

# READINGS IN SOCIOLOGY

TO ACCOMPANY  
AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

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## INTRODUCTION

American colleges have long felt the need for an increase in the available supply of source material for sociological courses and an improvement in its quality. The literature in the field has been increasing with startling, if not embarrassing, rapidity; but it is scattered in magazines, of which there are legion, in pamphlets both published and unpublished, and in literally thousands of books in scores of languages. The average teacher cannot spare the time even to read it all, much less to appraise and select that part which is most pertinent. The editor does not lay claim to having secured a perfect or completely well-founded choice of materials, but he does feel that unusual care has been exercised by the authors who are experts in their respective fields and that any new compilation of readings should not be an unwelcome addition to our stock of tools.

The fact is that at present collateral readings are almost as necessary a part of any well-conducted sociological course as is the teacher. It is quite hopeless to expect the student to range through the entire library for additional material concerning the particular topic under assignment; and even if he should, his findings would in many cases be utterly inadequate. We have tried to guard against the danger of making the reader content merely with the readings as given here, to the neglect of original sources. On the contrary, the selections herein given should stimulate the earnest student to seek first-hand acquaintance with the books and authors referred to.

This collection is designed primarily to accompany Volume One in the "Social Relations Series," *An Introduction to Sociology — A Behavioristic Study of American Society*, which contains detailed questions on the readings as given here. The outline used is that of the former volume, and all the material is classified and integrated under the following heads:

- Book I. The Evolution of the Great Society
- Book II. The Forces Shaping Society
  - Part I. Society and Its Physical Environment
  - Part II. Society and Its Biologic Equipment
  - Part III. The Psychological Foundation of Society
  - Part IV. Society and Its Cultural Heritage
- Book III. The Organization of Society
- Book IV. Sociology Applied to Social Problems

Although credit is given wherever it is due at the beginning of each extract, the authors desire here to express their particular appreciation to the

various publishers and authors who have kindly given their permission to reprint these various selections. It has not seemed necessary always to use complete sections or to insert the authors' headings, and in every case their footnote references have been omitted.

No pretence is made of representing all points or view; this would be utterly impossible in the available space. The selections have been chosen with the actual needs and limitations of the classroom in mind and considerable case material is included. Because a certain point of view is presented, it does not in the least mean that the authors of this volume either singly or collectively indorse that position. We believe that stimulating and forceful treatment of a subject adds to its interest and that even where there may be considerable, perhaps violent, opposition to an article or author on the part of many contemporary students of the subject, this should not necessarily act as a barrier to publication. Controversy sometimes helps to develop thought. It will be recalled that Malthus was the product of heated altercations between the boy and his father about a subject of which the son knew little or nothing.

If this volume will serve in any way to awaken in the minds and hearts of students, not necessarily the ideas contained herein but the will to think further and more painstakingly into the social problems to which they lead, it will have achieved its purpose. Social change cannot be purposive until man knows more of social causation. No matter what prejudices or vested interests stand in the way, sociology exists first, last, and always to help find truth, but ever with the frank purpose that we may think and act more intelligently together.

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BOOK I

THE EVOLUTION OF THE

CHINESE SOCIETY

HARRY J. BARNES



## CHAPTER I

### THE HISTORICAL POINT OF VIEW IN SOCIOLOGY

#### 1. SOME OF THE FRUITS OF HISTORICAL STUDY<sup>1</sup>

By JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON

Fifteen years ago Henry Adams, who was both thoughtful and wealthy, distributed without price an astonishing little volume called *A Letter to American Teachers of History*. In a very learned and ingenious way Mr. Adams gave expression to the discouragement which not uncommonly overtakes a sensitive and critical soul after three score and ten years of experience with the ways of man. The chief indictment that he brings against historical teachers is that they do not reckon with Lord Kelvin's discoveries in regard to the universal tendency in Nature to the dissipation of mechanical energy. This applies to man who, like all other things, is bound inexorably to run down. Mr. Adams could see plenty of indications of this universal trend towards degradation, whether he compared the architectural achievements of the Greeks or of the thirteenth-century builders, with those of to-day, or considered what he thought to be a pitiful flattening out of our American democracy since his grandfather was president of the United States.

Man's preposterous and fatal error, Mr. Adams claims, is the old assumption that the human intellect is "an ultimate, independent, self-producing, self-sustaining, incorruptible solvent of all earlier and lower energies, and incapable of degradation or dissolution. . . . [This] assertion has led to physical violence and intellectual extravagance without limit, so that history shows man as alternately insane with his own pride of intellect and shuddering with horror at its bloody consequences" (p. 113). He adds that a teacher who used American history to illustrate the workings of the law of energy-degradation would likely lose his position. This observation of Mr. Adams's is surely true beyond peradventure.

Last August Professor Clarence Alvord published in the *American Mercury* his "Musings of an Inebriated Historian." "I am," he says, "reaching the sear and withered age of my life (having reached the fifty-seventh milestone as a matter of record) most of which has been passed in the repressive and artificial atmosphere of an American university, where I practiced the art of a professor of history. As becomes a man of my pro-

<sup>1</sup> From *Proceedings of the Association of History Teachers of the Middle States and Maryland*, No. 23, 1925, pp. 74-78.