

This is a novel form of destruction that falls to the lot of the money-making establishment's blacksmiths at the end of each calendar year, and is the only sure way of preventing the wily counterfeiter from making spurious coin without regard to date. The dies of the Mint are the stamps that imprint on the coin all that fancy business that, when rubbed off by time, gives the street car conductor a chance to insult the holder by refusing to accept it. For instance, it stamps on the dollar the face of the beautiful lady encircled by stars and makes a strong contrast on the other side by printing a game looking eagle perched on arrows under "In God we trust."

The die is a little round chunk of steel about three inches long, sloping off at the top, which makes it look like a miniature milkman's can without handles. On the top of it is cut the face of the coin it manufactures, with the date of the year, and something to think about when you look at them is that the die of a penny costs the government no less than the die that makes precious the \$20 gold piece. Coiner Steel, of the mint, signed the death warrant of the old year's dies. It meant the destruction of a thousand of 1887's money-makers. Every stamp, from double eagles to dollars in gold, from dollars to ten-cent pieces in silver, the fives in nickle and the pennies in copper were doomed.

The place of execution was the gloomy shop in the basement weirdly lit by hungry fire-light. At 9.30 o'clock the dies were taken from their cells upstairs and conveyed thither in black coffin-like pans. Coined gold jingled merrily on all sides as the procession passed. What regret had gold for the steel that gave it power to ruin souls? So the dies of '87 passed to their fate unwept.

The little coiners of big money were first sacrificed. The dies of gold were flung by handfuls into the flames. There they lay until the steel grew red and the face of Columbia blushed crimson. They were not taken out by hand, but with iron tongs, and placed rightend upward

on the anvils. Then the smithy raised his sledge hammer aloft and struck each one full in the face. A shower of sparks, a smashed sound and the agony was over. The ring of the steel had gone, the face vanished like magic and the die of the past was but crushed unshapely metal.—*Philadelphia Press.*

### Curious Postage Stamps.

AMONG the issues of postage stamps by foreign countries there is none more curious within recent years than the new issue of Madagascar—three and one-fourth inches long by two and one-half inches wide—and none that will be more eagerly sought by collectors. There are eight in all, ranging in value from 1d. to 2s. They are issued by England, for letters mailed at the British Consulate in Antananarido, and gummed only in the corner.

The letters are sent to Mauritius, where the Malagassy stamp is removed and kept for a voucher and the Mauritius stamp substituted. The Peruvian government announces its intention to redeem all outstanding surcharged stamps and use only the new issue (1 purple, 2 green, 50 rem, 1 sol br.), to which a 20 blue is to be added. Paraguay is having a 1 green and 2 vermillion, similar to 1884, printed in Buenos Ayres.

The United States of Colombia have issued a hideous 10 yellow, with the head of President Nunez. A complete new issue is announced. Antequia has issued a new set—1 green, 2½d. bl. on yel. and 5 blue—similar to last year's. Shanghai rejoices in a new issue, 40, 80 and 100 cash. Tobago has surcharged its 2½d. blue with 1½d. in black, and St. Kitts the 6d. green with 4d. black.—*American Stationer.*

Can any reader give us information concerning the above stamps?—*Editor.*

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