

FACTS ABOUT SILVER.

UNCLE SAM OWNS \$500,000,000 WORTH OF IT.

It Would Take Three Hundred Thousand Able-Bodied Men to Carry It—The Making of Silver Money—Money Vaults at Washington.

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In these times when the statement is made that much money is hidden in insecure places like old stockings and abandoned coffee pots, it may be interesting to know how Uncle Sam protects the millions of silver and gold in his charge and keeps it circulating throughout the country, and protects the millions which come in and go out from the treasury department every day from those inside and outside of the great building, from which issues the financial current, supplying the outside world of business.

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At the beginning of the Christian era the precious metals in the Roman empire amounted to \$1,640,000,000. This store shrank so rapidly during subsequent centuries that at the date of the discovery of America the stock of silver and gold money in Europe did not exceed one-tenth of the sum mentioned. The depleted currency of the old world was made full again by supplies from the new. To-day America furnishes nearly all of the silver used by the inhabitants of the globe. The great source of supply is what geologists term the Cordilleran system, embracing the Rocky Mountain region, the Mexican plateau, and the Andean chain of South America. In fact, the metal is not produced to any important extent anywhere else.

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The visitor may go down to the vault where the largest amount of silver is stored by obtaining permission from Mr. Daniel N. Morgan, Treasurer of the United States. When this has been obtained, you are escorted down two flights of stairs into the sub-basement, where the walls are very thick and the corridor very narrow. Here you halt before a heavy grated door, behind which a watchman sits night and day. The messenger directs the watchman to open the door and you step inside the corridor where are stored 101,860,000 silver dollars. To enter the vault one must first pass the great door with its multiplicity of combination locks and time locks. Beyond this is a heavy steel door weighing over six tons which is rolled into place by a windlass and securely locked. Beyond this is the great vault, which is eighty-nine feet long and fifty-one feet wide, and twenty feet high. Around the outer side of this vault is a corridor about three feet wide which extends clear around the inner vault, which is composed of steel lattice work, strongly riveted together, and which securely holds the millions within.

But even through this steel lattice work you cannot see the white metal which is stored away. All that can be seen is a long row of wooden boxes which are piled up, tier upon tier, from the floor of the vault to the ceiling. All around the sides and lining the central corridor of the vault, these boxes are two tiers deep and form a large room on either side of the central aisle of the vault. Inside these two rooms formed by the rows of boxes the silver is stored away in bags, \$1,000 in a bag, the weight of which is sixty pounds; the boxes each hold two bags, so that a box of silver weighs 120

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bounds, exclusive of the weight of the box.

But this is not all the silver that Uncle Sam has in his strong box. At the right hand of the silver vault is the door of another vault in which some of the gold and silver is stored. In this vault are kept the dimes, quarters and half-dollars. Forty-eight millions of this money and eleven millions in gold are kept in this vault, while in the department of the Controller of the Currency are stored all the Government bonds deposited by the national banks as a security for their circulation, and in other vaults are kept the United States Treasury notes. In another is the supply of money used by the cashier of the United States, in the daily banking operations of the cash room, which acts as a feeder not only to the banks of Washington, but to the banks of the United States at large.

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