

# Coos Bay Times

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### AN EFFORT TO SWITCH OFF. (Oregonian.)

Most people possibly, even probably, are getting tired of discourses on the financial situation. Besides, nothing anybody can say will make much difference. The conditions we have now had their origin in conditions that existed years ago, and have been developed to what they are today by natural sequences. Pursuing the courses we have followed, we could have no right to expect anything else. The descent is always easy. The climb upward is the labor.

But we are at a landing place now, such as Coleridge establishes in his "Aids to Reflection," and we take breath to look about us a little. We have got into a strait, as the companions of Ulysses did, who, against all warnings, devoured the sacred oxen of the Sun. "Fools," says the poet, "they perished by their own blind folly." It is true we here in the West haven't gone in any direction very far wrong. We have splendid resources here, and have been developing them in legitimate ways. But the frenzied finance of the East has been casting a kind of spell over us. We have looked to it for credit and support, and have put our money in there, expecting returns. But frenzied finance there has cut us off for the present, and we must wait. Let us do it cheerfully.

To beguile the time we may as well think a little on speculative or abstract questions—questions, nevertheless, which deeply concern us from generation to generation; for we are working on a democratic basis, and therefore should halt at any opportune landing to consider where we are, how we came here, and whither our course is carrying us. Many able thinkers believe we are steering for a whirlpool which will surely engulf us. They can see no other result of this great, blind, democratic movement, as they call it. William Edward Hartpole Lecky certainly was a great writer. He had a remarkably clear view of the philosophy of history. His "History of Rationalism in Europe," his "History of European Morals," and his "History of England in the Eighteenth Century" are among the great books of the last 50 years; while his two later volumes, "Democracy and Liberty," are exceedingly stimulating to thought, and contain stuff enough to make us uneasy, yet we believe they fall short of affording an adequate account of modern political tendencies. They have a pessimistic tone, derived from the conservative way of looking at and dealing with the problems started by the movements of a progressive modern democracy. These things concern us Americans a great deal. So we shall note what Mr. Lecky has to say.

He tells us that the problem of democracy, in its last analysis, is whether the world should be governed by its ignorance or intelligence. But this is incidental only; it is not the last analysis. Such problem indeed is in the movements of democracy, but in these movements always there is a principle of correction and recovery. Says our author: "According to one party, the preponderating power should be with education and property; according to the other, the ultimate source of power, the supreme right of appeal and of control, belongs legitimately to the majority of the nation, told by the head,—or, in other words, to the poorest, the most ignorant, the most incapable, who are necessarily the most numerous. It is a theory which assuredly reverses all the past experiences of mankind. In every field of human enterprise, in all the competitions of life, by the inexorable law of nature, superiority lies with the few and not with the many; and success can only be attained by placing the guiding

and controlling power mainly in their hands."

This last is perfectly true; but it is not incompatible with democracy. In emergencies democracy seldom shows unwillingness to listen to the counsels of its wiser men. The whole history of the United States, the greatest democracy the world has ever known, is proof of this. We have had our struggles, of course, but have not all the results sustained the claims of democracy? Have not these claims been sustained through Washington, Jackson, Lincoln, Cleveland and Roosevelt? Have monarchy and oligarchy been free from ignorance, from selfishness, from incapacity and their consequences?

Theoretically, indeed, democracy is hopeless; but monarchy and oligarchy proved their hopelessness long ago; and this is why democracy came in. It has corrected far more abuses than it has created. Besides, democracy has an inner soul which leads it, though with difficulty, to regard for the lessons of morality and experience. It is the spirit of the people behind the forms of the Constitution, that lead it or guide it. Let us say again that the history of democracy seldom shows unwillingness on the part of the masses of the people to defer to the opinions of leaders wiser than themselves. The salvation of democracy, then, is in the intelligence and unselfishness of its leaders; and if such is not the character of the leaders the people are very sure presently to discover it. Under a system of general education democracy shows little disposition to cut loose from experience; and its wisdom is more unselfish than that of an aristocracy, with its plutocratic tendencies always foremost in the leadership.

Leadership of some kind men must and will have, undoubtedly; and democracy, therefore, when it follows its ablest and worthiest men, becomes the strongest of governments. Yet its disposition leads it always to place a check upon those who assert superiority, or who think themselves above it; and this tends to the conservatism of popular liberty. Thus it creates for itself in the long run the surest of balances in government. To find fault with it is easy; but what better mode has been known among men?

### THE FIRST SKY PILOTS. (St. Louis Globe-Democrat.)

Nowadays the balloon excites only a thrill as contrasted with the terror of the French peasants who observed the "Montgolfier," in 1783, which was the first great and successful balloon, although minor experiments in aeronautics had been common prior to its ascension.

It was a hydrogen globe loosed into the void without a passenger, and after a flight of 45 minutes from Champ-de-Mars it fell into a field near the village of Gonesse, where the effect upon the inhabitants illustrated that unenlightened human nature is the same in all ages. A bulletin of the great event said:

"On first sight it is supposed by many to have come from another world; many fly; others, more sensible, think it a monstrous bird. After it has alighted, there is yet motion in it from the gas it still contains. A small crowd gains courage from numbers, and for an hour approaches by gradual steps, hoping meanwhile the monster will take flight. At length one bolder than the rest takes his gun, stalks carefully to within shot, then witnesses the monster shrink, give a shout of triumph, and the crowd rushes in with flails and pitchforks. The tears what he thinks to be the rain, and cause a poisonous steam to gain all retire. Shame, no doubt, now urges them on, and they die the cause of alarm to a horse's tail, who gallops across the country, tearing it to shreds."

Seeing it in flight, some cab drivers had been awed into leaving their vehicles and prostrating themselves in the dust by the roadside.

To allay popular fear the paternal government of France deemed it prudent to publish an explanation, which contained this passage:

"Anyone who shall see in the sky a globe resembling the moon in shadow should be aware that, far from being an alarming phenomenon, it is only a machine, made of taffeta or light canvas, covered with paper, that cannot possibly cause any harm, and which will some day prove serviceable to the wants of society."

The first animals to become aeronauts were a sheep, a cock and a duck, sent up in this Montgolfier balloon, and they made a considerable voyage without damage save a hurt to the cock's right wing, which, however, was due to a kick received from the sheep.

Finding that the upper air was breathable, M. Pilatre de Rozier achieved glory and immortality by making an ascension, although the king had suggested first sending up a couple of convicts under sentences of death, by way of better demonstra-

tion and for the fun of the thing. Nowadays aeronauts do not hesitate to take their wives up with them.

In the century and a quarter since M. Pilatre de Rozier first essayed the cerulean, many thousands of ascensions have followed, and balloon courage has become common to everybody save, perhaps, Russell Gardner, "Bud Dozier" and Santos-Dumont. Honest countrymen no longer gape at the sky pilot, who is a commonplace at county fairs.

In St. Louis, balloon races have taken the place of horse races, and

we may soon have a populace so accustomed to the graceful and inspiring spectacles that only the betting feature will yield excitement.

—There will be a meeting of the Millicoma Club Tuesday evening, Nov. 5th, at 8 p. m. Important business.

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