

EARLY COIN-MAKING.

Money Manufactured in Philadelphia Nearly a Century Ago—The Washington Half-Dollar, the Mark, the Cent of 1793, and the Dollar of 1794—High Prices for Them.

The history of the early mint, says *The Philadelphia Press*, resembles the early lives of our most successful millionaires in that it commenced to make money in small amounts and in a very humble way. The three-story structure, Nos. 37 and 39 North Seventh street, was chosen as the site for the United States mint, and there it remained from 1792 until 1833, when it was removed to its present location.

The subject of a national coinage was agitated as early as 1782, when Robert Morris, the financier and signer of the Declaration of Independence, advocated a system of coinage for the United States. "Ten units were to equal 1 penny, 10 pence to make 1 bit, and 10 bits to make one dollar." Dies for these pieces were made and several specimens struck in silver, called the mark, quint and bit. All of them are exceedingly rare and valuable. A mark sold for \$540 in a public sale in New York, and the bit, of which but one specimen has been brought to light, and which was recently bought in a sale of coin in Scotland by W. E. Woodward, of Boston, is valued at \$550. These patterns or experimental coins are historically most interesting, as they comprise the earliest efforts for the establishment of a government coinage.

The foundation of the new mint was laid by David Rittenhouse, on Tuesday, July 31, 1792, at 10 o'clock A. M. On Sept. 11, 1792, the mint made the first purchase of coining metal, six pounds of old copper at one shilling 3 pence per pound. Three presses were put up and operated in the beginning of October, the first pieces coined being the Martha Washington half-dimes, of which President Washington speaks in his annual message to congress, Nov. 6, 1792, as follows: "In the execution of the authority given by the legislature, measures have been taken for engaging some artists from abroad to aid in the establishment of our mints. Others have been employed at home. Provisions have been made for the requisite buildings, and these are now putting into proper condition for the purpose of the establishment. There was a small beginning in the coining of half-dimes; the want of small coins in circulation calling the first attention to them."

There is a tradition, generally believed by numismatists, that these pieces were struck from the private plate of Washington, which he had melted up for that purpose, and that Martha Washington sat before the artist who designed the dies. This is very probable, as Washington was greatly interested in the infant mint, personally superintending many of its affairs. For this reason the coin is highly prized by collectors. A number of other dies were made and coins struck in 1792, as patterns or designs for a regular coinage. Notable among them is the Washington silver half-dollar. The dies for this piece were made by Peter Getz, of Lancaster, and on the obverse is represented the bust of Washington, facing left.

The mint did not, however, commence its regular business till 1793, when the copper cent and half-cent first made their appearance, and, although quite a large number of these were coined, no less, in fact, than 112,212 cents, yet they are seldom met with now, and a perfect unused specimen has been sold at auction for \$200. The half-pennies of this date do not command so much, in fine state of preservation only bringing from \$10 to \$20. The most valuable of the early pennies are those of 1793 and 1804, and if these could be obtained in uncirculated condition—that is, as fine as when dropped from the die, they would sell for from \$300 to \$400 each.

In the year 1794 the silver dollar first made its appearance, and the coinage of the half-dime was resumed. Of the dollar but few really excellent impressions can be found, and they would realize from \$100 to 200 each. The coinage of silver dollars continued till 1804, large numbers being put in circulation. The silver dollar of 1804, surnamed the "King of American Coins," will probably command a larger price than any other of the American series, and in the face of the fact that it is not generally conceded by collectors who have thoroughly investigated the subject, that there ever was or is a genuine coin of that date struck in that year, known to the numismatic world. That dies were made for the piece is unquestioned, and that there were several restrikes from the dies as late as 1860 is also admitted. The two specimens in the mint cabinet are restrikes, as are all the others which have recently been offered for sale, but as they sell from \$1,000 to \$1,200 apiece it can readily be seen that the fraudulent restrikes have been a very lucrative and quick way of making money.

Of the little silver half-dime of 1802 but eighteen specimens have been found. The silver quarters of 1823 and 1827 are almost impossible to find, and unused examples of these dates would be eagerly bought at \$150. The rarest early American coin, however, is the gold half-eagle of 1815. In this year, a disastrous fire having occurred

at the mint, a number of dies were removed to Lancaster, and owing to the confusion incident to their removal and the lack of proper facilities but few pieces were coined.

No pennies of this year have been found. Should a genuine one turn up it will doubtless bring an enormous sum. Of the half-eagles but three have found their way into collections, two of these having been discovered in an old stocking and sold to a New York broker twenty-five years ago. The cabinet of the United States mint, which was begun as early as 1835, although containing an almost complete series of American gold coin, could not obtain this date. It has quite recently made a valuable and important acquisition in securing from H. P. Newlin one of the three specimens in a remarkably fine state of preservation. The others are owned by Mr. Garrett and L. G. Parmelee, of Boston, the latter being one of the oldest collectors and having a cabinet of American coins valued at \$50,000. It is stated that another 1815 half-eagle is in the collection of the Swedish mint. The value of each of the pieces is estimated at \$500.

In the year 1833 the mint was removed to its present site on Chestnut street, below Broad, and its facilities for the coining of gold, silver, and copper were greatly increased. Of its late coins, subsequent to 1834, but few command large prices, the \$20 piece of 1849 alone excepted. This piece, of which but one gold specimen was struck, is probably the most valuable of the entire series, and a few years ago the authorities of the mint were offered \$2,000 for it by an enthusiastic collector.

Coin collecting is in its infancy in this country. As the number of numismatists is now three thousand and the demand for rare coins is far greater than ever before, it would be natural to suppose that as the supply can not increase with the demand, the fictitious value must advance in proportion.

His Wife Number Two.

Old Col. Porterfield was a hard man. He worked his wife—a good, patient woman—to death upon his plantation. On her death bed, when too late, his eyes were opened to the great wrong he had done, and he begged her for forgiveness.

"It is easy enough for me to forgive," she gasped, "but my forgiveness will not cause your coming punishment to be lessened. I feel that you are going to be punished on this earth." She turned her face away from him and died.

The Colonel's season of grief was not long. He soon put on his best clothes and showed himself at hog killings and other places of amusement. His friends were shocked, but said nothing. Soon there came into the neighborhood a graceful woman, Antoinette Polworth. The Colonel met her and was charmed. He called on her. She received him kindly and eventually they were married.

Six months of almost unbroken happiness flew away, but now the Colonel's face sometimes wore an anxious expression. His wife was not so fair as she had been, and the Colonel had discovered that the waving hair which he had so much admired was sometimes at night hung on a corner of the mantle-piece. He found, also, that he had been deceived in other ways, and the spirit of revenge arose in his injured breast.

"Antoinette," the Colonel one day remarked in a voice which had lost much of its wonted gentleness, "Caroline is ill, to-day, and I want you to go out and weave jeans for the negroes. I got a good price for the stuff, and I cannot afford to see the loom idle."

"Well, then, don't look at it," Antoinette carelessly replied.

The Colonel nibbled his lip and sternly said: "Woman, I want no foolishness."

"Don't have it then."

"I won't. Go out there and weave, or you'll feel the ungentle force of retributive authority."

Antoinette laughed. The Colonel took hold of her nose and gave it a turn as if he would unscrew it. Antoinette put aside a stocking she had been darning, knocked the Colonel down with a lightning like slap, put one foot under him, threw him across the room, sat down and resumed her peaceful occupation. After a while the Colonel sat up and looked at her in astonishment.

"Antoinette," he feebly said

"What, dear?"

"You needn't weave."

"Thank you, dear."

"You have convinced me that a woman should have a few rights, but say, how did you do it? Where did you acquire the facts which you have just embodied into such an unanswerable argument?"

"Colonel," she replied, "pardon me for not sooner telling you. For many years I was the cannon-ball woman and the iron-jawed maiden in the circus. Don't get excited, dear. I shall not give you another exhibition until you attempt to get a divorce from me. Then I will take you up in my teeth and shake you."

The Colonel went out, leaned on a horse block and groaned. His first wife's prediction was verified.—*Arkansas Traveler*.

A Georgia farmer, whose hogs ate up his wallet, containing \$50, is in Washington, and will be an important witness as to the desirability of continuing the coinage and distribution of the less perishable silver dollar.

Tithes and Polygamy.

George Q. Cannon having failed to escape the punishment due his polygamous crime by trying to run away has now given bail. The amount of the bond is large, but he can afford to forfeit it. He is one of the high dignitaries of the Mormon Church, an institution which has a revenue of about one million and a half a year. It could bail out every bishop and high functionary of the church and they might all run away. Still a good bank account would be left. The strength of polygamy lies very largely in the wealth of the church as an institution.

The revenues of the Mormon Church are derived from tithes. The common people are compelled by church law to contribute one-tenth of their income, whether it be in crops, live stock, profits, salary, or anything else, to the ecclesiastical fund. The contribution is not a voluntary gift, but an assessment, enforced by the most solemn obligations.

These ecclesiastics are able to rob (no milder term would fit the case) their ignorant laity by assuming that the tithing system of the Hebrew commonwealth, instead of being a national law, is a perpetually binding religious obligation. This perverse idea may be said to furnish the tap-root of Mormonism, with all its revolting beastiality. The reasoning of the "saints" is that the law of Moses fixed upon one-tenth as a permanent assessment for all the Lord's people, and that it is as binding now, and in America, as it was thousands of years ago in Palestine. By insisting upon this theory they make their dupes believe that to withhold the tithes would be a species of wickedness peculiarly provocative of divine wrath. There is no passage of scripture upon which Cannon and his brother preachers of Utah dwell with such resonant and unctuous fondness as Malachi's exhortation to bring all the tithes into the storehouse of the Lord. The changes are rung upon it with an iteration which would provoke to expletives a less free-tongued hearer than Prince Hal's fat friend.

There could hardly be a more palpable perversion. The Jews constituted a nation, and as a matter of course here had to be some system of taxation. As the government was originally a theocracy, church and state were one, the former being the political and official head of all public affairs. The tax of one-tenth, or 10 per cent, levied under the Mosaic law, was not extortionate and oppressive. In these days it is better to have taxation upon values, rather than on crime, and exact payment in money rather than in kind, at least that is the general opinion and custom, but the old system was better adapted to those times and that civilization. Conceding the wisdom of tithes, as originally levied, it is no less true that any attempt to graft it on to the present system of taxation for the benefit of ecclesiastics has no justification. As well insist that the modern clergy should wear the dress prescribed in the same law for the priesthood. Some-times one hears the tithing system brought forward, outside of Mormonism, as a model for Christians giving to religious and philanthropic purposes. It is no doubt a good idea to be systematic in one's charity, and to gauge the amount according to the income which one receives, or may count upon as reasonably secure. In this war the spirit of the old Hebrew law can be made useful. But pressed beyond that point, and held up as an integral part of the general religious laws of our holy religion, it is liable to grievous abuse, as the example of polygamous Utah impressively teaches.

The essence of the tithing system is not the one-tenth exaction, but the payment in kind, rather than in money. Abstractly considered, this difference between tithes and taxes would seem to be a mere matter of convenience, especially for the tax receiver. It would be easy enough for the farmer to take a load of corn, a few hogs, and a steer or two to the county seat in payment of his annual public assessment, but the utilizing of the same might be awkward, and attended with very considerable loss. Curiously, however, the difference in these two systems, as shown in a vast scale within the period of modern history, may be set down as one of the great things in the development of the race.

Under the feudal system, as it obtained in continental Europe, the peasant paid his tax on the tithing plan of a certain per cent of his increase and crops, while in England the payment of a money tax obtained. At least these two systems were thus in vogue when the silver of Mexico and Peru began to pour into Europe. That influx cheapened money, many fold, and proportionately lessened, practically, the taxation of the English peasant while the continental tax was in effect proportionately increased, for money was then, hardly less than now, the standard of values. The English peasant rose to the dignity of the farmer, and the whole people prospered while the horrors of the peasants' war in Germany, and the burning chateaus of France in the early stages of the French revolution were the revenge wreaked by the oppressed husbandmen of those countries upon their tithing masters.

This remarkable phase of history, to which the merest reference only can be

made in this connection, is no argument against the tithing system as it prevailed in ancient Jewry. It was, no doubt, fair and equitable there and then, but when we see the most revolting domestic abomination deriving its sustenance in our day and land from tithes it is pertinent to recall the evil, upon a continental scale, which was attributable to the retention of the tithing system in Europe after it had been outgrown in the march of events.—*Chicago Inter Ocean*.

She Was From the Country.

She was from the country, and as pretty a picture as you could imagine. The difference between city and country girls in California is generally in favor of the country girl. She was visiting some friends, and this was a theatre party. She was in charge of a superb city dude, a man full of metropolitan airs and graces, albeit he had never been beyond the Rocky mountains. He was just spreading himself on this rosebud from the interior, and she, like a simple, innocent country girl, was very grateful, and very ingenious, and very much interested, and so the dude sailed in. He told her about everything that had been in San Francisco for the last ten years. He described all the Kiralfy ballets; he enlarged upon the late Neilson, the great Booth, the opera, Patti and Gerster and Nevada, and all the great people seemed to be quite familiar.

"What a dull time you must have in the country," he said.

"Yes," she answered, "its rather quiet."

"What do you do with yourself?"

"Oh, I read and sing and play sometimes, and every now and again we have a pleasant little party."

"And what do you think of the town? Doesn't it drive you wild with its excitement? Isn't this going to the theater a great treat?"

"O yes, indeed; it's very delightful!"

"I can't imagine what it must be to be ignorant of the world, to miss all the great pleasures of life."

"You know so much, of course, because of your great opportunities."

"That's to be expected. I've lived in the city all my life."

"You heard Nevada?"

"Well, no; I had to go out of town when she sang. You know she was sick for a long time."

"And what did you think of Patti?"

"Well, I think she is overestimated. She's good, of course, but not so great as they make out."

"And Gerster?"

"Well, she's good, too, but, after all, there's not so much difference. Of course, there might be to anyone from the country, like yourself, but to us in town they don't seem so very much above others."

"I think Patti's simply divine."

"Oh, you've heard Patti?"

"Yes, I have heard them all. I have been three times to Europe."

A dull thud rang in his ears. It was where the simply country maiden knocked out his conceit.—*San Francisco Chronicle*.

Losine Their Food Supplies.

"The most northern inhabitants of any territory belonging to the United States are rapidly dying of privations," said a signal service observer Monday who spent twenty-seven months with Lieut. Ray at Point Barrow. "Their sufferings deserve all the more sympathy because the whites are responsible for the great diminution in their food supply."

"These natives around Point Barrow now number about four hundred souls. Whales and seals are their staple articles of food. The supply used to be abundant, and the natives hardly knew what hunger was. For twenty years past, however, the coast off Point Barrow has been a favorite resort of American whalers. They have caught great numbers of whales there, and have almost exterminated them in these waters. All whalers have known for several years that it was getting unprofitable to seek for whales around Point Barrow."

"While we were there the one hundred natives in the village at Point Barrow caught only two whales. They eked out a living on eider ducks and other game obtained in the summer months. The failure of their food supply is a possibility that constantly confronts them. Every now and then they are pinched for food, and this new hardship, added to the others they already endured, is killing them fast. The population of the four villages around Point Barrow has decreased about one-third in the past fifteen years. For a little while during our stay there the natives in the village near our station were sorely pressed for food, and we helped them out as much as we could from our stores."

"These natives are a branch of the Esquimaux, and they give the ethnologists who assert that the Esquimaux all came from Asia across Behring straits a rather hard nut to crack. If their ancestors came from Asia it seems strange that the natives of to-day appear to bear no relation to the Choukchees, who live just across Behring straits in Asia. Their languages are dissimilar, and, while the Point Barrow natives hunt the reindeer, they have never domesticated them, while the wealth of the Choukchees consists in their herds of reindeer."—*New York Sun*.

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