Politics

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Every science begins by laying hold of some definite and tangible facts, and advances by tracing their myriad relations until they are lost in the great complex of things. So politics starts with the government which, in final analysis, is a determinate number of persons in a political community charged with certain public duties, and it advances to a consideration of the phenomena which condition the organization and operations of the government.

It is evident at a casual glance that official performances are not really separable from other actions of the governmental agents themselves or from many of the actions of citizens at large. For instance, the declaration of war against Spain was a political act, but clearly it was only an incident in the sum total of events which led up to the armed conflict. For months before the official proceeding, social forces had been gathering strength, and impinging on the minds of persons charged with transmuting the feeling and will of the nation into the legal state of war. It was by a mere formal process that social realities passed over into political facts.

It is apparent that the jural test of what constitutes a political action draws a dividing line where none exists in fact, and consequently any study of government that neglects the disciplines of history, economics, and sociology will lack in reality what it gains in precision. Man as a political animal acting upon political, as distinguished from more vital and powerful motives, is the most unsubstantial of all abstractions.

It is, however, to my way of thinking a false notion that the ancient and honorable discipline of politics has been overthrown or absorbed by the dissolution of the subject into history, economics, and sociology. Rather does it seem that solid foundations are being laid in reality in place of in the shifting sands of speculation. We are coming to realize that a science dealing with man has no special field of data all to itself, but is rather merely a way of looking at

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the same thing—a view of a certain aspect of human action. The human being is not essentially different when he is depositing his ballot from what he is in the counting house or at the work bench. In place of a "natural" man, an "economic" man, a "religious" man, or a "political" man, we now observe the whole man participating in the work of government. Politics starts with the observation of such of his acts as may be juristically tested, passes to the acts most nearly related, and then works out into the general field of human conduct. In describing the forms of government, in seeking the historical and social reasons why government in Germany differs from that in France; in explaining the elaborate details of administration; in endeavoring to penetrate the sources of party organization and operation; in comparing the political experiences of different nations, politics has a definite field of its own, even if it does not meet the approval of the high priests of the mathematical and the exact.

It may be conceded at the outset that politics does not possess a single piece of literature as substantial as a table of logarithms or an engineer's handbook, nor a body of doctrine to be applied with celerity as a form of first aid to the injured. And after all, the men of pure science must admit that politicians are scarcely more disputatious over the best form of a primary law than are consulting engineers over the problem of ventilating the subway. In fact all knowledge, when applied to specific problems, even in many branches of natural science, is often at best a dim light, and political knowledge suffers from this general limitation on the human intellect. In spite of the many troubles that beset him, however, the student of politics may rejoice in an ever growing body of sound material, historical on one side, descriptive and statistical on the other.

Archaeologists and anthropologists are disclosing to us primitive types of society which were unknown to Aristotle, Hobbes, and Locke. Vast collections of laws, documents, chronicles, and miscellaneous papers, revealing step by step the processes in the origin and development of the state, have been edited with scientific care by historical investigators. Great treatises like those of Stubbs, Maitland, Gierke, Brunner, Coulanges and Spencer have put the student of politics further in advance of Montesquieu than he was ahead of Marsilius of Padua of the fourteenth century. Governments are now taking censuses on an ever larger scale and on more scientific principles; bureaus are obtaining and arranging data on political experiments of every sort. Private persons, like Charles Booth in his survey of London, are laying bare realities once the subject of futile speculation and thus outside the range of effective political action. From this vast heterogeneous mass of materials are coming an ever sounder notion of the origin, functions, and tendencies of the state, a higher view of its possibilities as the experiments of each nation are placed at the disposal of all, and finally a more scientific theory of causation in politics.
One of the most salutary results of this vast accumulation of data on politics has been to discredit the older speculative theorists and the utopia makers. Even their very interests and presuppositions are being rudely brushed aside. For example, Locke devoted about one half of his famous "Treatises on Government" to rejecting the Adamite source of political authority. Locke proceeded to base his reasoning on an equally unhistorical proposition that "to understand political power aright and derive it from its original we must consider what estate all men are naturally in and that is a state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit within the bounds of the law of nature without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man."

Quite different from this is the procedure of the student today. If he wants to discover how government originated, how its forms have changed, the tendencies of its evolution, and the forces modifying its structure and functions, he knows that there is no hope for real knowledge except in the painstaking examination of the materials that are left to us—records of past politics, statistical materials on races, groups and classes, and descriptions of the bewildering types of society gathered from the past and from the four corners of the earth.

The influence of the historical school on correct thinking in politics has been splendidly supplemented by that of the Darwinians. They have given us as the political unit not a typical man with typical faculties, but a man infinite in variety and capacity, ranging from the dog-faced cannibals of the Andaman islands to the highest type of modern citizen who surrenders the hope of private gain that he may serve the state. The eighteenth-century philosophers were wrong. We have not been driven from a political paradise; we have not fallen from a high estate, nor is there any final mold into which society is to be cast. On the contrary, society has come from crude and formless associations beginning in a dim and dateless past and moves outward into an illimitable future, which many of us believe will not be hideous and mean, but beautiful and magnificent. In this dynamic society, the citizen becomes the co-worker in that great and indivisible natural process which draws down granite hills and upbuilds great nations.

Some very profound scholars, among them Sir Henry Sumner Maine, have thought that, in spite of this persistency of change, society has arrived at two fundamental notions of permanent validity, namely, freedom of contract and private property. Nevertheless, beyond agreeing that a certain freedom of contract is indispensable to the working of natural selection and that pure communism is a device for angels and not for men, recent writers seem unable to find an abiding place for contract or property. Under feudalism, as we know, some of the most elemental matters of a political nature now fixed in public law were the subjects of free arrangement between sovereign and
vassal, while many other matters then determined by status are now left to private agreement. Thus contract like other institutions falls into the flow of things; we are never compelled to choose between status or contract; but we shall have perennial questions as to the positive limits on the kinds of things which men may agree to do.

It is the same with private property. If we trace its evolution from the quasi-communism of primitive times to the age of intangible securities, we find that men’s ideas have differed fundamentally as to what particular things should constitute private property. Thus some forms of property have disappeared altogether; the public has laid hold of domains once reserved to the individual; and private rights are becoming more and more penetrated with notions of public welfare. The great question of any age, therefore, is not shall private property as such be abolished, for the nature of man demonstrates that it cannot be, but what forms of property shall be permitted, and to what public uses shall they be subjected. Here politics confronts not axioms of law or polity set like the hills, but complicated social questions to be settled, not in the closet with the philosophers, but amid the multitudinous experiences of the market place where society daily meets the pressing needs of life.

It is not only in possessing sound historical and evolutionary notions that the student of politics lays claim to being more scientific than his predecessors in the eighteenth century. He endeavors more and more to subject his own thinking to the very disciplines of history and evolution. He is convinced of what Professor Dunning has so amply and admirably demonstrated, that political philosophy is the product of the surrounding political system rather than of pure reason. The older philosophers naïvely gave expression to the opinions which logically fitted their respective environments and then apparently unconsciously assigned universal validity to their cogitations. The modern scholar solemnly warned by the fate of the older doctrinaires is on his guard against formulating into a transcendental philosophy either the emotions connected with the status quo, or the ecstatic delight derived from contemplating a perfected humanity. He has a strong suspicion that when his attention is sustained to the highest point and his so-called reasoning faculties are hardest at work, there are welling up within him and finding articulation, forces connected with his own life history and of the race and nation from which he sprang. He knows that it is an almost superhuman doctor who can set the norm for a sound mental eye.

These personal or subjective forces which distort the vision even when we would see straight are both gross and subtle, and they may be divided roughly for practical purposes into three groups—religious, class, and patriotic biases.

Now all of these biases, and many more, are dangerous foes to the
ascertainment of truth concerning any set of political facts—which is the real aim of scientific politics and which we have learned from the natural sciences is the best way in the long run to acquire that wisdom which exalts a nation. I hold that it is not the function of the student of politics to praise or condemn institutions or theories, but to understand and expound them; and thus for scientific purposes it is separated from theology, ethics, and patriotism. I know there is high contempt on the part of many persons for the pursuit of learning that does not end in the vindication of their preconceptions, just as, until quite recently, no American history was acceptable in the North that did not charge the South with moral depravity in addition to treason. I believe that on mature deliberation, thoughtful persons, contemplating the ruins which indiscriminate hate and fierce dogmatism have helped to make, will agree that the introduction of a little philosophic calm will not work corruption in the minds of men or undermine the foundations of society. The data secured by scientific investigation may be used by the theologian, the teacher of ethics, and the patriot for their several devices, and the student of politics will rejoice if they will use real facts in the place of pseudo-facts which are too often found in the armory of their arguments.

It is accordingly in the spirit of modern science that the student of politics turns to the great divisions of his subject, namely, the state, government, the limits of government action, political parties, and international relations. No apology need be made for placing the state first, for it is the unit in world politics; it is the highest form of human association yet devised; and with fundamental notions concerning it are connected both ideal impulses and practical policies. In common usage the word State is indiscriminately confused with the term nation or political community, but, as Professor Burgess has so clearly and definitively demonstrated, there can be no approach to a science of politics unless we have at the outset a somewhat precise concept of what is meant by the state.

The surface of the earth, at least of the civilized world, is now sharply divided into geographical areas inhabited by distinct political communities produced by ethnological, economic, and other factors. It is apparent to the most casual observer that not all the persons within any particular group—men, women, and children—share in the making of laws or the conduct of government. Moreover, as Sir William Markby urges, the lawyer in dealing with legal questions must always be prepared to prove, if it is denied, that there is a determinate and supreme sovereign or sovereign body whose intentions as regards the matter under consideration are capable of being ascertained and that the commands of this person or body will be obeyed. It is undoubtedly difficult, and sometimes almost impossible, to determine precisely the person or body within a nation which possesses unlimited underived
authority over all the others and is capable, under ordinary circumstances and in last resort, of enforcing its authority. Nevertheless for juristic and political purposes such a body must exist, and in many instances it is possible rather sharply to distinguish the state from the nation, especially where there is a recognized ruling class or absolute monarch.

The origin of this sovereign power in the political society is an ancient question and four answers have been made to it. The theologians, in times past, have attributed to the state a divine origin. This theory is now rejected because it does not explain the exact process by which the state came into existence, and if literally accepted would close the doors to research and understanding.

The second theory, which is generally connected with the name of Rousseau, not because he originated it but because it became such a powerful instrument of agitation in his hands, is that the state originated in a compact made in prehistoric times by free individuals. Even Rousseau did not believe the original compact to have been an actual historic fact, but it afforded him the semblance of a natural philosophy as the basis of an attack on the theologians who had a monopoly of the divine right doctrine. The third explanation of the origin of the state, associated with the name of Sir Henry Sumner Maine, views the state as the product of gradual evolution out of patriarchal authority—the original form of domination among human beings. The state is only the enlarged family. This is now rejected on the simple ground that not a single one of the states of Western Europe of whose origin we have tolerable records can be traced genetically to the extension of patriarchal authority.

The real origin of the state, in Western Europe at least, is to be found in conquest, although it must be admitted that power-bearing individuals were previously rising within the older patriarchal groups as a result of the economic discipline they were able to impose on their slaves and semi-free kinsmen. A military leader and his war band, in search of plunder and sources of steady income, conquer and fuse settled communities loosely united by kinship, and settle down upon the subject population as the ruling authority, absorbing surrounding areas by diverse processes. In the beginning, the power of the leader is checked by his war band, but the threads of dominion are slowly gathered into his hands, especially after he becomes king and receives religious sanction, though in the exercise of his battle-born authority he may be always thwarted or swayed on many policies by his warrior aristocracy and the Church Militant.

War thus begets the king; in time the king becomes the prime source of political authority. The strong king proves acceptable in spite of his sometimes cruel despotism and irresponsible actions. His peace protects merchants and cities against robber barons; his courts afford justice—rude and curious—but more certain in principle and more effective in action than the justice of
the feudal castle. At his palace learning is cherished; arts and commerce flourish; a middle class of smaller landed proprietors and men of trade is created; it seeks to standardize the king by the strict rules of business. Its members ask the king not to tax them without their consent, not to seize their person or property without observing some regular public forms, not to make laws without asking their opinions. Thus constitutional government is born and thus political authority passes from the king to a portion of his nation. It is sometimes a painful process for the sovereign. If he resists encroachments on his consecrated rights, refuses to conciliate, mistakes the inevitable process for temporary insubordination, then there is a cataclysm and the new form of state is created in the throes of revolution. If the king is wise he contents himself with the insignia of office and continues to symbolize the nation’s unity and power. Such in brief is the story of the rise and diffusion of political authority—i.e., sovereignty. It rests not on vacuous speculation, but upon the results of laborious research and patient winnowing on the part of innumerable historical scholars.

It is evident that in this diffusion of political power among the masses the state has lost its ancient definiteness of form, for it is difficult to discover not only who compose the state from the standpoint of law, but also where among those enjoying nominal sovereignty is the real power. It is clear that these thousands of units making up the state are not all equal in intelligence or influence. It is also evident that a great portion of them do not exercise the power which they lawfully have, that another portion has no very lively consciousness of the motives on which it acts, and that the actual will of the state in any one instance is merely that of a majority at best. This problem has received very little attention from students of power, but it would seem that the real state is not the juristic state but is that group of persons able to work together effectively for the accomplishment of their joint aims, and overcome all opposition on the particular point at issue at a particular period of time.

Since the essence of the state is the exercise of sovereign authority by some person or group of persons, it is evident that from the standpoint of jurisprudence there can be only three forms of state—monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic—the rule of the one, the few, or the many. Changes in the form of the state have been caused primarily by the demand of groups for power, and in general these groups have coincided with economic classes which have arisen within the political society.

Corresponding with these three principal stages in the evolution of the forms of state, there have been three general types of government, considered in their fundamental nature rather than their accidental structural aspects. In the absolute monarchy we find the unlimited rule of the sovereign. In the use of the instruments of government, even where they are taken from primitive
popular institutions, the absolute monarch is, in law and fact, irresponsible and unrestricted, save by the limitations of nature and the possibilities of revolt on the part of his subjects. In the aristocratic state, where the prerogatives of the sovereign are in reality shared by a portion of his subjects, the agents of government are positively limited by the effective will of the minority thus admitted to power. The result is a balancing of the titular sovereign against the interests of those who divide dominion with him, and the establishment of a disjointed government, inefficient for positive action on a large scale and characterized by that irresponsibility which division of power inevitably engenders. In the democratic state, where the rule of the majority is frankly recognized (a condition of affairs gravely feared by the framers of our Constitution), government tends toward a type, unified in internal structure, emancipated from formal limitations, and charged with direct responsibility to the source of power.

This tendency in the evolution of state and government has been fully grasped by many students in the United States who have broken away from the familiar notion that we are living under a peculiar dispensation in the matter of political institutions. President Woodrow Wilson opened the way a few years ago by his splendid study of Congressional Government, in which he protested against further belief in “political witchcraft” [and] urged a frank consideration of the defects of the Constitution. Two other American scholars, Mr. Henry Jones Ford and Professor Goodnow, have further advanced clear thinking on American politics by revealing the intimate character of the relation between our democratic society and the framework of government built upon eighteenth-century ideas, which were misunderstood by their formulators and have been abandoned by the nation from which they were originally drawn. These scholars have conclusively shown the unreality of the doctrine of divided powers, and the positive fashion in which our democratic political society seeks through extra-legal party organization to overcome the friction of a disjointed machine. They urge that a separation of powers is in practice impossible, claiming that the function of government is two-fold—the expression and execution of popular will—and that the body that wills must, in the nature of things, control the body that executes, if government is to be efficient. Following out this contention, these writers maintain that our strong party machinery is the extra-legal instrument with which democracy strives to obtain that coordination of legislative and executive functions. They admit, however, that this attempt to control through powerful party engines is fraught with serious evils, that the confusion and division of authority among the organs of government render direct and transparent responsibility impossible, and that an element of uncertainty and distraction is added by our practice of submitting complex social and economic questions to the juristic tests of the Courts.
Since radical changes in the framework of government are outside the field of practical politics at present, there has been a decided tendency recently to attempt the establishment of responsible government by securing, through primary legislation, the responsibility of the party organization which operates the government. Provision for popular control of party has gone so far in Wisconsin as to require the nomination of practically all candidates by direct vote. Other states have gone farther and sought more effective supervision in the form of direct legislation, placing the popular will above all governmental instruments. To some this seems to be adding only cumbersome complications to our politics, but to others it appears to be only our circuitous way of achieving legislative responsibility.

In thus coming to recognize in clear and direct responsibility the essence of democratic government, American students are changing many of their earlier notions about the details of administrative organization. They no longer believe that democracy requires the election of every officer from the street sweeper to the state health commissioner, and they are now advocating centralization of administration (once regarded as a species of original sin) and secure tenure for technical officials as the primary necessities of efficient government. Where responsibility can be firmly and unequivocally secured, power may be safely entrusted to the agents of government, and to meet the great centralizing tendency in our economic institutions (the basis of all political institutions) power must be so entrusted, in order to administer effectively the very laws upon which the permanence of popular government depends.

The enormous burden which maintenance of this extra-legal responsibility has thrown upon the political party in the United States has given it a peculiar position in our political system, though its operations were almost neglected by our students until Mr. Bryce called attention to them. Now we are becoming alive to the fact that juristic descriptions of the forms of government incur the danger of being mere abstractions when party customs are left out of account. For example, the jurist in describing the Federal government will say that the House of Representatives elects the speaker, but as a matter of plain fact the speaker is really selected by a caucus of the majority party held after many dinners and political tempests. Constitutional law has nothing to say about committees, but everybody knows that our laws are made by the committees and log-rolling. Examples might be multiplied indefinitely and the story pushed so far that a practical treatise on government would give party organization and methods the text, and reduce the formal law to the footnotes.

Patent and important as this fact is, the student of politics is compelled to admit that we have no scientific descriptive works on the formal organization of parties or their real practices. We have, it is true, many works purporting to relate the history of parties, a few excellent studies such as the beginnings
made by Ostrogorski and Bryce, and no little theorizing on the functions of parties, but we have no account of the actual historical processes by which the party has arisen and, as an extra-legal institution, controls the legal forms of government. Rich as are our political and social statistics, we have made no considerable attempts to discover inductively the precise composition of parties or their relation to surrounding social and economic phenomena. We have no philosophical treatise on the process by which the party becomes an institution commanding allegiance and punishing for treason. Under these circumstances it seems to me that the party in general and particular, as a centre of power and a working institution, offers the richest field of investigation now open to the student of politics, and the results of really scientific investigation would have the highest theoretical and practical value.

The work of the student of politics is by no means complete when he has described the forms of state and government and the operations of the latter through party control, for underlying all problems of politics is the fundamental question of the limits on government interference with individual activity. During the early part of the nineteenth century it was thought in certain quarters that this problem was settled for all time by the solution advanced by the laissez-faire school who proposed to limit the functions of government to the maintenance of peace, the protection of property, and the enforcement of contracts—"anarchy plus the police constable."

Nevertheless, like all other political philosophies, the doctrine of laissez-faire has been compelled to submit to the limitations imposed by theoretic criticism and the march of events. On one hand, it was pushed to extremes by that type of anarchist, conscious or unconscious of the nature of his philosophy, who agreed with the laissez-faire school that the government was a necessary evil. This rebel against the institution of government went to the logical extremity of declaring that governmental intervention to protect private property, especially in the form of inheritance, was a violation of the first principles of competition—the struggle of all against each and each against all, resulting in the survival of the fittest.

On the other hand, the beneficent results of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest, regardless of all human considerations and the waste it entailed, were not realized in the social life of England during the period in which the doctrines of laissez-faire were at their height. Indisputable evidence of the distressing state of affairs is to be found in the bulky volumes of the parliamentary reports, in the memoirs of the enlightened men who investigated the conditions in the factory centres, and in the dry pages of the statutes revealing the wrongs which parliament sought to remedy. After considerable time had elapsed the scholars came to see the palpable untruth in the statement that the government has no concern in economic matters.
government defines what shall be the subjects of private property, provides
the laws of inheritance, places burdens in the form of taxation, prescribes the
terms on which corporations are formed, in short fixes the entire juridical
framework in which economic laws operate—a fact too often neglected by
political economists. In time men came to learn that society is no more a
fortuitous collection of warring individuals than one of Beethoven's sym-
phonies is a mere chance assemblage of individual notes. Evolution in the
business world also rendered obsolete the abstract propositions of laissez-faire
which were tenable enough before the universal extension of the factory
process and the organization of business in national and international forms.
As a result of philosophic considerations and the pressure of fact no student of
politics today will attempt to lay down dogmatically what government in all
times and places should undertake to do, for he realizes that what the govern-
ment does in practice depends not upon any theory about its proper functions,
but upon the will of the group of persons actually in control at any one time or
upon the equilibrium that is established through conflicts among groups seek-
ing to control the government.

Turning from the field of theory to practice, we find that three powerful
forces are now at work pressing for an increase in the functions of govern-
ment. First in order of historical importance is paternalism or the effort of the
upper classes (through sympathy or fear) to advance the interests and security
of the working class. This form of state interference is less popular among the
more purely individualistic industrial nations where the cash nexus has more
fully supplanted the personal relation.

A second group of advocates of increased government activity is funda-
mentally individualistic in the old sense of the word, insomuch as its members
seek to use the arm of the law to destroy, or closely restrict, large corporations
in order to encourage the diffusion of real property and the intensification of
competition. Thus we have the paradox of extreme individualists calling on
the government to interfere in economic matters to a certain degree for the
purpose of forestalling the possibility of a future intervention on a larger
scale.

A third force working for state interference is the constant increase in the
huge industrial army that inevitably accompanies the advance of mechanical
revolution in production and distribution. The mediaeval system in which
each worker owned and controlled his simple implements and conducted his
business in his own fashion has disappeared forever and in place of it has
come a divorce of the laborer from his tools—the ownership and management
of which have passed largely into the hands of a relatively small proportion of
the population. It is demonstrable, of course, that there are gradations of
fortune in modern industrial communities and that persons are constantly
passing from the working class into other ranks, but this should not be permit-
ted to obscure the permanence of that class itself as an inevitable concomitant of the industrial revolution. There is therefore in every Western nation a vast class of persons without land, tools, or homes, dependent for a livelihood upon the sale of their labor power, and subject to the fluctuations of modern business.

As the doctrines of divine right formerly had no permanent validity for the rising middle class, so the doctrines of individual liberty—trial and indictment by jury and due process of law—do not have the same reality to the workingman that they have to members of the possessing group. Freedom of contract between an employer and an employe with a few days' supplies behind him obviously cannot have the same meaning that it has between persons similarly situated as far as economic goods are concerned. To discourse on the liberty afforded by jury trial to a man who has never appeared in a court but often suffers from considerable periods of unemployment is to overlook the pertinent fact that liberty has economic as well as legal elements.

Quite naturally this new industrial democracy is evolving a political philosophy of its own, confused and inarticulate in diverse ways, but containing many positive elements ranging from minor modifications of the labor contract to the socialist doctrine that the passive ownership of property is merely a special privilege to be eliminated by the use of the government as the collective instrument for the administration of all important forms of concrete capital. With the large implications of this new philosophy, the student of politics need not tarry unless he is of a speculative turn of mind, but its concrete manifestations in the form of labor parties, and the precise nature and points of their pressure on existing governmental functions constitute a new and important branch of research and exposition.

As a result of all these forces and the growing complexity of our civilization, along with the increasing possibilities of effective collective action, the burdens of our governments tend to multiply, and the stress once laid on individual liberty in the juristic sense is being diminished. Our own Congress, in obedience to these new economic forces, seems willing to stretch to its utmost its powers of regulating industrial operations and protecting the working class; and in its extension of the notions of the police power, the Supreme Court reveals the existence of this new pressure in our political jurisprudence.

A fifth and, in certain aspects, almost new division of political research may be denominated world politics. Of course we have long had treatises on the history and forms of diplomacy and also upon international law as a system of rules recognized and enforced by the tribunals of enlightened nations. But the marvelous expansion of trade and commerce which have re-fashioned the map of Africa in our own day, awakened the slumbering nations of the East and the islands of the seas, has brought new problems of universal interest which we have scarcely begun to analyze. They embrace such ques-
tions as the meaning and tendency of race conflicts, the control of the tropics, the attitude of imperial nations toward subject races, the best forms of colonial administration. The shuttle of trade and intercourse flies ever faster and it may be weaving the web for a world state. It may be that steam and electricity are to achieve what neither the armies, nor the law, nor the faith of Rome could accomplish—that unity of mankind which rests on the expansion of a common consciousness of rights and wrongs through the extension of identical modes of economic activity.

In closing this lecture, it seems desirable that I should indicate more precisely some of the tendencies in the scientific literature of politics. In comparing the political writings of the last twenty-five years with earlier treatises one is struck with decreasing reference to the doctrine of natural rights as a basis for political practice. The theory has been rejected for the reason that it really furnishes no guide to the problems of our time and because we have come to recognize since Darwin’s day that the nature of things, once supposed to be eternal, is itself a stream of tendency.

Along with decreasing references to natural rights there has gone an increasing hesitation to ascribe political events to Providential causes. As in history, scholars are seeking natural and approximate causes; they treat politics as a branch of sociology; and leave to the theologian and philosopher the ascertainment of the ultimate rationale of the whole complex.

Closely related in spirit to the tendency to elucidate political questions by reference to divine will was the somewhat later notion that divergences in the history and institutions of different peoples were to be explained on the ground of racial characteristics. Now, it is not to be denied that there are such things as race characteristics, but as Secley warns us “we should be slow to allege mere national character in explanation of great historical phenomena. No explanation is so obvious or suggests itself so easily. No explanation is so vague, cheap, and so difficult to verify. Why did the English gain freedom so early? Anyone can answer, because they are English and it is the nature of Englishmen to love liberty. I call this a cheap explanation. It is easily given and almost impossible to verify. It is the more suspicious because it gratifies national vanity.” Wherever Hegel, with his Patriotismus reduced to a science, has been dethroned there is a decided tendency to look to economic and material facts rather than to race psychology as the most reliable sources of institutional differences.

The practical outcome of this rejection of the divine and racial theory of institutions is a persistent attempt to get more precise notions about causation in politics, and this is destined to have a high practical value. The heat with which the politicians cite the fate of the Roman empire as evidence of what will happen to the United States if the Philippines are retained and a thousand
experiences of political life bear witness that a treatise on causation in politics would be the most welcome contribution which a scholar of scientific training and temper could make.

After all I have said about the fields of political research and the intensely human and practical nature of the questions which students of politics have to consider, it may seem a work of supererogation to refer to the actual service of the science of the nation. Nevertheless, I believe a word of defence should be spoken, for in this world of ours we are turning keen and troubled faces to the instant need of things, and it is wise that we should. Decidedly real as are the subjects with which the student of politics deals, it must be admitted that he suffers many disadvantages when he endeavors to meet the call for practical receipts guaranteed to cure quickly. The nation as a whole is a high abstraction; it seldom demands remedies; it is groups within the state that demand remedies. Shipbuilders want ship subsidies; workingmen want labor legislation. The desirability of their demands cannot be referred to eternal standards; what they will probably get will depend more on the power and effectiveness of their organization than upon sweet political reasonableness. If the student of politics prescribes a remedy which pleases the group that applies, he will probably be hailed as a scientist; if his suggestion is unpalatable, he is only a professor anyhow.

Notwithstanding this fact, politics renders a high service in general and in details. Statesmen have gained in breadth and firmness of perspective in proportion as they have deliberated upon one or all of the great subjects which fall within the domain of politics. The origin, tendencies, and destiny of human society politically organized are subjects, moreover, which appeal to the highest type of a citizen. The ideals arising from the contemplation of experience and the potentialities of the future, more than anything else differentiate human from animal societies. Mature consideration of the problems of state in the grand outlines helps to transform petty politicians into statesmen, and inspires them to press on even when in the midst of party squabbles they lament with Machiavelli the "fickleness and folly of a vain world." The discipline that comes from deliberating upon great things, even though we see through the glass darkly, has a real value though it cannot be weighed in scales or sold over the counter.

To speak more modestly of politics, I shall descend into particulars. Politics renders a service by the collection and classification of data, by the description of institutions and experiments, and this service alone justifies it in claiming a high place in the university. The recent sane tendencies of legislative bodies to construct laws on reports of expert commissions rather than on impulse and high notions of popular prerogative, however legitimate, is only an application of the scientific method and spirit of politics as a university subject. Such action is not infallible, but surely we may agree with Diderot
that the use of such reason as we have is not indecent. As I view it, accord-
ingly, it is the function of the university research in politics to seek the truth
concerning special problems simply in the spirit of science.

It is the duty of the teacher to say to his pupils: Observe these facts, con-
sider these varying explanations, ponder upon these theories, study the
most impartial records of political operations, look to the future as well as the
past, and as a citizen of this great nation build this discipline of the mind into
the thought and action of afterlife. Book-learning cannot make a wise man of
a fool nor a great statesman out of a village politician; it cannot correct
nature’s mistakes, but it may open highways to her potentialities. Technical
information is the necessary part of the equipment of the person who intends
entering the actual service of the state, and the wisdom that comes from a
wide and deep and sympathetic study of the political experiences of men is the
true foundation of that invisible government, described by Ruskin, which
wears no outward trappings of law, diplomacy, or war, but is exercised by all
energetic and intelligent persons, each in his own sphere, regulating the inner
will and secret ways of the people, essentially forming its character and
preparing its fate.