

**CHAPTER XXVII.  
SOCIOLOGY AT THE  
PARIS EXPOSITION  
OF 1900 PP.1451-1592**

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Chapter XXVIII. Sociology at the Paris Exposition of 1900 pp.1451-1592 by Lester F. Ward

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**LESTER F. WARD**

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 By LESTER F. WARD, 1841-

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No truth is more familiar in these days than that ideas can not take root and grow until the public mind, which constitutes their natural soil, is prepared to receive them. The converse of this is also true, that when there is such readiness to welcome thought it will take root and grow if duly sown. But some ideas are not like the germs of the air, that are everywhere ready to sprout at any point where the conditions will permit. The best thoughts are rather comparable to the golden grains of wheat—scarce, expensive, and needing to be sown with intelligence and care. It is somewhat so with sociological ideas, and a Paris exposition seemed to be needed as a laboratory culture for their artificial germination.

#### THE SOCIOLOGICAL MOVEMENT.

That a widespread interest in the deeper problems of social life has been gradually and increasingly taking possession of the public mind in all civilized countries has become a matter of common observation. The only question with regard to it which it is now thought necessary to discuss is that of its cause or underlying principle. With this it is perhaps not necessary to deal here further than to remark that it must be in great part due to the increasing extent to which the people of all nations are participating in what are known as public affairs. The number of persons of a thoughtful or philosophic turn of mind bears a somewhat uniform proportion to the whole mass of the people,

regardless of race, nationality, or social position, and in proportion as larger numbers are admitted to the broader fields of public affairs, in the same proportion will the number be increased who are capable of looking at the deeper aspects of public questions. To this may be added the fact that can no longer be doubted, that the political liberty which has so long been the highest aim of mankind, now that it has been to so great an extent attained, proves somewhat disappointing. It was supposed that political liberty would, if fully secured, remove the greater part of the evils under which society was laboring and usher in an ideal state of human existence. This dream has not been realized, and the more farsighted of all nations have become satisfied that no conceivable degree of political perfection can ever accomplish this result. In the prolonged struggle for freedom the only oppression that was recognized was that of government or the state, but now that the yoke of political rulers has been so completely lifted from the necks of the people of enlightened nations, it is found that there are other forms of oppression, and that man is still far from free in that ideal sense in which that word was wont to be used. Among the increased numbers whom the attainment of national freedom has brought to consciousness, and who have proved capable of analyzing the conditions of existence, there are many who see that this is what was to be expected. They see that while the millennial state can not be expected to be attained, there is another step which must be taken in the same general direction in which the world has been moving, and that political freedom having been so nearly realized, the next aim must be the attainment of social freedom. In other words, it is perceived that the nature of man is primarily egoistic and only secondarily altruistic; indeed, that this should be so and is no reproach to mankind, since it is the condition under which alone the race could have developed. The fact, however, necessarily leads to a certain amount of evil in society. This evil is for the most part beyond the reach of legislation and all state agencies, and belongs to the class which is recognized as social in contradistinction to the political evils from which the world has suffered.

It had long been taught, and is still largely believed, that social evils are incurable, but this doctrine has latterly been called in question, and there is no doubt that the growing skepticism on this point has greatly stimulated the study of social science. The time has now arrived when an old-school economist who holds to the irremediable character of social evils is looked upon much as would be a physician who should reiterate the view that once prevailed that plagues and pestilences are wholly beyond the reach of human art to arrest, remove, or prevent. Those who perceive these deeper truths of society, whatever they may call themselves, are sociologists, and their number and importance are increasing very rapidly.

But these practical considerations are not the only ones that have contributed to bring sociology into prominence. The human mind is so constituted that the study of any real problem soon yields its own satisfaction and leads to research and discovery for their own sakes. Indeed, so difficult and complicated are social phenomena that many abandon at once all thought of putting their results to any practical use and pursue their investigations for the sole purpose of arriving at truth. In the present state of the science this is perhaps the wiser course. At any rate, this class of investigation is now furnishing the stimulus required to keep a large and respectable corps of pure sociologists at work.

This is not the place to write the history of sociology as a science, or even to give a rapid sketch, such as that contained in the preface to the second edition of my *Dynamic Sociology* in 1897 (pp. v-viii). Much, however, has been done in the past three years, and an excellent summing up of the general results, from the pen of Prof. F. H. Giddings, may be found in the *International Monthly* for November, 1900.

All the countries of the civilized world are contributing to the sociological movement, but the activity is greater in some than in others. It is perhaps least in England. In Germany it has a distinctive character, with a tendency to evade the name of sociology. It is very marked in Italy and Belgium, slightly less so in Switzerland and the Netherlands, perceptibly on the increase in Spain and Portugal, and not wholly absent from several South American States. In the United States this activity is most intense and very real and earnest. But there can be no doubt that it is in France, which was also the cradle of the science, that sociology has taken the firmest hold upon the thinking classes, and it is there that we find the largest annual output, whether we confine ourselves to the literature or include in our enumeration the practical applications of sociology in the form of institutions, such as the *Musée Social*, for carrying on lines of operation calculated to educate and enlighten the people in social matters.

Under these circumstances it was especially favorable to the progress of sociology that there should be held in Paris during the last year of the nineteenth century a great universal exposition, calculated not merely to concentrate at the French metropolis the products of human invention, industry, and achievement in all parts of the world, but also to attract there and bring into contact and cooperation the men, the talents, and the ideas of all nations.

#### THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE EXPOSITION.

In the broadest sense of the word an exposition is wholly and essentially sociological. It brings together for examination and comparison the products of human genius, wrought by man in a social state, which



would have been wholly impossible but for his association and cooperation under the operation of the sociological principle of the division of labor. From that point of view to write up the sociology of the Exposition would be to write up the Exposition itself. This, of course, is wholly beyond the scope and plan of this sketch. It will be done by a large number of specialists in the different groups and will form the solid monument of the Exposition. A single one of the numerous groups may be mentioned, viz, that of social economics, but the details of it must be left to those who had the exhibits in charge. So far as our own country is concerned, this subject is in the best of hands, and a report will be prepared that will do it full justice. The present paper must rise to a more general plane and deal with those wider educational aspects presented by the Exposition as a whole.

Before leaving the matter of special exhibits, however, there is one feature almost wholly peculiar to the Paris Exposition of 1900 which demands emphasis at least, although here also the final treatment is fully provided for and will be given in the proper time and way by those who have so successfully inaugurated and carried on the movement. I refer to the part taken by the International Association for the Advancement of Science, Arts, and Education. The origin and history of this important organization are fully set forth in its several bulletins, especially in Bulletin No. 1. An Anglo-American, a French, a German, and a Russian group were organized at the Exposition, with headquarters in the Palais des Congrès, and active operations were carried on throughout nearly the whole period. The purpose was essentially educative, the principle being that of bringing directly home to those participating the lessons of the Exposition. It was felt by the organizers of this association, and it has long been felt by many who have observed closely the nature and influence of these world exhibitions that are becoming such a feature of our times, that they are not doing as much good as they might be made to do. The throngs that attend them do indeed carry away much that is valuable toward the general enlightenment of the world, and their influence in breaking down national prejudices and unifying and civilizing all nations and peoples has not been exaggerated. But the results have thus far been general and, one may truly say, superficial, compared with what they might be if means existed for making the facts and the truths which are thus spread before the public penetrate more deeply and take root in the minds of those who go and observe them. In other words, such exhibitions are in fact vast object lessons, but, like all other object lessons, there is needed in most cases a certain amount of direction and concentration in order that the lesson be really learned. To the ordinary undisciplined visitor they present a sort of chaos, strange and interesting though it may appear, but without definite relations and so vast and manifold that the mind despairs of any methodical

arrangement or tangible grasp of its entirety. Most persons therefore go aimlessly through the grounds and carry away only so much as may chance to adhere to their minds by reason of its novelty or striking character.

The association of which we are speaking aimed to segregate certain of the most important portions of this maze of fact and bring it to the special attention of as large a number as possible by means of lectures offered by persons who were masters of their respective departments, and to use the exhibits as professors in modern universities use their specimens to illustrate these lectures. The plan was to give the lectures in some hall adjacent to the exhibits to which they related, and to follow this up by personal visits by the class to the departments where the objects were displayed, and by oral and tactual demonstrations, not merely of the objects themselves, but of their historical and causal relations and their true meaning to the present state of art and industry.

To speak only of the Anglo-American group, and to mention only a few of the leading examples, we find that under the able direction of that well-known scientific educator, Prof. Patrick Geddes, aided by such competent specialists as Professor Mavor, Prof. Arthur Thompson, and several others of the regular staff, the following subjects, among others, were presented in this doubly effective manner:

By Professor Geddes, "Every man his own art critic," with visits to the Palais des Beaux-Arts; "The outlooks of science, physical and biological," with experimental demonstrations at the monde souterrain at the Trocadéro; "France in the history of civilization," with visit to Vieux-Paris; "Paris, historic and actual," with visit to the pavilion of the city of Paris, etc.

By Professor Mavor: "Railways and transportation," with visit to the department of transportation of the Exposition; "Gold mining," with visit to the Transvaal mining exhibit; "Canada," with visit to the Canadian pavilion; "The factors of emigration and colonization," with visit to the British, Russian, and French colonial pavilions.

By Professor Thompson: "The zoology of the ocean," with visit to the oceanographic collections, pavilion of Monaco; "Fisher and hunter," with visit to the pavilion of chasse, pêche et forêts; "The web of life," with visit to the aquarium, rue de Paris.

In addition to these two-hour exercises, there were numerous conference visits to the most interesting exhibits, under the leadership of Messrs. Zug, Marr, Michie, Morris, Law, Grindling, Lukens, and others. These visits were not confined to the exposition grounds, but extended to the Louvre, the old market in the faubourg St. Germain, to the annex at Vincennes, and to the cathedrals of St. Denis, Beauvais, and Chartres.

A number of eminent persons and scientific specialists who visited the exposition were induced to lecture or address the association. Among these were the Right Hon. James Bryce, vice-president of the British group, to whom a reception was given in the United States pavilion on September 14; Mr. N. P. Gilman, who lectured on "Profit-sharing," followed by a visit to the social economy section; and Prof. A. S. Bickmore, who spoke on "Geographical education and the Hawaiian Islands," with lantern photographs, and showed the class through the Hawaiian exposition in the west Trocadéro; and Mr. Lester F. Ward, who lectured at the Trocadéro on "The dependence of social science upon physical science."

From this incomplete sketch it is easy to see how much more the exposition must have meant to those who availed themselves of its advantages than to the average visitor. The effect was clearly educative in a high degree, and the entire scheme was essentially sociological.

#### THE AUXILIARY CONGRESSES.

Although, as already remarked, a universal exposition, as a civilizing and socializing agency, constitutes a grand object lesson in sociology, still its very magnitude precludes all attempt to treat its material aspects in a paper like the present, which must confine itself in the main to those more immaterial and ideal or ideological features which naturally present themselves in connection with such an enterprise. The multitudinous exhibits, illustrating the inventive power of the world, form a material basis for the development of thought. The suggestive power of such a concentration of the products of genius is enormous, and the ideas that grow out of them can not be confined to the practical applications of machines and instruments, however ingenious and important. These ideas swarm in such an environment and fertilize one another. They combine and recombine, forming groups within groups of compound conceptions, which arrange themselves in a vast hierarchy of thought. Then this generalized and integrated mass differentiates and specializes until every distinct body of knowledge or science underlying and making possible the several discoveries, inventions, arts, and mechanisms represented in the exhibition demands separate expression. This demand is supplied by inaugurating an extensive series of special organizations or congresses to meet in connection with the exposition and discuss the principles that underlie all branches of development. And since all this has to do with the progress of civilization in the social state of man, it may be said of these congresses, as it was said of the exposition itself, that they are all sociological in the widest sense of that word. But as they represent all the sciences, and as it is convenient at least to consider