

TURNING BACK THE HANDS

A QUIET CHANGE TO THE STANDARD TIME.

STOPPING THE PENDULUMS IN THE CITY CLOCKS AND IN THE RAILROAD STATIONS—THE MOVEMENT STARTED.

At just 9 o'clock, local time, yesterday morning Mr. James Hamblet, General Superintendent of the Time Telegraph Company, and manager of the time service of the Western Union Telegraph Company, stopped the pendulum of his standard clock in Room No. 48, in the Western Union Telegraph Building. The long glistening rod and its heavy cylindrical pendulum ball was at rest for 3 minutes and 58.38 seconds. The delicate machinery of the clock rested for the first time in many months. The clicking of the electric instrument on a shelf at the side of the clock ceased and with it ceased the corresponding ticks on similar instruments in many jewelry and watch stores throughout the City. When, as nearly as it could be ascertained, the time stated above had elapsed, the heavy pendulum was again set in motion and swung backward and forward in its never-varying trips of one second each from one end of its swing to the other. With the starting of the pendulum the clicking of the little instruments all over the City at intervals of two seconds between each click was resumed. Mr. Hamblet had changed the time of New-York City and State.

The adjustment of Mr. Hamblet's standard clock was sufficiently accurate for the ordinary uses of mankind, but not for scientific purposes. His clock is adjusted to hundredth parts of a second, a space of time so infinitesimal as to be almost beyond human perception. That absolute accuracy might be secured, comparisons were then made by telegraph with the observations at Washington, Allegheny, Penn., and Cambridge, Mass., and absolute accuracy was thus obtained. From the actual time thus obtained the New-York Central Railroad took the new standard of time at 10 o'clock, and thus became the first railroad in the country to adopt the new standard. This time was chosen by this company as the hour least likely to interfere with its business. The standard time was from this time on indicated throughout the City wherever the little tickers are in the habit of announcing it. In many of the jewelers' shops the standard time clocks were set to correspond to the new signals at that hour. In others the change was not made until 12 o'clock. Where absolute accuracy was not required, as in tower-clocks, the large show-clocks and regulators adjusted only to seconds, and the clocks along the lines of the elevated roads, the clocks were simply stopped for four minutes, and then, by watches previously adjusted to the new standard, were again started at the expiration of that time, leaving the adjustment of the second and a half, which was gained by this process, to the future, when clocks and watches shall have been regulated to the new standard. The Western Union Telegraph Company's time-ball fell at the new 12 o'clock, and so gave to mariners and ship-masters an opportunity to set their time-pieces on seventy-fifth meridian time.

Curious people, some of whom could not exactly understand how the time could be changed without some serious results, crowded the sidewalk in front of jewelry stores and watch-repairing establishments to see the great transformation. There was a universal expression of disgust when it was discovered that all that was necessary to effect the change was to stop the clock for four minutes and then start it again. A large crowd gathered in the vicinity of the City Hall to watch the change as indicated on the faces of the clock which rests under the shadow of the restored Cypriote antique of Justice.

"Begorra," remarked to his companion a vermilion topped Hibernian who was watching the south face of the clock, "the thing has stopped; phwats the matther wid it, anyhow? I don't see no time changin', do you, Mike?"

"Divil a change at all, at all, can I see," said his companion, who turned away with apparent disgust after watching the motionless hand for a minute or two. "Lave us go on, the hull thing's a sell."

"Howld your whist, will you," said the first speaker, who still gazed fixedly at the clock. "She's movin' agin. Watch it now." The two gazed steadily at the clock, and saw the minute hand again start on its course. They started for Park-row, and one sadly remarked to the other, "I towld yer 'twas a sell. The clock's running agin, and there's been nary a change of time at all, at all."

At the Pennsylvania Railroad station in Jersey City the change from local (Philadelphia) time was made to correspond with standard time. The clock marked "New-York Time" was removed from the waiting-room. The sign over the large clock, "Philadelphia Time," was removed, the clock was stopped for one minute and then resumed running. Only one minute's stoppage was needed to change this to standard time, as it was already slower than New-York time. To-day the clock will have placed above it a sign bearing the legend, "Standard Time." At all the other railroad stations in the city the local time was changed to standard time. To-day the railroads will issue their new time-tables, based upon the new standard. The two large clocks in the window at the entrance to the Western Union Telegraph Company's main office, in Broadway, one marked Chicago time and the other marked New-York time, showed practically the change effected in the adoption of the new standards. The minute hands pointed to the same numerals on the faces, but the Chicago time hour-hand indicated one hour earlier than did that of New-York. That is, at 1:20 Eastern standard (New-York) time it was 12:20 Central standard (Chicago) time. If one will bear in mind hereafter that in a correct clock or watch there will be no variation here or in England in the minute and second hands, there need be no trouble. The traveler will simply have to add to the standard time for this City just an hour for every 15 degrees he moves east, or deduct one hour for every 15 degrees he moves west; then he can always tell the exact clock time wherever he may be. An American bound for Europe would find his watch exactly five hours slow when he arrived in London, England. It would be exactly three hours fast if he went across the continent to San Francisco.

Mr. W. F. Allen, editor of the *National Railway Guide* and Secretary of the National Railway Time Convention, to whose knowledge of both the practical and scientific sides of the time question is due the change brought about throughout the country, was in the City yesterday and watched Mr. Hamblet make the change in the standard in this City. When the news came over the wires that the change had been successfully made, he expressed himself as greatly pleased, as well he might be, with the successful accomplishment of his work. In addition to the preparation of the schedules where the time may be changed on the railroads at the terminal points of routes or divisions he had prepared and furnished to the railroad companies a "translation" of the standard time for all sections by which the time schedules in use on Saturday could be readily changed to the standard time. The preparation of this translation required a vast amount of labor, for which he finds his reward in the saving of necessary calculations by railroad officers and their consequent thanks, and in the remembrance that his name will be forever connected with the successful accomplishment of one of the most useful reforms possible, to the heretofore often bewildered traveler.

When the reader of THE TIMES consults his paper at 8 o'clock this morning at his breakfast table it will be 9 o'clock in St. John, New-Brunswick, 7 o'clock in Chicago, or rather in St. Louis—for Chicago authorities have refused to adopt the standard time, perhaps because the Chicago meridian was not selected as the one on which all time must be based—6 o'clock in Denver, Col., and 5 o'clock in San Francisco. That is the whole story in a nut-shell.