

unions, practically oath-bound secret societies, which are controlled, as armies are controlled, by their chiefs, with the sole purpose of wresting from their employers a larger share of the rewards of labour. It is, in fact, a state of social war.

What is the cause of these troubles? The cause is not single, nor does it lie altogether on the surface. If it can be controlled, the study of it is not less practical than the construction of disputed financial schemes and the electing of administrations to try experiments with them. Under one shape or another it will be found to belong, in comparison with the past and with other lands, to those altered conditions of social life which the Irish independent had vaguely in mind when he rebelled at the dictation of his ecclesiastical master. Long-established social distinctions and demarcations are broken up. Prescription has lost its hold. Classes are mixed and fused. No American thinks of remaining in any grade or calling or position because his ancestors have been there, no matter for how many generations. From the bottom to the top is but a single leap, and anybody can make the leap. It is common to speak of this as an unmingled advantage. Undoubtedly it stimulates enterprise. So does it stimulate greedy ambitions, wild expectations, and heated competitions. It sets up impracticable standards. It opens the lists to all, but there is a limit to the prizes, whether of office or fortune. What everybody wants and tries to get only a few can gain. Of aspiration come both the glory and the misery of mankind. Hope that is still hope inspires effort and points to success; hope disappointed and crushed is followed by a reaction of despair, of bitterness, perhaps of crime. A universal scramble for place and profit is not a producer of social peace or a school of social virtue. Take

away all the dishonesty in politics caused by an open competition for the offices, and all the dishonesty in business caused by an open competition for wealth, and what an upright people we should be! We are not finding fault with our system; much less are we recommending a remedy. We are accounting for the restlessness, financial upheavals, commercial disasters, unwholesome depressions, and needless impoverishments to which we are subject. We say that one of the causes is an unprecedented temptation to use indiscriminate means to "get up in the world," drawing thousands of men out of the safe, even, and sure path of a steady and contented industry.

Kindred to this inordinate passion, this pull and push, is an artificial estimate of the relative respectability of different kinds of work. It may seem rather late, to be sure, to be urging the dignity of labour. The point is that while men and women are eagerly determined to get rich, they are fastidious as to the manner and fashion and name of the service that is to accomplish it. The more wealth the country has, the more anxious people of all conditions are to put on the dress and style of wealth. The more the soil yields, the less they want to have to do with the soil. Leaving out of view the immense acreage of tillable but untilled lands at the West, waiting largely for foreign cultivators, observe the agricultural districts in all the Eastern and older States. For fifty years there has been going on a steady process of depletion of enterprise and vigour. Three lines of immigration run out from them—to the small cities and railroad centres, to the great cities, and also, but less, to the newer States and Territories. These emigrants of both sexes want two things: they want money, and they want to get it without working much with