

these days of machinery there was no "labor problem," although there was capital and there was labor. And to-day, in all that is said on the subject, no one seems to regard the tillers of the soil as "laboring men" at all. And yet, the men in this country who work on farms far outnumber those who handle machinery. What is called the "labor problem" would more appropriately be called the machinery problem.

The owners of machinery wish to get as much work out of the men for as little pay as possible, so as to secure the largest profits, while the men wish to get as much pay for as little work as possible, so as to secure the largest gain in money to themselves. It is the selfishness of the machine-owner against the selfishness of the machine-operator. That is the conflict, in plain English.

The herding of men in great factories may help trade and make money, but it is hurtful to the men. They are made to go through a dull routine, in which it is impossible to take an intelligent interest. Instead of developing the best powers of a man, such work degrades him into a mere machine-feeder. Then the employer is separated from his employes, and there is no sympathy between him and them. His selfishness opposes theirs. The workmen combine. The owners combine. So we have strikes, riots and dynamite on the one hand, and lock-outs and police clubs on the other. And then we talk gravely of "the labor problem."

The trouble with us is, we have become machinery-mad. We boast that this is an Age of Progress (age with a big A, and progress with a big P). Every writer and speaker is expected to say, no matter what subject he is discussing, that this is an Age of Progress. But if we stop and ask—progress towards what? there is no reply. Whether progress is good or bad depends entirely on the direction one is going. Progress towards what? is a question which needs to be sounded in the ears of this age rushing blindly forward, without considering the direction it is going. Progress towards what? Towards getting all the iron out of the ground, and all the coal consumed? Will the victory for mankind be won when the earth is netted over with railroad tracks and roofed with telegraph wires? Is progress to cover the world with steam and coal smoke? Is the perfection of the race to be secured by crowding men, women and children into the stifling air of factories during the day and turning them out at night into an atmosphere so filled with smoke that they cannot see the stars? "Oh! we can talk across the ocean!" Yes; but is what you say to those on the other side really worth their hearing? Are we to become simply enlarged locusts, whose shrill cry can be heard afar, but is in nowise worth hearing? "We can go a mile a minute!" to be sure, but is rapid motion the ideal of existence? And when you reach your destination will you do anything worth doing? If not, what is the good of getting there so quickly? "But we can make money faster than our grandfathers made it." Here we have it at last. The object of all these things is to make