

The Watchman and Southron.
WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 1894.

The Fluctuation of Silver.

From Harper's Weekly.
Kesepeh, or the white metal, as it was called by the Hebrews, has known endless fluctuations, yet has never ceased its vain rivalry with gold. Solomon was the first apparently to discredit it, and when silver grew so abundant in the Holy City that it was almost as plentiful as the stones of its streets, he very naturally refused to receive it as currency. He would take nothing but gold, and we are told by Josephus, for his merchandise, but paid away his depreciated silver to Egyptian traders for a chariot and a pair of horses. On this he rode out in state in the morning to his country-seat at Etham, a paradise of rivulets and gardens. Nothing could be bought or sold at Jerusalem for silver, says the historian, and only gold was valued.

The Greeks, when they first visited Spain, made their anchors and common utensils of silver. The white metal lost its value. But this could not continue long, for the richest silver mines at last grew unproductive, and in the seventh century B. C. the metal had once more risen to a higher price. It could once again compete with gold, at least at a distance. The first form of money was in stamped bars or ingots, with the weight certified by an official seal. The earliest known ingots were of gold. But about 700 B. C. Mr. Headus tells us money was first coined, and in the British Museum may be seen a Babylonian stater of electrum, a mingling of gold and silver, apparently the oldest coin in existence. Silver was for a time the common currency of the Greeks, but at last they adopted a gold standard. The fine gold pieces of Philip and Alexander have become the models of all later coinage.

At Rome the earliest money was of bronze; then silver came in as the standard; and when it grew too abundant, the Roman emperors borrowed the gold coinage of the East. The Roman solidus was worth, in gold, a sovereign or a half-eagle. But nowhere did silver money fluctuate more widely than at Rome; in the Hannibalic wars the currency was constantly debased; in moments of danger money was hoarded. But the victories of Caesar and his general robbery made it so plentiful at Rome that land doubled or trebled in price and money sank in value. Under Augustus, in the quiet of peace, it is probable that silver was worth about one-tenth its weight in gold. With the decay of the empire a debased currency filled the world with disaster, and aided in the general destruction of commerce and the arts. Silver in the Middle Ages rose in value with rarity, and was at times almost on an equality with gold. In Richard the First's time in England four shillings would buy a cow, a bull, or a horse for ploughing, and tence a sheep with fine wool. Yet again, with the conquest of Mexico and Peru, money fell, prices of labor and land increased; but the rapid growth of trade and commerce at the same period revived the demand for an honest currency. Silver and gold moved on together, and kept up a certain ratio to each other that was never greatly disturbed. It is only recently that the immense yield of our Western mines has nearly equalled that of ancient Spain when silver sank into discredit. But it will no doubt soon revive again. It cannot take the place of gold in the opinion of mankind—the source of value. But it will always hold a subsidiary position that no other metal can fill.

Nitrate of Soda for Gardens.

Nitrate of soda is not designed as a fertilizer for the large field crops alone. It acts beneficially on the small gardens, and for nearly all of the small vegetables and small fruits. There are many garden soils where potash and phosphoric acid need to be acted upon by nitrate of soda to combine them in the growing crops. It is difficult to tell how much such elements are in the soil, and how much nitrate of soda is required, but with a little experiment one can readily determine this. Ordinarily from 100 to 200 pounds applied to one acre of garden soil will answer all purposes, and most remarkable results are obtained. This amount will not injure small fruit or vegetables, but will often make them flourish better than any other application.

Strawberries often thrive on good soil after the application of the nitrate, although previously they seem to have had a struggle. The same is true of vegetables that appear to starve on very rich soil. The trouble with the soils of such gardens is that they have all the necessary manurial elements present, but they are not in a condition for the plants to make use of at once. In applying nitrate of soda to the garden it is always better to weigh out the amount desired, and then mix it with fine soil or sand about five times its quantity. Mix this thoroughly, so that in spreading it in the garden an even distribution will be obtained. The nitrate of soda deposited upon the leaves of tender plants might injure them, or if it came in direct contact in large quantities with the stalks or roots. Consequently in applying it to any growing plant it is better to scatter the mixture between the rows, so that

no part of it gets on the leaves. The next rain that comes will wash the nitrate into the soil, and the chemical process will begin immediately. It is a good idea to hoe or rake the garden right after applying the mixture, as the nitrate begins action more quickly then, as it gets incorporated into the soil immediately.

There are many advantages obtained from the use of nitrate of soda on soils that are rich with vegetable material, but it should never be used as a perfect manure. It is only a supplement to the others. It performs its best function when applied as a top dressing when the plants are up and growing. It stimulates them into new growth, and it will often hasten their maturity by one or two weeks. It is the common experience that crops, both of garden and field, that have been forced by nitrate of soda have a stronger tendency to resist parasitic diseases, and in wet, damp seasons these crops are the last ones to yield to the attacks of fungi. Nitrate of soda will never exhaust the land, but will simply make available the material in it. Continue to feed the land with proper barnyard manures, and the nitrate of soda will prepare their plant food for immediate use. Try it on your strawberries, vegetables and other garden crops.—S. W. Chambers, in American Cultivator.

Everybody thought last year's cotton crop was a small one, and yet seven million bales have been marketed and the receipts for one-third of the year, up to Sept. 1st, still to bear from.

The bimetallic conference now being held in London for the purpose of reaching an international agreement by which silver can be restored to its place as a money metal, has demonstrated quite conclusively that sentiment in favor of the free coinage of gold and silver at a ratio to be fixed by common agreement between all the great commercial nations of the world is rapidly growing in Europe, and especially in England and Germany.—New Orleans States.

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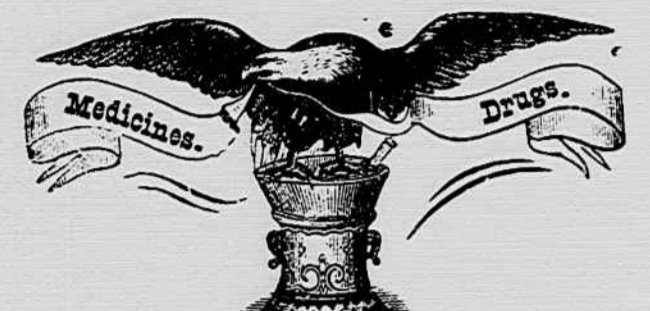
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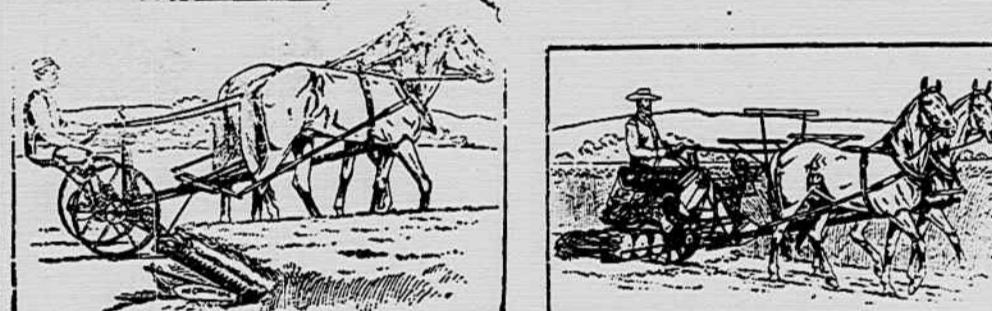
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Dailies, weeklies, monthlies, will be found there. Also, the Library from the S. L. I. has been removed to the rooms of the Y. M. C. A.

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