

OUTLINE
OF THE
RATIONAL SYSTEM OF SOCIETY,

Founded on Demonstrable Facts,

DEVELOPING THE

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE SCIENCE OF
HUMAN NATURE:

BEING THE ONLY EFFECTUAL REMEDY FOR THE EVILS EXPERIENCED
BY THE POPULATION OF THE WORLD;
THE GRADUAL ADOPTION OF WHICH WOULD TRANQUILLIZE THE
PRESENT AGITATED STATE OF SOCIETY,
AND RELIEVE IT FROM MORAL AND PHYSICAL EVILS, BY REMOVING THE
CAUSES WHICH PRODUCE THEM.

BY

ROBERT OWEN.

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HOME COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

WHATEVER may be said or written on the improvement of all classes of society, it is now evident to those who reflect, that that which is necessary to this end is A SOUND, GOOD, PRACTICAL EDUCATION, AND PERMANENT BENEFICIAL EMPLOYMENT to all who require them; in fact, that any other measures are mere palliatives, and can produce only temporary benefits, at an extravagant waste of time, capital, and labour.

It will also be obvious to those who have thoroughly investigated the subject, that a sound education and permanent beneficial employment cannot be given under the present competitive arrangements of society; and that the best mode of securing these benefits to the population will be by the establishment of SELF-SUPPORTING HOME COLONIES, on account of their complete efficiency for the purpose, and their great economy over the present system.

A Society has therefore been formed to promote the establishment of these Colonies; having for its object—

1stly. To submit the plans of the Colonies in all their details to the most scientific and experienced men in every department of life.

2ndly. To make these plans extensively known to the public, and to demonstrate their efficiency for the purposes designed.

3rdly. To demonstrate that these Colonies, in consequence of their very superior economical arrangements, will afford a secure and profitable investment for capital.

4thly. To arrange the preliminaries for Joint-Stock Companies to carry the same gradually into extensive execution.

5thly. To publish the most useful and authentic works explanatory of the principles on which the system of Home Colonization is based, in order to convey to the public correct information on this most important subject.

The expenses attendant on the above will be met by Subscriptions of £5 each and upwards; which shall, at the option of the subscriber, be placed to his or her credit in behalf of one or more shares, which the subscriber may choose to take in the first Joint-Stock Company established; and by Donations.

A Subscription or Donation to the above amount will constitute a member of the Society.

The Society have published a statement of their views and the measures they propose, in a Work entitled "A Developement of the Principles and Plans on which to establish Self-supporting Home Colonies; as a secure and profitable investment for capital, and an effectual means permanently to remove the causes of ignorance, poverty, and crime, and most materially to benefit all classes of society, by giving a right application to the now greatly misdirected powers of the human faculties, and of physical and moral science."

This Society is not confined to any particular class, sect, or party, but invites the co-operation of *all* who will unite in *practical measures* for the relief and amelioration of humanity. And the proposed Colonies will contain arrangements for the accommodation of every religion; the only religious requisition being, the *practice* of charity and kindness to all.

A Committee attend daily at the Office, to answer inquiries and give explanations respecting the measures proposed, &c. Communications by letter will also receive attention.

May, 1841.

A. C. CUDDON, *Secretary.*

HOME COLONIZATION OFFICE,
57, Pall-Mall, London.

OUTLINE
OF THE
RATIONAL SYSTEM OF SOCIETY,
FOUNDED ON DEMONSTRABLE FACTS,

Developing the First Principles of the Science of Human Nature :

Being the only effectual Remedy for the Evils experienced by the Population of the world ; the gradual adoption of which would tranquillize the present agitated state of Society, and relieve it from moral and physical Evils, by removing the Causes which produce them.

THE FIVE FUNDAMENTAL FACTS ON WHICH THE RATIONAL
SYSTEM OF SOCIETY IS FOUNDED.

1st. That man is a *compound being*, whose character is formed of his constitution or organization at birth, and of the effects of external circumstances upon it from birth to death ; such original organization and external influences continually acting and re-acting each upon the other.

2d. That man is compelled by his original constitution to receive his *feelings* and his *convictions* independently of his *will*.

3d. That his *feelings*, or his *convictions*, or both of them united, create the motive to action called the *will*, which stimulates him to act, and decides his actions.

4th. That the organization of no two human beings is ever precisely similar at birth ; nor can art subsequently form any two individuals, from infancy to maturity, to be precisely similar.

5th. That, nevertheless, the constitution of every infant, except in case of organic disease, is capable of being formed into a *very inferior*, or a *very superior*, being, according to the qualities of the external circumstances allowed to influence that constitution from birth.

**THE FUNDAMENTAL LAWS OF HUMAN NATURE, OR FIRST
PRINCIPLES OF THE SCIENCE OF MAN.**

I. Human nature is a compound of animal propensities, intellectual faculties, and moral qualities, or the germs of them.

II. These propensities, faculties, and qualities, are united in different proportions in each individual.

III. This diversity constitutes the original difference between one individual and another.

IV. These elements of his nature, and their proportions, are made by a power unknown to the individual, and consequently without his consent.

V. Each individual comes into existence within certain external circumstances, which act upon his peculiar original organization, more especially during the early period of his life, and by impressing their general character upon him, form his local and national character.

VI. The influence of these general external circumstances is modified, in a particular manner, by the peculiar organization of each individual; and thus the distinctive character of each is formed and maintained through life.

VII. No infant has the power of deciding at what period of time, or in what part of the world, he shall come into existence,—of what parents he shall be born,—in what religion he shall be trained,—what manners, customs, or habits, shall be given to him,—or by what other external circumstances he shall be surrounded, from birth to death.

VIII. Each individual is so organized that, when young, he may be made to receive either true ideas derived from a knowledge of facts, or false notions derived from the imagination, and in opposition to facts.)

IX. Each individual is so organized, that he must necessarily become irrational, when he is made from infancy to receive, as truths, false fundamental notions; and can only become truly rational when he shall be made to receive true fundamental principles, without any admixture of error.,

X. Each individual is so organized that, when young, he may be trained to acquire injurious habits only, or beneficial habits only, or a mixture of both.

XI. Each individual is so organized, that he *must believe* according to the strongest conviction that is made upon his mind; which conviction cannot be given to him by his will, nor be withheld by it.

XII. Each individual is so organized, that he *must like* that which is pleasant to him, or which, in other words, produces agreeable sensations in him; and *dislike* that which is unpleasant to him, or which, in other words, produces in him disagreeable sensations; and he cannot know, previous to experience, what particular sensations new objects will produce on any one of his senses.

XIII. Each individual is so organized, that his *feelings and his convictions* are formed *for him*, by the impressions which circumstances produce upon his individual organization.

XIV. Each individual is so organized, that his *will* is formed *for him* by his feelings, or his convictions, or both; and *thus his whole character—physical, mental, and moral—is formed independently of himself.*

XV. Each individual is so organized, that impressions which, at their commencement, and for a limited time, produce agreeable sensations, will, if continued without intermission beyond a certain period, become indifferent, disagreeable, and ultimately painful.

XVI. Each individual is so organized, that when, beyond a certain degree of rapidity, impressions succeed each other, they dissipate, weaken, and otherwise injure, his physical, mental, or moral, powers, and diminish his enjoyment.

XVII. Each individual is so organized, that his highest health, his greatest progressive improvement, and his permanent happiness, depend upon the due cultivation of all his physical, intellectual, and moral, faculties, or elements of his nature,—upon their being called into action at a proper period of life,—and being afterwards temperately exercised, according to his strength and capacity.

XVIII. Each individual is so organized, that he is made to receive what is commonly called a *bad character*, when he has been placed, from birth, amidst the most unfavourable circumstances.

XIX. (Each individual is so organized, that he is made to receive a *medium character*, when he has been created with a favourable proportion of the elements of his nature, and has been placed, from birth, amidst unfavourable circumstances:—)

Or, when he has been created with an unfavourable proportion of these elements, and when the external circumstances in which he is placed are of a character to impress him with favourable sensations only:—

Or, when he has been created with a favourable proportion of some of these elements, and an unfavourable proportion of others, and has been placed, through life, in varied external circumstances, producing some good and some evil sensations. This compound has hitherto been the general lot of mankind.

XX. Each individual is so organized, that he is made to receive a *superior character*, when his original constitution contains the best proportion of the elements of human nature, and when the circumstances which surround him from birth, and through life, are of a character to produce superior sensations only ; or, in other words, when the laws, institutions, and customs, under which he lives, are all in unison with the laws of his nature.

THE CONDITIONS REQUISITE FOR HUMAN HAPPINESS,
and which will ultimately be secured to all, under the *Rational
System of Society*.

I. The possession of a good organization, physical, mental, and moral.

II. The power of procuring, at pleasure, whatever is necessary to preserve the organization in the best state of health.

III. The best education, from infancy to maturity, of the physical, intellectual, and moral, power of all the population.

IV. The inclination and means of promoting, continually, the happiness of our fellow-beings.

V. (The inclination and means of increasing, continually, our stock of knowledge.)

VI. The power of enjoying the best society ; and more particularly of associating, at pleasure, with those for whom we feel the most regard and the greatest affection.

VII. The means of travelling at pleasure.

VIII. The absence of superstition, supernatural fears, and the fear of death.

IX. Full liberty of expressing our thoughts upon all subjects.

X. The utmost individual freedom of action, compatible with the permanent good of society.

XI. To have the character formed for us to express the truth only upon all occasions; and to have pure charity for the feelings, thoughts, and conduct of all mankind; and a sincere good-will for every individual of the human race.

XII. To reside in a society whose laws, institutions, and arrangements, well organized and well governed, are all in unison with the laws of human nature.

THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF THE RATIONAL RELIGION.

I. That all facts yet known to man, indicate that there is an external or an internal Cause of all existences, by the fact of their existence; that this all-pervading Cause of motion and change in the universe, is that Incomprehensible Power which the nations of the world have called God, Jehovah, Lord, &c., &c.; but that the facts are yet unknown to man which define what that Incomprehensible Power is.

II. That it is a law of Nature, obvious to our senses, that the internal and external character of all that have life upon the earth, is formed *for* them, and not *by* them; that, in accordance with this law, the internal and external character of man is formed *for* him, and not *by* him; and therefore he cannot have *merit* or *demerit*, or deserve *praise* or *blame*, or *reward* or *punishment*.

III. That the knowledge of this fact, with its all-important consequences, will necessarily create, in every one, a new, sublime, and pure, spirit of Charity for the convictions, feelings, and conduct of the human race, and dispose them to be kind to all that have life,—seeing that this varied life is formed by the same Incomprehensible Power that has created human nature, and given man his peculiar faculties.

IV. That it is man's highest interest to acquire an accurate knowledge of those circumstances which produce EVIL to the human race, and of those which produce GOOD; and to exert all his powers to remove the former from society, and to create around it the latter only.

V. That this invaluable practical knowledge can be acquired solely through an extensive search after *truth*, by an accurate, patient, and unprejudiced, inquiry into *facts*, as developed by Nature.

VI. That man can never attain to a state of superior and permanent happiness, until he shall be surrounded by those external circumstances which will train him, from birth, to feel pure charity and sincere affection towards the whole of his species,—to speak the truth only on all occasions,—and to regard with a merciful and kind disposition all that have life.

VII. That such superior knowledge and feelings can never be given to man under those institutions of society which have been founded on the mistaken supposition that man forms his *feelings* and *convictions* by his *will*, and therefore has merit or demerit, or deserves praise or blame, or reward or punishment, for them.

VIII. That under institutions formed in accordance with the Rational System of Society, this superior knowledge and these superior dispositions may be given to the whole of the human race, without chance of failure, except in case of organic disease.

IX. That in consequence of this superior knowledge, and these superior dispositions, the contemplation of Nature will create in every mind feelings of high adoration, too sublime and pure to be expressed in forms or words, for that Incomprehensible Power which acts in and through all nature,—everlastingly composing, decomposing, and recomposing, the material of the universe,—producing the endless variety of life, of mind, and of organized form.

X. That the *practice* of the Rational Religion will therefore consist in promoting, to the utmost of our power, the well-being and happiness of every man, woman, and child, without regard

to their class, sect, sex, party, country, or colour; and its *worship*, in those inexpressible feelings of wonder, admiration, and delight, which, when man is surrounded by superior circumstances only, will naturally arise from the contemplation of the Infinity of space, of the Eternity of duration, of the Order of the universe, and of that Incomprehensible Power by which the atom is moved, and the aggregate of nature is governed.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE SCIENCE OF SOCIETY, OR OF THE
SOCIAL STATE OF MAN.

I. A knowledge of the laws of *human nature*, derived from demonstrable facts, which prove man to be a social being.

II. A practical knowledge of the best mode of *producing*, in abundance, the most beneficial necessities and comforts for the support and enjoyment of human life.

III. A practical knowledge of the best mode of *distributing* these productions most advantageously for all.

IV. A knowledge of the principles and practice by which to form the new combination of circumstances for *training* the infant to become, at maturity, the most rational being.

V. A knowledge of the principles and practice by which to *govern* man under these new arrangements in the best manner, as a member of the great family of mankind.

VI. A knowledge of the principles and practice for uniting in one general system, in their due proportions, these separate parts of the SCIENCE OF SOCIETY, to effect and secure, in the best manner for all, the greatest amount of permanent benefits and enjoyments, with the fewest disadvantages.

A GENERAL CONSTITUTION OF GOVERNMENT, AND UNIVERSAL CODE OF LAWS,

*Derived from the Constitution and Laws of Human Nature, and
which will ultimately be secured to all who shall have
been born and trained within the arrangements
of the Rational System of Society.*

*(A rational Government will attend solely to the Happiness
of the governed.)*

It will ascertain what Human Nature is ;—what are the laws of its organization and of its existence, from birth to death ;—what is necessary for the happiness of a being so formed and matured ;—and what are the best means by which to attain those requisites, and to secure them permanently for all the governed.

It will devise and execute the arrangements by which the condition essential to human happiness shall be fully and permanently obtained for all the governed ; and its laws will be few, easily understood by all the governed, and perfectly in unison with the laws of human nature.

LIBERTY OF MIND OR CONSCIENCE.

I. Every one shall have equal and full liberty to express the dictates of his conscience on religious, and all other, subjects.

II. No one shall have any other power than fair argument to control the opinions or belief of another.

III. No praise or blame, no merit or demerit, no reward or punishment, shall be awarded for any opinions or belief.

IV. But all, of every religion, shall have equal right to express their opinions respecting the Incomprehensible Power which moves the atom and controls the universe, and to worship that Power under any form, or in any manner agreeable to their consciences,—not interfering with the equal rights of others.

PROVIDING FOR AND EDUCATING THE POPULATION.

I. Every one shall be equally provided, through life, with the best of every thing for human nature, by public arrangements ;

which arrangements shall give the best known direction to the industry and talents of every individual.

II. All shall be educated, from infancy to maturity, in the best manner known at the time.

III. All shall pass through the same general routine of education, domestic teaching, and employment.

IV. All children, from their birth, shall be under the especial care of the community in which they are born; but their parents shall have free access to them at all times.

V. All children shall be trained and educated together, as children of the same family; and shall be early taught a knowledge of the laws of their nature.

VI. Every individual shall be encouraged to express his feelings and convictions only; or, in other words, to speak the truth, solely upon all occasions.

VII. Both sexes shall have equal education, rights, privileges, and personal liberty; their marriages will arise from the general sympathies of their nature, uninfluenced by artificial distinctions.)

GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE POPULATION.

VIII. Under the Rational System of Society,—after the children shall have been trained to acquire new habits and new feelings, derived from the laws of human nature, (there shall be no *useless* private property.)

IX. As soon as the members of these communities shall have been educated from infancy in a knowledge of the laws of their nature, trained to act in obedience to them, and surrounded by circumstances all in unison with them (there shall be no individual punishment or reward.)

X. Society shall not be composed, as at present, of single families; but of communities or associations of men, women, and children, in the usual proportions, from three hundred to two thousand, as local circumstances may determine.

XI. As these new communities increase in number, unions of them shall be formed for local and general purposes, in tens, hundreds, thousands, &c., according to the less or more extended

objects and interests which shall require their consideration and direction.

XII. Each of these communities shall possess around it land sufficient for the support, for ever, of all its members, even when it shall contain the maximum in number.

XIII. These communities shall be so arranged as to give to all the members of each of them, as nearly as possible, the same advantages ; and to afford the most easy communication with each other.

GOVERNMENT OF THE POPULATION AND DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL.

XIV. Each community shall be governed in its *home* department by a general council, composed of all its members between the ages of thirty and forty ; and each department shall be under the immediate direction of a committee, formed of members of the general council, chosen by the latter, in the order to be determined upon ; and in its *external* or *foreign* department, by all its members from forty to sixty years of age.

XV. After all the members of the community shall have been rendered capable of taking their full share of the duties in the general council of government, there shall be no selection or election of any individuals to office.

XVI. All the members at thirty years of age, who shall have been trained from infancy in the communities, shall be officially called upon to undertake their full share of the duties of management in the home department ; and at forty they shall be excused from officially performing them : at forty they will be officially called upon to undertake the duties of the external or foreign department ; and at sixty they will be excused from officially attending to them.

XVII. The duties of the general council of the *home* department shall be, to govern all the circumstances within the boundaries of its community,—to organize the various departments of production, distribution, and formation of character,—to remove all those circumstances which are least favourable to happiness,—and to replace them with the best that can be

devised among themselves, or of which they can obtain a knowledge from other communities. The duties of the general council of the *external* or *foreign* department will be, to receive visitors or delegates from other associations or communities,—to communicate with other similar associations,—to visit them and arrange with them the best means of forming roads, and conveying surplus produce to each other,—to travel, to give and receive information of inventions, discoveries, and improvements, and of every other kind that can be useful;—and also to regulate and assist in the establishment of new associations, composed of the surplus population of the community from among themselves, and to send delegates to the circle of communities to which their community shall be attached.

XVIII. The general councils, home and foreign, shall have full power of government *in all things under their direction*, as long as they shall act in unison with the laws of human nature, which shall be their sole guidance upon all occasions.

XIX. All individuals trained, educated, and placed, in conformity to the laws of their nature, must of necessity, at all times, think and act rationally, except they shall become physically, intellectually, or morally, diseased; in which case the council shall remove them into the hospital for bodily, mental, or moral, invalids, where they shall remain until they shall be recovered by the mildest treatment that can effect their cure.

XX. The council, whenever it shall be necessary, shall call to its aid the practical abilities and advice of any of the members not in the council.

ADJUSTMENT OF DIFFERENCES. -

XXI. If the general councils should ever attempt to contravene the laws of human nature,—which is scarcely possible,—the elders of the community who have passed the councils shall call a general meeting of all the members of the community between sixteen and thirty years of age, who have been trained from infancy within it. This meeting shall calmly and patiently investigate the conduct of the general councils; and if a majority shall determine that they have acted, or attempted to act, in opposition to these laws, the general government shall de-

volve upon the members of the community who have passed the councils and are above sixty years of age, united with those who have not entered the council and are between thirty and sixteen years of age. It is scarcely possible to conceive that this clause will ever be required; and, if required, it can only be of temporary application.

XXII. All other differences of every description,—if indeed it be possible for any to exist in these communities,—shall be immediately determined and amicably adjusted between the parties, by the decision of a majority of the three senior members of the council: except when the difference shall exist between members of the councils,—when it shall be, in like manner, decided by the three members who have last passed the councils.

CONCLUSIONS

*Deduced from the foregoing Facts and Principles, considered
in reference to the present excited and unsatisfactory
state of the civilized World.*

I. That the period for introducing the Rational System, for remodelling the character of man, and for governing the population of the earth in unity, peace, progressive improvement, and happiness, is near at hand; and that no human power can resist the change.

II. That the governments of the world will soon be compelled, in their own defence, to adopt this superior system, to prevent their being involved in anarchy, war, and ruin.

III. That this change will root up and utterly destroy the old vicious and miserable system of ignorance, poverty, individual competition, and contest, and of national wars throughout the world; and will introduce, in place thereof, the Rational System of Society, in which competition, strife, and wars, will cease for ever, and all will be trained, from infancy, solely to promote each other's happiness.

IV. That this system can be best commenced by convincing governments of the truth of the principles on which it is founded. There must be also a sufficient number of individuals imbued

with its spirit of genuine charity, affection, and philanthropy, and instructed in the best mode of applying it to practice: they must likewise possess patience and perseverance to overcome all the obstacles which prejudice will oppose to their progress; and, above all, they must be united, have full confidence in each other, and be directed by one heart and one mind.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Under the past and present irrational system of the world,—devised in opposition to Nature,—19 out of 20, or perhaps more truly, 99 out of 100, of the external circumstances formed by man around society, are of an inferior and vicious character; but under the Rational System of Society now proposed to be formed in accordance with Nature, *all* the circumstances under human control will be of a superior and virtuous character.)

Under the existing religious, political, commercial, and domestic, arrangements of Great Britain, 250 individuals cannot be supported in comfort on a square mile of land: while under the proposed system, with much less labour and capital than are now employed, 500 may be immediately supported in abundance; and in a few years after the new arrangements shall have been matured, 1000, 1500, and probably, without any additional new discoveries, 2000, individuals, may be so supported upon every square mile of an average quality of soil.

Such is the difference between a Rational System, formed in accordance with Nature, and a System founded in opposition to it.

ROBERT OWEN.

A DEVELOPEMENT OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PLANS ON WHICH TO ESTABLISH SELF-SUPPORTING HOME COLONIES ; as a secure and profitable Investment for Capital, and an effectual Means permanently to remove the Causes of Ignorance, Poverty, and Crime, and most materially to benefit all classes of Society, by giving a right application to the now greatly misdirected powers of the human Faculties, and of physical and moral Science. By ROBERT OWEN. 4to. with Plates, 5s.

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