

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

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RALEIGH agreed with Sidney that "historians do borrow of poets, not only much of their ornament, but somewhat of their substance." If our muse will not admit imaginary work, she always welcomes judgment. It is never beyond the province of history to study the record, to separate the incidental or accidental from the permanent factors, and to search for results, which must be essential and inevitable.

In treating the American People I do not mean that loosely considered and worse interpreted "multitude," which stands too often for the body politic. I would define the American People as such, and to reach that conception we must set forth, first, the State as it exists in the United States of America.

My own simple notion of a State includes the people organized under a regular form of government, settled on a definite territory. If we would have an authoritative statement, let us cite Mr. Jenks<sup>1</sup>: "By a State or political society, we understand, at the present day, a community of considerable size, occupying a clearly defined territory, owning direct and complete allegiance to a common authority, and invested with a personality which enables it to act more or less as an individual." This is based on Bluntschli and far exceeds the conceptions prevailing a century ago. Edmund Burke called the State "the nation in its collective and corporate capacity." The modern State has very slowly forged itself out of human consciousness.

<sup>1</sup>Law and Politics, p. 68.

Aristotle led the way, and his inductive theories are complete, based as they were on a thorough knowledge of his time. He says "the majority, each member of which taken apart, is not a remarkable man, is however above the superior men: if not individually, at least in the mass, as a feast at the public expense is more splendid than that which only one person provides."

Passing through the Roman empire, feudal kingdoms and the rising popular representation, we come to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The State then took three forms in the minds of philosophers; and its foundations were laid on force, on social contract, on justice. Hobbes maintained the first, bringing man out from the state of nature, which is war, until he is constrained into peace. Locke formulated the second principle. He did not admit absolute force, even in the state of nature, but found man then subject to a primitive law of duty, rather than to his own will. Force was to be used, not for attack, but for defence. Hence came some of the most pregnant political ideas. Before positive civil law could have been, Locke assigned certain natural political rights to each man; rank, liberty of person and property based on labor. Locke's civil power rested not on force, but upon popular consent. He did not falter at the inevitable consequences of this doctrine; insurrection and the right of revolution, which he called the right of appeal to heaven.

Montesquieu follows Locke closely, and we should study both carefully; for politically they formed the minds of our fathers, who made the American Republic. Locke eliminated the great idea of personal liberty and asserted the innate dignity of each man, a child of God. He did not comprehend the method and means of liberty in civil government. Popular consent, administered by a popular assembly, is often the worst of tyrannies. Montesquieu perceived that liberty is not in us, but, so to speak, is and

must be outside ourselves. How could this solemn constraint, this inhering bent directing each man toward a liberty of willing for the common good, instead of the license of his own will, be embodied and made permanent in organized civil government? Montesquieu, studying English experience as well as ancient history, separated the three great functions—not of the State—but of government. There must be a power to make the laws, a power to declare and interpret them, a power to execute them; the legislative, the judiciary and the executive powers.

We come to the third form, resting on justice. This belongs to the most advanced communities. Let us leave these highly developed methods of the State and turn back to the Greek analysis of this greatest of political ideas. The dictum of Aristotle—though profound in its search for the true sources of the State—has not satisfied the wants of numerous thinkers. Though he kept well in hand the aristocratic tendencies of ancient States and saw more clearly than his fellows the growing powers of democracies, yet he did not fully adjust the relation of the State to each individual. His advocacy of slavery is one illustration of this defect. Plato was not equal to the great Stagirite in his practical grasp of affairs, in his application of experience to philosophy and political science. But Plato cannot be reckoned out of any movement of the human mind since his time. His marvellous insight pierced and apprehended the essential ideas of humanity even when he could not formulate those ideas for the work of every day life. His definition of a State reads: "A State arises out of the needs of mankind; no one is self-sufficing, but all of us have many wants."<sup>1</sup> This is a two-fold definition, expressing very well today the harmonious relation between society and the individuals composing it. He does not say common wants. The very essence of a

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<sup>1</sup> Republic of Plato, II., 369.

State is stability; that had been proven in Egypt and Assyria. Immense sacrifices had been freely made that man might rear the solid pillars of the State, on the efforts and labors of individual men and women—not fellows, but creatures of the State.

The greatest immediate factor in deranging Plato's orderly harmony proved to be religion and worship. Christianity assumed to divide with the State and to control in large degree the daily lives of its citizens. Professor Seeley<sup>1</sup> pointed out that theocracy—while hardly less influential than aristocracy and democracy—had been overlooked by Aristotle, and only slightly entertained by modern writers.

The eighteenth century brought out politics, as well as philosophy and religion, into freer air and planted them on firmer, broader ground. Man—not a high born, wise, good man—but man as he was, concrete and simple, the creature of God, became the ultimate and acknowledged end of the State. The most complete example of the process was afforded by the United States of America. This was a strictly historical and experimental process. The immediate theories came from Locke and Montesquieu, but they were enlightened and corrected by all the deductive thought and experience of all the sages who had gone before. In fact, the feudal modification of Roman, organic, political society—deflected by a religious hierarchy—passed from continental Europe into the British isles. Though America grew out of institutions—impelled by a positive hereditary tendency—her founders brought those institutions to new tests and conditions, then cultivated them in a new political soil, warmed by a new political atmosphere. The Puritans planted the most stringent hierarchy known before Cromwell and Harrison. Alongside and out of it, Roger Williams developed absolute

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<sup>1</sup>Political Science, p. 52.

spiritual freedom, governed "only in civil things," something then unknown. The Anglican Episcopal Church occupying Virginia became an American Church; over the border, the Catholic Baltimore granted toleration of faith. The Quaker in Pennsylvania, the fiercely Independent Presbyterian everywhere, stood for a nearer relation to God than any civilized community had ever known.

Let us now consider the American people, in whom reside the governing organs of this State, as above described. We may lay down several propositions, coming from the ethnological and social experience of this people.

I. The primitive types of race, Aryan, Celtic, Teutonic, have been greatly modified in forming any Englishman, Irishman, German, or other European.<sup>1</sup>

II. The processes of change occurring in European life—as they worked in forming the characteristics of the above individuals in their various nationalities—these changing and forming causes were immensely accelerated by the new conditions of the new world.

III. These conditions of change—or a new environment—worked by a selection of individuals in the amalgamation of our people. Instead of tribal or even feudal families perpetuating their traits in a nation, the newly selected individuals, chosen from many nations, united in forming a new people.

IV. These conditions of mingling races with free selections of individuals were in a large sense a social condition or environment. This social condition in the United States necessarily worked under and through political agencies, the most potent and elastic ever known. This constant political pressure, working and according with race or blood heredity in the United States, has operated to produce a new political race or people.

The term Nation has a certain meaning which must be

<sup>1</sup>Gardner, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, VIII., pp. 263, 266, 267. Mackay, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, XXI., p. 473.

distinguished and considered in this connection. It might be argued that nation is coming to mean, in these days, a type of structure, instead of a line of descent. "Each Nation has its customs, its manners, and each People has its government." Lineage, language, historical tradition, inherited laws, at times any or all of these make a nation. In this sense, we ascend from the family; through the tribe and horde, into a nation. Something more than this makes a people. The office of king, elective or hereditary, as distinguished from a tribal chieftain, came from the people.

Nation and nationality are often improperly confounded with the idea of the State. Various causes formed the European nations and states; one overwhelming political cause formed the United States. This controlling political factor modified the previous traditional hereditary or circumstantial causes, that shaped the life of European communities. In Plato's twofold idea of the State—*i. e.* individuals leaning together for the satisfaction of many differing wants—stability and desire were balanced. The despotic form of State, where individuals were remorselessly sacrificed to stability, was passing away in the more enlightened Grecian time. For thorough stability as now understood, it is necessary to give to the modern State or political entity much of the personal or moral quality. Contrariwise, when a State is surely grounded politically, it can allow much latitude to individual and personal freedom.

We shall comprehend our own peculiar conditions better if we consider separately the very different circumstances of Europe. No one has weighed this serious problem more carefully than Renan,<sup>1</sup> or set it forth with more brilliant expression. He holds it a great error to confound race with nation, or to attribute sovereignty to ethno-

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<sup>1</sup> Lator's Cyclopaedia, II., 924.

graphic or rather linguistic groups. France, England, Germany and Russia will be, for hundreds of years, "historic individuals." This, as will be perceived, is a modern and is not the ancient rendering of the nation. The Germanic peoples, in the period 5th-10th century, did not change the races of France, Italy or Spain, but imposed aristocratic government upon them; they made a "fusion of the peoples." A French citizen may be a Gaul, Burgundian or Visigoth, or all of these together. The essence of a nation is that individual members must have many things in common, also "must have forgotten many things." In this sense, the nation is the historic result, a series of facts all tending to the same end. Dynastic causes may prevail; they are not absolute, as we see in Switzerland and in the United States. Nation is not based on race; there is no pure race. Nor upon language; language invites to union, but does not compel it. Languages are historic formations that "give little indication of the blood of those who speak them." Religion, which once comprehended the very existence of the social group, is not the key; nor is community of interests, nor geography. A nation, according to Renan, is a great "solidarity," constituted by the sentiment proceeding from sacrifices that have been made, and anticipating those the community is still disposed to make. It supposes a past. "Man is not the slave of his race, his tongue, his religion, or of rivers or mountain chains. A great aggregation of men, of sound mind and warm heart, creates a moral conscience, which is called a nation." Another French writer, M. Block, has said that nationality is an important political element, not necessarily a controlling one. It is a sentiment of doubtful purity and "does not flow generally from justice or personal dignity, but from hatred of the foreigner, and frequently from ignorance." Barbarisms and despotisms often nourish powerful nationalities. Authorities generally agree that nationality is a hindrance

rather than a help in the higher course of political development, which is coming to inspire and regulate civilization.

The word *people* carries in its etymological structure a whole leaf out of the history of civilization; an embodiment of political progress. In the early days of Rome, this body being included with the Senate, formed a governing class, entirely distinct from the populace or plebeians. In those primitive times, when coördinated with the Senate in the business of government, it was socially and politically a subordinate aristocracy. From this strict classification the word has gradually widened its scope, until it includes all the effective members of the body politic in America. In royal governments, kings always said "My People." This phrase was a political ideal, toward which the actual socio-political fact has constantly tended.

Do not imagine that this historical evolution is easily traced, or that it moves always in direct lines. Blackstone, reflecting the movement of the eighteenth century, loosely defines *people* in two senses. The first includes all human beings in a country, governors or subjects, male or female. The second definition puts king and parliament into one class, while all other members of English society are included in the term "*people*." These classifications have been severely criticised, but they were, perhaps, the best working definitions for the time and place. The subtle evolution of the word is fairly reflected in a phrase uttered by Viennet, about 1825: "The *people* is proud as a gentleman. In the greatest lord it would see only a man." No American community would exclude from the *people* as a political body, any one not an alien or a criminal. Socially, the word is used in a different sense. To define and set off the rich, we say, *common people*, or *rich and poor people*; or *people of a city*, as distinguished from that of the country. Though wealth is potent in many ways, rich persons have no political recognition here.



The French distinctions, stated so forcibly by Viennet, could not have the same significance here. If we construe them in the broadest sense, as embodying the intangible results of wealth and culture—a fine expression of social refinement—yet they would not apply in American society. The term gentleman has been restricted often to the ways of a particular class; then to an affectation of the manners of that class.

People must not be confounded with the electorate. People includes men, women and children, and it means the raw material of the whole political system. Voting electors are the first defined political organ, the people being an amorphous political substance. If we consider it as plasma, and the electorate as protoplasm, then representatives—in town, county, state or federal government—are the rudimentary expressions of the popular will. The self-governing development of the United States has brought the representative into close sympathy with the desires and purposes of the people. An American politician never says "my patrons," he always addresses "my constituents."

We may now define people in its largest political significance in the United States. It includes peoples, nations in the lineal sense, and races in one amalgam. This is a new sovereign or governmental stuff. It may make kingdoms, empires or republics, according to the nature of the stuff. Mr. Roosevelt<sup>1</sup> has shown an exact socio-political parallel to this genesis and evolution of a political people in his study of the settlements formed on the western slopes of the Alleghanies. The Scotch-Irish race mingled with English, more or less German, a few Dutch and Huguenot French families, formed the social fringe of the Atlantic colonies and States. This pioneer vanguard of civilization made a singularly homogeneous mass of back-

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<sup>1</sup> "Winning of the West," vol. I.

woodsmen. Whatever their origin or previous locality, they were all alike and were all American backwoodsmen in the socio-political work which had fallen to them. To hunt bear or Indian, to plant corn, to call a county meeting, to marry their children, to preach and pray, to organize courts of justice—all these varying steps in civilized life became their daily walk by almost preternatural intuition. The people moved forward with one purpose and generally with one method.

While the process was more dramatic and picturesque in the limited opportunities of the last century, it has been essentially similar in the present century. An equivalent fusion of race characteristics and previous experiences has been going forward and working itself out in all the United States. This elastic backwoods or frontier element, mingling with itself citizens from the old Atlantic States and a constant stream of European immigrants, has settled and improved one section of this continent; especially the portion called the West and Northwest. Combining blood, hereditary experience and national tendency, it has formed the solid amalgam of the American people.

The controlling political element—the flavor, so to speak—of the racial development was in the Anglo-German tendency to self-government. The civic impulse of the citizen moved from his own centre, but always tended toward the political action and conduct of his fellows. This political tendency—strangely difficult for Latins and Celts in the original—became easy enough for any and all stocks of Americans, however derived, when carried into new racial grooves by the movement of local and federal politics. English or Irish, German or French, all went one way. Local institutions firmly fixed the individual citizen in his right of initiative and in the corresponding restraint of self-control. After 1865, the national or imperial impulse carried the citizen higher and widened him out. Thus person, family, race, nation

were fused and mingled in one grand political current—the people.

Recent publicists generally agree that the State is a moral entity.<sup>1</sup> That man was the ultimate and end of the State was not a mere theoretical idea in America. It was a practical system of government, expressed by and attainable through the people—such a people as I have described. Through the constitution, this American people got themselves together and organized the State. In 1812, they maintained the flag of the United States. In 1861-1865, having burst the swaddling clothes of local government, they grew into imperial government.

Before closing this statement of the harmonious growth of State and people, we should distinguish between the functions of the State and those of any government within that State. It is quite common to confound the nature of the State—the moral entity above described—and the concrete art of government. Only recently has this practical distinction in great affairs been recognized. "Publicists do not sufficiently distinguish the State from the government. They see the danger to individual liberty of recognizing an unlimited power in the government, and they immediately conclude that the same danger exists if the sovereignty of the State be recognized."<sup>2</sup> The State must vindicate its right to be. With their ready appre-

<sup>1</sup> "History ascribes to the State a personality which, having spirit and body, manifests a will of its own."—Bluntschli, "Theory of the State," Book I., Chap. I.

"The State is not a mere physical but rather a moral entity."—Seeley, "Political Science," p. 23.

"The inner ground of the origin of the State is the fact that an aggregate of persons has a conscious feeling of its unity and gives expression to this unity by organizing itself as a collective personality and constituting itself as a volitional and active subject."—Jellinet, the Austrian, cited by Willoughby, "The Nature of the State," p. 119. And *cf.* Willoughby, p. 8. Burgess "Political Science," I., pp. 51, 52.

<sup>2</sup> Burgess, *Political Science*, I., 57.

"Simple and definite as is this distinction between the State and its governmental machinery, it is one that has seldom been made."—Willoughby, "Nature of the State," p. 8.

"The State is something inestimably wider than its government."—McKechnie, "The State and the Individual," p. 47.

hension of great political principles, our people have been quick to assert the majesty and dignity of the State. Now, the United States of America—with the Isthmian canal, when built—will be the first example of a continental power. Aside from any questions of relative strength, this peculiar position of the United States will make her a powerful factor in balancing the adjustments of Europe and Asia. The march and countermarch of armies across Europe, even by a Napoleon or a Moltke, would not control the world now. The sea is immensely greater than the land. Floating fortresses with the readiest steam and the best served guns rule the world.

The American people, after mastering a continent in its development, is a great, possibly the greatest, example of the sublime unity of the State. From the rule of fetish and of medicine man, through chieftain and tribe, animated by religion and philosophy, the great body of the common people has been lifted in steady ascent, until it controls its own destiny. That destiny is now carrying the most active and powerful of peoples, the most religious of nations, into wider contact and larger influence with the peoples of the world.

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