

THE  
THEORY OF HUMAN PROGRESSION.

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INTRODUCTION.

PRELIMINARY EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCE.

BEFORE attempting to exhibit an argument to establish the possibility of a science of politics, and to prove also the probability that such a science may reasonably be expected to evolve at this period of man's progressive acquisition of knowledge, it is necessary to define exactly what we mean by a *science of politics*.

*Science* is nature seen by the reason, and not merely by the *senses*. Science exists in the *mind*, and in the mind alone. Wherever the substantives of a science may be derived from, or whatever may be their character, they form portions of a science only as they are made to function logically in the human reason. Unless they are connected by the law of reason and consequent, so that one proposition is capable of being correctly evolved from two or more other propositions,

called the premises, the science as yet has no existence, and has still to be *discovered*. Logic, therefore, is the universal *form* of all science. It is science with *blank* categories, and when these blank categories are filled up, either with numbers, quantities, and spaces, as in the mathematical sciences, or with the qualities and powers of matter, as in the physical sciences, mathematics and physics take their scientific origin, and assume an ordination which is not arbitrary. Science, then, wherever it is developed, is the same for the human intellect wherever that intellect can comprehend it. It abolishes diversity of credence, and reestablishes unity of credence.

We have then to ask, "What is the *matter* of political science?" Of what does it treat? What are its substantives? What is the general character of the truths it professes to develop?

1. It treats exclusively of *men*.
2. It treats exclusively of the *relations* between man and man.
3. It treats exclusively of the relations of men *in equity*.

Equity or justice is the *object-noun* of the science of politics, as number is the object-noun of arithmetic; quantity, of algebra; space, of geometry; or *value* of political economy.\*

\* It must be observed that *equity* or *justice* is not itself capable of definition. If it were so, it could not be the object-noun of a *science*, as no science ever defines its object-noun. For instance, *unity*, *quantity*, *space*, *force*, *matter*, *value*, are all incapable of definition; but *forms* of unity, *forms* of quantity, *forms* of space, *forms* of force, *forms* of matter, *forms* of value, are capable of definition.

*Politics, then, is the science of EQUITY, and treats of the relations of MEN in equity.*

The fundamental fact from which its propositions derive a *practical* importance, is the following:—

“Men are capable of acting equitably or unequitably towards each other.”

To obliterate all unequitable (or unjust) action of one man towards another, or of one body of men towards another body of men, is therefore the *practical* ultimatum of the science of politics.

Politics, then, professes to develop the *laws* by which human actions ought to be regulated, in so far as men *interfere* with each other.

Human actions may be viewed under various distinct aspects:—

1. In their *physiological* aspect. In this aspect, to kill a man is to inflict such an injury on his bodily frame as causes the cessation of his functions.

2. In their *economical* aspect. In this aspect, to kill a man is to destroy a mechanism which possessed so much *value*; and, consequently, to inflict a greater or less injury to society, according to the value of the person killed. Men *cost* a considerable expense to

On this subject we have some observations to offer hereafter; but if the reader should suppose that a science ought to define its object-noun, he has only to refer to the mathematical sciences, not one of which ever attempts to offer a definition of its noun-substantive major. Were a geometrician to offer the smallest speculation as to what space *is*, he would have departed altogether from the province of geometric *science*. *Spurious* definitions of *value* are occasionally set forth; that is, we are told not what value *is*, but what it *does*, a mode of definition altogether illicit.

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rear, and the destruction of the object reared is, or may be, the loss of the cost and profit.

3. In their *political* aspect. In this aspect, to kill a man may be a *crime*, or a *duty*, or *neither*, (an *accident*, for instance.) If by accident, the physiological fact is the same, the economical fact the same, but the *political* fact is essentially different from *intentional* killing.

4. In their *religious* aspect. In this aspect, to kill a man may be either a *sin* or a righteous act; and in this aspect the killing involves all the three previous modes, as intention is taken for granted.

Politics then, in its *position*, is posterior to political economy, and anterior to religion. It *superadds* a new concept to economics, and religion again superadds a new concept to politics. Political economy in no respect can be allowed to discourse of *duty*, nor can politics be allowed to discourse of *sin*. Economy superadds the concept *value* to physiology, and the physiologist has exactly the same case to deny the *value* of the economist that the economist has to deny the *equity* of the politician, or the politician to deny the religious quality of actions posited by the divine. The four regions are perfectly distinct; distinct in their noun-substantive major, distinct in the end of their inquiries, distinct in their method, and distinct in their practical signification and importance, although all meeting in the organized, intellectual, moral, and religious being, MAN.

Into politics, therefore, no action can be allowed to enter which is not at the same time *intentional*, and the action of one man, or one body of men, on another man, or body of men.

The substantives, then, that enter the science of politics, are

*Man, Will, Action;*

and the general problem is to discover the laws which should regulate the voluntary actions of men towards each other, and thereby to determine what the order of society in its practical construction and arrangement ought to be. Men *have* social rules of action; and, from the condition of men on the surface of the globe, men *must* have social rules of action, whether those rules are right or wrong. A practical necessity exists for some kind of determination; but it is plain from history, that in many cases the practical rules have been altogether erroneous and criminal. It is therefore necessary to discover what the rules ought to be; for the rules determine the political *condition* of society.

In politics, as in every other science, it is necessary to classify the *forms* of the matter with which we reason; thus geometry classifies the forms of space into lines, angles, and figures.

Actions, then, are classified into *duties* and *crimes*. But as duty and crime are thus viewed *subjectively*, it is necessary to determine the objective characteristics of a duty and a crime, so as to be able to determine the character of the action itself, without inquiring into its motives. The only requisite would then be to ascertain whether it was or was not *intentional*, for this intentionality can never be laid aside.

Again, it is not only necessary to take into consideration man, the *subject*, with whom lies the whole question of human *liberty*, but the earth, the

*object*, with which lies the whole question of human *property*.

The same division that enabled us to classify human actions, will enable us to exhibit the aspects in which the *earth* is considered.

1. The earth may be viewed as involved in physical science. In this aspect, it is involved in astronomy, mechanics, chemistry, &c.

2. The earth may be viewed as involved in economical science. In this aspect, it is a *power of production* — a power capable of producing wealth.

3. The earth may be viewed as involved in political science. In this aspect, the power of production has superadded to it the concept, *property*. Economy can no more discourse of *property* than it can discourse of *duty* or *crime*. *Property* is a quality altogether incapable of being apprehended in the object itself by means of sensational observation, exactly as the *criminality* of an action can never be apprehended in the physiological characteristics of an action.

4. The earth may be viewed as involved in religion. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." The difference between the political and the religious mode of viewing the earth as property, is this: In politics, the *power of production* is viewed as property; in religion, the *substance* is viewed as property. Politics in no respect treat of the *substance*, although the feudal system — according to which the king derived his rights from God — assumed the proprietorship of the *substance*, exactly as the correlative system, the *papacy*, claimed for its head the spiritual vicegerency of God, and assumed the power of forgiving sin.

The feudal system has transmitted, on this subject of property, a superstition strictly analogous to that of *slavery*. The slave was an *object*, not an *agent*,—a thing, not a being; he was *property*, and could not possess property. In course of time, however, he passed from the objective and superstitious mode of estimation, and became transformed into a political agent and *power*. The earth has not yet been transformed into a *power*; but the whole analogy of scientific progress would, we think, lead to the belief that it will come, ere long, to be viewed in this light.

It is quite evident that the earth cannot function in political economy until it is transformed into a power of production having a *value*. And, to carry it forward into the science of politics, all that is requisite is to apply the axiom, "an object is the property of its creator;" so that when political economy has determined, by a scientific method which is *not* arbitrary, what value is created and *who* creates this value, politics takes up the question where political economy had left it, and determines, according to a method which is not arbitrary, *to whom the created value should be allocated*.

We have thus the substantives *man, will, action, duty, crime, property*; but as action of one man upon another necessarily implies an agent and an object, a doer and a sufferer, the *same* action may be regarded in its relation to the agent and in its relation to the object. Thus the action which is called a *crime* in the agent, is called a *wrong* in respect to the person against whom the crime is committed; and again, whatever *duty* lie upon one man, gives birth to a coëx-

tensive and correlative *right* in all other men. If one man is bound not to murder or to defraud, another man has a coëxtensive and correlative *right* to be un-murdered and undefrauded; and herein lies the whole theory of human *rights*. Thus the terms present themselves in the following manner:—

<i>Agent or Person acting.</i>	<i>Person acted upon.</i>
A duty.	A right.
A crime.	A wrong.

Finally, then, the principal substantives of the science of politics are—*man, will, action, duty, crime, rights, wrongs, and property*. And *equity* or *justice* is the object-noun of the science in which the relations have to be determined.

From the previous considerations it is evident that political science, if it can be exhibited as really and truly a branch of *knowledge*, must assume to determine, not merely the laws that should regulate *an individual*, but any number of individuals associated together. If an action be criminal for an individual, it is no less criminal for ten individuals, or a hundred, or a thousand, or a million. If it be a crime for one man to seize another man and reduce him to slavery, the criminality of the action is in no respect diminished if a whole nation should commit the action with all imaginable formalities. If it be a crime for one man who is more powerful than another to deprive that other of property without his consent, the action is no less criminal if a thousand or a million deprive another thousand or million of their property without their consent. Science can acknowledge none of these arbitrary distinctions. If there be a rule at all,



it must be general; and therefore political science must assume to determine the principles upon which political societies ought to be constructed, and also to determine the principles on which human laws ought to be made.

And as there cannot be the slightest doubt that God has made *truth* the fountain of *good*, it may perhaps be fairly expected, that if ever political science is fairly evolved and really reduced to practice, it will confer a greater benefit on mankind, and prevent a greater amount of evil, than all the other sciences.

Political science is peculiarly *man-science*; and though, as yet, the subject is little or no better than a practical superstition, we propose, in the present volume, to exhibit an argument, affording, we think, sufficient ground for believing that it will, at no distant period, be reduced to the same form and ordination as the other sciences.

Of course, any thing like a unity of credence is at present altogether out of the question. Such a unity is neither possible nor desirable. It *could* only be a superstition — that is, a credence without evidence. To produce conviction, therefore, is not so much our hope, as to endeavor to open up the questions that really require solution. And here we must be allowed a remark on the subject of politics, taking the term in its general signification. Perhaps no subject, except religion, absorbs so large a share of the attention of Britain, and perhaps no subject has so small a portion of English literature devoted to its exposition. At the utmost, there are only a very few works which can be called dissertations on the principles of political

ethics. This paucity of special works is certainly one of the most curious facts in the history of literature. The word *politics* is in almost every man's mouth; the subject involves interests of the utmost magnitude; questions of politics are continually in debate; the greatest assembly in the kingdom assembles yearly to discuss practical measures, which are necessarily founded on *some* theoretic principles, (right or wrong;) and yet, perhaps, no subject of ordinary interest could be named that has so small a quantity of literature devoted to the exposition of its more general truths.

The current literature of politics is one of the wonders of the world, but the *book* literature is of the scantiest character. Some of it is said to be *antiquated*, (Milton and Locke, for instance — a very great mistake, as we propose to show hereafter,) and some of it never even approaches the main questions. Under these circumstances, therefore, perhaps no apology is requisite for an endeavor to systematize the subject.

The first question in every branch of knowledge is its *method*. So long as the method is in dispute, the whole subject is necessarily involved, not only in obscurity, but in doubt. Without method there can be no standard of appeal, no process of proof, no means of determining otherwise than by opinion, whether a proposition is true or false. But even if opinion *were* the rule, this could not exclude the necessity for theoretic principles. *Whose* opinion is to be taken as the rule? Is it the opinion of the emperor, as in Russia? or the opinion of the free population, as in the United States? or the opinion of the whole male population, as in France? or the

opinion of a small portion of the population, as in Britain? Whatever system may be practically adopted, that system necessarily involves a theory; and the question is, "Is there any possibility of discovering or evolving a natural theory which is not arbitrary?" Is there, in the question of man's political relation to man, a truth and a falsity as independent of man's opinion as are the truths of geometry or astronomy? A truth there must be somewhere, and in the present volume we attempt to exhibit the probability of its evolution.

Our argument is based on the theory of progress, or the fact of progress — for it is a fact as well as a theory; and the theory of progress is based on the principle, that there is an order in which man not only *does* evolve the various branches of knowledge, but an order in which man *must necessarily* evolve the various branches of knowledge. And this necessity is based on the principle, that every science when undergoing its process of discovery is *objective*, that is, the object of contemplation; but when discovered and reduced to ordination it becomes *subjective*, that is, a means of operation for the discovery and evolution of the science that lies logically beyond it, and next to it in logical proximity.

If this logical dependance of one science on another could be clearly made out for the whole realm of knowledge, it would give the outline, not only of the classification of the sciences, but of man's intellectual history — of man's intellectual *development* — where the word development means, not the alteration of man's *nature*, but the extension of his knowledge, and

the consequent improvement of his mode of action, entailing with it the improvement of his condition.

And if the law of this intellectual development can be made out for the branches of knowledge which have already been reduced to ordination, it may be carried into the future, and the future progress of mankind may be seen to evolve logically out of the past progress.

Let us then consider the aspects in which a science of politics may be viewed.

1. In the probability of its evolution, based on the logical determination of its position in a scheme of classification.

2. In its constituent propositions, and the method it employs for their substantiation.

3. In the history of its doctrine (not the history of its *books*) — in the history of the past reduction of its theoretic principles to *practice*, and in the application of its principles to the present condition of society; thereby attempting to estimate what changes ought to be made, and what, in fact, ought to be the one definite form of political society.

The present volume professes to treat of the first of these divisions.

In attempting to classify the sciences, and to show that they evolve logically out of each other, we do not profess, in the slightest degree, to discourse on the matter of the sciences themselves, further than their primary propositions are concerned; but on their form, their position, their actual development, (as commonly acknowledged,) and on the lesson which, as a whole, they must ultimately teach.

With regard to the classification of the mathematical sciences, we have not the slightest misgivings. We believe that the order in which they are presented will be found correct; and as logic has not usually been considered as the first and simplest of the mathematical sciences, we have said rather more on logic than might otherwise have been necessary.

With regard to the inorganic physical sciences, the mode of classification is by no means so evident. The method according to which they must be classed, *if we knew their characteristics*, is apparent enough; but that difficulties attend the application of the method, so as to locate the various suites of phenomena in an unobjectionable scheme, must certainly be admitted. The difficulties will no doubt be ultimately removed; but they must, in the first place, be removed by the acquiescence of men of science before the mere logician can profess to arrange the materials, and to schematize the branches of knowledge according to their essential characteristics.

Thus it belongs to the physicist to determine whether there is, or is not, a material substance called *light*; but it does not belong to the physicist to determine whether the mechanical phenomena of light are, or are not, to be confounded with its chemical phenomena. Let light be what it may, the mechanical (including the geometric) phenomena of light fall necessarily *before* the chemical phenomena. Again, it belongs to the physicist to determine what *sound* is; but the mechanics of sound (vibration) must be logically separated from the music of sound, (tone, &c.,) inasmuch as the music might be studied without even

the knowledge that the sound was accompanied by, or produced by, vibration; and, on the other hand, the vibrations might be observed and measured by a deaf person, who could have no knowledge of tone, and to whom the vibrations would be only *motions*.

Chemistry, again, treats of the *qualitative* characteristics of matter, and it may be viewed in one sense as a science complete in itself. But if such a major *power* could be discovered as would produce the phenomena logically in the observed conditions, then chemistry, from being a science in itself, would become only the *classification* of a science, and the *power*, whatever name it might receive, would assume the precedence, because the qualitative relations would be made to function under the influence of the power.

Every function, of whatever character, or wherever found, we assume to present itself under the form of

*An Agent,      An Object,      A Product;*

and this division belongs, in no respect, to any one particular science, but to all, — that is, it is a *necessary form of thought*, and being so, it belongs to the metaphysician. Now, if a science be viewed as a complete function, it must range all its substantives under one of these heads. Every thing of which science treats must be ranked either as agent, object, or phenomenon; and no science can be considered as completed, even in part, until it has made such a logical ordination as will make the phenomenon to result logically from the operation of the agent on the object. But while a science is undergoing its process of discovery, this logical ordination of its parts is illegitimate, and cannot be made on sufficient grounds; so that the

development of the constituent propositions of a science is necessary before its various portions can be classified in such a manner as to satisfy the requirements of the reason.

Under these circumstances, we have given only a general estimate, sufficient to direct the line of argument without trespassing on special departments, or intruding opinions on subjects that lie beyond our province. To construct an argument that should be *in the main* correct, is all we could hope to achieve.

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