

POLITICAL PAPERS: EXPANSION

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649398225

Political Papers: Expansion by Theodore Marburg

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THEODORE MARBURG

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EXPANSION**

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EXPANSION.

BY

THEODORE MARBURG.

Reprinted from *The American*.

JOHN MURPHY COMPANY,

PUBLISHERS

BALTIMORE, MD.:

44 W. Baltimore Street.

NEW YORK:

70 Fifth Avenue.

1900.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
~~P 70100~~
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS,
1900.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
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BOOK I.

SOURCES OF CONFUSION.

BY a series of rapid events, America has had suddenly thrust upon her the question of expansion in territory which is not contiguous, the question of dependencies. Will dependencies be detrimental to us? Is such a policy consistent with the spirit of our institutions? Is it reconcilable with our conceptions of justice? These are the questions we have been asking ourselves. The confusion and doubt on the subject arise from diverse sources.

Private ethics and public ethics.

One is the failure to distinguish between private and public ethics. We have come to believe that our ethics, if not actually having their origin in human experience, have been largely shaped by it. What is sin to-day was not such even within recorded history recent as that is now known to be in comparison with the whole period of man's life on the planet. Private conduct called *good* manifestly makes for the benefit of the community; *bad* conduct for its injury. In the struggle for existence, amongst the lower animals as well as amongst men, the social faculty, the faculty of co-operation, has played a more important part than the individual qualities of fierceness, strength or cunning. This is what reconciles evolution with the moral law. Traits of unselfishness, disinterestedness and promptings of social service making for co-operation have conferred an advantage upon the

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particular groups in which they were most highly developed. Fortunately, this accumulated experience is no longer thought of as such, but the traits of nobility and generosity, aspiration, and all the marvellous phenomena of conscience revealing the divine element in man, prompt him to do right for right's sake.

Until within a very short time indeed groups have lived their separate life, regarding the foreigner as an enemy. Intercourse between the nations and a regard for the interests of mankind as a whole are not old enough to have developed a code of public ethics. The failure of international law to comprehend such ethics, not higher nor more important than private ethics, but applying simply to larger groups, no doubt partly explains why international law has not been given a sanction, why no central tribunal has been established to pass upon violations of it, and to summon the nations, by concerted action, to enforce it. We are daily reminded

of the necessity of readjusting our attitude in various departments of knowledge.*

Unless this applied to ethics too, there would be no such thing as moral progress. It has become clear that wrong in the individual

*Prof. Henry D. Rowland, in a remarkable address to the Physical Society of America, said:

"It is a curious fact that, having minds tending to the infinite, with imaginations unlimited by time and space, the limits of our exact knowledge are very small indeed. In time we are limited by a few hundred or possibly thousand years; indeed, the limit in our science is far less than the smaller of these periods. In space we have exact knowledge, limited to portions of our earth's surface, and a mile or so below the surface, together with what little we can learn from looking through powerful telescopes into the space beyond. In temperature our knowledge extends from near the absolute zero to that of the sun, but exact knowledge is far more limited. In pressures we go from the Crooks vacuum, still containing myriads of flying atoms, to pressure limited by the strength of steel, but still very minute compared with the pressures at the centre of the earth and sun, where the hardest steel would flow like most limpid water. In velocities we

may be right in the state. Only men who are blind to the larger interests of the race still condemn the supplanting of savages by civilized peoples. Killing and confiscating are both involved in the process. This would be evil on the part of the individual. Is it evil on the part of the state? We must make up our minds on this subject once for all. The

are limited to a few miles per second; in forces, to possibly one hundred tons to the square inch; in mechanical rotations, to a few hundred times per second.

“The ordinary crude mind has only two compartments—one for truth and one for error; indeed, the contents of the two compartments are sadly mixed in most cases. The ideal scientific mind, however, has an infinite number. Each theory or law is in its proper compartment, indicating the probability of its truth. As a new fact arrives, the scientist changes it from one compartment to another, so as, if possible, to always keep it in its proper relation to truth and error. Thus the fluid nature of electricity was once in a compartment near the truth. Faraday's and Maxwell's researches have now caused us to move it to a compartment nearly up to that of absolute error.”