

create suspicion. He had at his home crucible and he remelted the gold, mixing it with silver and lead. This last product he sent to us through the express company, and was able to do so without suspicion. We found one bar of the gold in Cochran's house the day he confessed, and we also found \$5,000 in gold eagles. It was a curious house. It was honeycombed with secret closets, and it was in these that the money was found. Cochran kept up his stealing to the last. The day the weighing was completed Cochran came down early. He was there before any of the other employes of the mint. We had weighed part of the gold. The vault was open, and there was a truck in it loaded with bars of bullion. Cochran, finding no one about, picked up twenty of these bars, and, one at a time, threw them into the ventilator shaft of the vault, so that they fell in between the roof of the vault and the floor above. When he confessed he told where this gold was, and we got it back. The remainder was partially covered by that which we found at the house, and we received something from Cochran's property and his bondsmen. Uncle Sam is, however, still \$12,000 or \$13,000 short from that robbery, and the superintendent of the mint, Colonel Bosbyshell, may have to pay this."

"What did they do with Cochran?" I asked.

"He was tried and sent to the penitentiary for a term of six years and seven months. He is now in prison. He weighed 250 pounds when he was arrested. He does not weigh 150 now, and has lost 100 pounds since his theft was discovered."

"Do you think he was insane?"

"That is a question," replied the director of the mint. "He seemed to be a mono-maniac on the subject of gold. He claimed that he had saved the United States millions of dollars by guarding its treasures, and he was indignant when the gold was taken from him. Since that time we have not kept gold bullion in vaults of this nature, and there probably never be a robbery of that kind again."

"Has Uncle Sam ever lost as much as this in the past?"

"There was little loss in Cochran's case," replied Director Preston. "The money was nearly all recovered. There have, however, been big losses in the past. In 1885, just about the time I entered the treasury department, Uncle Sam lost \$150,000 at the San Francisco mint. When one of the settlements was made it was found that this much was short. The melter and refiner claim that this was waste, that it had been lost in refining or had escaped up the flues. It is a question in mine mind whether he did not tell the truth. At any rate, he was arrested, but not convicted. Shortly after his trial he left the United States and went to South America. He was drowned there."

"Another curious case in connection with the San Francisco mint," Mr. Preston went on, "occurred just about the close of the war, or about 1865. The cashier of the mint, whose name was William Macey, was the brother-in-law of the treasurer of the United States. During one operation the coiner of the mint claimed to have delivered \$120,000 in gold double eagles to the cashier. The cashier credited his books with \$100,000, and swore that this was all

the coiner had given him. The result was that there was \$20,000 missing. About this same time it was discovered that Macey, the cashier, had embezzled \$10,000 of the mint funds set aside for wages. He acknowledged the stealing of this, but not the other. He happened to have many influential friends, and in some way or other he escaped prosecution. He was discharged from the mint and came east. On his way through Omaha he deposited \$1,500 in one bank there. He put it in under an assumed name, and was given a certificate of deposit. He lost his certificate, and the bank refused to return the money. He never got it."

"There was a queer robbery at San Francisco in 1878, by which a colored night watchman stole \$20,000 in gold. It was known that gold was in some way or other being taken out of the mint, but it could not be traced. The detectives finally discovered that Henry Smith, the negro night watchman, had been selling bullion. They arrested him and charged him with taking it from the mint. He denied the crime. They then went to his house and thoroughly investigated it. They took up the floors and broke the furniture, but could find nothing. They next attacked the yard. They dug the soil over with spades, and found a little furnace in which gold had evidently at some time been melted. This was shown to the watchman, but he said he knew nothing about it. They then went back and dug up a flower bed, which they had not touched on account of its beauty. It was filled with pansies, and the ground about it was covered with rose bushes and geraniums. They had dug about two feet down into this bed when they found a big earthen pot which was covered at the top with melted wax. Breaking this, they discovered a saucer beneath it, and under this there were seven cones of yellow gold, worth, all told, about \$6,000. They took this to Smith, and he at once confessed. He had stolen about \$20,000 in less than three years. He had taken the gold from the separating tanks by means of a spoon. The bullion was placed in such tanks and treated with acid and water to remove the silver. By the action of the acid, the gold fell to the bottom in the shape of a fine black precipitate, and the silver solution was washed away. The tanks were covered and locked at night, but there was a hole in the bottom of them in which a hose was inserted for the washing of the precipitate. The watchman unscrewed the hose, and then, by means of a spoon, ladled out a few spoonfuls a day and took them home. Each spoonful was worth about \$20, and he laid the precipitate aside until he could buy a furnace and crucibles. With these he turned the black powder into yellow gold by melting it, and he sold the product to the bullion dealers of San Francisco."

"What was done with this man?" I asked.

"He was arrested, tried and sent to prison," replied Mr. Preston; "but his fate was rather an exception to that of the mint robbers of the past. Many of them have escaped punishment. I do not believe in this at all. I think they should be prosecuted and punished to the full extent of the law, and I think the sentence of Cochran was just. Take the case Negus. He confessed to the

stealing of \$10,600 and was allowed to go free. Macey, the cashier of whom I spoke as stealing \$20,000, was not prosecuted. The melter and refiner who was \$150,000 short was not convicted, and there have been several other cases of like nature. In 1865 there was a change in the mint at San Francisco. The coiner and melter and refiner delivered all the bullion to the superintendent, and the wastage was declared. It was a month, however, before a new melter and refiner was appointed. In the meantime there was no work done and when the new coiner came to be appointed the bullion was found to be \$10,000 short. No suit was ever brought for this crime, and Uncle Sam lost the money."

"Another steal at San Francisco, the perpetrators of which escaped punishment, occurred in the sixties. The assay clerk had a confederate outside, and he raised the mint figures on all the bullion brought by this confederate for sale. If the gold was put at 9.95 fine he would raise it to 9.96 or 9.97. It would then go to the melter and refiner, and under ordinary circumstances it would have passed all right and the difference would have been credited to waste."

"The melter and refiner in this case, however, was an old assayer, and he saw that he was losing gold. The result was that he reassayed some of the gold and discovered the fraud. It was then found that the assay clerk had changed the reports of the assayer enough to have made \$10,000 by doing so. This man's name was James H. Cills. He was tried but the jury disagreed and Uncle Sam never got a penny back."

"It was the same in the burning of the mint at New Orleans a few years ago. A fire broke out in the cashier's vault between Saturday night and Monday morning, and when it was discovered \$24,000 worth of Uncle Sam's currency was not to be found. The cashier was the only man who had the keys of the vault. He shut it up Saturday night and he opened it Monday morning. The vault was lighted by electricity, and there was no possible honest way of the fire being kindled. James M. Dowling, the cashier, was arrested on the suspicion of robbery and of having embezzled the fund and then kindled the fire to cover his crime. He was smart enough to employ a nephew of the judge who tried the case to defend him, and he was acquitted."

Frank G. Carpenter

A permanent badge for the California Miners' association has been agreed upon by the officers and will be submitted for adoption to the convention which is to meet in San Francisco the week after election. Instead of the crossed pick and shovel, which has been in use thus far, the new badge represents Marshall at the moment of his discovery of gold in California. His right hand is outstretched and in the hand is held a golden nugget. The other hand rests on the pick that has brought to light the little piece of precious metal. The body of the badge is in white metal, while the nugget is of the golden hue. Below the figure of Marshall are the letters "O. M. A.," indicative of the California Miner's association title.