

THE SOCIAL TREND

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The social trend by Edward Alsworth Ross

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EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS

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THE SOCIAL TREND

BY

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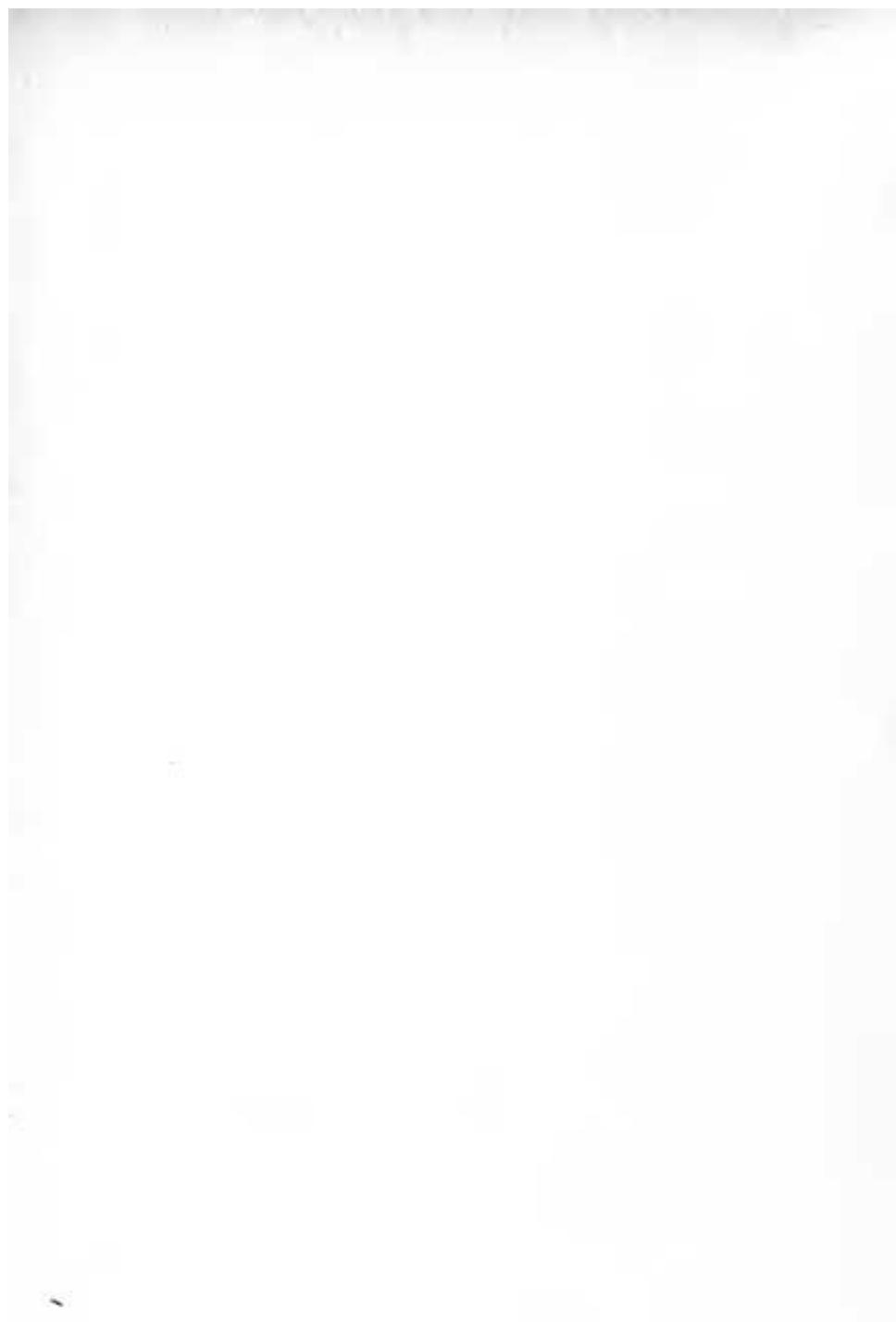
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To
MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE
FORWARD-LOOKING DEMOCRATS
OF THE AMERICAN TYPE
THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED



INTRODUCTION

We moderns are like mariners on a ship sailing an uncharted sea. We cannot lay our course in the light of the experience of our ancestors. None of them ever plowed these waters; that is to say, before us no folk ever practised machine production, let its daughters work away from home, bestowed leisure upon multitudes of its wives, saved its babies, vanquished disease, and slew its foes by mechanism, to the extent that we do. So study of the past can not reassure us as to how these things are going to work out.

Science and Invention have borne us away from the routes followed by any previous society. They have brought us into strange latitudes where we have nothing to go by. And they do not allow us to feel our way deliberately, put out scout-boats, take soundings. They hurry us on. So the best we can do is to set watchers to scan the horizon. The sociologist is just a man in a crow's nest who knows no more of this sea than his fellows. But from his position

INTRODUCTION

he will catch sight of coming dangers—shoals, sunken rocks, derelicts, cross-currents—before they are seen by those on deck.

This book is an attempt of an observer at the masthead to judge the probable course of the ship, to call out what lies ahead and how the ship must bear to starboard or to port in order to avoid trouble.

EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS.

MADISON, WISCONSIN,
June, 1922.