

## Steinmetz

"The electrical wizard," everybody called Charles Proteus Steinmetz. He answered the popular conception of a wonder-worker. To see the gnomelike figure—his body a mere appendage to a giant brain—playing in his laboratory with thunderbolts of his own creation was to witness something that seemed to border on the supernatural. One would have said that he came nearer to being a disembodied intellect than anybody else in the world.

He had, beyond most practical scientists, the faculty of being entertaining. Whatever he said on any subject was eagerly caught up. Only the other day he was advising the country to try Henry Ford for President "as an experiment"; and the next day he was foretelling the advent of the four-hour day and the end of drudgery. The last picture we had of him was in his canoe on the Mohawk River, his favorite workshop, head buried in plans of who knows what—perhaps of harnessing the sunlight, one of the more modest of his projects. Really, the public would not have been surprised had he made sunlight out of cucumbers.

Dr. Steinmetz's own view of his commanding ability was prosaic. He laid in Germany the foundations of an extraordinary proficiency in mathematics. To that study he attributed all his success. It has been said of his inventive work, brilliant as it was, that it took the form of hints for others to follow up and the illumination of facts discovered rather than of sheer invention. As a teacher he was wonderfully stimulating, and was a consulting engineer raised to the nth power.

He left Germany because his socialistic affiliations barred him from preferment, and he remained a socialist. A year ago he made an interesting incursion into politics as Socialist candidate for State Engi-

neer, running far ahead of his ticket both in this city and throughout the state—a striking personal tribute to the man and his accomplishments.

The utter dissimilarity of this tiny genius to any man of his times was what captivated the popular fancy. Without doubt he was one of nature's prodigies.

*Editorial -*

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