

**THE POLITICAL CLASS BOOK:
INTENDED TO INSTRUCT THE
HIGHER CLASSES IN SCHOOLS IN
THE ORIGIN, NATURE, AND USE
OF POLITICAL POWER**

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The political class book: intended to instruct the higher classes in schools in the origin, nature, and use of political power by William Sullivan & George B. Emerson

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WILLIAM SULLIVAN & GEORGE B. EMERSON

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POLITICAL POWER.

"Government is instituted for the common good; for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people;—and not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men." *Mass. Bill of Rights.*

"Ignorantia legum neminem excusat; omnes enim presumuntur eas nōsse, quibus omnes consentiunt."

BY WILLIAM SULLIVAN,
COUNSELLOR AT LAW.

WITH AN APPENDIX
UPON STUDIES FOR PRACTICAL MEN;
WITH NOTICES OF BOOKS SUITED TO THEIR USE.

BY GEORGE B. EMERSON.

New Edition,
WITH AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS.

BOSTON:
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AND
G. W. PALMER AND COMPANY.
1838.

P. A. S. B. R. C. 13

INTRODUCTION

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE people of the United States have undertaken to preserve and transmit civil and religious liberty, and the blessings of life, by the administration of just and equal laws, made in conformity to written constitutions, voluntarily adopted.

There must be, somewhere, an authority competent to judge whether such laws are so administered. This authority resided in those who instituted our governments. It passed to their successors. It resides, always, in those who compose the political community. This community has not only the exclusive right to judge whether power, established for its benefit, is constitutionally exercised, but also the absolute right to amend, and even to abolish, an existing system, and substitute any other.

Such sovereign power implies *knowledge* of the subjects to which it is to be applied ; and, as there is no distinction in the political rights of the members of the community, every citizen, who has attained to the age of *twenty-one years*, is entitled to all the rights of citizenship, and is held

to the performance of all its duties. *He must, therefore, be presumed to know what these rights and duties are.*

Every citizen of a state is also a citizen of the United States. Being entitled to all the rights of national citizenship, and held to the performance of all its duties, *he must be presumed to know what these are.* Among these are included the duty, and consequently the competency, of judging whether those who undertake to administer the National Government execute their trust with ability and faithfulness.

It is not perceived that provision has been made, in the usual course of education, to qualify those who are approaching manhood, to discharge, with advantage to themselves, and with justice to their fellow-citizens, the political duties which they must assume. If the young acquire any knowledge of this nature, it must be by inference and accident, and not because it is systematically imparted.

This small volume, of very humble pretensions, is designed to do something towards supplying what is supposed to be a want, in the present course of education. It treats, briefly, several subjects, which are commonly supposed to be above the intellectual capacity of the young. This difficulty has been met, it is hoped, by the elementary mode of treatment. The book is divided into chapters and short sections, as is usual in school books; and questions are appended, intended to intimate the subject comprised in each section.

If this book should be deemed worthy of being made a class book, it is supposed that it may be most profitably used, by requiring of a pupil to give, *in his own words*, the meaning of sections. This is the same intellectual exercise, which is required in the business of life, in whatsoever department of industry *one* may find his lot to have been cast.

A book comprising many subjects, and yet *small enough* to be a school book for general use, could not contain practical and historical illustrations. Intelligent teachers can easily supply these, from their own resources. They can do this in a mode not too much in use, that is, by an interchange of thoughts between themselves and their pupils; and, by such means, lead to a useful exercise of the powers of the mind.

To the young it may seem, that time moves heavily. But it will soon remove many of their predecessors, and advance themselves to the rank of citizens. Almost unconscious of the change that is in process, they will suddenly find themselves called upon to take their part in affairs, which involve the most important interests of a great and increasing people.

It is yet a problem, whether united representative republics will continue to diffuse their blessings through a prosperous and grateful community. The solution may depend, in no small degree, on the veneration which the young carry into manhood, for the institutions of their fathers; and not less on their ability to distinguish between

the unprincipled contrivances of politicians, and the manly actions of statesmen.

At the request of the writer, a gentleman well qualified to render such service to the community, has furnished instructions for a course of reading on the arts, sciences, and history. This course is introduced by explanatory remarks, which will be found highly instructive, not only to those who are seeking the advantages of an education, but to those who are engaged in the active scenes of business. The part of the volume alluded to, is contained in an Appendix.

W. S.

Boston Mass., August 1, 1830.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE NEW EDITION.

THE first edition having been more favorably received than was even hoped for, and very soon disposed of, the publishers applied to the authors to revise the book for a new edition. In doing this, all the suggestions which have been made by way of improvement, have been attended to. For some of them, a due sense of obligation is entertained. Many corrections have been made. Additions have also been made; and among them a new chapter, as a substitute for the concluding one of the former edition. In this (chapter XXX), an attempt is made to show the nature and use of physical, moral, and intellectual power; and also the principles on which *manners* are formed, and what their proper utility is, in social intercourse. In page 151 will be found a note, on the *constitutional* law of debtor and creditor; and, next following this, a note on *crimes*, showing the distinction between national and state jurisdiction. A copious Index is prefixed to this volume.

To the *Appendix* has been added a chapter on *moral philosophy*, in which the three branches, into which this subject is usually divided, are explained.

This edition is designed for schools, *in all the states in the Union*; and to make it fit for this purpose, the constitution of each state has been described. The analysis of the constitution of Massachusetts, and of that of the United States, will enable instructors in each state (with the aid of the description above mentioned) to explain how powers are derived and exercised, in their respective states. It is impracticable to be more particular; it is believed, that the course adopted will be found sufficiently so.

It is improbable, that either of the authors will have leisure, or inducement, to make any further alterations. So far as they may be permitted to judge, the volume will be found to contain all that is necessary to the object in view; and as it is, and such as it is, it must find its own way as it can. If it should attain to the honor, for which it was framed and designed, and should prove to be useful to those who *are to be citizens*; and if it should enable them to understand the institutions of their own country (the value of which is made the more striking by recent, and probable events, in other countries); the purpose of the authors will have been accomplished, and their labors most acceptably rewarded.

W. S.

G. B. E.

Boston, Mass., January 1, 1831.