WELL GUARDED CASH

The Millions Piled Up in the Mint at Philadelphia.

STORED IN ARMORED VAULTS.

The Whole Building Is Embedded in a Solid Concrete Foundation, and the Underground Storage Rooms Are Impregnable—The Night Watch.

The Philadelphia mint always contains coin and bullion which fluctuates in value each day between a half and three-quarters of a billion dollars. One hundred millions of dollars of this amount is in silver dollars stored for several years in a room by itself 100 by 55 feet in area. About $300,000,000 is in gold coin, ready to be put in circulation or to be stored in the national treasury at Washington against the issue of a corresponding number of gold certificates. A million or two is in bronze and nickel coins. Finally an amount of bullion varying from a small quantity to several hundred millions of dollars' worth occupies the four massive vaults designed for the uncoined metal.

Now, how is this vast hoard protected?

First of all, the whole mint is embedded in a solid concrete foundation about three feet deep. Concrete, as every one knows, is one of the strongest of all known substances and the most impervious to drilling or wear. Then on the interior, where the vaults are placed, within this concrete protection, comes a solid armor of battleship steel six inches thick, so strong that an expert working on it a week could scarcely make an impression, much less penetrate it by hand tools.

The vaults themselves are sunken deeply below the ground. Descending several flights of stairs and passing by doors guarded by a fearsome array of rifles for use by the night guards, a long, fairly wide corridor of solid concrete masonry shows the entrances to the six vaults, one for the silver already referred to, one for all kinds of coinage, but mostly for gold, and the remaining four for the gold, silver and nickel bullion. The bronze bullion lies in another room by itself, but as a few dollars' worth of this substance makes an uncomfortably heavy load it is not thought necessary to surround it with the minute safeguards used in the case of the precious metals.

The vaults themselves have a double combination. That to the outer door is known by the cashier only and that to the inner door by the custodian of the vaults only. To enter a vault both men have to be together, and it is a rule of the department that both shall stay together till the inspection or other object for which the huge safe is opened is accomplished.

Entering one of these great cages after five minutes' working at the combination, one finds himself in a large room partitioned off in fifteen compartments by steel gratings of the strongest kind. A straight passage six feet wide and the height of the chamber goes down the length of the room from the door. At the entrance are stored the bronze coins, the cents, about $80,000 worth of them, but the amount varies from day to day. Next come the more precious nickel coins, of which the value usually totals about $300,000.

Beyond these storage places a steel grated door in the passage itself has to be opened and then still another to get completely to the end of the room. All along the length of this passageway from the entrance to the vault to the end, are the compartments for the coins, separated from the passageway by exactly the same kind of gratings as those which divide the way itself into sections.

The bottom, the sides and the top of this vault are lined with steel plates, and about the entire vault is the three foot protection of concrete. Within the vault itself are the separate compartments, each locked. These compartments are examined shortly after the end of the fiscal year and are then sealed by the examiners, so that any entrance to them would be impossible without the breakage of the seals. In each compartment devoted to the storage of gold the coin is stored first in bags which contain $5,000 each in half eagles, eagles or double eagles, and then these bags are arranged twenty to a shelf. Each shelf has thus $100,000 on it. The shelves are arranged in rows downward, ten from top to bottom of the compartment, each row having thus $1,000,000 in gold in it.

Electricity lights the entire section of each vault, and the electric current is so arranged that if it were possible for the vaults to be tampered with the electricity would immediately give notice outside that something was wrong.

A detachment of guards every night is stationed at the entrance to the stairways leading to the corridor, which gives access to the vaults themselves. Their orders are to shoot down any one attempting an entry.

For the protection of the mint from fire a well drilled fire brigade has charge of the extinguishing apparatus. There are thirty-one fire alarm stations located in the corridors and rooms throughout the building.

At night every fifteen minutes thirty-one watchmen ring a signal notifying the watch in the telephone room that all is well. All these men carry revolvers during the night watch. If the signal from any watchman was not heard at the right time an instant alarm would be sounded.—Philadelphia Record.

SNOW CRYSTALS.

They Invariably Conform to the Rule of Six.

What magic is there in the rule of six that compels the snowflake to conform so rigidly to its laws? Here is a germ bestrewn realm of nature possessing the charm of mystery, of the unknown, sure richly to reward the investigator.

Much wonder has been excited because the snow crystals exhibit such a bewildering diversity and beauty. They form within a very thin gaseous solvent, the air, and this allows the molecules of water an unexampled freedom of motion and adjustment while arranging themselves in crystal form. The fact doubtless largely explains why the crystals of snow far exceed other crystals in complexity and symmetry. Snow crystals, like all crystals of water, develop under the hexagonal system and invariably divide into six. Nothing absolutely certain is known as to why they grow thus except as it is assumed the number and arrangement of the attractive and repellent poles possessed by the molecules of water impose this habit of growth on them. This dividing into six is necessarily discussed and best explained in somewhat technical sounding terms. We may assume each water particle or molecule possesses two opposite primary poles, positive and negative, corresponding in direction with the main tabular axis of the crystals, and in addition three or six equidistant secondary poles arranged around what may be called the equatorial diameters of the molecules. Water, being a diamagnetic substance and susceptible to polar repulsion, presumably has a tendency to arrange itself thus in a position between and at right angles to the primary electromagnetic poles. This alignment of the lines of growth opposite to the lines of greatest magnetic force would compel the crystals of snow to grow mainly outward in the directions of their equatorial diameters and secondary poles. This theory would perhaps best explain why the crystals grow upon thin tabular or in the hollow columnar form and increase so little in the directions of their main axes—that is, in the direction in which, it is assumed, the main position and negative poles lie.—Technical World Magazine

A PATHETIC DUEL.

Sad Sequel to a Meeting in the Days When Middies Fought.

One of the most pathetic duels in the early history of the American navy was that between two young midshipmen whose names are not given in the record, according to a recent writer. Their ship was in the Malayan waters. One hot night they quarreled over the question of leaving open the scuttle. The dispute was finally settled amicably by the exchange of cots. A superior officer who had overheard their heated words made it plain to one of the midshipmen that he would have to "call out" his friend if he wished to retain the respect of his friends. To avoid ostracism and to conform to the standard of honor imposed by his superiors the unwilling midshipman challenged.

The meeting occurred on the seashore. He wrote of it afterward as follows. "Upon the signal we both fired. I found myself wounded and was about to lean upon my second's arm when I perceived my opponent fall upon the sand. My own wound was in the fleshy part of the thigh. It did not prevent my running to the prostrate figure of my old friend whose face exhibited intense pain, and kneeling down by his side, I implored his forgiveness, which he instantly granted.

"My despair at his fate knew no bounds, and, accusing myself of his murder, I upbraided with the bitterest reproaches those who had urged me to send the challenge. For weeks after his cot was attended by his late opponent, whose greatest joy was to anticipate his wants."

The wounded youth recovered, but had a withered arm, and, leaving the service, died of a broken heart.

American.

It was an Englishman who after traveling from New York to St. Louis was asked in the latter city if he was going west. "Heavens, what a country! Here I am, a thousand miles from the sea, and I'm asked if I'm going west!"

It was an American who, alighting in San Francisco from a trip across the continent which had been impeded by heavy traffic, grasped his friend's hand at the station and exclaimed, with pride, "What an empire, where a man, though moving all the time, can be twenty-four hours late on a railroad train!" It is an empire and powerful as vast.—Washington Star.

Charles Reade's Mistake.

"It was Charles Reade, wasn't it, who wrote, 'Nothing is so terrible as a fool?'"

"Yes, but he was wrong. I live next door to a newly married couple. If Charles could see them he would at once admit that two fools are ever more terrible."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Not Peculiar.

Tess—I see a notice in the paper of the wedding of Mrs. Nabride. Jess—Yes; I know her very well. Tess—Do you? What was her maiden name? Jess—I suppose her maiden name was to get married.—Philadelphia Press.

It is very much easier for a bad man to become notorious than for a good one to become famous.—Atlanta Journal.

MR. BINNEY'S FAILURE.

Opinions by Neighbors, Creditors and His Family.

Mr. Binney failed in business.

One of his neighbors said, "At last?"

Another neighbor said: "I thought they were going it pretty strong for a man of his income. Still, I didn't like to say anything at the time."

A third neighbor said: "Oh, I'm so sorry. My dear, we must go over and give Mrs. Binney our deepest sympathy. I'm dying to see how she is taking it."

One brother-in-law said: "If he had sent me that $500 I asked him for last year he'd have been that much ahead, anyway. Much good it did him to keep it. Too bad, though, of course."

Another brother-in-law said: "Sly old boy, Binney. He's got it salted away somewhere, all right. Don't you worry."

His butcher said: "Now, a poor man like me has to pay his debts as he goes along. All the same, I'm not worrying about the $20 he owes me, but I'll bet you if I owed any body $20 they'd make my life a misery till they got it."

His wife's best friend (to Mrs. Binney): "Now, my dear, you mustn't mind any of the awful things you hear. At a time like this people will talk."

A friend: "A man must either have exceptional capital or exceptional ability to succeed in business nowadays. Poor Binney, as it happens, had neither."

A second friend: "How much will he be able to pay? Twenty-five cents on the dollar? How did these come to be so much? Did Binney overlook it?"

A third friend: "Ninety-five per cent of business enterprises are unprofitable. There's nothing like a steady, well paying position."

A knowing acquaintance, "Wise old Binney."

His daughters, "We must hold our heads up higher than ever or people will say that we are ashamed."

His wife, "He'll be home more now, and that is everything."

Binney: "Whew! Thank heaven it's over. Now I've got to hustle and get a job."—New York Sun.

A CITY OF DANGERS.

Going Out at Night in Mosul Means Imperiling One's Life.

Mosul, on the western bank of the Tigris, is described in "The Short Cut to India," by David Fraser, as a place of some difficulty for the residents. Prices of every mortal thing are dearer than anywhere else in Turkey. Water is procured only from the Tigris, and every drop required must be carried therefrom in skins upon donkeys. Two pounds a month is a very ordinary expenditure on this essential and provides but a scanty bath.

To go out at night is to place one's life in jeopardy. To walk across the bridge in broad daylight is a danger owing to the frailty of the structure. The bridge is a wonderful affair and yields an income of some thousands of pounds annually to the contractor who farms it from the government. Three hundred yards of it is solid masonry and the remaining 150 yards a wooden platform laid upon a row of crazy boats.

Where the bridge of boats abuts the shore at one end and the stone bridge at the other are the points of danger, for owing to the height of the river when I was there the joinings were at a slope of forty-five degrees and consisted of narrow gangways up which people, sheep, cattle, donkeys, mules, horses and camels had to scramble. No wonder there were many fallings into the water—dangerous water, too—for it coursed like a cataract between the boats and swirled and boiled in fierce eddies and whirlpools below the bridge.

One poor Yabtie, with rifle slung and bandoliers strapped across his chest, was walking across when his horse slipped at the ascent to the boat part of the bridge, and both fell into the water. The horse was rescued, but the man was drowned. Life has small value in Mosul, however, and nobody bothered to mend the huge holes in the bridge or to make its passage less precarious.

A Hard Lot.

Nicaragua has been distinguished even among Central American republics by the number of its revolutions. Discovered by Columbus, it takes its name from the chief who ruled it at the time of its exploration by Davila in 1522. Of its earliest rulers it has been said that "the first had been a murderer, the second a murderer and rebel, the third murdered the second, the fourth was a forger and the fifth a murderer and rebel." Nicaragua abounds in prehistoric remains, and in some parts, it is said, the inhabitants still supply themselves with pottery from the vast quantities preserved below the surface.

Off Duty.

Winfred, six years old, was tying paper boots upon the kitten's paws when his aunt remonstrated with him for teasing the kitten, saying, "I thought you belonged to the Band of Mercy." "Yes, aunt'e, I do," said Winfred, "but," he added apologetically, "my badge is on my other coat."—Delineator.

Either Way.

Silicus—I can't decide which one of those two girls I want to marry. Cynicus—Well, marry either one of them and you'll discover that you got the wrong one.—Philadelphia Record.

The Foolish Maiden.

Crawford—So your daughter loves poetry? Crabshaw—Worse than that. She's fallen in love with one of those fellows who write it.—Judge.

SHOWING THE ALBUM

The Old Plush Volume Pictured the Family History.

A TREAT FOR THE VISITOR.

She Learned All About the Twins and Aunt Jane's Little Love Affair and Mother Sybil's Narrow Escape and a Whole Lot More Besides.

"Yes'm, that's my marriage certificate, and them pictures pasted on it is me and pa the day we was married. No, he wasn't sick, but he was so scared it made him look peaked. Do you like to look at photographs? Most everybody does, I guess. Wait till I get the album. Yes, it is kind of a pretty cover—real plush. I got it off a book peddler lady—dollar down and 50 cents a month.

"There's twins. There was two of them. They looked just like you see them there. One of them is my husband, but nobody can tell which he is now. Sort of creepy, ain't it, not to know whether your own husband is one twin or the other? One of them died when he was sixteen, and that broke the set. I think it is the sweetest picture in the album, they took so simple and harmless, just like two little calves. Grandma Jones used to make their clothes herself. You'd never guess it would you? She used to lay the cloth in two thicknesses and cut out two suits at once. If one of them was born a girl she couldn't have done it. Turn over the page.

"That's the gentleman Aunt Jane nearly married. He looks like a college professor, don't he? He was so refined and meek and so eloquent at prayer meeting. But he wasn't a professor; he peddled Grigg's infallible cure for dog chokers and lectured on temperance. He was awful poor in his health, and the minute Aunt Jane set eyes on him she made up her mind to marry him. She was forty, and she usually got what she wanted, and everybody said it was a thousand chances to one that she would get him. But just when Aunt Jane was sure she had him he got wind of it. He went back to Massachusetts the next day and died peaceful. Turn over the page.

"That's my sister Gertie and a base singer we used to have in the choir. His name was Spring—Launcelot Spring—and he was a barber by profession. Him and Gertie was engaged for six weeks, but she found out he had a wife and six children at Boston, so she didn't marry him. He was the prettiest singer! You'd never imagine he had a wife and six children if you could have heard him sing. Ain't it awful how awful people can be and yet look so innocent? Gertie took on awful when she heard the facts about him, and she wouldn't get engaged to anybody else for a long time, and you know what that means for a choir singer. Turn over the page.

"Sue Harwick that is, one of my old girl chums. She run off with a cattle buyer and got married, but that wasn't until five years after this picture was took. She had a lovely character—so light and playful and that fond of handsome clothes. I remember the day she had that picture took. She'd been to a picnic with a traveling gentleman from Cincinnati and got engaged to him. I helped her trim the very hat she has on. It was a green straw with roses, one red and one blue and one yellow. It matched her complexion lovely. She was a dark blond with red hair. Oh, yes, she always smiled that way on account of one front tooth being out. Turn over the page.

"That's my Aunt Phoebe by marriage the day she was married. Ain't she sweet? The basket wasn't hers. It belonged to the man that took the picture. Neither was the cows in here, though they didn't belong to the photograph man. I've got them now laid away till they come in handy. I tell pa it's a pity it ain't man's hair fashion of style, and then he could wear it. Baldness seems to run in his family. His father was so bald that he never used a brush and comb for forty-two years and used to comb his hair with a flannel rag. That dress of Aunt Phoebe's is the lowest necked anybody on either side of our family ever had, but then she was a great one for society. Turn over the page.—Ellis Parker Butler in Reader.

Queer Legal Oaths.

In Siberia, in the wild Ostyaks law courts, the natives swear by the newly severed head of a bear, which is implored to subsequently rend and devour them should they perjure themselves, while in Assam the opposing witnesses lay hold of a chicken by its feet and retain each one-half as the clerk of the court chops it in two. By undergoing this ceremony they are considered to be pledged to a like fate in the event of their swearing falsely.—Chicago Journal.

Saved His Life.

"Don't chide me for carrying a revolver. This little gun saved my life once."

"How exciting! Tell me about it."

"I was starving, and I pawned it."—Cleveland Leader.

The Scornful.

"What are the wants of the scornful?"

"Didn't you ever have a friend pass you perched up in a fine automobile?"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Fire and sword are but slow engines of destruction and conversion with the human mind.—Burke.

SWEEDY AND THE SHARPS.

The King Gambler Taught the Stranger a Lesson.

Some years ago, when St. Louis was wide open, Pat Sheedy, king of gamblers, was sitting in the corridor of the Planters' house with a friend. Two strangers (not game) descended the stairway and very quietly invited the gambler to poker upstairs. They had money, Sheedy looked and did not wonder. Him, now he looked the part of a "jay" from "down" and it does not appear like "easy money."

"He's no lark," one of the strangers said, "but we haven't another man here. We might get up a little game of draw poker."

"Wouldn't mind sitting in myself," said Sheedy, with a wink to his friend. "I haven't played poker for some time."

"Suppose we play a little show-down—$1 or $5 limit?" one of the strangers said.

"I'm agreeable," Sheedy replied. "And I guess my friend is. Make it a five dollar limit for an hour or two."

Introductions under fictitious names on both sides followed, and the three men went to Sheedy's suit. On the way for the first deal the speaking stranger received the honor. The way he handled the cards showed that he was used to that careless shuffle method that can only come from years of practice by a professional gambler.

The suspicions of Sheedy and his friend were confirmed by the first hand shown. Sheedy received three kings, his friend a small full house, the dealer's friend a pair of tens and the dealer an ace full. The betting was very light on the part of Sheedy and his friend.

The next deal was Sheedy's. He took a long while arranging the cards. When they were dealt every one in the party had fours, Sheedy's kids, of course, being the highest. The betting was fast, and when the hands were shown the speaking grabber modestly remembered a long distance telephone call for himself and friend was awaiting them. They departed hurriedly, and Pat Sheedy, turning to his friend, said:

"My boy, it's been twenty years since I had to do that for a living."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

A GREYSOME PATRON.

The Famous and Terrible Gentleman Fortress of Schlusselburg.

In the middle of the river Neva, where it flows out of Lake Ladoga, there lies a tiny island surrounded on three sides by the mighty, turbulent waters of the river and bastioned on the fourth by the cold and stormy lake. Upon this island stands a very ancient fortress erected by high walls more than seventy feet in thickness. This is the Fortress of Schlusselburg. Day and night sentries patrol every two hours around the top of these walls, keeping a vigilant lookout on every hand. No one from within the fortress can enter the soldiers' quarters—in other words, communicate with the people who dwell upon the banks of the river. By the severest deterrent measures it is his best bet next to the will of the fortress he is granted by the shoot of a sentinel, aiming his rifle:

"Away, or I shoot!"

Not even the Dead Sea in the deserts of Asia is so utterly isolated and cut off from the living world as is the Fortress of Schlusselburg, which lies within forty miles of St. Petersburg.

They are very ancient, the high walls of the fortress. In many places they are crested from old age and the cracks little trees have taken root. The lower part of the wall is practically hidden covered with slimy moss, just as the face of a very old man becomes covered all over with wrinkles. They look awful, mysterious by night as if they did dark and gruesome secrets. And, in point of fact, whose would there are in other words that have witnessed as many and more terrible human tragedies as the Fortress of Schlusselburg.—David Ramsay in McClure's Magazine.

When Fashion Lasted for Years.

In those happy days fashion moved slowly, and footmen for years. Much the same fashion continued through the long reign of Louis XIV., and another through that of Louis XV., while the ladies of the middle ages never thought of varying their costumes. And for the Greeks and the Romans generation succeeded generation with little change in female dress, and in all these ladies of the past were more artistically dressed than those of today. Many no doubt spent more than their income could afford, but when they did so costly dress they kept it as long as they could, always trying to replace it with another.—London Truth.

Going Some.

Inebriated One—Shay, mishter, did you ever see that fellow that tried to miss? Stranger—I saw you running down the street, but I didn't observe any competitor. Inebriated One—You didn't? Why I went by that lamppost back there's if it was standing still.—Puck.

Trying Work.

This Haired Man—What? A shilling for cutting my hair? There's outrageous! Barber—But, my dear sir, look here on your head—so far apart that I had to cut each one by itself.—London Tit-Bits.

The Play.

It is remarkable how virtuous and generously disposed every one is at a play. We unitedly applaud what is right and condemn what is wrong, when a word or motion will put them right.—Hazlitt.

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