

STRANGE COINS.

Tokens of Value Collected from Far Corners of the Earth.

[From the Halifax "Mail."]

IN a bag lie various uncoined symbols of value. Here are the silver lumps, bullet shaped, called "tekal" current in Siam; and the white cowrie shells used in Africa; and the rings of gold and silver which are common currency of Nubia; and the pieces of iron named "hashhash," like semicircular knives, used in Oordofan; and bits of coarse cotton, called "freigat," which are equivalent to 60 pieces of "hashhash," and the beads and blocks of salt used in Abyssinia; and the fish-hook money, made of pieces of silver wire, still current in China.

"Don't overlook this tenpenny bank token," says Mr. Avery. "It is Irish." The Irish coins mostly resemble the English. Those of Henry VIII. have the arms of England and the Irish harp crowned between the initials of Henry and his queen. Then comes the Ormonde money, having its weight stamped in Irish numerals. But the most remarkable Irish coins are the pieces named "gun money," struck out of cannon melted down by James II. before the last struggle for his forfeited throne. There is also a crown in white metal with the king on horse back. This last is scarce, but the specimens of the "gun money" are common.

"Here," continues Mr. Avery, "is a specimen of the constitutional currency of France. It is a sou of 1792, showing the head of Louis XVI., with the inscription, 'Le loi, le roi, la nation.'"

It is of bell metal, made during the revolution from the bells of the demolished churches. It jingles out of the bag with a 5 franc piece of "Napoleon, Empereur" and "Dieu protege la France" on the edge, and a piece of 5 lire marked "Napoleone imperatore e re," with "Dio protegge l'Italia" on the edge. The Italian coin shows the conqueror in the flush of his conquests; the French coin brings him under the shadow of Waterloo. In the one he is serene and proud; in the other his face is full of care.

Then Mr. Avery opens another bag. The coins that tumble out are "joes" and "half joes" of Brazil, Bolivian dollars, with the bust of Bolivar and the motto

"Libre par la Constitution," doubloons of the Argentine Republic from the mint of Rioja, seals celebrating the independence of Chili in 1817, Spanish dollars cut into "bits" for use in the West Indies, copper coins of Petion, Loyer and other rulers of Hayti, a 10-livres piece from Mauritius, the home of Paul and Virginia, a coin of the American Colonization society of Liberia showing a negro welcoming the arrival of a vessel, Arabic coins marked with the date of the hegra (A. D. 587) and of the Sultan's reign, macutas from Guinea, a pistaren of Ferdinand of Spain, siege pieces or necessity money struck during the incursion of Napoleon into Spain, guilfers from Zealand, stivers from Holland, crowns from Belgium, a brass counter from China with a square hole in the centre, a scudo of Pope Pius VII., a bajocco of Pope Pius IX., a gold mohur from Calcutta, a pagoda of the East India Co., a Turkish piastre, a Bank of England dollar, a Tuscan florin, a Russian ruble.

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—There being 3000 women in charge of postoffices in this country, the serious question arises whether to call them postmasters or postmistresses. The former, by all means. It is the proper mail appellation.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

—Jules Verne beaten. The performance of Jules Verne's here, who went round the world in eighty days, has been surpassed by an English post card which has just returned from its interesting travels.

It was mailed by a gentleman on October 10th to a friend in Hong Kong, by way of the United States and Yokohama, and reached Hong Kong on November 23rd., when it was re-directed to London by way of Brindisi. It was despatched on November 25th. and reached the original owner on Monday morning—that is, within seventy-five days from the start.—London Telegram, Dec. 26th