous son, dragged him by main force out of the church, tumbled him into a carriage which was waiting on the outside, and drove off, leaving the disconsolate bride "to wave the willow o'er her nuptial bed."

The following definitions of experimental and natural philosophy were given to us a few days since by a Pearl-st. merchant. "Experimental philosophy," said he, "is to ask a man to endorse a note.—Natural philosophy" is to refuse it."—*N. Y. Paper*

☞ All kinds of Job Printing executed at this office.

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