

CHAPTER III

THE THEORY OF MEN'S PRACTICAL PROGRESSION

WE have now to make good our argument that there is a natural probability in favor of a millennium, or reign of justice. We maintain that man has, within the range of his natural knowledge, sufficient means for determining, that if the course of human history continue ordinated on the same principles that may be inferred from a consideration of the past and present, then in the future there must come a time when justice shall be the regulative principle of the earth, and man shall carry it into systematic and universal operation.

After all that has been said of the millennium, we cannot help thinking that there is a peculiar satisfaction in finding that nature, history, and reason contribute to authenticate the promise.

To condense the argument we posit, that human progression is from logic and the mathematical sciences, through the physical sciences, and up to man-science.

Man-science has four functions:

- Action on the external world.
- Action on man, without interference.
- Action on man by interference.
- Actions towards the Divine Being.

The second class of functions gives rise to political economy, which furnishes the rule of correct action.

The third class to politics.

The fourth class to religion, the scientific groundwork of which is theology.

Correct knowledge is the only means whereby correct action can be performed. In advancing, therefore, the probability of a millennium in politics, we must, of course, imply that a millennium in other departments has actually taken place, or is now taking place. And this we do. The definition of a millennium is, for us, not any period of time, but a period of truth discovered and reduced to practice. And consequently, when we speak of a political millennium, we speak of a period when political truth shall be discovered and be reduced to practice; and such a period we maintain to be within the bounds of rational anticipation.

What, in fact, is the problem of politics? To discover the laws which should regulate men in the matter of interference. When those laws are discovered, political truth is discovered. What reason can possibly be alleged for asserting that the laws which should regulate men in the matter of interference are not as much within the reach of the human intellect as the laws which should regulate the merchant in carrying on his commercial transactions? It is plainly evident that man, being the most complex of all the objects that inhabit the earth, must be the last whose phenomena are subjected to analysis. Let the sciences be classed as they may, man, and man's functions, must always be placed at the extreme end of the scale of natural knowledge, i. e., of a description of the various steps of the course which the human race must take in its passage to an equitable condition of society; and these must be looked for in the evolution of the sciences one after another. Each new science is not only a revela-

tion to the intellect, but a new power for performing things which could not otherwise have been done; in fact, a new sceptre for man to rule the world, and to bend its elements in obedience to his will.

Let us again repeat, that knowledge is the only means given to man to evolve correct action; and that correct action is the only means whereby man can evolve a correct, and consequently beneficial condition. Let us also note well, that knowledge does not admit of diversity of opinion; that where knowledge is really attained and properly substantiated, uniformity of credence is its constant and necessary result; and consequently, wherever we find diversity of opinion, we have a region where knowledge is not yet attained, or where it is not yet met with general acceptance.

Let us now ask, what is the essence of that ultimate condition of man, expressed for brevity's sake by the word millennium?—A period when truth is discovered, acknowledged, and carried into practical operation.

A millennium is a condition of society in which man shall evolve the maximum of good by acting correctly. And man can act correctly only where he has acquired knowledge. The moment, then, we ascertain the order in which knowledge must be acquired, we learn the scheme of human improvement, and ascertain the general outline of his course, in his passage from ignorance, poverty, and depravity, towards knowledge, prosperity, and virtuous action.

Therefore, the past history of human progress must supply us with the beginning of the natural millennium; and these beginnings we must look for in the sciences that have been already discovered and reduced to practice.

A political millennium will come, but it will come only because it forms a portion of the still greater

scheme of human improvement,—of the more general millennium, that involves all human knowledge and all human operations.

Consequently, wherever we have truth discovered and carried into practical operation, we have a millennium in that department of knowledge.

All scientific truth is the intellect of the creature apprehending correctly the divine arrangements of the created.

All science therefore is divine, and divine, not in the sense of pantheism, but in the sense of its being the correlative object created in harmony with the human reason. Science is the object of reason, and reality is the object of science; and both reason and reality are the productions of the divine Creator. Reason on the one hand, and reality on the other, are the correlatives of creation, and science is the middle term that unites them; reality giving the matter of science, and reason giving the form. Knowledge, therefore, is the divine intention; and all the sciences may be viewed, not as human acquisitions, but as fulfilments of the divine purpose in creating an intellect to comprehend, and an object to be comprehended.

Immediately, then, that we admit science to be not merely human, science acquires a new character. It becomes the exponent of humanity, and points out the order of human progression. We have here a sure basis of operation, a foundation on which the reason may at last rest in constructing its philosophy of man. Science is stable. It shifts not with opinion, and changes not with lapse of ages. Were all knowledge obliterated, and man to begin to-morrow a new course of research, he could come only to the same truths and to the same sciences; and those sciences would evolve in

a similar order, were the experiment to take place a hundred or a thousand times.

We must now inquire how the dogma of knowledge is efficient to produce an amended condition of man upon the globe.

Every science has a millennium; that is, a period when its truths are discovered, acknowledged, and carried into practical operation.

First come the mathematical sciences. A mathematical millennium takes place when mathematical truth is discovered, and reduced to practical operation. Mathematical science is the foundation of man's intellectual and practical progress, and the region of mathematics is the first region in which a natural millennium takes place. Without mathematics we have no astronomy, no geography, no measurement of time, and no systematic navigation, worthy of the name. That is, we have in those departments ignorance or superstition, instead of knowledge.

Next to a mathematical millennium is a mechanical millennium. The mathematical sciences are absolutely essential to the evolution of mechanics, and mechanical knowledge is absolutely necessary to enable man to turn the earth to the best account. One of the first great spheres of mechanical operation is "locomotion."

Let us consider that the earth, as constituted, permits only of locomotion under certain conditions. It is possible for man to have a maximum of locomotive facility. A certain speed will be found beyond which we lose in safety, and below which we lose in celerity without gaining in safety. And this applies to all systems of locomotion. The problem, then, is to discover the best system; that which combines the maxi-

num of celerity with the minimum of danger. And when we have made as near an approach to this as the circumstances of the earth permit of, we have a locomotive millennium.

We have said enough to show the direct bearing of science on the improvement of man's condition on the globe. Knowledge is obtained, an improved system of action is consequently generated, and from that improved system of action an improved condition arises as the necessary result.

But then, how comes it that, notwithstanding man's vast achievements, his wonderful efforts of mechanical ingenuity, and the amazing productions of his skill, his own condition in a social capacity should not have improved in the same ratio as the improvement of his condition in regard to the material world. In Britain, man has to a great extent beaten the material world, and, notwithstanding this, a large portion of the population is reduced to pauperism, to that fearful state of dependence in which man finds himself a blot on the universe of God—a wretch thrown up by the waves of time, without a use, and without an end, homeless in the presence of the firmament, and helpless in the face of creation.

We do not believe that pauperism comes from God. It is man's doing, and man's doing alone. God has abundantly supplied men with all the requisite means of support; and when he cannot find support we must look not to the arrangements of the almighty God, but to the arrangements of men and to the order in which they have portioned out the earth. Charge the poverty of men on God is to blaspheme the Creator. He has given enough, abundance, more than sufficient; and if man has not enough, we must look to the mode in which God's gifts have been distributed. There

is enough, enough for all, abundantly enough; and all that is requisite is freedom to labor on the soil, and to extract from it the produce that God intended for man's support.

And what is the cause of human pauperism and human degradation? for the two go hand in hand. It is because the social arrangements of men have been made by superstition, and not by knowledge. The sciences, we have shown, lead to an amended order of action, and an amended order of action leads to an amended and improved condition. But we must have knowledge in the department in which we require the condition to be amended. That is, mechanical knowledge improves man's mechanical condition, as regards his power over external nature; agricultural knowledge his agricultural condition; chemical knowledge his chemical condition; and so forth. But social knowledge—that is, social science—is absolutely requisite before we can labor intelligently to improve man's social condition. These are the conditions under which man tenants the globe. Every department of nature, and of man's phenomenology, has its laws; and if those laws are infringed, evil is the immediate, invariable, and necessary result. And if man's social condition is evil; if we find at one end of society a few thousands of individuals with enormous wealth, for which they work not, and never have worked, and at the other end of society millions belonging to the same country, and born on the same soil, with barely the necessaries of life, and too often in abject destitution—there is no other conclusion possible than that this poverty arises from man's social arrangements, and that poor the mass of the population must remain until those arrangements are rectified by knowledge.

If Englishmen discover that pauperism and wretch-

edness are unnecessary; that the Divine Being never intended such things; that the degradation of the laboring population, their moral degradation consequent on poverty, is the curse of the laws and not of nature,—does any man suppose that Englishmen would not be justified in abolishing such laws, or that they will not abolish them? Can we believe for a moment, that if any arrangement would enable the population to find plenty, that such an arrangement will not be made? If any man believe this, he is at all events willing to be credulous. For ourselves, we believe it not.

There are hundreds of thousands of persons in this country who are not earning above 7s. to 10s. per week, even when they have constant employment.

With this a man brings up a family and educates his children. His life is a life of stern economy, and he faces it like a man. He respects himself, and feels that he has a right to be respected. He does manage to live like a moral being, and sometimes escapes the degradation of the poor-roll in his old age. This is the best position of the laborer, the maximum that the present condition of Scotland can afford to the highest class of her laboring children—milk, porridge, and potatoes, and with these he goes through his life of honest independence.

But what is the minimum, what is the condition of the shoals of Irish peasantry who invade the west coast, and the tribes of Highlanders who have little or nothing to do? What can they earn? What food do they habitually use, and what is their moral existence? Let any one visit the Western Islands, and inquire into the social condition of the inhabitants, and the arrangements men have made for the destruction of the population. See scores of men, women, and

children gathering shell-fish on the shore as almost their only food, while the rent of the island is all abstracted, and spent in London or elsewhere; and then say if it be possible that, with such arrangements, any soil, or any climate, or any profusion of natural advantages, would have compensated for the evil arrangements that men have made. Does any one suppose that those same Highlanders, who find a wretched sustenance on the shore, could not, and would not, extract an abundant existence out of the soil of their native island? The law forbids them; that is, men have made such arrangements with regard to God's earth, that the stable population must be reduced to destitution, for the purpose of having one man endowed with a wealth which he, perhaps, knows not how to use, nor even to retain.

And we affirm, without the slightest hesitation, that the very same kind of improvements that have followed the mathematical and physical sciences, will follow social science, and achieve in the world of man far greater wonders than have yet been achieved in the world of matter. It is not trade Britain wants, nor more railroads, nor larger orders for cotton, nor new schemes for alimending the poor, nor loans to landlords, nor any other mercantile or economical change. It is social change,—new social arrangements, made on the principles of natural equity. No economical measure whatever is capable of reaching the depths of the social evils. Ameliorations may, no doubt, be made for a time; but the radical evil remains, still generating the poison that corrupts society.

The evil is expressed in a few words; and, sooner or later, the nation will appreciate it and rectify it. It is "the alienation of the soil from the state, and the consequent taxation of the industry of the country."

Britain may go on producing with wonderful energy, and may accomplish far more than she has yet accomplished. She may struggle as Britain only can struggle. She may present to the world peace at home, when the nations of Europe are filled with insurrection. She may lead foremost in the march of civilization, and be first among the kingdoms of the earth. All this she may do, and more. But as certainly as Britain continues her present social arrangements, so certainly will there come a time when—the other questions being cleared on this side and on that side, and the main question brought into the arena—the labor of Britain will emancipate itself from thralldom. Gradually and surely has the separation been taking place between the privileged landowner and the unprivileged laborer. And the time will come at last that there shall be but two parties looking each other in the face, and knowing that the destruction of one is an event of necessary occurrence. That event must come. Nor is it in man to stay it or to produce it. It will come as the result of the laws that govern nature and that govern man.

We may as well attempt mechanical impossibilities as political impossibilities: and, notwithstanding the almost universal prevalence of the current superstition about the rights of landed property, we have no hesitation in affirming that a very few years will show that superstition destroyed, and the main question of England's welfare brought to a serious and definite discussion.

In politics there are only two main questions—first, personal liberty; second, natural property. England has been at work for centuries in the endeavor to settle the first; and, when that is definitely settled, she will give her undivided attention to the second.

The first and most obvious requirement in a country, is some degree of security for life, liberty, and property. This gives birth to criminal law, the great end of which is ostensibly to prevent crimes. The minor proposition, "What is a crime?" requires to be determined on exactly the same principles as we determine "What is a square?" or, "What is the orbit of the earth?" Without this determination, made on principles which are not arbitrary but scientific, law is despotism; and no man in the world is morally bound to obey it, except as Scripture may enjoin him to obey even unjust laws. If legislatures will make arbitrary crimes—that is, make actions legally criminal which are not naturally criminal—no population is bound to obey them. On the contrary, it becomes one of the highest duties of man to resist such laws; to use every effort to procure their abolition; and, if he cannot do so by reason, then do so by force. The welfare of humanity demands this at the hand of every man; and the base and slavish doctrine of non-resistance is fit—not for men who study truth in God's universe—but for hireling sycophants, who care not what man may suffer so that their vile carcasses are clothed and fed. The liberties we have in England are mainly owing to the fact, that England would not tolerate the determination of crime by the executive rulers, but reserved this for the deliberate assembly.

Ultimately connected with the theory of crime (much more so than is usually imagined), is the theory of natural property. The law assumed crime arbitrarily, and proceeded to punish it; it assumed property arbitrarily, and proceeded to protect it. The king, who had the power to make or unmake crimes, had the power to dispose of the land that belonged to the state. He sold or gifted it, and thus in the long run the whole

of the lands of England, with some trifling exceptions, have been alienated from the nation, and the burden of taxation has been placed upon the people. Superstition (that is, unfounded credence) was at the bottom of the king's right in both cases; and the present inhabitants of the British islands are bound to observe the laws, made in former times, concerning crimes and property, just in so far as those laws are now equitable, or would now be re-enacted were there no laws on those subjects. The present possessor of a portion of land derives not one iota of present right from the former gift of a defunct monarch; and his right, to be now valid, must be such, that were all his titles destroyed the nation would proceed to place him in possession of the lands, because he, as an individual man, had an equitable claim to them. Just as, if all the laws and statutes of England were destroyed, the nation would proceed as usual to the arrest and punishment of the murderer and robber—those persons being punished, not because there are laws for their punishment, but because it is just that they should be punished, and just that there should be laws to punish. The justice of the punishment does in no case derive from the law, but the whole force and validity of the law derives from the justice of the punishment; and where the punishment is not just, that punishment is a crime, whatever the law may be, or whatever it may declare.

One striking fact is apparent in considering the past history of laws with regard to crimes and property. The laws with regard to crimes have been considered alterable, the laws with regard to property have been considered unalterable. One generation of legislators and rulers made an action a legal crime; but the next generation did not on that account con-

sider itself bound forever so to esteem it. On the contrary, every generation of legislators has considered itself at full liberty to alter, revise, amend, and abolish such laws, according to its own judgment. But with regard to the king's gift of lands it has been quite otherwise. The deeds of past rulers have been supposed to extend to all future generations; and the doctrine now prevalent is, that the lands once alienated by the king's gift, could not be reassumed by the nation without a breach of equity—without, in fact, committing that crime abhorrent in the eyes of aristocracy, “attacking the rights of property.” This discrepancy is at once explained, when we reflect that the legislators of Britain have been for the most part the landlords themselves, or those so immediately connected with their interests, that the government was to all intents and purposes a landlordocracy. But the question still occurs, and must occur again and again, “If the acts of past rulers were not morally permanent with regard to crime, how can they possibly be so with regard to property? and if they are morally permanent with regard to property, how can they be otherwise with regard to crime?”

We have now to show that crime and property are not distinct, in fact that, so far as regards legislation, they are identical; and that the laws (or king's grants, which are in fact nothing else than laws, although this fact is overlooked) regarding landed property, are neither more nor less than laws regarding crime. Property is usually regarded as an object, as something essentially distinguished from action. Yet we shall undertake to show that action alone is concerned, and that all laws regarding property are merely laws regarding action. And if we succeed in doing this, we have unhinged the superstition that prevails on the

subject of landed property,—we have loosened the fabric of aristocracy, and laid open a question that for many years to come will occupy the attention of Great Britain. There is already in the public mind a very extensive suspicion that the present distribution of the land is the true and main cause of England's distress and Ireland's wretchedness; but the supposed difficulty of presenting a scheme which should be perfectly just in theory, and practicable and beneficial if carried into effect, appears to have deterred many from openly attacking the question, and from subjecting it to the same kind of calm and rational investigation so lavishly accorded to other questions of incomparably less importance. The apparent hopelessness, also, of effecting any radical change in the present system, and the fear of advocating "wild" doctrines, have both exerted an influence in repressing investigation. This apathy, however, cannot continue long. Whatever may be the result, the investigation cannot fail to be made.

We now undertake to show that the gift of the land by the king, is nothing more than a law affecting action; and, consequently, is of the same character as a law relating to crime. And if so, it must follow the general course of the laws relating to crime; and if those laws are not morally permanent, neither is the king's gift of land morally permanent, but may be revised, amended, or abolished, exactly in the same manner as a law affecting crime. And over and above, we maintain, that neither the one nor the other is one atom more valid, or more binding, on account of legislation, but that they are right now, or wrong now, wholly and solely according to their own merits; that the law cannot make a crime, although the law may call an action by this name, and treat it as such; and

that the law cannot make a portion of land property although it may call it property. Both crime and property are anterior to law, and superior to it: and it was not to make either the one or the other, but to prevent the one and protect the other, that legislative law was called into existence. Law is not the moral measure of right and wrong; but the rule of practice for the policeman, constable, jailer, judge, sheriff, and hangman; and until law is absolutely perfect, there is a canon higher than the canon of law, one more valid and more stable—the canon of reason—to which law itself must be subject.

A law against crime is a public declaration that certain acts ought not to be performed; and that he who performs them shall be visited with certain specified penalties. This, we maintain, is exactly the essence of the king's grant of landed property, because the law declares that if any persons use the land without permission of the grantee, they shall be punished.

Now the essential part of this political arrangement is this:—"All persons in the nation are forbidden, under pains and penalties, to use a certain portion of land, with the exception of the grantee, or by his permission." This, then, is essentially a law against action—a law declaring that to use a certain portion of land is a crime for the vast majority of the population.

Now, if we turn to the effects of this arrangement, we find that this grantee is in no respect bound to make the land produce. He may utterly neglect it; nay, he may, as has actually been done recently in the Highlands of Scotland (and as the king did himself ages ago at the New Forest)—may drive off the population, drive off the sheep (the food of the man), and convert the district into a game desert for his own

amusement—he having plenty of wealth, derived perhaps from other lands, wherewith to support these costly pleasures—at the expense of the nation.

Such, on the side of the grantee, is the limit of liberty. Let us now ask, What the limit is on the part of the nation? No matter what may be the state of the land—even if it is lying waste, and producing nothing for man's support, as is actually the case in many parts of the kingdom—no man in Britain may put into it a spade or a potato, to save his family from starvation, without incurring the penalties of the law. He would be a criminal (the law would call him so), and he would be treated as such.

This state of affairs represents the extremes; and all that is better than the extremes is due, not to the law, but to the laws of nature. Now, the law has done this grievous injury; it has deprived the poor of the natural remedy whereby they would have corrected so enormous an abuse. Let us suppose that there was no law, and that one man claimed thirty thousand acres for his amusement. Other persons require the land for their support. They begin to occupy it, and he endeavors to repel them. Now, what would be the natural consequence? What ought the cultivators to do? Should they retire and starve? or expatriate themselves? They would resist the aggression by force, and in so doing they would only do their duty. But the law will not allow them to resist. The law has first deprived them of the land, and then enlisted a standing army to prevent them from using the natural means of recovering it.

No truth can be more certain than that God gave the land for the benefit of all; and if any arrangement interfere with, or diminish that benefit, then has man as man, as the recipient of God's bounty, an un-

doubted right to alter or abolish that arrangement, exactly as he alters his arrangements in agriculture, in medicine, in mechanics, or in navigation. No more crime, and no more wrong attaches to his alterations in the one case than in the other.

Political improvement takes place exactly as men discover and definitely determine the true nature of crime; and exactly as they confine their laws to the prohibition of those actions which are crimes, and to the non-prohibition of those actions which are not crimes. The laws of man cannot make a crime, neither can they unmake a crime. Crime is logically anterior to human legislation, and the very end and intent of legislation in its first and most essential capacity is,—to prevent crime.

All nations with which we are acquainted have punished as crimes actions which were not crimes; and the gradual improvement of the laws of man in this respect, is one of the great phenomena that we learn from history.

But while we have a positive major proposition, we have also a negative major proposition, which is—

“No action that is not a crime ought to be prevented by the law.”

Now, as legislators and rulers are only men (there is no divine wisdom, nor divine sacredness about them), they may be the criminals as well as any of the population. It is quite easy for the generality of writers on these subjects to treat of crime as committed by the population. They see so far, and sometimes their views are valuable and correct. But they have first perched the government on a great height, which they do not intend to survey; and then they confine their observation to the subject population. To include both at one view appears a stretch beyond their power,

and hence their admirable dissertations are unsatisfactory; and by unsatisfactory, we do not mean that they are not distinguished by talent of the highest order, and by upright sincerity; but that they treat only one portion of the phenomenon, and omit its correlative. Exactly as if one were to write an able dissertation on the earth's motion, furnishing us with a perfect diagram and specification of the orbit, and an exact determination of the velocity, and yet should altogether omit to mention the sun. Such a dissertation, let its details be as perfect as they may, would be altogether unsatisfactory; because the correlative, the sun, has not been exhibited in its relations to the earth.

And so it is with crime. He who studies crime as a portion of man-science, must include in his view the whole phenomenon, and must inquire what does man do, as man. And when we turn to Britain with this principle, we must regard the whole population, king, lords, commons, soldiers, judges, laborers, paupers, in fact, the whole mass of society, as merely men. And when we define crime, and find that actions coinciding with that definition are performed by any of these parties, by whatever name they may be called, or under whatever pretences they may appear, we must not hesitate to call the action by the name of crime, and to say, "this is a crime committed by men." Reverence for law as law, as a human rule of action *de facto* enacted by legislators, is mere debasing superstition; nor, however venerable law may be in some men's estimation, do we consider either their law or their worship of it at all entitled to respect. Men venerate law and care nothing for justice, just as they venerate the priest and forget the Deity.

The Almighty Maker and Ruler of mankind will

have men subject to justice and not to men; and the very moment the rules of justice, which vary not, nor can vary, are departed from, that moment is man relieved from his allegiance to the ruler; and if the population have the power, they may arrest the rulers, and bring them to the same judicial trial that would be reserved for the individual.

Hence the necessity for a "science of justice," that men—definitely ascertaining, on principles which are not arbitrary, the real actions which are criminal—may appoint a first magistrate to carry into execution the laws of justice. And this first magistrate—king, president, or anything else—is not to govern men, but to regulate them according to the laws of equity; and in performing this function, he occupies the highest position to which man may attain, and, performing his duties with impartial sincerity, he merits the constant respect, aid, and support of every person in the land. This portion of the British constitution, the first magistrate king, the independent judges, and the jury from the locality, is unsurpassed, if not unequalled, by anything in the whole history of man. In England, we have in this portion of our political mechanism, the most profound reason for thankfulness to God. Had the slave-owner been tried, he could not have been convicted because of the law; but had the legislature been tried for making laws to allow slavery, and for using the British arms to support it, there can be no question that, if the ordinary decisions were adhered to, the jury would have found the legislature guilty, and England may proudly say that her judges would not have hesitated to pronounce the condemnation. Definitely to determine what is a crime and what is not a crime is one of the first great problems of political science. We define crime to be,

“a breach of equity”; and consequently we maintain that whatever is not a breach of equity is not a crime, and under no circumstances whatever ought to be prohibited or restricted by the laws. Absolute freedom, then, to perform every action that is not a breach of equity, constitutes the great final termination of man’s political progress, so far as liberty is concerned.

But what is man’s final termination with regard to the other great substantive of politics, property?

Here we approach a subject that, in the course of a few years (in all probability), will be the great element of strife and contention. Here is the rock on which England’s famous constitution of King, Lords, and Commons, will suffer its final shipwreck. Such an assertion is, of course, at present a mere opinion; but if the scheme we have advanced be in the main correct, then we do not hesitate to affirm, that if we continue that scheme into the future, we may see that the question of landed property will be the cause of a stupendous struggle between the aristocracy and the laborocracy of Britain, and that its final settlement will entail the destruction of the constitution. And the question lies in narrow bounds, all that is required being an answer to a question virtually the following: “Is the population to be starved, pauperized, and expatriated, or is the aristocracy to be destroyed?”* Let the political arrangements be what they may, let there be universal or any other suffrage, so long as the aristocracy have all the land, and derive the rent

* By the destruction of the aristocracy, we do not mean the destruction of the aristocrats, any more than, by the destruction of pauperism, we should mean the destruction of the persons of the paupers. It is to the system that we refer exclusively, and only as either system has been created by the arrangements of men.

of it, the laborer is only a serf, and a serf he will remain until he has uprooted the rights of private landed property. The land is for the nation, and not for the aristocracy.

But it is necessary to understand what we mean by a lord and a serf.

A serf is a man who, by the arrangements of mankind, is deprived of the object on which he might expend his labor, or of the natural profit that results from his labor; and consequently is under the necessity of supporting himself and his family by his labor alone. And a lord or an aristocrat is a man who, by the arrangements of mankind, is made to possess the object; and who consequently can support himself and his family without labor, on the profits created by the labor of others. This is the essential distinction between the lord and the serf; and we maintain that the constitution of the world forbids that any arrangement of this kind should result in any other than an evil condition of society, which must necessarily condemn a large part of the population to physical degradation, and if to physical degradation to moral degradation. No instance can be adduced of a population reduced to extreme poverty (as must ever be the case where the land, the great source of wealth, is allotted to a few who labor not), where that population has not been also and in consequence reduced to moral and intellectual degradation, and where the spirit of man has not been depraved and borne down by the circumstances in which man, and not God, has placed him.

The history of the acquisition of liberty (in Britain, for instance) is only the history of the gradual destruction of the privileges of the lord, and of the legal title which the serf has from time to time succeeded

in establishing to those natural rights of which he has been deprived.

We are fully aware that there exists in the minds of many persons a vague apprehension, that if the present laws relating to landed property were to be disturbed, evils of the most malignant character would invade the society of Britain. Nothing can be more absurd, more puerile, more dastardly. The very same fears have prevailed with regard to every other change that has taken place; and, down to the last change that man shall make in his political arrangements, we may rest satisfied that the craven, the place-man, and the aristocrat will not fail to vent loud lamentations on the evils which, in their estimation, are sure to follow. The arrangements of mankind have established diversities of rights affecting the possession of the earth, which the Creator intended for the race; and thus one man was endowed with vast extents of territory, while, on the other hand, multitudes were thereby necessarily deprived of everything except their labor. So singular a system could only originate in the reign of power, and could only be perpetuated through the ignorance of the masses of the population. But the arrangements of mankind with regard to the earth did not stop here. One generation was not content with making arrangements which were to be in force for that generation alone; but laws were enacted, and customs were acknowledged whereby the arrangements of one generation were to descend to future generations, and to be imposed on men not yet born, who were to be born into a world already portioned out, and consequently to which they had no title. Those, therefore, who were born into the world in a country where the land had been accorded to individual proprietors, could obtain their livelihood

only by labor for other men; and as those to whom the land had been accorded could not cultivate it themselves, and as the land was required for the support of the population, the laborers were under the necessity of paying a rent to those who thus procured a vast revenue without labor. This system of diversity of rights to the natural earth, which God intended for the race, being perpetuated from generation to generation, entails with it, as its necessary attendant, that baneful condition of society, in which we have a few aristocrats endowed with vast wealth without labor, and a multitude of laborers reduced to poverty, destitution, and sometimes to actual starvation.

No political truth requires to be more strenuously impressed upon the world, than that the men of every succeeding generation have the same right to make their own arrangements, unburdened with any responsibilities, restrictions, diversities of rights and privileges, other than those restrictions imposed by the general laws of equity, or those diversities of office which they may agree to make for their general advantage.

If, then, we admit that every generation of men has the same free right to make its own arrangements, and to carry into effect the principles it knows or believes to be true, quite independently of the arrangements that have been made by any anterior generations, we must also of necessity admit, that the earth and all it contains, belongs, for the time being, to every existing generation, and that the disposition of the earth (as the great storehouse from which man must derive his support and sustenance) is not to be determined by the laws, customs, arrangements, king's gifts, or prescriptive rights of any past generation of men, but by the judgment and reason of the existing generation, ordering all arrangements according to the rules of

equity, which are always valid and always binding, and which at every given moment of time are the rules which ought to determine human action. Consequently the question at every period is, "What is the equitable disposition of the earth?" The great problem is to discover "such a system as shall secure to every man his exact share of the natural advantages which the Creator has provided for the race; while, at the same time, he has full opportunity, without let or hindrance, to exercise his labor, industry, and skill, for his own advantage." Until this problem is solved, both in theory and in practice, political change must continually go on.

Absolute equalization in the eye of the law with regard to natural rights, is the final termination of man's political progress, the last term in that grand series of changes that commenced with the two opposite elements—the lord and the serf; and which will terminate with the one element—the freeman without privileges and without oppressions.

There cannot be the slightest question that the progression of modern states is towards universal suffrage; that is, towards absolute equalization of the political function of the individuals of whom the state is composed. The necessary attendant of universal suffrage must be, "the equal eligibility of every member of the state to fill any office in the state."

When a state arrives at this ultimatum with regard to the political function of each individual, the question of natural property must fall to be discussed; and as no possible reason can be alleged why one individual should *à priori* be endowed with more of the earth (which God, the Creator and Father of mankind, has given to the human race) than any other individual; and as every generation of existing men must

have exactly the same title to a free earth, unencumbered with any arrangements of past generations, we may rest satisfied, that through whatever transformations men may pass, the ultimate point at which they must necessarily arrive, is absolute equality with regard to natural property. And if so, the intention of Providence will then be realized, that the industrious man shall be rich, and the man who labors not shall be poor. Such is the intention of nature, and such is the intention of the Almighty Maker of mankind.

The great social problem, then, that cannot fail ere long to appear in the arena of European discussion is, "to discover such a system as shall secure to every man his exact share of the natural advantages which the Creator has provided for the race; while, at the same time, he has full opportunity, without let or hindrance, to exercise his skill, industry, and perseverance for his own advantage."

Of this problem, we maintain that there can be but one general solution possible; and the whole analogy // of scientific discovery assures us that, sooner or later, the problem will be solved, that the solution will be acknowledged, and that it will be transformed from an intellectual dogma into a practical rule of action, thereby presenting a realization, in outward condition, of those propositions which the reason has seen to be correct.

The solution we propound is the following, although, of course, there is no supposition that any general solution can be immediately applicable to the circumstances of this or any other country.

We shall speak of England alone, and consider the state of England as composed of an indefinite number of members, all equal in the eye of the law, all on a parity with regard to primary political function, and

all equally eligible to fill any office to which they may be elected by the suffrages of the majority. All authority of man is of course excluded, and the canon of right is the science of equity—that is, the rules of divine and immutable justice, as capable of being apprehended by the human reason.

[Even if it were true that there ought to be an inequality of rights among the individuals of the human race, it would be absolutely impossible to determine which individuals of the race should be born to more rights, and which individuals to fewer rights, than their fellows.* An inequality of rights can only be based on superstition, and the very moment reason is substituted for superstition in political science (as it has been in physical science), that moment must men admit that no possible means are known by which an inequality of rights could possibly be substantiated.]

The state of England, then, would present a soil (including the soil proper, the mines, forests, fisheries,

* “Whilst we maintain the unity of the human species, we at the same time repel the depressing assumption of superior and inferior races of men.” “There are nations more susceptible of cultivation, more highly civilized, more ennobled by mental cultivation, than others, but none in themselves nobler than others. All are in like degree designed for freedom—a freedom which, in the ruder conditions of society, belongs only to the individual, but which, in social states enjoying political institutions, appertains as a right to the whole body of the community.” “If we would indicate an idea which, throughout the whole course of history, has ever more and more widely extended its empire, or which, more than any other, testifies to the much contested, and still more decidedly misunderstood perfectibility of the whole human race, it is that of establishing our common humanity—without reference to religion, nation, or color, as one fraternity, one great community, fitted for the attainment of one object, the unrestrained development of the psychical powers. This is the ultimate and highest aim of society, identical

etc.; in fact, that portion of the natural earth called England) which was permanent, and a population that was not permanent, but renewed by successive generations.

The question then is, "What system will secure to every individual of these successive generations his portion of the natural advantages of England?" Of this problem, we maintain that there is but one solution possible.

No truth can be more absolutely certain as an intuitive proposition of the reason, than that "an object is the property of its creator"; and we maintain that creation* is the only means by which an individual right to property can be generated. Consequently, as no individual and no generation is the creator of the

with the direction implanted by nature in the mind of man towards the indefinite extension of his existence. He regards the earth in all its limits, and the heavens as far as his eye can scan their bright and starry depths, as inwardly his own, given to him as the objects of his contemplation, and as a field for the development of his energies. Even the child longs to pass the hills, or the seas which enclose his manor-house; yet, when his eager steps have borne him beyond those limits, he pines like the plant for his native soil; and it is by this touching and beautiful attribute of man, this longing for that which is unknown, and this fond remembrance of that which is lost, that he is spared from an exclusive attachment to the present. Thus deeply rooted in the innermost nature of man, and even enjoined upon him by his highest tendencies, the recognition of the bond of humanity becomes one of the noblest leading principles in the history of mankind."—Humboldt's *Cosmos*, vol. i. p. 368; *Bohn's Edition*.

* In the arts, man creates form; in political economy, he creates value; and in politics, he creates property. And as the evolution is in this order—1st, the Arts; 2d, Political Economy; 3d, Politics; the laws of political economy must be discovered before there can be a system of property rational in its theory and scientific in its form.

substantive, earth, it belongs equally to all the existing inhabitants. That is, no individual has a special claim to more than another.

But while on the one hand we take into consideration the object—that is, the earth; we must also take into consideration the subject—that is, man, and man's labor.

The object is the common property of all; no individual being able to exhibit a title to any particular portion of it. And individual or private property is, the increased value produced by individual labor. Again, in the earth must be distinguished the permanent earth and its temporary or perishable productions. The former—that is, the permanent earth—we maintain, never can be private property; and every system that treats it as such must necessarily be unjust. No rational basis has ever been exhibited to the world on which private right to any particular portion of the earth could possibly be founded.

But though the permanent earth never can be private property (although the laws may call it so, and may treat it as such), it must be possessed by individuals for the purpose of cultivation, and for the purpose of extracting from it all those natural objects which man requires.

The question then is, upon what terms, or according to what system, must the earth be possessed by the successive generations that succeed each other on the surface of the globe? The conditions given are—First, That the earth is the common property of the race; Second, That whatever an individual produces by his own labor (whether it be a new object, made out of many materials, or a new value given by labor to an object whose form, locality, etc., may be changed) is the private property of that individual, and he may

dispose of it as he pleases, provided he does not interfere with his fellows. Third, The earth is the perpetual common property of the race, and each succeeding generation has a full title to a free earth. One generation cannot encumber a succeeding generation.

And the condition required is, such a system as shall secure to the successive individuals of the race their share of the common property, and the opportunity without interference, of making as much private property as their skill, industry, and enterprise would enable them to make.

The scheme that appears to present itself most naturally is, the general division of the soil, portioning it out to the inhabitants according to their number. Such appears to be the only system that suggests itself to most minds, if we may judge from the objections brought forward against an equalization of property.

But men must go forward, never backward. To speak of a division of lands in England is absurd. Such a division would be as useless as it is improbable. But it is more than useless—it is unjust; and unjust, not to the present so-called proprietors, but to the human beings who are continually being born into the world, and who have exactly the same natural right to a portion that their predecessors have.

The actual division of the soil need never be anticipated, nor would such a division be just, if the divided portions were made the property (legally, for they could never be so morally) of individuals.

If, then, successive generations of men cannot have their fractional share of the actual soil (including mines, etc.), how can the division of the advantages of the natural earth be effected?

By the division of its annual value or rent; that is,

by making the rent of the soil the common property of the nation. That is (as the taxation is the common property of the state), by taking the whole of the taxes out of the rents of the soil, and thereby abolishing all other kinds of taxation whatever. And thus all industry would be absolutely emancipated from every burden, and every man would reap such natural reward as his skill, industry, or enterprise rendered legitimately his, according to the natural law of free competition.* This we maintain to be the only theory that will satisfy the requirements of the problem of natural property. And the question now is: how can the division of the rent be effected? An actual division of the rent—that is, the payment of so much money to each individual—would be attended with, perhaps, insuperable inconveniences; neither is such an actual division requisite, every requirement being capable of fulfilment without it.

We now apply this solution to England. England forms a state; that is, a community acting through public servants for the administration of justice, etc. In the actual condition of England, many things are at present unjust; and the right of the government to tax and make laws for those who are excluded from representation, is at all events questionable. However, we shall make a few remarks on England as she is, and on England as she ought to be; that is, as she would be were the rules of equity reduced to practical operation.

1st. The state has alienated the lands to private

* We have no hesitation whatever in predicting that all civilized communities must ultimately abolish all revenue restrictions on industry, and draw the whole taxation from the rents of the soil. And this because the rents of the soil are the common produce of the whole labor of a community.

individuals called proprietors, and the vast majority of Englishmen are born to their labor, minus their share of the taxation.

2d. This taxation of labor has introduced vast systems of restriction on trades and industry. Instead of a perfectly free trade with all the world, England has adopted a revenue system that most materially diminishes both the amount of trade and its profit. And, instead of a perfectly free internal industry, England has adopted an excise that is as vexatious in its operation as can well be conceived. Both the customs and excise laws, and every other tax on industry, have arisen from the alienation of the soil from the state; and had the soil not been alienated, no tax whatever would have been requisite; and were the soil resumed (as it undoubtedly ought to be), every tax of every kind and character, save the common rent of the soil, might at once be abolished, with the whole army of collectors, revenue-officers, cruisers, coast-guards, excisemen, etc., etc.

3d. Taxation can only be on land or labor. [By land we mean the natural earth, not merely the agricultural soil.] These are the two radical elements that can be subjected to taxation, capital being originally derived from one or the other. Capital is only hoarded labor or hoarded rent; and as all capital must be derived from the one source or the other, all taxation of capital is only taxation of land or of labor. Consequently all taxation of whatever kind is,—1st, taxation of labor, that is, a deduction from the natural remuneration which God intended the laborer to derive from his exertions; or 2d, taxation of land, that is, the appropriation of the current value of the natural earth to the expenses of the state.

Now, labor is essentially private property, and

land is not essentially private property, but on the contrary is the common inheritance of every generation of mankind. Where the land is taxed, no man is taxed, nor does the taxation of land interfere in any way whatever with the progress of human industry. On the contrary, the taxation of land, rightly directed, might be made to advance the condition of the country to a high degree of prosperity.

4th. For the expenses of a state there must be a revenue, and this revenue must be derived from the taxation of labor, or from the rent of the lands. There is no other alternative; either the rents of the soil must be devoted to the common expenses of the state, or the labor of individuals must be interfered with; and restrictions, supervisions, prohibitions, etc., must be called into existence, to facilitate the collection of the revenue.

The political history of landed property in England, appears to have been as follows:—

1st. The lands were accorded by the king to persons who were to undertake the military service of the kingdom.

2d. The performance of this military service was the condition on which individuals held the national land.

3d. The lands were at first held for life, and afterwards were made hereditary.

4th. The military service was abolished by the law, and a standing army introduced.

5th. This standing army was paid by the king.

6th. The king, having abolished the military services of the individuals who held the national land, resorted to the taxation of articles of consumption for the payment of the army.

The lands of England, therefore, instead of being

held on condition of performing the military service of the kingdom, became the property of the individuals who held them, and thus the State of England lost the lands of England. And the military service of the kingdom, instead of being performed by those individuals who held the national land, was henceforth (after the reign of Charles II.) to be paid for by the general taxation of the inhabitants of the country.

Therefore the present system of taxation, and the national debt, the interest of which is procured by the forcible taxation of the general inhabitants of England, are both due to the alienation of the lands from the State, inasmuch as the national debt (incurred for war expenses) would have been a debt upon the lands, and not a debt upon the people of England. If, therefore, the legislature had a right to abolish the military services of those who held the national land, and thereby to impose on the general community all the liabilities of the military service of the kingdom, the legislature has the same right to abolish the general taxation of the community, and to allocate to those who hold the land all the expenses that have been incurred, and that are still incurred, for the war charges of the kingdom.

The alienation of the land from the state, and its conversion into private property, was the first grand step that laid the foundation of the modern system of society in England,—a system that presents enormous wealth in the hands of a few aristocrats, who neither labor, nor even pay taxes in proportion to those who do labor; and a vast population laboring for a bare subsistence, or reduced sometimes by millions to the condition of pauperism.

So long as this system is allowed to continue, it appears (from the constitution of the earth, and of man's

power to extract from it a maintenance) an absolute impossibility that pauperism should be obliterated; inasmuch as the burden of taxation necessarily falls on labor, and more especially as the value of labor is necessarily diminished wherever there is a soil allocated to an aristocracy.*

The three events which have at last left the lands of England in the hands of a small number of aristocrats, are these: the suppression of the monasteries; the abolition of military tenures; and the enclosure of the common lands.

Yet every one of these events has a right side as well as a wrong side. It was right to abolish the monasteries and the military tenures, but it was iniquitous to transform the lands thus obtained into the property of the aristocracy.

The enclosure of the common lands, again, was a proper measure, inasmuch as the lands were producing a little; and every measure that caused the lands to produce more for the consumption of the country was so far beneficial. It would have been quite absurd to leave the common lands in pasture, while their enclosure would produce for the service of the country

* In fact, it is the disposition of the land that determines the value of labor. If men could get the land to labor on, they would manufacture only for a remuneration that afforded more profit than God has attached to the cultivation of the earth. Where they cannot get the land to labor on they are starved into working for a bare subsistence. There is only one reason why the labor of England, Ireland, and Scotland, is of so little marketable value, and that reason is, the present disposition of the soil. The lands of England have been disposed of according to two laws—the law of the strongest and the law of the most cunning; hence England's pauperism and England's moral degradation. There yet remains another law, and its reduction to practice will, one day or other, regenerate the social condition of the population—the law of equity.

a much larger quantity of food. But these allotments were assigned, under enclosure acts, not to the occupiers, but the owners of the cottages. Thus almost *a complete severance has been affected between the English peasantry and the English soil.* The little farmers and cottiers of the country have been converted into day-laborers, depending entirely upon daily earnings, which may, and frequently in point of fact do, fail them. They have now no land, upon the produce of which they can fall as a reserve whenever the demand for labor happens to be slack.

And now it is necessary to inquire, "Why does it happen, that in the richest country in the world a large portion of the population should be reduced to pauperism?" Until the causes of pauperism are satisfactorily ascertained, and until the remedy is applied to the cause, no remedial measure can do more than alleviate the evil. Apply the remedy to the cause, and the evil is eradicated. The cause, or at least one of the great causes, is that expressed in the words quoted above, "the severance between the English peasantry and the English soil;" and until the peasantry recover that soil, the inhabitants of England may rest satisfied that the curse of pauperism will pursue them. The British public can never be sufficiently reminded that there need have been no taxes had it not been for the alienation of the land from the state.

No truth appears to be more satisfactorily and more generally borne out by the history of modern Europe, than that the progression of men in the matter of liberty "is from a diversity of privileges towards an equality of rights;" that is, that the past progress has been all in this direction since the maximum of diversity prevailed in the aspect of individual lord and individual serf. And if this be the case, it

cannot be an unreasonable conclusion, that if sufficient time be allowed for the evolution, the progress of change will continue to go on till some ultimate condition is evolved. And that ultimate condition can only be at the point where diversity of privilege disappears, and every individual in the state is legally entitled to identically the same political functions. Diversities of office there may be, and there must be, but diversity of rights there cannot be without injustice.

Such, then, is the theoretic ultimatum that satisfies the reason with regard to its equity, and such is the historic ultimatum that the reason infers from the past history of mankind. Such, then, is the point towards which societies are progressing; and when that point is reached, the ultimatum of equity is achieved, and the present course of historical evolution is complete.

The next steps required to lead society towards its final destination are questions for the practical statesman.

Diversity of opinion may arise between two men who are both apparently in the right, if the attention of the one be directed to what is theoretically right, and the attention of the other to what is practically expedient as the next step which the present balance of powers in the state renders possible. The one takes the unchangeable and imperishable element of man, the objective reason, crowns it with imperial authority, and demands that all should at once acknowledge its supremacy. The other takes the variable element of man—his subjective condition—and, rejecting every dogma that claims to be absolute, discourses only on the proximate possibility of improving that condition.

Between these two parties, therefore, there is not

so much a perpetual warfare, as a perpetual misunderstanding. Their point of view is different. They stand on different elevations, and have quite a different range of horizon.

To a certain extent, both are necessary—both are workers in the great field of human improvement and of man's amelioration. Incomprehensible as they must ever be to each other (till the last final item of change shall bring both to an identity of purpose), they are fellow-laborers in the scheme of human evolution. The one devises afar off the general scheme of progress; the other carries the proximate measures of that scheme into practical operation. The one is the hydrographer who constructs the chart; the other, the mariner who navigates the ship, ignorant perhaps what may be its final destination.

The theorist, too often trusting to his individual perceptions, forgets that propositions which appear to him of absolute certitude, can never be accepted by the world until they have received a far wider authentication than any one man could possibly bestow upon them. And though perchance he might evolve some propositions which should ultimately be able to stand their ground, experience will prove that the diffusion of truth is no less necessary than its discovery. Truth, like leaven, must pervade the mass before the requisite transformation is effected. On the other hand, the man of practice moves, for the most part, as he is impelled by the convictions of the multitude, and his object is not to theorize but to design the requisite changes, and to carry them into execution. The theories of to-day he regards with indifference or aversion; they are of no practical avail; he is pressed with the necessity of action, and forgets that he moves in action because the multitude have moved in mind;

and that the multitude moved in mind because they had imbibed the theories of former speculators, and changed their credence under the influence of conviction. He forgets that change of action comes from change of credence, and that change of credence comes from theoretic speculation. He forgets that if there were no theories there would be no change, and if no change no necessity for him to execute it.

In assigning, then, a theoretic ultimatum to man's political progress, we posit—

That absolute equality in the eye of the law, without the slightest distinction of individuals or classes, is the ultimatum of political progression; and this ultimatum is the only condition that satisfies the requirements of the reason, and the only condition that presents a rational termination to those changes which, according to history, have been gradually taking place for centuries.