READINGS IN SOCIOLOGY

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BY

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To

WILLIAM F. OGBURN

THE gods have not shown men all things from the beginning, but, seeking, in time they find out what is better. — *Xenophanes.*

For nothing is so conducive to greatness of mind as the ability to examine systematically and honestly everything that meets us in life, and to regard these things always in such a way as to form a conception of the kind of universe they belong to, and of the use which the thing in question subserves in it; what value it has for the whole universe and what for man, citizen as he is of the highest state, of which all other states are but as households. — *Marcus Aurelius.*

I have taken my best pains not to laugh at the actions of mankind, not to groan over them, not to be angry with them, but to understand them. — *Benedict Spinoza.*

PREFACE

WHAT should a book of readings in sociology include? It might stress the important interpretations of the field of sociology, but however valuable this might be, it would constitute not so much an interpretation as a history of interpretations. The present work has a different ambition, and turns attention directly to social life, its phases, problems, promises, and failures. Although only omniscience could with certainty identify those phases of social life which are really most significant, we can say with some confidence that the character and the problems of social life are illuminated by the interpretations and conclusions of the many scholars whose contributions are assembled in this volume.

A century and a half ago no one foresaw the trend of social life during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for no one had identified the forces which were destined to make the most far-reaching and significant changes. No eighteenth century scholar foresaw, or could foresee, for example, the results of the doctrine of natural rights and the assertion of the essential equality of men. That doctrine was destined to extend beyond the borders of lands in which it was first ardently advocated; it is still spreading, and perhaps eventually it will influence all peoples. It passed beyond the realm of political affairs and penetrated the barriers of class. It affected the institution of slavery, and invaded the factory, the field, and the home. "All men," at least in some lands, came to include also "all women" and finally "all children." The doctrine has influenced industry and the family; it has brought universal adult suffrage and universal education; it has released women from male domination, and concurrently has increased the divorce rate; and the full effect of its influence has not yet been felt. Even a device or a movement which, in its inception, is apart from social life may prove of great moment to the latter, as witness the Industrial Revolution, another movement of the eighteenth century.

The Industrial Revolution was essentially merely the invention and improvement of machinery and the substitution of more efficient tools and appliances for cruder and less efficient ones. But this improvement was only the beginning of a process which, with the passing of the years,

grew in intensity and compass. This movement, too, invaded many lands, influencing first the European civilizations, then those cultures of different tinge in the Far and Near East, and now no land is free of its influences. It has affected every phase of social life: the character of work and play, of art and artifice, of education and religion. The home has been invaded, and every nook and corner of social life has been influenced, often considerably, by the Industrial Revolution:

> The invention by a man named Wilkinson of a cylinder that made Watt's new steam engine really work . . . changed the course of history and the destiny of man. The Age of Machinery stood beckoning on the threshold, and the human race walked into a revolution the termination of which we cannot foresee and the consequences of which we do not know how to measure. For, beginning with Watt's steam engine, we have pressed excitedly from one invention to another, harnessing new forces to every new mechanical appliance.[1]

If the foregoing interpretations are correct, then a century ago sociologists should have turned attention primarily to the great forces associated with the concept of natural rights and to those bound up with the Industrial Revolution. That they did not do so can be explained only by the fact that no one understood their full implications or foresaw their far-reaching and radical effects. They were the parents of democracy, socialism, internationalism, the movements for the extension of suffrage and of education, and other progeny too numerous to mention but scarcely less important. No one knew what kind of offspring they were bringing into the Western world. Indeed, while this preface was being composed a letter to one of the editors from a well known writer confesses: " In 1898 I wrote an account of the first automobile that came to X and prophesied that ' the automobile would never amount to much.' " How, in 1898, could one know that the automobile would ever amount to much, or that it would influence social life in many significant respects?

We are confronted with a dilemma: to understand social life we must study social phenomena; but to comprehend events or forces of social significance, we must turn attention also to things and tendencies which play, or seem destined to play, an important *rôle* in shaping social life. These are multitudinous and multifarious, for civilization develops, or at least changes, with amazing rapidity, and its aspects are too numerous, its tendencies too subtle, to be grasped by any one mind. And yet to admit that an intelligent insight into the drift of social currents is impossible is to confess incompetence to deal with,

[1] Raymond D. Fosdick, *The Old Savage in the New Civilization,* pp. 63–64. New York, Doubleday Doran, 1928.

or even to comprehend, the world which men have created and which now shapes their careers. Some of these tendencies, we are confident, can be recognized, and many are described in this book. Neither social life nor civilization consists of discrete and isolated portions which operate independently of one another. Rather they are all loosely or intimately bound together, so that change in any one phase influences all others. Some changes are but ripples which travel to no far horizon and stir no deep waters, while others are far-reaching and deep-moving; an understanding of the latter constitutes the object of our endeavor. Yet change goes on with accelerating rapidity. The things of yesteryear are stranger now than were, a millennium ago, those of one century to the generations of the ensuing one. Insight into processes likewise grows, and the interpretations of an earlier day soon become inadequate and antiquated.

We have, therefore, for the most part confined our selections in this book to recent descriptions and interpretations, since an historical survey is precluded by limitations of space, and would, in any case, make too great demands upon even the most willing student. We have endeavored to make the book a volume which can be used either independently or in connection with another text in sociology. A concurrent aim has been to make it a companion volume to the text written by one of the editors, under weighty obligations to the other (Wallis, *Introduction to Sociology*, Knopf, 1928), and the readings illustrate and supplement the topics treated in that book.

The outlines of the two volumes are not identical, however, and the present volume does not treat every topic discussed in the other text. The present selection of material includes many illustrative and descriptive accounts which should be useful in the classroom in connection with any text. With very few exceptions the materials have not appeared in other collections of readings. In fact, most of the material is not available in book form, but is taken from periodicals. The lists of selected readings at the end of the respective chapters are designed to raise interesting additional points which bear upon the chapter topics; they should add interest to class discussions. These readings, too, are largely from periodicals and include few citations that appear in the *Introduction to Sociology*. The selections have been made after consulting more than a hundred journals and periodicals, foreign and domestic, which deal with important phases of social life, and many recent books. No attempt has been made by the editors to introduce complete consistency in style and punctuation; in general, the contributions are reprinted with some cutting, but otherwise unchanged. Previously unpublished contributions have been made to this volume by Dean Justin Miller, of the University of Southern California School of Law; Mr. E. S. Gosney, President of the Human Better-

ment Foundation, Pasadena, California; and Professor Lehman Wendell, of the College of Dentistry, University of Minnesota. We are deeply indebted to them, to those who have permitted us to reprint their respective papers, and to the respective journals and publishing houses which have graciously granted the necessary permission. We believe we have done these contributors no disservice in the company they here keep; but ours will remain a deep obligation, and it will not be presumptuous to say that the reader will share it.

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