

The Man and the State.

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"The worth of a state in the long run," wrote John Stuart Mill, "is the worth of the individual composing it." "We put too much faith in systems and look too little to men" was the opinion of Lord Beaconsfield; and a German writer of our own time holds it to be a very doubtful state of affairs, "when the man is sacrificed to the citizen."

In these several phrases are found questions that have for centuries been a battle ground for nations. Men have been slow to recognize and expound the fact of their great superiority over states.

While few have been able to recognize our true sovereign, - the common man, many have been satisfied to accept the principle of state omnipotence and bend the knee to others who advocate its superiority over the man.

This is only a form of superstition that has for years been advocated by a certain class, and today many have taken sides with this class, who seem to be willing to tear down our

present system of government and establish a paternal policy instead, citing the prosperity of various European governments as arguments, to support their theory. Weak indeed, are these arguments, for in most European countries where the state is superior to man, great dissatisfaction prevails among the people, and government is often tyrannical and oppressive. After the close of the late Rebellion this theory of paternalism had nearly died out, but within the last ten or fifteen years new forces have arisen and now every section of the country, every industry, is clamoring for protection in their rights. The people having vague ideas of the true purposes and objects of government demand legislation in their favor and the enforcement of such laws as their party leaders may suggest. Thus we see the "labor candidate" the farmer candidate, the whisky candidate, each representing special industries, abroad in the land, while not far behind comes the candidate put forth by the manufactures also demand.

ing recognition and legislation in their favor.

These are the narrowest and most selfish ideas against our present system of government that have as yet been presented. In them we see political hatred and prejudice, the rankest, blindest, and most insidious form of superstition that can befall a people. Many a good sermon could well be preached on this subject from the pulpit, that these vague principles might be more thoroughly eradicated from man's nature.

No one will deny that many are rich and living in luxury while multitudes are walking the streets and actually begging their bread. The wide extension of state control or paternalism is suggested by many as a remedy for this state of affairs. But would it endure? Could the state provide for all? Judging from the experience of older nations, the state could not, or could it pay the enormous price necessary for its services. Let us notice the great respon-

sibility that would thus be thrown upon the state. The state would abolish the right of property in land, own and control the railroads, telegraph and telephones; act as banker, landlord, merchant and teacher, in short act as parent to us all. Were the state to have such control over us, and all property, we would have one of the strongest centralized governments in existence. But how could the government do justice to all of her citizens. Would not a few men in each community act as leaders and regulate society as they saw fit, thus making this grand scheme of government, under which none are supposed to want, a profit making machine for demagogues.

In the state and nation who would be president, congressman, governor or a judge of the superior court. In municipal affairs who would be mayor, alderman, or who would be managers and superintendents of railroads, factories, and mines. How would this vast army of government officials be select-

ed? What would be the condition of civil in our country? Who would be "boss"? Would this system, which undertakes to control the capital and wealth of our nation, increase the product so that there would be enough for all to make a respectable living. If this plan would improve the methods of distribution of wealth, we might then receive some benefit from it. From the conditions of society we cannot see any improvement, nor will we be any better off. If, on the contrary, it were to diminish the present product and put the distribution under the control of a superintendent, might not a great many people starve who now get some sort of a living? Fully admitting that there are many functions of "this grand aggregate of individuals," called society, which the state or even municipal corporations can perform for the citizen better than they can perform them for themselves, yet it would be manifestly impossible for our nation to charge its officials with all the burdens that the advocates of

paternalism propose and it is yet more impossible to let congress interfere in the direction of many of the functions now attempted or proposed by some of our statesmen.

Take for example the railroads and telegraph. Were the government to assume control of these, go into the railroad and telegraph business, three important questions would immediately present themselves. First, will it extend its lines all over the country or will it confine them to a few favored regions? Second, will it have a monopoly or allow competition? Third, will it hire or buy the existing lines, or build its own? And just back of these is still another one, - will it manage the business upon business principles, charging equal rates for equal services, and making the charges pay the expenses, or will it delude the people by low rates, making up the deficiency by other taxation? The first question can be answered in but one way. The only justification the general government has to

interfere, is that the interest of the whole people demand it. In the second place, if the government allows competition it must lose money. The private companies abandon to it the non-paying routes and confine themselves to the more profitable ones. Thus the only way in which this system can be made self supporting is by applying the profits made upon the paying routes to the support of others. Should these profits be destroyed by private competition, the deficiency must be made up by special taxation. Third, should the government buy out the existing companies? Justice forbids that it should them from carrying on their business, and even business principles forbid it to do so.

Thus reasoning, paternalism suggests no satisfactory remedy to relieve our distress. The arguments given in support of it are indeed weak. It is highly probable that the burdens of the poor will be increased, in order that the rich may enjoy greater luxuries without paying for them, under this proposed sys-

tem. All deficiencies must be met by taxation which must be paid by those who are least able. Looking beyond the mere theory of this system, into the distant future we see a nation degenerating; the state becoming an aggressor instead of a protector. A cruel tyrant as it were, ruling on a despot's throne, the common man remaining silent, - his state or government superior to himself.

The history of all ancient nations is lost in obscurity, but from traditions which come to us in the form of myths and legends and some few conclusions from language and monuments, we learn that military despots then ruled over the people. Feudalism succeeded to the patriarchal, servile and clan system. Amid the shock of moving nations and tumbling empires, the words allegiance and fealty with all their meaning were preserved. The serfs looked to their lord and master. Mankind constantly labored under a slow going civilization until it effloresced into chivalry. Beauty with all its enchant-

ments, courtesey with all its brilliant charms, romance and poetry with all their fascinating and delightful adventures, were employed to continue its mighty sway. It was described as a "generous loyalty to rank and sex;" "a proud submission;" a "subordination of heart that kept alive even in servitude itself the spirit of an exalted freedom."

These successive stages of advancement have passed into history and with this progress of civilization there has been a great limitation of the sphere of action and authority in government, thus placing more responsibility upon the individual, - the man. This age is progressive. We were not content until we had equality. The right to vote equally with the richest and proudest is not denied to any citizen. We are all equal before the law and the essential function of the state is to protect us in the pursuit of any honorable vocation.

Many recognizing this and admitting the facts thus far brought out,

yet seem to think that the man is inferior to the state and that it can restrain him in any of his actions. From Humboldt we get a principle which strongly contradicts such rash statements. It is this, "the highest aim of every man is the highest and most symmetrical cultivation of his powers in these individual peculiarities, and that to attain to this as freedom of action as well as diversity of situation are necessary." This being true, the state must give man freedom of action in any honorable occupation or business, which he wishes to pursue. It cannot exercise any power that comes into collision with the rights and liberties of the individual. Often we hear men speak of the "paternal care" and solicitude of the state and the great powers conferred upon government. But what powers has the state aside from those given to it by man. Man then, not the state is the source of all power, which the state exercises. The state in itself can do nothing, but man with his philan-

thropic spirit, helps the poor, feeds the hungry, teaches the ignorant, sends the spirit of industry throughout the world, the state only protecting him in these various enterprises!

The great question which a nation must decide is: Where shall state functions stop and the action of man begin?

Somerset says, "the state is the moral being organized in society for the preservation of right and justice." The essential functions of government is protection, and it is not the state's duty to secure for its citizens a living. A government owes no one a living, though it should protect the individual, while engaged in securing one for himself. Again, how can the state protect man against his own lust or greed, or restrain in any way his free will, from acting in its natural capacity. Man's ambition ever reaches for the true, the sublime, and the beautiful, discovers new fields of action, climbs loftier heights, and step by step advances until the last obstacle is overcome! The history of older nations teach that

those nations which are the freest are the most prosperous; where man is bound down least, civilization seems to be more advanced; where the individual is free the force of government is least felt.

Turn to the history of England. The separation of the Church from Papal Rome was for kingly self-aggrandizement. The sovereign became supreme. Liberty advanced slowly. Ecclesiastical tyranny reinforced that of the crown. The common people were in complete subjection, nothing being done for their betterment, until her paternal system of government was overthrown and the common man began to plead for more liberty, more knowledge, more truth, and more righteousness; did the English people establish a constitutional government, which immediately placed England among the foremost and most prosperous nations in the world. And now, "Freedom rears her beautiful bold brow" over Great Britain, bringing enlightenment and respect for her people.

Take Germany. Here is a history of kings, who loved to war, which crushed out every element of growth and vigor, leaving industries, science, literature, church, and nation in a state of confusion and indifference. Again taking courage, she rapidly gains strength until she leads the world in learned thought. Here we see a nation that takes charge of her people from infancy, teaches them in all the rudiments of education, and turns them out as scholars, soldiers, artisans, tradesmen or statesmen. But here in this strong central government, lies one of the most despotic form of government in existence. So firmly are the people held within the restraints of the law, by her strong police power and her well organized and equipped army, that they have become mere chattles, in the clutches of a well established system of paternalism.

Such was ^{also} the early history of France. After her dark days of riot and revolution, she proudly lifts her head among the nations and declares in fa-

vor of government by the common people. France made her greatest progress as a nation under a free republican form of government, and she is ready and willing to uphold this great universal truth, "that within limits of right all human transactions should flow from the voluntary action of man."

History has not recorded one single instance where a nation thrived under a paternal system of government. Such nations had oppressive laws, despotic rulers, and their civilization either degrading or at a standstill. Time and experience has taught us that self government is an inherent right, that strict paternalism is degrading to manhood and a hindrance to human progress.

The people should care for themselves as much as possible. Under our excellent systems of schools and universities no one need be uneducated. Every person can acquire such education as will fit him for the active duties of citizenship. With such a great respon-

sibility upon each individual, a higher and nobler standard of manhood would be established, thus destroying many of our present schemes of "robbing the government," taking advantage of our fellow men, and many gambling devices which are at present carried on throughout our country.

The American theory of government is self-government, which means that the individual remains his own master in all that concerns only himself. When his actions interfere with the actions of another, the two act together. Whatever may have been the source of the body politic, this is the theory on which joint action is founded, whether of several persons or many. So with the state. One state may unite with another for the management of common concerns, and thus form a central union, federation or national. This means that each shall govern itself in all that pertains to itself; and in matters pertaining to both, the two shall govern both. This is the true republican form of gov-

ernment. The spirit of paternalism and absolutism were destroyed by the independent natures of our forefathers, and a free and independent form of government established. It represents the true fruits of liberty, equality, and intelligence, which by the superiority of American manhood must be kept pure.