

CHAPTER X

SOCIOLOGY

FRANKLIN H. GIDDINGS

Professor of Sociology, Columbia University

THE REALM OF SOCIOLOGY

Many of the important scientific discoveries of recent years have been made in marginal fields of research where domains of specialization meet. They have been made, for example, in a zone that is at once electro-physics and chemistry, in one which is chemistry and thermo-dynamics, in one which is chemistry and biology, and in one which is biology and psychology.

The observation applies to sociology, because sociology is occupied with relations of cause and effect between matters which the so-called natural sciences collectively are concerned with, and interests which the so-called political sciences collectively are concerned with. The scientific significance and the practical value of sociology arise out of this circumstance.

The participants in economic and political affairs are not generalized human beings; they are not abstract minds. They are concrete individuals who exhibit traits of race and complexes of culture which interest the anthropologist. They are hereditary mechanisms of response and conscious makers of habit whom the psychologist investigates. Each also is an organism and, as such, is subject matter of biological interest. Moreover, all activities of each are conditioned and limited by peculiarities of pattern and of process which the physicist and the chemist discover in matter and its energies.