

FINANCIAL OUTLOOK IN THE UNITED STATES.

The latest circular of Henry Clews & Co. says:

"Rarely, in the history of national elections, have the people been called upon to choose between more vital issues; and it is to the last degree important that there should be a clear conception respecting the interests at stake. The public choice is between the continuance of a basis under which gold or its equivalents may be demanded in the settlement of all contracts; and a basis under which silver dollars alone would be used in payments; such dollars being sixteen times the weight of the gold dollar. At the present value of silver bullion, the silver dollar would need to weigh about thirty times the weight of the gold dollar, in order to make the two coins of equal value. It follows, therefore, that if, as demanded by the silverites, any holder of silver bullion can have his metal minted into dollars at the rate of 16 weights of the white metal to one of the yellow, the dollars so coined would have an intrinsic or metallic value of only about one-half that of the gold dollar.

"It is proposed that this deteriorated dollar shall be coined without limit, whether from silver imported or that coming from the home mines. It is also proposed that these dollars shall be a legal tender to any amount in the liquidation of contracts. Under this scheme the United States would stand exposed to an issue of silver dollars limited only by the world's entire current production and its accumulated stocks of coined silver. What would prove to be the depreciation of the silver dollar, under such conditions, it is impossible to tell. One of the first effects of the change would be for the European nations to exchange, as far as possible, their 1,500 millions of silver bullion and coin for our gold. Besides that, under the natural law by which an inferior currency always displaces a superior one, our supply of gold would leave the country. In this way, we should lose our gold circulation and become an exclusively silver-paying nation with an attendant enormous loss of the only stable form of money and a consequent contraction of the circulation. We should then be upon the same monetary basis as China, Japan, Mexico and third-rate nationalities. Provided silver kept its present bullion value, our dollar would then be worth a fraction over one-half of its present valuation; and to that extent the purchasing power of our entire paper circulation would also be diminished. All our mercantile debts outstanding when this state of affairs took effect would become payable in this depreciated money, excepting those made under special contract payable in gold. The national debt and the interest upon it would be legally payable in the same stuff; inasmuch as the law authorizing the bonds makes them payable 'in coin,' without stipulation as to whether the coin shall be of silver or of gold. The many thousands of millions of real estate mortgages, and of bonds of every form, and the interest upon all corporate stocks, all of which are now payable in gold or its representatives, would then become payable in the silver money of unknown value. Thus, the enormous sum of national investments and the wealth which they represent would not only lose their stable gold standard of value, but would become enormously depreciated, and their price would be ever fluctuating with the oscillating price of silver bullion. The 2,700 millions of private deposits in banks and trust companies would suffer in the same way, and so would the 1,800 millions of the workmen's accumulations in savings banks, as they would become payable in the same depreciated dollar. What would become of our foreign credit may be inferred from the fact that we have from 1,500 to 2,000 millions of investment securities outstanding in foreign countries, a large part of which would become payable in this deteriorated coin.

"These are some of the more obvious consequences that would immediately follow the adoption of unrestricted coinage of silver in the ratio of sixteen parts of the white metal to one of the yellow. What would follow it is not difficult to foresee. Our credit system would be paralyzed, if not ruined. Capitalists who are conducting vast industrial enterprises would necessarily be seriously embarrassed. The ruin of producers would be inevitable and great suffering of the employed classes would naturally follow. If the real nature and consequences of this free-coinage craze are fully understood, there can be no danger of the

country being committed to it. The St. Louis convention affords a reasonably certain assurance that the danger will be escaped. But with such a popular fanaticism as now infests the West and the South, it is no time to take anything for granted. The true course, in the presence of the coming campaign, is to calculate upon the worst, and to work with might and main for the best. No man can perform his duty without using his whole influence in the work of public enlightenment."

WHAT IS A GOLDBUG?

Has not this folly gone on long enough? There are many signs that the turning point has been reached; that the people are realizing the fact that they have been deluded in this matter. For the first time in many years several of our State conventions have been afraid to say "gold standard" in their platforms, and to speak of "gold" instead of "coin" or "sound money" merely. This shows an awakening of courage, and the time may soon come when some of our public men can hear themselves called "goldbugs" without shying or shivering. What is a goldbug? Simply a man who insists that the people of the country shall have the best possible kind of money in which to transact their business; that the laborer shall be paid in the best money only; that the widow and the orphan who live on the interest of the money which has been left to them, shall not be cheated of half their principal and interest by having a fifty-cent silver dollar substituted for a one-hundred-cent gold one.

There is not a truer benefactor of all the people in this country to-day than the goldbug, for he is contending for the maintenance of trade and commerce and industry, for the just dealings of man with his fellow-men—in short, for civilization itself.—*The Century*.

CARGO AND SPEED RECORD—LAKE FREIGHT SHIPS.

It may give readers abroad an idea of the size and speed of modern steamers on the Great Lakes, if we give the *Marine Review's* record of several trips.

The Mutual Line steamer "Coralia" has carried from Escanaba, on Lake Michigan, to Ashtabula, Ohio, on a draft of 16 feet 1½ inches, a cargo of ore that is larger than the big cargo which the "S. S. Curry" carried between Escanaba and South Chicago on 18 feet draft of water. Following is the correct record:

Iron Ore—"Coralia," Mutual Transportation Co. of Cleveland, 4,738 gross, or 5,307 net tons, Escanaba to Ashtabula, draft of 16 feet 1½ inches; "S. S. Curry," Hawgood & Avery Transit Co. of Cleveland, 4,569 gross tons or 5,117 net tons, Escanaba to South Chicago, draft of 18 feet. Lake Superior cargoes—Schooner "Aurania," John Corrigan, of Cleveland, 3,928 gross or 4,399 net tons, Duluth, Lake Superior, to Ashtabula, on 14 feet 4 inches draft.

Grain—"Selwyn Eddy," Eddy Transportation Co., of Bay City, 130,820 bushels of wheat, Detroit to Buffalo; steel schooner "Martha," Minnesota Steamship Co., 163,000 bushels of corn, South Chicago to Erie, on 15 feet 4 inches; "S. S. Curry," Hawgood & Avery Transit Co. of Cleveland, 246,673 bushels of oats, Chicago to Buffalo.

Coal—"S. S. Curry," Hawgood & Avery Transit Co., of Cleveland, 4,535 net tons bituminous, Conneaut to Gladstone; "Selwyn Eddy," Eddy Bros., of Bay City, Mich., 4,252 net tons anthracite, Buffalo to Milwaukee.

Speed—"Owego," Union Line, of Buffalo, Buffalo to Chicago, 889 miles, 45 hours and 16 minutes, or at the rate of 16.4 miles an hour; "Centurion," Hopkins Steamship Co., of St. Clair, Mich., Buffalo to Duluth, 997 miles, 67 hours and 50 minutes, equal to 14.7 miles an hour.

MUNICIPAL FIRE INSURANCE.

Various attempts have been made in different European countries to establish a system of state or municipal fire insurance, and the most successful examples are to be found in that nursery of European democracy—Switzerland. In Zurich and several other cantons, fire insurance is made a part of cantonal government. One of the best laws on the subject is in operation in Basel-Stadt, one of the smallest of Swiss

cantons, containing only 73,000 people—less than the population of a small local government district. The town of Basel has a population of 60,000, so that the community is largely an urban one. The fire insurance law is administered by the "General Obligatory Mutual Fire Insurance Institution," operating under the Department of Finance. The law is not only compulsory, but the system is a monopoly, as buildings insured by it are not allowed to carry additional insurance. Several classes of buildings are excluded from the operation of the law, including churches which belong to the state, buildings of less value than 300f., when situated some distance from towns and villages, as they, perhaps, run little or no risk, and buildings which are of too hazardous a nature, such as theatres and powder mills.

A valuation commission appointed by the Government council, values the buildings in the presence of the owner or his agents. The value is determined "by the amount which at the time of valuation the buildings in their then existing construction would cost for material and labor with deductions for age, use, poor state of repairs, etc." Local advantage or sight value does not influence the valuation, and moveable objects, such as machines or parts of machinery, are excluded. Buildings are divided into four classes according to the nature of the risk, and the premiums are graduated accordingly. Dwelling houses and all buildings not used for manufacturing purposes pay a premium of 50c. per 1,000f. value, or 5d. per £40. Ordinary manufactories and workshops pay 80c. per 1,000f. Places of greater hazard, such as breweries, distilleries, gas works, tobacco factories, pay 1f. 20c. per 1,000f., while class four, including chemical factories, dyeing works, and a few more places where the risk is still greater, pay at the rate of 1f. 80c. Where the hazard is exceptional, and in the case of buildings partly constructed of wood, an addition which must never exceed 5f. on each 1,000f. is made.—*Contemporary Review*.

—As to the production of the chemical fertilizers, the chairman of the English Chemical Manure Association states that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland produces nearly 1,000,000 tons of superphosphates annually; Germany, 800,000; France, 750,000; Belgium, 300,000; Denmark and Holland, 200,000; Italy, 50,000; and the United States, 1,000,000 tons; altogether 4,000,000 tons, of the value of £10,000,000 sterling. In addition to that, nitrates are used to the value of £8,000,000, ammonia to the value of £2,500,000.

—In one of his last letters addressed to Judge E. R. Hoar, the late J. Russell Lowell wrote thus whimsically of a painful disorder from which he suffered much: "Even in the very frenzy of it's (the gout's) attack I have found topics of conciliatory reflection. Is it podagra? I think how much better I am off than the poor centipedes must be. Is it chiragra? I imagine Briareus roaring. I call my gout the unearned increment from my good grandfather's Madeira, and think how excellent it must have been, and sip it cool from the bin of fancy, and wish he had left me the cause instead of the effect."

—An Order-in-Council is published, unofficially, granting an extension of time, for three years from the 1st October next, for completing the Chignecto Marine Transport Railway. The company represents that it has expended between \$3,000,000 and \$4,000,000 on the works, which will require \$1,000,000 more to complete, and that the necessary capital can be raised only on its receiving an extension of time for the completion of the undertaking. The order granting this extension will require the ratification of Parliament. Technically the subsidy, an annual payment for a number of years, was forfeited by the failure of the company to finish the work within the time stipulated. By a minute of Council, October 21, 1893, the Government refused to re-arrange the subsidy, as asked by the company, and since then the annual payments have been withheld. Last session Parliament, by a small majority, refused to sanction an extension of time for the completion of the work; but few regarded this action as finally decisive of the question. The question whether a mere extension of the time would revive the subsidy was answered in the negative. No Orders-in-Council involving the payment of money can become effective till they have received ratification by Parliament.