

fixed as the race itself. Yet, as Mr. Argo justly remarks, in one of his biographies, addressed to the French Academy—The moral transformations of society are subject to the laws of continuity; they rise and grow, like the productions of the earth, by imperceptible gradations, each century develops, discusses, and adapts to itself, in some degree, truths—or, if you prefer it, *principles*—of which the conception belonged to a preceding century; this work of the mind usually goes on without being perceived by the vulgar; but when the day of application arrives, when *principles* claim their part in practice, when they aim at penetrating into political life, the ancient interests, if they have only this same antiquity, to invoke in their favour, become excited, resist, and struggle, and society is shaken to its foundation. The tableau will be complete, gentlemen, when I add, that, in these obstinate conflicts, it is never the *principles* that succumb.”

The following quotation is from the “*City of gold*,” in Blackwood’s Magazine for September, 1864, in which, after directing the attention of its readers to the causes of the rise and fall of gold, and the unsuitable nature of a varying standard of value, and stating that the *Paper currency* of the Bank of England never varies, that unlimited confidence has always been placed in it, whether the Bank stopped payment or redeemed its notes in gold, and thus exhibits the fallacy of gold currency, and the ruinous losses that occur through it:

“But never—not in a single instance—is gold demanded from the Bank from any loss of faith in its notes. No one doubts the value of the Bank of England’s notes, and the power of converting them into gold is never desired save as a means of procuring gold for export, by the parties and for the purposes which we have specified.

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“This City of Gold is based upon gold, and the foundation is found to be pre-eminently unstable and perilous. The golden base perpetually oscillates to and fro, and each of its greater oscillations is felt like the shock of an earthquake. It rises and falls, expands and contracts, and sometimes seems to slip away from beneath the city altogether. Then goodly houses go down by the dozen, not because they are ill-built, not from any fault of the architect and occupants, but simply because the foundation upon which they

all stand has given way. Of late years these oscillations have become more frequent and more serious; and every ten years or so, a convulsion takes place—not of nature, but by Act of Parliament—which spreads terror and disaster through the Golden City, and paralyses the whole country as effectually as if an earthquake had strewn with ruins the great seats of our national industry. The merchant and the manufacturer, the shopkeeper and the day-laborer, alike find their trade stopped, and their gains swept away. Suffering and want spread over the land, as if there were a great famine. There is a paralysis of trade, a dearth of employment; and the hard times are felt by the mill-worker and the bricklayer, not less than by the magnates of the trading and commercial world. Is there not something wrong here? Ought the presence or absence of a few millions of gold to make the vast difference between national prosperity on the one hand, and national disaster and widespread suffering on the other? How will posterity speak of us when it sees that we made the huge fabric of our national industry stand like an inverted pyramid, resting on a narrow apex formed of a chamberful of yellow dross? Will they not laugh at our folly, our barbarism? When the usual supply of gold is temporarily diminished, why should our usual credit-system be restricted in proportion, or totally suspended? Of what use is Credit but to take the place of payments in coin? Was it not for this purpose, and for this alone, that credit and paper-money were adopted? Why, then, not make use of our credit-system as a means of compensating the temporary absence of gold? Why not tide over the difficulty instead of aggravating it? and so avoid the tremendous sufferings which are ever-recurrent under our present system of monetary legislation. Suffering thousands and starving myriads signalise each great monetary crisis. Even during the last year, though the crisis of evil has been escaped, the usurious Bank rate of nine or ten per cent has swept away the profits of trade into the pockets of bankers and capitalists. Parliament inflicts misery upon the country out of an antiquated deference to some bits of yellow dross. Is this wisdom, is it humanity, is it civilisation? It is barbarism and folly, preached up by the moneyed interest, the high priests of Mammon, at the expense of the community.”

In the foregoing quotations we have presented the latest views on currency by