

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

### GENERAL BOOKS AND BOOKS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

*Folkways. A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals.* By WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER, Professor of Political and Social Science in Yale University. (Boston: Ginn and Company. 1907. Pp. v, 692.)

PROFESSOR SUMNER has written a very valuable and timely book, and one involving years of patient research, as well as the possession of a ripe and fearless mind. By "folkways" he means "the ways of satisfying needs which become habitual and customary by the uncoördinated coöperation of individuals, each trying to satisfy needs as well as he can. When these uncoördinated individual acts become habits of the individual and, after some generations, traditional customs of ancestors, they are recognized as advantageous to social welfare. Then they get a philosophy and become rules of the life policy. Thus they get a notion of 'ought' and are sanctioned by religion and by the force of society. At this stage the folkways turn into mores. Taken together they make a social philosophy and a public morality."

The timeliness of a treatise of this character, particularly when the work is carried out as Professor Sumner has done it, is that we are still so naïve and anthropomorphic in our modes of thought that we are in the habit of regarding white civilization as a superior type *qua* white, while in fact the great bulk of our social practices—of our morals, our religion, our marriage, our manners—are almost as little rationalized as our language. They are superior from the point of view of intelligence to the reflexes of animal behavior, but are very far from representing a complete rational oversight. They are but little superior in rational content to the practices of the natural and half-cultural races, and even this slight superiority is usually only a few centuries old.

Professor Sumner has developed this standpoint in a manner which is at once fascinating and convincing, and the range and aptness of the ethnological and historical data brought into play is a thing to admire. Incidentally his book is one of the strongest arguments yet presented for the essential likeness of the human mind in all times and in all peoples, and also a most suggestive volume for those who are interested in the reform of our whole system of education. The analytical and descriptive side of the work is not surpassed, hardly equalled, in the field of social psychology, and the first chapters I regard as the clearest statement yet made on the "folk-mind".

The two most serious defects of *Folkways* are a lack of psychological standpoint and a lack of systematic and complete presentation. Aspects of social life are presented in a kaleidoscopic fashion, different sections treat of the same question (compare 479 with 481 and 484; and 625 with 640), the fine print goes over the same ground as the coarse, and the reader cannot avoid the impression that the illustrative materials are sometimes shuffled rather than logically arranged. Some points are elaborated with extreme detail and others touched on in so fragmentary a manner that it would have been better not to treat them at all. (The section on Japanese woman contains a single citation from Hearn, and Chinese woman is not alluded to at all.) Some large and important fields illustrating folkways are very inadequately handled. The treatment of folkways as illustrated by literature and art is conspicuously poor, sketchy, and apparently perfunctory. On the psychological side there is lack of clearly defined theory. The irrational nature of folkways is convincingly displayed, but we find no indication of the psychology of the process by which social practices are slowly rationalized. Indeed, the reviewer does not feel that Professor Sumner has made out a difference between *folkways* and *mores*, and it is certain that he frequently uses the terms indifferently (compare sections 1 and 40).

In view of the extraordinarily wide range of authorities used, it is remarkable that Professor Sumner neither cites nor lists Steinmetz's *Ethnologische Studien zur ersten Entwicklung der Strafe*, Nieboer's *Slavery as an Industrial System*, Westermarck's *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, nor Schultze's *Alterclassen und Männerbunde*—the most important books, perhaps, on certain topics to which he gives particular attention.

WILLIAM I. THOMAS.

*The Development of Western Civilization. A Study in Ethical, Economic, and Political Evolution.* By J. DORSEY FORREST, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology and Economics in Butler College. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1907. Pp. xii, 406.)

THIS book is an interpretation of human history from the standpoint of the identity of interest of the individual and of society. Social reformers have set up this ideal as a goal to be reached and are busy with programmes for its speedy attainment. These however can be of no help in the solution of social problems unless they accord with the general law of development of the human race. To understand our present condition and to put into successful operation forces which shall alleviate present evils, the track of the onward march must be closely scanned. The purpose of the social reformer, however, will not be served by confining attention to the line of march. That line must be studied with reference to the general topography. That is, an understanding of social history cannot be acquired by the pursuit of any