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IS IT WAR?

THE OUTCOME OF THE PRESENT STRIKES.

The mining strikes, the Coxe movement, and the recent railroad troubles are assuming a serious aspect. It is becoming apparent to everyone that the country is on the eve of a great conflict. There is no mistaking the signs. A large number of the people are dissatisfied, and many are becoming desperate. Men are engaged in the strike now who have never even sympathized with them before, and there are thousands in all parts of the country who are showing sympathy and encouragement to the strikers. The numbers are growing greater every day, and the feeling is becoming stronger.

There must be some reason for this. When so many people take such a stand there must be something wrong somewhere. It is not right to say that the strikers are wholly to blame. If they were altogether in the fault there would not be so many of them. We have such an abiding faith in the people that we cannot believe a majority of them to be wrong and stay wrong for any considerable length of time. The idea of justice is too deeply implanted in the hearts of the American people for this. They have always shown themselves willing to stand up for what is right, even to shedding their blood on the battlefield.

At present there is little regard for the law by many of the strikers and the whole country is suffering in consequence. Business is almost paralyzed, and the financial loss to the country is enormous. The railroad companies have had millions in property destroyed, to say nothing of their loss of business during the tie-up. The laborers and their families are suffering. Yes, lives have been sacrificed, and innocent ones in some cases.

Are these strikers outlaws and criminals? Well, a per cent. of all classes are criminals. But let us remember that they are all human and just like you and I and our neighbors. They have hearts that beat just the same, and they have noble impulses. They have laudable ambitions, and a desire to accumulate property and to enjoy it. They have wives and children that are just as dear to

to them as ours are to us, and those children run to greet their fathers when they come home from their day's work, just as you have experienced at home. They have a desire to have them fed on good food, well clothed and the children educated, just the same as a rich man has for his children. They are good neighbors; always ready to do a kindness and help the sick. They are intelligent, educated, and skilled in their trades. There are no better citizens. They are our best citizens. They are patriotic and have the courage to make a bold stand for what is right. They would willingly enlist to fight for their country, in fact, the working-people have fought our wars for us, and successfully. Let us not, then, force them to fight against our country.

You say they have already begun the fight! Oh, no! Not ten per cent. of the men engaged in the strike had a hand in the rioting and burning. A few of the most rabid and a lot of toughs and thieves from the slums did the work in Chicago. The head men and the rank and file did all they could to prevent it. If all the real strikers had joined the mob, Chicago would have been wiped out in one hour.

What is the reason of all this trouble? Well, the Pullman Car Company has an extensive plant for building palace cars at a place called Pullman, near Chicago. The town has several thousand inhabitants, all employed in connection with the car works. It is Pullman's town. He owns all the houses and all the property, and comes pretty near owning the inhabitants. He owns the stores, all the businesses represented, and his employes do all the building, street improvement and even attend to making the lawns at each house. The residents not only pay rent but pay Pullman for attending to their lawns. By this means the city is improved in a uniform manner and presents a beautiful appearance, is in fact, a model city as far as appearance goes. The people are all obliged to buy their goods at Pullman's stores. This plan worked well for a while, and it was a happy community. But, Pullman soon became avaricious and wanted all the profits himself. It did not take him long to figure just how little a family could subsist upon, and the

prices of rent, goods, etc. were adjusted so that by strict economy a family could barely subsist upon its wages. Not satisfied with this, the wages were still further reduced, on the pretext that the hard times forced the company to take contracts for building cars at low rates. But the real motive was to get the men in debt so they could not move away to better paying employment, thus ensuring cheap labor for the factory. The wages were finally reduced so that they did not average 90 cents per day, and for skilled laborers, mind you. The rents and living were not lowered with the wages, and the men were soon in debt. Pullman did not care for that, as he wanted all of them to owe him. Still another wage reduction was attempted and then the men quit in a body.

What has this got to do with tying up the railroads? The laboring men on the railways did it in sympathy. They objected to having Pullman cars on the trains, and this is the only way the industrial classes can accomplish anything, by standing together. They dare not give an inch, or they lose all. Capital is too strong for them, unless they stand united.

The quiet, firm and orderly strike is the only sensible method to settle the great question, and it will succeed if properly managed. But, it will not do to permit rioting. Respectable workingmen should organize, drill and march in order with the militia to quell the rioters. This would dispense with the ugly features of strikes and strengthen the cause of the laborer. We hope there will be no war. In this advanced stage of civilization wars can be avoided if anything like a proper spirit is shown.

Such a war would be disastrous in every particular. It would break out in a fury in the cities, and death and destruction would come fast. It would put neighbor against neighbor and brother against brother. The very nature of the conflict would bring pillage and murder in every community. The torch will play a big part in such a struggle.

Let the authorities use great discretion and fairness in dealing with these troubles and thereby avert a terrible calamity. And, let the laborer temper his feeling with prudence. Let us depend on

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