

THE SCOPE OF SOCIOLOGY.

I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGICAL METHOD.

THE primary purpose of this paper is to describe, not what the writer thinks sociology ought to be, but what it actually is, up to date. The secondary purpose, to be taken up in a later section of the paper, is to point out certain lines of development which sociological theory must inevitably follow.

By way of anticipation it may be said at once that the definition or description of sociology to be used in a subsequent paper is: *Sociology is the study of men considered as affecting and as affected by association.*¹

It goes without saying that this description of sociology is not a definition of the preserve that can be claimed by any academic department of sociology. As will be pointed out before the close of this paper, we shall remain unable to see, not to say solve, the problems of association, so long as we remain unable to realize that our academic divisions of labor upon the problems are measures of convenience, which become inconvenient whenever they obscure the actual correlations of common subject-matter.

Innumerable definitions or descriptions of sociology are in vogue. Each represents the opinion of a person or of a school, in opposition to some other view of what sociology is or ought to be. No one of these views can as yet command the assent of all the sociologists. No one of them can prove that it has the adherence of a majority or of the most weighty sociologists. There is one fact, however, which crops out in the writings of all the different sorts of sociologists, namely: they are all trying to reach judgments of a higher degree of generality than the subject-matter of any single branch of social science is competent to authorize. It makes no difference how narrowly a given

¹This conception has been ably treated by MR. R. G. KIMBLE, in a paper entitled "Contributions to the Comparative Study of Association," AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY, March, 1899.

sociologist defines his discipline for himself; he sooner or later begins to betray his tacit conception of his mission by propounding judgments that leap over his own boundary. Their validity depends upon knowledge that belongs, in the first place, to each of the more special divisions of social science. It follows that, in spite of all disagreements about territory, sociology is in practice, as a matter of fact, an attempt to organize and generalize all available knowledge about the influences that pervade human associations. The men who make the most restricted definitions of sociology often indulge in the most absolute generalizations in the name of sociology, and they seem to take themselves quite seriously while they are thus placing the poverty of their logic upon exhibition.

The impulse to generalize social laws of higher orders than those to be derived from the traditional social sciences may be audacious. It may look to results which are beyond the reach of human reason. The ambition to develop a system of generalizations which will interpret the influences that form human society may be foredoomed to disappointment. The fact remains that the sociologists are in the midst of an adventure which means nothing less than discovery of the limits of human power to trace the workings of human association in all times and under all circumstances. As was said above, this turns out to be true about equally, though in different ways, of those who seek wisdom through a sociology defined as the science of an abstracted section of social facts, and of those who boldly describe sociology as a comprehensive science or philosophy.

To get our bearings, therefore, in today's sociology, it is necessary to survey the course of thought by which we have arrived at our present attitude toward the problems of society. We must review the forms under which the pioneers in sociology have presented the problems to themselves. These early attempts are instructive, not because they have contributed directly to the solution of sociological or social problems, but because they have led to more exact statement of the problems.

Judged by results, sociology up to date has comparatively little to say for itself. Before we are through we shall argue

that the chief significance of the sociologists is in their instinct of the oneness of all knowledge about men. If names were consistently used, sociology would not be understood to mean a phase of social science. It would be the comprehensive term for all search into the facts of human association, somewhat as biology no longer means any special phase of the science of life, but the whole body of investigation into vegetable and animal phenomena. We are obliged to use the term "sociology," however, to designate that standpoint from which a better survey of human association is becoming possible, which at present seems, to those social scientists who do not occupy it, entirely isolated from their interests. The best that has been done so far by sociology in the narrower sense, except incidentally in certain of its concrete divisions, is to demonstrate the lack of method in analyzing social relationships, and in searching for the secrets of social cause and effect. The history of sociology is a record of an apparently aimless hunt for something which the hunters did not know how to describe or define. In the last half-century a few students of society have been filled with vague discontent because of haunting dissatisfaction with the sort of insight into social truth which the traditional studies furnished. These students have beaten the air, sometimes only to raise more dust, but sometimes also with the result of chasing away some of the lingering clouds. On the whole, the history of sociology consists mainly of attempts to plan a kind of study which will yield more intimate knowledge of society than the traditional social sciences have reached. As yet there is very little to show by way of conclusion from these quests. The fortunes of these attempts are nevertheless a precious legacy to the present generation. They are, first of all, object-lessons in how not to do it. In the second place, they are indirect and fragmentary indications of how to state the problems of society and how to proceed in solving them. The history of sociological method is thus the most effective discipline in methodology, if we are wise enough to gather up its teachings.

In accordance with the foregoing, we may join with Tarde in finding the progenitors of our sociologists long before the

name was invented. Tarde implies belief that the old philosophers and theologians were actually the pioneers in the fields of study which have at last reached such intensive cultivation that the class of investigators known as sociologists had to be differentiated.¹ He speaks of the "change promising better results" which is observable from the time when "such specialists in sociology" as the philologists, the philosophers of religion, and especially the economists began to perform the more modest task of identifying minute facts and of formulating their laws.

There has been a gradual recognition of interlacings among human relationships, and this perception has been calling for larger coördinations of research, and closer organization of results, than older students of society felt to be necessary. We have consequently arrived at conceptions of the relations of knowledge about society which constitute a totally new setting for all particular facts. This anticipated organon of knowledge about society is sociology. In order to get the most intimate view of sociology, both as it is and as it must be, it is worth while to make a rapid survey of certain typical attempts to formulate sociological problems and methods. We may do this most conveniently for our present purpose by reference to Barth's *Die Philosophie der Geschichte als Sociologie*.²

Barth's thesis is that there is no sociology except the philosophy of history. The theorem is not true, but it contains truth. The philosophy of history attempted to formulate the laws of social sequences. Sociology almost universally attempts to formulate, not merely laws of sequence, but also laws of past and present correlation. Many sociologists declare that the most important division of sociology is beyond both these groups, in laws of social aims and of the available means of attaining them. Even if we were reduced to a conception of sociology which identifies its subject-matter with that of the philosophy of history, it would be easy to show that sociology is perfecting a method which distinguishes it from the philosophy of history

¹ *Les Lois sociales*, p. 26.

² Vol. I (Leipzig, 1897). Cf. review, *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY*, March 1898.

somewhat as astronomy from astrology, or chemistry from alchemy. This is by no means to deny essential similarity of purpose, to a certain extent at least, between the earlier and the later attempts to discover social laws. "Sociology is accordingly the natural successor, heir, and assign of the worthy but ineffective philosophy of history."¹

It is needless to ask how early men directed their attention to the actions of men, and tried to see those actions in their connections with each other, and then tried to recount the facts in their supposed relations. There came a time, at all events—let us say, for convenience, with Herodotus and Thucydides—when this attention to actions of men in the large was conscious and deliberate. It had taken the place and rank of a dignified intellectual pursuit. It called itself history. It undertook to tell both what men had done and why they had done it. This, in general, is precisely what sociology tries to do today. History is, therefore, sociology in the yolk. We shall understand sociology best not by dogmatizing about the sort of thing which it would please us to designate by that name. The name has come to stand for something which is asserting itself, whether we like it or not. We shall form a more intelligent view of sociology if we follow the trunk line of its evolution from men's earliest naïve attempts to see human actions together. This is what history has been from the beginning. It is what sociology is now. Sociology exists today because a few men have discovered that, if we are to see human actions in their most essential relations, a more complicated machinery of research and organization is necessary than historiography controls.

The disrepute into which the philosophy of history has fallen is not due to disbelief that there has been method in human experience. When a modern critical historian speaks with contempt of the philosophy of history, he refers either to some of the obsolete methods of reaching historical judgments, or to some other man's philosophy of history. He is surely not contemptuous himself, nor willing that others should be, toward his own philosophy of history. He always has one, if he is anything

¹ *Journal of Political Economy*, March, 1895, p. 173.

more than a rag-picker from the garbage-heaps of the past. But the more we study the philosophies of history that are no longer in vogue,¹ the more are we impressed by a few common-places concerning them; for instance:

First: People have attempted to make a very little knowledge go a long way in coining generalities about society. History has proved to be like the Bible: it may be made to teach anything, if we take it in sufficiently minute fragments.

Second: People have tried to create the general truths of history out of philosophical presuppositions, instead of building them up by collection and generalization of facts. That is, they have trusted to dogmatism and deduction instead of attempting induction.

Third: People have had very crude conceptions of the complexity of the things to which their assumed historical principles were supposed to apply. They have not been able to analyze the subject-matter so as really to see the elements involved.

Fourth: Hence the foregone conclusion of demand, sooner or later, for a method which shall be an improvement upon that of the philosophy of history.

At the same time, critical study of the philosophers of history is a most valuable propædæutic for sociology. Every sociological system that is trying to push itself into favor today has its prototype among these more archaic systems, and not a few recent sociological schemes may be disposed of by the same process that rules these philosophies of history out of court.

On the other hand, each of these abortive philosophies of history has contributed its quota toward comprehension of the conditions of social problems, and together they have indirectly promoted the adoption of adequate sociological methods. This fact may be indicated more in detail if we adopt for illustration Barth's seven-fold division of the philosophy of history, instead of discussing a score or more of familiar theorems of alleged central principles in history. We find that each of these views attempted to bring into focus something that is actually present

¹ *Vide* FLINT, *Philosophy of History*. The first edition is more useful for a general survey than the incomplete second edition.

in human affairs. It may not be the something alleged. It surely is not present in the proportions alleged. It is a real something, however, and the final science of society must know it and place it.

For instance, Barth distinguishes first "The Individualistic View of History." There are still historians who hold that the actions of great individuals are the only proper content of history. There is no universal or general current which from the beginning of society carries the hero along with the rest of mankind. On the contrary, according to this view, each hero digs the course of his own current. This may have relations with the similar life-courses of other great men, but it by no means forms part of a great common current. The individualists think of the great personalities as free, as creators out of nothing, as first links of a new chain of events, which are so independent of the past that they are capable of beginning a new life in opposition to the endeavors of the past.

It is evident that so far as this view prevails there is no possibility of science. Science is knowledge of things in their correlation. If they have no correlation, there is no material for science. If there are no recurrences, no uniformities in societary events, there is no possibility of the rudiments of all science. There can be no descriptive classification.

In order to appreciate the problem with which we are now dealing, it may be an advantage to state it in concrete form, thus: The things that we want most to know about society are not things of the past, but of the present and the future. We turn back to the past because it is once for all before our eyes. It is a reality. We hope it will reveal some guidance for present and future. We want to know how men should act if they would make the most of life. We want to know what influences are at work, and how they work, in affecting social conditions. To that end we inquire into great historical movements, for example the transfer of power in the Italian peninsula from the old Roman element to the barbarian element. We call it the fall of Rome. We name other similar movements: the breaking up of the Carolingian monarchy into European feudalism; or the consolidation

of feudalism into the new monarchies; or the overthrow of the aristocracies and the enfranchisement of the democracies in the early part of the present century. From such great movements we ought to learn something about what would be involved in a social change of equal magnitude today; as, for instance, a solution of the labor problem which would give wage-earners a more direct and decisive influence in the economic order.

Suppose we are asking how such a change in modern industrial society is to be brought about, and we go to history for the answer. We find a class of interpreters of history ringing the changes on this one theme, namely: "Great social changes are the product of individual factors alone." Now, this answer is not as simple as it sounds. One man means by it that a few great, perhaps almost superhuman, men—Solon, Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon, Bismarck—have been the mainsprings of social movement, and the rest of the human herd have been inert masses moved by them. Others mean that social movements are simply the slow accretions of volume or force by addition of one human individual to another—the drop added to drop that wears the rock away, or the atom added to atom in one scale which at last overbalances the huge mass in the opposite scale. The individualistic view would say to the wage-earners of our present generation who want their class to become the dominant type in the state: "To bring about the industrial revolution that you want, either 'labor' must incarnate itself in a giant or hero, who will perform some modern labors of Hercules and make the world over; or the mere multiplication of the numbers of the wage-earners, regardless of combinations or changes of their ideas, or the coöperation of other classes, or the limitations of the constructive capacity of the operative class, will in time effect the desired social transformation, or it is impossible altogether."

This view of social forces makes individuals alone—whether the few great and forceful ones or the multitude of average ones—the sole factors in social complications.

Now, there is a sense in which this must be true. Society is made up of individuals, just as matter is supposed to be made

up of atoms; but no theory of atoms alone will account beforehand for the behavior of the particular atoms that make hydrogen or oxygen or sulphur or phosphorus. Nor will any theory of the atom alone account for what happens when one pair of substances enter into a reaction, and the unlike results when another pair of substances react upon each other. The case is similar with the actions of individuals. All social facts are combinations of individual facts. Yet the influences at work in these combinations are not accounted for by any *a priori* conception of individuals which we can reach. For instance, a hundred socialistic German students are mustered into the imperial army and are sworn to defend the Kaiser and the flag. So long as they wear the uniform they are imperialists, not socialists. Now, there is something besides the sum of those individualities which is at work in giving them a character when they are combined that is different from the sum of their characters as isolated individuals. In this case the flag and the uniform may symbolize the added something. At all events it would be a very shallow and unpenetrating account that would find in the company merely one hundred detached and self-sufficient individuals.

It may be said that the individualistic view of history marks a sort of extreme swing of the pendulum from the fatalistic, mass notion of human affairs that prevailed before men were conscious of their own personal agency, before they had fairly differentiated themselves from their surroundings. It may be said that the task of finding out the facts about influences in society is virtually the task of finding the qualifications which must be thought of when we regard human fortunes as events of which individuals are the elements. It may be said that the individualistic view gives us a primary term in the social equation, and that our further work is to find out the value of the other terms which affect the value of the individual term. These propositions are no doubt approximately correct. The individualistic conception of human affairs is not utterly false. It is a rough, uncritical, inexact exaggeration of a perception which must be reduced to more precise and proportionate formulation. Today's sociology is still struggling with this preposterous initial

fact of the individual. He is the only possible social unit, and he is no longer a thinkable possibility. He is the only real presence, and he is never present. Whether we are near to resolution of the paradox or not, there is hardly more visible consensus about the relation of the individual to the whole than at any earlier period. Indeed, the minds of more people than ever before seem to be puzzled by the seeming antinomy between the individual and the whole.

In this play between unscientific, uncritical, wholesale assumptions about society, students have been brought to face a specific problem, namely: Given individual elements in society, given also a certain coherence of society by virtue of which influences stronger than those of any individual persist, or at least influences persist with more than the personal energy of any individual, what are the specific modifying and differentiating factors which procure social motion, progress, development? Accordingly the historians, independent of the sociologists, have struck out in a new direction in the present half-century. The older historians told of the fortunes of persons, of states, of humanity. The newer history, however, becomes more specific and realistic. Both in theory and in practice it considers nations as the vehicles of culture. It traces the development of their internal conditions. It compares them with each other. It tries to fix upon what is typical in each, and by that course to arrive at the history of humanity.

Even in conservative Germany perceptions of scientific demands which have arisen in the course of arriving at such historical views have produced sociologists. They are not recognized in many of the universities, but they are working under various titles—philosophers, historians, economists, etc. They are searching for the most general truths about human associations, and about the forces that are working in them. In other words, the friction between the individualistic view of history and opposing views has been one of several distinct producers of inductive inquiry into real conditions. When the different inductive inquiries so provoked have become aware of each other, they have been seen to constitute a new line of approach to

social reality, and they have together received the name "sociology."

A similar form of conclusion must follow due consideration of each attempt to account for the historical movements of society. Barth's second title is "The Anthropo-Geographical View of History." Having shown in the foregoing paragraphs how a single one-sided view of past events has helped to form our methods of thinking, and to make scientific demands more precise and adequate, we need not consider other one-sided views at equal length. The outcome in each case is essentially the same. Each one-sided view has drawn attention to an actual factor in the problem of society. The sociologists are now stating the problem in terms of all these factors so far discovered. The form of the sociological inquiry is not the old form of the historians: "Is the secret of human life this or that?" The sociological form of inquiry is: "Given observed forms of influence in human affairs, how much of each detected form of influence is present in a given social movement, and in what measure does it work?" The several one-sided views have thus been merged into a many-sided inquiry.¹

We should notice, in passing, that a similar practical result is produced upon individuals by the study of the social sciences. Whether a given student gets a system of social doctrine satisfactory to himself or not, he emerges from the study of the social sciences, as at present organized, with a perception that the world of people is the arena of many interactive influences. In his judgments, either of past times or of current events, the student of the social sciences, from the sociological point of view, is forearmed against the narrowness that presupposes the prevalence of a single force rather than the interplay of many forces. The outlook that sociology makes familiar brings into the field of view the whole number of modifying influences that have been discovered among men. The sociologist, studying the present condition of China or Turkey or Japan or the Philippines

¹ Vide CHAMBERLIN, "The Method of the Multiple Working Hypothesis," *Journal of Geology*, November, 1897. This article is a veritable sermon in stones, which the sociologists would do well to consider. *Mutatis mutandis* it may be taken bodily as a lesson in sociological methodology.

or Spain or Germany or France or Russia or the United States, does not imagine that he has before him a simple case of economics or politics or ethics. He sees the resultant of numerous physical and spiritual antecedents, varied in each case by special combinations, and constituting in each case a peculiar organization of primary and secondary factors, the force of which has to be determined in each instance for itself.

Thus the development of thought about society has had the double result, on the one hand, of enlarging and clarifying technical social science, and, on the other hand, of forming the molds in which practical judgments of the world's present social problems must be cast.

All the one-sided views of history are, in the first place, exaggerations of ideas which may be detected very early, at least in germs or suggestions. Barth observes that something of this anthropo-geographical conception of history is to be found in Hippocrates, Herodotus, Thucydides, etc. Coming to more recent times, the idea was so prominent in Herder that many readers have hastily reduced his theory of history to terms of this notion alone. Ritter, professor in the university and military school at Berlin (1779-1859), systematically expanded the idea. His geographical studies have become the basis for school work in the subject in Germany, and his influence may be traced throughout the world. His ambition was to make geography an interpreter of history. His purpose may be described as a wish to develop a dynamic geography. Yet it would be unfair to treat him as blind to all other influences affecting society. He distinctly recognized a certain *diminuendo* movement in history, so far as the influence of physical environment is concerned. The view to which Ritter gave such prominence has been exploited with less balance by Buckle¹ and Draper.² The essential thought which Ritter did so much to justify impressed President Gilman of Johns Hopkins University while he was still at Yale. He might have developed a sociology on the basis of geography, if he had not turned to administrative tasks. Professor Geddes, of

¹ *History of Civilization in England.*

² *Intellectual Development of Europe.*

Edinburgh, is the most energetic expounder of this idea in the English-speaking world. Not the most prominent geographer but the most scholarly exponent of this particular anthropo-geographical idea on the continent today is Ratzel, of Leipzig (*Anthropo-Geographie*). Ratzel, again, is to be classed with Herder and Ritter in placing his peculiar perception in balance with coöperating forces. He aims to show the ways in which humanity depends upon the spatial relations of the earth. While the analysis of influences from the environment, as carried out by Ratzel, is full of instruction, and while it opens up still uncultivated fields of research, it is still comparatively free from the fault of historical one-sidedness. Not so with men who have taken up this clue to history without the corrective which Ratzel expresses in the words: "Not nature, but mind, produces culture." For instance, Mougeolle⁴ declares: "Thus the environment alone can truly explain the chief events of history, and furnish the solution of its most general problems."

As in the case of the individualistic conception of history, so with this exaggerated estimate of the part that nature has played in the formation of human society. Doubtless the social problem has waited longer than it ought for adequate formulation, because many men have too implicitly and literally believed with Plato that "ideas make the world." Such men have told the story of history as though it were a ghost-dance on a floor of clouds. They have tried to explain how spirits with indiscernible bodies have brought about the visible results. They would not admit that the facts of human association have been the work of flesh-and-blood men with their feet on the ground. How much of the soil and the sunshine and the wind and snow and rain has lodged itself in men's works and ways remains to be determined. At all events we have been taught by the contradictions of extremists that history in the future will neither be turned over entirely to the weather bureau, nor will it be exclusively the affair of the introspective rhapsodist. Human fortunes are not diluted climatology. They are not visualized spirituality, in any sense at least which we can comprehend. They are the

⁴ *Le Problème de l'Histoire*, Paris, 1886.

resultant of physical and spiritual forces, reacting upon each other in the most complex combinations which we know. They will not be summed up in any simple equation of a single term. The views of history which exaggerate a coöperating factor into an exclusive factor, and assume that a constant influence is a monopoly of influence, are gradually forcing us to study new terms in the social problem. Each partial view of the influences that have made and remade men and associations gives us a distinct factor about which correlated search by the different kinds of sociologists must find means of answering the general question: "In what cases does this factor work; with what tendencies does it work; with what ratio of force does it work?" In other words, the sociological scheme which appropriates the lessons of previous failure to penetrate the social mystery will have a use for all accessible knowledge about the time, place, direction, and intensity of the purely topographical and climatological factors among social influences; but for the same reason it will have an appropriate place also for all the other influences that may be discovered.

Barth's third title is "The Ethnological View of History." It is not easy to draw a sharp line of division between this view and the second, just noticed. Of the two, the view now to be considered seems to have more prominence in today's social science. It appears less extravagant, less open to the suspicion of being crass materialism and mechanicalism, and therefore less taxing to the credulity. It is easier to see, or to imagine that we see, how the Teutons and the Romans could coalesce in a third something which turns out to be the Carolingian empire, than to see how the dust of one peninsula, stirred by one set of breezes, made Spartans, while the dust of another peninsula, vexed by other breezes, made Etruscans. The traditional belief that blood tells prepares a welcome in our minds for the stock-breeder's theory of history. It is supposed to have such backing in the findings of biology that the people who get the view fairly into their minds are strongly tempted to trust in its all-sufficiency, and to abandon further search for historical explanations. Indeed, the ethnologists and the orthodox economists are the closest

competitors for the distinction of making a very narrow abstraction stretch to the utmost extension as a total explanation. The prestige of the ethnological view rests, however, upon very precarious support. Whether genetic laws large enough to explain any single historical movement have been demonstrated within the field of ethnology proper is open to serious question. Much that passes for severe ethnological science is merely ingenious speculation. Even if it is proved that races have been the vehicles of influences which have affected different societies in different ways, it remains to be proved that the racial element was cause rather than effect of this influence, or of some other which was a more important cause. Moreover, many of the theorems of racial influence are theses in psychics rather than in physiology or zoölogy. They are dogmas in folk-psychology, not data or results of ethnology at all.

In this connection the most prominent ethnologists have failed to clarify their ideas. Such men as Topinard in France and Tylor in England and Brinton in this country have performed some grotesque straddles by defining ethnology as a physical science and then including in it every manifestation of man's complex nature. They have seemed to be uncertain, and they have surely left their readers uncertain, whether they were discovering physical traits, and then showing how these lend themselves to industrial and cultural development; or whether they were starting with mental developments and were reasoning back to differences of physical traits sufficient to account for the phenomena. In other words, the most eminent ethnologists have not yet shown themselves such patient investigators of the facts within their own field that their conclusions have had a very profound effect upon laymen, especially those who are experts in other branches of physical science. This is likely to grow less and less true since more carefully trained scholars are entering the ethnological field. The work of many of these, however, tends to the opposite extreme of mere description and classification of details, from which no general truth of large dimensions emerges. Hence the recent differentiation of the folk-psychologists. They are really only ethnologists of a new type

They are less first-hand discoverers of ethnological fact, and more interpreters of the material that collectors and classifiers place at their disposal. The two types together realize a division of labor that is bound to make ethnology a powerful ally of the other search-sciences in revealing the social mystery.

We need not deny that blood tells, but we should not be prematurely certain that we can hear what it tells, or that we can distinguish the voice of the particular blood that speaks. Whatever truth is to be found out along this line is apparently farther from present demonstration than the truths about the transmission of physical traits in general. It will doubtless be long before we shall be able to distinguish between proof in this field and fiction under a thin mask of illustration. Even if we were disposed to assume *a priori* that the whole truth lies in this direction, we should be phenomenally credulous to believe that the truth is already in sight sufficient to make a science of society to be remotely compared in precision with either of the physical sciences. The one prominent result thus far of attempts to fit the ethnological assumption to interpretation of the social mystery has been to impress judicial investigators with the non-correspondence between the hypothesis and the evidence chiefly relied on for proof. Instead of making toward the conclusion that blood corpuscles in one race so differ from the blood corpuscles of another race that civilizations are contrasted with each other in consequence, the evidence makes for the conclusion that ideas weigh more than differences in animal tissue in determining what the traits of associated life shall be. This is the reason why ethnology is finding its most promising developments today in the line of ethnic or folk-psychology, which is only a cross-section of mass-psychology. Each is a chapter of social psychology in general.

The problems of the relation of the animal organism to the spiritual nature of man seem at present to be in progress toward solution, if anywhere, in the psychological laboratories. People who deal with human phenomena in bulk are not likely to solve these problems, whatever they call themselves. They can merely deal with aspects of human facts which leave these fundamental

questions unexplored. Whatever may be the form which our conclusions may one day take about the influence of the body upon the mind, our interpretation of human events must have respect to this by-product of ethnological theory, namely, the observation that different ethnic and tribal groups somehow come to be the vehicles of a tradition which, so far as effects appear, might as well be part and parcel of their physical structure. Their bodies and their tradition of thought and feeling constantly function together. The colored and the white elements in the United States, for example, are not made up of individuals of absolutely identical force in the social equation. A group of colored men and a group of white men, who had passed through schools of the same grade in the same city, would not be social forces of identical quality and equal energy, for the reason that they somehow carry along unlike traditions from unlike conditions in the past. We may see these differences in men, and we should see them as they manifest themselves in racial peculiarities. On the other hand, we should not assume that these racial manifestations present to us irreducible factors of human force. That would be like a theory of chemistry which assumes that vapor and water and ice are three irreducible elements.

The final solution of the social mystery will have an answer to the question: "What is the value of the racial factor in the social equation?" Meanwhile, neither physiology nor zoölogy nor ethnology nor history lends sanction to the superficial assumption that the social equation is an affair of only one set of variables, namely, the racial characteristics of peoples. When we have in mind the ethnic factor in the social problem, it is necessary to render the sociological question in this form: "What is the formula of the racial factor in its combinations with all the other factors in the social equation?"

Barth's fourth title is "The Culture-History View." The very idea of "culture," as the term is used among German scholars, has hardly entered distinctly into American calculations. In order to indicate the viewpoint which is occupied by the interpreters to whom the title of this paragraph applies, it is

necessary to define words in a way not yet adopted as a rule in English usage.

What, then, is "culture" (*Kultus*) in the German sense? To be sure, the Germans themselves are not wholly consistent in their use of the term, but it has a technical sense which it is necessary to define. In the first place, "culture" is a condition or achievement possessed by *society*. It is not individual. Our phrase "a cultured person" does not employ the term in the German sense. For that, German usage has another word, "*gebildet*," and the peculiar possession of the "*gebildeter Mann*" is not "culture" but "*Bildung*." If we should accept the German term "culture" in its technical sense, we should have no better equivalent for "*Bildung*," etc., than "education" and "educated," which convey too much of the association of school discipline to render the German conception in its entire scope. At all events, whatever names we adopt, there is such social possession, different from the individual state, which consists of adaptation in thought and action to the conditions of life.

Again, the Germans distinguish between "culture" and "civilization." Thus "civilization is the ennobling, the increased control of the elementary *human* impulses by society. Culture, on the other hand, is the control of *nature* by science and art." That is, civilization is one side of what we call politics; culture is our whole body of technical equipment, in the way of knowledge, process, and skill for subduing and employing natural resources.

Now there are very positive theories based on human technology as the one determining factor, and even the efficient cause, of all social development. These views are indicated when Barth speaks of the "culture-history idea." The theorem is that men's ways of dealing with nature have been the cause of their spiritual life, and of their social and political conditions. Here belong at first glance all the numerous writers who have divided the history of the race into periods, according to the kind of tools or implements that men have used. It may be that the apparent importance of the method is not real enough to make their view quite as one-sided in this respect as the classification

would indicate, but the symptoms should be regarded as danger signals. For instance, when Dubois-Reymond divides historic times into three periods—namely (1) that of the building arts, bronze-casting, and stone-cutting; (2) that of the three inventions of the compass, gunpowder, and printing; (3) that of machinery moved by steam—he implies the one-sided culture view that men's inventions are the sole causes of their social condition. We might well ask of this view, as men at last asked of their mythologies: "If Atlas holds up the skies, who holds up Atlas?" If inventions cause social conditions, what causes inventions? Dubois-Reymond finds the cause of the fall of Rome in the fact that the Romans did not advance beyond the second of these three stages. He does not say whether the barbarians conquered Rome because they, too, had not advanced beyond the second stage! Of the culture-history view it is sufficient to say, with Barth: "The naturalists, technologists, and ethnologists accordingly start off on a false scent, if they try to make out that increase in the amount of 'culture possessed' is the main-spring of human progress. In this case, as before, we find that all historical events, both progressive and retrogressive, are phenomena of volition. The will is not moved, however, by endeavors after culture alone; but before and besides these endeavors are all sorts of other forces. Progress of culture is accordingly only one element, and not the only one. In many periods it constitutes, indeed, only a feeble factor in the historical movement." (P. 261.)

We reach similar conclusions in turn about the "political," the "ideological," and the "economic" conceptions of history. Upon this last view a single paragraph may be cited from Barth: "But economics thus undertakes much more than it can accomplish. Economics is rather in peculiar need of close connection with the history of the other branches of social life. In other words, economics needs sociology. Isolated from sociology, economics cannot even adequately determine fundamental conceptions. Thus Wagner¹ asks the question: 'Is the limitation of the economic motive, that is the effort to get a

¹ *Grundl.*, 3. Aufl., I, pp. 9-12.

maximum return for a minimum effort, desirable in itself, or attainable if desirable?' The answer will, without question, depend upon the assumed purpose of social life. Economics alone is incompetent to define this purpose. It is the affair of a comparative historical science like sociology, which works in conjunction with philosophy, that is, with the science of the highest theoretical and practical questions of humanity. In his politics, that is, in his theoretical and at the same time practical sociology, Aristotle claimed that happy life is the proper purpose of the state, which to him was identical with society. His notion of happy life was more fully defined in his *Ethics*. His whole politics and economics would have been different if his ethics had been different. So each modern system of economics takes form according to its assumed idea of the purpose of social life, that is, according to the sociology, and, in the final resort, the philosophy, from which it takes its departure. The isolation of economics has had as a consequence, so far as conceptions of history are concerned, only confusion."

Without resorting to further illustration from the philosophy of history, we may repeat that these snap-judgments about social laws, with all the dogmatism reinforced by them, have been so many rule-of-thumb attempts to do the thing which the sociologists want to do more scientifically. They want to formulate precise problems. They want to bring valid methods of inquiry to bear upon the problems. They want to derive knowledge that will be profitable in all things civic.

At the same time it has to be confessed that, as was hinted above, most of the sociology up to date has repeated in its way the same methodological errors which the philosophy of history committed. Yet, although the sociologists have not been forearmed individually as they might have been with lessons taught by the mistakes of the philosophers of history, sociology is gradually assimilating those lessons. Moreover, sociology is profiting by the provincialisms of the pioneer sociologists. It is learning to find the element of truth in the clues upon which different men have attempted to build sociology: These premature schemes have accordingly served their purpose toward perfecting a

method which in its turn will ultimately organize a body of knowledge.

The account which Barth gives of "the sociologies" fails to get this latter fact into focus. The titles which he gives to the groups into which he divides the sociologists really beg very important questions. As in the case of the philosophers of history, use of Barth's groupings, however, will serve to bring out the necessary facts about gradual perceptions of what sociological problems involve. This continued reference to Barth is incidentally for the purpose of correcting a radical error in his exposition. It prevents comment upon some very important writers, but the main point at present is to show that Barth misconceives the facts when he schedules a series of "sociologies." Superficially, he is correct; but closer inspection shows that, consciously or unconsciously, the sociologists have been working upon one sociology. Exaggeration of some single factor in association, or of some single feature in method, does not constitute a special sociology. It contributes, directly or indirectly, positively or negatively, to the development of the one general sociology.

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[*To be continued.*]