

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM.

"THE SEAT OF A NATION'S WEALTH."

MONEY is a subject of universal interest. It has a fascination for us all, from the beggar at the door to the Queen in her palace; yet how many of us know how the pennies we paid for this number of the HOME MAGAZINE came into existence?

heap of shavings in the world, the tiny bits of gold falling in a heap on a tray, and being taken back to the copper in the melting-room. As the blank coins fall from the "punching" machine they are picked up and dropped into another machine close by which raises the pretty edge you will notice on all coins, the object of this being to protect the face of the coin. This process is accomplished as fast as the coins can be thrown in. When they have been marked, the heap of sovereigns is placed on a tray and taken to the "bakehouse," where they are placed in a red-hot oven. Next, the coins must be immersed, first in water and then in acid, issuing from the bath in a really beautiful condition. The silver, on leaving the bath, is literally as white as snow, and the gold is as beautiful and chaste as it is possible for it to be.

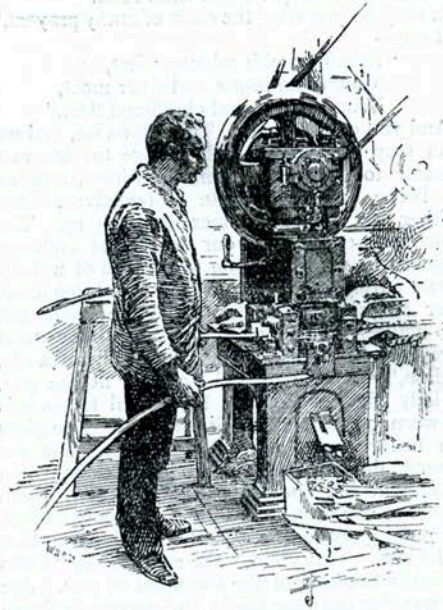
In the next room through which we pass is an old box which strikes us as being particularly out of keeping with the good, substantial appearance of everything else in the Mint. You would smile if told that this box has contained more sterling wealth than ever king or queen possessed. But you would be told the truth. Into this shabby, half worn-out box is dropped every coin that is ever struck. The process is a

BOILING GOLD.

Our national money factory stands on the banks of the Thames, in the shadow of the gloomy Tower. Nobody would suppose that the old-fashioned stone building in the mean neighbourhood which surrounds the Tower is the seat of our country's wealth, but so, in a literal sense, it is. From here comes every coin you ever spend, from the humble farthing to the golden sovereign. Money-making, which exercises so many minds outside the Mint, has been reduced to a fine art at Little Tower Hill, and the processes through which even the smallest piece of copper passes before it becomes a dignified coin of the realm are little short of marvellous.

The first state of a sovereign—to take the most precious of all coins for our illustration—is, of course, a sunlike a sovereign as anything can be. Before the precious metal can be manipulated in any way it must be "boiled" in the copper and moulded in bars a foot long, which, before they are ready for the "rolling room," must be made smooth by a revolving file. Our first picture shows the gold being poured from the melting pot into the mould. In the next room the golden bars pass between heavy rollers, and are thinned out to twice the thickness of a sovereign.

The strips then pass into the hands of the "puncher," who places them, two at once, in the cutting machine, from which the coins fall out in their proper shape at the rate of three hundred an hour. Here one may see the most precious



"PUNCHING" SOVEREIGNS.

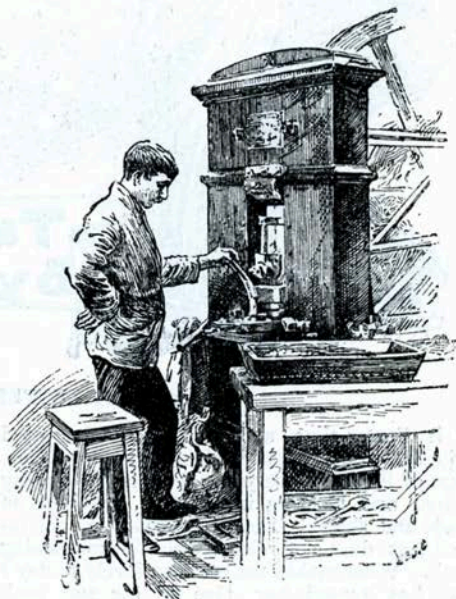
somewhat curious one, the idea being to dry the coins after they are taken from the bath. The box is half filled with dried sawdust, and

revolves at such an amazing rate that a moment or two serves to dry the money completely. The coin is now nearing perfection, but it is not yet impressed with the image which is its only title to currency. This process—the last stage of all—is very simple, yet very wonderful. The blank coin is dropped into a tube, from which it comes out a coin of the realm, ready to be passed over the banker's counter. Down in the tube the coin is gripped between two dies, in a tighter grip than miser ever held his gold, and both sides are impressed at once.

We have come to the end of the money factory now, but as we leave we are amazed by a marvellous machine which weighs every coin before it leaves the Mint. Beneath the scales are three drawers, into which the coins fall according to whether they are light, heavy, or correct in weight. All that is necessary is to put the coin in the scale—it drops into its proper drawer automatically. Each of these wonderful machines costs £300, and there are thirty in the Mint. Many coins on being weighed in the balances are found wanting, and of every hundred which reach the weighing room, thirteen go back again to the melting-pot.

But the wonder is not that thirteen are light or heavy, but that 87 are absolutely correct. It need not be said that no margin is allowed for blunders at the Mint. The most microscopical error means a fortune lost when gold is being

So that "waste not, want not" is a maxim which might well be painted over the door of the Mint. Something like £8,000,000 worth of money is made every year, but if the banks ran



THE LAST STAGE OF ALL.

suddenly dry some day the Mint could make a million sovereigns in a week. It is a money-making place in more than one sense, too, for incidentally in the course of a year it makes something like three quarters of a million sterling for itself.

THE POLICEMAN'S GOSPEL.

FOLSTOI once saw a policeman in Moscow pushing and kicking a drunken man whom he was escorting to the station. The count stopped the policeman, and said :

"Thou knowest how to read ?"

"Yes, sire."

"Hast thou read the gospels ?"

"Yes, sire."

"Then thou knowest we must not maltreat our fellows ?"

Then the policeman began to question him :

"Knowest thou how to read !"

"Yes."

"Hast thou read the policeman's instructions ?"

"No."

"Then read them first and we'll talk this matter over again."

He.—"What an ugly man ; I never saw anybody so ugly."

She (fearing he would be overheard).—"Hush, dear, you forget yourself."



FORTUNE IN SAWDUST.

dealt with. The strips from which sovereigns are made must not vary one 20,000th part of an inch, and a difference of two-tenths of a grain in weight would mean £3,000 in making a million sovereigns.