

AN OMINOUS PLATFORM.

The platform adopted by the Democratic delegates convened at Chicago is in several features a melancholy exhibition of crude ideas in regard to economic and political questions. The adoption by a representative body, which voices the judgment so called of the dominant party at the last elections, of the free silver plank is a distinct menace to the monetary and commercial interests of the United States. The effect in England has been to bring down upon the Democrats the sharp denunciations of all the prominent organs of public opinion, whose judgment unanimously condemns the platform adopted at Chicago as "most deplorable." The exact words of the platform adopted in regard to currency are as follows:

"We declare that the Act of 1873 demonetizing silver without the knowledge or approval of the American people has resulted in the appreciation of gold and a corresponding fall in the prices of commodities produced by the people, a heavy increase in the burden of taxation and of all debts, public and private; the enrichment of the money-lending class at home and abroad; the prostration of industry and impoverishment of the people.

"We are unalterably opposed to monometallism, which has locked fast the prosperity of an industrial people in the paralysis of hard times. Gold monometallism is a British policy, and its adoption has brought other nations into financial servitude to London. It is not only un-American, but anti-American, and it can be fastened on the United States only by the stifling of that spirit and love of liberty which proclaimed our political independence in 1776 and won it in the war of the Revolution.

"We demand the free and unlimited coinage of both gold and silver at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1 without waiting for the aid or consent of any other nation. We demand that the standard silver dollar shall be a full legal tender equally with gold for all debts, public and private, and we favor such legislation as will prevent for the future demonetization of any kind of legal tender money by private contract."

The belief in the appreciation of gold leading to a corresponding fall in the prices of commodities, an increase of taxation, and prostration of industry, is as rational as witchcraft. Before any article can be truly said to have appreciated in value, its value must be demonstrated to have been a fixed sum before the alleged appreciation set in. This, in relation to gold, is an impossibility, for there is not now, nor has there ever been since money came into use, a fixed, unalterable, universally acknowledged standard for testing or appraising the value of gold. A yard measure, we all know, is an established length, and a standard is kept for regulating all yard sticks. Where is the measure which with like certainty enables judgment to be passed upon the value of gold to-day compared with its value in 1873? In that year so much gold was exchangeable for so much wheat, to-day these respective quantities are different. Who shall say whether this is owing to gold having advanced, or wheat receded in value? The evidence seems to us overwhelming in favor of the latter idea, for while the supply of gold has fully kept pace with the world's increased demands, the supply of wheat has enormously overshoot the supply per head in 1873. Since then the

wheat fields of Argentina, India, Australia, Manitoba have poured out enormous supplies of wheat, enlarging the supply by several hundred millions of bushels without any corresponding increase in the number of consumers. Necessarily wheat has gone down in value owing to the supply being super-abundant.

That silver has fallen heavily in value compared with gold is mainly owing to the over-stimulation of its production by the American silver party. Look at the facts. From 1793 to 1877, 85 years, the United States only coined \$8,031,238 in silver dollars and \$182,855,233 in subsidiary silver, yet the supply was sufficient for currency needs. During that time the ratio of silver to gold ranged from 16 to 1, to 17 to 1. From 1878 to 1896, 18 years, the United States coined silver to amount of \$429,289,916 in dollars, and \$38,371,349 in subsidiary silver. For 85 years, 1793 to 1877, the average coinage was \$2,250,000 yearly. For next 18 years, 1878 to 1896, the average coinage was \$26,000,000 yearly! Now note the effect. After this enormous supply of silver coins began, the ratio of silver to gold commenced to rise until in 1895 the ratio was 31.56 to 1, compared to 16 to 1 in preceding years. From 1833 to 1878 the price of silver ranged between 63 and 55 pence, after 1878 the prices ran down until in 1895 the average quotation was 30 pence. The supply was more than doubled, and consequently the value dropped to one half, just as the increased wheat supply decreased wheat values. Should the production of silver be again artificially forced, as is proposed, its value will take another drop, and we shall probably have silver dollars only worth 40 cents a legal tender for "all public debts" of 100 cents. What gold has to do with this, or with wheat prices falling, is inconceivable to those who are able to trace economic phenomena rationally to their causes. The American people, however, seem so prejudiced against England that they actually blame the gold standard currency of the old land for the fall in price of wheat! Those who have got this crazy notion into their heads, overlook that some things have advanced in value while wheat has been declining, so that, according to their theory, the advanced value of gold has depreciated certain values and appreciated others, which is like saying that gold values are both expansive and contractive at one and the same time. If any man, as is proposed, could buy \$1,000 worth of bullion, take it to the mint, have it coined into \$2,000 worth of coins which would be "a full legal tender for all debts, public or private," two things would happen: first, there would be such a demand for silver to enable dollar debts to be paid by 50 cents, that the metal would "appreciate" very rapidly; then, the enormous mass of silver coinage would become a drug, silver would collapse in value, and the last state of the country cursed with such a depreciated currency would be worse than the first.

That one phrase in the Democratic platform, "all public debts" to be payable in silver dollars, whatever may be their market value, if made a basis of legislation, as is demanded, would precipitate a cyclone of panic which would wreck every financial interest in