

look to girls' clubs and classes as possibly the best device yet discovered for bringing them to a consciousness of their economic weakness, and developing in them a desire for better industrial training. It is interesting and at the same time distressing to notice that they find little reason for confidence in the trade-union among women as an effective means of bettering conditions. However, in this they differ altogether from the conclusions of M. Gonnard, who, in a recent discussion of the "La femme dans l'industrie," finds the main reliance to be placed upon the trade combination among women.

L'ouvrière doit faire l'apprentissage de l'association. C'est par là surtout qu'elle parviendra, comme son frère de labeur, à l'amélioration de son sort. L'action syndicale, quand elle est pacifique et sérieuse, est le moyen le plus digne et le plus efficace à la fois, pour le salarié, de faire admettre par le salariant ses droits et ses prétentions. Actuellement, les syndicats féminins sont rares et faibles. . . . Et cependant, l'avenir est là. L'ouvrière finira par ouvrir les yeux sur les avantages de l'association de résistance. Elle se syndiquera, et syndiquée, étayée sur la force commune, elle n'acceptera plus pour elle un salaire de famine, ni n'obligera par là les autres à l'accepter.¹

Upon different forms of public control then, upon such social devices as girls' clubs, to a slight degree upon organization among women, the authors rely for some amelioration of the lot of the working women of Birmingham of whom might be said, to quote again from the words of M. Gonnard who is writing of the working women of France: "In certain respects the life of the modern working woman is at times well-nigh a hell itself; but over the door of this hell she still refuses to inscribe the words 'abandon hope all ye who enter here'."

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Folkways: a Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Mores and Morals. By WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER, professor of political and social science in Yale University. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1907. Pp. vi+692.

"Mores" seems likely from now on to symbolize Sumner, as "imitation" suggests Tarde and Baldwin, or as "consciousness of kind" epitomizes Giddings. For Professor Sumner's philosophy centers in the idea of the mores which he first expounds and after-

¹ R. Gonnard, Professor à la Faculté de Droit de l'Université de Lyon, *La Femme dans l'Industrie*, p. 198.

ward uses to interpret the life of social groups. "Folkways" contains a general theory of society which is illustrated by copious use of materials from anthropology, ethnology, history, and everyday life. It is worth noting that among nearly seven hundred authors cited in the book, there is hardly one known as a philosophical or a methodological sociologist. With thinkers of this type, Professor Sumner has little in common. In this field "the most elaborate discussion only consists in revolving on one's own axis" (p. 98). Philosophers like to play with words, and as for "methodology" it is "eternal" (p. 193). Naturally Professor Sumner has given little heed to the work of men like De Greef, Tarde, Baldwin, Novicow, Ross, Sighele, and Le Bon,¹ so that when in the preparation of his systematic sociology he wanted to refer to the theory of the mores, he could point to nothing in print. Hence, he turned aside to formulate this theory. It must be counted a great gain to sociology that Professor Sumner did not try to find, as he might have done in the authors named, many if not all of the leading ideas in his doctrine of the mores. In his own way he has set forth more vividly and effectively than any or all of them the part which habit and custom play in the lives of men and groups.

In brief outline the doctrine of the "mores" is as follows:

Men in carrying on the business of life unconsciously hit upon ways of solving their daily problems; these "folkways" selected by pleasure and pain repeat themselves in personal habit and solidify into a structure which is societal. After a time with many of these "folkways" a judgment of value to the group is connected; they gain coercive force, and become *mores*. The mores are unconscious products. Reflection is their worst enemy. "There is logic in the folkways, but never rationality" (p. 473). They are formed out of the needs of the group, and are changed, not by conscious purpose, but in adaptation to new conditions. "Intentional investigation, original reflection, projects of voluntary associations, authoritative prohibitions are not in the mores" (p. 57). But the standards of right and wrong are in the mores. Adaptation to the social situation is the test of the mores. "Whatever is defined and provided for in the mores as a way of solving the problems of life interests is never wrong." "Immoral' never means anything but contrary to the mores of the time and place" (p. 418). Legislators and

¹ The only citation from Le Bon is a review article and not his *L'Evolution des peuples*, Paris, 1895, which has so direct a bearing on the "mores."

reformers succeed in proportion as their proposals run with the mores. Laws after all always ordain and regulate what the mores have long before made facts. Products of the mores are often mistaken for causes which have changed them. Thus humanitarian sympathy has not abolished slavery, but changed conditions having made slavery impossible have widened sympathy. Democracy and free institutions are a result of cheap land and a demand for men. With dense overcrowding, aristocracy may be expected to reassert itself. Education is chiefly a transfer of the mores to the young. Ritual offers an effective discipline for preserving the mores. Catchwords and question-begging epithets and phrases deepen and appeal to the mores. The group uses the mores for societal selection and the enforcing of types by suggestion, cozening, and coercion. Taboos imbedded in the mores define social standards. Pathos "in the original Greek sense"—envelops the ideas of the mores with a glamor of sentiment and protects them from criticism and even discussion. Readjustments in the mores demand the solution of new problems and insight into the changes which are going on. "The masses are not an oracle, and if any answers can be obtained on problems of life, such answers will come rather from the classes. . . . It is the classes who produce variation. It is the masses who carry forward the traditional mores. . . . Thinking and understanding are too hard work" (p. 49). The mores fixed in habit are persistent under surface changes. No social group is fundamentally transformed by contagion or coercion from without. The mores contain many false inferences and superstitions and hence the supposed value of these to the group is a delusion. Again, the mores may suffer disintegration. "A revolution is a time when there are no mores. The old are broken up, the new not formed. The social ritual is interrupted. The old taboos are suspended" (p. 86). But the mores are not wholly beyond the influence of reason for "a really great and intelligent group purpose . . . can infuse into the mores a vigor and a consistent character which will reach every individual with educative effect."

No mere epitome can do justice to the clearness, vigor, and frequently convincing force with which Professor Sumner through six hundred generous pages, drives home his theory of the origin, changes, and determining influence of the mores. So vivid and dominant does this idea of a blind, remorseless power become that the futility and folly of attempting to modify or direct it are borne

in upon the reader with chilling effect. Certainly the first impression is that of an almost fatalistic determinism. Philosophy, religion, and ethics are declared to be products of the folkways and "not creative or determining forces" (p. 40). All these things are in the mores not outside of or acting upon them in any independent way. The idea of progress as a "function of time" is utterly misleading. There is no social development, for "development means the unfolding and growth of a germ according to the elements which it contains" (p. 475). Again "we can find all kinds of forces in history except ethical forces. Those are entirely wanting" (p. 475). The effect of all this is to picture social life as a vast, unconscious, resistless, onswEEPing process determining its course from time to time by the demands of the immediate situation, but without plan, purpose, or destination, and with no standards of value save the shifting notions of current utility. And along with this stream the individual is swept powerless to direct its course. It is not to be denied that many a fervent soul who feels society plastic in his hands and would reshape it to his millennial model would profit by the cold douche of Professor Sumner's philosophy.

But this first impression needs correction. While a large group is unified by common mores, there are sub-groups with slightly varying standards. There are the superior few, the *élite*, "the classes," who think, solve problems, and foresee situations. Within the limits imposed by the nature of the mores, the capable few may influence in some measure the changes in customs and standards. It is through them, to a considerable extent, that the mores get themselves adjusted to new conditions. The possibility of some conscious control of social life is admitted by Professor Sumner but always in a significantly restrained and almost grudging way. What could be more cautious than the assertion that "knowledge of the mores helps to understand and *perhaps regulate to some extent* the education" (p. 638). It is with something like surprise that the reader in the last sentence of the book finds both a personification of the mores and apparently an ethical aim: "The mores aim always to arrive at correct notions of virtue, and in so far as they reach correct notions of virtue, the virtue policy proves to be the only success policy" (p. 653). On the other hand, ideals are characterized as "entirely unscientific" (p. 201), useful chiefly for sermons, as stimuli to self-education and as aids to vanity. Professor Sumner in this low estimate of ideals must have in mind not rational pro-

jections of present facts into pictures of possible attainment, but "fanaticism which has little or no connection with fact" (p. 201). Probably Professor Sumner would deny that he has ideals, but he betrays frequently the possession of positive standards as to a protective tariff, the pension system, government intervention, and "imperialism." It is hard to see how he can avoid setting up some end or aim of society by which to value these policies; in short, how he can come off quite guiltless of some sort of teleology. If good mores are *adjusted* or *adapted* mores "aiming to arrive at *correct* notions of virtue," who is to judge of this "adaptation" or "correctness"? How could anyone decide without appeal to some criterion which would seem at least to be detached from the mores themselves? If Professor Sumner does not close the door to conscious guidance toward a social ideal, it must be owned that he leaves the portal only barely ajar. Moreover one suspects the author of falling victim to a fallacy against which he gives frequent warning, viz., the danger of being deceived by words and phrases to which an almost magic power is attributed. With the progress of the argument, the word "mores" gradually takes on a kind of force and agency. The "mores" seem to be almost objective and independent things, determining right and wrong, creating status, and having "aims." To be sure they are hardly so dangerous as "progress," "democracy," "the people," but nevertheless the word "mores" becomes a term to conjure with.

Professor Sumner's allusions to democracy deserve notice. Democracy is a contemporary fetish, the subject of "dithyrambic oratory." The product not of "great principles"—which are simply made to order to meet emergencies—but of physical and economic conditions, democracy is protected by pathos from rational criticism, and is glorified for popularity. With changing conditions, however, the doctrine that all men are equal is not being emphasized, and "we may at any time find it expedient to drop the jingle about a government 'of the people, by the people and for the people'" (p. 167). However, the author holds no brief for aristocracy for he insists that no class can be trusted to rule society with disinterested justice. Nevertheless the bourgeoisie are to be credited with the "institutions of civil liberty which secure to all safety of person and property" (p. 169). It is hard to resist the conclusion that Professor Sumner's intense aversion to dithyrambic rhetoric and cant phrases has blinded him to the reinterpretation of democracy in terms of an

intelligent leadership appealing to and modifying the deep currents of national life which flow in the mores, and preserve a great tradition.

The use of illustrative material throughout the volume discloses a vast amount of reading and establishes Professor Sumner as a folk psychologist, however modestly—or indignantly—he may disclaim the title. The doctrine of the mores is used to give setting and significance to such phenomena as slavery, infanticide, cannibalism, sex relations, marriage, incest, kinship, and asceticism. The treatment is illustrative rather than controversial. In some cases the author takes issue with another scholar, as for example, in questioning Westernmarck's "house-mates" hypothesis and advancing the theory that primitive people reach a vague induction as to the evils of close in-breeding. The data from anthropology and ethnology seem at times to overweigh the book by their sheer bulk and multiplicity,² but for the most part they deepen the impression of the main thesis. Now and then there is repetition not always defensible on the ground of utility to the underlying philosophy. Occasionally, too, proportion is lost sight of, notably in the detailed description of the Inquisition.

The literary style is forceful and idiomatic. The sentences are brief, incisive, and emphatic. Probably no social theorizing of recent times is so free from technical language. "Folkways," "father-family," "mother-family," "pair-marriage" (proposed as more accurately descriptive of the present advanced type, than the term monogamy), are some of the self-defining terms of the book. Syncretism (the fusion of the mores of two combining groups), ethnocentrism, biolog, etc., are evidence that Professor Sumner, if temperate, is not a total abstainer from Greek terminology. The adjective societal appears consistently in accordance with the author's usage. The general reader can follow Professor Sumner's argument and description without difficulty and get a vivid picture of the unconscious, underlying forces of human society.

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² The bibliography of over seven hundred titles fills fifteen closely printed pages; and the index, twenty-one.