

INTRODUCTION

PRELIMINARY EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

BEFORE attempting to exhibit an argument to establish the possibility of a science of politics it is necessary to define exactly what we mean by such a science.

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 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 re-establishes unity of credence.

Politics is the science of Equity, and treats of the relations of Men in equity.

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

In position it is posterior to political economy and anterior to religion. Its principal substances are: Man, Will, Action, Duty, Crime, Rights, Wrongs and Property; 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.

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.

In man, the subject, lies the whole question of human liberty; in the earth, the object, the whole question to human property: and political science, if it be 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. Science can acknowledge no 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 so-

cieties 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, anything 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.

The first question in every branch of knowledge is its method. Without method there can be no standard of appeal—no means of determining whether a proposition is true or false. 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 dependence 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—or his 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.

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 com-

monly acknowledged), and on the lesson which, as a whole, they must ultimately teach.

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. While a science is undergoing its process of discovery, this logical ordination of its parts cannot be made on sufficient grounds.

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.