

THE NAMES OF COINS.

The florin, one of the most famous of modern coins, originated in Florence. Some say that it gave the name to the city, while others assert that it was so called because it had on it a fleur-de-lis, from the Italian florone, or "flower," for the same reason that an English silver piece is called a "crown," or certain gold pieces in France indifferently a "Napoleon" or a "Louis," or the \$10 gold piece in America an "eagle."

For several hundred years, and down to these pieces is, like the American dollar, divided into 100 parts, called kopeck in Russia, pfennig in Germany, kreutzer in Austria, cent in Holland, and in Italy, France and Spain by the word meaning hundredth.

The word shilling is of German derivation, like penny, which comes from the German "pfennig." The word "crown" comes from the image placed on the coin. The name franc was given by King John, who first coined these pieces in 1360.

They bore the motto "Le Roi Frank" (King of the Franks), and were of two kinds, one representing the king on horseback, the other on foot.

The franc was formerly also called livre (pound), though the connection with any special weight is not evident. The name of the German coin, mark, meaning a recent date, money was coined at from twenty-five to thirty different cities in France, that had inherited the privilege. Now all French money is coined at the Paris mint.

Few French gold pieces are, however, in circulation, except those bearing the head of Napoleon III., and silver pieces of the same coinage are almost as common. French silver coins wear admirably, and pieces of the reign of Charles X., Louis XVIII. and Napoleon I. are very common.

The standard coins on the Continent are:—In France, the franc; in Spain, the peseta; in Italy, the lire; in Holland and Austria, the florin; in Germany, the mark; in Russia, the ruble.

Belgium and Switzerland use the French name for the piece of 20 tons. Each of weight of 8 ounces, was formerly in general use in Europe.

The name of the Italian coin that corresponds with the franc (lira) also means pound. The coins in present use in Spain have their names from other sources. The five-peseta piece, which corresponds with the American dollar, is called escudo (shield).

"Peseta," the name of the small coin representing the monetary standard, means simply "little piece." "Ruble" is from the word meaning "to cut," and was so called because originally the coin was made with an ornamental edge.

Few persons have ever troubled themselves to think of the derivation of the word dollar. It is from the word thal (valley), and came into use in this way about 300 years ago. There is a little silver mining city in Northern Bohemia called Joachimsthal, or Joachim's Valley.

The reigning duke of the region authorized this city in the sixteenth century to coin a silver piece, which was called "Joachimthaler." The word "joachim" was soon dropped, and the name "thaler" only retained.

The piece went into general use in Ger-

many and Denmark, where the orthography was changed to "daler," whence it came into English, and was adopted by the Americans with still further changes in the spelling. The Mexican dollar is generally called "plastre" in France, and the name is sometimes applied to the United States dollar.

The appellation is incorrect in either case, for the word plaster or plastre has for the last fifty years been only applied with correctness to a small silver coin used in Turkey or Egypt, which is worth from 5c to 8c.

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