

PATRICK EDWARD DOVE

Julia Bastian

*Julia Bastian has worked as a journalist in London for many years, including a spell with **The Times**. On retirement she took on a part-time job for the Henry George Foundation of Great Britain. I am particularly pleased to have Julia's permission to include here her fine and enlightening contribution on Dove, which first appeared in an anthology of Georgist writings published in the U.S.A. in 1998. (See Reading-List for catalogue of the Henry George Foundation.) S.A.H.*

Dove the Man

There are clansmen still around in the glens who will pay homage to the man they call the most popular landlord in Scotland. At a time when landlords were hated and feared, Patrick Edward Dove (1815-1873) became much-loved by his tenants, gaining their respect for his fair and honest dealings. This somewhat unusual landlord did not believe in a system where landlords collected the rents from tenants while they did all the work. He maintained that land rent should go direct to the state and be used for the benefit of the nation. Nor did he accept that the game laws of the time were equitable. He employed no keepers on his Scottish estate, and poachers could come and go as they pleased without interference.

Under the old Celtic tenures, the Klaan (children of the soil) had been the proprietors of the land they occupied. Whole counties, Sutherland for example, belonged to its inhabitants. Their chief was held to be their monarch and not a proprietor, and had no more right to expel them from their homes than the king across the border in England. But in 1807, the Duke of Sutherland ordered his agents to clear some 15,000 inhabitants from his land and to burn their homes. Year after year, more of his tenants were forced to abandon their snug farms and find new livelihoods elsewhere, or to seek a new life by emigrating to America. Such "clearances" continued with increasing severity and were not confined to Sutherland. Other parts of Scotland witnessed the tearing apart of the ancient ties which for centuries had bound clansmen to their chiefs. In Bute, the Duke of Hamilton caused the land area rented by twenty-seven families to be converted into one farm, they being deprived of their homes and possessions. The same sorry story was re-enacted in Argyll, Inverness-shire, Ross-shire, Perthshire and the Hebrides, to list but some of the affected areas. Everywhere men gave place to deer, so that Highland landlords might reap their golden harvests in the increase of their rent rolls from shooting and fishing rights.*

It was against this background that on July 31, 1815, a son was born to Lieutenant Francis Dove and his wife, Christiana Paterson. This prosperous aristocratic family resided at Lasswade near Edinburgh, where the young boy, Patrick Edward, enjoyed a loving and favoured childhood. From the earliest days, this precocious lad took an interest in everything around him, and soon expressed a liking for science and logic. His fascination for number, quantity, time and space, unity and diversity, remained with him throughout his life.**

His father was a serving officer in the Royal Navy at a time in history when the British seapower was unbeaten and towered above all rivals, especially with Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805. Napoleon's unquenchable passion for war, and his restless ambition, had inflicted untold harm and suffering on millions of innocent people over a long period. Wellington had just defeated Napoleon, who was soon to be isolated

* John Prebble, *The Highland Clearances* (London: History Book Club, 1966); J.W. Peace, *The Great Robbery* (London: Public Commonwealth Press, 1933); and Frederick Verinder, *Land and Freedom* (London: Hobarth Press, 1935).

** "Patrick Edward Dove," *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 5 (London: Oxford University Press), 1284-1285.

on the little Atlantic island of St. Helena. Europe was still seething with discontent. But the time was still under the influence of the Age of Enlightenment and the prestige of Britain had never stood higher than in the year of Waterloo – 1815.

The Doves had been rich and prominent landowners for generations. Many naval officers of high rank had given service to the crown, and in due course Patrick Edward's father was promoted to commander and appointed Commissioner of the Navy at Plymouth, at which point the family moved south. Already well educated in Scotland, Patrick Edward continued his studies in France. But here, along with fellow students, he joined in open insurrection against their tutors who evidently had fallen short of expectations. The Paris Academy saw fit to expel him, as one of the ringleaders, and he was obliged to return home in disgrace. One option now was to follow his father and forebears into the navy, but his father thought otherwise. No doubt he had seen much bloody fighting during the napoleonic wars and had other plans for his intelligent son. He encouraged him to become a gentleman farmer on the family estate. In 1830 he was sent back to learn farming in Scotland.

By the time Patrick Edward was 17, King William IV, the more popular brother of George IV, had come to the throne.* Demands for reform were everywhere in the air, as well as an outcry about the clearances in Scotland. In English counties where the wretched labourers, stung to fury by a combination of injustices such as the game laws, the frequent death or transportation to Australia for sheep-stealing, and the miserable pay they received for long hours, rose up against their masters in revolt. Patrick Edward would have been well aware of their plight.

As a quiet country gentleman farmer, he became a first-rate horseman, a fine shot, an expert fly-fisher, a skilful sailor and an excellent mechanic. He became agricultural adviser to neighbouring farmers and, during the potato famine, exerted himself energetically to provide employment for the many Irish families who came to Scotland looking for work.** Although Dove set himself to learn as much as possible about husbandry, by all accounts he was able to lead a life of comparative leisure, which gave him time to read philosophy and travel widely. He made several grand tours to the continent and lived for long periods in France, which he had come to love.

In 1840, at the age of 25, Dove came into his inheritance, and the following year he decided to purchase a new estate of his own near Ballantrae, Ayrshire. As time went by, running "the Craig" on new, liberal lines won him the reputation of being the "most popular landlord in Scotland," largely, perhaps, because he had absorbed the new ideas in France springing out of the Declaration of the Rights of Man during the Revolution. He firmly believed that the soil of the nation was the inheritance of all people; his tenants could come and go across his land without interference. Thus he gained the respect and affection of his tenants. Until 1848 he lived happily at "the Craig" but, quite suddenly, some of his investments crashed on the stock market and the greater part of his fortune was swept away. It was at this moment that he chose to propose to a young girl as penniless as himself. Anne, daughter of George Forrester, an Edinburgh solicitor, made him a good wife and there were one son and two daughters from the marriage. The couple stayed together until his death in 1873.

The newlyweds left Scotland and set up home in Darmstadt, Germany, where Patrick Edward Dove took a post as lecturer at the University, and pursued the philosophical studies to which he had long been devoted. Here he continued to write about social matters and took time to think out his ideas. It was a

* *George IV (1762-1830) ruled from 1820 until his death. William IV (1765-1837) ruled from 1830 until 1837.*

** *From 1845 to 1847 Ireland suffered from a potato famine, forcing many people to emigrate. It has been estimated that 500,000 people either died or left Ireland during these years.*

valuable period for him and the first fruit of this new life was the book, *The Theory of Human Progression*.^{*} Initially, he decided to publish anonymously but, finding that it attracted wide interest in academic circles, a limited edition followed in 1850 in London and Edinburgh.

A number of luminaries, including Thomas Carlyle, read *The Theory of Human Progress* and praised the wisdom of its ideas. Sir William Hamilton, the great philosopher, pronounced the book "epochmaking," while Charles Sumner, in the United States, was so impressed with it that he circulated numerous free copies and persuaded Dove, now a writer of stature, to turn his hand to writing in favour of emancipation.^{**} This movement became a torch for Dove.^{***}

Dove was free thinking, blunt speaking and farsighted. He was a man of great physical power, with a noble head. Professor J.S. Blackie, who knew him well, wrote that he "combined in a remarkable degree the manly directness of the man of action with the fine speculation of the man of thought. Altogether, Mr. Dove dwells in my mind as one of the most perfect types of the manly thinker whom I have met in the course of a long life."^{****} Sir Francis Seymour Haden, the artist, who became his close friend while living in London, was "impressed by his enormous energy, physical and moral."^{*****}

After leaving Germany, the Doves settled in Edinburgh where, in 1853, Patrick Edward lectured at the Philosophical Institution on various subjects. For a while he edited *The Witness* during the illness of his friend, Hugh Miller, and later that year published the second part of his work on politics which he called *The Elements of Political Science*. A third and concluding part was written but never published, and the manuscript was lost.

In 1856 Dove stood unsuccessfully for the chair vacated by the death of Sir William Hamilton, and it is interesting that his rival, who was successful, spoke highly of Dove's "powerful individuality and uncommon grasp of social problems and insight."^{*****} In 1858, the Doves moved on to Glasgow, where he edited a newspaper, the *Commonwealth*, and became general editor of the *Imperial Dictionary of Biography* for the first twenty numbers. He also busied himself with editing the *Imperial Journal of the Arts and Sciences*, and wrote the article "Government" for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

* Henry George praised Dove's book during a public meeting at Glasgow in 1884. It was not until 1942 that the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation of New York published an abridged version by Julia A. Kellogg in a bid to assist the promotion for land-value taxation then in progress. It was hoped that such a volume would help reform land tenure in line with the ideas of Henry George.

** Sir William Hamilton (1788-1856) was a noted Scottish philosopher. Charles Sumner (1840-1910), a senator from Massachusetts, was a major exponent of radical reconstruction after the Civil War.

*** Julia A. Kellogg in Patrick Edward Dove, *The Theory of Human Progression*, ed. Julia A. Kellogg (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1942), preface (no pagination).

**** John S. Blackie (1809-1895) was an eminent educator and proponent of Scottish nationalism.

***** Sir Francis S. Haden (1818-1910) was a pioneer physician, writer, and artist, especially noted in the field of etching.

***** "William Hamilton," *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 8 (London: Oxford University Press), 1111-1116. See also *Glasgow Herald* (May 2, 1873); *Scotsman* (May 1, 1873); and *People's Journal* (May 1 and 8, 1884).

Britain was the premier industrial power at this time, having taken the initiative during the eighteenth century in the Industrial Revolution. Although she was derisively, but jealously called a nation of shopkeepers, her mills and factories churned out products at an ever-increasing rate and were sent to all corners of the globe, setting the pace for the rest of Europe, and the United States as well. Set against this heightened national prosperity were the degradations of the farmer-turned-labourer and the endless growth of darkened cities. Dove felt that modern manufacture was a monstrous system of misdirected intention, based on a blasphemy against man's spiritual nature:

The whole system of modern manufacture, with its factory slavery; its gaunt and sallow faces; its half-clad hunger; its female degradation; its abortions and rickety children; its dens of pestilence and abomination; its ignorance, brutality, and drunkenness; its vice, in all the hideous forms of infidelity, hopeless poverty, and mad despair – these, and, if it were possible, worse than these, are the sure fruits of making man the workman of mammon, instead of making wealth the servant of humanity for the relief of man's estate.*

Along with the growth of the industrial proletariat arose numerous problems. Unions and workers' movements began to flourish and visionaries with new systems of thought desired to radically alter the status quo. Being well aware of the socialist and communist doctrines at that time circulating among the workers and in academic circles, Dove advised those in England who heaped contempt upon the doctrines to try to understand the concepts and to seize the fallacies on which they were based.

Whatever may be true, or whatever may be false, in socialism (using that term in the most unobjectionable sense – Christian socialism, for instance), the principles of equity must first be taken into consideration before we can, by any possibility, proceed to the consideration of those higher principles of action which may come into play, when once the principles of justice are acknowledged and carried into general operation.

This question is perhaps, practically, the most important in modern politics. Insured millions let loose on the world, with vague ideas of fraternity in their heads, with the courage of enthusiasm in their hearts, and with bayonets in their hands, are, at all events, formidable expositors of doctrine. Their energy is exactly what the continent of Europe has so long required; but their ignorance may transform what would otherwise have been a most useful reformation, into a terrible hurricane of vengeance, and a blind exercise of destructive power. Now that the theorist and the orator can raise armed millions, the game of politics has assumed a new character. Theories are no longer barren speculations, nor is oratory mere declamation. It is, therefore, of the first importance that the most cheerful, impartial, and honest endeavour should be made to perfect the theory of politics – to base it first on the immutable foundations of justice – to satisfy the reason before setting the passions in a flame – to evolve principles which can be calmly and soberly maintained by the intellect, before they are given as rules of action to enthusiastic populations, ready to march in any direction that is plausibly pointed out as the right one.**

During these troublesome times, there were also many wars of unification waged in Europe, such as in Italy and Germany; and of liberation, such as in Austria.***

* Dove, *The Theory of Human Progression*, 83.

** *Ibid.*, 89-90.

*** A united Italy was declared in 1871 with the annexation of Rome; the German Empire came into being the same year. The most prominent nationalist uprising in Europe was in Austria on the part of the Hungarians during the Revolution of 1848.

The American Civil War (1860-65) was also transpiring, fought, in part, over the slave issue. Dove had always concerned himself with the plight of all mankind and deplored the slave system, whether it was British or American in origin. In the southern states in America, Negro slavery formed the basis of a distinctive aristocratic society. Its economic rationale was the cotton-plantation, and of course England was a major consumer of cotton. But although the Confederacy tried to entice England to its aid in the war, British public opinion, Lord Palmerston's policies,* and the rising fortunes of the North all combined to forestall her entanglement. No doubt Dove helped to form public opinion on this issue at home.

When the emancipation of the African was spoken of, and when the nation of Britain appeared to be taking into serious consideration the rightfulness of abolishing slavery, what tremendous evils were to follow! Trade was to be ruined, commerce was almost to cease, and manufacturers were to be bankrupts. Worse than all, private property was to be invaded (property in human flesh), the rights of planters sacrificed to the speculative notions of fanatics, and the British government was to commit an act that would forever deprive it of the confidence of British subjects. These evils at home were, of course, to be accompanied by others abroad much more tremendous. The West India islands were, of course, to be ruined past all possible hope of recovery; the blacks were to insurgé and to destroy the white population; a moral hurricane, ten times more dreadful than the winds of heaven, was to sweep across the Caribbean Sea; blood was to flow like water; the emancipated slave was to celebrate the first moment of his liberty with rape, rapine, and murder; evils unheard of and inconceivable were to astonish the earth; the very heavens were to fall. And why? Because British subjects were no longer to be permitted by British law to hold their fellow men in slavery on British ground.

The law was a positive enactment armed with power, and the moment the law ceased to exist the negro was emancipated, not by the law, but by nature. The law may make a slave, but it is beyond the power of the law to make a freeman. the only question that can ever be legitimately taken into consideration, with regard to slavery, is immediate and total abolition, and so of all similar cases where injustice is established or systematically perpetuated by law.

The people of Great Britain were taxed by force for the purpose of paying the planters for their slaves. Theoretically, the Commons imposed the taxation on themselves; but nine-tenths of the population have nothing to do with the election of members of Parliament, and so far as they were concerned, the taxation was *ab extra* – forced on them by a government which they had no voice in electing. We maintain that this act was one of downright injustice and oppression, whatever may be said of its magnanimity.**

It was natural for Dove to take an interest in military matters. He was fundamentally a man of peace but he could see the need for strong defence against tyranny. In 1848 he had produced a treatise on the revolver and the handling of firearms in general. A few years later, he published a book, *The Revolver*, with hints to rifle clubs. He also expounded on the defence of the country and deplored the depopulation of the Highlands. He was proud of his invention of the rifled cannon which had ratchet grooves, but although it was shown to have a great range and accuracy, the Ordnance Committee which had examined this weapon declined to take any further steps. In 1859 Dove accepted the command of the 91st Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers, and later took part in the first meeting of the National Rifle Association at Wimbledon, winning several prizes.

The great prosperity of industrial Britain after 1860 was largely ascribed to Gladstone's efforts to

* Henry J.T. Palmerston (1784-1865), a leading English statesman, was twice prime minister. He championed British interests and pursued liberal policies

** Dove, *The Theory of Human Progression*, 54-55.

bring about free trade and this became the accepted doctrine of all parties for the remainder of the century.* To this end, Dove wrote strongly in favour of the complete abolition of all customs and excise. This, he said, was a most necessary change that must take place before the country could be free and enjoy commercial liberty, for the labourer, the merchant, and the manufacturer. Besides being adamant in his distaste for customs duties, Dove regarded most taxes as superfluous for the operation of any state. Only a minimal amount of revenue was necessary for the operation of a scaled-down government.

During the mid century Britain's might was nonpareil. Not only was she defended by the world's most formidable fleet, but she was governed by a government of a singular character for the times. Although it suffered from many problems, it was one of the most advanced and modern. Dove, nevertheless, like many of us, was much irritated by state officials and expressed his dislike for officialdom.

From such, there had been a great cry for reform of state and society. Among many orators leading the new generation of thinking people was Jeremy Bentham, who was regarded as the Father of all Reform.** He was the author of a *Catechism of Parliamentary Reform* in which he argued that a more democratic form of government would help to produce "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." This book and those words would not have been lost on the young Dove, whose most important contribution was his great work, *The Theory of Human Progression*. Dove set out in his book the theory of man's intellectual progression. Before a nation can change its condition it must change its beliefs. Dove was a religious man and well understood the ultimate authority of God who made the laws governing Nature. He showed how a country's beliefs determines its conditions and fixes its destiny. Truth, he said, must bring with it a correct and beneficial system of society while false beliefs must ever be accompanied by despotism, anarchy, and wrong. Dove believed that political progress of mankind is a passage to one definite end, to an ultimate condition that requires no further change, to a stable system of law. Part of Dove's theory contained the idea of what we would call a single tax, which he postulated as a most necessary part of historical progress. This initial change, along with other political liberties which Dove saw as integrated parts of an ongoing evolution, could be effected only through a constant increase of knowledge, for this is the only means by which man can work out his wellbeing and ameliorate his condition on the globe. Dove's thesis maintains the doctrine of liberty and equality and, by extension, he argues persuasively that the rent of land ought to belong to the nation and be distributed for the benefit of all. The main principle of his book avers that all human progress is conditioned by the development of true knowledge to achieve these ends. It was vital, in his view, to bring this idea to the attention of scholars.

Let it be remembered that the progress of mankind in the evolution of civilization, is a progress from superstition and error towards knowledge. Superstition and error present themselves under the form of diversity of credence; knowledge presents itself under the form of unity of credence. Wherever there is knowledge, that knowledge is the same in all parts of the earth, and the same in substance whatever language it may use as the instrument of expression. The progress of mankind, therefore, is a progress from diversity of credence towards unity of credence. There is but one truth, one scheme of knowledge; and consequently, wherever knowledge is really attained, diversity of credence is impossible. Where men differ in credence, they differ because one or all have not knowledge.***

One of the elements blocking this preordained evolution to a higher plane of man's existence was the

* William E. Gladstone (1809-1898) was a noted Liberal British statesman who was prime minister four times and promoted various important reforms relating to Ireland, the civil service, the military, etc.

** Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) was an English philosopher who founded utilitarianism.

*** Dove, *The Theory of Human Progression*, 74.

present concept of landownership, especially when it is monopolized and sanctioned by statutory law. It perpetuated gross iniquities and generated poverty and starvation in the present. For the future it stymied the best hopes of a more perfected society wherein everyone could have a voice in decision making and a genuine commonwealth.

Given the perilous circumstances of a fast-growing Britain encumbered with so many problems, Dove predicted that the subject of property would become the major cause of strife and contention.

Property is the rock on which England's famous constitution of king, Lords, and Commons, will suffer its final shipwreck. Such an assertion is, of course, at present a mere opinion; but if the scheme we have advanced be in the main correct, then we do not hesitate to affirm, that if we continue that scheme into the future, we may see that the question of landed property will be the cause of a stupendous struggle between the aristocracy and the laborocracy of Britain, and that its final settlement will entail the destruction of the constitution. and the question lies in narrow bounds, all that is required being an answer to. . .the following: "Is the population to be starved, pauperized, and expatriated, or is the aristocracy to be destroyed?"* Let the political arrangements be what they may, let there be universal or any other suffrage, so long as the aristocracy have all the land, and derive the rent of it, the labourer is only a serf, and a serf he will remain until he has uprooted the rights of private landed property. The land is for the nation, and not for the aristocracy.**

Dove's last years were spent travelling in Natal (in the south of Africa) to experience a change of climate, and he died following a stroke on April 28, 1873. His son, P.E. Dove, became Secretary of the Royal Historical and Selden Societies, and wrote admiringly of his father's work in the years that followed.

* *By the destruction of the aristocracy, we do not mean the destruction of the aristocrats, any more than, by the destruction of pauperism, we should mean the destruction of the persons of the paupers. It is to the system that we refer exclusively, and only as either system has been created by the arrangements of men. (Note by Dove).*

** *Dove, The Theory of Human Progression, 114-115.*

Patrick Edward Dove was born at Lasswade, near Edinburgh, in 1815. As young man he travelled widely, and lived for a time in Paris and London. About 1840 he came into the family property in Ayrshire, and lived there until 1848, when an unfortunate investment deprived him of most of his fortune. Shortly after this he married and went to live at Darmstadt, in Germany, where he studied, wrote, and lectured. In 1850, the same year in which Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics* appeared, enunciating similar conclusions, Dove published his *Theory of Human Progression and Natural Probability of a Reign of Justice*. It was the first part of a work entitled *The Science of Politics*, of which the second part, *The Elements of Political Science*, appeared in 1854. The first part was acclaimed by Thomas Carlyle, Sir William Hamilton, Professor Blackie, and Senator Charles Sumner who circulated many copies in the United States, but it never secured general public attention. A second edition, edited by Mr. Alexander Harvey, was published in New York in 1895, and subsequently an excellent abridgement by Miss Julia Kellogg was published by Isaac H. Blanchard & Co., New York. The second part had even less attention, and is now exceedingly scarce. After publishing his book Dove lived for a time in Edinburgh, and later in Glasgow. He wrote extensively on economic, religious and philosophic subjects, and interested himself in military science. In 1860 he was stricken with paralysis and went to Natal in a vain search for health. Returning to Scotland, he died in 1873 and was buried in the Grange Cemetery in Edinburgh. "In his case," says Morrison Davidson (*Four Precursors of Henry George*), "the adage 'jack of all trades and master of none' was strikingly falsified."

A.W. Madsen

*

Note: A.W. Madsen was Editor, in the earlier part of this century, of "Land and Liberty", an organ of the Henry George Foundation. (See Address List.)

This valuable Historic Statement, extracted from Patrick Edward Dove's work, is kept in print by the Henry George Foundation, and is re-published here by their kind permission. S-A.H.

Birthright ... and ... Scotland Today