MOVING YELLOW METAL.

Gathering the Coin from an Ocean Steamer.

A Million in Gold Transferred from a Ferry on a Truck—A New York Harbor Scene.

Almost $5,000,000 in gold coin was transferred from Hoboken to the offices of different banking houses a couple of days ago, and the unfashionable manner in which it was handled during the operation was something to make the average man's blood boil. The gold, all of which was in the form of jingling coins, got to Hoboken on the steamship Normannia.

It had been shipped from Europe on the orders of bankers in this country, and the bankers were anxious to have it in their offices as soon as possible after the steamship had been made fast to her pier.

In order that all the aggravating contemptuousness with which that gold was handled may be known, it must be stated that when pat aboard the Normannia on the other side—Europe, not Hoboken—it was placed in that part of the vessel known as the melting room.

A record was made of the marks and numbers on the packages of gold, but this that is done when a sale of rags is shipped. The young man who had charge of the melting room regarded the boxes, in which he could hear the gold chinking, with more interest than he would a bundle of rags, of course; he was human. But he was much more anxious about the letters in his care, if outward appearances went for anything, than he was about the gold.

When the Normannia had been tied to her pier the captain hurried ashore, entered his vessel at the Custom house, and then the bankers secured permits to remove the gold.

It was half an hour, perhaps, after the permits had been secured that those who transferred the gold arrived at the pier in Hoboken, alongside of which lay the Normannia. All the first cabin passengers had disappeared some time before. Those who remained had not come over in the first cabin and were grouped at the forward end of the pier, which was immediately from the rest by a rope which was stretched by a naughty person who betrayed the fact that he could not speak any English other than profanity, for he swore decently every time a person endeavored to slip under the rope.

The first vehicle which appeared on the dock to carry away a portion of the gold was a common, ordinary, everyday truck, and a one-horse truck at that. It was one of the trucks belonging to the carmen who carts baggage and coin for the bankers. With the truck appeared a clerk for one of the banking houses. He had the permits to remove the gold, and when he had presented it to one of the customs officers on the pier the truck was driven down the pier and backed up to the gangplank noted the same end.

Then a stevedore blew a whistle, and a crowd of longshoremen pressed around him. He selected a number of them at random and marched them toward the vessel. The driver of the truck, with a hook in his hand, used in handling cases of merchandise, sat on the end of his truck whistling aimlessly and swinging his limbs carelessly.

Three bankers' clerks—two had appeared in the meantime—stood at one side, pencil and paper in hand, ready to make a memorandum of the boxes of gold as they should be placed on the truck. An officer from the vessel and a representative of the carmen were in the group with them, similarly equipped.

Soon a longshoreman, hatless, his sleeves rolled up, with bare breast and perspiration dripping from him, walked slowly down the gangplank with a box in his hands. The box was about fifteen inches long, a foot high and ten inches wide, and seemed to be about all the brawny fellow could carry. It contained about $45,000, and each time the longshoreman brought a box down the gold clinked.

He threw it down on the end of the truck, clearly glad to get rid of it. He turned and went back on the ship for more. In an hour he had carried out six of those boxes, and received 25 cents, the regular pay for longshoremen, for his hour's work.

There were three lots to go on the first truck. There was $1,000,000 for Speyer & Co., $500,000 for J. and W. Seligman and $500,000 for L. Von Hoffman & Co.

The longshoremen carried it all out, throwing the boxes down with an air of disgust, and the driver of the truck kept each lot separate. He piled the boxes around on his truck as if the contents of each one was worth a hundred. He wrenched his hook into them in a savage way at times, but was careful never to touch the seam of wax which marked where the tops and bottoms of the boxes came together. If the seals were broken it would be supposed at once that the boxes had been tampered with.

As the boxes were placed on the truck the clerks, the officer from the Normannia and the carmen's representative made a memorandum of the number on each box. When all that was to be carried on that truck had been placed there, the driver placed a heavy board behind the last row so it would not slide off, stuck a couple of earrings behind the boxes, the three clerks seated themselves on the boxes—not to protect the gold, but because it was a more comfortable manner of reading their respective offices—and the driver said "Get!"

None of the quartet on the truck had any other weapon about him than a peashooter of an old revolver. None of them feared any difficulty, though they were close to $2,000,000 in gold on the truck. As they left the pier they crossed the Hoboken ferry, so they reached the office of the bankers from the pier in Wall street in a crowd and gave attention to the truck and its load.

It was the same with all the others. Trucks and express wagons followed the first truck. There was $125,000 for Lazard Freres, there was $50,000 for Kidder, Peabody & Co. Everywhere on the dock, even in the staterooms of the Normannia, sailing ended there on the pier, knew what was in the boxes, yet not one paid any attention to it. I might have been as much pig iron that was being carted away.

The second truck, a double one, carried away more than a million dollars. Beside the driver there was the clerk on the truck, and the money warehouse in that city with as little incident as marked the passing of the first truck load.

The express wagons came for some of the gold, because it was to be shipped to other cities. One lot, amounting in all to $1,250,000, was sent to Chicago. It was heavily guarded all the way. In Chicago, according to telegrams from that town, express wagons with safes and strong-guards aboard, was ready to receive the money. It was divided up into small lots and carried by different wagons. There were seven guards heavily armed on each wagon.

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