

broods over the classic hills and sandy deserts of the East, while the sound of the pioneer's axe, and the shout of the sturdy emigrants, proclaim a glorious destiny for the mighty regions of the West. Industry, on her car of triumph has pursued her onward career with unparalleled success, daily opening up new avenues of wealth, and bringing within the compass of human skill sources of prosperity of which less favored ages never dreamed. The tendencies of the times are evidently progressive. The age looks toward universality. The sweep of its thought is growing vaster, its investigations more bold, its reforms more radical. Theories venerable with age are summoned to the bar of Reason, and found guilty of fallacy. Institutions rooted and grounded on the very core of society are overturned, and new ones, more in harmony with the spirit of the age, erected on their ruins. Where all this may end it is difficult to conjecture. While there is ground for rejoicing, there is also much reason for grave apprehension. While it is pleasant to indulge in captivating reminiscences or golden anticipations, it cannot be disputed that dangers lie concealed beneath this fair exterior. It requires no philosopher to perceive that our modern civilization is menaced by formidable foes. Grave and startling possibilities lurk beneath the fabric of civil society. Every age has had its own scientific and political problems to solve. It may remain for the nineteenth century to grapple with one which persistently and threateningly forces itself into prominence, viz., the problem of socialism. This is a power whose slumbering energies threaten to mar the fair form of our civilization. For ages it has dogged the footsteps of progress and grown with its growth; but never at any other period did it present a more formidable character, or more extensively ramify itself through every grade of social life.

Centuries before the Christian Era, this question confronted the statesmen of Greece and Rome, arousing the speculative mind of Plato, and affording a fruitful theme for the

splendid talents of Cicero. One of the most prominent of modern speculators in this line of philosophic inquiry was Sir Thomas Moore, who propounded, in his famous *Utopia*, a chimerical scheme of perfect government. His ideal commonwealth, however, grew and flourished under impossible and extravagant conditions, and never was designed to be a practical solution of social difficulties. At a still later date Fourier in France, and Owen in England endeavored to arouse the public mind to the necessity of re-organizing society on a different basis. But notwithstanding the profound abstractions of philosophic minds, socialism still remains an unsolved problem, presenting to the mere political economist an ample field for thoughtful investigation, but to the practical statesman a question of deep and serious import demanding wise and liberal legislation.

The socialism which threatens the foundations of our civilized society is a system of philosophy which proceeds upon the principle, that a more equitable and happier adjustment of social relations could be obtained than that which now exists. It has appeared in different countries under peculiar forms and a variety of names; but everywhere its fundamental principles are substantially the same. It is the Communism of France, and the Nihilism of Germany and Russia; but here has assumed a more aggravated form, and a more revolutionary aspect. With the Gaul, the Teuton and the Slav, it is something more than mere theory. With them it loses its passive nature, and at once presents the dangerous front of organized activity, and is in deadly antagonism with every existing form of law and government.

This question was originally evolved from the profound depths of social need, and depends for its continued existence, upon the unnatural and inharmonious development of civilized society, as well as to a loose and inefficient administration of social affairs. The extraordinary and ridiculous notions of popular government with which the minds of