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COMPILED AND ABSTRACTED BY

DAVID DUNCAN, M A. (late Professor of Logic and Director of Studies at Madras); RICHARD SIEPPING, Ph D.; and JAMES COLLIER.

EXTRACT FROM THE PROVISIONAL PREFACE

In preparation for The Principles of Sociology, requiring as bases of induction large accumulations of data, it was arranged for comparison, I, some twelve years ago, commenced, by proxy, the collection and organization of facts presented by societies of different types, past and present, being fortunate enough to secure the services of gentlemen competent to carry on the process in the way I wished. Though this classified compilation of materials was entered upon solely to facilitate my own work, yet, after having brought the mode of classification to a satisfactory form, and after having had some of the Tables filled up, I decided to have the undertaking executed with a view to publication, the facts collected and arranged for easy reference and concrete study of their relations, being so presented, apart from hypothesis, as to aid all students of Social Science in testing such conclusions as they have drawn and in drawing others.

The Work consists of three large Divisions. Each comprises a set of Tables exhibiting the facts as abstracted and classified, and a mass of quotations and abridged abstracts otherwise classified, on which the statements contained in the Tables are based. The condensed statements, arranged after a uniform manner, give, in each Table and succession of Tables, the phenomena of all orders which each society presents—constitute an account of its morphology, its physiology, and (if a society having a known history) its development. On the other hand, the collected Extracts, serving as authorities for the statements in the Tables, are (or rather will be, when the Work is complete) classified primarily according to the kinds of phenomena to which they refer, and secondarily according to the societies exhibiting those phenomena, so that each kind of phenomenon as it is displayed in all societies, may be separately studied with convenience.

In further explanation I may say that the classified compilations and digests of materials to be thus brought together under the title of Descriptive Sociology, are intended to supply the student of Social Science with data, standing towards his conclusions in a relation like that in which accounts of the structures and functions of different types of animals stand to the conclusions of the biologist. Until there had been such systematic descriptions of different kinds of organisms, as made it possible to compare the connections, and forms, and actions, and modes of origin, of their parts, the Science of Life could make no progress. And in like manner, before there can be reached in Sociology, generalizations having a certainty making them worthy to be called scientific, there must be definite accounts of the institutions and actions of societies of various types, and in various stages of evolution, so arranged as to furnish the means of readily ascertaining what social phenomena are habitually associated.
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