

An Hour at the Treasury.

Secretary's Monthly for April opens with a very interesting illustrated article on a visit to the United States Treasury, from which we copy the following extracts:

"THE WATCHDOG OF THE TREASURY." Very probably he is occupied in constructing specimens of that mysterious signature which ornaments all our paper money, and to do so is a riddle more insoluble than any that the Sphinx ever propounded. Translated, it is F. E. Spinner. We observe that the pen with which it is written is of peculiar construction, and has three points, and that the ink used has the thickness and consistency of nutmeg and the blackness of Egyptian darkness, and is "spiked up" on the paper to a light of which we never see it, and which, having been seen, renders us more incredulous than the messenger information is, and the long exposure to the atmosphere in an old pitcher with a broken nose. It is astonishing, we are further told, that the number of people, principally from the country districts, who stray into the Treasury room during the course of a year, and the purpose of shaking hands with "the man who makes the funny signature," and of looking wonderingly on to see how he makes it. We are quite sure to be afflicted, unless some circumstances of an unusual disturbing nature has occurred, and the General's familiarly called, notwithstanding his reputation for the use of strong words, is really a man of uncommon good nature. Even when provoked to one of his ebullitions of righteous wrath, his back is proverbially worse than his bite, and the goodness of his heart usually leads him to make reparation for violence of language by lenity of action. So it happens that applicants for favors at his hands are sometimes told by their friends, who know the old gentleman's peculiarities, that it is a favorable circumstance that on the first presentation of their case they should be calmly received, since the chances are that after the first heat of temper has cooled, patience for undue harshness will lead him on second consideration to grant their request. Not even the General's most ardent admirers—and no man has more—will claim that he is as kind as a lamb, and even should they have the hardihood to do so, the vignette on certain fifty cent notes, of which there are many still in circulation, would furnish a complete refutation of their assertion. But, to be fair, the skin-plasters do not do him justice. There is an eagle and a grizzly bear, and a man who has been so kind as to write a letter to me, and even should they have the hardihood to do so, the vignette on certain fifty cent notes, of which there are many still in circulation, would furnish a complete refutation of their assertion. But, to be fair, the skin-plasters do not do him justice. There is an eagle and a grizzly bear, and a man who has been so kind as to write a letter to me, and even should they have the hardihood to do so, the vignette on certain fifty cent notes, of which there are many still in circulation, would furnish a complete refutation of their assertion.

"NUTRIENT NOTES." Further on we come to the room devoted to the counting of the mutilated money received by mail, for, in addition to the receipts by express, an average of one hundred packages is received each day by mail. The money so received is in much worse condition than that which comes by express, for the reason that currency which is mutilated is redeemable only by the Treasurer, and usually comes in small amounts by mail, while the various assistant treasurers, depositaries, and depository banks are agents for the redemption of currency which is tendered to them, which is forwarded by them to the Treasurer by express. The money received by mail comes in all sorts of damaged conditions, and has all imaginable kinds of horrible or ludicrous histories. Sometimes it is swallowed by a cat or a dog, which, finding a good deal of carelessness, left by itself with the salt which he had absorbed from the perspiration, until the book was forced open and the contents exposed. The green notes had an inviting and familiar appearance, and a cunning animal eagerly swallowed them and so sealed his own death warrant; or the owner, returning and seeing the wreck of the pocket-book, rightly conjectured where the money had disappeared, but the unwitting thief to death and recovered the half-digested notes. Others have been found on the bodies of drowned or murdered men, weeks previous after their death. Frequently they have been so burned that nothing remains but the charred remembrance of notes, so frail and brittle that a slight touch will change them to cinders. Sometimes a note is found in a pocket, or in a hole of the coat, and the one who has been found with it, when asked how it got there, confesses to have put it in his pocket, and says he is a thief. It is a sad condition of things when a note is found in a pocket, and the one who has been found with it, when asked how it got there, confesses to have put it in his pocket, and says he is a thief.

"Punctuality in Business." How often we have heard business men cough for dilatoriness in keeping their appointments, and how often we have heard of their dilatoriness in keeping their engagements for the delivery of goods, etc. Tailors, shoemakers, milliners, and dressmakers seem to receive the lion's share of this censure; but it is by no means confined to them, being applicable, more or less, to parties engaged in almost every branch of trade. The lack of punctuality is seemingly one of the least excusable evils to which humanity is addicted. It is astonishing, after all the bitter experiences to which people have been subjected, and the annoyances which associations, and even whole communities, have suffered through the lack of this one quality, which seems so necessary to the smooth running of the machinery of every-day life that it should receive so little attention in daily affairs. Its value cannot be estimated by a single occurrence, or one day's duration, but by its constant recognition in the innumerable transactions of a lifetime. Every man is to some extent dependent on his neighbor, but his position in life is what may be said to be the most important. It is that every engagement should be promptly met, in order that the utmost confidence may be placed in one and another. On the other hand, the failure of, or delay in the performance of his duty, in this respect, not only possibly injures others, but injures himself, and upon himself, by indulging in so pernicious a habit, the injury to his own interests is as great as to those of his neighbor. Punctuality is the utmost confidence of every one, the only reason for the lack of it in some persons is a want of energy or earnestness. They make rash promises without due consideration as to whether they can fulfill them, their procrastinating spirit makes them put off until they are unable to do. Besides being a source of continual annoyances, such persons seldom raise to any eminence in life; we lose confidence in them, and thus the reverse of eminence is generally the result in their case. This fact, together with the record of many distinguished men who have attributed their chief success to observance of punctuality, should be a caution to all to make no promises or engagements which they have not at least a reasonable prospect of fulfilling. By the observance of the latter suggestion they will establish for themselves a reputation that will be at least pleasant, and can be beneficial.

Actions of a Lifetime.

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"Jim-Jams"—How They are Affected by Low Tension Humidity. During the "late unpleasantness" in many sections occupied by the Confederates, it was impossible for thirty spirits to obtain any other preparation of the "Oh, bejovial" than Jim-Jams, rum, and even that, the deal compound was sold at ruinously high prices. In one of the interior towns of Louisiana, a young army surgeon had been stationed on post duty. Sad to say, he was not a temperate man. On the contrary, he wrestled constantly and diligently with a man until it "drove him crazy" and he had a beautiful case of "jim-jams."

Underground Telegraph Wires. A recent heavy rain followed by a severe frost in New York played great havoc with the telegraph wires. The weight of ice was so great as to cause innumerable breaks, so that the elaborate fire alarm system became useless. The wires were so broken up that communication with other cities was seriously interrupted. This has caused a re-organization of the subject of underground wires, which is justly believed, would prove of great advantage as compared with those now in use. Not only would the night telegraph be improved, but the use of our streets, but such casualties as the above, due to the weather, would be permanently averted. Professor Silliman, in a recent letter, points out some of the difficulties incident to the underground plan. He says that getting a wire to the ground is one of the greatest difficulties where it is expected to act as a ground wire, and that the action of moist earth and vegetable processes. An element also, that is to be carefully considered in carrying out a general system for underground telegraphs in cities, is the facility that would be given for relying in case of fire upon the ground wires, and that the telegraph poles are removed from our streets, but such casualties as the above, due to the weather, would be permanently averted. Professor Silliman, in a recent letter, points out some of the difficulties incident to the underground plan.

What an Old Man Has Noticed. I have noticed that all men are honest when well watched. I have noticed that purses will hold pennies as well as pounds. I have noticed that merit is always measured in the world by its success. I have noticed that in nearly all things money is the main object in view. I have noticed that in order to be a reasonable creature it is necessary at times to be downright mad. I have noticed that some men are so honest that necessity compels them to be dishonest in the end. I have noticed that silks, broad cloths and jewels are often bought with other people's money. I have noticed that whatever is left over, the left leg, and the left side of a plum pudding, and the left side of a pig, are always the best.

Quaint Legend. Junius Henri Browne contributes to the last number of the Galaxy an entertaining sketch of foreign travel "Along the Elbe," accompanied by numerous engravings illustrating the picturesque scenery and social features of Saxony. The author is much impressed in favor of Dresden, the favorite resort of American travelers as a comfortable resort. The following quaint legend from the folk lore of the country is given by the author:

In a dismal cave on the south side of the Lilienstein a troop of gnomes are wont to meet on the night of the 30th of April—the famous Walpurgis night—for the purpose of reckoning up the treasures in their keeping, and holding a mystic revel. The peasants in that region give the most implicit credence to this myth, believing that the gnomes then bring together all the precious metals they are appointed to watch over, and dance to them in gnomish glee. Some of the rustic claim to have seen ghostly fires on the rugged steep, and to have heard weird laughter and hilarity therefrom at the hour of midnight, and would make oath to this on all the oaths of heaven. A legend, to the truth of which the peasants will be sworn, is that one of their number, in the fourteenth century, was impelled by curiosity, strengthened by unflinching courage to witness the antics of the gnomes on the Walpurgis night. He clambered up the Lilienstein before dusk, and secured a favorable point of view, crept the unearthly light began. The gnomes were punctual—I have always suspected punctuality to be a supernatural vice—sembling in due season, the heaps of silver and gold, and commencing in awful mystery their golden reckonings. The mortal witness, as he afterward narrated, saw them strike the rock, from which ruddy wire flowed in streams; and this they drank in such quantities that they became human in their drunkenness. They capered, screamed, and fought, turning Walpurgis night into St. Patrick's day, and in their ferocity tore off each other's heads and arms, which at once grew on again. After they had disemboweled another twenty or thirty times all around, and with a spirit of Miltonian grandeur and generosity thoroughly embraced and increased their potations.

That all the girls used to be in love with him. That all the widows are now. That all the heroes were once. That all the old fellows are. That he wouldn't introduce a fellow who he knows his sister or his daughter. That his wife is a little jealous. That she used to be a pretty girl.

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