

THE GOLD STANDARD IN JAPAN.

The Experiences Which Led to Its Adoption—How It Is Affecting the Industries of the Country.

Mr. S. Uchida, consul for Japan at New York, has written a very interesting sketch of the experiences of his country with different monetary systems in the last thirty years. During that time it has tried the gold standard, the silver standard, the double standard and an inconvertible paper currency, such as our greenbacks were during and for a time after the war. In short, Japan has put to the test all of the theories about money which governments are urged by conflicting schools of political economy to adopt. Mr. Uchida writes of these experiences entertainingly and with the intelligence of one who understands the whole subject. The article has much instruction in it for the people of this country, and if its value is appreciated it will have wide publication. It appears in the columns of "Public Policy," a Chicago weekly of high class, edited by Allen Ripley Foote.

Mr. Uchida shows that the gold standard was nominally established by Japan soon after it opened commercial relations with the outside world. It early learned that it must unify its local currencies, then in a chaotic condition, and that it should have a standard of value bearing some definite relation to that used by the world, in which it had become a factor. Unfortunately, just as this reform was begun, the government was forced to grapple with rebellion, and its expenses being enormous, it resorted, like our own country, to repeated issues of paper money. It was obliged to abandon all pretense of keeping this paper currency at par with gold. The latter passed out of circulation and was quoted at a premium.

Japan also tried a national bank currency, modeled after ours, but as it was redeemable in the government paper money, the bank notes suffered the same discount.

The next step was to admit silver to free coinage and make it a full legal tender. This gave nominally the double standard, but in practice the depreciated paper expelled all silver as well as gold. Gold, silver and paper were alike legal tender, but no two of the same value. Nothing more is required to show that something besides the legal tender quality is required in money.

At this time, 1881, Count Matsukata, the same statesman who lately established the gold standard, became minister of finance. He determined to resume specie payments upon a silver basis. His plan was: First, to pay off the government notes, cancel them and issue no more; second, to compel the national banks to pay off their notes and retire them; third, to organize one great central bank of issue, modeled after the

Imperial Bank of Germany, [which should have the exclusive privilege of issuing paper money and be required to always redeem the same in silver.

This tied the currency to silver. It relieved the country from the fluctuations of an irredeemable paper currency, which had been found injurious to all interests, but Count Matsukata was of the opinion that Japan had not yet the best system obtainable. He believed the adoption of the gold standard would be another step of progress, and, indeed, was indispensable if that country aspired to a prominent commercial position.

Accordingly, in 1893, was appointed a monetary commission of fifteen members to investigate the whole subject. It was composed of high officials, professors of the University of Japan, members of the Diet, and business men eminent in the commerce of the country. The outcome of its investigations was the decision that the country should adopt the gold standard.

Mr. Uchida tells this story in its interesting details, and his account of how the government carried the reform to successful issue shows it to have been one of the most ably conducted operations in the annual of government finance. The change to the gold standard was made without any violation of existing equities by establishing a new gold unit, corresponding to the value of the existing silver unit. The indemnity received from China furnished the gold required to take up the silver yen coins, and the latter were either advantageously sold or reminted into subsidiary coins. The entire plan as laid out in advance was carried through, and Japan placed securely on a gold basis.

Mr. Uchida shows that the results of the change have thus far been gratifying to those who advocated it. The industries of the country are prosperous, its commerce is increasing rapidly, wages are advancing, the revenues of the government are satisfactory, and the action commands the approval of the people.

The experience of Japan has covered so completely the whole field that debate ranges over, and Mr. Uchida has told the story with such detail and with such clear appreciation of the facts that are important, that the article is very instructive. It is certain to be read with great interest in this country, and it will help our people to a clearer understanding of the great laws that control the value of money and its relations to industry and trade.

"Mr. Danforth's hope of a reunited democracy cannot be realized till all be changed," says the Richmond Times (dem.). "There can be no sincere and genuine reunion of the democratic party until populists have been excluded, populism abandoned, and democratic principles reasserted and reestablished."

THE FALL MIGRATIONS.

A rush of wings through the darkening night,
A sweep through the air in the distant height.

Far off we hear them, cry answering cry;
'Tis the voice of the birds as they southward fly.

From sea to sea, as if marking the time,
Comes the beat of wings from the long, dark line.

O, strong, steady wing, with your rhythmic beat,
Flying from cold to the summertime heat:

O, keen glancing eye, that can see so far,
Do you guide your flight by the northern star?

* * * * *

The birds from the north are crossing the moon,
And the southland knows they are coming soon.

With gladness and freedom and music gone,
Another migration is passing on.

No long, dark lines o'er the face of the moon;
No dip of wings in the southern lagoon.

No sweet, low twitter, no welcoming song;
These are birds of silence that sweep along.

Lifeless and stiff, with the death-mark on it,
This "Fall Migration" on hat and bonnet.

And the crowd goes by, with so few to care
For this march of death of the "fowls of the air."

* * * * *

A bier for dead birds—has it come to that—
Must this be our thought of a woman's hat?

—MARY DRUMMOND.

J. Sterling Morton says that in 1861, Thos. L. Fortune, of Mt. Pleasant, this county, wrote to a Nebraska City man saying he had invented a steam wagon for crossing the plains at the rate of ten miles an hour, and adding that he had a sample machine on exhibition in Atchison. Who knows what became of the steam wagon? Mr. Morton wants to know something about it, as he is writing a history of Nebraska in connection with Dr. Geo. L. Miller. Mr. Fortune is quoted as saying in his letter that the steam wagon was not a new idea, as the Chinese used it thousands of years ago. (Later.—Clem. Rohr, who knows everything, says the steam wagon referred to was exhibited in Atchison July 4, 1861, and ran away on lower Commercial street. Levi Loser had his pants torn off in the runaway, and Luther Challiss' store was injured. Fortune, the inventor of the machine, came here from the South, and the machine broke him up. John Bemer married Fortune's widow. Doug. Fortune, who works for the Missouri Pacific, is Tom Fortune's son. Mrs. Mary E. Hayes, an old resident living south of town, says Fortune's steam machine was made in Kickapoo, and that it started to Denver, and broke down somewhere on the Platte river, where it rotted. Clem. Rohr says hundreds of people followed the machine around the streets of Atchison July 4, 1861, until it met with the accident mentioned above.)—From The Atchison Daily Globe.

"He who has no substance and yet has a trade is not poorer than he, who, possessing ten acres of land, is obliged to cultivate it for his subsistence."