



# The Principles of Sociology: An Analysis of the Phenomena of Association and of Social Organization

Franklin Henry Giddings

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In this volume, described as "an attempt to combine the principles of sociology in a coherent theory," Professor Giddings has attained real success. His work is the best and roost comprehensive introduction yet written to the general theory of the subject. It displays at once great breadth of information and a thorough insight into the ideas that have done most to bring order into study of human society. On the physical side it is worked out from the evolutionary point of view derived from Darwin and Mr. Spencer; while on the mental side it takes into account both Spencerian conceptions and those new ideas about the social mind which are to be found developed in writers like M. Tarde. "General Sociology" is regarded not as merely the sum of the particular social sciences, such as history of religion, history of art, etc., but as being rather their common basis. In this it resembles general biology, which is a science of elements and first principles applicable in all the special biological sciences. Society is an organism—or, rather, an "organization," which is more than organism—and as such is conditioned physically; yet sociology is not properly a physical nor even a biological science, but is essentially a science with a psychological datum. This datum is the "consciousness of kind." It is intermediate between the notion of "contract and alliance" (De Greef), which too special to serve as the universal sociological datum, and "imitation" (Tarde), which is too general. If the datum assigned by Professor Giddings at first seems itself too general, this impression is removed when he comes to define it in relation to human society. "Human nature," he says, "is the preeminently social nature. Its primary factor is a consciousness of kind that is more profound, more inclusive, more discriminating, more varied in its coloring, than any consciousness of kind that is found among the lower animals." This conception he defends against the view, derived from economics, that what is fundamental in society is "mutual aid." If, with Professor Giddings, we take consciousness of kind as involving desire—first of all, for association— some difficulties that may be raised against his view seem to disappear. Whether the purely social or the economic datum is regarded as primary, both have to be taken into account in the actual working out of the subject. On the theoretical question we agree with Professor Giddings that the social nature of man must be taken as prior to the conscious pursuit of utility through society as a means. Endeavor after "mutual aid" supervenes upon the mere desire of men for one another's society without thought of purpose....

—The Speaker.



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