

# PRINCIPLES OF FINANCE.

**Lecture of Mrs. Victoria C. Woodhull  
Last Evening.**

Last evening Mrs. VICTORIA C. WOODHULL lectured at Cooper Institute before an audience of nearly 1,000 persons, on "The Principles of Finance." Mrs. WOODHULL, who was introduced by Mr. THEODORE TILTON, first explained the meaning of the terms money, currency, and wealth. Money was, she said, any medium used for transferring wealth from one person to another. Currency was the name applied to the money of any country. Wealth was the accumulated product of labor. Wealth existed long before money was used, or even thought of. Gold was generally considered as the only money fit to use, yet no medium could possibly be more unfit. It fluctuated in its purchasing power according to its scarcity or plentifulness. True money should not do so. The idea of money, she said, must first be separated from that of the intrinsic value of gold, or any other commodity, and confined to the mere capacity of representing all commodities, and so of facilitating the exchanges of wealth. This, it has been abundantly demonstrated, can be as well, and, for various reasons, better done by strips of paper, properly stamped and signed, than by gold or any other metal. In the next place, these strips of paper, signed by the Government, with the credit and wealth of the whole country, are better than individual promises; though the issuance of individual promises should not and need not be prohibited, as we do not now prohibit anybody from making or receiving private notes, drafts and checks. Again, the Government money need not be redeemable, but only convertible into new strips of paper when the old ones are worn out, and into commodities when they are used in trade, and into other Government securities bearing interest. Still again, money has also been held to be a correct measure of values. This it ought to be, indeed, but has never been so, because it has never been measured itself. Of what use would yard-sticks be, used for measuring cloth, but which had never themselves been measured by anything? The system which I have stated for measuring money itself is believed to be perfect. It is not the individual dollar, relatively to the half dollar or the hundred dollars, that has failed to be measured or fixed; but the rate of increase relatively to other values, of all the Government currency afloat. By the convertibility of any excess of issue sinking its value below a certain standard into interest-paying bonds, any overissue is immediately absorbed, while a deficiency of issue will be revealed by the fact that absolutely no bonds will be sold. In this manner the whole operation will be self-adjusting from day to day; the value of the aggregate of Government money will be accurately measured and kept uniform; and any interest or temptation which the Government might have to an overissue would be immediately neutralized by the absorption of such surplus into bonds, upon which the Government itself would be paying interest; or, in other words, assuming an unnecessary and useless burden, in the face of the people and of its own economies. Can anything more perfect be devised? If so, let us have it by all means; if not, let this device be adopted. A self-adjusting, self-regulating admeasurement of the value of money would make a true measure of other values, and is a suggestion which, if it can be secured, is of unequalled importance.

Finally, in its basis, this system of Government money is money issued at the mere cost of printing and circulating; but by adjoining with it the idea of a complete, simple and exceedingly economical means of raising the revenue of the country, the three or four per cent. is paid to the Treasury; that is to say, by the people individually to the same people in their collective capacity. Under this system all the various revenue officials and tax assessors and gatherers would be dispensed with, and a vast system of economy inaugurated, which in a few years would transpose us from a borrowing to a loaning nation, making us the financial example for all the world. This, it also seems to me, is another invaluable feature of the system, all of which I, however, respectfully submit to the decision of the people. Mrs. WOODHULL also referred to our national bank system, which she characterized as a swindle.

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