

# The Evening Times-Star

SECOND SECTION

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PAGES NINE TO SIXTEEN

ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1923

SIXTEEN PAGES

## For First Time, in Royal Mint, Employee Caught at Roguery

### TURNED OUT HALF CROWNS AT NIGHT

Bowie was So Trusted That He Had Master Key.

IS SENT TO PRISON

Capture Effected Through Keenness of Employee in Post Office.

London, Dec. 14.—For the first time in the history of the Royal Mint, so far as is known, a trusted employee has made use of his position to counterfeit coin of the realm with Government machinery.

As is well known, the most elaborate precautions are taken to prevent any servant betraying the implicit confidence reposed in him.

Everything is carefully scheduled. Metals to be turned into coins are weighed when issued to the workmen, re-weighed on their return; every operation is checked and re-checked in order to detect any dishonesty.

And yet, despite this, one of the old servants of the mint, who, by reason of his apparent fidelity, had been entrusted with a master key, contrived to circumvent the regulations.

Though certain suspicious incidents had been reported to the mint, nothing definite transpired. And, curious to relate, it was a sharp-eyed post office clerk who revealed the illicit traffic in which the man was engaged. It was but a little thing that brought him to justice and to a sentence for his first conviction.

For 20 years, the dishonest official, Francis Bowie, served in the mint. Fourteen years of that time he was continuously on service, and for the remainder he was attached to the Royal Fleet Reserve. His good conduct earned for him a pension, and some time after his discharge his credentials secured him employment at the mint. That was in 1911, and three years afterwards, so exemplary was Bowie's conduct, he was promoted the permanent staff as a full civil servant.

**Gets Master Key**

He gradually worked his way up, until he became a head messenger, and was given a master key, which gave him access to most of the rooms in the mint.

By reason of his intimate knowledge of the mint, he was familiar with the necessary and varied processes through which coins intended for circulation pass. It should be explained that in the first instance out of sheets of silver of varying thicknesses, according to the size and value, are stamped what are technically known as "blanks." These are just a shade larger than the finished product, and the "blanks," as originally produced, are silver in color. Before these shining discs can be formed into passable coins they are subjected to a certain chemical action the metal so that when the "blanks," which changes the color to a brownish hue. This process is adopted to "soften" have been again polished and are placed in an electrically-driven machine they take the impression of the dies better, and the milling comes out perfect.

**How He Worked**

At night the current which drives the many machines is switched off, and each fly-wheel, which weighs a quarter of a ton, is chained and padlocked in order to prevent any unauthorized interference. Bowie managed to secure possession of a number of sheets of silver "blanks" which had been "softened" and leaving home exceptionally early, he went to the mint, and with the aid of his master-key, obtained access to the press-room. Here he severed the chain attached to the fly-wheel of one of the machines, inserted his "blanks," and by hand power, struck 25 spurious half-crowns. His lack of practical experience somewhat disappointed him, for the counterfeits were faint in their impressions on the obverse, and the milling, too, was faulty. Bowie soon showed readiness and resource. Some of the dull colored coins were specially brightened with sulphuric acid found on the premises, of which he provided himself with a generous supply, and the milling marks were improved by the application of a file.

Some of the coins were uttered in the City of London and Bowie showed an ingenious turn of mind for realising on his ill-gotten gains. He walked into the post office at Liverpool street station and asked for a postal order, placing on the counter four coins. The observant clerk noticed that two of the coins appeared to have a very flat or worn appearance on the tail side though dated 1923.

"Two of these coins are bad," he remarked to Bowie.

"I think not," replied that individual. "In any case, I know where I got them from, and I will take them back. Give them to me."

But the clerk had his suspicions about the matter. He refused to hand over the coins, and instead called one of the railway police officers and gave Bowie into custody on a charge of uttering counterfeit coins.

He was found guilty and given a prison sentence.

### KILLS HUSBAND; WAS JEALOUS

Wife Shoots Him at Breakfast and Runs to the Street.

New York, Dec. 14.—As Irving Gross, 25, a post office clerk, and his wife, Elsie, also 25, sat at breakfast in their third floor apartment at 155 Audubon avenue, the young woman had a .32 calibre revolver concealed in her dress. Directly after her husband had finished breakfast and before he had risen from his chair, she raised the revolver and shot him twice.

"I killed him because I loved him," she cried when Patrolman Salvatore Mirabello arrested her in the street before the door of the apartment house.

When arraigned before Magistrate House in Homicide Court Mrs. Gross was still hysterical. She was arraigned on a short affidavit charging suspicion of homicide, sworn out by Patrolman Mirabello. She was held without bail for examination and was locked up in Tombs Prison.

According to Morgan A. Jones, Assistant District Attorney, Mrs. Gross admitted to the police that she had done the shooting, but later told conflicting stories, in which she referred to a struggle between her husband and herself in which he grasped her arm to get possession of the weapon, thus causing its explosion. This does not explain, however, how the second shot was fired.

Policeman Mirabello said he was walking down the street not far from the apartment house when he heard the shots. He could not tell the direction, but he began a search, looking into hallways as he passed until he came to the house at 155. Mrs. Gross rushed out the door, crying that she had killed her husband. He pushed her back into

### "BABY" OF NEXT CONGRESS



This shows Representative Lester Hill of Alabama, said to be the youngest member of the next Congress. He is 28, and is shown being welcomed to Washington by employees of the Capitol.

the hallway, where he demanded her pistol. She gave it to him, and he says she cried: "He didn't love me! He didn't love me enough!"

Relatives of Gross say his wife had repeatedly threatened his life in a long standing quarrel over "another woman." Gross worked from 4 in the afternoon to midnight in the Bush Terminal branch of the post office, and was an instructor in the Earl Liederman Physical Education Gymnasium at 805 Broadway from 7 a. m. until 8 p. m.

**A Mean Insultation.**

Alice—I don't think he knows enough to propose.

Edith—What if you should hear that he and I are engaged?

Alice—Well, my opinion would still be the same.

### JACK BENTLEY TO GET IN CONDITION

Means to Show Manager McGraw He was Worth \$72,500.

New York, Dec. 14.—Jack Bentley, the pitcher John McGraw paid Baltimore \$72,500 for, means to show McGraw he's worth it.

After a sort of indifferent season in the National League, Bentley has started in to do a Babe Ruth, and will spend the whole off-season getting in tip-top shape for the campaign of 1924. Bentley reported to the Giants' hog

fat and out of shape late in the spring training season of 1923. He was waiting around Baltimore for either McGraw or Jack Dunn to fork over some of the purchase money. In the mean time other ball players were getting ready for the grind. Jack got a bad start.

As soon as the 1923 World's Series was over Bentley, returned to his Maryland home and began following the hounds. He is a country gentleman and loves his horses and dogs. Bentley has hunted all fall and now is planning to spend the rest of the off-season in Virginia where the weather is a little milder.

He is an enthusiastic fox hunter and has a string of fine red fox hounds at his home. He is taking these to Virginia as well as a big bag of golf clubs.

Later he intends to precede the Giants south and spend a week or two at Hot Springs.

"I'll be as fit as Dempsey before a championship battle," says the big left hander.

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### 14 DROWN AS SHIP IS BATTERED

Earle Harding of St. John Said to be Among Number.

GRIM TALE OF SEA

Lives on Schr. Grace N. Pendleton Lost With Lifeboat Near.

Paris, Dec. 14.—A story of heroic efforts to rescue the crew of a vessel being battered to pieces in the sight of the lifeboat has just been made known.

The vessel was the Grace N. Pendleton, formerly of Boston, a four-masted motor schooner, which had just been transferred to British registry. She struck the Vogelesand shoal during a heavy storm while trying to make the mouth of the Elbe.

The Cuxhaven lifeboat Hermes approached within fifty yards of her, but attempts to board her failed. Two men put off in a boat and were saved, but no more efforts in this direction were possible.

A line was shot on board and secured to the foremast. The mast snapped, and the dozen men aboard lashed themselves or clung to the remaining masts.

At dusk—after twelve hours' work—another line was shot across the bows. Two men, half frozen, left the mast to which they clung and attempted to make the line fast. They were swept into the sea; the second mast then collapsed, and carried its human freight with it.

The captain, his eighteen-year-old son, a German steward, and a pilot were left to see another mast crash. When hope was being abandoned, another line was shot across, and the captain sent his son and the steward to safety. By this time the line could be sent back the vessel had heeled over, and the captain and pilot were drowned.

A Gloucester, Mass., despatch says that Captain Forman L. Pothier's son, Oddee Pothier, and second cook John Woolfeber of Hamburg were picked up after clinging to wreckage for 19 hours in the gale. Those drowned were Captain Pothier, George B. Lamson, James G. Gorman of Parraboro, N. S., and Earle Harding of St. John, N. B., as well as 10 Scandinavians and Germans.

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