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CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

JOHN WORKMAN'S NOTIONS.

Liberty and Economics.

Science is usually accounted the friend of man, as indeed, it ought always to be; since if it is a malign and unwholesome force, it ought not to exist. It is one of the essential elements of civilization and general happiness of humanity. If it does not mean this, if every element of it does not tend in this direction then that element should be modified or eliminated even if the whole fabric should crumble to dust and man return to barbarism. It is better that the should perish by savagery than by the self-inflicted tortures of a weakening and destroying civilization. The unmodified tendencies of nature are unquestionably destructive. Here unrestricted self-gratification means mutual annihilation or the survival of the strongest only. This is the law of the brute creation. It is the law of human existence in so far as man is a brute. If we eliminate brain and conscience--co-operative intelligence and the sense of justice--"the survival of the fittest," which is only the survi-

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vel of the strongest, the most cunning and the most unscrupulous, is the inflexible law of human existence. Society and Science are elements of civilization. They are valuable only as they counteract the tendencies of nature whose product is barbarism. Science is not restricted to the discovery of facts or the formulation of natural laws. Its highest function is to apply natural laws to human betterment or teach humanity how it may escape the evil resulting from their unrestrained operation.

It in the material world, science has developed the laws of forces and the principles governing their application. Primarily these forces are by no means wholly beneficent. Heat parches and burns as well as warms and fructifies. Steam scalds and rends as well as moves the piston. Gravity loosens the avalanche as well as the apple. The wind is sometimes a cyclone and sometimes a zephyr. Electricity killed for ages before it was taught to serve. Fire and water were hard masters before they became good servants.

All the material forces of nature and many of the forces derived from material nature, in some form or other are harmful as well as beneficent. Some are thus far known only to be harmful to humanity. The province of material science is not only to discover beneficent uses but to teach humanity how to avoid malignant effects--to find the antidote for nature's evil or even to wring beneficence out of her malignancy. It reveals the nature of disease in order that its cause may be eradicated; analyses poison that its action may be neutralized. It shows that air may be made wholesome; the torrent chained; the lightning fettered; the pestilence balked. This is its true mission--man's service, man's betterment.

It is true that science works evil as well as good, according to the intelligence by which it is directed. Unlike nature, material science is a passive force. It serves the good or evil purpose, according to the character or wisdom of its manipulators. It is only when it is regarded as essentially and inevitably malign in its influences that material science becomes an enemy of man. This may be

either through intentional perversion of the power it confers or through some failure to harmoniously coordinate its forces whereby what might be rendered useful becomes destructive.

Various manufactures such as white lead and those which give off the fumes of arsenic are examples of this. Their products are beneficent, their manufacture destructive. This is not the fault of Science. She would provide means by which these lives might be spared but it would cost money and civilization values money more highly than life.

That is, we are told that it is civilization; perhaps we shall learn sometime that it is only another form of barbarism.

What is true of material science is true also of every phase of knowledge pertaining to humanity. The only function of such knowledge is to improve human conditions. The study of history, government, society, moral and economical conditions--have all no other function or legitimate purpose. All these are instrumentalities not ends.

He who studies history merely to amuse himself with the story of the past, may indeed find entertainment, but he has missed the better part of historical knowledge unless he compares the life he reads with that which went before it, that which came after it and all with that which he himself lives. The lessons of history are evolutionary. The "rule of three," is the only one by which its lessons may be applied. As some past day was to its yesterday some today may be to its tomorrow. Ratio may exist; identity of condition, never. It is a fool's logic which declares that history repeats itself. Infinite diversity is the law of human experience. There may be analogous--indeed, there may be perhaps identical phases--but so related to other elements and conditions that no life, individual or collective ever becomes the counterpart of any other life.

This fact, admittedly true of individual lives, has been almost lost sight of in the study of social and political conditions. It has been assumed that the social and national life was somehow or other a thing separate and apart from the individual life. We have

studied history as the scientist observes the sands of the desert. He is careless of the form or character of the separate grains, it is the heaped up mounds--the shifting tumul - which interest him. He notes the forces and direction of the prevailing winds; the amount which each month or year deposits in the lee of any obstacle; and from these data he reaches his conclusions.

In like manner the social and political theorist have studied national economical and religious movements and tendencies and forgetful of the fact that the men who are the ultimate units of these aggregated forces are not dull inert atoms moved by some irresistible breath of common impulse, but individual moral agencies who if they fly in one direction, do so very often less because of the fierce compelling wind of material conditions than because of some moral impulse, some general volition which inclines them this way or that. They are not mere lifeless desert sands, the sport of every wind of circumstance, but each is a live magnet impelled by its own individual tendency to seek and cling to some more or in like manner repell

ed from some moral idea which happens at a particular time to be uppermost in men's minds.

It is this individual quality which gives character to all collective movements of humanity and makes man himself by far the most important element of human destiny. Human progress is less a result of physical conditions, invention, discovery, commerce, mechanism, social order than of the individual man's inclination and desire. If an enlightened sense of justice prevail, or that broad selfishness which sees in the general welfare of all the highest good of each or of if some great moral idea for a time ~~shines~~ shines through the blinding mist of envy and greed progress will be upward, marked and well nigh universal, it matters very little what may be the external conditions, Poverty, war, oppression, even famine and pestilence are impotent to obstruct human progress, when the popular heart is leavened with some great and worthy purpose. In like manner, when the strife of individual purpose becomes general and unrestricted and the pop-



ular ideal is only to outdo one's fellow, progress is of necessity downward, no matter how favorable the surroundings.

Thus, history becomes an infinite evolution, not wholly nor indeed chiefly controlled by environment, but largely dominated by that moral purpose which in great measure creates its own social atmosphere and conditions. A nation shapes its own destiny by establishing conditions which strengthen or weaken its general life. As individual life depends but little for its strength and superior qualities upon that surplus of value above necessary comforts, which we call wealth, so the general <sup>excellency</sup> quality of a nation's life depends but little on its aggregated wealth and is hurried rather than helped by the tendency to great individual accumulation.

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It is in the separation of <sup>economic</sup> ~~social~~ and ~~for national~~ ~~economic~~ from the science of government which embraces <sup>all</sup> the relations of the individual to the community, — of the means to the end & attitude, — that the fundamental fallacy of the so-called "science of Political Economy" lies.

Economics is simply the pluralized & nominalized. Both as a science and as an art it consists of making the best possible use of existing conditions, for the promotion of some worthy purpose. Without such purpose,

economy whether individual  
or aggregate is simply desira-  
ble. A nation the chief object  
of which is to use its mate-  
rial advantages merely to  
increase its aggregated values  
is to other nations precisely  
what the miser is to other  
men — an object of supreme  
contempt

A Economy in the individ-  
ual or the household when  
it ~~is~~ <sup>enable</sup> the purpose of the individ-  
ual to ~~perform~~ <sup>achieve</sup> some ~~useful~~ <sup>good</sup>  
result — to enhance his knowl-  
edge, edments, ~~and~~ his children  
provide comforts for <sup>dependent</sup> those ~~dear~~

to him. It is a form of power  
and like all power, ~~the~~ the  
desirability of its possession  
depends on the use which  
is made of it. The sole  
worthy end of economy as  
an individual quality or <sup>attribute</sup> ~~end~~,  
is to enable a man to discharge  
some necessary duty. Joined  
~~to any other purpose it is degrad-~~  
~~ing. As a means As the in-~~  
strument of an evil purpose  
it is of course <sup>degrading</sup> ~~pernicious~~. The  
~~man~~ <sup>He</sup> who would gather  
wealth in order that he may  
do wrong is one of the most

dangerous <sup>types</sup> elements of civilization,  
if it is to <sup>enlightened society</sup> ~~enlighten~~ <sup>instead, precisely</sup> ~~enlighten~~  
the man who practices economy  
while the other = chief is to barbarism.  
merely for the sake of accumulation =  
simulation is <sup>simply</sup> despicable. By  
the name miser, the common  
instinct has well linked him  
with the miserable; <sup>of earth</sup> For  
such the ~~old~~ gambler's system  
or the old Dutchman's theory  
embraces the whole science of  
economy: "It is nothing to get  
rich" said Henry the farmer; "Am  
has only to work <sup>fairly</sup> hard; sell all he  
can raise; <sup>what</sup> what he cannot sell  
fed to the hogs and <sup>what</sup> the  
hogs will not eat — eat him =  
self!

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x x

The ~~type~~ of man who is willing to eat what the swine refuse is the type of man whom the practice of economy, as an end, produces. As a sword on a <sup>economy</sup> staff ~~it may~~ be the instrument of the highest ~~achievement~~. ~~and is a means by which the highest and most virtuous species may be secured~~ best achievement; as an end, ~~and~~ it degrades even the lowest individual.

is commendable.

Economy in the individual only when ~~it only as the means by which~~ it ministers to the enhancement ~~elevation~~ betterment of individual =

manhood; economics, is an important element of national life only as it leads to produce a higher type and better average of citizen-better men. The true field of economics is not to find the minimum of expenditure and the maximum of production of a people; but that relation between production and consumption, — cost and price — labor and leisure, which <sup>may</sup> be productive of the highest ideal among its people. The function of society and civilization is to advance the general individual excellence; the function of government and national

ity is to advance the general  
excellence of particular groups  
of humanity. Political Economy,  
properly the economics of ~~social~~  
~~organical~~ organic society is  
merely one of the means by  
which the <sup>time</sup> function of govern-  
ment is to be <sup>attained</sup> promoted, and  
must be rational not only  
because of <sup>the</sup> distinctive char-  
acter of rationality but  
because of varying conditions  
and developments.

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x x