

UNCLE SAM'S MONEY MILL.

WASHINGTON, D. C., September 26, 1893.—The present financial troubles have made the bureau of engraving and printing the liveliest department of the United States government. This is Uncle Sam's great money mill. It is here that all the new national bank notes are being turned out, and greenbacks are now made by the million. At no time in our history have the employes been worked so hard. Their hours have been increased, and one hundred extra hands have been added in order to hurry on the work. On one day during the month of September two million dollars' worth of notes were turned out in the Treasury department, and on the 12th of August last nearly three hundred thousand plate impressions were made on bank notes with hand presses. On August 15th three hundred and twenty thousand plate impressions were made, which is the highest number ever made in the bureau here, or in any other bureau on the face of the earth. In twenty-one days twenty-seven million dollars' worth of notes were made, and the average is now more than a million dollars a day. Mr. Johnson, the chief of the bureau, emphatically states that he can print all the money the country can use if he has only the authority of Congress and the treasury to back him, and he has the great factory so organized that its capacity is practically unlimited. The money is turned out in sheets with four notes on each sheet and its amount is determined by the denomination of the bills. It takes no more time to print four one thousand dollar notes than four one dollar notes, and the capacity of the bureau is measured by sheets. In ordinary times it has turned out only six to eight thousand sheets daily. It is now running out from fifty to sixty thousand sheets every day and bank notes are being made more quickly now than ever before. The usual time required to make a bank note is twenty-one days. This under the present stress has been reduced to fourteen days, and the nerves of the engravers and the muscles of the printers are strained to the utmost. The increase of the work in the bureau began about the first of July and went on steadily during that month. August and September, and today the hum of the machinery in the bureau is like that of a great factory, and its machines are rattling away with such a noise that they almost shake the Washington monument which stands near them.

MILLIONS IN NATIONAL BANK NOTES.

The vast increase of work has come from the demand for money from the national banks of the country. They have been depositing more bonds in order to increase their circulation, and it has been found that a large number of them have been holding bonds upon which they have not demanded the currency. New orders for paper have had to be sent to Dalton, Mass., in order to supply the demands, and the great steel van which carries the bank notes over to the treasury has been making several trips daily. Not long ago this van delivered \$3,000,000 to Secretary Carlisle in one day. It required two trips, and it took \$1,500,000 at each trip. I saw this big money wagon at the door of the department

as I came up to it today. It is hauled by two horses, and it is driven from the treasury to the bureau with four guards, two of which hang on the behind and the other two sit with the driver. It is securely sealed and locked before it leaves the bureau, but it drives its way unostentatiously with its millions over the cobble stones and slips along across the asphalt to the treasury. It looks as though it would be easy to rob it, and its guards carry only revolvers. Nothing of the kind has, however, been attempted, and that old steel wagon will go on carrying millions for generations to come.

HOW UNCLE SAM GUARDS HIS PAPER MILLIONS.

I walked through the bureau of engraving and printing this afternoon and watched the fifteen hundred clerks working away, making these untold sums of money. I asked their wages and I was told that they range from a little over a dollar a day up to several thousand dollars a year. It seemed strange to me that they could resist the temptation, and I inquired into the safeguards which Uncle Sam has placed about the money. It seemed so easy to slip away with a \$1,000 note or to take home one of these steel plates and print enough to last you a life time. My investigation, however, showed me that no miser's hoard has ever been guarded as is the money of Uncle Sam's. This bureau must cover several acres. It contains three stories and a basement and it is packed full of machinery and engraving material. Every bit of this material has to be accounted for every night before any one can leave the building. In the corridor as I went in I saw a metal plate set in a frame in the wall. It looked much like the electric button plate at a hotel office. It contained twelve round holes, and each hole was labeled with the name of the departments of the bureau. There was no pins or buttons in the holes, but I found that they all had to be filled before any one could leave the department. As soon as the inventory has been taken of the work of a department at the close of the day, and all accounts are found to be correct, the superintendent of that department marches down and puts a pin with a button on the end into the hole marked with his division. As he does so an electric gong rings and the watchman permits the men of the division to go out. All of the holes have to be filled before the building is emptied, and if a sheet of paper, a bank note or a scrap of anything important is lost the employees are all kept until it is found. The hands in this factory are prisoners during the day. The most of them work inside of steel cages and the notes are printed on the machine surrounded by a great network of steel fence.

BLANK PAPER WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN DIAMONDS.

The paper used in this big money factory is worth its weight in diamonds. At least if it is lost it may cost the bureau or the clerks more than its weight in diamonds to supply its loss. Every sheet of it which is made is registered at the mill at Dalton, Massachusetts, and the paper mill can't make a sheet which must not be accounted for to the government. The paper is sent from the mills to the treasury, and it is issued by the Treasury Department

from day to day to the bureau of engraving and printing. It is carried over in a in the big steel wagon which hauls back the money, and as soon as it is sent from the treasury it represents so much money. If, for instance, a thousand sheets are sent over in hundred dollar bills these thousand sheets represent \$400,000, as these are four bills to each sheet. If in the printing of these sheets one sheet should happen to be lost the clerk who lost it would have to pay \$400 for it. If the denomination of the sheet was \$1,000, instead of \$100, he would be liable to the extent of \$4,000, and he or the bureau would have to make up the loss. I took a look at a lot of this paper yesterday. It was piled away in great stacks, much of it being dampened for the presses. It is white and it comes to the department in sheets just large enough for the printing of four bank notes. Two sheets pasted together would be the size of a lady's hankerchief and two lines of silk thread run down one side of the sheet so as to make them go on the face of every note. I handled some of this paper. It is crisp and strong, and I would have liked to have carried away a sample, but when I suggested it the superintendent looked at me with horror and I found that all defective sheets have to be accounted for as well as the good ones, and that such sheets are canceled by holes punched through them and they are sent back to the treasury with the good money. Each one of these sheets is counted about forty times before it is turned from white paper into greenback dollars. Every man who puts his finger on a sheet has in some way to leave a register of it, and if a printer spoils a sheet in printing he is obliged to send it in. The initials of the printers are on the plates they use, and it would be a great deal easier to carry off a half dozen bags of silver from the steel vaults of the treasury than to crib one of these sheets of blank paper.

STEEL WORTH MORE THAN GOLD.

It is the same with the steel plates from which the money is engraved. They are worth more than their weight in gold, and are more carefully guarded than the crown jewels in the Tower of London. In one department of the bureau there are four great vaults, before which guards always sit. The chief of these guards gets \$2,500 a year, and he is responsible for the dies and plates in his charge. He has them locked away in these vaults in such order that he can put his hands on them at any moment. The vaults are entered by steel doors, and the combinations with which they are closed are three for each door, and only one of these is a time lock. The combination locks are each known to one man, who keeps the secret to himself, but writes out a duplicate and sends it in a sealed envelope to Secretary Carlisle. If he should die suddenly the envelope would have to be opened before the combination could be known. Each bank note plate has a separate pigeon hole in these vaults. It is only issued on order, and the plate printers, when they arrive in the morning, have to give a check like a trunk check for the plate, the ink and even the rags which they use for wiping the plate. They have to receipt for every bit of paper they get, and it is impossible for them to get away with any of the dies, plates or paper of the bureau. There are about 40,000 different pieces