

Criminal Operations in Doctoring Uncle Sam's Currency.

How Skillful Manipulators Derive Large Profits from Clipping, Saving, Gouging, Hoarding and Uttering Gold Pieces.

One of the many unlawful schemes to prostitute the coin of the nation has recently been suppressed by ex-Chief Drummond. It first came to my attention early last year, says a New York Herald writer. I refer to what was known as the "coin sticker," which made possible the extraction of, without discovery, part of the silver in coin. The inventor of this "coin sticker," which was an advertisement printed on paper to be pasted on coins, sold territorial rights to print and use it. The "coin sticker" cost the government a great deal of trouble and expense to suppress. On fifty cent and one dollar coins was pasted the advertisement with a paste of glue which almost defied removal, covering the inscription on the reverse of the coin, deadening the resonance and of course enabling the swindler to take out part of the silver and substitute base metal. Spurious coins of very common workmanship also passed readily with the coin sticker on them.

There is a great increase of late in the number of skillful men who are constantly studying ways and means of stealing a part of the genuine metal from our coins and substituting base metal. One of the most successful swindlers in this line was a man named Wilcox, who was recently taken into custody in Chicago by secret service officers. He made an average income of from fifty to one hundred dollars a day by clipping gold coins. By cutting a rim from around the coin, as a tire might be removed from a wheel, he took away from each twenty-dollar gold piece an amount of gold not exceeding twenty-six or twenty-nine grains in weight, or the value of one dollar. The subsequent receding of the double eagle, done with a machine, rendered it as perfect as over to the eye of the casual observer.

The apparatus was small and easily packed, and on reaching a fresh locality all that was required was a quiet room in an obscure street and a supply of gold coin. The latter he secured from the bank. He would deposit a considerable sum of money, and after awhile he would draw it out in gold. The clipped coins were passed by Mrs. Wilcox at dry goods shops mostly.

One of the most interesting processes consists in sawing a double eagle in two through the edge and gouging out the inside, so as to remove about fifteen dollars' worth of gold. Thus the piece is reduced to a hollow shell in halves. It is then filled with platinum, which is nearly as heavy as yellow metal and costs at the present market rates, though this varies, somewhat less than one-half. Lead is too light for the purpose. The cut edge of the reconstructed coin is disguised by a rim of gold soldered on, and a reeding machine renews the corrugations of the minting. The result is really a work of art, being a combination of five different metals. Only an expert can distinguish anything wrong about it.

A method somewhat similar, though less artistic, is to substitute for the interior portion of a gold piece a core in the shape of a planchet of silver. A better plan, though somewhat laborious, consists in boring into the coin from the edge so as to remove a considerable part of its internal substance. In this manner about seven dollars' worth of gold may be conveniently removed from a twenty-dollar piece, the hole being filled up with a metal composition and soldered at the opening with gold.

Fortunately for the currency, practically all the gold in circulation in the United States passes every few hours through the treasury and subtreasuries. Every piece received at those institutions is weighed, and, if found light in weight, is stamped with a big "L." Such coins are redeemed as bullion. The loss to the government by wear and tear on silver coin in circulation is considerable. It averages three cents on every dollar. Last year it amounted to \$239,593.

The people have not all become familiar with the faces of the new silver coins. The obverse and reverse of the older coins they have known so long and intimately that the draped figure of Liberty and the majestic pose of the eagle are fixed in their mind and always recognized, but the new coins, with changed designs, to which, puzzling them more, were added the Columbus souvenirs, have not yet established their identity.

The manufacturing counterfeiters, quick to discover and take advantage of whatever favors deception, almost immediately followed the government's issue of the coins of new design with their fraudulent issue in likeness of them, and reaped a rich harvest because the originals were known, but not well known.

The gilders—counterfeiters, too—saw in the new twenty-five-cent coin, if gilded, a presentable, beguiling ten-dollar piece, and pocketed a full percentage of profit until discovered. The lack of weight should, of course, and does make known the fraudulent character of the gold coin. This last, the gilders scheme to falsify coin, as it requires neither skill nor expensive plant, and promises so much for so little, is always a seductive one to the unprincipled or weak of will.

Nearly all legal papers are now typewritten, though documents are encountered now and then which have been laboriously written out by the hand of one of the counsel. The men who still cling to the habit of writing their own legal papers are usually old lawyers, often of good practice, who cannot accommodate themselves to the new order of things. Young lawyers, no matter how small their practice, manage in one way or other to obtain the services of a stenographer. Some of the older men find it practically impossible to work with a stenographer in typewritten at least.

A WHISTLING SNAKE.

It is One of the Deadliest Serpents Found in New Guinea.

The discovery of the Horn expedition to the McDowell ranges in Australia of a remarkable specimen of natural history called a "whistling snake," whose peculiarity consists in producing a whistling noise by the simple operation of drawing its fore leg across its jaw, seems at the moment to be out of the news. Sir William Macgregor, the administrator of British New Guinea, is now in the field with another extraordinary discovery—a whistling snake. In his latest report Sir William says that a large number of deaths occurred early this year in the Rigo district of New Guinea from snake bite. The administrator points out that the island is infested by a small species of black snake, which is very fierce. The natives declare that whenever a man goes near one it rushes at him, uttering sounds which they describe as resembling a whistle. "Shortly before I was at the government station," writes Sir William Macgregor, "one of these reptiles attacked the government agent, but was killed before it did any harm. A little while before a boy of fourteen years was in the bush near the station, when one of these snakes made a rush at him with the usual peculiar whistling sound. The boy thought the noise emanated from some cockatoos in a tree and began to look for them. He did not discover his mistake until he received a bite from the reptile, from which he died in a little while in great agony."

MONUMENTS OF INDIANS.

An Imperishable Memorial of the Fourth Century.

The architectural monuments of India frequently gathered a group of satellites around them, like the feudal towns called into existence by the needs of medieval castles. A solid shaft of mixed metal stands near the Kootub which dwarfs it to diminutive size.

This column, says the Chicago News, known as "the Iron Pillar," was placed in its present position by the Hindus about A. D. 315 and was erected by Pajah Dhawa, who inscribed his name upon the imperishable memorial. Another relic of Hindu monarchy remains in the "Boat Khana" or idol temple and the ruins of later date consisting of the great mosque of the Kootub, the palace and gateway of Alla-uddeen and the tombs of kings and prime ministers indicate that the vicinity of the stately minaret was revered as holy ground.

The architectural treasures which enrich the Indian peninsula are now secured from destruction or violation by the protection of the government, and schools of archaeology employ large numbers of native draughtsmen, whose accurate copies of every detail in the varied and intricate designs of palace, temple and tomb display the inexhaustible patience and subtlety of Hindu genius, which, while reflecting the influence of every dominant race, possessed sufficient inherent vitality to shape them into native mold.

The ruins of forgotten dynasties which rise on every side of the Kootub Minor transport our thoughts to the heroic age of India, when sages and warriors divided the honors of the ancient mystic land.

The woman of the Aryan race frequently fulfilled the promise of the tribal name derived from the word "Arya," or "Noble." Vedic hymns of legendary times and historical records of subsequent ages depict a higher type of womanhood than that of the later epochs, when the comparative freedom of antiquity was crushed beneath the heavy yoke of caste and creed.

A Hint for Hunters.

Seashore gunners hold that the wild goose can count two, but not three. Accordingly, it is customary in preparing to shoot wild geese from a blind or some detached ribbon of marsh for three men to row over to the station together and for two of them to return to the mainland. The geese, being unable to count above two, believe when they see two men returning that no enemy has been left upon the marsh, and approach the spot without fear. It is asserted if only two men go out and only one returns the geese will carefully avoid the region of the blind.

—Medical Examiner (for insurance company).—"You appear to be in a very weak, nervous, depressed physical condition." Applicant for insurance.—"Yes, your agents have been chinning at me for six months."

—Mother—"To think that my little Ethel should have spoken so impudently to papa to-day at dinner! She never hears me talk in that way to him." Ethel (stoutly).—"Well, but you choose him, and I didn't."—Harper's Bazar.

—Young Man (looking over hotel register).—"I see that Joshua Crawford, of Crawfishville, is stopping here. Where can I find him? He's an uncle of mine." Clerk—"I think you'll find him in the elevator; he's been riding up and down all the forenoon."

—A stationer's traveler, having had a run of bad luck in prosecuting business, received from the "boss" the following telegram: "If you can't make expenses, come home at once." The reply was: "All right. Can make plenty of expenses, but no sales."

—Domestic Bliss—"You seem very happy, Dora." Dora—"Ah, yes; I have every reason to be. We have a beautiful home, two lovely children, a snug sum in the bank, my husband's life is insured for \$20,000, and his health is very far from robust."—Life.

—"Who is that distinguished looking gentleman over there?" "That is General Airbleau, the great military man." "Ah, the great military man. I have heard of him. What battle was he in?" "What battle? I don't know, I'm sure. He's a magazine writer, you know."—Boston Herald.

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