UNCLE SAM'S COINAGE.

Some Interesting Things Not Generally Known.

"E Pluribus Unum" Never Authorized by Law—Origin of the Motto, "In God We Trust," and the "M" on Liberty's Neck.

The making of the first money in the United States began in 1786, but instead of the faces of representative statesmen it bore only the figure of Liberty. Some few coins were stamped with the face of Washington, and of course are highly valued by collectors. The first coins struck by the United States mint were some half dimes in 1792; the first dimes were struck in France from old silver family plate furnished by Washington, the coins being known as Martha Washington dimes, from the circumstance as noted, of an adaptation of the Liberty head to that of Martha Washington.

The United States mint in San Francisco is said to be the largest of the kind in the world. The process of coine making there may not be without interest. The silver bullion is first melted and run into two-pound bars. These in turn are run through immense rollers and flattened out to the thickness of the coin. These strips are then passed through a machine, which cuts them into proper size for the blanks, the strips first having been coated with a kind of tallow to prevent their being scratched in their passage through the cutters.

The silver pieces are then put into the feeder of the printing presses, and are fed to the die by automatic machinery at the rate of 100 per minute, 6,000 dimes being turned out in a regular working day of 12 hours.

As the smoothing pieces are pressed between the printing dies they receive the lettered and figured impression; at the same time the piece is expanded in a slight degree and the small corrugations are cut in its rim. The machine drops the completed coin into a receiver and it is ready for the counter's hands.

The first silver dollar was coined under the act of February 12, 1792, and weighed 416 grains and had a fineness of 892.4, which standard was continued for many years. The first coins struck for America, however, are supposed to have been the Sommer Island shilling and sixpence. The date of coinage, place and circumstances under which they were issued are unknown. The Somner or Summer islands are the present Bermudas. The shilling was called a "Hogge-Penny," composed of copper, size 19, weight 177 grains.

The silver dollar, since the first introduction of the coin, has undergone many changes, all of which have had more or less effect in establishing a fixed value among collectors of rare coins. The issue of 1804 bears the palm in this respect, and has won for itself the name of "The King of American Rarities." Only seven or eight of the 1804 dollars are known to be in existence.

The "legend" of the scarcity is that a vessel bound for China had on board almost the entire coinage, $19,570, and was lost at sea. Another theory concerning this mysterious coin runs as follows: That the entire issue was shipped to pay the Yankee tars who fought in the war with Tripoli. The sailors drifted around after the war closed, and many of them went to Africa, where they spent their money.

The native kings collected all the coins and buried them as trophies. Perhaps Stanley might throw some light on the last version of the 1804 dollar.

The national motto, "E pluribus unum," on different United States coins, was never authorized by law to be so placed. Although the mint was established in 1792, the use of the motto on any of the gold, silver or copper coins was not authorized or directed by any of the provisions of the act establishing it. None of the coins since 1837 bore the motto until the standard silver dollars were coined.

It remained on the early gold and silver coins until 1834, when it was omitted from the gold coins. From the double eagle in 1866 it was also omitted. In 1836 it was dropped from the 25-cent piece and the following year from all silver coins, the trade dollar only reviving its use. The motto was first used on a half-penny or cent struck in New Jersey in 1786-7.

The motto "In God We Trust" has a curious history. Until 1864 no religious motto appeared on American coins. In November, 1861, a clergyman addressed a letter to Mr. Chase, the secretary of the treasury, suggesting a recognition of the Deity on the coins. This letter was referred to James Pollock, an ex-governor of Pennsylvania and director of the mint at the time, but it was found that the mottoes could not be changed without authority of law.

In December, 1866, the director submitted plans for a new three-cent, two-cent and one-cent piece, on which it was proposed that one of the following mottoes be inserted: "Our Country, Our God," "God, Our Trust." Mr. Chase suggested in lieu of these mottoes the one "In God We Trust." It was upon the two-cent piece authorized April 22, 1864 (since abolished), the motto of Secretary Chase first appeared.

It was also stamped on the 1866 issue of the double eagle, eagle, half eagle, silver dollar, half dollar and nickel five cent piece in lieu of the long standing motto "E Pluribus Unum." In the trade dollar issue (1873) both mottoes were retained, "In God We Trust" appearing on the obverse.

This is a popular idea prevalent that the minute letter "M" stamped on the Goddess of Liberty just at the point where the largest lock of hair crosses her neck stands for "mint," and is an evidence of the genuineness of the coin bearing it. But this is a mistake.

The "M" stands for Morgan—George T. Morgan, who is the originator of the design. He also stamped the letter "M" on the reverse side of the coin, on the left half of the loop of ribbon tied about the wreath.

Regarding the Liberty head on the obverse side Mr. Zoellar, the designer of the soldiers' monument which is to be placed in Garfield square, Pottsville, says: "I have sought everywhere almost for a true head of Liberty, and I have come to the conclusion that the best head is that which at the present time has a place on our silver dollar. I propose to use it on account of its being the best representation of Liberty that can, in my judgment, be found."

Mr. Morgan, in order to get the design for the head which was accepted, selected as his model Miss Annie Williams, a young school-teacher, who had, Mr. Morgan said, "the purely American features."

Quite a number of people have been under the impression that Mr. Morgan's wife's head had been used as a model for the perfection of the design, but such was not the case.

Regarding the dollar mark writers are not agreed as to the derivation of this sign to represent the word dollar or dollars. Some contend that it comes from the letters U and S, which, after the adoption of the federal constitution, were prefixed to the currency of the new United States, and which afterward, in the hurry of writing, were run into each other, the U being made first and the S over it.

Others say that the contraction is from the Spanish pesos, dollars; others still believe it to be derived from the Spanish word fuertes, meaning hard, so called to designate silver and gold from paper or soft money. The more plausible explanation of the puzzle is this: That it is a modification of the figure 8, and that the character, as we mark it, denotes that we are speaking, or writing, of a sum of money equal to eight reals; or, as the dollar was formerly called—a piece of eight.

In the early history of the dollar, when everybody knew it as a piece of eight, writers who had occasion to mention it in their articles did so by making this character: (8)

The two eights and the double hyphen gradually "evoluted" until it came out as $.

A word relative to the origin of the old shinplasters, emanating from no less a source than the late Gen. F. E. Spinner, whose unique autograph will long be remembered, may not be amiss at this particular point:

"When all the silver had been paid out of the treasury of the United States early in 1862 I procured from the postoffice department quantities of postage stamps for the purpose of making change. My recollection now is that at that time five and ten-cent stamps were the only kind in use.

"So, to facilitate the making of change, I had the stamps pasted on slips of paper so as to make 25 and 50 cents. This was done after an agreement with Mr. Montgomery Blair, the then postmaster general, that he would redeem them in that condition in postage stamps. It was soon found that this mode of procedure was impracticable.

"I then persuaded the postmaster general to procure the engraving and printing of fac similies of the postal compound postage stamp. These the treasurer bought from the postmaster general under an agreement that the post office department should redeem them. This was what was called 'postal currency.'"

The postmaster general soon became tired of the additional responsibility and labor that the issuing and redemption of this currency threw upon his office, and he urged that the treasurer should relieve him of it. He then procured the passage of a law by congress for the printing of a currency which would represent the fractions of a dollar.

These were engraved and printed in denominations of 3, 5, 10, 15, 25 and 50 cent notes, and in contradistinction to the postal currency were called fractional currency, and were receivable for all government dues.

Connected with the United States treasury is one of the most remarkable coin experts in the world. He is the coin examiner, and has the remarkable gift of discerning the slightest fraud in specie without being able exactly to tell how it is done.

If a counterfeit piece be concealed in a heap of money he will detect it blindfolded. He runs his fingers through the mass, and in a few moments every coin is tested. This is the result of that remarkable power of touch which is only perfected by long practice.

When Treasurer Huston came into his office he gave a receipt for what the treasury vaults contained, and this receipt was the largest ever given in the history of the world. A fac-simile of it is framed and hung up in the treasurer's office and it represents $771,432,329.45¾.

Over 90 per cent. of the silver produced in the country passes through the hands of a few banks and firms which make it their special business in New York and San Francisco. In fact, three or four houses monopolize the greater part of the trade, and to them silver is consigned for sale by the mining and smelting companies.

They dispose of it in the market to the government (whose purchases under the late silver law are now of great importance), ship it abroad or buy it themselves.

The stock is believed never to be very large, and even during the recent silver agitation was not much more than from six to seven million ounces. Bars weighing 1,000 ounces on an average are usually 999 fine, and all transactions in them are on this basis, which is the standard of the United States coinage.

A number of bars go to the assay office to be converted into assay bars, which are thin bricks of silver weighing 200 ounces each and bearing the official stamp of weight and fineness. These are in demand by silversmiths on account of the guarantee of the stamp.

The bullion shipped to Europe is in the form of commercial bars, which are simply carted to the steamer and there placed, unpacked, in the treasure room. It is quite unusual to pack silver with the care that is bestowed on gold. The bars also form the bulk of the stock held in New York.—H. D. Sim, in N. Y. Commercial.

MILITARY AFFAIRS.

THE horses of the German cavalry regiments are to be entirely shod with paper shoes, recent experiments as to their durability, etc., having proved entirely satisfactory.

THE government of Nicaragua has decided that the maximum number of troops in active service during time of peace shall be 1,000 men, and in time of international troubles 5,000.

GEN. ALEXANDER S. WEBB, president of the College of the City of New York, has received from the war department a medal of honor for "distinguished personal gallantry at the battle of Gettysburg."

AUSTRIA has an army 300,000 strong. But a correspondent says that the Austrian soldiers are very poorly dressed in comparison with the English and German soldiery, and they are also not so good specimens of manhood as the queen's and the kaiser's troops.

THE food allowed to sailors in the American navy is better than that furnished in any other navy in the world. They have every vegetable that can be canned except asparagus, besides all kinds of canned meats. In fact, they have fresh meats, and the mess fund provides fresh fruits.

WORTH YOUR WHILE TO READ.

THE peach was originally a very poisonous fruit, but by cultivation the poison has disappeared.

OUT of the letters in the sentence "Let charity arouse your zeal," a St. Louisian has formed 29,059 words.

A CUBIC foot of newly fallen snow weighs five and a half pounds and has twelve times the bulk of an equal weight of water.

A TEXAS farmer who has 400 acres planted with 11,000 pecan trees calculates that in six or seven years, on the basis of an average yield of a basket for each tree, he will get a net return of $50,000 from them.

IN aiming a revolver experts claim that it is utterly useless to attempt to follow a sight line, but that more satisfactory results are obtained when the marksman simply looks at the object to be struck, and fires.

RATTLESNAKES are said to have a natural antipathy to white ash leaves. Some naturalists assert that a rattlesnake placed in a circle of half ash leaves and half hot coals will cross the coals rather than encounter the leaves.

ON THE SIDE OF SCIENCE.

A BERLIN surgeon reports that pure water injected under the skin with a syringe is an excellent anæsthetic.

A TEMPERATURE of 220 degrees below zero has been produced by a bath of carbon bisulphide and liquid nitrous acid.

DR. PINEL, of Paris, has found that hypnotic patients obey the phonograph as readily as they do a living speaker. He therefore discards the whole theory of animal magnetism.

THE heat-conducting qualities of the metals range as follows: Silver, 100; copper, 73.80; gold, 52.20; annealed aluminium, 37.96; tin, 14.50; iron, 11.60; steel, 11.60; lead, 8.50; platinum, 8.40; bismuth, 1.80.

SMOKE is finding its champions in England, notwithstanding the efforts made to prevent its diffusion in the atmosphere. It is claimed that the carbon in the smoke is a powerful deodorizer, and as such is a blessing rather than a nuisance.

TOLD OF THE UNKNOWN.

AN industrious Lawrence county (Mo.) woman has put up a five years' supply of fruit.

EIGHT brothers met in Mexico, Mo., the other day, and it was the first time that all of them had ever been together.

THE only pauper in Tucker county, Va., is handsomely lodged. The poor farm cost $900 and he has it all to himself.

A FARM in East Bowdoinham, Me., is worked by a farmer of eighty-two years, helped by his wife of eighty, and a family of eight middle-aged children.

A MAN in Concord, Mich., makes his living by raising English sparrows. When the birds feather out he cuts off their heads and gets the per cent. on them.

AN eccentric old bachelor who died a few days ago at Morenci, Mich., left a trunk in which were found $4,700 in gold, $10,000 in greenbacks and $10,000 in mortgages. His heirs are delighted.

POINTS OF ETIQUETTE.

"MRS." or "Miss" may be used as a prefix to a lady's signature in a letter to a stranger, but should be inclosed in parentheses, as (Mrs.) James Clarke, (Miss) Cora Brown.

IN writing to an unmarried woman upon formal or business matters she should be addressed as "Dear Madam," rather than "Dear Miss." The use of "Miss" without the name is inelegant.

THE spoon is used to eat melons. Hard cheese one conveys to the mouth with the thumb and forefinger, but soft cheeses may be eaten with the fork. It is said to be dangerous to swallow grape seeds.

ANY small fruits, the seeds of which are to be rejected, should be eaten from behind the half closed hand, the stones and skin falling into the fingers unobserved and thence to the plate. Peel the pears and quarter them before eating them.

FOUND IN THE PAPERS.

AMONG other specified qualifications needed in a coachman advertised for in a Boston paper is the ability to converse in German and French.

AN ingenious Pole advertises in the newspapers his readiness to supply to order houses, churches, bells, cannon and ships, all made of paper.

A WESTERN newspaper closes an article about the canning enterprises of Yuba City by saying: "No Chinese are employed and 14,000 are put up daily."

ADVERTISEMENT in an English provincial paper: "A young gentleman on the point of getting married is desirous of meeting a man of experience who will dissuade him from the step."

IN THE HEAVENS.

BY the use of the camera, with powerful telescopes, a new and very large crater has been shown upon the moon's surface.

A "GREASY" sky, which is a dull, dirty gray, resembling lead smirched with a greased cloth, is ominous of bad weather.

BESIDES the large planets which revolve about the sun, over two hundred and fifty others have been discovered and catalogued, and science is daily adding to this list.

LONG white streamers reaching from the horizon to the zenith, resembling white rockets and known as mare's tails, indicate a coming wind, and they reach up from the quarter whence it is rising.

A DISCOVERY more curious than any other yet made with the Lick telescope is the recent one of a new moon. Since the first hint of the discovery many observations have been made, all of which tend to confirm the original impression, to wit: That this particular satellite of Jupiter is double—a dot of a moon revolving around the main moon.

UNUSUAL AND ENTERTAINING.

THE bounty paid by Minnesota last year for wolf scalps amounted to $52,000.

DEFIANCE, Ia., has a man five feet six inches in height who weighs but sixty-five pounds.

THE greatest long distance bicycle riding record is 745 miles in fifty-four and one-half hours.

A SALMON weighing fifty and a half pounds was caught in the Solway, Scotland, a couple of weeks ago.

A BLACKBIRD that was blood red, except head and wings, was shot by a sportsman of Alloway, N. J., lately.

INSTANTANEOUS photography has been used to record the movements of the lips in speaking, and by putting the photographs in a zoetrope a deaf mute can easily read the words.

A THREE-YEAR-OLD child in Lewiston, Me., babbles in three languages—French, Swedish and English. Her father is French and her mother is a Swede. She picked up English from customers in her father's fruit store.

LITERARY NEWS AND NOTES.

MRS. SUSAN E. WALLACE is generally introduced to the public as the wife of the author of "Ben Hur," yet she is a writer of ability herself.

THE London Spectator calls James Russell Lowell "His Excellency the Ambassador of American Literature to the Court of Shakespeare."

LESS than a score of Russian scholars, it is asserted, can translate Count Tolstoi's dramatic language directly from the original into English.

THE literature of Greenland, which is still very meager, has recently received an interesting addition in the shape of a long poem entitled "Karjarnack," by a missionary named Spindler.

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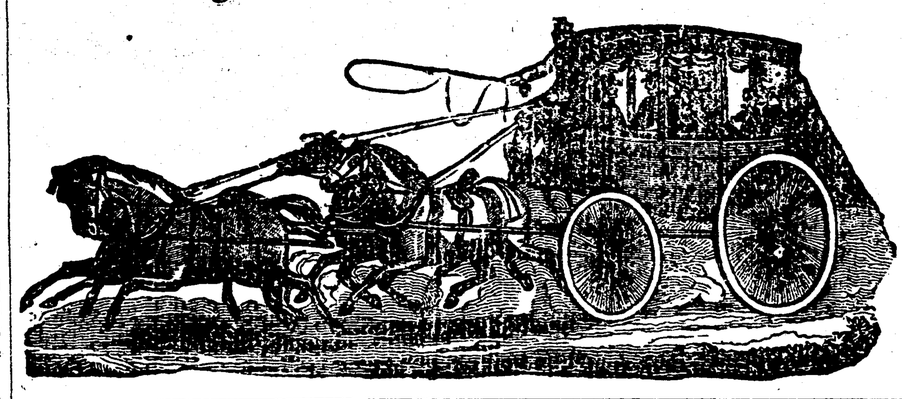

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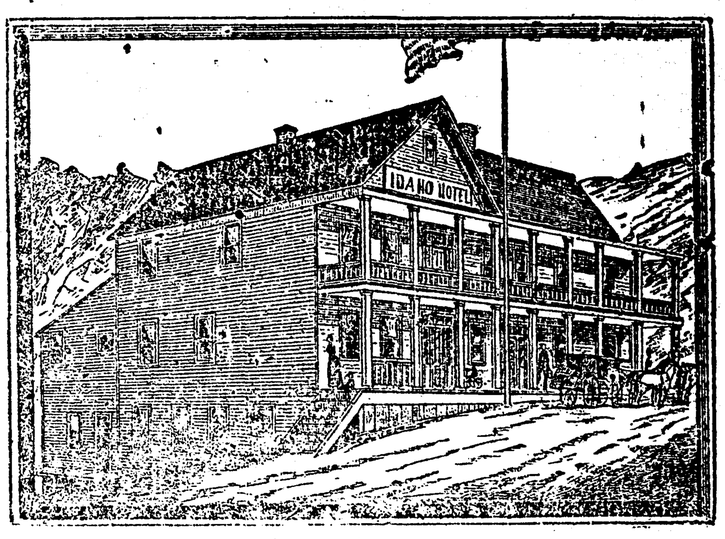

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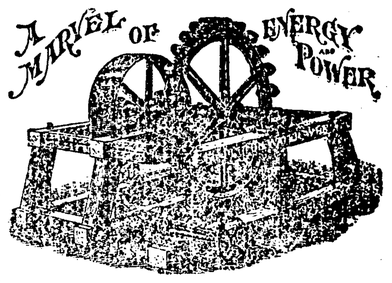

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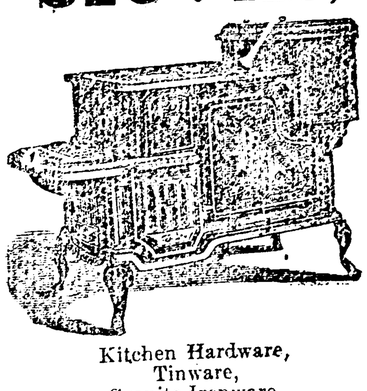

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