

THE THEORY
OF
HUMAN PROGRESSION

BY
PATRICK EDWARD DOVE

Abridged by
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WITH THE COMPLIMENTS
OF THE
MANHATTAN SINGLE TAX CLUB
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FOREWORD

THE purpose of this abridgement is to aid the Propaganda now in progress for a reform in our land-tenure in line with the ideas of Henry George: as promulgated in his great book, "Progress and Poverty," a reform generally known as "The Single Tax." To this end the parts of the work upon the ownership of natural resources, and kindred topics, are given nearly in full, the metaphysical parts, on the other hand, being given only with sufficient completeness to induce those readers who are interested in the *philosophy* of progress to have recourse to the original for themselves.

Our author shows clearly that land is *naturally* common property and that the failure to see this and to adjust our system of political economy to its truth is the supreme cause of poverty with all the suffering and degradation that poverty entails.

J. A. K.

"Slowly comes a hungry people; as a lion creeping nigher
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying
fire."

TENNYSON.

THE BOOK AND THE AUTHOR

ABRIDGED FROM ALEXANDER HARVEY, EDITOR

PATRICK EDWARD DOVE was a Scotchman, born at Lasswade, near Edinburgh, July 31, 1815. His father was a Lieutenant Dove of the royal navy. The families of both parents had been for generations rich and prominent. The Doves had given many officers of high rank to the navy of their king, and one ancestor had been bishop of Peterborough, famous in his day. Commander Francis Dove settled the family in Devonshire in 1716.

Patrick Edward received a good education in his own country and in France. From the French Academy he was expelled in disgrace for leading his fellow-students in an open insurrection against the tutors. On leaving school he had the intention of going into the navy, but he yielded to his father's wish that he should be a gentleman farmer, and went up to Scotland to learn something of husbandry. He led practically, however, the life of a gentleman of leisure, reading and traveling, making several tours on the continent and residing for some years in France.

In 1840 he came into his property and the next year took the estate called "The Craig."

He was said to be the most popular landlord in Scotland. But this landlord did not believe in landlords. He maintained that the soil of a nation was the inheritance of all its people. He was never weary of repeating that rent should go to the State for the benefit of all.

Also, he did not believe in the game laws. He had no keeper on his great estate and no poacher was ever interfered with. Another peculiarity was his friendship for Ireland. He stood up stoutly for the Irish peasantry and denounced Britain's treatment of it.

For seven years he lived thus happily on his estate, but in 1848 an imprudent investment swept away his fortune. Soon after that he married, his bride being penniless like himself. The newly-wedded couple went to live in Darmstadt, where the husband studied and lectured and wrote. They were never unprosperous.

"The Theory of Human Progression" was the first fruit of this toil. The work appeared anonymously. A limited edition was published in 1850, both in London and Edinburgh. In brief, the book is the single-tax theory elucidated a generation in advance of Henry George. What Dove did for scholars, George achieved for the masses.

Economic works were not widely read at that time. Nevertheless Carlyle read and praised the volume. Sir William Hamilton, the great philosopher, pronounced it epoch-making, and our own Charles Sumner was so impressed by it that he circulated many copies in the United States and persuaded Dove to write in behalf of the emancipation movement. For all that the book failed to make its way and before many years was utterly forgotten.

On leaving Germany Dove settled in Edinburgh and soon acquired reputation as a teacher and writer.

The latter part of his life was characterized by an interest in military matters. He was a man of peace, a devout Christian and a scholar, yet he was deeply imbued with the idea of the ultimate necessity of social revolution. He freely expressed the opinion that the masses in their own interest should familiarize themselves with the

technicalities of warfare. He did his best to popularize this sort of knowledge. In 1848 he produced a treatise on the Revolver and the handling of firearms generally. He even went to the length of inventing a rifle cannon which was commended by competent authorities. He had command also of a rifle corps and of a regiment of volunteers which he drilled and equipped himself. He became an authority on the militia.

By this time he was residing in Glasgow, and in 1860 he was suddenly stricken with paralysis. Henceforth he lived mostly a retired life and died April 28, 1873.

NOTE.—It is pleasant to know that he lived to see the abolition of slavery in the United States, which he had foretold years before as a deduction from the general principles of his own theory of the progress of mankind.

DEDICATION

To

MONSIEUR VICTOR COUSIN,

Prof. of Philosophy at Paris.

To you I beg leave to dedicate the following Essay on Human Progression, with those sentiments of esteem and admiration which I share in common with so many of my countrymen.

The truth I endeavor to inculcate is—That credence rules the world—that credence determines the condition and fixes the destiny of nations—that true credence must ever entail with it a correct and beneficial system of society, while false credence must ever be accompanied by despotism, anarchy, and wrong—that before a nation can change its condition it must change its credence; that change of credence will of necessity be accompanied sooner or later by change of condition: and consequently, that true credence, or in other words knowledge, is the only means by which man can work out his wellbeing and ameliorate his condition on the globe.

The question is often asked, What is the use of philosophy?—nor is the answer difficult. Next to religion, philosophy is, of all known causes, the element that most powerfully tends to determine the condition of a country. It is a power—a power so vast that we are scarcely likely to overestimate its effects; and, though it must ever be unable to solve the great questions in which our race is involved, it may, by uprooting political superstitions and false religions, exercise an influence that no calculation can compute. The theories of one generation become the habitual credence of the next; and that habitual credence, transformed into a rule of action, is ere long realized as a palpable fact in the outward condition of society. And thus it may be truly said—As the philosophy of a country is, so its condition will be.

To no one could I dedicate a work intended to elucidate these principles, so appropriately as to yourself—to you, Sir, who have labored so earnestly and so well to give to your countrymen a correct system of Ethical Philosophy, and, through them, to communicate to Europe a scheme of natural morals which must ere long bear a rich and most beneficial harvest.

Accept, Sir, the dedication of this work as a tribute of respect from your sincere admirer.

THE AUTHOR.

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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 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.