

THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY.

*The Principles of Sociology.* By Herbert Spencer. Vol. iii. Pp. viii + 635. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1896.)

WITH this volume Mr. Spencer has completed his system of "Synthetic Philosophy," the work of thirty-six years. This fact gives a very special interest to his preface, where he tells with dignity and reserve of the disadvantages and disappointments under which his untiring purpose was carried through. Mr. Spencer's comprehensive survey of the sciences in the light of the conception of organic development has abundantly redeemed his promise to his subscribers. But "the first two volumes of the Principles of Sociology have expanded into three, and the third, which if written would now be the fourth, remains unwritten. It was to have treated of Progress." Mr. Spencer has been too much of a pioneer, perhaps, to hope to say the last word of evolutionist science on progress. But if his pleasure in his emancipation, to which he refers as his dominant emotion on the completion of his task, be not too great, we may venture to hope for a further contribution on the subject from the master's pen.

Of the present volume the first part has already seen the light in book form, under the title "Ecclesiastical Institutions." It traces the origin of the religious idea to the apparition of dead ancestors in dreams. "Gods arise by apotheosis." Whatever may be said as to the derivation of certain forms of fetishism and of the animal cults connected with totemism from ancestor worship, it is unlikely that the worship of nature-powers was at its source "but an aberrant form of ghost-worship," as Mr. Spencer holds. But at any rate, in the need to maintain right relations with ghostly powers, there arose the first professions—those of priest and medicine-man. The latter is essentially an exorcist, and his functions are gradually usurped upon by the propitiator of the beneficent spirits of the family, and specially of the chief's family. So that it is from the priest, as he becomes the comparatively leisured and sole repository of knowledge, that the professions draw their origin.

The second section, dealing with Professional Institutions, has already appeared in the shape of review-articles. It finds all those modes of the enrichment and expansion of life, which we call the professions, in germ in the priestly office. Not only teacher, architect, and musician, but actor and lawyer, surgeon and physician, man of science and philosopher spring up in the service and under the shadow of religion. Even where medical appliances were natural, the ideas which accompanied them were supernatural, so that the priest rather than the medicine-man is the source of modern medicine. And notwithstanding much specialisation—witness the Indian rhinoplast—and the empirical training of slave-doctors, the complete emancipation of surgery and medicine is quite modern. It was only the prohibition of clerical shedding of blood that freed the surgeon; it was because their medical duties too much engrossed the time of the clergy, that specialist physicians arose, whom in time a papal bull permitted to marry. Under

Henry VIII. a licence to practise in London issued from bishop or dean, "assisted by the faculty." As late as 1858, a medical diploma was granted by his Grace of Canterbury.

To interpret the sacred writings we need grammar. To determine the construction and orientation of altars and shrines, and to fix the seasons of sacrifice, we must have geometry and astronomy. It is the pontiff alone who has the secret of the arch. Hence even the concrete studies of the men of science are priestly; while in Greece alone of the ancient world were these and the abstract speculations of the philosopher emancipated, because "before there was time for an indigenous development of science and philosophy out of priestly culture, there was an intrusion of that science and philosophy which priestly culture had developed elsewhere," and the political incoherence of Greek states prevented the dominance of a hierarchy. Equally ingenious is the treatment of other apparent exceptions, popular music side by side with sacred music in the mediæval world, and the Roman contempt for the slave-actor.

The closing part of the work deals with Industrial Institutions, and is wholly new. An account of the division of labour, which owes nothing to Adam Smith, a history of the origin of exchange, which lays stress on the pre-barter stage, and which draws from the experiences of Cameron a novel illustration of the necessity for the evolution of money, and from the observations of Coote a new example of the qualities found necessary for good money, are followed by a sketch of the development from status to contract, in which the control of family or of chief or, here only incidentally, of priest gives way to guilds originally based on kinship, to free labour and to trades unions, or in which the condition of slavery passes through serfdom to freedom of contract. In this part of Mr. Spencer's work, brilliant though it is, the need that anthropology still has of an adequate method is apparent.

With free labour and its efforts to establish new groupings we pass to the treatment, not altogether convincing from the economist's point of view, of trades unions, co-operation, profit-sharing, and socialism. Of the first, Mr. Spencer is the candid and not hostile critic, though he fears a recrudescence of militant policy, and observes that the guilds, as contrasted with the unions, enforced a standard of work. As regards the rest, Mr. Spencer, feeling sure that all the victories of civilisation have been won by an increase of liberty, is inclined to regard reintegration as a step backward. Though the consideration of the effects of machinery on the labourer, who under the coercion of circumstances as producer "loses heavily—perhaps more heavily than he gains" as consumer, gives pause to Mr. Spencer's optimism, he concludes, as he began "nearly fifty years ago," with the conviction that "the ultimate man will be one whose private requirements coincide with public ones; he will be that manner of man who, in spontaneously fulfilling his own nature, incidentally performs the functions of a social unit, and yet is only enabled so to fulfil his own nature by all others doing the like."

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