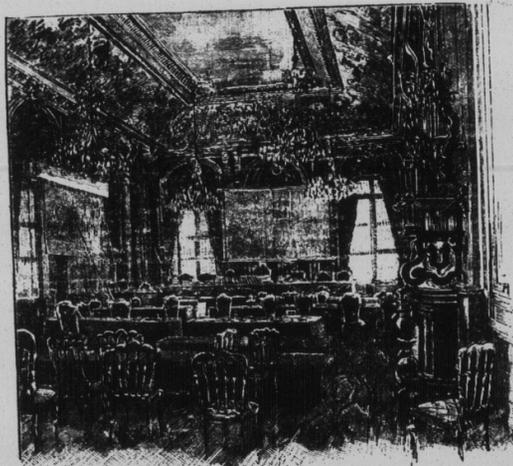
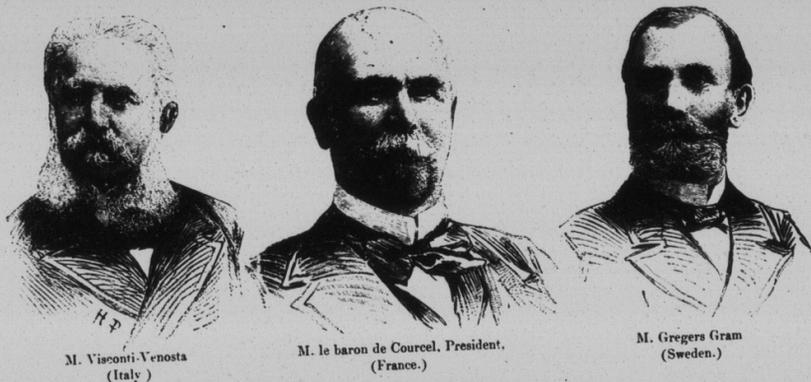


IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD.

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Sir John Thompson (Canada.)



AT THE BANK OF ENGLAND.

Curious Features of the Old Lady of Thread-Needle Street.

One of the first objects of interest upon entering the Bank of England building is the bullion office, where all the gold and silver, that enters or leaves the bank passes through to be checked, says a London paper. On the right is the gold; on the left the silver. The prominent feature of the room is the "Grand Balance," or scales, constructed by the Messrs. Napier. This marvellous instrument is a ponderous and peculiarly-built weighing machine standing nearly seven feet high and weighing about two tons. The whole is under a huge glass case, access being gained thereto by a sliding panel. The scale is worked by hydraulic power, and is the most sensitive weighing-machine in existence. On each side the scales are fitted with weights amounting to 400oz. The gold is made up in 400oz. bars, and the difference of one-thousandth part of an ounce can be detected. By a manipulation of the machine, so tiny a thing as a postage-stamp can be weighed, for on the same being placed upon the scale the index will jump a distance of no less than six inches! It is the only balance of its kind in the world, and cost exactly £23,000. The silver scale is not so finely balanced, and the two are respectively christened "The Lord Chief Justice" and "The Lord High Chancellor."

In another room are several machines for weighing sovereigns and half-sovereigns. Each machine consists of a complicated system of counter-weights, and is not un-

like a sewing-machine as to its lower half, the whole being completely inclosed in glass. A long feeder, like a tube cut in half down its length, and made of brass, is set at an angle of 45°, and is filled with a long roll of sovereigns. These turn as they slip down on a circular movable plate, slightly larger than a sovereign. If the coin is of the right weight, it slips down a metal tube into a till below. Should, however, it prove to be lighter or heavier than the standard, the delicate machine turns it to the left, and condemns it to the guillotine. These machines weigh coins at the rate of twenty-six per minute, and a day's weighing at the banks amounts to about £100,000.

Another interesting feature is to be found in the vaults containing the defunct paper circulation of the Bank. Some idea can be gained of the quantity when we say that they are over 77,000,000 in number, and that they fill 1,000 boxes, which, if placed side by side, would reach two and a half miles. If the notes were placed in a pile they would reach a height of five and a half miles, or, if joined end to end, would form a ribbon 12,455 miles long. Their superficial extent is a little less than that of Hyde Park; their original value was over £1,750,000,000; and their weight exceeds another for £250 left at the Bank for 111 years, whose accumulated interest raised its value to £60,000.

The printing of the existing paper currency is an interesting process. The notes are struck off two at a time on hand-made paper, which, upon being cut, gives three rough edges and one smooth one to each piece of paper—a distinguishing feature of a Bank of England note. The paper is manufactured at the Bank's own mill, and

the production of it entrusted entirely to the members of one family. The ink used in printing the notes is made from the charred stem of the lichen vine, which is believed to produce the richest black of any ink in the world. Each strip of paper has to be strictly accounted for, the whole process being under effective supervision. The Bank can boast of possessing the wealthiest room in the world in the shape of a kind of vault surrounded from floor to ceiling by iron safes containing rows upon rows of gold coin in bags of £2,000 each, and piled upon pile of bank-notes. The amount of specie contained in this room alone is not less than £80,000,000 sterling.

Not the least interesting feature in connection with the Bank is the fact that the whole system from beginning to end is under constant police espionage, in addition to military protection, and the electric arrangements are so complete that communication with all parts of the building can be effected at a moment's notice.

THE NUMBER NINE.

Odd Results Following the Manipulation of Some Figures.

Most of us think numbers are of the stupidest things in the world. But there are some rather curious facts and fancies connected with them. The number nine is, perhaps, the first as regards such experiments, although number seven is more prominent in literature and history. The odd thing about number nine is that when you once use it, you can't get rid of it. It will turn up again no matter what you do to put it "down and out."

Some wise men once tried all sort of tricks with it, and found out this strange fact in regard to it.

All through the multiplication table the product of nines comes nine. No matter what you multiply with, or how many times

you repeat or change the figures, the result is always the same. For instance, twice nine—18; add 8 to 1, and you have 9. Three times nine—27; 2 and 7 make 9 again. Go on till you try eleven times nine—99. This seems to bring an exception. But add the digits—9 and 9 make 18; and again, 1 and 8 make 9. Go on to an interminable extent, and the thing continues. Take any number at random. For example, 450 times 9—4,050, and the digits added, make 9 once more. Take 6,000 times 9—54,000, and again you have 5 and 4.

A French scholar tells us another queer fact about this number nine. Take any row of figures, reverse their order, and subtract the less from the greater—the total will certainly be nine or a multiple of nine. For example, take 5071 minus 1705 equals 3366. Add these digits and you have 18—and 1 plus 8 make the familiar 9.

You have the same result no matter how you raise the numbers by squares or cubes. One more way is shown by which number nine shows its strange powers. Write down any number you please, add its digits, and then subtract the sum of said digits from the original numbers. No matter what numbers you start with, the sum of the digits in the answer will be nine.

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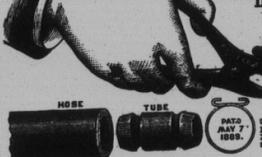


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