

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

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An introduction to sociology by Arthur M. Lewis

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ARTHUR M. LEWIS

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TO SOCIOLOGY**

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BY
ARTHUR M. LEWIS

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PREFACE

This book is precisely what its title calls it—"An Introduction to Sociology." It makes no claim to add anything new to sociological theory. It is intended for a class of readers who have not yet been reached by the sociologists of the university chairs. Technical terms are studiously avoided, so that it may be comprehended by men and women who have never passed through the universities or had any special training in this or any other science. While it contains some criticism and much appreciation, its chief function is explanation. It does not for a moment presume to tell the readers all they should know about the science of society. The purpose is to give a condensed history of its origin and development and a general idea of its present position. It is the result of a pains-taking reading of the chief masters of the science, and the author hopes that its effect will be to create or to stimulate an appetite for reading the works which it expounds and from which it freely quotes.

The contents of the book were first presented in the form of twelve lectures from the stage of the Garrick Theater, Chicago, in the autumn of 1911, to an audience composed chiefly of working men. Eleven hundred members of the audience were sufficiently interested in its publication to pay for their copies at the close of the course and before a line of the book itself was written. It will be observed that the lecture form is not followed in the book; there is no attempt at a verbatim reproduction of the lectures themselves. The amplifications of

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the platform are neither necessary nor desirable in a book.

The reader who has no previous acquaintance with the literature of sociology will probably be considerably surprised at the immense strides made in the scientific analysis of social phenomena during the last half century. He will also be gratified to learn, that while this country is backward in almost every other science, and in scientific research generally, especially as compared with Germany, in sociology, thanks to the labors of Lester F. Ward, America holds a foremost place.

Our social problems grow ever more acute and attract, in scientific research generally, especially as compared with the rest of the world. If these problems are ever to be solved, the solution must be found in the scientific study of their causes and the scientific application of the knowledge derived from that study. For this reason, sociology makes a direct appeal to all who are interested in making the sad world better for our children than it has ever been for us. It is in the hope that this modest volume will make some small contribution in this direction, that the author sends it forth.

ARTHUR M. LEWIS.

Chicago, Sept. 28, 1912.

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An Introduction to Sociology

CHAPTER I

THE THEOLOGICAL DIFFICULTY

The first half of the nineteenth century enriched our modern languages with two great words—Biology and Sociology. The honors in both cases fall to France which still held, as it had held throughout the seventeenth century, the foremost place in philosophy and science. John Fiske attributes the origin of the word "Biology" to De Blainville, but Professor Huxley, with his usual thoroughness, has shown that it was first used in a book published in 1801 by Jean Lamarck, the real father of the modern evolution theory. As to the origin of the word "Sociology," there is no disagreement. The undisputed honor falls to August Comte who first used it in a book written in 1838. Biology was the great science of the nineteenth century, with Lamarck as its Copernicus and Darwin as its Newton. In this century, the foremost place will fall to the "science of society" which is, as Ward well says: "the last and highest landing on the great staircase of education."

The chief root out of which sociology has grown is the ever-increasing conviction of the universality of causation. Science has no existence apart from the idea of law. Wherever we have penetrated the secrets

of the universe thus far we have found "cause and effect" regnant. As Starcke well maintains: "all science is founded on faith in the universality of causation."

Whatever difficulties may have existed as to the application of this concept to the older sciences, they exist no longer. Astronomy, Physics and Chemistry have been given over completely to what the Duke of Argyle called "The Reign of Law." The sciences dealing with living things—the sub-sciences of biology—are rapidly moving in the same direction, and the steadily increasing perception that the same fate awaits the phenomena of social activity has brought society within scientific reach.

This wholly desirable attitude has not been achieved without overcoming obstacles similar to those which long blocked the progress of the earlier sciences. We shall better understand the process if we consider these difficulties at some length.

The barriers which opposed themselves to the founding and developing of sociology were chiefly three. The first was purely theological. It may be stated as "belief in Divine Providence." There was a time when Divine Providence directed the stars and determined the weather, but astronomy has banished it from the one and meteorology is driving it from the other. It has, in fact, been expelled from field after field of human thought and is making its final and hopeless stand in the field of social phenomena. If society were ruled by "divine will" there could be no direct science of society. If the divine will were limited by law, which theologians would hardly concede, there might be a science

of the divine will, and this might serve indirectly as a sort of social science in the second remove.

This would mean, however, the abolition of mysteries which are sacred to the religious mind, and which will only disappear with the disappearance of religion. The poet Cowper observed that "God moves in a mysterious way" and the greater and earlier poet who wrote the Book of Job presented God as an inscrutable mystery: "Canst thou by searching find out God?" In the scientific world belief in divine providence has lost its foot-hold. It is worn only, when worn at all, as a Sunday coat to insure respectability. It is expressed merely as a pious opinion to keep the theological fraternity from snapping at one's heels.

In the ranks of the working class Divine Providence long held sway. In the minds of many it still rules, thanks to their utter lack of scientific education. What with long hours of labor and meager access to real books it seemed as if the laborers could never be emancipated from their superstitions.

Fortunately for them a new educating force has arisen which serves them largely in the place of a scientific training. It is in fact a scientific training in itself. This new emancipating force has been brilliantly expounded by two writers—Paul Lafargue and Professor Veblen. The latter has given it a happy name. He calls it: "The cultural incidence of the machine process."

The working mechanic has indeed outstripped his bourgeois brother in the shedding of outworn beliefs. The scientific education of the bourgeois is of the slenderest, while the machine process has wrought long and well on the mind of the proletariat.