

**THE GOLD STANDARD FROM THE
STANDPOINT OF THE WEST-
ERN STATES.**

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MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—We cannot define the West. It has no abiding boundaries, for any lines which we may draw north and south through the United States in our attempts to locate the West are arbitrary ones. If the eastern boundary of the West is defined by the Mississippi river, we include political divisions which are noted for their large fixed population, for their accumulated wealth, for their development and for their intelligence. Perhaps a better division of the East and West would be the eastern boundaries of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Indian Territory extended south through the state of Texas. The West thus defined would include half of the compact territory of the United States. All of this West, save that of a portion of Texas, the states of California and Oregon and the Territory of New Mexico, had scarcely a name at the breaking out of the civil war. We might call the new country, which has become important political divisions of the United States since Mr. Lincoln was elected president, "the West."

While my subject is entitled a gold standard from the standpoint of the Western States, the limitation so far as section is concerned is entirely unnecessary, and therefore useless. Our contention is, the best standard of money for the extreme West, or the country that is most thoroughly impregnated and imbued with the farmers' alliance and populistic theories, is the best standard for the extreme East. The best standard for the agriculturist of Kansas and Nebraska and the mining states is the best standard for New York City. In other words, the best standard in one section is the best standard for all regions of the United States. Speaking of a standard, we allude to that quality possessed by a metallic money which measures all values, gives stability and elasticity, but circulates in all sections without depreciation; that goes and comes without its value being questioned or suspicioned. The foundation of the metal which forms the basic money should be labor.

While it is impossible to have any product produced by labor absolutely fixed in value, it is important that the money standard, which is the basis of the redemption of all currency of whatever kind and the true measure of values, should have the least possible fluctuation in value, and that all tests applied to it should leave the substance in whatever condition reduced as the changes take place in its

former shape, of the same intrinsic value. If the standard be of gold, the metal when turned into the coinage of the realm should have the same value as it had in the shape of the bar, or the coin reduced into any shape of the same fineness, whether by design or accident, should have exactly the same value that its weight would have in coin.

This test applied to any metal used as money makes the coin equal in value to its weight in the bullion of the same metal and fineness of which it is made, or vice versa. Every effort to fix the value of a standard in any other way has proved a failure. The imprint of the face of a king, emperor or dictator, made upon the coin, does not give it value. To impress a value has been tried many, many times, but it has as often failed. Such a coin may circulate for a time without question in the jurisdiction where made, but such time for its circulation is usually short, and the moment it gets beyond the jurisdiction which has attempted to give it value it depreciates to the actual value of the weight of the material of which it is made. The only impressions that should be made on the coin are its weight and its degree of fineness.

The gold standard is the standard of the United States; it in truth is the standard of the world. In the few countries where it has not been so made by positive enactment it is there no less the standard than if it was made so by written law. The further we make inquiry with reference to the standards of money I believe the more firmly convinced we will be that a law of nature has had most to do in fixing gold as the money standard of the world.

A comparatively few years ago the best known means of transportation on land was that afforded by domestic animals ridden or harnessed to the then best known designs of wagons or carriages, the animals used being determined in different countries by circumstances. Domestic animals are now used to a very limited extent for the carriage of passengers and freight on long distances. Steam and electricity where heavy loads must be transported and moved quickly, have largely supplanted the use of animals, just as the animals, possessing greater strength and endurance, supplanted to a great extent in the early history of the world man as a beast of burden. A century ago the winds of heaven were the chief propelling power for the transportation of mankind and all articles of commerce on the lakes, rivers and high seas. Better means were found, better propelling power, more rapid and satisfactory, was discovered in the utilization of steam and electricity. Iron is better adapted to the construction of ships than wood, consequently the iron steamship has

largely supplanted the wooden ship equipped with canvas sails.

Before the discovery of steam, the nation and individual were content to transmit news and important communications by the stage coach, pony express or by slow sailing vessels. We might go on indefinitely in our illustrations. Suppose that Great Britain, in her intercourse with her colonies, or with the world, should say that because a century ago she carried on her commerce successfully in the craft of the period, and sent her dispatches by the means customary at that time, she would now return to those methods, and that the telegraph lines should be removed; that the ocean cables should be permitted to go into disuse; that the great iron steamships which play a most important part in the commerce between nations should be moored at the quays to decay, and that in all things in which advances have been made she would return from the present modes of transacting business to the mode of a century ago. The world would soon discover that Great Britain had lost her prestige in the world of business and intelligence, and that she had reached her summit of growth, and that hereafter her condition would be that of retrogression.

With reference to what metal shall be considered and used as the standard of money there has not been less growth than in the improvements

which have been made in the commerce of the world. At one time iron was good enough for a money metal. It supplied all the qualities required for money at the time it was used. The same may be said of copper and brass. The world has advanced, not however as the result of any law or positive enactment. It has reached the conclusion that gold only, so far as it has learned, of all substances, is best adapted as a money standard. It is convenient; it is well-nigh indestructible; it is of that bulk in proportion to the labor required to produce it as to most nearly satisfy all that is desired as a money standard in one jurisdiction and in all jurisdictions; and it is well adapted to all the demands of the commercial nations as the money metal. It is sufficiently abundant. The world's test of it is the test to which we have alluded. Its bullion value is the same as its coin value. It has outstripped all other metals, and no other metal, so far as we today know, can supply its place for all that is required of it as a money standard. In saying this, we do not want to be understood as undervaluing the use of silver as money in small transactions, or what is commonly known as token money. Silver has many of the qualities possessed by gold; it is hard to destroy; it is clean, and for money of small denominations it is well adapted, but because of its bulk in proportion to the labor required to produce