

Succeeding kings coined rose-nobles and double rose-nobles, great sovereigns, half Henry nobles, angels and shillings.

During the last fifty years the subject of regulating the relative value of gold and silver has occupied considerable attention, and been a source of much inconvenience in most commercial communities.

The relative value of these metals being governed, like that of other commodities, by supply and demand, frequent and sometimes important variations in their relative value have occurred. These variations have been produced by two causes, viz., the relative supply obtained from the gold and silver mines, and the action of different countries in making the one or the other the money standard. The recent gold discoveries have had the effect of still further deranging the relative value of these metals. This subject, as well as the comparative value of money and commodities at different periods, is one intimately connected with the question of money, and will be considered in a future number.

Intimately connected with the subject of Money is that of Banks and Banking, which now exercises such an important influence on the trade of the world. The same causes which first rendered the precious metals such objects of desire, and consequently of so great value, had also an important influence in leading to the establishment of banks, and to that system of banking which has added so much to the facilities of commerce. A merchant trading in some distant country prefers to dispose of his merchandise for some commodity of great value but small bulk—something which he can hide if overtaken by an enemy—something which rust will not corrupt, nor time destroy—something which the miser can hoard in safety, and the provident put past for future need. Fire may consume the dwelling, with the savings of years of industry and toil, but gold and silver come through the fire only purer and better. Whether, therefore, as a medium of exchange, or a safe investment, the precious metals, in a rude state of society, stood unequalled.

But the hoarding or even the safe keeping of a hundred small sums required the constant watchfulness of a hundred individuals. Many weak persons would naturally seek the protection of the strong in whom they had confidence, and place their valuables in their hands for safe keeping. The division of labour, as mankind advanced, would soon place in the keeping of a few men what previously required the watchfulness of many; and a rude system of banking would be inaugurated such as we see illustrated in many remote parts of our own country, where the poor labourer or industrious mechanic places his savings in the hands of his employer, or in that of the magistrate or country merchant, where he has confidence of its safety.

But in time the opulent experience the same difficulty in securing their savings as the poor, and a few of those unite together and provide a place of safety at their joint expense. This would constitute a Bank of Deposits. "Of this sort," says an able writer in *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*; "was the first bank of importance of which we have any authentic history, and was the Bank of Venice, established in 1171. It was a governmental institution, and existed for some 600 years, affording great conveniences to the commerce not only of Venice, but of a great part of Europe.

"The Bank of Amsterdam, a similar institution, was established in the Netherlands in 1609. It received on deposit all the coins then in circulation,