

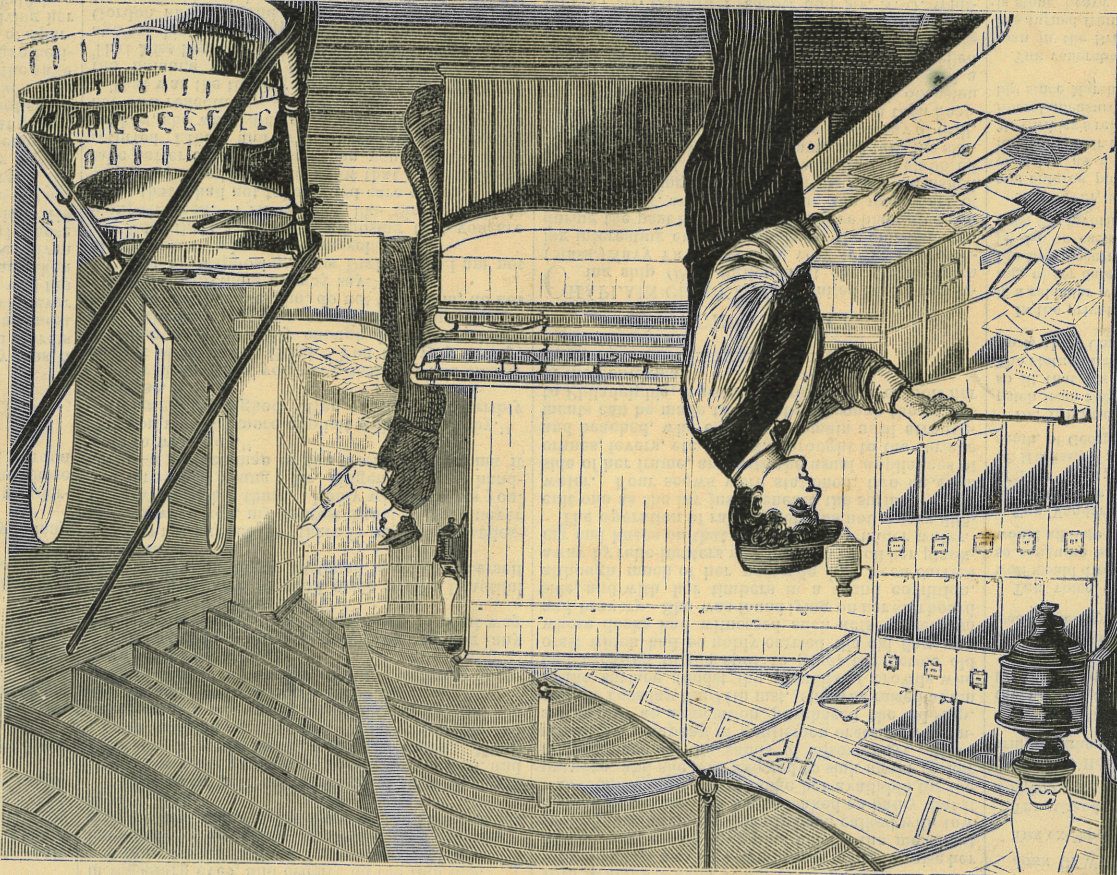
FAST MAIL TRAINS.

THE POSTAL-CARS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD COMPANY.

PROBABLY no branch of the public service shows such marked improvement as does the Post Office Department. The Federal Government was first formed in 1789 and what is at present is so striking as to be almost incredible. Then lumbering wagons, stage-coaches, slow sailing vessels, horseback-riders, and some-times pedestrians, were the means used to carry the mails from place to place, and what the lack of system in the whole management of the Post Office, our worthy ancestors must have had and a faint gleam of the inestimable value of the system that in our day works so smoothly and effectively, and makes the mail our most useful and trusted servant. Step by step postal reform and improvement have almost been reached.

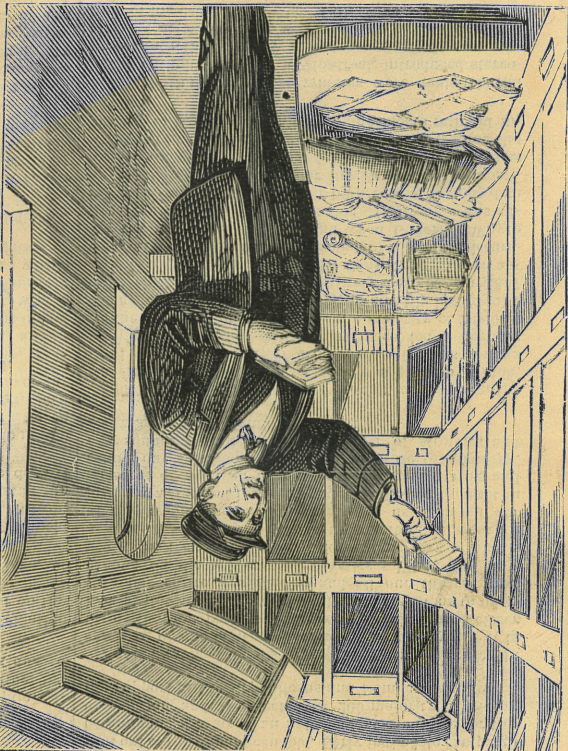
The railway mail service began in 1836, but it was not until 1864 that Colonel Geo. B. Armstrong suggested the plan, which was subsequently adopted, of putting "post-office cars" on the principal railroad lines. On the 28th day of August, 1864, the first postal-car left Chicago for Clinton on a trial trip, and on the 31st of the same month it began running regularly. In October, 1864, improvements were made in the postal-car, and a force of expert clerks from the Department at Washington were placed in the cars running between New York and that city. On the 9th of November post-office cars were placed upon the lines between Chicago and Danville, Ill. On January 17th, 1865, the Chicago-Barlington and Galveston-Quincy lines were established, and on May 22d, the first railway post-office service was put in operation on the Philadelphia-Pittsburgh route. About the same time, or a little later, postal-cars were placed upon all the principal lines leading out of Chicago, and also upon the Hudson River and New York Central Railroads, between New York, Albany and Buffalo, carrying and distributing along the line the Northern and Western mails.

The establishing of fast mail trains has been a pet scheme of the various representatives of the disaffected roads, Mr. Bangs became instrumental in averting the calamity which a withdrawal of the mails was charged by Congress to something more equitable, and the deal of legislation, the basis of payment for the transportation of mail was rendered a concentration of mail matter on any one line mutually profitable to the line and to the department. This is easily understood. This settlement opened the way for pushing the subject of fast mails, and after long discussions with railroad officials, a plan for lighting postal trains between the East and the West was perfected.

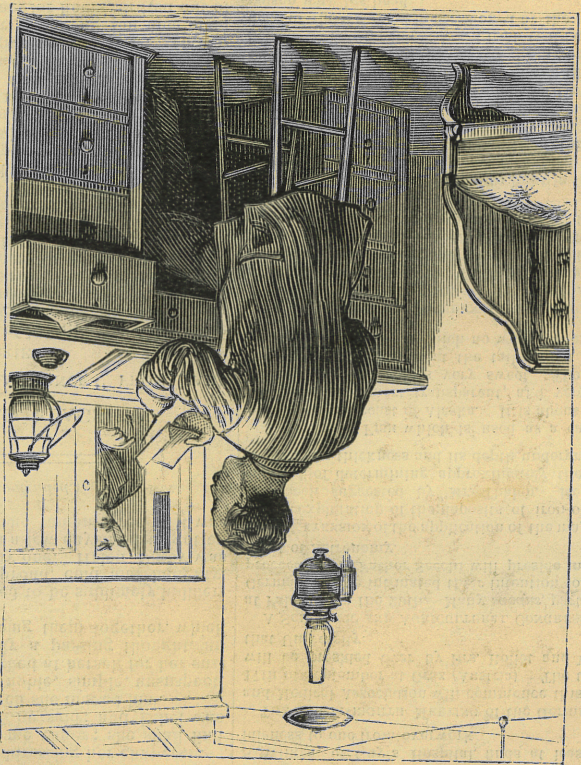


LETTER AND NEWSPAPER COMPARTMENTS—SORTING AND DISTRIBUTING THE MAIL.

and plans for the new equipment necessary to carry out this undertaking were furnished each road, and the construction of postal-cars was immediately begun. The 16th of September was fixed upon as the date for the inauguration of the new enterprise, and on that day the two special trains started from the city, each carrying a large mail, post-office officials and invited guests. The New York Central train left the Pennsylvania Central Depot at 4:15 a. m., and the Pennsylvania Central train started from Jersey City at 4:30 a. m. The rivalry between the two roads led to some little dissension, and resulted in the Pennsylvania Company dispatching a "limited mail" on September 13th. The officers of the road state that when they offered to run a fast mail train and newspaper train to Cincinnati and St. Louis, the Post Office authorities accepted the offer, and requested the Company to have its cars ready by September 12th. This gave the Company only thirteen days in which to build the cars. The work was accomplished by the presence of time, but the Post Office authorities, on being informed that the New York Central Railroad cars were not ready, declined to send any mail matter until the 16th. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company was not willing to wait until the New York Central train left the city, and accordingly sent out its first train. The limited mail train left the Jersey City depot at 4:45 a. m., consisting of a locomotive and three cars. The first of the cars was the baggage-car, which contained 25,000 copies of daily newspapers published in New York for distribution at Philadelphia and intermediate places. Besides these there were 2,500 copies for the Post-Office, and behind this was a car containing several New York journals, Samuel Carpenter, the General Eastern Agent of the road, and George W. Barker, the Division Superintendent. The postal-car is of a peculiar form of construction, and will be run with a tender. The tender will be a simple express-car arranged for merely carrying through-mails. The postal-car proper is of ordinary width, but longer than usual, having a length of 60 feet. It is built of white pine wood, and painted white inside and out. Internally the car is divided into three compartments. The first of these contains 975 pigeon-holes, each of them representing a station. A shelf surrounding the holes is used for the purpose of sorting the letters. Letter-drops, with their apertures to the outside of the car, are in drops are. The next compartment of the car is fitted up with boxes and hooks for the reception of mail-bags and newspapers destined for way-stations. Behind this, and in the last compartment, are a number of boxes arranged in rows. One side of these boxes is open, while the opposite side is closed by a door on hinges. From hooks in these boxes the mail-bags are suspended, and the newspapers as



NEWSPAPER DISTRIBUTING COMPARTMENT.



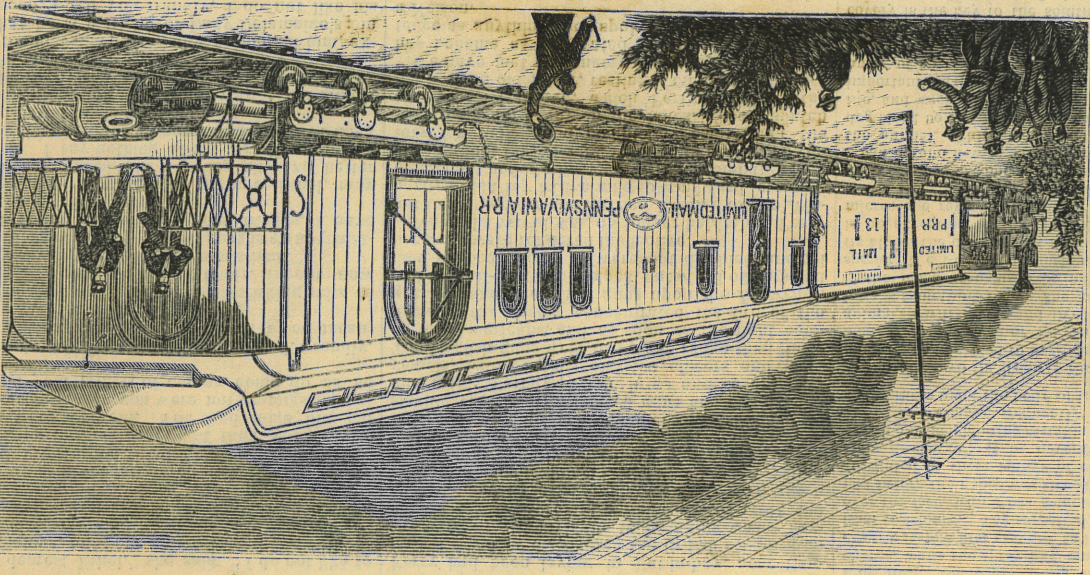
CHIEF CLERK'S OFFICE.



EMPTYING THE BOXES INTO THE MAIL-BAGS, AND TRUCKING THEM INTO THE TENDER.



INTERIOR OF THE TENDER—THE MAIL-BAGS STORED AWAY.



THE NEW POSTAL-CAR OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD COMPANY, "MADE UP," THE LIMITED MAIL-TRAIN OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD COMPANY.