

PROGRESS OF GOVERNMENT IN 100 YEARS

THE OREGONIAN'S HOME STUDY CIRCLE. DIRECTED BY PROF. SEYMOUR EATON

COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF TWO CENTURIES

IX.

Political Conditions in 1800.

From the government point of view, the 18th century will be notable in all future history as the era of the triumph of democracy. The beginning of the movement for political liberty dates back to the early medieval period of European history, but a review of conditions at the opening of this century shows that the long struggle had resulted in the establishment of a government in only two nations. Great Britain had established a Parliamentary government on a sure basis, and, building on foundations of English precedent, the House of Commons had passed through a whirlwind of fire and blood in a desperate attempt to realize the ideal of equality and equality of rights. But just as the century opened Napoleon wrested from the unhappy nation the doubtful freedom which it had bought at a price which appalled humanity, and the republic was crushed by a military despotism as absolute as the regime of Louis XIV. A review of the rest of the world shows the monarchial principle firmly entrenched save in little Switzerland.

The Triumph of Democracy.

As we look abroad today at the close of the century we see self-government established in more or less perfect measure in every civilized country of the world save Russia. Among the great nations America and Great Britain now stand as types of the most perfect democracy that the world has ever known. In the United States the monarchial institutions still exist, but the royal prerogative is very narrowly limited, and the will of the people finds full expression in free parliaments. The final establishment of government by the people throughout the larger part of the civilized world is the crowning glory of a century which is replete with glorious achievements in every field of human activity.

The general process of democracy which has characterized the century has worked under widely different conditions in different countries, and to follow its action we must glance briefly at the governmental development of a few important nations.

The Development of the United States.

In America the opening of the century found government by the people in successful operation under the present Constitution. For nearly a century before the United States had been an independent Republic under the Declaration of 1776, and for a decade it had enjoyed efficient National Government. The first philosophical of the day felt that republican government in America was an experiment of doubtful issue. The modern world showed no other instance of such government except in the very feeble Republic of Switzerland, and the stability of democracy on a large scale was yet to be proved.

But, although they were pioneers in a perplexing field, the framers of our Constitution succeeded in establishing a government on such wise lines that the fundamental principles of the very few small changes during more than a century of growth. Nevertheless, while the form of the Constitution has remained practically unaltered, our Government has been changing constantly in spirit and method. By ever broadening interpretation of the written Constitution, the system has been adjusted to changing demands. Thus the Republic of 1800, although its fundamental law has been amended very slightly, the great change which has been wrought may be expressed as the evolution from a virtual aristocracy to a real democracy.

From Aristocracy to Democracy.

It is commonly believed that the founders of our Nation were ardent advocates of democratic equality. That this is a mistaken conception appears from an examination of the form of government which they established when they had achieved independence. In the first place, the laws of the various states greatly restricted the voting privileges. Universal manhood suffrage was not an 18th-century idea, even in the more democratic America. It was the fashion of the day to declare that the voice of the people is the voice of God, but they wanted to select the people. A glance at the Federal Constitution also shows how far the Revolutionary statesmen from implicit confidence in the people. For instance, the original electoral college system, of choosing the President, was an attempt to secure an aristocratic, not a democratic, choice. The provision for the election of Senators by state legislatures is a striking evidence of lack of faith in direct popular action.

But the century was still young when the people asserted their right to make direct choice of their President and discovered a way to do this under the Constitution by the device of pledged electors. Next they took into their hands the nomination of their candidates for the Presidency. At first restrictions were made by Congressional caucus, but clamor for a more democratic choice suspended this method after 1824, and, after a period of confusion, they developed about 1830 the present representative National convention. Meantime property qualifications and other restrictions on the suffrage were steadily relaxed, and the political parties were organizing on the primary plan of representation.

These movements are simply symptomatic of the development of the Nation, and the first demand that this should be as direct a government by the people as it was possible to arrange. The latest manifestation of this spirit is the widespread agitation for the introduction of the referendum on a plan similar to that employed in Switzerland. Many political scientists believe that we Americans have gone too far and are too far on this road toward the most extreme democracy. They believe that restrictions on the suffrage which would exclude the ignorant and irresponsible from our present citizenship would insure better government. But this academic discussion has no apparent influence on practical politics. Democracy has advanced triumphantly in America, and the solution of our difficulties must come through the education of this democracy.

Democracy in Great Britain.

As we turn to Great Britain to note the development of a century, we are considering the country which first established self-government in the modern world. For 600 years and more from the beginning of our century the people of England had steadily pressed toward a free parliamentary government. During the 15th century they had beheaded one King and exiled another who attempted to rule without the consent of the governed. During the century that followed the cabinet system was perfected, and the responsibility of Ministers to the House of Commons was clearly defined. The crown had been brought under control of the popular will as expressed in Parliament, and the House of Lords had lost the larger part of its influence before 1800. The House of Commons was thus the real sovereign of England.

Nevertheless, England was not a democracy at the beginning of our century. The real governing body, the House of Commons, did not represent the people of England. A vicious system of electing members of the House deprived great masses of the people of all voice in the government, and gave into the hands of a few rich landowners the power to appoint a majority of the members of the Commons. Reform of the representation system began with the great act of 1832, and was perfected by subsequent acts of 1867 and 1884. The wrong of centuries was thus righted, and the House of

Commons began to reflect fairly the opinions of the British people. The reform of the representation was the one thing needed to make the government of Great Britain a real democracy, and thus the last battle of the greatest struggle for political liberty in all history was won in our century.

Republicanism in France.

The nation which stands beside the United States as the second greatest republic in the world has had a stormy governmental history during the last 100 years. The first republic established by the French Revolution was just yielding to the absolutism of Napoleon when the century began. When Napoleon was conquered by the allied armies of Europe in 1815, France was handed back to the Bourbons, and remained a monarchy until the great wave of popular revolution which swept Europe in 1848 drove Louis Philippe from the throne and brought Louis Napoleon to the front as the President of the second republic. Following closely in the footsteps of his uncle, the new Napoleon, the President of France specifically made himself the Emperor of the French, and it required the convulsion of the Franco-Prussian War of 1871 to overthrow the empire and set up the third republic. The parliamentary system



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN 1798. (From a painting by Karl A. Hickel.)

thus established has endured for a generation, but its existence has seemed precarious at times that if France were the only great exemplar of republican government the enemies of the system would have at once been repelling today the grave forecasts of failure which were so common a century ago when our own free Government was first established. France has ever looked apprehensively at the new republic which would overthrow the monarchial institutions and revive the monarchy.

Note.—This study by Dr. Frederic W. Speer of Philadelphia, will be concluded on Friday next.

HIS CHANCE FOR MISCHIEF.

A Correspondent Who Thinks It Is Very Small.

SALISBURY, Aug. 16.—(To the Editor.)—Several weeks ago you commented on the fact that, whereas in 1856 the editorial waste-basket overflowed with communications from the advocates of 16 to 1, this year the free silver lunatics seemed to be keeping their no-called thoughts to themselves. Now, after all the woes which, according to your philosophy, have been brought upon this country by the free silver agitation, I see no good reason why you should not be willing to drop the subject if the other fellow is; but you continue to hammer away, and a state editorially appears in your issue, in which you declare that the voice of the people is the voice of God, but they wanted to select the people. A glance at the Federal Constitution also shows how far the Revolutionary statesmen from implicit confidence in the people. For instance, the original electoral college system, of choosing the President, was an attempt to secure an aristocratic, not a democratic, choice. The provision for the election of Senators by state legislatures is a striking evidence of lack of faith in direct popular action.

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as they have been every "day" since 1832, and you often state that we have had the gold standard ever since 1838.

He could send to Congress, the Democratic Congress elected with him, a free-coinage bill and insist upon its passage, and that would wreck the gold standard in a day.

There might be a glimmer of reason in this if there were any prospect that Senate and House would both be safely for free silver during Mr. Bryan's term, and you are welcome to what little satisfaction there may be in that.

The law of March 14, 1900, expressly provides that the silver dollar shall be a legal tender for any amount; so that Mr. Bryan, through the Department of Justice, could enforce unlimited payment of private obligations, not secured by gold contracts, in silver, and that would wreck the gold standard in a day.

The law of March 14, 1900, provides on that point nothing more nor less than this: "Section 2. That nothing contained in this act shall be construed to affect the legal tender quality as now provided by law of the silver dollar, or any other money coined or issued by the United States." It makes no change whatever from the law of 1873 which is the one that "provides that the silver dollar shall be a legal tender for any amount," and we have worried along under that law for over 27 years without wrecking the gold standard in a day.

The second half of your statement is, if you will pardon the expression, absolutely absurd. The idea of the President, through the Department of Justice, enforcing unlimited payment in silver for the Yukon is a dream.

Victoria Aroused and Again Urges an All-Canadian Route.

Victoria has been aroused by the proposal of the Council of Skagway to impose a special tax on all foreign vessels entering that port. Skagway's complaint seems to be that Dawson, ships, added by the tax administration of American tariff laws are invading the Lower Yukon country in Alaska and monopolizing trade that properly belongs to Americans. The Victoria Colonist questions the legality of the Skagway proposal, but sees in it a move to divert trade from Canada to the United States.

Discussing the matter it says: "It is very evident that the question, whether legal or otherwise, will put Canadian ship-owners to a very great deal of inconvenience, the duty of the British Columbia Government to take up at once with the Federal Government the question of an all-Canadian line to the Yukon is more apparent than ever. We must have an all-Canadian line. We do not believe that the Dominion Government, when the matter is fully explained, will stand by and see our trade with our own country interfered with by a lot of unreasonable people, but will come forward with a sufficient amount of aid to secure the proposed line. Upon this great question there ought to be complete harmony of action. It must be made clear that the Yukon that cannot be interrupted by unfriendly foreigners. The all-Canadian route is long, but it will open a vast and rich region. Substantial aid to the construction of the line; but we believe a scheme can be arranged whereby the cost of such aid to the tax-payers of Canada will not be heavy."

Yukon Channels to Be Improved.

J. C. Tache, engineer of the British Public Works Department in the Yukon Basin, announces that this fall a dam will be built at Lake Laro, to confine the waters from spreading over the shallow area there and coursing through several channels. It is estimated that the cost of this work will be itself clear out the remaining channel, and so obviate dredging. At Five Fingers the passage will be further improved by blasting out the rock and increasing the width of the channel. At Thirty-Mile River 150 boulders were removed last year, and this work is to be resumed.

Plague at London's Gates.

LONDON, Aug. 16.—The British steamer Arthur, of the Clan line, which sailed from Calcutta July 12 via Port Said August 2, for London, has been quarantined at the Thames, owing to a death from bubonic plague having occurred on board the vessel.

Marine Notes.

The steamer *Orinoco*, sailed from Muroan, August 5, for Tacoma. The American ship *C. S. Bement* arrived at Bristol, via Falmouth, August 9, 189 days from Port. The *Bement's* cargo of wheat, valued at \$40,000, was damaged by water.

San Francisco shippers are embarrassed for want of ships ready to take cargo. While there are 18 ships in the engaged list, in the port, only 10 are ready to load. Two are known to be loading. Of the other 12, six have only just arrived, and of course have their inward cargoes still aboard. Of the other six, one arrived July 15, and is ready to load. The others are not ready to load until August 1, but if ready it is not generally known. There are seven ships in the free list, including the *Orinoco*, which is due this month, one July 16, and one June 27.

Domestic and Foreign Ports.

ASTORIA, Or., Aug. 16.—Condition of the bar at 4 P. M., moderate; wind north-west; weather fair. Sailed at 5:30 A. M. Steamer *State* of California, for San Francisco. Arrived—Steamer *W. H. Harrison*, from Tillamook. Left at 6:30 A. M. British ship *Idem*.

San Francisco—Arrived—Ship *Santa Clara*, from Kalki; steamer *Matteawan*, from Tacoma; Steamer *Gulde*, from Victoria; schooner *Mayflower*, for Coquille River.

Seattle—Arrived August 15—Steamer *City of Topeka*, from Dyce.

Port Townsend—Sailed August 15—Ship *Deer*, for Seattle.

August 15—Schooner *Una*, schooner *Vine* and schooner *Ethel Zane*, from Cape Nome.

Some-In port August 4—United States ship *Patterson*, steamer *Albion*, steamer *Robert Dollar*, steamer *Roanoke*, steamer *Aloha*, steamer *Dora*, tug *Skookum*. Sailed August 2—Steamer *Lakme*, for St. Michael.

Seattle—Arrived August 15—German ship *Arctura*, from Port Townsend; United States ship *Columbia*, steamer *Al-Ki*, from Dyce; steamer *J. S. Kimball*, for Nome.

Yokohama—Arrived August 13—British steamer *Empress of India*, from Vancouver.

New York, Aug. 16.—Sailed—August 16, for Portland via Plymouth and Cherbourg; *Barbarossa*, for Bremen via Cherbourg. Arrived—Pennysylvania, from Hamburg, etc.

Rotterdam, Aug. 16.—Sailed—Rotterdam, for New York, via London, via Liverpool.

Mobile, Aug. 16.—Arrived—State of Nebraska, from New York for Glasgow, and proceeded.

Liverpool, Aug. 16.—Sailed—Cambrian, for New York, via London, via Liverpool.

Naples, Aug. 16.—Arrived—Werra, from New York via Gibraltar for Genoa, and proceeded.

New York, Aug. 16.—Arrived—Kaiser Wilhelm I, from Naples; Servia, from Liverpool.

Plymouth, Aug. 16.—Arrived—Columbia, from New York for Hamburg.

Liverpool, Aug. 16.—Arrived—Waresand, from Philadelphia.

New York, Aug. 16.—Arrived—Germanic, from Liverpool.

Queenstown, Aug. 16.—Sailed—Majestic, for New York.

Cherbourg, Aug. 16.—Sailed—Friedrich der Grosse, from Bremen for New York.

Fire Apparatus Trust.

NEW YORK, Aug. 16.—A consolidation of the largest manufacturers of heavy fire apparatus in this country has just been effected under the name of the International Fire Engine Company. All the concerns in the United States manufacturing fire apparatus are included in the combination, which is stated to have

RACING ON THE YUKON

UPPER RIVER BOATS HAVE AN OCCASIONAL BRUSH.

Yukon Lowers Time Between Dawson and White Horse to Three Days, 15 Hours, 15 Minutes.

Steamboat racing is becoming popular on the Upper Yukon River where only two or three years ago no sound but that of the Klondike's paddle broke the northern stillness. The Zealander had a record of three days, 11 hours and 15 minutes between Dawson and White Horse, and the Lightning was close behind with a running time of three days and 18 hours. The Yukoner arrived at White Horse, August 5, three days, 15 hours and 15 minutes from Dawson, lowering the Zealander's time by two hours and 15 minutes. The Lightning gave her chase, but was outclassed. The Yukoner's passengers took great interest in the race and helped the crew to pile wood aboard at the wood stations. The ship was then reduced to the minimum and the Lightning lagged behind all the way. The Dawson-White Horse run is 400 miles.

SKAGWAY'S TONNAGE TAX.

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THE IMPERIAL.

C. W. Knowles, Manager.

M. L. Cohn, city.

A. Nelson, city.

Chas. Landauer, city.

Pomeroy, city.

C. H. Brock, city.

J. C. Goodale, city.

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