

MORE IDEAS ABOUT MONEY.

In a late News appeared a short article by "Democrat," on the subject of money and other matters. Also some editorial comments by the News Editor. Will you afford a little space in which I may be allowed to give expression to some personal ideas on the matter therein contained?

"Democrat" was in error when he said that the News "depreciated the extensive agitation of the silver question," as it seems you do not do so, and I am glad of it. So far as some of the positions taken by "Democrat," as well as by the News are concerned, I concur, and I also concur in some of the positions assumed by many of the ardent supporters of the proposed law providing for the free coinage of silver.

It seems clear to me that it is a duty devolving on Congress, under the constitution, "to coin money and regulate the value thereof," in order that the people of the United States may be provided with currency with which they may conduct such business as must necessarily arise in the Republic. But I hold that it is not a duty, nor is it necessary for Congress to consult the wishes of other governments in regard to the kinds of coin, or other currency the government may so provide. Our money is designed for our own use, and ought not to be so "regulated" as to be available as money in other countries. It ought not to become an article of merchandise, to be shipped to foreign markets.

Other governments do not consult ours regarding the kinds or value of their money; for this, and other reasons, I think that those persons who "favor waiting for an international agreement," are mistaken in the theory that such would be the better policy.

The opponents of the coinage of silver would have gold to be the only standard here. Why should it be? The result would be detrimental to trade and commerce; it would enhance the wealth of the creditor class at the expense of the debtor. There is not enough gold produced in the world to afford, if all of it should be coined, money enough for the business of the world; the product being (in 1887) reported at \$109,866,782 in value. In the United States the gold product is less than \$32,000,000, and the silver product less than \$52,000,000.

In 1887 the debt of the United States was about \$1,726,063,698, being a charge per capita of more than \$28, while the currency in the same year amounted to \$709,552,667, or less than \$11.00 to each person. This showing, it seems to me, clearly proves that there is not money enough in the country for its necessities.

Out of thirty-three governments, there are only twelve whose standard is gold only; twelve others have a double standard of gold and silver, and nine whose standard is single and of silver.

The News expressed the belief that "Democrat" was mistaken, in stating that "Congress has refused to coin (silver) and regulate its value."

In order that you readily may understand how this matter stands, I refer to the Revised Statutes of the United States. (Statutes at large, 1873 to 1875, page 700.)

"Sec. 3151. The gold coins of the United States shall be, 'a quarter eagle, or two and a half dollar piece; a three dollar piece; a half eagle, or five dollar piece; an eagle, or ten dollar piece; and double eagle, or twenty dollar piece,' etc.

"Sec. 3513. The silver coins of the United States shall be 'a trade dollar (not now coined), a half dollar, or fifty cent piece; a quarter dollar, or twenty-five cent piece; a dime, or ten cent piece; and the weight of the trade dollar shall be four hundred and twenty grains troy; the weight of the half dollar shall be twelve grains and one-half grain; the quarter dollar and the dime shall be, respectively, one-half and one-fifth of the weight of said half dollar.

"Sec. 3516. No coins, either gold, silver, or minor coinage, shall hereafter be issued from the mint other than those of the denominations, standards and weights set forth in this title."

The last section quoted settles the question, I think, as to whether Congress "refused to coin and regulate the value of the silver dollar."

It will be observed in what a peculiar manner the old law providing for the coinage of "the dollar of our daddies" was repealed. It was a sneaking, dishonest procedure, unworthy the Congress of this great republic; it would seem to have been the design of the goldites to, by indirection, smuggle through Congress an act repealing a former law.

It is a common idea among successful financiers I believe, that none but such as themselves know enough to adopt a correct theory regarding financial matters, and the idea may be a correct one, but I am not convinced that it is so; for this reason I venture to give my opinion as to the kind of silver coinage law that would be best for the United States. It is this:

Require the mint to coin all the gold and silver which may be presented for that purpose by the owners of bullion; regulate the weight and fineness of each, coin same into such lawful denominations as owners may desire; stamp the same and make them legal tenders in payment of all taxes, debts and demands, both public and private; returning to the owners the proceeds when coined of their bullion, requiring payment of the expense only of coinage. By this means the government would be saved the present enormous outlay for the purchase of bullion, and the *onus* of floating the money thus coined, would devolve on the owner.

One objection to the Bland and other coinage laws is, that too much discretion is left with the treasury department; instead of permitting that department to pay out at its discretion, the silver money, it should be compelled to do so.

I cannot conceive of any good reason why this government should become a purchaser of any metal to be coined into money, so long as it has the undoubted power to coin paper money; and I know of no better security for currency than the faith of the United States.

Much prejudice exists in the minds of many persons against what they call fiat money, but after all, neither gold nor silver coins would be legal money, but for the fiat decree of the law which makes them such; without such decree they would be merely articles of merchandize.

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NOTE—It will be observed that I have given the figures of the reports as to money and liabilities for 1887. This was done merely because I did not have at hand reports for any subsequent period.

THE WAR OF 1812.

Henry Clay as a factor in the development of American public spirit formed the main feature of Dr. Gordy's lecture last evening. In the opening years of the present century, as remarked by a distinguished traveler at the time, there was no American sentiment worth mentioning. A great portion of the people sympathized with France, another section with England, and only a few were really American. France and England were at deadly enmity. The great Napoleon had the whole of Europe at his feet except Britain. He was working for her subjugation, but his repeated efforts to effect a landing on her shores baffled him. The channel, or as he called it, the ditch saved her. He saw that her strength lay in her commerce, and he directed all his energies to the destruction of that commerce.

West Florida caused at this time a misunderstanding between Spain and the United States. The latter claimed it under the terms of the Louisiana purchase of 1804, and the former maintained that it was never included in that territory. However, the Americans proceeded to occupy it. Spain retaliated by destroying American ships and inflicting insults and outrages in other ways. By the intervention of Napoleon a settlement was effected. But France and England still continued to insult and outrage the United States. There seemed no sentiment of an American character. The bulk of the people were either French or English in sympathy. Napoleon ordered Portugal to close her ports against English ships. England demanded of American ships a tax for the right to sail the seas. Finally the embargo closing the ports of the United States to all foreign vessels went into effect, and it caused a good deal of internal discord.

It was Jefferson's belief that by adopting this course his country could escape being embroiled in European trouble. But even this extreme measure did not have the desired effect. England continued to overhaul American ships and impress into her service all English-speaking persons on the ground that they were British subjects. Even certificates to the effect that such persons were either American born or naturalized citizens did not always save them from impressment. About this time a new generation of Americans appeared on the scene, among whom were Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and a number of other equally fervent and brilliant young men. America was their country, and to uphold, sustain and guard her from insult were their mission. With tongue and pen they awakened an American spirit, and in due time the crisis came.

Henry Clay became Speaker of the House of Representatives in 1811. Using the vast influence which that office commands in shaping legisla-