Paper Money Men
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Commerce, Manhood, and the Sensational Public Sphere in Antebellum America

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As we proceed to develop our investigation, we shall find, in general, that the characters who appear on the economic stage are mere personifications of economic relations; it is as the bearers of these economic relations that they come into contact with each other.

—Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume 1* (1867)

I love the paper money, and the paper money men;
My hundred, if they go to pot, I fear would sink to ten . . .

I hold the paper money men say truly, when they say
They ought to pay their promises, with promises to pay;
And he is an unrighteous judge, who says they shall or may,
Be made to keep their promises in any other way.

—Thomas Love Peacock, *Paper Money Lyrics* (1837)