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EDITORIAL

THE McKEES ROCKS STRIKE.

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THERE is not a strike but it acts like a plow which throws up some hidden secret, and thereby increases the store of information for the guidance of the Labor, or Socialist Movement. The huge strike of the compressed steel car employes at McKees Rocks is no exception.

There is in Pittsburg a body known as the Pittsburg Public Defence Association. The Association is composed of the leading and active capitalists of the city. Its purpose is indicated by its name—defend the public. Anyone who knows anything knows, or supposes he knows, what is to be expected from such a body. The “public,” with such a body, means Money Bags. Unnecessary to say what the defence of Money Bags implies. The entirely uninitiated would conclude that, if the Pittsburg Public Defence Association took a hand in the McKees Rocks strike, it would be to fall over the strikers like a pile of bricks. Not so, in this instance; and much is to be learned from the startling exception.

The Pittsburg Public Defence Association applied to the Court for an injunction. “Why, of course!” one hears someone interject. “Why, of course! That’s what they always do: apply for an injunction against the men on strike.” Not so fast. The Pittsburg Public Defence Association did apply for an injunction to restrain the strikers from trespassing, etc.; that’s true; but the petition also prays for an injunction TO RESTRAIN THE PRESSED STEEL CAR COMPANY FROM CLOSING ITS DOORS TO ITS EMPLOYEES AND FROM OPENING THEM TO STRIKE-BREAKERS!

The right of an employer to discharge his men at will, and to import strikebreakers as he pleases is among the “sacred and vested rights” of Capital. The application of the capitalist Pittsburg Association for an injunction to restrain the Company from exercising its “sacred rights” looks at first sight mysterious. There is

no mystery about the thing. The Association itself solves the riddle. The reasons it alleged for its application were—mark this well—were that it consists of and represents taxpayers, and that the 1877 strike cost the taxpayers of the county \$21,000,000, which amount the county had to pay for damages caused by the strike.

“There is nothing more cowardly than \$1,000,000,” so runs the proverb, “unless it be \$2,000,000.” Capital will, of course, swagger, and browbeat, and bully; but the prospect of heavy taxes to pay damages incurred by a strike, sends so cold a chill down the bully’s back that he almost abdicates.

This pregnant fact has never before been historically recorded. It is on record now. It is the contribution of the McKees Rocks strike to the fund of information that, once organized and set in motion, will cause the capitalist class to abdicate wholly.

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