

The Oregonian

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ROOSEVELT ON EXCEPTIONAL MEN.

Mr. Roosevelt is not the first American citizen to remark upon the superlative value of the master-mind. He told the Berkeley students, as no doubt they have often been told before by their professors, that material civilization is by its nature ephemeral. The luxury of Tyre and the naval supremacy of Carthage have disappeared without leaving more than a trace upon the history of the world, while the exceptional men of Greece and Rome still count as factors in civilization because they were master-minds.

When the Carnegie Institution at Washington began its work the first president, Dr. D. C. Gilman, declared that its principal purpose would be to seek out "the exceptional man" and help him develop his powers. No doubt this aim has been followed more or less faithfully ever since, but for some reason the master-mind which Mr. Roosevelt longs for has not made its appearance in the United States. During the last half century there have been tremendous intellectual movements in Europe and America has reflected them with a certain facility, but we have not initiated any of our own.

To mention only an instance or two, Nietzsche's philosophy, which is so subjective to the point of being almost insight under thin disguises in all our colleges, but we have brought no Nietzsche to light. After deriding Ibsen's epoch-making drama, we now go dutifully to see it played without the faintest expectation of seeing any new ideas arising from our own playwrights. When Madame Curie discovered radium the scientific world of Europe forthwith prepared its instruments of investigation to push deeper into the secrets of radiant matter, but the first American to do this was not a discoverer, but a great man of letters, a Harvard professor that the whole thing was humbug.

The period of half a century which has brought forward so many Europeans in all the departments of intellectual life has produced a great number of respectable mediocrities in America, but not one genius of the first rank. Mr. Roosevelt may well remark upon the circumstance and ask what the reason is. Certainly it cannot be because of more mental power in our Americans, for the same stock as Europeans. The immigrants to this country have been for the most part people of humble condition, but they were of the same blood and the same kind of life as the Americans of the Old World came. The intellectual nobilities of Europe are not usually either rich men or aristocrats. They are born in modest homes and rise to eminence through adversity. There is a common notion that genius is directed to the Old World and opportunity denied to the poor, but facts do not approve it. It is proportionally more common for a poor boy to achieve real intellectual eminence in Europe than it is here, though they do not so frequently become millionaires.

Here, no doubt, is the key to the problem of our dearth of exceptional intellectual lights. The mental energy which in the Old World goes to the production of poems, plays and scientific discoveries is directed to the United States to the accumulation of wealth. Getting rich has been held up to our youth as the one worthy object of ambition. It is all very well to be a poet, we tell our young people, if you can afford it, but what chance has a man to win immortal fame if he hasn't enough to eat and must wear shabby clothes? The European answers that it profits a great deal, but in this country we are of another opinion.

Mental power is not marked off into fixed divisions. It is a protean entity which admits of transformations into many forms. While the genius of a Shelley is no doubt something unique, a special creation, still as a rule a person of exceptional ability may become eminent in any one of many different fields. Most of our boys have chosen the field of money-making, so that few have been left for the drama, scientific discovery and philosophy. A man who can do what Rockefeller did in the domain of finance could have become a rival of Descartes, perhaps, had his mind been turned to metaphysics when he was a boy. What we must do in order to produce the exceptional master-minds that set the lure of glory before our youth instead of the lure of dollars. Some way must be found to make them fall in love with the olive wreath and the lofty ode. The light that never was on land or sea would shine here if we gave it a crack to glimmer through the troupe of clouds that we bar the window with gold.

In our opinion Mr. Roosevelt is wise to make his plea to the college boys and girls. It is of no more use to try to convert a grown man to the evangel of art and fame than it is to seek to turn a forty-year-old man into a child. It cannot be done. But take a youth in his purple glory when the clouds he has brought from God are still trailing and heaven still shines about him and there is no limit to what you can do. Call to his soul from the heights and he will answer. Set the ideal before him and he will give his life to follow it.

The colleges have yielded too readily to the tyranny of the practical. They have scouted and inclined their ears all too readily to the money changers' inviting charm. When our colleges return to locusts and wild honey our boys will grow up into Miltons and Darwins. Until that happens we must be content with John Jay Hammond

and Rockefeller. They are excellent of their kind. It is with the kind itself that Mr. Roosevelt finds fault.

WHAT IS THE NEXT MOVE?

If we understand correctly the logic of Mr. Timothy Brownhill's argument, advanced in his frank letter yesterday, it is that the way to build up a great combined agricultural college and state university is to wreck the present institutions and rear the new edifices on the ruins. The plan involves a great deal of risk, not to say disaster, to the educational structure of Oregon. The Oregonian has urged, and now favors, a rational and comprehensive plan for combining the institutions at Eugene and Corvallis. But it is not willing to adopt the violent Brownhill method. If the energies of Mr. Brownhill and his exasperated colleagues in old Yamhill were to be directed toward the formulation of a joint advisory of the three, being in one and in logic a candid judgment. Direct legislation will presently be giving to the framers of laws and to the phrasing of their titles. It is a positive conviction that were responsible for the law intended to secure a procedure in the taxing of the single tax and for the "women's tax" and "strange amendment."

It is probable that if the "short ballot" idea were applied to direct election in Oregon, the result would be in a trice titles, imperfectly drawn measures and inadequately presented laws, such as Mr. Haynes mentions, would be greatly minimized. If there were fewer measures for consideration the voter would have a larger opportunity and more time for study and for discovering hidden meanings. In its application to candidates the short ballot movement has a large degree of merit if not carried to extremes, but the Oregonian is not prepared to endorse a system of state government in which the power is in the hands of a few. To go to this extreme would invite the return of machine rule in state politics. Always will there be men in each community who can control votes. Their organization under the name of the Oregonian is not to be understood as an endorsement of the appointment power in a very few officers. Yet the reasons for an adaptation of the short ballot idea to both branches of the Oregon voter's prerogative are becoming imperative. Mr. Roosevelt should find a receptive audience if he discusses the subject in Oregon.

MAY DEVELOP ALASKA.

The new Secretary of the Interior is said to have in mind a plan for leasing the Alaska coal lands on such terms that the Government will receive a good revenue from them, and capital at the same time find attractive investments in opening the mines. Details of this reported policy have not yet been announced, but Washington advises state that it is entirely satisfactory to Attorney-General Wickersham, who not only has an intimate knowledge of the land, but has also been well acquainted with Mr. Fisher, the new Secretary. It would seem from this that Mr. Fisher is well qualified to administer the affairs of that much misrepresented and misunderstood land in a manner satisfactory to all concerned.

So little is known about Alaska and its wonderful resources that the theories of the Pinchots and others who have been responsible for its slow growth and lack of development have not been settled. It was the public sentiment which grew out of this lack of knowledge that was responsible for the hampering persecution of ex-Secretary Ballinger and prevented the accomplishment of results in Alaska which the world needs. A man who can understand the possibilities of the country and has sufficient stamina to carry through a policy that will bring best results for the isolated and neglected land of riches in Alaska is an accomplishment of the highest order. What Alaska needs is a man who can understand the possibilities of the country and has sufficient stamina to carry through a policy that will bring best results for the isolated and neglected land of riches in Alaska is an accomplishment of the highest order. What Alaska needs is a man who can understand the possibilities of the country and has sufficient stamina to carry through a policy that will bring best results for the isolated and neglected land of riches in Alaska is an accomplishment of the highest order.

The campaign of vilification that was waged against Mr. Hallinger was not without some good results, for it brought to the attention of the public the great resources of the country. It is the knowledge thus gained there will be less disposition to criticize even if the new official should carry out some of the best features of the policy of his much-abused predecessor. If Mr. Fisher will only restore to the public domain some of the lands now wrongfully held in forest reserves he will immediately become a very popular official.

THE SHORT BALLOT.

It is noticeable that in his Western addresses Colonel Roosevelt is indorsing with emphasis the short ballot as an instrument of progressiveness and the people's rule. The short ballot, which implies the centralization of authority and the power to appoint minor officers in a few important ones, is advocated by a number of candidates for a better knowledge as to their fitness.

"Now, you cannot exercise a wise choice if you are asked to vote on a multitude of names," said the Colonel in his Los Angeles speech. "If you are given to choose among thirty or forty names it is to vote, how many of them will you know anything about?" We are not informed as to the inspiration for the Colonel's illustration of a ticket carrying thirty or forty names. Perhaps that is the numerical status of the ticket he is advocating to voting. Here in Portland the ballot in the last general election carried about 130 names, in addition to the titles of thirty-two laws and constitutional amendments.

Some of the most patent criticisms of the ballot are based on the fact that the Oregon system is based on the length of the ballot that is its product, recently the Political Science Quarterly, which is published under the auspices of the Academy of Political Science, contained a comprehensive discussion of "People's Rule in Oregon, 1910." This study is affiliated with the Columbia University. The author of the article, George H. Haynes, of Worcester, Mass., finds in the character of the Oregon ballot a note of warning concerning "permanence of the good and progress toward the better." It may well be said that the ballot in no sense criticizes the principle the Oregon system seeks to make applicable to legislation and good government. But he declares that the November ballot was a "preposterous thing," and that "experience with the ballot" is a warning to the "people's rule" movement and the "people's rule" movement must go together.

It is interesting to note, also, that there may be read in Mr. Haynes' article testimony of the absence of the safeguards which Colonel Roosevelt declares should be thrown around the initiative and referendum. Colonel Roosevelt has asserted that the initiative should be accompanied by some adequate provision for the expert drafting of proposed measures and for their adequate presentation to the voters. One might think that Mr. Haynes

and Colonel Roosevelt had been in conference. Mr. Haynes says: "The experience of this election, furthermore, has proved the need of attention both to the psychology and to the ethics of title-writing. One measure, said to have been drafted because its title included a doubtful clause, which was successfully avoided in the text of the law itself. Another measure of dubious merit was passed because the title, was silent as to the main intent of the law, made a successful appeal to an exaggerated popular prejudice against a direct poll tax. Direct legislation is not the spontaneous registration of individual voters' measured judgment as to the best method of dealing with a given problem; the voters simply acquiesce in the proposals of specific proposals originated, framed and phrased and every step in the procedure is controlled by some one else. By whom? For what? These may at times prove doubtful questions. The November ballot was drawn in such haste that it is hardly possible to find a mistake; nor was this lack supplied by any enlightening argument in the book, the only one that was submitted, a joint advisory of the three, being in one and in logic a candid judgment. Direct legislation will presently be giving to the framers of laws and to the phrasing of their titles. It is a positive conviction that were responsible for the law intended to secure a procedure in the taxing of the single tax and for the "women's tax" and "strange amendment."

The remarkable feat of the French aviator Breguet in carrying eleven passengers a distance of two miles in his monoplane reveals wonderful progress in flying machine construction. The weight of the twelve people was 1315 pounds, and the combined weight of machine and occupants was 2602 pounds. It is not yet ten years since inventors were struggling in vain to perfect heavier-than-air machines that would lift one lone operator from the earth for a few moments at a time. The remarkable flight of Breguet is of vastly greater importance than all of the high-flying and spectacular stunts that have been performed in gold-plated dirigibles and balloons that followed the Wrights, the original birdmen. The most serious deficiency now apparent in the aeroplane is a device which will prevent too sudden a descent in case of accident. Like the air brake on the train, and the cushion ball on the aircraft, the will come along in time, but death will continue to levy heavy toll on the calling until some such device is provided.

The Supreme Court at Olympia, Wash., has handed down a decision which will have a profound effect on the Southern Railway and the Seattle Electric Company to give transfers from one line to the other on a 5-cent fare. It was the refusal of the company to grant a 5-cent fare into the city that brought forth the demand for municipal ownership of the downtown line. The Seattle voters, possibly including a few of the taxpayers, voted favorably on the proposition, and if the bonds can be sold, Seattle will in time be in possession of a line which will secure the ownership of the downtown line. The next thing necessary in order to make the line popular (not necessarily profitable) will be for the voters, not including the taxpayers, to declare for a 5-cent fare or ten tickets for the same. The demand will be laid along over streets. Nor could the drainage be made perfect under his method of treating the ground, to say nothing of the other things that would be done. Mr. Brereton makes various objections to the plans of the City Engineer, none of which are well taken, to my way of thinking. It suggests a four-foot sidewalk, which is not only too narrow but would be found totally inadequate 10 years hence. He also suggests an undulating sidewalk, which would be as tiresome to the pedestrian, but would never do for our modern mode of rapid transit, for it cannot be doubted that the sidewalks of Washington are over streets. Nor could the drainage be made perfect under his method of treating the ground, to say nothing of the other things that would be done. Mr. Brereton makes various objections to the plans of the City Engineer, none of which are well taken, to my way of thinking. It suggests a four-foot sidewalk, which is not only too narrow but would be found totally inadequate 10 years hence. 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