

PREFACE

WHEN John Humphrey Noyes published his "History of American Socialisms" (1870), the modern socialist movement was almost unknown in this country. The "socialisms" described by Noyes are merely the social experiments of the early schools of communism. Most of these experiments have since passed out of existence, and those still surviving can hardly be considered part of contemporaneous socialism. Socialism to-day is a vastly different movement from what it was in the days of Noyes. The numerous isolated communities, with their multiform socialisms of various hues and shades, have given way to one organized and uniform socialist movement of national scope.

The growth of the socialist movement in the United States has become an object of interest to all students of social problems. Many books have been written of recent years on the theories of socialism, but its history has received very scant attention. In 1890 A. Sartorius von Waltershausen published a scholarly work on Modern Socialism in the United States,* which contains much valuable material on the history of the movement during the period of 1850 to 1890. One year later S. Cognetti de Martiis published a book under a similar title.† The author deals with

*"Der Moderne Socialismus in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika."

† "Il Socialismo Negli Stati Uniti."

the earlier stages of the socialist movement as well as with its more modern phases, but contributes little new information on the subject. Neither work can at this date be regarded as a complete history of the socialist movement in America, and, moreover, both are written in foreign languages, and are for this reason inaccessible to the majority of American readers. Of writers in the English language Prof. R. T. Ely was the only one to attempt a concise and intelligent history of American Socialism,* but Mr. Ely's book was written seventeen years ago, and the subject was but incidental to the thesis of his work.

And still a knowledge of the history of socialism is indispensable for the intelligent appreciation of the movement. The circumstances of its origin and the manner of its growth furnish the only reliable key to its present condition and significance, and the tendencies of its future development.

In the preparation of this work I have endeavored to fill a gap in the literature on the subject, and I now present it to the public in the hope that it may contribute in some degree to a better understanding of a movement which is fast becoming an important factor in the social and political life of our country.

*"The Labor Movement in America," 1886.