

them, and 8-29 was the proportion of telegrams sent to every 100 letters.

To the outsider the interior of the operating-room is one great and confusing mystery. Like the mail-room, it is large and well lighted, and here one is almost oppressed by the constancy of the labourer. On each side down the



Wrigglesworth & Binna, photo, Wellington.
MR. C. C. ROBERTSON.

(In charge Wellington Telegraph and Telephone Exchange.)

room are massive tables of polished cedar, each with its little instrument of shining brass and little glass shade, the brass work glittering like burnished gold. The chatter and clatter of the metal cones are bewildering, and to a nervous man (not a timid individual, a man with nerves, that is to say) would doubtless be maddening. Boys, or rather young men, with shaves of telegrams fresh from the counter in the receiving office, hurry backward and forward delivering work and taking up messages received. The clicking sound you hear is a message being delivered, the dull deadened tapping one being sent, and on each side there are a couple of dozen, more or less, instruments either sending or receiving messages in this way. How the operators distinguish the sounds is a wonder to the outsiders. It will take a cadet three months to pick up the work in any sort of fashion, and it usually takes from three to five years for a man to become an expert operator. Some get on quicker, some never really get smart, but five years is about the time. Each table, be it understood, controls a different wire. Here will be a gentleman who does nothing but send messages to Auckland. He will send 60 to 70 messages—average commercial messages—in an hour, and of course the man at the other end must receive them at the same speed. As may be imagined, the strain must be fairly severe, yet as a rule the operators are healthy and cheerful looking men, who bear their troubles, if they are such, very lightly.

The latest addition to the postal arrangements of the colonies was, of course, the Telephone Exchange, which has assumed gigantesque proportions of late years, and which

will doubtless continue to grow with amazing rapidity now that the Postmaster-General has reduced the subscription. The impatient subscriber who fumes and occasionally swears over a delay of say a dozen seconds in answering his bell should make a point of being taken over the telephone exchange. He will come away a humbler and a wiser man, with a considerable respect for the telephone girl which he did not possess before. If the noise is confusing in the telegraph room with the chattering clatter of the metal tongue, it is a thousand times worse, confusion worse confounded, in the telephone bureau, where the tongues are women's. There are about a dozen of them at work, each in front of the frames as shown in the picture. A glance at one of these frames may give some idea of the manner in which the exchange is worked. The first thing to strike the eye is a number of little shutters—fifty to each annunciator if we are not mistaken—some of which fly open every second or so disclosing a number, say 16. This shows that No. 16



Kinsey, photo, Wellington.
MR. W. C. SMYTHE.
(Electrician Government Post Office.)

wants to talk to someone, and pressing a key the telephone girl rings his bell and asks him what number he wants. He states; and if it happens to be one of the other ninety-nine of her division, she can make the connection at once. It is a good many chances to one, however, that the subscriber wants a number in another division, and the operator then connects him with the switchboard in front of her, calling out to the girl in charge of the division containing the number her client requires and the division, with generally the name of the firm added to make matters easier. There is an impression amongst many people that the girls stop occasionally to laugh and chatter amongst themselves, while the unfortunate subscribers are fretting themselves into a fever at the delay. A very brief visit to the exchange would dispel any such delusion. The girls have not, during busy business hours, time to wink or brush away a fly, let alone talk, even if there were not a stern and implacable presiding genius to check any frivolity, and placards intimating how strict must be at-

tention to business. Happily there are no bells in the telephone exchange else are we sure no mortal could stand a day of it and keep sane. There is a little whining sound and that is all save for the everlasting cries of 'No. 16—L, No. 126—K, ring up, what number? ring off, engaged,' which are fired off in quickest succession by twenty voices at once. How the nimble fingered operators keep their heads a perpetual mystery to an outsider, and one has only to have seen the burry and scurry of the telephone exchange to be extremely tolerant of such trifling mistakes and delays as will occasionally occur in the best regulated bureaux.

Our portraits for this week include Mr C. C. Robertson, who joined the staff as a cadet operator to the Telegraph office in Danedin, in 1867. He is at present officer in charge of the Wellington Telegraph Office and supervisor of the Telephones Exchange.

A reproduction from a photo of Mr W. C. Smythe is also given. He joined as electrician on December 24th, 1884, a position he still holds. Mr Smythe was formerly assistant instructor at the School of Military Engineering, Chatham, and is electrician to Messrs L. Clark, Muirhead and Co

BIBLE MISPRINTS.

SOME QUEER BLUNDERS MADE BY TYPE SETTERS.

In no work that has been printed since the invention of the art has there been so many misprints perpetrated as in the Bible.

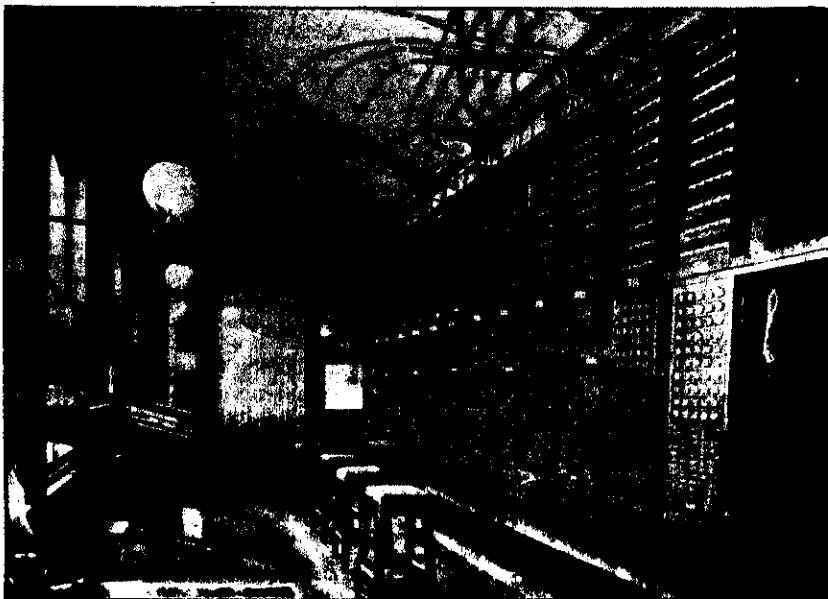
Pope Sextus V. caused an edition of the 'Vulgate' to be published in Rome in 1590, every proof of which he had carefully corrected himself, and at the end of the volume he affixed a bull by which he excommunicated any one who should attempt to make an alteration in the text. This book caused a great deal of amazement—for the Bible was found to be full of mistakes—and the Pope, in consequence, was obliged to suppress the edition. A copy of it is a great rarity, and, of course, fetches a high price. Brunet, in his *Manuel du Libraire*, says that a very large paper copy was disposed of at the sale of Cadmus de Limaze for 1,210 francs. The English Bible contains some very remarkable misprints. In the edition of 1634, at the twelfth Psalm, 'The fool hath said in his heart there is God,' instead of 'there is no God.' This edition was suppressed by order of the King. In another London edition (quarto 1653) we read: 'In order that all the world shall perceive the means of arriving at worldly riches,' instead of 'godly riches.' Even the edition of Field, who was printer to the University of Cambridge in the seventeenth century, is full of misprints. It is said he received a present of £1,500 from the Independents to print 'ye' for 'we' in the sixth verse of the third chapter of Acts, in order to make it appear that the right of choosing their pastors emanated from the people and not from the Apostles: 'Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of Holy Ghost and of wisdom whom ye [we] may appoint over this business.' In the same Bible, in Corinthians (I. vi., 9), we find, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall [not] inherit the Kingdom of God.' At the Clarendon Press, in 1617, a Bible was printed which was known as the 'Vinegar Bible,' on account of the title of the twentieth chapter of St. Luke, in which the 'Parable of the Vineyard' is printed the 'Parable of the Vinegar.' To show how dangerous it is to assert infallibility while correcting the press, it may be mentioned that in the 'Curiosities Bibliographiques,' published at Paris in 1847, and from which I have derived several of these misprints, the word 'vinegar' is printed 'vineyard.'

The omission of the negative has occurred more than once in printing the seventh commandment. This happened in the edition published in the reign of Charles I., and for it the printers were summoned before the High Commission and fined £3,000. The same omission was observed in the thirty fourth edition of the Bible, printed at Halle, which was confiscated, and is now a great biblical rarity. All scriptural misprints are not, as we have seen in the case of Field, the result of accident. There is another on record which betrays a deep and, I may add, a most nefarious design. It was the design of the printer's widow in Germany to upset the whole system of domestic economy. A new edition of the Bible was being printed in her house, and one night, when all the workmen were absent, she arose from her comfortable bed (a German bed is never anything else but comfortable) and proceeded to the printing-room, there to tamper with the type and falsify a text that had caused her much trouble. Her defunct better half (?) had, without doubt, given her frequent cause to protest in her heart against that sentence of woman's subjection which is pronounced upon Eve in the third chapter of Genesis. To rescue her sex from its false position she resolved to alter the relative situations of the parties, and taking out the first two letters of the word 'herr,' cunningly replaced them by 'na.' By this means the decree ran: 'And he shall be thy (narr) fool,' instead of he shall be thy (herr) lord.' This substitution, though submitted to in domestic life—*na*, perhaps, was the case—was not sufficient to pass by those who were in authority without punishment, and the widow was burned for heresy. Some copies of this edition are said to have been secreted, and are possibly to be found in the private libraries of a few strong-minded women.

A TRIFLE HANDICAPPED.

BROWN: 'Robinson, will you take something?'
Robinson: 'Thanks, no; I'm just going to dinner.'
Brown: 'Well, take an appetizer.'
Robinson: 'No; I've only got a shilling in my pocket, and my appetite, as it is, is rather more than that amount will cover.'

HIS PARTISAN SHOP.—He: 'But couldn't you learn to love me, Ida?' She: 'I don't think I could, George.' He (reaching for his hat): 'It is as I feared! You are too old to learn.'



INTERIOR OF TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE.