

AN IMPORTANT COIN.

THE CENT IS NOW MORE IN DEMAND THAN EVER BEFORE.

The Penny-in-the-Slot and the Bargain Counter Responsible for Its Increased Use—One Automatic Machine Company Takes in Half a Million a Day.

Notwithstanding the rumpus raised by the disputing friends of gold and silver, the most useful and hard-working member of the coin family is of neither of these materials. It consists of 95 per cent. of copper and 5 per cent tin and zinc and bears on its face the legend "one cent."

Two recent devices have been largely responsible for the increased use of our only copper coin. One is the penny-in-the-slot machine, which has spread over the land like the locusts of Egypt within the last two or three years. A single automatic machine company in New York City takes in half a million pennies a day. As there isn't a crossroad village in the country that hasn't a chewing-gum, kinetoscope, music or weighing machine operated in this way the number of coins required to keep them all going is enormous. The other invention responsible for the rise of the cent is the "bargain counter." The craze for 49-cent and 89-cent bargains makes work for a lot of pennies. Superintendent Milman of the New York Sub-Treasury said the other day that it was no unusual thing for one of the great department stores which make a specialty of "bargains" to take \$10,000 worth of cents—one million pieces—at a time. The penny newspapers and in some places three-cent street-car fares have also increased the field of operations of the one-cent piece.

"The cent is really the most interesting and least known of our coins," said Mr. Milman, "and there are some very curious facts about it. The Sub-Treasury is the clearing-house for the pennies in circulation in the metropolitan district, and the penny is for us a barometer, a calendar and an accurate index of business conditions."

"Why, in the middle of July there was a week or more of cold, rainy weather and the supply of pennies coming in for exchange into larger denominations fell off one-third. A heavy storm or the sudden coming of cold weather, anything that keeps the penny-spending part of our population at home, is accurately reflected in the falling off in the supply of cents coming to us for exchange. All through the summer the pennies accumulate on our hands, but when cold weather comes and the children get back to school, and retail trade revives, there is a great demand for them."

"Come this way," said Mr. Milman, "if you want to see the way we handle pennies," and he led the way to the minor coin division, where half a dozen clerks were busily at work. In one corner of the room was a stack of canvas bags reaching nearly to the ceiling and making a good-sized pyramid. "These are all pennies," said the director. "I suppose there are some one hundred million pieces there, and we have more below." In another corner of the room was a stack of loose coins piled high above the heads of the clerks, who were busily counting them off into the canvas bags. The pennies are kept in bags of one thousand each, and when they come in they are all counted over.

There are several unique features about the coinage of pennies, and the work is managed in a somewhat different fashion from the turning out of gold and silver coins.

In the first place, although the United States Government is the only authority entitled to indulge in the manufacture of coins, our Uncle Samuel does not prepare the blanks from which pennies are made. He finds it cheaper to let out the work by contract than to do it himself, and it is at present in the hands of a Cincinnati firm. They prepare the copper blanks in sheets large enough to turn out one hundred pieces each. It is not known exactly how much the Government pays for these blanks, but the price is in the vicinity of \$1.25 per one thousand, or a trifle over one mill for each unstamped cent.

When the copper sheets ready for stamping reach the Philadelphia mint, where all our minor coins are made each one is tested to see that the alloy is in the right proportion. Thence they pass directly to the coining room. Here the sheets are cut into strips, from which the round blanks, called "planchets," are first punched, and these are run directly through the stamping machines, where they receive the impressions from the dies.

Pennies are not counted by the laborious process of handling each piece, but by a device known as the "counting board," by which five hundred are counted at a time. The counting board is an inclined plane, with columns the exact width of a cent, separated by copper partitions in height exactly equal to the thickness of the coin. The cents are spread over this board and fall into the grooves prepared for them, all surplus coins falling off into a trough. Then the counting board is emptied into the canvas bags, which are carted away to be shipped to any part of the country.—Washington Star.

What Would Bring Heat.
Warwick—That man Wilkins is a genius. He has the finest plant I ever heard of for raising the temperature of Alaska.

Wickwire—What's his scheme? Going to fasten an aurora borealis in position so it will keep off the north winds during the day?

Warwick—No; he's going to build a hotel and advertise the place as a cool summer resort.—Puck.

ARABIAN WOMEN AND MARRIAGE.

Their Life is Full of Sentiment and Quaint Customs.

Arabians have peculiar ideas on the marriage question. An Arab will invariably offer marriage to his brother's widow. It is considered a sign of respect to the dead brother and the living woman by so doing, as the Semitic tradition in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures tells us. In an Arab town a statement made before the cadl constitutes all the essential marriage ceremony. In the desert the only necessary function is the slaughtering of a sheep within or before the tent of the bride's father. Arabs not infrequently change and exchange wives, to the high satisfaction of all concerned. If a man is dissatisfied with his wife he may return her to her father, but he must also return her marriage portion in full, and if she be of the Bedouin blood a she camel must be added to the original dower. Arab wives as a rule are treated with consideration and with no small share of tenderness. In Arabia woman's position is one of dignity, her attitude one of self-respect. Arab men are as full of sentiment as of prowess, and no more ashamed of the one than the other.

In some Arab tribes a man and maid on breaking together before three witnesses a flat, thin cake of almond paste are formally affianced. An Arab has an absolute right to the hand of his girl cousin. He must formally renounce that right before she can marry any one else. When a girl has more than one male cousin, the prior claim is the oldest cousin's, or, in some tribes, that of the oldest unmarried cousin. The man must provide all necessaries for his wife and if she has money or earns any she spends it in dress. If she makes him a skull cap or a handkerchief he must pay for her work.

In the land of Ishmael no honeymoons are ever taken by the bridal couple after the ceremony has been performed. However, it frequently falls to the lot of the bride-elect to make a very trying journey. It is to be married to a man in a neighboring town she goes to him—no to her, for she is leaving her home and he is not—what more natural that she should be put to the inconvenience? Besides, it is considered luck for the bride to cover the distance, if there is any, between herself and her future husband. And what a picture she makes as she comes riding proudly her nuptial camel! She rides in a litter, canopied by embroidered, tasseled and tinsel silk or fine cloth. On the canopy is an appropriate text from the Koran, embroidered in gold. The camel wears a proud plume of ostrich feathers. His long neck is dyed deep with brilliant henna. His face and head and hung with wee mirrors, which flash in the sunlight. His grotesque bulk and his gaun legs are swathed and hung with plunkarls—strange eastern cloths bedight with squares and ovals of looking glass and long, thick stitches of rich silk. Some girl or woman friend rides with the bride, and attendants and protectors precede and follow her.—Springfield Republican.

Their Fixed Tastes.
The circulation and distribution of books during the last century may be illustrated by the following anecdote of the Scilly Islands—there are 365, out of which four or five only are inhabited. The library consisted of two books, a copy of the Bible and "History of Dr. Faustus." The latter book was handed about from house to house and was dropping to pieces by continual thumbing, until at last little was left either of his wonderful enchantment or of his terrible end.

This being made generally known, a meeting of the inhabitants was called, and it was resolved that as soon as the season permitted any intercourse with Cornwall a fresh supply of books should be sent for. What books, however, were to be ordered? The meeting considered this question very earnestly. At last it was unanimously agreed that the Penzance bookseller should be ordered to send them, at once, one new book, a new copy of "Dr Faustus."

Unintentional Injury.
"Young man," said the Senator to the reporter, "you have done me irreparable harm."
"What have I done?" asked the bewildered reporter.
"I got in largely on a temperance platform, as you may recollect."
"Yes, sir."
"And you speak of me in this morning's paper as 'drinking my coffee with gusto.' It will take me more than a lifetime to get it out of the heads of my constituents that gusto isn't some kind of alcoholic beverage."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Was Certainly Excusable.
The teacher of a city school recently received the following note explaining the absence of one of the pupils the day before, according to Harper's Round Table: "Please excuse Henry for absents yesterday. Him and me got a chance at a ride to a funeral in a charriage, and I let him stay at home, as he had never rode in a charriage and never went to a funeral nor had many other pleasures. So please excuse."—

Ignorant Educator.
Willie—Say, pa; didn't you tell me the other day that it was wrong to strike any one smaller than yourself?

Pa—Yes, Willie; that's what I said. Willie—Well, I wish you'd write my teacher a note to that effect. I don't think she knows about it.—Chicago News.

REST.

Let us rest ourselves a bit.
Worry? Wave your hand to it;
Kiss your finger tips and smile
It farewell a little while.
Weary of the weary way
We have come since yesterday.
Let it fret us not, in dread
Of the weary way ahead.
While we rest look down—not up—
To seek out the butterfly
And the daisy, where they wave
O'er the green home of the grave.
Let us launch us smoothly on
Listless billows of the lawn,
And drift out across the main
Of our childish dreams again,
Voyage off, beneath the trees,
O'er the field's enchanted sea,
Where the lilies are our sails,
And our seagulls, nightingales.
Where no wilder storm shall beat
Than the wind that waves the wheat
And no tempests burst above
The old laughs we used to love.
Lose all troubles—gain release,
Longer and exceeding peace,
Cruising idly o'er the vast
Calm mid-ocean of the past.
Let us rest ourselves a bit,
Worry? Wave your hand to it—
Kiss your finger-tips and smile
It farewell a little while.
—James Whitcomb Riley.

THE OTHER GIRL.

On my arrival at the station, Lady Mannington, Molly and the French maid had collected their chattels and stood round the immense heap in attitudes denoting various degrees of impatience. I apologized.

"It's of no consequence," said Lady Mannington, in a tone signifying it was of the greatest. Molly shook her head at me and smiled. I looked at the two ladies and the French maid and then I looked at the miniature conveyance.

"The brougham is only seated for two," I hinted.

"Celeste can walk," said Lady Mannington.

"I should prefer to walk, mamma," said Molly, with an air of much good nature.

"So Molly and I started to walk over the crisp snow. Just outside the station I helped her over the stile. "We may as well take the short cut," I observed; "it is not so very much longer, and I have so much to say to you."

"What about?" asked Molly.

I hesitated. "It is about a friend of mine," I replied at length.

Simply straightened herself up and asked to whom he was engaged.

"Well?"

"He blurted out the name of the other girl. He couldn't think of any other name."

"To whom, of course, he is not engaged?"

"No. And I don't suppose she would have him."

"Is that your whole story?"

"Ye've nearly. The girl went away and told her mother, who came up gushingly and congratulated him. She is a true sportswoman. Afterward she went about telling everybody of the engagement, and my friend has had to receive congratulations ever since."

"How awkward!" said Molly, meditatively. "Has the other girl heard of it?"

"Not yet. This all happened yesterday."

"Yesterday?"

ASTRANGE WOMAN.

BY PAUL PHODEN.

I had sold my mill, and was on my way home. It was evening when I reached Granville, where I took the stage. An old woman was my sole companion. She appeared to be one who had seen much trouble in life, and at the present time she seemed weighed down by some special care.

She was rather a large woman, somewhat bent, and quite unwieldy in her movements. She was evidently used to hard work, for when I took her arm to help her in, although it was under her shawl, I could feel the strength of one well used to the labor of house and farm, so common with women of that region. Her dress was shabby, and her face was covered by a black veil, which was disturbed but once to my knowledge, and that was when I had been looking out into the darkness, and saw it drop when I turned back my head. She was very hoarse, and any attempt to respond to some passing remark from me would set her into a violent fit of coughing. Weighed down by her troubles as she was, I saw that she should be left to herself, and so I said but little.

The country through which we were riding was a dreary one, and pictures of road-agents, and the cleaning out of my five thousand dollars, not to speak of a worse fate than robbery, would occasionally come up to my imagination. I wasn't nervous, but the consciousness of the tempting bait I carried with me was sufficient to awaken certain apprehensions in spite of myself.

Three months before this, a stage had been stopped some twenty miles from here, and one of the passengers who had attempted resistance was shot. Why might not this one be the next to take its turn?

I could but wish that a vigorous man was sitting in the seat opposite in place of that helpless old woman. As far as I could learn, she was to stop at a crossing two miles this side of my destination, where her son was to take her home in his wagon. I should have four miles of it alone, though, to tell the truth, I felt more lonely with such company as this than if I had been by myself.

Finally she appeared to fall into a doze, her bowed head and swaying body indicating a long fight into dreamland. She had been watching at the bedside of a consumptive daughter, and now must go home to tend a grand child that was suddenly stricken down with diphtheria.

"You need your sleep, my good soul," I thought. "We know not who have the greatest trials in life. Mine is at present an imagined evil, yours is in the real."

As the stage rumbled over the uneven road in the gloom of that wild and swampy country, the spectral pines retreated endlessly to the rear, revealing an occasional star appearing in the north, that seemed to gaze in admonitory silence upon me.

My eyes had got so used to the growing darkness that I could make out objects near me with some distinctness. At one time I noticed that the old woman was uneasy in her sleep; the action of her hands indicated something exciting. They were under her shawl, but the movement was very perceptible. I had been looking from the window, and I observed this uneasiness when I turned my glance inside the stage.

I was gazing curiously on the shabby figure when a suspicion darted through my mind that sent the blood to my heart. I had read of such things, and why was this not—but phaw! my money was simply a magician conjuring up visions and spectres of the night.

ing of the mystery. It certainly was becoming a dreary ride to me. I controlled myself, and pointing to the woman, said—

"One like her might well call it so."
"How's that?"
"Sickness at her home—perhaps death!"
"Ah!" and he turned a look upon the unconscious subject of our remarks, the meaning of which I could hardly fathom.

The northern lights were now shooting up in the heavens, reflecting a dim light in the stage.

A vision of my cheery home rose to my mind. Mother and children were pictured in that pleasant sitting-room, talking perhaps of father and his return.

Should I ever see those dear ones again? What if—but my meditations were interrupted by the heavy voice of the passenger.

"Returning home, I take it, sir?"
"I am."
"You consider this a safe road, do you not?"
"Never heard of any trouble here. It's going on around us, though. Heard of the pull last night?"
"The pull?"
"The robbery on the Hanson road, I mean."
"Robbery!" I gasped. "I did not hear of it."
"Oh, yes; it's getting pretty near."
"Nothing worse, I hope."
"Murder!" and the speaker's voice sank to a still deeper tone.

The old woman started in the corner, as if disturbed in her dreams. He glanced meaningfully at her, and then directing his thumb that way, he said—

"An uncommon sleeper."
"Tired out."
"We'll not disturb her."
"The murderer has a devilish name," he said, after a brief silence.
"Which?"
"The last robber—no, not the last, exactly, for the robber and murderer of all is one man."
The stage entered a gully thickly shaded with trees, and when the passenger said this in his abysmal voice, my scalp crept over my head. It was so dark that not even his Herculean form could be seen.

"What was the name?" I asked, in a hush.
"Left-handed Dick."
The stage went very slowly at this point, and my ear caught a movement as if the sleeper was again uneasy, and was adjusting her shawl.
"Why that?"
"He lost his right hand in a fight, and he is a demon with his left."
"I'd rather tackle a dozen than a left-hander."
"This man is equal to a dozen. I know he has murdered as many as that."
The impression was gaining on me that the man before me was honest. He struck me, moreover, as having a purpose here in this stage known only to himself, but which I began to suspect. He acted like one that had serious business in hand.

"Is there no way of trapping the fiend? I think if he could come into your grip, sir, he would fetch up pretty quick."
"Size doesn't always tell," he returned. "This fellow is like a madman. He neither fears nor waits."
"How does he keep it up?"
"He's cunning as the devil. He goes disguised."
"How!" I exclaimed. "Disguised. But his handless arm—"
"Oh, that's easily fixed. If he's a man he has it in his pocket—"
"If he's a man! How else does he do it?"
The stage emerged into the open country. The aurora was at its height, and threw its pale light into the stage. The shawl of the sleeping woman was suddenly twitched at the hands, and I noticed that the old black veil was somewhat awry. I also noticed that her neighbor had changed his position.

"My good woman, I hope your sleep has rested you," I slowly uttered, sharply eyeing her shawl in the gloom. Her answer was a violent fit of coughing.