UNCLE SAM'S STRONG-BOX.

WHERE HE KEEPS HIS GOLD—THE SUB-TREASURY BUILDING AT NEW YORK

[From the New York Evening Gazette.]

THE beautiful marble building on Wall street, known as the United States Sub-Treasury, with its collonnade of lofty pillars and flight of stone steps, which thousands of men daily pass, while others throng it, contains much which is of deep interest to those who care about the financial condition of the country or the manner in which it looks after its money matters. Having seen the immense stock on hand of bags of gold which Uncle Sam possesses, we go away vividly impressed with the depth of his pocket and the vastness of his riches; we feel like congratulating ourselves upon holding so near a relationship to such a wealthy uncle, when a grave looking clerk meets us and shaking his head dissipates our smile by remarking: "It is not what he possesses, but what he owes!" Entering the beautiful building from Wall street, and stepping into the vestibule of the rotunda, we pass upon the right into what is known as one of the borne rooms, the office of the Deputy Treasurer, and in the left that of the Assistant Treasurer.

These are good-sized rooms, neatly fitted up, and are occupied by their respective officials. A wide aisle runs from the Wall street entrance of the rotunda directly across the rear of the building. Upon the Eastern side of the aisle is the receiving department of the Treasury where all the moneys which are due to the United States are paid in; upon the west side is the paying department, where the United States settles its bills.

The department of the Treasury over which Hon. Henry H. Van Dyck presides as Assistant Treasurer is divided into seven bureaus, which are as follow: The Paying Bureau, the Gold Note, the Receiving, the Interest, the Conversion, the Internal Revenue, and the Fractional Currency Bureau.

The Paying Bureau occupies the western portion of the rotunda, and is presided over by Mr. W. Hawkins Ferris as cashier. The average number of payments made in this Department per diem of six hours, from nine o'clock in the morning, until three o'clock p.m., is one thousand, and the sum paid out per year amounts to about five millions of dollars. We find in this room the Cashier's desk, that of the Paying Teller and those whose business it is to make payments of temporary loans, beside the Book keeping Department. People are constantly presenting themselves at the counter in the rotunda with their orders and demands upon the Government, which are as constantly being cashed. In Jackson's time when the Treasury was in the old United States Bank but seven men were employed to do its business; now it requires more than ten times that number, something like seventy-seven being required to consummate its transactions.

The gold metre bureau, in charge of Mr. Edward H. Birdsall, who has been in his position since 1847, is one of the most interesting to the general reader in the whole building. The average amount of coin received per day is three hundred thousand dollars, which amounts in a year to about one hundred millions of dollars. The coin department, or "gold-room" as it is called, where the money is received, examined, assorted, and put up into bags ready to be deposited in the vaults, is in the Pine street end of the building cornering on Nassau street, and back of the rotunda. Here all the gold which is taken from customs is paid in—the custom houses along the Canadian frontier making their returns to the Treasury in this city.

Banks send in their gold to be deposited, and get in return gold certificates, which are issued by the Treasury. These gold certificates are very handsome pieces of workmanship, manufactured at Washington, representing on their face the value of five thousand dollars while the backs are printed in a beautiful design of golden yellow. These certificates are the medium of circulation upon the street, and, as they represent so much gold which is on actual deposit in the vaults of the Treasury, they rise and fall in value the same as gold. At present there are $23,850,000 worth of these certificates in circulation.

In the gold room we were shown some very cleverly executed counterfeit coins. It seems the rogues have made much improvement in this art of late years, and have been able to perfect it to such a degree that mechanical means for detecting the cheat are no longer of use. If the coin is put upon the scales the weight is found to be perfect; if its size is measured, that also is exact; if it is thrown upon the counter, the genuine metallic ring is present—the peculiar look or appearance of the coin is its only vulnerable point, and this does not escape the eye of the detective. Besides Mr. Birdsall there are five men in the coin department who can detect a coin which is counterfeit or has been tampered with, by its looks.

There is quite a difference in the color of genuine coins of various issues. The gold of California contains a quantity of silver, and when the discovery of gold was made the United States had not perfected an apparatus for removing the silver from it—the result was the coins were struck at the mint with the silver in them, and therefore they present a paler and whiter appearance. The coins which are now struck are nearly pure gold containing much alloy and of a brighter appearance: others come into the Treasury stained various tints, but all the genuine ones possess a peculiar polished look which is given to them at the mint—the surface looks hard and smooth like glass. A coin which has been cut open and filled with some other metal has to go through a process of heating before it can be put together again.

This heating destroys the genuine polished look of the money, and gives it a soft, mellow, or burnished appearance. Unless the coin is cut into, this is the only difference which can be detected. Such pieces as these may circulate for years upon the street and among the banks, but the moment it gets into the Treasury its character is determined. At the Bank of England a machine is in use with a large hopper into which a bag of gold is poured, when all the sheep are separated from the goats, the good coins falling into one box, and the counterfeit into another. This is applying a mechanical test, but in the United States it would not work, for the counterfeiters are too clever to be caught in that way.

There is more counterfeit gold coin in existence than most people suspect; some days as much as fifty dollars are detected at the Treasury, other days only five dollars will be found. The counterfeiter holds a twenty dollar gold piece, we will say, and saws the face of the coin from the back, removing about five dollars worth of gold in the operation; he then takes a piece of platinum, nearly the size of the twenty dollar piece and putting it between the two faces of the coin, brings the edges nicely together, and with delicate tools perfects the milling. This is the neatest trick done and the most successful. A collection of these coins which have been tampered with has been made recently for the benefit of the Bank of England.

When the gold comes to the coin room, pieces of different denominations are mixed; these are all assorted, and put up in bags by themselves—five thousand dollars worth in each bag. The bags are seamless, made of linen, and look as if they would hold from three pints to two quarts of peas. Formerly the gold coins were separated by hand, a very tedious process. When Cobb was Secretary of the Treasury, he told the Assistant in this city that the Government had on hand five millions of gold dollars, two millions of which were the first issue of small dollars and three millions were of more recent issue of the flat, and somewhat larger gold dollars, but they were all mixed together. If they could be separated, or if the Assistant was willing to undertake the job, he might have the issue of small dollars melted up and coined over into a large and more convenient size. Secretary Cobb supposed the job would be declined, and thought it a good joke. It would seem an almost endless task to assort all this five millions of gold dollars by hand, when each issue was so nearly of a size. But the job was easily accomplished; a series of sieves was invented with holes in the bottom just large enough to let the smallest dollar pieces through: it took but a short time to sift this heap of money, as the housewife does her meal. All the gold coin which now comes into the treasury is separated in this way, the largest pieces remaining behind in the first sieve, and so on through the series.

There is a desk in the gold room where a register of the gold certificates is kept. There are also four pair of nicely adjusted scales standing upon the counter, one pair having been in use for twenty years, and remaining as good to-day as when it was bought. After five thousand dollars' worth of gold has been counted out it is put into one scale dish, and the same amount into the other dish. If they weigh exactly alike it is called "proving," and the beam of the scale balances. If one piece should be missing out of the five thousand, supposing they are all dollar pieces, the scales detect the loss instantly, and the fact is made known that a mistake is made in the counting. The small linen bags having been filled with gold, they are put upon a car and wheeled into the vaults.

There are two immense vaults in the treasury on the same floor with the rotunda, but back and each side of it, occupying nearly a central position in the building. It is almost impossible to describe these, and one is quite overcome when he reflects upon their unequalled strength, and the immense amount of money which they contain. One hundred and five millions of dollars is the amount now in the treasury, and all this our eyes have seen in one vast pile! Sixteen bunches of greenbacks, not nearly so large as Webster's dictionary, nor near so heavy, each containing one million of dollars, were simply stowed away in a strong box.

There isn't the least chance for a burglar to pick the pockets of the United States. He might spend his whole life in the vain attempt to find the lock for the first door of the vault, and after he had obtained it he could make no use of it. 'Tis true as a *Gazette* man, we walked in and out without the least difficulty, and for the fun of the thing playfully stuck a million or so into our coat pocket, that we might say we once had that amount there, which is more than most people can record of themselves. When we left the vault we left our pocket money behind—for, alas! we could not pass the door with it in our possession. How the vaults look, and the best way to get into them, will be fully explained hereafter.

BUTTER MAKING—*Cleanliness Imperative.*—It is a most noticeable fact that a great deal of the butter brought to our local market is far from being good. Westminster Township furnishes the largest proportion of really good butter. When in Devonshire, some few years since, we visited several large dairies, and observed that not only were the dairy houses and utensils kept scrupulously clean and well supplied with pure spring water, but also that the cows' udders were washed before milking in the morning, and that the dairy maids had clean hands. Glass or glazed milk pans are to be preferred to metal; they should be washed first in boiling hot water, with a piece of muslin on the end of a stick—afterwards rinsed in clear spring water, and allowed to dry without being touched by a cloth of any kind. The milk should be strained into the pans through fine muslin. Cream should not be allowed to accumulate till it turns sour, as is too often the case. It is better to churn every other day, if really good butter is desired; the cream should be at a temperature of 55° to 60° when the butter comes, and the buttermilk should be worked out thoroughly with a wooden spoon and clean, cold, spring water; the hands should never come in contact with the butter or cream during any part of the process. Another evil is that too much salt—and that often of bad quality—is added. For fresh butter, in rolls, make a mixture of one pound of the finest dairy salt, pounded fine, with four ounces of pulverized loaf sugar. One ounce of this mixture is sufficient to add to each pound of butter. The cream should be taken off the milk before it turns sour. Butter, to be really good, should be entirely divested of milk; firm, free from streaks or specks when cut; taste rich, marrowy, and rather sweet, having that peculiar fragrance of smell that is only found in well-made butter; the colour of a creamy yellow, though it often happens that really good butter may be of a yellower colour than usual in summer, or when carrots are fed to the cows in winter or spring.

Black-band iron, recently discovered in Pennsylvania and traced over one hundred miles, has hitherto been almost exclusively imported from Scotland.

The United States Boot and Shoe Trade.

The *Shoe and Leather Reporter*, says of the New York market:—

It is with pleasure that we this week record a decided improvement in this branch of trade. The doubts and fears which have hitherto held back the numerous buyers from all parts of the country now represented among us, have in a great measure disappeared with the incoming of such really pleasant weather, and although the consideration of the reconstruction question has still further postponed the tariff and revenue bills before Congress, buyers have taken the philosophical view that the people were not to go barefoot in consequence and so the spring trade may be considered to have fairly opened at last. We do not hear of any noticeable changes in prices, but for the very best goods the figures obtained are fully equal to those which ruled at the close of the fall business; for poor work and inferior qualities of goods the rates are not up to the prices ruling at that time, and the accumulation of this kind of stock in the market, will have a depressing influence for some time yet. At the auction houses, the bidding is more spirited, and prices more satisfactory than at any previous time this year.

It also thus refers to the Boston trade:—

There has been some improvement in the trade the latter part of the week as regards the quantity of goods disposed of, but little or none in prices, which continue depressed and unremunerative to manufacturers. Buyers are here from all the principal cities of the West, and seem inclined to purchase a fair stock of goods but the field of operation being extended to the neighboring towns more than formerly, their presence is not so noticeable to the trade of the city. The surplus of goods in the market is gradually being worked off, and as the stock of any particular kind decreases the price improves. Competition in selling is very strong and some manufacturers who find they cannot dispose of their goods on hand at a profit, immediately commence making an inferior quality in order to promote sales for the time being. This policy we trust will not be generally adopted as it would end in placing the Eastern market at the rear instead of as heretofore at the head of the markets for furnishing the country with boots and shoes.

THE NEW ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH SCHEME.—The prospectus of the British and American Telegraph Company (Limited) is issued. The object is "to establish a cheap telegraphic communication between London and New York, by submarine lines from Falmouth to Halifax, Nova Scotia, thus organising direct communication between Great Britain, the Canadas, and America generally, and entirely avoiding the land lines through Newfoundland, which have already been the cause of such frequent interruption to the telegraphic communication between the two continents." A capital of £600,000 is estimated to be sufficient to complete the communication to Halifax, and the promoters lay stress upon the advantage they will possess in being able to adopt a much lower tariff than that fixed by the Atlantic Telegraph Company. The company propose to adopt the cable and system of telegraphy patented by Mr. Allan, which, they say, "effects a saving of about one-third on cost of construction, with extra working powers." The capital is fixed for the present at £600,000, in 30,000 shares of £20 each, "of which 10,000 shares fully paid up are to be taken in part payment of the contract for the manufacture of the cable." Amongst the directors are Sir David Brewster, the Attorney-General for Nova Scotia, the President of the Executive Council of New Brunswick, the Canadian Secretary of State, the United States Consul in London, &c.

RAILROAD RACING.—The St. Catherine's *Post* says: —An instance of the culpable recklessness of life, too often displayed on American railroads, came under the notice of a friend of ours who lately had occasion to travel on the New York and Erie Railroad. This line runs parallel with the New York Central for the distance of about 10 miles, between the towns of Avon and Batavia, the lines being comparatively close to each other. Shortly after the train had left the former town the speed at which it was travelling was suddenly increased, and he noticed a train on the other road going at a similarly dangerous rate, which seemed to occasion quite an excitement among the passengers. Upon inquiring what was taking place, he was coolly informed that a race was going on between the trains, both of which continued to dash forward at full speed as long as they remained in sight of each other. Our informant understood that races of this description are of every day occurrence at this point. No wonder we read of numerous accidents on American Railways.

Secretary McCulloch has written to the Collector of Customs at Chicago, as follows:—

"In reply to your letter of the 8th inst., I have to instruct you to so far modify the instructions heretofore given, as to grant special permits to unlade in the night time, to all American vessels, arriving from American ports or places, on the Northern, Northeastern, and Northwestern frontiers, upon the master of any such vessel taking and subscribing to the following oath:—This is to the effect that he did not touch at or enter any port or place within the British Provinces, on the Northern, Northeastern and Northwestern frontiers, for any purpose whatever.

CRANBERRY CROP OF HARWICH, MASS.—The number of barrels of cranberries raised and sold in Harwich last year, was 5,115, and the price received for them $52,072.