THE PRICE OF COTTON

GOVERNED BY THE LAW OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

Free Silverites Should Study This History of Production and Prices Since 1791. What the Record of Crops Proves—Silver Has No Effect on Prices.

The spread of free coinage sentiment in the southern states has been almost entirely due to the belief that the low price of cotton was caused by the adoption of the gold standard. The main argument of the advocates of a 50 cent dollar in this section of the country has been that the alleged demonetization of silver was the cause of the marked fall in cotton during the past 23 years.

A bulletin just issued by the department of agriculture giving the history of the production and price of cotton for over 100 years proves conclusively that the use of silver as money has nothing to do with the decline in value of cotton. Beginning with 1791, with a crop of 8,889 bales, worth on an average 26 cents per pound in the United States, the production rapidly increased during the next ten years to 210,526 bales, and the price at the same time advanced to 44 cents. In 1802 the crop was 241,228 bales, of which 120,619 were shipped to Great Britain, but, owing to the greatly increased supply and a large stock—154,000 bales—on hand at the close of the year, the price dropped to 19 cents per pound in New York.

In spite of this remarkable decrease in price the crop increased to 340,000 bales in 1810, worth 16 cents. In 1816 the crop was 457,565 bales, but the enormously increased demand from Great Britain forced prices up to 29½ cents, and the next year to 34 cents. These high prices caused an increase in the acreage of cotton, and by 1820 the crop was 606,061 bales and the price dropped to 17 cents. The production increasing, prices fell, in 1822, to 11.40 cents, and in 1827, with a crop of 957,281 bales, and with 562,360 bales in stock, to 9.29 cents.

By 1834 an increase in the European demand for cotton had advanced the price to nearly 13 cents, with a crop of 1,205,394 bales. For the next five years prices fluctuated widely, averaging from 7¼ to 20 cents per pound, and when, in 1840, the crop amounted to 2,177,855 bales, the average price went down to 8.92 cents. The great crops and the accumulation of large stocks in Liverpool caused a still further decline, in 1845 reaching 5 cents, the lowest recorded price, with a crop of 2,394,503 bales. By 1850 prices had advanced to 12.34 cents, and for the next ten years averaged about 11 cents, the crop increasing to 3,655,557 in 1856 and to 4,861,292 in 1860.

The war which broke out in 1861 brought on the "cotton panic," which lasted to 1866, when prices went as high as $1.89 per pound. The close of the war left many of the cotton growing states in an impoverished condition, and it was not until 1876 that the crop was as large as that of 1860. In the meantime the price had fallen with the gradual increase in production until in 1871, with a crop of 4,352,317 bales, it averaged 16.95 cents. In 1872 cotton was badly damaged by excessive rains, and with a crop of only 2,974,351 bales, the price reached 20.48. In 1880 the crop was 5,761,252 bales and the price had fallen to 12.02.

The increased European demand for a time prevented prices falling to the level of the decade previous to the war, but by 1889 the stock on hand began to increase beyond the demand, and in 1891 the unheard of crop of 8,652,597 bales forced the price down to 9.03 cents. In 1892 the crop was 9,035,379 bales, the stock on hand amounting to 2,253,000 bales. Prices fell to 7.64 cents, but advanced in 1893, when on account of unfavorable weather the crop fell off to 6,700,365 bales, to 8.24 cents. An increase to 7,549,817 bales in 1894 was followed by a decline in price, and the greatest crop on record in 1895, amounting to about 9,476,435 bales, brought down the price to 6.26.

The following table gives the comparative crops and stocks of cotton and the lowest and highest prices in the United States for two decades, showing that prices reached the lowest point during the years when the accumulation of surplus stocks was the largest, and that those were the years of largest crops:

1841—1850.

	Crops in United States. Bales.	Surplus in Europe at close year. Bales.	Middling upland per lb. in New Orleans. Cents.
1841	1,634,954	[illegible]	8 @12
1842	1,683,574	761,000	6¼ @[illegible]
1843	2,378,875	897,000	4½ @ 8
1844	[illegible]	[illegible]	5¾ @10¼
1845	[illegible]	1,101,000	4⅞ @ 7¾
1846	2,100,537	[illegible]	6½ @ 8½
1847	[illegible]	[illegible]	7½ @13
1848	[illegible]	[illegible]	5 @12
1849	[illegible]	[illegible]	5 @ 8¾
1850	[illegible]	[illegible]	9¼ @12⅜

[illegible]

	Crops in United States. Bales.	Surplus in Europe at close year. Bales.	Middling upland per lb. in New Orleans. Cents.
1886	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
1887	[illegible]	[illegible]	8½ @10¼
1888	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
1889	[illegible]	1,031,000	[illegible]
1890	[illegible]	[illegible]	9 7-16@11⅞
1891	[illegible]	[illegible]	7 11-16@10⅝
1892	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
1893	[illegible]	[illegible]	6 13-16@ 9 13-16
1894	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] @ 8 3-16
1895*	[illegible]	2,454,000	4⅞ @ 7

*The figures for 1895 are to July 1.

This record of crops and prices proves that instead of being caused by an increase or decrease in the use of silver money, the price of cotton depends in every case on the relation between supply and demand. [illegible] sulted in falling prices, and when in a few years with an increased crop prices advanced it was the increased European demand, which meant that the crop was not larger as compared with consumption, which regulated the price. The record further proves that in the year 1845, when the silverites claim that silver was the unit of value, the price of cotton in the United States was lower than at any time in the history of the country. In view of these facts we should hear no more of the price of cotton as a reason for debasing our currency by putting it on the silver standard.

ALL DEBTORS NOT DISHONEST.

Free Silver Means That Creditors Are to Lose 50 Per Cent.

Is the proposition for "free silver at 16 to 1" expedient and honest?

Stripped of verbiage, the proposition is for this government to embark in the immediate and unlimited coinage of silver dollars, each dollar to contain approximately 50 cents worth of silver bullion; to discard all provisions for guaranteeing the concurrent circulation and parity of gold and silver, and to compel by law the acceptance of the new dollars in payment of all debts.

The object is to reduce the value of the dollar about one-half, and by forcing creditors to take this dollar for debts to scale all existing obligations. The only exception will be where the shrewd creditor has stipulated for payment in gold. Such creditor will be paid in full, but the unsuspecting man or woman who has merely trusted to the honor of the nation is to be "done up," just in proportion as the dollar is scaled.

The Populists are solid for this scheme. It's in their line of business. They are opposed to a dollar having any intrinsic value, but if they must have a dollar worth anything at all the less it is worth the better it suits them. Very few Republicans take any stock in the scheme, and the more it is studied the sooner it will be dropped by all thinking men.

The agitators assume, because Kansas people are in debt, that every Kansas man ought to join in the clamor for such dollars. I deny that it is the duty of any man, because he lives in Kansas and is in debt, to favor a scheme which his conscience tells him is wrong.

I am as much in debt as the average Kansan, but I cannot see why this fact should blind the conscience or destroy the ability of a man to reason on such questions. I believe in bimetallism and in the use of the largest volume of silver as standard money which can be maintained at a parity with our gold and paper money, so that all of our dollars will be equal for all purposes. But the Harvey programme is merely a scheme to scale our standard dollar—in which all contracts have been made—for the purpose of robbing creditors.

If these agitators simply wanted to cheapen the dollars for use in future business transactions, they would advocate a law making the new dollars legal tender for future debts only. But that's not what they want. They insist that these new cheap dollars must be made a legal tender for all debts.

I am opposed to that because it is dishonest. If anybody can prove that it is honest, I will be glad to be for it. But he must prove it by some better argument than the threadbare assertion that John Sherman conspired with the Rothschilds to rob innocent people 20 years ago, for even if that idiotic statement were true it would be no reason why you and I should conspire to rob a much-larger number of equally innocent people today.—George L. Douglass in Kansas City Star.

Red Riding Hood Up to Date.

"But, grandma, what long, stiff ears you have got?"

"The better to hear what you say, my darling," said the wolf, and his eyes glared greener than ever.

"What large green eyes you have got, grandma!" said little Red Riding Hood, so frightened she knew not what to say.

"The better to see you with, my child," chuckled the wolf, showing his ugly teeth.

"Grandma, what a large mouth, and, oh, what big teeth you have got!"

"Ah, ah, ah, the better to tear you to pieces and eat you with," said the wolf, throwing off his disguise.

Wouldn't Suit Them.

We would offer no objection to the unlimited use of silver at its real value. Let the government offer to coin it into pieces of convenient size and stamp them according to their weight and fineness and let them pass current at their actual value. How many of the silver owners would take advantage of their silver in that way? Not any, but no fairer plan can be offered.—West Alabamian.

SILVER IN MEXICO.

HOW THE LABORER IS ROBBED BY THE CHEAP DOLLAR.

The Condition of the Toiler In That Country Is a Warning to Be Heeded—Wages Merely a Pittance, and Living Is Made Higher by Free Silver.

Some things would seem to be so certain that it is a waste of time to argue about them. Among these is the condition of the people of Mexico, which everybody knows, is in every respect inferior to that of the people of the United States. Yet the silverites have cheek enough to brazenly claim that the Mexicans are more prosperous than we are. The following letter, recently published in the New York Sun, shows the real facts as to Mexico's alleged prosperity:

MEXICO, July 6, 1895.

The fight over the financial question now on in the United States is watched with eagerness and interest by mine owners here. Whenever the United States throws open her mints to the free and unlimited coinage of silver the mining property of Mexico will be enhanced in value in the same proportion as that in Colorado, though experience has shown that the salary of the laborer will be the same, at least so far as Mexico is concerned. The dividend of the stockholder will alone be increased.

The average of wages ranges from 12½ to 25 cents a day in the cities and haciendas or plantations of Mexico, and in the remote mining districts it is a little more. All laborers have to "find" themselves in Mexico. On all plantations there are stores owned by the landlord. What is usually earned by labor on the land is always spent with the owner of it.

The question naturally arises, especially after one has heard the promises of the silver men on the floors of congress, Why have wages not risen in Mexico? Why, even on a silver basis, are they so much lower than the lowest paid in the United States? It must be remembered, too, that the wages paid here are in a depreciated coin, worth only half as much as the same amount received for labor in the United States.

On all sides one hears the answer that the silver basis in Mexico is not responsible for the low wages. This is partially true, but still wages have not increased or made any advance under the free coinage of silver. The chief argument of the silver men in the States seems to be that wages will advance and that the volume of currency will be largely inflated.

Nothing which has been promised by the silver men has come to pass here. Wages are lower and living higher. Since silver has decreased in value to about one-half, everything produced in this country which competes with the markets of the world has increased proportionately. The only products which have remained at nominally the old figure are those which are not grown for export and which do not come in contact with similar products grown in countries which have a sound currency. Even coffee, which is one of the staple products, has risen to such a point as to practically be beyond the reach of the peon and the laborer, while the only beef ever in reach of the peon is that which is cut from the dead animals after the bull fight.

Butter is so dear as to make it a luxury to all classes, and it is ordered in restaurants as dainties are. Beer, which is a standard drink here, sells for 15 cents a glass, and the only liquor which is to be had by the laboring classes is a native drink called "pulque," a milk-like looking beverage which produces some of the results of the malt product without possessing any of its virtues.

When these facts are pointed out to the silver man from the States, he at once says that such a condition of things could not exist there; that labor is too well organized to permit such a state of affairs to last. The politician as well as the laborer knows that there can be no fictitious value in labor, and, moreover, that less than 2 per cent of the great mass of labor in the United States is organized. The low wages here are not confined alone to what may be termed the laboring class, but all salaries are proportionately small. The best of clerks in the stores get from $50 to $100 a month. The most expert bookkeepers can seldom get more than from $60 to $90 a month. Yet in this class of life the clothes they wear, the food they eat, are bought at gold prices. While his salary is higher, yet the bookkeeper's necessities are so much the greater.

Argue as they will, there can be but one result from a silver basis in the United States, which should be made clear to all who are dependent for their living upon their labor. It is that wages would not be perceptibly increased, and that the purchasing power of those wages would be diminished almost half.

Rents have been steadily advancing here, and they would be put up in any country which depreciates its money. Whenever the United States goes upon a silver basis, the earning power of her laborers, artisans and clerks will be cut almost in two, while the clothes they wear, the houses they live in, the food they eat, will be increased almost double. Seeing the condition of the toiler and the peasant here, in a country upon a silver basis, it can be but the one prayer of an American visiting Mexico that his own country may be spared the folly of doing what would be an irreparable wrong.

AN AMERICAN DEMOCRAT.