

UNCLE SAM'S BANK NOTES.

HOW OLD ONES ARE REDEEMED BY THE TREASURY.

The Work Done by Fifty-Seven Employees, Mostly Women—Disposing of the Redeemed Notes.

One of the most complete of the government workshops, says the Washington Star, is the national bank redemption division of the treasury department. The work done there, while of a complicated nature and requiring great accuracy, is so systematized that it runs without a hitch. Even if a mistake should occur in handling and counting the vast sums of money which constantly pass through the bureau, the system of checking and receipting is so perfected that it would be discovered in a very short time, and its origin traced almost simultaneously. The fifty-seven employees of the bureau, mostly ladies, who are locked in a long room on the west side of the building, are the ones who count and sort the old worn out bank notes, which are sent to the department for redemption. Each counter has a separate table with compartments for different notes. The casual visitor to the department gets a partial glimpse of the ladies behind the wire screens, rapidly fingering the soiled and torn money which has just been withdrawn from general circulation, but, for precautionary reasons, visitors are seldom admitted to the interior.

The bureau is in existence ten years, and the work accomplished by it is invaluable. Since its origin there has been redeemed \$1,391,494,097.15, or over twice the national bank circulation.

"What is the average life of a bank note?" asked a Star reporter of one of the officials.

"About five years," was the reply. "Of course," he added, "we have no other way of finding out than by comparing the amount annually redeemed with that in circulation, about twenty per cent. of the whole circulation being redeemed every five years. The life of the legal-tender notes, being of smaller denomination, is only about three years."

The amount of money received from year to year varies from \$60,000,000 to \$240,000,000.

A Star reporter was escorted through the division by Superintendent Rodgers, and the modus operandi was kindly explained. "Money sent here to be redeemed goes through three separate processes," said that officer. "Packages are received from banks, and just in the shape they come are taken by the counters, who give their receipts for them, to their tables, and are there sorted out by denominations. These packages, containing bills according to denomination, are turned in at night, and the next day the counters divide the bills into groups. We have fifty-two of these groups, which include all the national banks, arranged alphabetically by towns in which they are located. New York has a group of its own, and so has Boston, on account of the large number of banks located in those cities. The group packages are deposited in the vault, to be gradually withdrawn and the bills separated according to the banks of issue. This constitutes the third and last process. Bank notes which are fit are returned to the banks of issue, and a check generally given on a sub-treasury sent for those which are not fit. While the first two processes are daily, the third is of course not. The groups are taken from the vault in order, and the whole fifty-two are generally gone through with about twelve times a year. When the redemption is about \$100,000,000 in a year about seventy-five per cent. of the notes received here have to be destroyed, a very small portion proving fit to be used again. When, however, the redemption is much over the proportion of fit notes is much larger."

"I see the ladies are allowed to have comfortable seats while at work; has that always been the case?" asked the Star reporter.

"No; several years ago they were compelled to stand at these large cases and perform their work. But the constant strain from standing and from the use of the muscles of the shoulders in handling the money, was very injurious. The systematizing of the work, however, permitted changes in the manner of performing it. After five years of study in the old way a woman would be almost entirely used up."

"This book," continued Mr. Rodgers, turning to a rather small account book, "shows the workings of this division since its organization to the present day, giving the result of each day's proceedings. It is balanced daily, and from an inspection of it, the workings of the division can be seen at a glance. If a bank sends more money than is marked on a package, or not as much as marked, it is noted here. On May 9 you will see that there was a shortage of \$360. That is rather peculiar, for the package of money came from the National Metropolitan bank of New York, just a day or so before it suspended. The officers of the bank must have received the letter from the department noting the mistake on the very morning of suspension, but I guess they were too busy with more important matters to pay any attention to it. That was the fourth time that there were large shortages in the packages from that bank in the past ten years, but every time before the bank would not own the mistake, but insisted that the trouble was in this office. Very often banks send more money than they mark on the packages. In fact the 'overs' have exceeded the 'shorts,' amounting to \$170,800, and the 'shorts' to \$135,800. In the same ten years \$41,900 in counterfeit notes has been discovered."

"Is it possible for an employe to extract a note and take it home," asked the Star man.

"Yes, it is possible, but not at all probable. If it should be done a mistake would be discovered by means of the checks and receipts, and the point of disagreement be soon located. Of course, if the clerks were inclined to steal, they would be apt to take from an 'over' package, but a mistake of that character is often discovered at home and reported here before we can inform the bank. We can point to the fact of the 'overs' exceeding the 'shorts,' as a general proof of the honesty of the bureau."

"Of course everybody knows what becomes of the redeemed notes. The banknotes are macerated in the basement of the treasury in the presence of a committee. The United States notes are similarly disposed of at the bureau of engraving and printing. The pulp which remains is often made into ornaments of different designs and sold by private parties to curiosity-seekers. The fact that each ornament contains the remains of thousands of dollars is its main attraction. The pulp is sometimes made into paper, but only the coarsest kind can be made—in fact, not so good even as formerly, when the notes were printed upon better material than now."

SELECT SIFTINGS.

In Japan the sandals are left outside of the house.

The sturgeon fishermen in Winnebago Lake use lines six miles long, and use 20,000 hooks on a line.

The guanaco of Patagonia is described as having the head of a camel, the body of a deer, wool of a sheep and the neigh of a horse.

In Madagascar the crocodile is sacred, and is seldom destroyed by the inhabitants, although it frequently kills cattle and human beings.

The register of Hyde Abbey, Winchester, written in the reign of Canute, is still in existence, and forms part of the Ashburnham collection.

A cure has been discovered in South America for elephantiasis. It is to eat the flesh of a turkey-buzzard—a bird so loathsome that starving people have been known to refuse it when offered as a dish.

Charles II. was fond of music, but only of that in which the time was very marked. In consequence the sacred music written for the Chapel Royal in his day sounds as if meant for the ball-room.

The name and title of Fortescue came from the conduct of the ancestor of the house, who protected William I. with his shield at Hastings, and thence acquired the name Fort-escue, or strong-shield.

A tenant in a house at the east end of London, that last refuge of poverty, recently testified before a charitable committee to having taken twenty-two thickens of paper off the walls of a room, preparatory to repapering it.

The eaju is a Brazilian fruit which has some curious properties. The seed grows outside the fruit, and is encased in a pulpy covering filled with a very powerful acid capable of blistering the skin. When the seed is roasted it is edible, but the smoke which arises from the roasting irritates the skin, and, if it enters the eye, destroys the sight.

SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

The rays of the electric light, which are injurious to vegetation, may be withheld by transparent glass.

Steel tubes are found to retain twice as much magnetism as steel rods, and are therefore better for permanent magnets.

The average life of a locomotive is thirty years, during which one, if in active use, will travel about 700,000 miles.

A process has been discovered by which artificial ivory can be made from the bones of sheep and goats and the waste of white skins.

It is now said that the substitution of iron for wooden sleepers on railways is only a question of time. The change has already made considerable progress in Germany.

It has recently been proposed to prevent petroleum fires by placing a bottle of ammonia in each barrel of the oil; on ignition, by accident or otherwise, the bottle would break, and the effect of the ammoniacal vapors would be to extinguish the fires.

Among the 20,000 articles of bronze belonging to the lake dwellers so far found in Switzerland about thirty per cent. are rings, seventeen per cent. bracelets, four per cent. knives, three per cent. needles, 0.4 per cent. hammers and 0.2 per cent. fibulae.

Dried leaves of the bitter-orange tree are much used by the inhabitants of South America as a household remedy. An infusion of the leaves is regarded in Brazil as a specific for sick headache, flatulence, indigestion, hysteria, spasms, recent colds, and chills and fever. Its free use is considered to promote perspiration.

A Live Fly Catcher.

"Of what earthly use is a toad?" a naturalist was asked.

"It is a very useful animal about the house. There isn't a better fly catcher. I trained a toad once, and kept it in my room. Its place was on the window bench, and it was my diversion to see it catch flies. If a fly came near it it does with its tongue, they would be invincible. Its aim is as unerring as its glance. Its tongue is made so that it can shoot it out nearly two inches. It is so short that it sears a fly as upon the point of a needle, and it is done as quick as a man can wink. It requires very great attention to see the operation."

"How do they live in the winter?"

"Toads crawl into a crack in the earth or bury themselves in mud. There are numerous stories about the length of time they can live without food or air. Mr. Buckland's experiments showed that they could live two years, so that we must conclude the legends of the discovery in the bowels of the earth of toads that possibly lived before Noah are misleading. They certainly get a modicum of air in their hiding places. There is no trustworthy account of a live geological toad. There are toads found in stones, but they are merely housed up in a solid coat of sun-baked clay, which on the exterior seems as hard as a stone, but which, in all probability, contains some fissure invisible to the naked eye, through which it gets air and drink."

"The toad is occasionally found concealed in a knot of a tree, where it has been wholly locked up from air. It has the power of contracting its body and swelling it to twice its natural size. It certainly can live in a greater state of torpidity than almost any other animal, and, being born a tadpole, it is likely to be carried in the water to very extraordinary places."

"Does it have any cry?"

"Yes; curiously enough, it has a cry that sounds like an infant screaming under a pillow. Its utterance is strangely human, but it comes forth only when it is injured or frightened."—New York Sun.

Health Hints.

The Medical Summary recommends the external use of buttermilk to ladies who are exposed to tan or freckles.

Spirits of camphor and starch applied to a burn will extract the fire and give speedy relief. The starch should be kept moistened with the camphor.

Rhigoline spray is recommended in the treatment of neuralgia, especially of the portia duo of the seventh nerve. It is said to give almost instantaneous relief, and in some cases to effect a complete cure. Its action is explained on the supposition that the intense cold effects a radical change in the nutrition of the nerve.

In one dozen cases of poisoning from the bite of the rattlesnake, iodine proved curative, given in one or two drop doses of the tincture every hour, according to the severity of the case. In one instance, where the patient was swollen terribly, mottled spots appearing over the entire body, breathing with great difficulty, and apparently near death, four drops of iodine were given every hour, with entire recovery.

There is nothing new in saying that lemon juice is good for malaria; or, in other words, that it is useful to combat intermittent fever by the victims of that disease. A French medical journal recommends a decoction of the fresh lemon, that is, a lemon cut into slices and boiled in a new earthen pot, making, practically, a lemon tea. It is to be given four hours before the fever, and is said to be as serviceable as quinine, without having any of its ill effects.—Dr. Foste's Health Monthly.

Tae Bursting Force of a Boiler.

Few people conceive how powerful is the force imprisoned in the interior of a steam boiler when in active operation. The steam gauge shows a pressure of perhaps 100 pounds per square inch, and the uninitiated spectator who works or walks carelessly beside the apparatus, may imagine that 100 pounds represents the force with which its fragments would be propelled in case of an explosion. But the whole force of the live steam in a boiler is equivalent to the area of the internal surface of the boiler multiplied by the pressure per square inch.

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Pittsfield, Mass., July 31, 1894.

Dr. David Kennedy, Rondout, N. Y.

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