

The Science of Popular Government

The author is not unaware of the feeling ^{of uneasiness} which may arise in the minds of many of the most thoughtful and accomplished of his countrymen ~~at~~ when they shall first read the title of this work. It will seem to them if not actually absurd, at least somewhat incongruous, to apply the term "Science" to "popular government" as distinguished from other forms or types of ~~governance~~ ^{political} control ~~of~~ ^{of} specific groups of ~~some~~ associated human beings. That it is incongruous both with ~~and~~ the scholastic methods of the American publicists, the ^{accepted} ~~theories~~ of views of our ~~the~~ jurists, and the

general notions of those
writers and thinkers, who
for a century or more
have been engaged in
tracing epological resemblances
between our institutions and
those of other countries, espe-
cially Great Britain, he freely
admits.

The universal tendency
of what may be termed the
scientific method, is to reduce
all things to the fewest possible
elementary ideas. When we
regard government as the exer-
cise of power by which any
political community is restrained
controlled and ordered in respect-
to the relation of its inhabitants
to each other, and to the govern-
ment itself and to foreign other
nations, there appears at once
so striking a resemblance

that it is easy to say that they are in effect identical, and that the ~~unimpaired~~ theory study of the same is properly denominated "Political Science". This is regarded as applying to all nations, without reference to governmental forms or ~~states~~ ^{and} collective conditions, and might more properly be designated the Science of governing peoples. It embraces the mechanism of law-making, administration, the functions of a chief executive, an organized judiciary, ~~administration~~ the collection and disbursement of revenues, and the administration of all matters essential to the general national security and general welfare. In this view the functions of the chief executive

and the legislative branch
of a representative democracy
are regarded as substan-
tially equivalent to those of
a monarch and his coun-
cil or any form of govern-
ment in which the controlling
power is hereditary or self-
perpetuating. As a result of
this tendency the term govern-
ment has come to be restrict-
ed to the means by which
power is applied to specific
ends, to the almost entire
neglect of the means by
which it is generated. ~~The~~

~~The study of this "legislation of
Government" as applied to a
republic bears the same as-~~

This view
is correct enough, if the
~~Executive and Legislative~~
~~departments~~ ~~various depart-~~

~~members of a republic govern;~~
~~as yet are~~
^{specific} departments, ex-
ecutive and legislative are
really the source of law or
method. This is true, ^{in fact, absolute} in a
monarchy and ~~in fact~~ is as-
sumed to be true in a lim-
ited monarchy. In all such cases,
the executive head of the nation
is theoretically at least, the source
of power. The sovereign acts by
right; others by grace.

When we come to regard the
people of a republic as the act-
ual rulers, and consider the
chief executive and ~~the~~ legis-
lative branch of the government
as the mere servants of the popular
will, chosen not to exercise an
unlimited discretion, but in
the main, to carry into effect
instructions which are attached

to the grant of power con-
ferred upon them for a
limited term, we see at once,
that the most important
field embraced by the term
"Popular Government," is not
the ~~methods~~ methods and theories
which may control the
action of these agents of the
popular will, but, ~~the means~~
by which the popular will is ascertained

~~1 - its nature - ascertained in
the minds of the majority
which is the majority.~~

-
- 1 - The ~~determination~~ ^{ascertainment} of the ~~course~~
sign will, ~~by its expression~~
in the minds of the majority
 - 2 - Its formation and expression
through voluntary agencies.
 - 3 - Its crystallization into a political
policy and expression in the
forms of law.

4- Its administration by the executive department of the government and

5- Its enforcement by the Judiciary.)

The most important of all the elements of government is the moral and intellectual character of the sovereign. This is true whether the sovereign is an individual or a multitude. The only differ-

ever is as regards the modification
of this sovereign character by
educational environment and
events.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013