

endeavor, impartially, to discover what are the relative rights of employee and employer, and to what extent authority is justified in intervening.

"Strikes" may be considered under two points of view, viz: in themselves and in their practical results. Let us examine the question, first in the light of its intrinsic nature. What is the signification of the word "strike?" Nothing but the mere discontinuation of work on the part of an associated number of workers, having in view the obtainment of more equitable terms. Now, we must all admit that every time an honest means is employed to attain an end equally honest, the method adopted is intrinsically lawful and justly allowable. But this is exactly the case with the laborer; he is only exercising a natural right, a right as inalienable and inalienable as any upon which our social structure is founded. Man is constituted by his nature the master of his mental and physical powers, and while free will and liberty exist, he alone has an absolute right to determine their individual value, and to continue, or refrain from exerting them, at the sole dictate of his convenience or feeling. Thus, in reality, a "strike" reduces itself to an act of volition, legitimate in its every sense, and the declaration of a right as sacred as a mandate from heaven, since whatever is implanted by nature is the immediate handiwork of God. Moreover, if success attend the strikers' efforts and more favorable terms are obtained, it clearly demonstrates that a "strike" is a saving power in the hands of labor to procure a just redress. It follows, then that the oft-repeated cry for governmental intervention is a wild delusion, as the powers of authority in such cases are exceeded, and an interference, on its part, would be a gross injustice. The duty of a government is to subserve the natural rights of its citizens, not to destroy them, and an infringement, in this respect, immediately forfeits obedience. Furthermore, not only would such an exercise of power be a violation of natural right but also would, at all times, expose the poor laborer to the rapacity and injustice of too-exacting employers, render him impotent, and subject to all manner of imposition,—thus placing in the hands of Socialists and other presuming champions of humanity arguments justifying their plea that Labor is the unwilling slave of Capital.

But Economists will tell us that "strikes" are opposed to the primary principles of Political Science, and that the strikers rarely accomplish the end in view. It is advanced as a strict law of Economy, that the just wages of labor is in a direct ratio to the demand on the manufacturer and in inverse ratio to the number of workers available; and an advance in wages is allowable only when the capital invested is multiplying dividends, or, on the other hand, when the number of available workmen is limited. Since, claim the Economists, "strikes" can, in no manner, increase the capital in hand or, in reality reduce the number of workmen, if successful, they obtain,

an increase factitiously and, if not, they injure those willing to continue under the old rates. The argument is of a specious nature, for, in the first place it pre-supposes "strikes" originating from the sole motive of an advance in wages, when, in many instances, strikers desire a reduction in the hours of labor, the abrogation of unjust and onerous laws, or the removal of some peculiar grievance. In reality, the conclusions deduced by Economists are contradicted by a multitude of facts. Thornton maintains, that, although in many cases manufacturers are successful in overcoming and uprising of this nature, ten times to the manufacturer's once, the strikers rest victors in the struggle and succeed in obtaining their demands, which instead of conflicting with the interests of those not engaged in the "strike" contribute substantially to their benefit. Certainly the receipts of the manufactures are reduced, but should the pittance of the poor laborer be sacrificed to an unbridled love of gain?

Again, will Economists tell us that an increase in the cost of production, necessarily, increases the price of purchasable articles; therefore, the workman, who has need of one or the other of these, will find, eventually, that he is in the same condition as he was previous to the "strike" or worse off on account of the loss of time and trouble entailed. Experience proves to us that this law of Economy is far from being immutable. If some manufacturers continue in effect to realize the same profits, after a concession is made, the great majority are constrained by the force of the "times," and are obliged to rest satisfied with a reduced return. As Ricardo says, purchasable commodities increase in value, not on account of the price of labor in their manufacture but, on the other hand, on account of the materials and the quality of the labor expended. The opponents of "strikes" may tell us that in the consideration of this question, we look simply to the matter of gain without a thought for the losses involved. We are reminded that the spinners of Manchester, in their strike of 1829, suffered a loss of £250,000 sterling; those of Ashton about the same amount; and this has always been the case with strikes even up to the present time—a great pecuniary loss and consequent distress to the working classes. Necessarily, Strikers incur a pecuniary loss; but if you reflect that this amount of loss, at first view, so large, is divided between thousands of workmen, the force of the charge is in a great measure diminished. In fact, the loss incurred reduces itself to the loss of wages which the employees would have obtained if they had not engaged in the strike. Now, as every man of business has a right to risk a certain sum with the hope of an increased return, no authority can without abuse of power intrude in a speculation of this kind, by its nature strictly private and legitimate.

Economists further say that "strikes" are not only injurious to the manufacturers directly affected, but also indirectly to every other industry, to all classes of