PREFACE

In this book an effort has been made to present a non-technical interpretation of human activity in fundamental agreement with the results of recent study in the fields of psychology, anthropology, and sociology. These disciplines, of course, are still in their infancy, and it is impossible to predict with any pretension to accuracy what light they may eventually throw on human affairs; but they do offer the student of today certain leading principles and a considerable array of specific data (still rather scattered and fragmentary, it is true), that can help him to an understanding of contemporary life and its problems.

The book has been written primarily for use in the Contemporary Civilization course which is required of freshmen in Columbia College, and is published in its present form so that the author may benefit from the advice and criticism of its readers before it is finally prepared for the press. He would therefore deeply appreciate any comments as to contents, manner of presentation, omissions, etc., that readers may be kind enough to make. He is especially anxious to receive such comments from students who have had occasion to use the book in the classroom.

The author has drawn his materials from a wide range of sources, only a few of which have been indicated in the bibliographical notes appended to each chapter. He is also indebted to his wife for help at all stages in the preparation of the manuscript, and to Professor John J. Coss for many suggestions for its improvement.

J. S.

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