

# THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 9.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, AUGUST 17, 1895.

VOL. LI.

Written for this Paper.

## TALES OF GOVERNMENT CRIME.

(Copyrighted by Frank G. Carpenter, 1895.)



**HAVE MORE** stories today of men who are trying to break into Uncle Sam's money box. He keeps his pile, you know, in the United States treasury, and

there are in his vaults today \$834,000,000. This vast sum is under the charge of the United States treasurer, a bright-eyed, active man of fifty, perhaps, who stands not over five feet seven in his stockings, and does not weigh more than one hundred and fifty pounds. He has not the muscles of a Sandow, and if he carries a revolver it is not to be seen. Still, he is responsible for more money, perhaps, than any other man in the world, and when he took possession of Uncle Sam's purse, about two years ago, he gave what is said to be the biggest receipt ever written for money actually transferred. It was for \$740,818,419. The man's name is Daniel N. Morgan, and he is Uncle Sam's chief watchdog. I called upon him this afternoon. There was not even a messenger to stop me at the door, and I walked right up and stood beside the big desk before which he was sitting and signing away millions with a black fountain pen, and he told me that within the last five days he had signed drafts to the amount of \$17,000,000 with it. I asked him some questions as to the small change which he had charge of for Uncle Sam, and found he was posted as to every cent of that steady stream of gold and silver and greenbacks which flow at the rate of almost a million dollars a day in and out of the United States treasury. Said he: "You want to know of some of the ways in which Uncle Sam is robbed? Well, they are few. The United States government loses very little money, I can tell you, though there are many attempts of one kind or another to steal from it. But first let me give you some idea of the money which we have on hand. We have seven great vaults, each of which contains millions. In vault No. 1 there is nothing but silver. It is in silver dollars and halves, and the sum total is more than one hundred millions. In vault 2 we have a lot of fractional silver and between two and three million dollars' worth of gold coin. Vaults 3 and 4 are filled with

national bank notes, which come in for redemption, and in vault No. 6 we have a little matter of \$25,000,000 worth of mixed money for our daily use. In vault No. 7 there is a quarter of a billion dollars' worth of bonds, which are held as security for the national bank circulation, and in another vault we have \$400,000,000 worth of notes to replace worn and mutilated money which is unfit for circulation. The total weight of the coin is 5,000 tons, and there are enough greenbacks to carpet a farm. The chief robberies attempted are in connection with the greenbacks, and most of these come in through the redemption bureau. I will give you a messenger now, who will take you to the chief of that bureau, and I will ask him to give you all the information you want."

With this Treasurer Morgan pressed a button. An ebony messenger appeared. He led me down into the basement of the treasury building, opened a door or iron grating, and took me into a room where hundreds of thousands of dollars, in all sorts of packages, were lying about. These packages were of old bills, which had come in for redemption. Some were corded up in piles, others were neatly laid out upon the counter, and others were still in the great box-like carts, in which they are carried from one part of the treasury to the other. The packages were lying about just as they came from banks, and as I looked, Mr. Albert Relyea, the chief of the bureau, picked up one of them and handed it to me. "There is enough in that handful to make you rich," said he. I looked at the figures on its outside and found that I had \$600,000 in my hand. "You have \$1,850,000 before you," he went on, as he pointed to about two bushels of bank note packages on a desk at the right. "We handle in this bureau just about a million dollars of notes a day Uncle Sam, gives new money for old. We pass upon the old, cut it into pieces and send it to the bureau of engraving and printing, where it is ground up into mush. If there are any pieces of a bill left, and it can be shown that the man holding the pieces has legitimately lost the balance, we give him new bills. We have replaced burnt money, and money chewed into thousands of pieces. A great many of the attempted frauds upon the treasury are from people who pretend that money has been destroyed when it has not, and want Uncle Sam to give them a new supply.

"Here, for instance, is a \$20,000 job that has been troubling me for some time," said Mr. Relyea, as he took a handful of manila paper slips, each the size of a bank note, from a draw at his right and laid them before me. "On

the corners or at the top of each slip there was a little piece of a bank note pasted. Some of these were pieces of \$50 notes. Some of \$20, some of \$10, some of a hundred and several of a thousand. None of the pieces were bigger than your little finger nail and they came, as it was afterward shown, from a hundred different notes. Those bits of money," said Mr. Relyea, "were brought in to me one day a few weeks ago by a slouchy-looking adventurer, who came from one of the backwoods counties of Pennsylvania. He brought them in in a pillbox and laid them before me and told me he wanted the United States to redeem the amount of money which they represented. I asked him how the money had been destroyed, and he told me his story. He said he was a peddler, and that while out in Oregon about a year ago, he had made a lucky real estate speculation, which had netted him \$50,000. This money he had brought back with him to his home in the east, and had taken with him to his farm in Pennsylvania. He said it was in the time of the panic and he feared to trust the banks. So he buried it under the floor in his spring house. After a few weeks he went to look at it and he found that the rats had gotten in and eaten it up. These were all the pieces that remained, and he wanted to know if Uncle Sam would not pay him back his \$50,000.

"The story was very fishy," continued Mr. Relyea. "I questioned the man, but he stuck to his tale, and I finally told him I would put the money in the hands of our experts and see what they could make of it. They pasted it on these slips, and they found that it represented pieces of \$22,000 worth of notes. The fraud in the case, however, was evident. It was a strange thing that there was no piece from the middle of a note, and that the rats had left only those pieces of the notes which had some printing on them to show their denominations. We told the man we could not allow him the money. He went away very angry. About two weeks later he came back, bringing three big rats' nests with him. He laid these down on the table, and said: 'There, sir, are the rats themselves. You will find some of the my \$50,000 still in them. I found these after I went home, and I have brought they down just to show you that I have been telling the truth. My money has been eaten, and I want it.'

"All right, said I, 'we will look at the nests.' I handed them over to our experts and the pieces of money were picked out. We found that in the nests there were the pieces of seven bills. One of these was a hundred-dollar bill, another was a ten and there were five