

The Century Social Science Series

# PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY

BY

EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS, PH.D., LL.D.

Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin.

Author of "Social Control," "Social Psychology," "Foundations of Sociology," "The Changing Chinese," "Changing America," "South of Panama," "Russia in Upheaval," etc.

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PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY

THE  
PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY

TO  
ROSCOE POUND  
DEAN OF THE HARVARD LAW SCHOOL  
PRINCE OF LAW TEACHERS  
AND  
BUILDER OF SOCIOLOGICAL JURISPRUDENCE  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

## PREFACE

After a cataclysm which has destroyed in battle seven and a half million men and set civilization back at least a life time the world ought to be interested in the scientific study of human relations. Sociology was young what time the World War was incubating, but—it is a satisfaction to recall—her unregarded voice was ever lifted in protest against the dance toward the abyss. Nowhere in Europe was she so contemned as in Germany, where her few champions in the Universities were utterly brow-beaten by the arrogant professors of *Staatswissenschaften*.

Sociologists follow the methods of Science but they are by no means content to seek Knowledge for her own sake. They are not ashamed to avow an over-mastering purpose and that is—to *better human relations*. They confess that they are studying how to lessen the confusion, strife and mutual destruction among men and to promote harmony and team work. A quaint idea—but after watching civilized humanity tear at its vitals for four and a quarter years one wonders if there may not be something in it!

The sociologists have been taken in by none of the evil doctrines which have brought the world to its present desperate plight. On the other hand, they listen with patience to those who really have at heart the amelioration of man's lot, but they accept no panacea. They do not pin their hopes of social progress to putting "God" in the Constitution, Sabbath protection, prohibition, collective bargaining, single tax on land values, syndicalism, public ownership, or guild socialism. Knowing that humanity must advance along many roads they keep their program broad.

This book I am offering has been a slow growth. Seventeen years have elapsed since I laid out the chapter scheme and began collecting material for it. It contains a *system* of sociology, i.e., the parts are fitted to one another and taken together they are intended to cover the field; but I do not put it forward as *the* system. While it is that organization of knowledge about society which helps me the most, no doubt other equally valid systems are



possible. True systems will, of course, not contradict one another, but they may differ in perspective. Sociologists equally sound may differ as to which truths deserve the foreground and which should be relegated to the background. A system is a way of making some aspect of reality *intelligible*, and we differ as to how to present social reality so as to make it intelligible for the most people. In time sociology will discover, as the older sciences have done, the best perspective for exhibiting its results. Then the systems of sociologists will come into closer agreement.

This book aims to light up the major problems of society at the stage of development which has been reached in about a third of the human race. It is, of course, a pleasure to understand human relations just as it is a pleasure to understand the motions of the planets even though we cannot influence them. But this book is furthermore intended to help people arrive at wise decisions as to social policies. The will of enlightened man is so bent on directing, or, at least, influencing, the course of society, moreover the possibilities of social amelioration are so tempting, that the chief object in explaining society is to help people determine the best thing to do.

While the emotions supply much of the driving force behind social betterment, and while moral indignation and moral enthusiasm are among the more powerful beneficent emotions, I have given as little characterization as possible to the conduct or conditions I describe. I have sought to explain rather than to praise or blame; so that in my description of the most sinister and detestable social phenomena I preserve an objectivity which I hope the reader will not mistake for indifference.

I wish to acknowledge my debt to Miss Sidney Horsley (now Mrs. Clin Ingraham) for valuable aid in gathering materials for this volume.

EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS.

Madison, Wisconsin, April, 1920.

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PART I  
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