

This is the exclusive attribute of Omnipotence. The entire province of human labour, skill and power, is limited to *transmutations or changes* of the form and place of the various objects which God has created, and with which his infinite wisdom and benevolence have stored and garnished our globe. The whole of human labour consists in the employment of natural agents. God created the garden of Eden with its flowers and trees, and appointed man to cultivate it. God has made the earth the air and sea, with all their treasures and properties, and has directed and limited the labour of man to develop and employ them; and by a principle of right, deeply implanted in the moral constitution of man, and recognised in almost all forms of human society, each labourer claims and is assured of the fruits of his own industry. This is the basis of all property—the right of each man to appropriate and enjoy the fruits of his labour—and is the great stimulant to human industry. The application of this principle involves those extensive branches of political economy which treat of the *distribution and consumption* of wealth.

The nature of objects and the right to appropriate them to our own use and enjoyment, being the result of labour in the three forms above stated, the question next suggested is, *what are the kinds of human labour employed, and how may it be rendered most productive?* When human labour is limited to the collection of natural productions, it is called *agricultural industry*. When employed in separating, compounding, or modifying the productions of nature it is called *manufacturing industry*, and as these processes can only be affected by mechanical or chemical means, Say justly remarks, that “all branches of manufacturing industry may be subdivided in the mechanical and chemical arts, according to the predominance of the one or the other in several processes.” When, however, labour is employed in placing within our reach objects at a distance, it is called *commercial industry*. The manner in which these three great departments of human labour contribute to the individual and public wealth of the country, and in which capital and skill can be best employed to promote them, comprehends inquiries of a vital and extensive branch of political economy.

As to the means by which human labour has been and may be rendered most productive, they will be found to embrace *Discoveries—Inventions—the use of Natural agents*, (both animate and inanimate)—*Division of labour—Education*, or the *moral & Intellectual Cultivation of labourers—wages*, or the *proper remuneration* of labour, whether simple or educated *Security of Property—Distribution and employment of capital* under its various forms,—the *Functions of Government—different kinds of consumption*, both public and private, and the laws relating to it—the end of all human labour being *enjoyment* or the *consumption* of wealth in some form or other.

Such, in a few paragraphs, is the briefest analytical view I am able to give of the science of Political Economy—comprehending it its widest range many topics of Moral Philosophy of Ethics, the chief applications of the sciences and arts, a great part of the functions of civil government, and the most remarkable developments and phenomena of modern civilization, but reducible to a few elementary principles, which I will now proceed to show may and ought to be made a branch of public education.

II. In attempting to show the importance of Political Economy, as a branch of Public education, I shall avail myself as far as possible of the words of standard authors on the subject, as of infinitely higher authority than any words of my own.

1. My first reason in favour of making Political Economy a branch of public education is, the fact that it may be easily comprehended by all classes of society. As the great truths of civil government can be as easily comprehended as the rules of the discipline which govern a school; so may the principles of economy be as readily taught and understood in respect to a nation as in respect to a family. It is true the doctrines—the science—of Political Economy are the result of profound investigation and extensive research; so also to the sciences of Arithmetic and Geometry the productions of deep speculations and mighty intellects—yet every school boy can master their elements. It required the genius of a Newton to discover the universal law of gravitation; but every child can comprehend the principle of it. The first principles of all knowledge, or, in other words, of the laws of the creation and government of God, are simple. An infant heart understands the

nature of love—while its origin and highest developments surpass the reach of all finite minds. The principles which form the basis of the science of Political Economy form a part of our original constitution and of the physical world around us; and the operations of those principles are as open to common observations, and as much within the comprehension of the multitude as the operations of any other natural laws. The author of an excellent book for schools and families, in the United States, entitled “*An Introduction to the Science of Government, with a brief Treatise on Political Economy*,” justly remarks: “The inattention to the science of Political Economy, which has so long prevailed, may be attributed, in part, to the common opinion that its principles are too abstruse to be brought within the comprehension of the great mass of the people, especially of the young. The fact, however, is otherwise. Few sciences are more simple. The youth of fifteen, though he may not be an adept in the science, nor possess the knowledge of an experienced legislator, is, nevertheless capable of understanding the general laws and principles which regulate the production and distribution of the wealth of society. These principles when duly explained, are as readily comprehended as those of Mathematics, or of Chemistry and Natural Philosophy.”

Archbishop Whately, formerly Professor of Political Economy in the University of Oxford,—long the zealous and successful advocate and promoter of Education in Ireland, in connection with the National Board—was the first to take decisive steps towards making elements of Political Economy a branch of public elementary education. He prepared a text-book on the subject, under the modest title of “*Easy Lessons in Money Matters*,” adapted, as he says, “for the instruction of young persons from eight years of age and upwards.” In the Preface of this little book, he remarks that “there are few subjects on which it is, for all classes of people more important to inculcate correct principles, and to guard against specious fallacies. All persons, in every station must when they grow up, practically take part, more or less, in the transactions in question. The rudiments of sound knowledge concerning these may (it has been found by experience) be communicated at a very early age; and that they should be inculcated early is the more important, because at a latter period there are more difficulties in the way of such elementary instruction. Many of even what are called the educated classes, grow up with indistinct, or erroneous and practically mischievous views on these subjects;—and the prejudices any one may have casually imbibed, are hard to be removed at a time of life when he imagines his education to be completed. Those, therefore who are engaged in conducting or in patronizing and promoting education, should consider it a matter of no small moment to instil, betimes, just notions on subjects with which all must in after life, be practically conversant, and in which no class of men, from the highest to the lowest, can in such a country as this, at least, be safely left in ignorance or in error.”

2. I remark secondly, that Political Economy involves, directly or indirectly, the interests of all classes of society, and ought therefore, to be made a branch of their education. Mr. McCulloch, one of the ablest English writers on Political Economy, expresses himself, with great force on the point. He remarks that; “The object of Political Economy is to point out the means by which the industry of man may be rendered most productive of those necessities, comforts, and enjoyments which constitute wealth; to ascertain the circumstances most favourable for its accumulation; the proportion in which it is divided among the different classes of the community; and the mode in which it may be most advantageously consumed. The intimate connexion of such a science with all the best interests of society is abundantly obvious. There is no other, indeed, which comes so directly home to the every-day occupations and business of mankind. The consumption of wealth is indispensable to existence; but the eternal law of Providence has decreed that wealth can only be procured by industry; that man must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. This two-fold necessity renders the acquisition of wealth a constant and principal object of the exertions of the vast majority of the human race; has subdued the natural aversion of man from labour; given activity to indolence, and armed the patient hand of industry with zeal to undertake, and perseverance to overcome the most irksome and disagreeable tasks. But when wealth is thus neces-