

PREFACE.

If it be true that what's everybody's business is nobody's, this little book will not be read by anybody. It treats of questions which are of vital importance to every man and woman, and for whose settlement everyone, to the extent of his ability and possible influence, is responsible not only to the State but also to his fellow men and to God.

Wisdom and power have been styled the attributes of sovereignty, but a little wisdom will go a great way, provided there be sufficient power. The doctrine of the divine right of kings was not more dangerous to liberty than is the idea that majorities are necessarily or even generally right. It is becoming a serious question whether the American people are wise enough to make a just use of civil power. Governments do not derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, nor is the greatest good of the greatest number ever of itself alone a sufficient warrant for the exercise of civil power. The yet undeveloped science of government will involve a science of rights yet to be formulated. In the absence of those

sciences political reform must continue to be more or less experimental, but correct principles of government should be followed as far as discovered, and no effort should be spared to make them known and understood by the masses of the people who are entrusted with all the power and charged with all the responsibilities of absolute sovereignty.

“To understand political power aright and derive it from its original, we must consider what estate all men are naturally in, and that is a state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man.”—*Locke*.

“It [the law of nature] is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this.”—*Blackstone*.

“Tyranny is the exercise of power beyond right.”—*Locke*.