

be awakened by it to a larger and nobler conception of the true mission of labor, and by its practice, along the path of simple, honest, persistent work, life may be made easier, and men and women healthier and happier.

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SECTION I.—SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SCIENCE.

THE sessions of the Section of Social and Economic Science had rather more interest and attendance this year than usual from the reopening of the question, voted upon the previous year, of an appropriate title, the new proposition being one of nearly identical meaning, but not so clearly defined in the word Sociology. As first used by Comte (not a very respectable paternity, by the way) and adopted by Spencer, sociology is confined to human societary evolution, a species of linear succession in the unfolding of psychology. Giddings, in his recently issued *Principles of Sociology*, bases it on the 'consciousness of kind,' a basis broad enough to include the societary institutions of animals, especially certain insects. The fact that several American universities have established chairs of sociology, and the name already includes quite a bibliography with the adjunct of a monthly periodical (although the Europeans are still rather shy of the name) brings into prominence the need of some appropriate title for that branch of knowledge which is concerned with demography, vital statistics, polity, economics, ethics, government, crimes, punishments, education, etc. The determination of this point brings up the underlying one of the need of some recasting of the departments of science concerned in psychological development. New classifications continually appear, in greater or less conformity with the broader views made possible by modern research. It is apparent that

we are on the threshold of a New Physics' which threatens to overlap that of the new Astronomy on the one hand and the new Chemistry on the other; and also to invade the domain of Psychology, with all the portentous consequences implied thereby. So of anthropology (another of Comte's progeny) of indefinite extent, as at present outlined, embracing archeology, ethnology, mythology and folk lore, somatology and psychology. Is sociology properly a branch of anthropology; or should it merely, for convenience of consideration, to be erected into a quasi-independent science?

Popular interest in the deliberations of the Section of Economic Science was this year enhanced by the pending National Presidential election and the political partisan platform issues, especially the 'gold vs. silver' controversy, which occupies so large a space in the newspaper and periodical press discussions, as if it were a new subject recently dropped into our economic life. Bimetallism is really an old debate which has been within a generation intensified by the nearly concurrent action of (1) the sale of the German indemnity silver after 1871; (2) the suspension of free coinage (at 15½ to 1) by the Latin Union; (3) the dropping of the silver dollar from the legal tender United States coins in 1873; (4) the fall in market value of silver by the increased output of United States mines, due to richer ores, better machinery and superior methods of extraction; (5) the cessation of silver absorption in Asiatic population—one-third of the human race—due in part to the introduction of railroads and telegraphs, and in part to the supply of ready-made jewelry and silverwares, formerly composed of hoarded coin and reconvertible into coin; (6) the law of redundancy or 'glut,' which operates to send down the price of the whole product, and (7) the widespread agitation and discussion of the value of silver as a unit measure of value which has resulted in

corresponding apprehension and disestimation. Several of these main contributing causes are not of human or legislative contrivance, and evidently cannot be banished by legislation, certainly not by the United States alone, as Prof. Walker and European students unhesitatingly declare. This is manifestly a question in which the executive and law-making powers might well avail themselves of expert advice, as in the case of weights and measures, nautical almanac, geodetic and coast survey, and other technical matters. European governments habitually do this, but the people of the United States feel quite competent to grapple with it; hence the need of 'a campaign of education,' and the paralysis of industry until the right decision is reached.

Edward Atkinson, as usual, led off in the discussion by two papers, 'What is true Money?' and 'The Crime against Labor;' the first being, for the most part, a condensed history of the various substances which have been used as money in historic, prehistoric and barbaric times, with the pendant that by a process of natural selection, gold and silver had come to be the most convenient and stable; and that all artificial attempts at establishing by enactment a fixed ratio between them had failed, and must fail; any apparent agreement to the contrary being transient and approximate only. The second paper supplemented the first by showing that bad money could not bring benefit to the wage earners, but was more likely to produce paralysis of trade and manufacture, and want and suffering to laborers. A third paper on the same topics, by Dr. Wm. H. Hale, went over the well-worn theme on a much higher level and in better spirit than the average partisan debates. The discussion brought out two or three advocates of the silver heresy, who made the claim that gold had appreciated, all other commodities being by so much

lowered in price. No very new and striking evidence was adduced on either side.

Quite a surprising degree of interest was exhibited in the reading and subsequent discussion of a paper on 'The Competition of the Sexes and its Results,' by Laurence Irwell, of Buffalo, an Oxford graduate. His contention that the new woman should abstain from the professions of law, medicine and politics was not merely because she would thereby displace an equal number of men who might have families to support, but also because the child-bearing sex are not physically or mentally qualified to stand the strain. The ladies of the audience seemed to be divided on this point, but agreed that the blame for women pushing into new fields of labor did not rest with their sex.

A paper on the 'Tin-plate Experiment,' by Prof. A. P. Winston, was the result of careful and impartial inquiries as to the working of the clause in the (McKinley) Act of 1890 raising the impost from 1 to 2.20 cents per pound in order to wrest, if possible, the American trade from the Welsh makers. In 1894 the rate was, by the Wilson bill, reduced to 1.20 cents per pound. The statistics show that for the four years ending June 30, 1895, a gratifying and rapid growth of production, viz., 19,000,000, 108,000,000, 145,000,000 and 200,000,000 pounds. Importations showed a marked decline. The conclusion to be drawn from the figures adduced was that, even if no further encouragement of tariff be given, the tin-plate industry, which has a large expectation of natural growth before it, can maintain itself against British competition, partly by superior mechanism and intelligence, proximity of raw material, and incoming of Welsh operatives.

Dr. C. F. Taylor, of Philadelphia, presented a paper entitled 'An Inheritance for the Waifs,' which was an ingenious appeal to the National Congress to tax heavily, by

a progressive ratio, the succession of estates exceeding \$1,000,000, for the benefit of waifs and strays; or, as the author put it, to make the Nation a joint and preferred heir of the very rich for the benefit of the destitute orphans—a sort of poetic or divine retribution. Attention was called to the fact that evasion would be resorted to by giving, instead of bequeathing, the excess property, which, the author contended, could be thwarted, as by the French law, by taxing such gifts. No one called attention to the fact that aside from general objections of policy and the discrimination against millionaires, this is not a proper subject of Federal legislation, unless the District of Columbia be a trifling exception. Its jurisdiction qualifies that population as a proper seed-plot for experimental legislation, but otherwise all such matters are domestic, appertaining to each State of the United States for its separate trial.

Of similar purport was the argument of James S. Skilton, a practicing attorney at law in New York, advocating the incorporation of a 'Sociological Institution,' for which a Bill (H. R. 8,192) has been introduced in Congress. The headquarters of this proposed Association are to be in Washington, D. C., and its first Board of Managers comprised of the heads of the principal political departments. It is modelled closely upon the act incorporating the Smithsonian, with this notable difference that in the latter case there was already in the Treasury a handsome bequest of money, with specific recommendation of the donor (and with nobody's dissent) that it should be used to promote the diffusion of sound learning. No definition of its aims and purposes is given beyond the capacity to receive gifts of money and to loan the same to the public Treasury at four per cent., unless it be found in the words 'for the increase and diffusion of sociological science among men.' Something is said later about 'the

duties of librarian and of keeper of the sociological exhibits and material of the Institution.' This raises the very pertinent question: what is sociology, and what is included or excluded in the term? Whether this new term which it is thus attempted to christen and fasten upon the National statutes is likely to stick, and in what sense, or whether it is likely to be restricted in future use to merely human social forces, are questions which will be raised among philosophers, legislators and reformers. The endorsement of the American Association is sought for the Bill and will come up for action of the Council at the next regular meeting. Perhaps the long argument in its favor by its author may meanwhile appear in Dr. Small's *Journal of Sociology*, so that its merits may be more generally known.

Fifteen papers in all were considered, having a wide range of topics, as will be seen by the following, in addition to those specially mentioned above:

'Fashion, a Study,' by S. Edward Warren.

'The Value of Social Settlement,' by Aaron B. Keeler.

'Citizenship, its privileges and duties,' by Stillman F. Kneeland.

'Relics of Ancient Barbarism (legal),' by Stillman F. Kneeland.

'Suicide Legislation,' by W. Lane O'Neill.

'Better Distribution of Weather Forecasts,' by John A. Miller.

'Human Reciprocity (Vanishing Neighborhood),' by Mary J. Eastman.

Students and teachers of the group of subjects included in Social Science and Economics are invited to take part in the next meeting at Detroit, so as to lend additional zest and dignity to this important and fascinating field.

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Secretary.