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CIVICS, AS APPLIED SOCIOLOGY

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CATEGORY: SOCIOLOGY AND CULTURAL STUDIES -- CULTURE

Read before the Sociological Society at a Meeting in the School of Economics and Political Science (University of London), Clare Market, W.C., at 5 p.m., on Monday, July 18th, 1904; the Rt. Hon. CHARLES BOOTH, F.R.S., in the Chair.

INTRODUCTION

This department of sociological studies should evidently be, as far as possible, concrete in treatment. If it is to appeal to practical men and civic workers, it is important that the methods advocated for the systematic study of cities, and as underlying fruitful action, be not merely the product of the study, but rather be those which may be acquired in course of local observation and practical effort. My problem is thus to outline such general ideas as may naturally crystallise from the experience of any moderately-travelled observer of varied interests; so that his observation of city after city, now panoramic and impressionist, again detailed, should gradually develop towards an orderly Regional Survey. This point of view has next to be correlated with the corresponding practical experience, that which may be acquired through some varied experiences of citizenship, and thence rise toward a larger and more orderly conception of civic action--as Regional Service. In a word, then, Applied Sociology in general, or [Page: 104] Civics, as one of its main departments, may be defined as the application of Social Survey to Social Service.

In this complex field of study as in simpler preliminary ones, our everyday experiences and commonsense interpretations gradually become more systematic, that is, begin to assume a scientific character; while our activities, in becoming more orderly and comprehensive, similarly approximate towards art. Thus there is emerging more and more clearly for sociological studies in general, for their concrete fields of

application in city after city, the conception of a scientific centre of observation and record on the one hand, and of a corresponding centre of experimental endeavour on the other--in short of Sociological Observatory and Sociological Laboratory, and of these as increasingly co-ordinated. Indeed, is not such association of observations and experiments, are not such institutions actually incipient here and elsewhere? I need not multiply instances of the correlation of science and art, as of chemistry with agriculture, or biology with medicine. Yet, on the strictly sociological plane and in civic application they are as yet less generally evident, though such obvious connections as that of vital statistics with hygienic administration, that of commercial statistics with politics, are becoming recognised by all. In the paper with which this Society's work lately opened, the intimate connection between a scientific demography and a practical eugenics has been clearly set forth. But this study of the community in the aggregate finds its natural parallel and complement in the study of the community as an integrate, with material and immaterial structures and functions, which we call the City. Correspondingly, the improvement of the individuals of the community, which is the aim of eugenics, involves a corresponding civic progress. Using (for the moment at least) a parallel nomenclature, we see that the sociologist is concerned not only with "demography" but with "politography," and that "eugenics" is inseparable from "politogenics." For the struggle for existence, though observed mainly from the side of its individuals by the demographer, is not only an intra-civic but an inter-civic process; and if so, ameliorative selection, now clearly sought for the individuals in detail as eugenics, is inseparable from a corresponding civic art--a literal "Eupolitogenics."

A--THE GEOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF CITIES

Coming to concrete Civic Survey, where shall we begin? Not only in variety and magnitude of civic activities, but, thanks especially to the work of Mr. Charles Booth and his collaborators in actual social survey also, London may naturally claim pre-eminence. Yet even at best, does not this vastest of world cities remain a less or more foggy labyrinth, from which surrounding [Page: 105] regions with their smaller cities can be but dimly descried, even with the best intentions of avoiding the cheap generalisation of "the provinces"? For our more general and comparative study, then, simpler beginnings are preferable. More suitable, therefore, to our fundamental thesis--that no less definite than the study of races and usages or languages, is that of the groupings of men--is the clearer outlook, the more panoramic view of a definite geographic region, such, for instance, as lies beneath us upon a mountain holiday. Beneath vast hunting desolations lie the pastoral hillsides, below these again scattered arable crofts and sparsely dotted

hamlets lead us to the small upland village of the main glen: from this again one descends to the large and prosperous village of the foothills and its railway terminus, where lowland and highland meet. East or west, each mountain valley has its analogous terminal and initial village, upon its fertile fan-shaped slope, and with its corresponding minor market; while, central to the broad agricultural strath with its slow meandering river, stands the prosperous market town, the road and railway junction upon which all the various glen-villages converge. A day's march further down, and at the convergence of several such valleys, stands the larger county-town--in the region before me as I write, one of added importance, since not only well nigh central to Scotland, but as the tidal limit of a till lately navigable river. Finally, at the mouth of its estuary, rises the smoke of a great manufacturing city, a central world-market in its way. Such a river system is, as geographer after geographer has pointed out, the essential unit for the student of cities and civilisations. Hence this simple geographical method of treatment must here be pled for as fundamental to any really orderly and comparative treatment of our subject. By descending from source to sea we follow the development of civilisation from its simple origins to its complex resultants; nor can any element of this be omitted. Were we to begin with the peasant hamlet as our initial unit, and forget the hinterlands of pasture, forest, and chase (an error to which the writer on cities is naturally prone), the anthropologist would soon remind us that in forgetting the hunter, we had omitted the essential germ of active militarism, and hence very largely of aristocratic rule. Similarly, [Page: 106] in ignoring the pastoral life, we should be losing sight of a main fount of spiritual power, and this not only as regards the historic religions, but all later culture elements also, from the poetic to the educational. In short, then, it takes the whole region to make the city. As the river carries down contributions from its whole course, so each complex community, as we descend, is modified by its predecessors. The converse is no doubt true also, but commonly in less degree.

In this way with the geographer we may rapidly review and extend our knowledge of the grouping of cities. Such a survey of a series of our own river-basins, say from Dee to Thames, and of a few leading Continental ones, say the Rhine and Meuse, the Seine and Loire, the Rhone, the Po, the Danube--and, if possible, in America also, at least the Hudson and Mississippi--will be found the soundest of introductions to the study of cities. The comparison of corresponding types at once yields the conviction of broad general unity of development, structure, and function. Thus, with Metschnikoff we recognise the succession of potamic, thalassic, and oceanic civilisations; with Reclus we see the regular distribution of minor and major towns to have been largely influenced not only by geographical position but by convenient journey distances. Again, we note how the exigencies of defence and of government, the developments of religion, despite all historic

diversities, have been fundamentally the same. It is not, of course, to be forgotten how government, commerce, communications, have concentrated, altered or at least disguised the fundamental geographical simplicity of this descending hierarchy from mountain-hamlet to ocean-metropolis; but it is useful for the student constantly to recover the elemental and naturalist-like point of view even in the greatest cities. At times we all see London as still fundamentally an agglomeration of villages, with their surviving patches of common, around a mediaeval seaport; or we discern even in the utmost magnificence of Paris, say its Place de l'Etoile, with its spread of boulevards, but the hunter's tryst by the fallen tree, with its radiating forest-rides, each literally arrow-straight. So the narrow rectangular network of an American city is explicable only by the unthinking persistence of the peasant thrift, which grudges good land to [Page: 107] road-way, and is jealous of oblique short cuts. In short, then, in what seems our most studied city planning, we are still building from our inherited instincts like the bees. Our Civics is thus still far from an Applied Sociology.

B--THE HISTORIC SURVEY OF CITIES

But a city is more than a place in space, it is a drama in time. Though the claim of geography be fundamental our interest in the history of the city is supremely greater; it is obviously no mere geographic circumstances which developed one hill-fort in Judea, and another in Attica, into world centres, to this day more deeply influential and significant than are the vastest modern capitals. This very wealth of historical interests and resources, the corresponding multiplicity of specialisms, more than ever proves the need of some means by which to group and classify them. Some panoramic simplification of our ideas of history comparable to that of our geography, and if possible congruent with this, is plainly what we want. Again the answer comes through geography, though no longer in mere map or relief, but now in vertical section--in the order of strata ascending from past to present, whether we study rock-formations with the geologist, excavate more recent accumulations with the archaeologist, or interpret ruins or monuments with the historian. Though the primitive conditions we have above noted with the physiographer remain apparent, indeed usually permanent, cities have none the less their characteristic phases of historic development decipherably superposed. Thus below even the characteristically patriarchal civilisations, an earlier matriarchal order is often becoming disclosed. Our interest in exploring some stately modern or Renaissance city is constantly varied by finding some picturesque mediaeval remnant; below this some fragment of Roman ruin; below this it may be some barbarian fort or mound. Hence the fascinating interest of travel, which compels us ever to begin our survey anew. Starting with

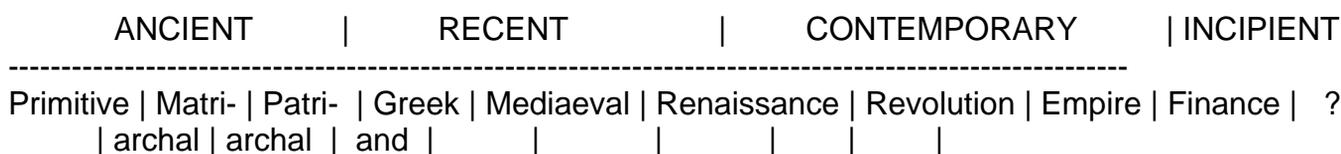
the same river-basin as before, the geographic panorama now gains a new and deeper interest. Primitive centres long forgotten start into life; pre-historic tumuli give up their dead; to the stone circles the [Page: 108] worshippers return; the British and the Roman camps again fill with armed men, and beside the prosaic market town arises a shadowy Arthurian capital. Next, some moment-centuries later, a usurper's tower rises and falls; the mediaeval abbey, the great castles, have their day; with the Reformation and the Renaissance the towns again are transformed; and yet more thoroughly than ever by the Industrial Revolution, with its factories, railways, steamships, and all that they bring with them. Thus, for instance, almost more important than the internal transformation and concentration wrought by railway and telegraph, is the selection, amidst the almost innumerable seaports of the older order, of the very few adapted to the deep draught of modern ships. In a word, not only does the main series of active cities display traces of all the past phases of evolution, but beside this lie fossils, or linger survivals, of almost every preceding phase.

Hence, after many years of experiment and practice in teaching sociology I still find no better method available than that of regional survey, historical as well as geographical. Beginning with some popular excursion of obvious beauty and romantic interest like that to Melrose, we see with every tourist how naturally and fully the atmosphere and tradition of the Border found its expression and world influence in Sir Walter Scott. Thence, passing by way of contrast through the long isolated peninsula of Fife, say to representative towns like Kirkcaldy and Largo, we still see the conditions of that individualism of which Adam Smith and Alexander Selkirk ("Robinson Crusoe") have each in his way become the very prototypes. In such ways the connection of regional geography, history, and social psychology becomes increasingly clear. Again, we explore the other old Fife seaports, a series of survivals like those of the Zuyder Zee, or again work out in the field the significance of Stirling, so often the strategic centre of Scotland. Again, Dunfermline, as early mediaeval capital and abbey, furnishes a convenient object lesson preparatory to the study of the larger Edinburgh. Here, again, its triple centre, in the port of Leith, the Royal Castle, the Abbey of Holyrood, are the respective analogues of the port of London, the Tower, and Westminster; while each city-group has its outlying circle of minor burghs, tardily and imperfectly incorporated into a civic whole. Again, such a marked contrast of civic origins and developments as those of Glasgow and Edinburgh has to be accounted for; and thus through such progressively complexer surveys we reach the plane of modern civic problems and policies. Understanding the present as the development of the past, are we not preparing also to understand the future as the development of the present?

The impressiveness of the aspect of Edinburgh to its visitors is thus not [Page: 109] merely pictorial. Be the spectator conscious of this or

no, it turns primarily upon the contrast of the mediaeval hill-city with its castle ramparts, its fretted cathedral crown, with park and boulevard, with shops, hotels and railway stations. But the historic panorama is unusually complete. See the hill-fort defended by lake and forest, becoming "castrum puellarum," becoming a Roman and an Arthurian citadel, a mediaeval stronghold of innumerable sieges, a centre of autocratic and military dictatures, oligarchic governments, at length a museum of the past. So in the city itself. Here the narrow ridge crowded into a single street all the essential organs of a capital, and still presents with the rarest completeness of concentration a conspectus of modern civic life and development; and this alike as regards both spiritual and temporal powers, using these terms in their broadest senses as the respective expressions of the material order and its immaterial counterparts. Thus the royal and noble castles of the Middle Age become with the Renaissance here as everywhere something of palaces, while with the industrial revolution they have become replaced by factories or transformed into breweries. So the guidance of speculative thought, once concentrated in the mediaeval abbey, becomes transferred to the Reformation assembly of divines, to the Renaissance college; and again at the Revolution, is largely taken over by the speculative encyclopaedists, of whom Hume and Smith were but the most eminent. Nor are later developments less obvious. Of the following generation, we have the neo-classic architecture which everywhere dominated Europe after the French Revolution and during the First Empire, while of the next generation's reaction against all this in the romantic movement, the neo-Gothic monument of Scott is the most characteristic possible representative. Again, just as in the Oxford movement we had the (appropriately regional) renaissance of the idealism of the Cavaliers, so in Edinburgh we have naturally the simultaneous renaissance of the Puritan ideal, e.g., in the Free Church, whose monument accordingly rises to dominate the city in its turn. The later period of prosperous Liberalism, the heroic enthusiasms of Empire, have each left their mark; and now in the dominant phase of social evolution, that of Finance, the banks, the financial companies, the press are having their turn as monument builders. Our Old Edinburgh is thus the most condensed example, the visible microcosm of the social evolution which is manifest everywhere; so that as a teaching model of sociological development it may renew its educational attractiveness when its improving hygiene has lessened its medical advantages.

Setting down now these phases of historical development in tabular form, we have a diagram such as the following:--



which, were it placed erect, we might now compare to the increasing [Page: 110] nodes of a growing stem, or rather say the layers of a coral reef, in which each generation constructs its characteristic stony skeleton as a contribution to the growing yet dying and wearying whole. I have elaborated this example of the panoramic aspect of Old Edinburgh as a widely familiar instance of the method of literal survey with which social and civic studies may so conveniently begin; and I press the value of extending these even to the utmost elaborateness of photographic survey: in my view, indeed, a sociological society has at least as much use for a collection of maps, plans and photographs as of statistics, indeed scarcely less than one of books. Of course, in all this I am but recalling what every tourist in some measure knows; yet his impressions and recollections can become an orderly politography, only as he sees each city in terms of its characteristic social formations, and as he utilises the best examples from each phase towards building up a complete picture of the greatest products of civic evolution, temporal and spiritual, of all places and times up to the present. Such a parallel of the historic survey of the city to that of its underlying geological area is thus in no wise a metaphoric one, but one which may be worked out upon maps sections and diagrams almost completely in the same way--in fact, with little change save that of colours and vertical scale. The attempt to express the characteristic and essential life and thought of a given region in each period upon a series of maps is in fact the best method of understanding the everyday map at which we commonly look so unthinkingly.

Much of the preceding, I am assured, must be most unsatisfactory to those who look at cities only from the standpoint of so many committees dealing with police, water, finance, and so on; or to those who are content to view the magnitude, the wealth and the population, the industries and the manufactures of a great city without considering whence these have come and whither they are leading; equally unsatisfactory also, I fear, to those to whom civic dignities and precedence, or the alternations of winning political colours, appear of prime importance. I can only hope that some of these may, on consideration, admit that the points of view I have endeavoured to outline above may be worth some thought and study as elementary preliminaries to their own more special and developed interests; and if the society permit. I hope to approach these more closely in a later paper.

[Page: 111] The abstract economist or legalist, the moral or political philosopher may also resent the proposed mode of treatment as an attempt to materialise sociology by reducing it to concrete terms alone. But I would reply that observation, so far from excluding interpretation, is

just the very means of preparing for it. It is the observant naturalist, the travelled zoologist and botanist, who later becomes the productive writer on evolution. It is the historian who may best venture on into the philosophy of history;--to think the reverse is to remain in the pre-scientific order altogether: hence the construction of systems of abstract and deductive economics, politics or morals, has really been the last surviving effort of scholasticism. Viewed as Science, Civics is that branch of Sociology which deals with Cities--their origin and distribution; their development and structure; their functioning, internal and external, material and psychological; their evolution, individual and associated. Viewed again from the practical side, that of applied science, Civics must develop through experimental endeavour into the more and more effective Art of enhancing the life of the city and of advancing its evolution. With the first of these lines of study, the concretely scientific, our philosophical outlook will not fail to widen; with the second, the practical, our ethical insight will not fail to deepen also.

As primarily a student of living nature in evolution, I have naturally approached the city from the side of its geographic and historic survey, its environment and functional change; yet it is but a step from these to the abstract interpretations of the economist or the politician, even of philosopher and moralist. Again, since in everyday practice co-ordinating the literal maps of each civic surveys with even more concretely detailed plans as gardener and builder, I find less danger than may at first appear of ignoring the legitimate demands of the needed practical division of labour in the city's service. When the first mutual unfamiliarity is got over, there is thus also a greatly diminished distance between speculative thinkers and practical men, who at present, in this country especially, stand almost unrelated: the evolutionist student and worker thus begins to furnish the missing link between them.

C--THE CITIZEN IN PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

Leaving now the external survey of the city by help of its material framework, its characteristic buildings and predominant styles, for the deeper psychological survey of the citizens themselves, we may conveniently begin with these also in their process of development--in fact, our method compels us to this course. We enter then a school; and if we bring fresh eyes we may soon be agreed that the extraordinary babel of studies its time-table and curriculum reveal, is intelligible from no single one of the various [Page: 112] geographic or historic points of view we have traversed from mountain to sea, or from past to present. But this unprecedented conflict of studies becomes at once intelligible when viewed apart from any and every definite theory of education yet promulgated by educationists, and even acquires a fresh

theory of its own--that of the attempted recapitulation of the survivals of each and all preceding periods in their practical or speculative aspects, particularly the later legends and literatures, their rituals and codes. Thus, the inordinate specialisation upon arithmetic, the exaggeration of all three R's, is plainly the survival of the demand for cheap yet efficient clerks, characteristic of the recent and contemporary financial period.

The ritual of examinations with its correlation of memorising and muscular drill is similarly a development of the imperial order, historically borrowed from the Napoleonic one; the chaotic "general knowledge" is similarly a survival of the encyclopaedic period; that is, of the French Revolution and the Liberal Movement generally; the Latin grammar and verses are of course the survivals of the Renaissance, as the precise fidelity to absurd spelling is the imitation of its proof readers; the essay is the abridged form of the mediaeval disputation; and only such genuine sympathy with Virgil or Tacitus, with Homer or Plato as one in a thousand acquires, is truly Roman or Greek at all. The religious instruction, however, re-interpreted by the mediaeval Church or the Reformation, has still its strength in some of the best elements of patriarchal literature; while the fairy tale, by which all this superincumbent weight of learning is sometimes alleviated, is the child's inheritance from the matriarchal order. Finally, the apple and the ball, at the bottom of this whole burden of books, complete the recapitulation; as the one, the raw fruit; the other, the ready missile, of primeval man. Our child then is heir of all the ages more fully than he or his teachers commonly realise. The struggle for mastery of the schools is thus no temporary feud, but an unending battle; one destined to increase rather than diminish; for in this there is the perpetual clash of all the forces of good heredity and evil atavism, of all the new variations also, healthy or diseases.

[Page: 113] D--THE APPLIED SOCIOLOGY OF THE PRESENT

The city and its children thus historically present a thoroughly parallel accumulation of survivals or recapitulations of the past in the present. Few types nowadays are pure, that is, keep strictly to their period; we are all more or less mixed and modernised. Still, whether by temporal or spiritual compulsion, whether for the sake of bread or honour, each mainly and practically stands by his order, and acts with the social formation he belongs to. Thus now the question of the practical civics, that is, of the applied sociology, of each individual, each body or interests may be broadly defined; it is to emphasise his particular historic type, his social formation and influence in the civic whole, if not indeed to dominate this as far as may be. We are all for progress, but we each define it in his own way. Hence one man of

industrial energy builds more factories or slums, another as naturally more breweries to supply them; and in municipal or national council his line of action, conscious or unconscious, remains congruent with these. Representative government fails to yield all that its inventors hoped of it, simply because it is so tolerably representative of its majorities; and there is thus great truth in the common consolation that our municipal governments, like larger ones, are seldom much worse than we deserve. Each social formation, through each of its material activities, exerts its influence upon the civic whole; and each of its ideas and ideals wins also its place and power. At one time the legal and punitive point of view, directing itself mainly to individual cases, or the philanthropic, palliating sufferings, dispute the foremost places; and now in their turn hygienic or educational endeavours arise, towards treating causes instead of waiting for consequences. Such endeavours are still undeniably too vague in thought, too crude in practice, and the enthusiast of hygiene or education or temperance may have much to answer for. But so, also, has he who stands outside of the actual civic field, whether as philistine or aesthete, utopist or cynic, party politician or "mug-wump." Between all these extremes it is for the united forces of civic survey and civic service to find the middle course. [Page: 114] We observe then in the actual city, as among its future citizens, that our action is generally the attempt to mould both alike to some past or passing social formation, and, therefore, usually towards the type to which our interest and our survey incline, be this in our own city or more probably in some earlier one. Even in the actual passing detail of party politics we are often reminded how directly continuous are the rivals with puritan London, with royalist Oxford; but still more is this the case throughout the history of thought and action, and the intenser the more plainly; for it is in his highest moments of conviction and decision that the Puritan feels most in sympathy with the law or the prophets of Jerusalem, the scholar with Athens; or that the man of action--be he the first French republican or the latest imperialist--most frankly draws his inspiration from the corresponding developments of Paris. It is a commonplace of psychology that our thought is and must be anthropomorphic; a commonplace of history that it has been Hebraomorphic, Hellenomorphic, Latinomorphic, and so on by turns.

This view has often been well worked out by the historian of inventions and discoveries, of customs or laws, of policies or religions, as by the historian of language or the fine arts. What we still commonly need, however, is to carry this view clearly into our own city and its institutions, its streets and schools and homes, until either in the private spending or public voting of the smallest sum we know exactly whether we are so far determining expenditure and influence towards enlarging, say, the influence and example of renascent Florence in one generation or of decadent Versailles in another. There is no danger of awaking this consciousness too fully; for since we have ceased

consciously to cite and utilise the high examples of history we have been the more faithfully, because sub-consciously and automatically, continuing and extending later and lower developments.

E--CITIES, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Hence, after a Liberal and an Imperial generation, each happy in their respective visions of wealth and expanding greatness [Page: 115], the current renewal of civic interests naturally takes the form of an awakening survey of our actual environment. First, a literal mapping of its regional elements, and then an historic interpretation of these--not, alas, merely or mainly in terms of the cities of sacred or classic tradition, nor of the Mediaeval or Renaissance cities which followed these, but as stupendous extensions of the mediaeval Ghetto, of the Wapping Stairs, of the Lancashire factories and of the Black Country, relieved by the coarse jollities of Restoration London, and adorned for the most part, with debased survivals from the Italian and the French Renaissance. There is thus no more question in our civic discussions of "bringing in" or "leaving out" geography or history; we have been too long unconscious of them, as was M. Jourdain of his speaking in prose.

But what of the opening Future? May its coming social developments not be discerned by the careful observer in germs and buds already formed or forming, or deduced by the thinker from sociological principles? I believe in large measure both; yet cannot within these limits attempt to justify either. Enough for the present, if it be admitted that the practical man in his thought and action in the present is mainly the as yet too unconscious child of the past, and that in the city he is still working within the grasp of natural conditions.

To realise the geographic and historic factors of our city's life is thus the first step to comprehension of the present, one indispensable to any attempt at the scientific forecast of the future, which must avoid as far as it can the dangers of mere utopianism.

F--LITERATURE OF CIVICS

No discussion of the preliminaries and fundamentals of Civics can omit some consideration of the vast and ever growing literature of cities. But how are we to utilise this? How continue it? How co-ordinate it with the needed independent and first-hand survey of city by city? And how apply this whole knowledge of past and present towards civic action?

The answer must plainly be a concrete one. Every city [Page: 116] however small, has already a copious literature of its topography and

history in the past; one, in fact, so ample that its mere bibliography may readily fill a goodly volume,[1] to which the specialist will long be adding fresh entries. This mass of literature may next be viewed as the material for a comprehensive monograph, well enriched with maps and illustrations, such as many cities can boast; and this again may be condensed into a guide-book. Guide-books have long been excellent in their descriptive and historical detail, and are becoming increasingly interpretative also, especially since Mr. Grant Allen transferred his evolutionary insight and his expository clearness from natural to civic history.

[1] e.g., Erskine Beveridge, LL.D., Bibliography of Dunfermline.--_Dunfermline, 1902._ 8vo.

After this general and preliminary survey of geographic environment and historic development, there nowadays begins to appear the material of a complementary and contemporary volume, the Social Survey proper. Towards this, statistical materials are partly to be found amid parliamentary and municipal reports and returns, economic journals and the like, but a fresh and first-hand survey in detail is obviously necessary. In this class of literature, Mr. Booth's monumental Survey of London, followed by others, such as Mr. Rowntree's of York, have already been so widely stimulating and suggestive that it may safely be predicted that before many years the Social Survey of any given city will be as easily and naturally obtainable as is at present its guide-book; and the rationalised census of the present condition of its people, their occupation and real wages, their family budget and culture-level, should be as readily ascertainable from the one, as their antecedents understood or their monuments visited by help of the other.

But these two volumes--"The City: Past and Present,"--are not enough. Is not a third volume imaginable and possible, that of the opening Civic Future? Having taken full note of places as they were and are, of things as they have come about, and of people as they are--of their occupations, families, and institutions, their ideas and ideals--may we not to some extent discern, then patiently plan out, at length boldly suggest, something of [Page: 117] their actual or potential development? And may not, must not, such discernment, such planning, while primarily, of course, for the immediate future, also take account of the remoter and higher issues which a city's indefinitely long life and correspondingly needed foresight and statesmanship involve? Such a volume would thus differ widely from the traditional and contemporary "literature of Utopias" in being regional instead of non-regional, indeed ir-regional and so realisable, instead of being unrealisable and unattainable altogether. The theme of such a volume would thus be to indicate the practicable alternatives, and to select and to define from these the lines of development of the legitimate _Eu-topia_ possible in the given city, and characteristic of it; obviously, therefore, a very

different thing from a vague _Ou-topia_, concretely realisable nowhere. Such abstract counsels of perfection as the descriptions of the ideal city, from Augustine through More or Campanella and Bacon to Morris, have been consolatory to many, to others inspiring. Still, a Utopia is one thing, a plan for our city improvement is another.

Some concrete, if still fragmentary, materials towards such a volume are, of course, to be found in all municipal offices, though scattered between the offices of the city engineer and health officer, the architect and park superintendent; while the private architect and landscape gardener, the artist, sometimes even the municipal voters and their representatives, may all have ideas of their own. But though our cities are still as a whole planless, their growth as yet little better than a mere casual accretion and agglomeration, if not a spreading blight, American and German cities are now increasingly affording examples of comprehensive design of extension and of internal improvement. As a specific example of such an attempt towards the improvement of a British city, one not indeed comprehending all aspects of its life, but detailed and reasoned so far as it goes, and expressing that continuity of past and present into future which has been above argued for, I am permitted by the courtesy of the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust to lay on the Society's library table an early copy of a recent study of practicable possibilities in a city typically suitable for consideration from the present standpoint, since presenting within a moderate and readily intelligible [Page: 118] scale a very marked combination of historic interests, and of contemporary and growing activity, both industrial and cultural, with hopeful civic outlook.

That co-adjustment of social survey and social service which has been above argued for as the essential idea of civics as applied sociology is thus no abstract principle, but a concrete and practicable method. Yet it is one not lacking in generality of application. For what we have reached is really the conception of an _Encyclopaedia Civica_, to which each city should contribute the Trilogy of its Past, its Present, and its Future. Better far, as life transcends books, we may see, and yet more, foresee, the growth of civic consciousness and conscience, the awakening of citizenship towards civic renaissance. All this the production of such volumes would at one imply and inspire--life ever producing its appropriate expression in literature, and literature reacting upon the ennoblement of life.

Apart altogether from what may be the quality and defects of particular volumes, such as those cited as examples of each part of such a proposed civic trilogy, one as yet nowhere complete, the very conception of such a possible threefold series may be of some service. For this would present a continuous whole, at once sociological and civic--the views and the resources of the scholar and the educationist with their treasures of historic culture, of the man of action with his mastery of

immediate affairs, of the thinker with his vision of the opening future, now all co-ordinated by help of the design of the artist, and thence to be gradually realised in the growing heritage of the city, the enlarging life of the citizen.

NOTE--As an example of the concrete application to a particular city, of the sociological methods and principles indicated in the above paper, Prof. Geddes exhibited an illustrated volume embodying the results of his studies and designs towards the improvement of Dunfermline, under the Trust recently established by Mr. Carnegie. This has since been published:

P. GEDDES. City Development. Park Gardens and Culture Institutes; a Report to the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust. With 138 illustrations. Edinburgh, etc.. 1904.

[Page: 119] DISCUSSION

The Chairman (MR. CHARLES BOOTH) in opening the discussion said:

The paper we have just heard read is one of the most complete and charming papers on a great and interesting subject I have ever heard. I think you will all agree in this, and I hope the discussion which follows will emphasise and, if that is possible, add to the wealth of ideas that this paper contains.

MR EBENEZER HOWARD (Founder of the Garden City Association) said:

I have read and re-read--in the proof forwarded to me--Professor Geddes' wonderfully luminous and picturesque paper with much interest. He has given us a graphic description of the geographic process which leads to the development of the city. We see vividly the gradual stages by which the city grows and swells, with the descent of the population from the hillsides into the valleys, even as the river which flows through the city is fed continually by the streams which flow down to it. But is there not this essential difference between the gathering waters of heaven, as they pour into the great city, and the gathering tide of population, which follows the path of the waters? The waters flow through the city on, on toward the mighty ocean, and are then gradually gathered upward into the soft embraces of the clouds and wafted back again to the hills, whence they flow down once more to the valleys. But the living stream of men, women, and children flows from the

country-side and leaves it more and more bare of active, vigorous, healthy life: it does not, like the waters, "return again to cover the earth," but moves ever on to the great city, and from thence, at least for the great majority, there is no chance of more than, at best, a very short stay in the country. No: the tide flows resistlessly [Page: 120] onward to make more crowded our overcrowded tenements, to enlarge our overgrown cities, to cause suburb to spread beyond suburb, to submerge more and more the beautiful fields and hilly slopes which used to lie near the busy life of the people, to make the atmosphere more foul, and the task of the social reformer more and yet more difficult.

But surely there must be a way, could we but discover it, of imitating the skill and bountifulness of Nature, by creating channels through which some of our population shall be attracted back to the fields; so that there shall be a stream of population pouring from the city into the country, till a healthy balance is restored, and we have solved the twin problems of rural depopulation and of the overcrowded, overgrown city.

This brings me to the second branch of Prof. Geddes' paper, the historical. The Professor reminds us how vestiges of one civilisation lie super-imposed upon another, like geological strata, and asks. "Understanding the present as the development of the past, are we not preparing also to understand the future as the development of the present?" Following this line of thought, I venture to suggest that while the age in which we live is the age of the great, closely-compacted, overcrowded city, there are already signs, for those who can read them, of a coming change so great and so momentous that the twentieth century will be known as the period of the great exodus, the return to the land, the period when by a great and conscious effort a new fabric of civilisation shall be reared by those who knew how to apply the knowledge gained by "Social Survey to Social Service." What are the signs? What words can we place under the head of "Incipient" in Prof. Geddes' diagram? I would suggest, for one of Prof. Geddes' interrogation marks might be substituted "Decentralisation of Industry"--as a great, but yet incipient movement, represented by Port Sunlight, Bournville, Garden City. For there are now many agencies at work making for industrial decentralisation. Industries are being driven out of the great towns by the excessive rents and rates which have to be paid there--by the difficulty of obtaining adequate space for the modern factory, a one-storey building; and for the homes of our workers, which must be vastly different to what they now are if England is to maintain her place among the nations. And while factories are being driven from the city, they are also being attracted to the country by its newly-discovered potentialities. Thus Messrs. Lever Brothers, crowded out of Warrington, established an entirely new town on a new site at Port Sunlight; and, because the site was new and raw, it was therefore possible for Mr. Lever to plan his little town with a single eye to the

best and most desirable conditions, alike from an industrial and a health and housing point of view. And the same is true of Bournville. Bournville is one of the most beautiful villages in the world, largely again because of the potentialities of a new site acquired for the definite purpose of building thereon a village in which overcrowding shall be deliberately and permanently prevented, [Page: 121] and in which work inside the factory may be varied by work in the garden. Now that these successful experiments have been carried out in this country, is it not time that the idea of establishing new industries on new sites, and of surrounding those industries with healthy homes, should be carried forward on a larger scale, with wider and more concerted aims--carried forward, too, in such a manner as to make it possible for the small manufacturer to take part in a movement which has proved to be so beneficial alike to employer and employed? It is out of this thought that the Garden City idea has grown, an idea now in course of being fulfilled. Three thousand eight hundred acres of land, or nearly ten times the area of Bournville or Port Sunlight, have been acquired in Hertfordshire, two miles west of the town of Hitchin, and on the branch line of railway between that town and Cambridge. State aid has not been sought; that would indeed be weary work. But a company has been formed, through the untiring efforts of the Garden City Association; plans for the town have been carefully prepared, plans which, of course, have regard to the contours of the land (which were first taken, showing every change of level of five feet), to the preservation of its natural beauties--its trees and the picturesque villages of Norton and Willian; to the necessity for railway sidings and railway station, now, thanks to the Great Northern Railway, already provided; to the making of roads of easy gradient and of suitable width, affording access to different parts of the estate, actual work on which is progressing; the careful guarding from contamination of our water supply, already proved to be abundant; the provision of a reservoir of suitable elevation, now in course of construction; a system of drainage, about to be started with; the provision of parks and playgrounds within the town, as well as a wide belt of agricultural land around it; sites for homes for 30,000 persons, with good sized gardens. About six cottages have already been built, not by the Company but by private enterprise, while many others are just about to be started upon; the setting apart of sites for schools, churches, and other public buildings, while plans are in preparation for lighting the town, as well as for providing it with motive power.

The programme which I have sketched out is certainly not too bold or comprehensive for the British race. If a hundredth part of the organising skill which the Japanese and the Russians are showing in the great war now in progress were shown by ourselves as citizens in our great civil war against disease and dirt, poverty and overcrowding, we could not only build many new cities on the best models, but could also bring our old towns into line with the new and better order. Prof. Geddes wishes well, I know, to the Garden City Association, a

propagandist body, and to its first child, the Garden City Company; and I am sure you will all unite with me in the hope that the best and most lasting success may crown the generous gift of Mr. Carnegie of £500,000 to the City of Dunfermline, and reward the efforts of the Trustees and of Prof. Geddes to make, by the application of modern [Page: 122] skill, science and art, the ancient city of Dunfermline a centre of sweetness and light, stimulating us all to higher and yet higher efforts to secure civic, national and imperial well-being.

MR. C.H. GRINLING said:

Like most of the audience, doubtless, he came not to speak but to draw ever fresh inspiration from Prof. Geddes. But there was one aspect of the subject he would like to bring out and emphasise. He referred to the sociological institute, which, under the name of the Outlook Tower, had grown up in connection with the School of Sociology which Prof. Geddes had founded and developed in Edinburgh. That institute was at once an organisation for teaching and for research, for social education, and for civic action. It was, in fact, a concrete and working application of the principle indicated in the paper as the very foundation of Civics--"social survey for social service." And, seeing that the Outlook Tower was an institution designed in every respect for application to any given locality, he urged the Sociological Society to advocate its general extension, so that no region should be without its own sociological institute or Outlook Tower.

If one individual could accomplish so much, what could not be accomplished by the sociologists of our day who would concentrate themselves, each on his own locality, not necessarily to do the work, but to give the inspiration which would call out the work of collecting just that material which Prof. Geddes suggested all through his paper was one of the great needs of our time? And so one hoped that papers of this kind would not merely lead to discussion, but to workers accumulating results of this kind, giving the inspiration to others, and thus laying up treasures for the sociologists of the future for their interpretation. Thus, the Sociological Society should be not only the one scientific society in constant touch with all the leading brains over the country, but it should be an inspiration, as Prof. Geddes has himself been, to groups of workers everywhere for just the kind of work which the Sociological Society has been founded to develop.

MR. J.M. ROBERTSON said:

I would first add my tribute to this extremely interesting and stimulating paper. It recalled confabulations I had with Prof. Geddes, many years ago, when he was first formulating in Edinburgh those ideas which have since become so widely known. I would like, however, to

suggest a few criticisms. The paper is, broadly speaking, an application of the view of a biologist to Sociology. It is not so much an application of Darwin's view as that of Von Baer. Prof. Geddes has characterised his paper as one of elementary preliminaries, but he has really contributed a paper that [Page: 123] would form part of a preliminary study in a series of studies in Sociology. The paper does not quite bear out its title: "Civics: as Applied Sociology." The application has not begun. The somewhat disparaging remarks on encyclopaedias of general knowledge, further, might well be applied to the scheme of an encyclopaedia of the natural history of every city and every village as an original centre. This atomism will not help Sociology. Had he to master all that, the sociologist's life would be a burden not to be borne, and we would never get to applied sociology at all. There is a danger, too, in following this line, of fastening attention on one stage of evolution and leaving it there. The true principle is that evolution is eternal and continuous; and I think harm may be done, possibly, when you take, say, the phenomenon of the communication of general knowledge in schools and call it a derivation from the French *Encyclopedie*. Why leave it there? Where did that come from? If you are going to trace the simple evolution of civic forms, if you are to trace how they have come about, it will not do to stick at a given point. This is a survival of that. That is a survival of something else. The French *Encyclopedie* will have to be traced back to the encyclopaedia of the mediaeval period; and even to the still earlier period of Isidore of Seville. Then again, there is a danger, I think, analogous to the danger met with in early botany--the danger of confusing a resemblance with a relationship. It is extremely interesting to speculate that the Place de l'Etoile is an evolution from the plan of the game-forest, with its shooting avenues radiating from a centre, but it would be difficult to show that there is any historical connection. The thing is not proved.

Of course, the vital question is not this tracing of evolution. The question is: Is "Civics" to be only the study of forms? If so, Sociology is a dead science, and will effect little practical good until it is vivified by such suggestions as Mr. Crane has put in his paper. Mr. Walter Crane brought in a vital question when he said: "How are you going to modify the values of your civic life unless you grapple with political problems?" I am not forgetting that Prof. Geddes promises to deal in another paper with the civics of the future; but I insist that it will have to grapple with political questions. As he says, a city is not a place, but "a drama in time." The question for the sociological student of history is: How has this inequality of wealth and of service arisen, and how is it to be prevented in the future? That is the problem we have to study if we wish to make sociology a vital interest. A definition of progress is really the first step in sociology. Prof. Geddes' next paper should give us a definition of progress, and it is better that we begin to fight over a definition of progress, in order to

get a dynamic agreement, than that we should multiply the archaeological study of many towns. I admit that it is very interesting. In travelling in South Africa, I often tried to gather how communities began; what, for example, was the nucleus of this or that village. It was surprising how very few had an idea of any nucleus at all. I deprecate the idea, however, that [Page: 124] we are all to amass an enormous accumulation of such researches. Mr. Booth's single compilation for London is a study for years; but Mr. Booth's admirable investigation of the difficulties of life among the poor of London does not of itself give any new impulse to the solution of the problem of London. It merely gives exact knowledge in place of general knowledge. The problem of sociology arose on the general knowledge. I fear lest the work of sociology should run to an extension of this admirable study instead of to the stimulation of action taken on that particular knowledge, or on more general knowledge. We all knew there was plenty of poverty, and how it was caused. We all had Ideals as to how it was to be got rid of in the future; but the question is: Is the collection of detail or the prescription of social method the kind of activity that the Sociological Society is to take up?

SIR THOMAS BARCLAY said:

I am not sure that I agree with Mr. Robertson that it is desirable to define either "progress" or "civilisation." On the whole, their chances lie rather in the great variety of ideas of what constitutes them than in any hard-and-fast notion of their meaning. They are generalisations of what is, rather than an object towards which effort should tend. But neither do I agree with Prof. Geddes' restriction of "civics" to the mere outward part of municipal effort. In America the word "civics" is applied to the rights and duties of citizens, and I should like to see Prof. Geddes include in Civics the connection between citizen life and the outward improvement of cities. I am sure, however, Professor Geddes, as a practical man, will deal rather with realities than theoretical views on the subject for which he has done so much himself. Edinburgh owes more than many are willing to admit to Prof. Geddes. I think Ramsay Lodge one of the greatest embellishments of the Castle Hill in Edinburgh. I hope he will now be successful in doing something still more admirable for my native town of Dunfermline. My friend Mr. Carnegie, whose native town it also is, I believe intends to show by an object lesson what can be done for all cities. Prof. Geddes is helping him in this work with his suggestions. I hope they will be carried out. In America there are several very beautiful cities. No one can ever forget Washington, which is truly a garden city. No money is spared in America to beautify and healthify (excuse the barbarism) the habitations of the thousands. A beautiful city is an investment for health, intellect, imagination. Genius all the world over is associated, wherever it has been connected with cities, with beautiful cities. To grow up among things of beauty ennobles the population. But I should like to see Prof. Geddes extend his projects for Dunfermline to the