

NATION'S TREASURE

HOUSE AT WASHINGTON

Mammoth Steel Vault That Holds

the Surplus Wealth of Uncle Sam

WHEN congress passed the emergency currency act last May authorizing the controller of currency to have printed emergency currency to the value of one-half of the amount of government bonds owned by the national banks throughout the country, a condition was created—and a very serious condition—which nobody realized so fully as Watson W. Eldridge, chief of the division of issues under the currency bureau. For this vast sum, about \$490,000,000, was to be placed in his hands for safe keeping, as is all the national bank currency.

At the time of the passage of this act there was on hand in the vaults on the second floor of the Treasury building in Washington about \$200,000,000 of national banknotes, as a "working stock." This quantity of paper money was about all that these two vaults would hold. So when the bureau of printing and engraving, after sending out a C. Q. D. summons for all the expert engravers in the country to come to Washington and aid in altering the steel plates, to comply with the new law, began to send the emergency currency in drayloads to Mr. Eldridge, that trusted guardian of the nation's wealth began to spend the most uneasy nights in all his 40 years' service in the treasury department and 20 years in his present position.

The money continued to pour in, not in thousands and hundreds of thousands, but in millions. It was the most unwelcome money ever unloaded upon a man working for a salary.

New Vault Made Necessary.

When things reached a crisis an order was given for a vault to hold this emergency currency, a vault which would make all previously manufactured safes look like pocket savings banks, for the new structure of steel was to be thin shells between inconceivable wealth and thieves who were ready to break in and steal, and the corruption of fire, earthquakes, and devastation of any other character. It must be a vault, so the treasury officials specified,

The new vault, which was built at a cost of \$45,000, is a two-story structure, furnished with steel racks, which closely resemble safety deposit box racks. The interior walls are of Harveyized steel, half an inch thick, and the whole vault is incased in masonry and cement more than two feet thick. But beneath the masonry and the shell of steel lies the chief protection of the vault against burglars—a mat of closely woven steel wires. Now, each of these wires is charged with electricity, so that when one of them is touched with an awl or a bit or a dynamite pump an alarm is instantly set off in an adjoining building, where watchmen are constantly on guard. And to make sure that this electrical apparatus is working properly there is a "buzzer" which goes off every 15 minutes inside the vault. If the warning apparatus is not working properly this buzzer will be thrown out of commission and the watchmen will be immediately notified.

Cannot Tamper with Cables.
"But what if the cables connecting the vault with the watchmen's room should be cut?" Mr. Eldridge was asked. The reply was that any tampering with the cable would have the same effect upon the alarm system as if the vault itself had been attacked.

This enormous vault, whose roof is on a level with the pavement, has a perfect system of ventilation by great driving and suction fans, which are turned on when the vault is opened, so that the air is fresh and cool at all times. It is lighted by electricity, the lighting plug being in place only after the vault door is opened.

One of the marvels of the vault is the vault door, a complicated mass of gray steel weighing seven tons, but so wonderfully balanced on ball-bearing hinges that it can be opened without effort. It has four combinations, and no one man in the employ of the government knows them. Two men know two of them, and two others the remaining two, so that in order to unlock the money chamber at least two persons must be present. The door is, of course, equipped with the time lock device, which is now in use on

opening almost at the elbow of the chief of the division of issues, who keeps the key in his desk. This elevator car was barely large enough to carry Mr. Eldridge, the newspaper man, and a photographer down to the vault. It is operated by the old-fashioned rope-pulling device and is the most prosaic road to millions imaginable.

On June 18, the morning on which the photograph from which we got the illustration was taken, the vault contained \$209,199,910, in the following denominations: \$77,516,650 in fives, \$219,011,300 in tens and twenties, \$6,256,200 in tens, and \$15,415,750 in fifties and one hundred. The money is printed in sheets, four bills to the sheet and 1,000 sheets to the package. There were nearly 3,000,000 sheets, or 8,797 packages to store away. The actual value represented in this amount of printed paper is only \$439,850. In estimating this value of the printed paper the government figures that each package weighs 14 pounds, and the paper is purchased at 43 cents per pound. The balance is for the printing and the handling of the bills, which are counted 53 times before being stored away.

treasury department suggested that all paper on which banknotes were printed should be retained after printing. Mr. Eldridge was the aggressive factor in this particular reform, and it is to him that the present pleasing appearance of our paper money is due.

Prior to the completion of the new vault the emergency currency was stored in the basement of the Union Trust Company, at the corner of Fifteenth and H streets, N. W. The first few millions that were received were placed in a large iron vault, but when carloads of money began to arrive this vault with a capacity of a mere forty millions soon overflowed, and then this enormous wealth was stacked on the floor in ordinary wooden boxes, which any hatchet could have knocked to smithereens. This seemed an awful risk for the government to take, but there was nothing else to be done. A tiny dynamite cartridge discharged in a little arroyo in the rear of the bank building would have blown a hole in the cellar walls that would have bared to view wealth of which Solomon "in all his glory" could not have dreamed, and which would have



Watson W. Eldridge, Custodian of Seven Hundred Millions of Dollars.

Twenty years ago this vast amount of printed bills would have been utterly worthless until each bill had been signed by the president and the cashier of the bank in whose name it was issued, but in the nineties congress passed a law making the notes legal as soon as placed in circulation, thus adding materially to Mr. Eldridge's cares, whose duty it then became to handle money, not in the making, but the perfected cash. Now, as soon as the bills are entered upon the ledgers of the treasury as being shipped to a bank, they are considered money. The express companies handling these shipments are bonded for \$500,000, and in case of loss or robbery the company is held responsible for the loss. It was only a short time ago that a shipment of \$40,000,000 of the Pacific coast was stolen in transit, and the express company was forced to give a check for the full amount. The treasury is today redeeming some of these stolen banknotes without question, although some of them bear no signature at all, while others bear the forged signatures of the president of that bank and of the cashier. The express company was never able to recover more than \$15,000 of the stolen bills. It had to lose the rest.

Deserves Thanks of Nation.

The crispness and durability of our present day banknotes are due largely to the efforts of Mr. Eldridge, the guardian of the Jumbo amount vaults. Many years ago congress passed a law authorizing the issue of treasury notes, and the bill required that these notes be put in circulation within 30 days. It was a rush job. The paper on which money is printed has to be dampened before it takes the impression of the hand press, so that when it comes out it is not sized (covered with glossy surface as the result of a bath in a glutinous substance). These treasury notes were issued just as they came from the press. As a result the fibers soon began to break through the surface of the paper, and as each bit of fiber dropped from the bill the ink began to fade, so that within two weeks after the first bill was issued the treasury had to begin to redeem the tattered notes and issue new ones. It was then that a committee appointed to examine into methods of the

made haughty Croesus green with envy. In order to meet this danger the government employed ten extra watchmen, who patrolled the streets and alleys in the neighborhood of the Union Trust building for nine months, day and night. These watchmen were only dropped from the payroll of the treasury on May 10, when the new vault was turned over to the government by the contractors.

Forced Change in Steel Plates.

But the division of issue was not the only branch of the government which found itself extremely busy after the passage of the emergency currency act. The steel plates for every national bank in the country had to be altered. To the legend on the face of the banknotes and at the top, "Secured by bonds of the United States," there had to be added a third line, "Or other securities." In order to add these three words every plate had to be softened, the extra words engraved, and then the whole plate retempered. Each of these banknote plates, which costs \$75, will print 30,000 bills, then the impressions begin to get dull, and the plate has to be softened, the dies recut, and the plate tempered again, after which about 10,000 more impressions can be taken. The plates are then destroyed and new ones made.

To-day Mr. Eldridge sleeps easy. "Let your notes come in as fast as you can make them," is his message to the head of the bureau of engraving and printing. "Rush the notes over until we have a stock of 700,000,000, 200,000,000 to remain in the upper vaults for current needs of the banks and 500,000,000 to rest secure in the vault beneath the treasury, guarded by its walls of steel and stone and by its network of wires which never sleep."

Bread from Fish Roe.

Peasants in the eastern regions of Russia make bread from fish roe. At the present time, owing to the hard season, there is what they term in that country a "little famine," consequently the peasants are making bread from the roe of fresh water fish, with which the rivers abound. The process of making "fish flour" differs little from the ordinary one. The roe is dried and ground, and cooked in the usual fashion.

LEADER OF THE PITTSBURG PIRATES



Here is Fred Clarke, the pilot of the pirate crew from Pittsburgh. Fred has been in the game a long while, but from the way he keeps up his speed it will be many moons before a youngster is selected to supplant him. Clarke has carried home several pennants for the Smoky City aggregation. It was under the late Billie Barnie, in the old Louisville days that Clarke made his entry into major league company. He soon succeeded Barnie as leader of the Colonels, and later, when the Pittsburgh club bought out the Louisville franchise and merged both clubs, Clarke came to Pittsburgh and

has remained ever since, playing left field and managing the team. Just now the Pittsburgh clan is sailing along at the head of the National league race and the hustling manager has his men in good shape. Of course he has the able assistance of that mighty Dutchman, Hans Wagner, and my! what a bundle of assistance that big pretzel hunter is to Clarke. The latter says its the pennant for his this time, and he further avers that a world's championship goes with it. For he feels that his team will be able to trounce the Detroit, whom he picks to win the American league flag.

ONE OF THE GIANT TWIRLERS

MOST BASEBALL PLAYERS

ARE LIVING MODEL LIVES

High-Salaried Diamond Artists Realize That They Must Keep in Best of Condition.



Leon Ames has done acceptable work for the New York Giants in the box this season. While Ames has never been ranked as a star, he has developed into a first-rate twirler during the years he has been with the Giants.

Pulliam Back in Harness.

Harry Pulliam is again the directing head of the National League. After a leave of absence of six months the National league president has resumed his duties. When Pulliam appeared at his office in the St. Louis building in New York he was as brown as a berry and looked the picture of health. Though they had not given the information out in advance, the office assistants were expecting him. John Heydler, who had been acting as president turned over everything to Pulliam and resumed his duties as secretary.

The Main Thing.

Rudolph Spreckels, of San Francisco, has sold his racehorses because of his aversion to race-track gambling. "If gambling were but a mere incidental to racing I should not mind," said Mr. Spreckels at a San Francisco dinner, "but gambling is essential to racing. It dominates it. It dwarfs it—like the case of the fountain pen. A girl, you know, gave her friend a cheap fountain pen for Christmas. Some weeks later the young man said to her:

Umpire Cusack Loses Job.

John Heydler, acting president of the National League, has dismissed Umpire Cusack, whose work has been unsatisfactory. For the present the National league will go along with seven umpires, Johnstone working alone.

By Himself.

No man ever said anything that was bright enough to be repeated day after day.

OPENED AS MUSEUM

House Where Keats and Shelley Lived in Rome.

Flowers and Vines Make Enchanting Bower of Little Gallery Where One Can Fancy Two Famous Poets Chatted Together.

Rome.—Early in April, in the presence of King Victor Emmanuel III, of Italy, the Keats-Shelley memorial house in Rome was opened and consecrated as a museum in memory of the two English poets who were friends. Henceforth this house, situated on the right hand side of the old Spanish stairs, in the Piazza di Spagna, will be a new resort for English-speaking tourists and lovers of these poets when in the Eternal city. The house has been bought by English and American lovers of poetry. It cost \$50,000. It is a modest house, which in Keats' and Shelley's day was a pension, or boarding house.

There is a quiet seriousness about the premises, as if the shadow still lingered where young Keats breathed his last sigh. In the little entrance hang some old engravings, which give one an idea of the Piazza di Spagna before the Spanish stairs were built and after their construction. The house has been renovated. The central room has been transformed into a reading room. Around the walls run the book shelves made of dark walnut, the floor is covered by thick Turkish rugs. Sir Moses Ezekiel's bust of Shelley holds a prominent place in this room, as well as that made of Shelley by Severn. It is rather hard to put oneself in touch with the two poetic spirits who lived in this house, amid the babble of the



Keats-Shelley Memorial House in Rome.

tourists, and the questions with which they ply the civil Italian gentleman who acts as curator. I am quite sure he must be almost distracted after his morning's work, for the house is only open every day to the public from ten o'clock until one p. m.

One of the little rooms leads out on the dearest little terrazzo, which in these lovely spring days is a display of beautiful flowers and creeping vines. Here one can easily fancy Keats and Shelley resting and chatting together. In another room the book shelves hold 200 editions of Keats' and Shelley's works. Most of these being recent editions, have little value except as evidence of the continuing fame of the poets—but is not that worth while to show in this way?

By far the most interesting room is the little bedroom in which Keats died, with its two windows, one of which looks out over the Piazza di Spagna and the other on the picturesque stairs leading up to the Church della Trinita de Monte. From the window one can gaze down on the loveliest flower market in the world all the year round, and watch the ever-passing throng going up and down the Spanish steps. Many of the artists' models group themselves about, or drop off for their open air siestas in the most natural of poses.

In this small bedroom Keats died in the arms of his faithful friend, Severn. The ceiling and the little fireplace have been left just as when Keats lived in the room. In this little sanctuary is the death mask of Keats, and a small lock of his chestnut-brown hair. In a sealed vase is a little bone which Shelley kept from the heart—"cor cordium" when the flames reduced all that was once Percy Bysshe Shelley's frame to a handful of clean ashes.

This little house where the two poets stayed in Rome puts us in touch with them on different lines from their graves, in the beautiful little English cemetery, under the shadow of the pyramid of Caius Cestius, and the walls of old Rome. There are several autograph letters of Keats and Shelley carefully treasured in the little museum, as well as their songs set to music. It is pleasant to feel that these poetic friends—such lovers of Italy—lived and enjoyed all Italy had to offer them in the fulness of her wondrous beauty, art and history, and when life's fitful fever ended for them, they rest in her loving bosom.

The Difficulty.

Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish is an anti-suffragette. She has joined the anti-suffragette organization, the National League for the Civic Education of Women. At a luncheon the other day she said:

"It isn't possible for women to do the same work as men, day in and day out in good weather and in foul. For instance, what woman could be a postman, out in all kinds of weather and at all hours, walking miles daily?"

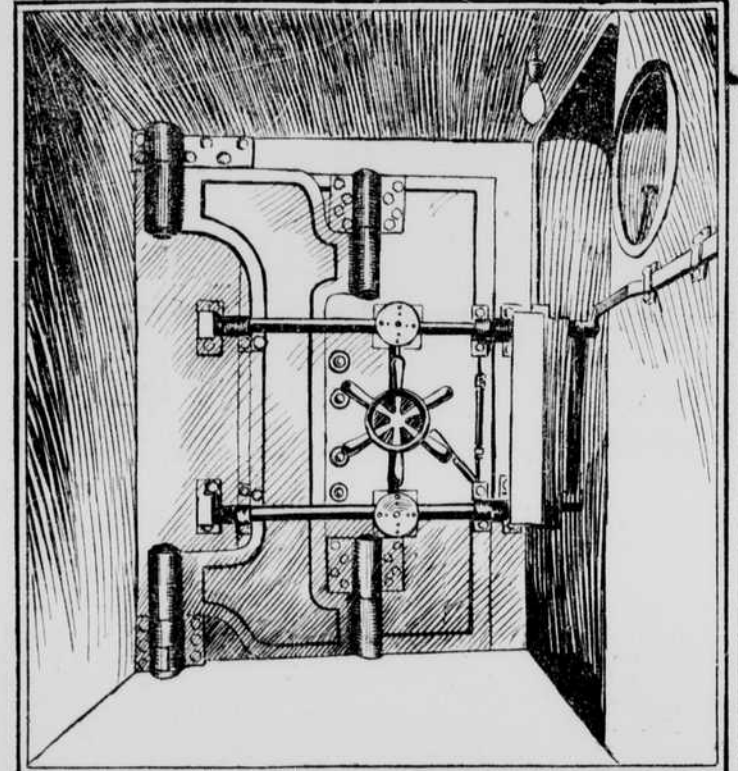
She smiled.

"A woman postman would compare with a male one as the beggar compares with the millionaire."

"You've got no ground to envy me," said the millionaire to the beggar. "I've got just as many troubles as you have."

"No doubt yer right, boss," said the beggar, humbly, "but the difficulty with me is, I ain't got nothin' else."

Not Suitable.
She—Try this delightful cough candy.
He (coughing)—It wouldn't do me any good. I haven't a delightful cough.



The Door to the Vault—Its Weight Is Seven Tons.

capable of holding the vastest sum of money ever stored in one place, five hundred millions.

The order was given and the safe-makers set to work. Today the vault stands completed, as witnessed by the accompanying illustration, the first which the government has allowed to be taken of this vault. There are stored in the steel pigeonholes a little more than 300,000,000 of banknotes and the remaining millions are being stored away as fast as they can be counted in the big offices above the level of the street.

all first-class safes. But even entrance through the vault door sets off the alarm in the watchmen's room. It is necessary, therefore, to supply the watchmen's department with a schedule showing at what hour the vault will be opened and at what hour it will be closed. The vault, according to the schedule, must not be opened before 8:45 in the morning, and it must be closed before five every night.

Old-Fashioned Elevator.

The only way to reach the vault is by way of a tiny hydraulic elevator, which is protected by an iron door,

MUCH PRECIOUS TIME WASTED

Writer in Lippincott's Points Out Loss Caused by Stereotyped Forms of Politeness.

Not very long ago the manager of a telephone company in one of our larger cities issued instructions to the exchange girls that they must no longer use the word "please" in conversation with patrons. It consumed too much time. "What number, please?" was short of its embroidery and reduced to "What number?" To be sure, it was less courteous, but on the other hand it was infinitely more profitable. By actual count it was found that the girls had been saying "please" 800,000 times a day. Allowing half a second to its utterance, there was an awful daily waste of 125 hours. Five days going to waste every round of the clock, a sheer loss of 60 months out of every year. Is it any wonder the manager was concerned and put a stop to the drain? Why the time it took to say "please" in one day was more than enough, to allow

TOOK LESSON FROM AMERICAN

Englishman in High Place Glad to Acquire Information from Prof. Newcomb.

Lewis Nixon told this interesting story at a recent dinner: "In sheer intellectual strength there is no man in America superior to Prof. Simon Newcomb. "And while known to but a limited circle of the American public, no man of science is better known or more respected in Europe. "In 1882, when he was at the head of the transit of Venus expedition, I crossed with him. I was with him in London, where every one seemed to want to do honor to this distinguished American. "One day we went down to lunch with the astronomer royal at the Greenwich observatory. "After lunch, sitting in the great octagonal instrument room, the astronomer royal and Prof. Newcomb began to talk shop. Among other things Prof. Newcomb was explaining how

Englishman in High Place Glad to Acquire Information from Prof. Newcomb.

he combined in one calculation the effects of more than one observation on the fixed stars, greatly facilitating calculations and insuring accuracy. "The professor talked along in a matter of fact way as if it were the simplest formula imaginable. The astronomer royal seemed to be trying to follow him, and then he said: "Prof. Newcomb, that's rather intricate. Would you mind my taking notes?" He promptly got paper and pencil, and as soon as he put a few figures down he, of course, quickly grasped the idea and highly commended it. "But one can easily imagine what pride I felt as an American to see the astronomer royal of Great Britain, a Smith's prize man and the greatest mathematician in the empire, taking notes and learning from Simon Newcomb some of the tricks of his trade."

Capsules Filled by Machine.

A new machine automatically weighs or measures a medicine and fills eight capsules while one is filled by hand.