

subject has gained such prominence, and produced such agitations, as to absorb public attention in Europe and America. This has made it appear as the great social question of the day. But the labor problem concentrates the attention on labor and laborers, and on economic affairs; and those who belong to the other classes are apt to leave it to laborers as solely their affair. Specialists and thinkers have, however, discovered that more than labor and laborers is involved in the industrial agitations. Laborers are recognized as part of the social organism, so that what affects them affects the whole of society. If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. Labor is recognized as the basis of society. Not only does it furnish bread and other materials for the physical life, but it is the condition for the attainment of all the higher interests. Education, religion, society, the state, all individual and social welfare, depend on agricultural and industrial labor; it is thus clear how the labor problem involves the whole of society and all its concerns. We need but go deep and broad enough to find that the labor question leads to the social problem. The question of labor is a very essential part of the social problem; but the latter involves much more than is usually attributed to the former, namely, all the members and all the interests of society. The social problem is the question of the transformation of society in order to establish more equitable relations, with an especial view to the elevation of the laboring classes.

The distinction between the social problem and socialism is more apparent. The former is a *problem*; the latter is a proposed *solution* of that problem by means of some form of collectivism. While laborers were being agitated, socialism was proposed as the means of getting rid of their grievances. The socialistic theories were proclaimed, they were adopted by multitudes of laborers, they arrested the

attention of the other classes who ignored the problem that was to be solved, and so socialism came to be taken for the social problem. We insist on first mastering the problem itself in order that we may be able to test the proposed solutions. The socialistic literature has become very extensive, it discusses the social problem with a view to its solution, and some of the most valuable discussions of the problem are found in this literature.

Many of the most valuable discussions of our subject appear in the current literature, the daily and weekly journals, the magazines, and the quarterlies. Among the common topics are the unrest of laborers, their demands, labor organizations, strikes, capitalism, trusts, monopolies, the influence of wealth on legislation, and similar themes. Society is also coming more and more to the front in literature, and our journals teem with social subjects. For understanding the social theories, agitations, and movements of our day this current literature is indispensable. But it is apt to be bewildering. So many details are given that one is likely to expel the other, or a chaos of opinions and facts is the result rather than system. The great need in view of these distracting details is thinkers who can classify the details, can go from phenomena to their causes, and can construct laws and principles and systems. This must be done by every one who would become master of the subject. Besides the current literature, the systematic study of solid works is earnestly recommended.

Amid class division and antagonism we can not but expect social themes to appeal to strong interests and violent passions. It is not strange, therefore, that much of the literature is one-sided and tinctured by prejudice. The student must be on his guard against a dogmatism which has ceased all inquiry where impartial inquiry is especially needed.

If but a few books can be purchased, let the first named be chosen.