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The Homestead Strike

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in their mercantile relations with each other. Intelligent Americans themselves keenly appreciate the untrammelled free-trade connection which binds the States together, and smile at the ridiculous spectacle of one or two small Australasian Colonies in close proximity to each other carrying on an exhausting tariff war against each other. Similarly, the 5,000,000 of people inhabiting the several provinces of the Canadian Dominion are all unfettered in their trade relations with each other from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Arctic Sea to the United States border.

At a late meeting of Victorian farmers hostile to the prevailing customs tariff the chairman, speaking for many of his class who had become convinced of the false character of the prospects which protection holds out to them, said that 'to encourage artisans employed in making engines and carriages, instead of encouraging the farmers to raise natural products wherewith to purchase such articles, is to waste the money represented by the extra cost as completely as if it were thrown into Hobson's Bay.'

MATTHEW MACFIE

THE HOMESTEAD STRIKE.

HOMESTEAD is a town of some 10,000 inhabitants on the banks of the Alleghany River, a few miles above the city of Pittsburg. Although politically an independent borough, it is virtually a suburb of Pittsburg, and is a part of the great iron manufacturing region of which that city is the centre. It has been built up within the last ten years. In 1880 the population was less than a thousand; in 1890 it was nearly 8,000; in 1892 it was between 11,000 and 12,000.

The rapid growth of Homestead was caused by the development of the Carnegie Steel Works at this point. The Steel Company is a limited partnership, manufacturing iron and steel, not only at Homestead, but at a number of other places in and about the city of Pittsburg. The total number of persons employed by the Company is stated to have been some 13,000. At Homestead itself, some 3,800 men were employed; and the population of the town consisted almost exclusively of the workmen in the steel works, and the tradesmen who purveyed food, drink, and lodging to them. The business at Homestead is chiefly the manufacture of steel structural materials, used largely in fire-proof buildings. At the time of the great strike the Company was also engaged in making armour plate, under contract with the United States Government, for vessels of the navy. The Carnegie Company has taken a very large part in the extraordinary development of the iron and steel industry in the United States in the last ten years, and the facts just stated indicate how enormous is the scale upon which its operations are conducted.

The chairman of the Company, and its manager during the strike,

was Mr. H. C. Frick, who had become manager within a few years. He had been for many years engaged in the manufacture of coke (the Carnegie Company, it may be remarked, has large coke works of its own), and in that industry had been engaged in bitter conflicts with his workmen. The story of the struggle between the coke manufacturers and their employees, with its accompaniments of riot, violence, and bloodshed, is long and obscure. The men were beaten; and Mr. Frick had come from the conflict with a reputation not likely to promote friendly feeling among his employees in the Carnegie Works.

The Amalgamated Iron and Steel Association is one of the oldest and best known of the Trades Unions of the United States. In its present shape it dates from the year 1876, when it was formed by the amalgamation of three independent organisations. Originally its members were iron workers only; but with the development of the steel industry, closely connected as it was with the iron industry, steel workers also became members of the Association. It is a firm and well-defined organisation, divided into districts over the country. As a Trades Union it is still in the exclusively militant stage. Its rules provide for stated contributions, and for strike pay at the rate of \$4.00 per week; but apparently make no provision for sick pay or out of work pay. It is strongest in Pittsburg and the region immediately about; outside of Pittsburg it is much stronger in the eastern parts of the country than in the western. Even in Pittsburg a number of important works are non-union; and before the great struggle, two large establishments belonging to the Carnegie Company were non-union. Some other very large establishments of the East are non-union. The indications are that the Amalgamated Association has lost ground within the last ten years. It has 24,000 or 25,000 members.

The steel manufacture is a new and growing industry, and the different establishments engaged in it are in different stages of development. Consequently the wages arrangements for the Amalgamated men in steel works were 'local'; that is to say, the men in each mill arranged an independent scale of prices with their individual employers. In the iron industry, which has reached a more settled stage, scales are 'general,' the same rates being fixed for all the men working in the mills of a given district. The relations between the Amalgamated Association at Homestead and the Company had been fixed in July, 1889, when a wages scale had been agreed upon, to endure for three years. The scale was a sliding scale, the workmen being paid so much a ton, and the rate varying with the selling price of steel billets, one of the crudest products of the mills. The sliding scale system is universally followed by the Amalgamated Association, and it always has a provision for a 'minimum;' that is, a point below which tonnage wages were not to decline as the price went down. The minimum fixed in 1889 was \$25.00 per ton.

Such was the situation at the beginning of 1892. Early in that year

the firm intimated to the workmen that it desired a rearrangement of the scale. During the early months of the year some desultory negotiations took place between the workmen and the Company. The Company desired the workmen to submit a new scale, and proposed a reduction in tonnage rates, and in the minimum. The agreement of 1889 was to expire on the 30th of June. One month before that date, on the 30th of May, the Company, somewhat suddenly, made a brief but sufficiently explicit proposal to the men. Upon that proposal the struggle turned. The men were requested to give an answer not later than June 24th, and were informed that the scales which accompanied the proposal were the most liberal that could be offered. Mr. Frick in a letter communicating the proposals to the superintendent said: 'We do not care whether the men belong to the Union or not, nor do we choose to interfere. He may belong to as many Unions or organisations as he pleases, but we think our employees at Homestead Steel Works would fare much better working under the system in vogue at Edgar-Thomson and Du-Quesne,'—two non-union works operated by the Company.

The essential changes in the proposal of the Company were three. First, a reduction in the tonnage rates. Next, the minimum price, below which wages were not to fluctuate, was lowered from \$25 to \$22.00. Finally the scale was to endure until January 1st, 1894, and so was to terminate in mid-winter and not, as before, in mid-summer.

As to the first of these points, the reduction in rates per ton, it was stated by the Company that the improvements in machinery which had been made since 1889 increased the number of tons produced per man, and so caused the wages of many of the tonnage men to be very high. In the testimony given before the committees of the Federal Legislature (both the House and the Senate appointed committees to investigate the strike) there was little disposition among the men to deny the truth of this statement. On the contrary, it was stated by the men as well as by the Company, that great improvements had been made at the Carnegie Works, that they were equipped with better machinery than other establishments, and that their output was greater. The superintendent told the Congressional Committee that their works were 'the finest in the world, the best built, and the most automatic. We can produce, at least in some of our compartments, fifty per cent. more with the same amount of hours.' The men indeed believed that the profits of the Company were large, which probably was true, and that they were entitled to some share in these profits. Judged by the scale of the market rate of wages for work of similar difficulty elsewhere, some of the men were largely overpaid. Some of the leading workmen received very large earnings indeed,—\$6.00, \$8.00, even \$10.00 per working day. There is evidence, too, that the improvements in machinery had caused the element of skill in the individual workman to be of less importance than in previous years. As matters stood at Homestead, the work done by most of the so-called

skilled workmen was so far aided by machinery as to require no long training or peculiar skill; any man of clear head and vigorous physique could learn to do it in a comparatively short space of time.

A reduction in the minimum price for the sliding scale was admitted to be reasonable in view of the steady decline in the price of steel billets. The Company originally proposed \$22.00 as the minimum point; later, it offered to raise the minimum to \$23.00. The men offered a minimum of \$24.00. It is probable that if this had been the sole point in dispute, it would have been easy to reach an agreement.

The change by which the agreement was to expire on January 1st instead of on July 1st aroused most opposition and bitterness among the men. The Company alleged as the ground for this change, that their contracts were usually made for the calendar year, and that it was necessary for them to have wages settled for the same period, and not liable to change in the middle of the year. The summer months, moreover, were the active season in building operations, and a re-arrangement of the scale on the 1st of July was disturbing. The men, upon the other hand, looked upon the change in the date as a direct menace to them. A strike or interruption of work was a much more serious matter to them in mid-winter than in mid-summer, and they were convinced that the Company meant to secure a tactical advantage over them. Both sides probably wished to have the dates fixed so as to give them the advantage in negotiation. The men wanted the summer date, because they knew that July and August were the busy months, and that a stoppage would cause more loss to the Company at that time than in mid-winter. The Company was probably desirous of carrying on its negotiations at a time when the men would be more loth to be deprived of employment. The men offered to sign an agreement running over five or six years; but the Company naturally was unwilling to bind itself for so long a time.

These proposals, as already said, were submitted to the men on the 30th of May. It may be noted that they were submitted in the form of a letter by the chairman, Mr. Frick, to the superintendent of the works, and that the Amalgamated Association was ignored in the communication. But this point seems to have played no part in the struggle. The recognition of the Union, which has often been the vital point in American labour struggles, here played no part. The officers of the Company offered to meet and did meet committees representing the Union, and virtually carried on negotiations with them.

No action was taken by the men until within a day or two of the date which Mr. Frick's letter fixed as the latest at which an answer would be accepted. On the 23rd of June, one day before the limit fixed, a committee of twenty-five went to the offices of the Company at Pittsburg, and held a conference with the manager and the superintendent. Before the investigating committees, the men said that the cause of the late date of the conference was the necessity or desirability

of referring the questions in dispute from the Homestead lodge to the general convention of the Amalgamated Association, which met in June. Very likely, simple procrastination and indecision added to the delay. The conference resulted in nothing. Neither side was willing to make any concessions upon the important points. When it ended, it was clear that a fight was coming. The men believed that the Company had intended to force the fight from the start. They had the feeling that the Company had made a proposal which it knew would not be accepted, with the intention of bringing on a struggle that should end in driving the Amalgamated Association out of Homestead. Probably the manager had no clear intention of this sort, but was not unwilling to fight, and get rid of the Amalgamated Association, if the occasion arose. Many other establishments have become non-union in recent years; an adjustment which naturally suits the tastes of the employer under any circumstances, and which was especially welcome to the Carnegie Company in view of the temper of the Amalgamated Association as shown in the strike that followed. Certain it is, that the Company did not go out of its way to secure a peaceable settlement. The chairman is described as a cold, stern man of unyielding temper; and his experience in the coke works, and the long struggle which there resulted in the complete defeat of the Union element, did not encourage the men to hope for easy negotiations with him. At the conference of June 24th, he left the room in impatience soon after the men appeared, his superintendent being left to continue the discussion on his own authority. No doubt a man of action must fret at the incongruity of a conference with an unwieldy committee of twenty-five slow-headed workmen. But with tact, patience, friendliness of bearing, the cultivation of a spirit of confidence and good-will, it is possible—whether probable, who can say?—that the struggle might have been avoided; and these qualities were conspicuously absent in the manager.

The number of men affected by the sliding scale, and by the proposed agreement of 1892, was not large. Out of a total of some 3,800 men employed at Homestead, only about 800 were members of the Amalgamated Association; and of these, again, only 330 were affected by the reductions. With nine-tenths of the employees there was no dispute. In fact, agreements for fixed pay running over three years, from 1892 to 1895, were entered upon with other classes of skilled workmen, such as engineers, blacksmiths, carpenters. The great majority of the employees therefore were in no way directly involved in the struggle.

As the 1st of July approached, the works were shut down. On the 29th and 30th of June, in one department after another, the fires were allowed to go out, and a dead silence succeeded the accustomed roar and clangour. The specific form which the struggle assumed was that of a lockout. No agreement had been reached with the skilled workmen of the Amalgamated Association, and the works were closed.

Even before the conference of June 23rd put an end to all hope of

a peaceful solution, some preparations for a struggle were made by the Company. A high board fence had been built about the works, and electric search lights had been put in. Much more important and significant was the action of the Company in providing for a large force of guards for the works. Before the conference of June 24th, as early as June 15th, the manager had begun correspondence with the Pinkerton Detective Agency for securing a number of armed men to guard the works. Immediately after the conference, on the 25th, Mr. Frick gave a definitive order to the agency. A force of 300 men was engaged, who were to act as guards in starting the works on the 6th of July.

A word may be said as to this Pinkerton Agency, which has played so prominent a part in many industrial struggles. Pinkerton's National Detective Agency, to give the full name of the firm, began as a private detective agency, furnishing watchmen and detectives to persons who might need the services of such persons. In recent years it has undertaken to furnish guards to railroad corporations and other large employers who feared that their property might be endangered in contests with the workmen. The resort made to this sort of private army (which, it should be noticed, has a permanent nucleus of only a few men, and at its largest numbers only 300) is due to the weakness of the civil authorities, and to their impotence in checking disorder and lawlessness. That weakness again is caused no doubt in part by the truckling of politicians to the labourers and labour organisations. But it is due in much greater degree to the simple fact that the ordinary machinery of justice and police was not devised with any expectation of meeting serious tumult. In the large cities there is a police force which often is barely sufficient to enforce the ordinary protection of the law. Outside of cities, the enforcement of the law and the suppression of disorder is in the hands of the sheriff and of his deputies. The sheriff's duties are chiefly of a formal sort in the enforcement of suits and judicial proceedings. His deputies are mild and inoffensive personages. The authority to summon a *posse* of citizens is hardly more than a form. A serious exigency unhorses him. Under such conditions large employers, having great property interests at stake, are inevitably tempted to call upon an agency which furnishes guards, supposed to be trained, for the protection of their property from destruction. During the strikes in the coke regions, to which reference was made a few moments ago, Mr. Frick had hired these guards, and had secured effective aid from them: an experience which helps to account for the prompt resort to them in this case. On the other hand, the hatred of the labour classes against the Pinkertons, as they are called, is beyond description. They are regarded as vile hirelings, assassins employed by monopolists for the oppression of the labouring man.

So far as the Carnegie Works are concerned, the experience of the Company in 1889, when the scale which terminated in 1892 had been

fixed, gave some ground for despair as to the probable efficacy of the ordinary civil authorities. At the time when the agreement of 1889 was formed, there had been a strike. The workmen took possession of the establishment. About 150 deputy sheriffs were then sent to Homestead from Pittsburg, the county seat; they were driven away summarily, and were not permitted to enter the works. In 1889 the workmen's terms had been accepted, and there had been no long strike. But evidently the Company had in 1892 no expectation that the civil authorities would be effective before the lockout began, and Pinkerton guards were engaged.

When the struggle fairly set in, the men took complete possession of the town. The lodges of the Amalgamated Association appointed an Advisory Committee, which ruled the place with an iron rod. A mass meeting of all the workmen in the employ of the Company was held, at which it was resolved to remain out until an agreement was reached with the Amalgamated Association. The Company stated later that this action was taken under fear of violence from the Amalgamated men; the latter said their comrades stood by them from real sympathy and devotion. Probably there is a degree of truth in both statements. At all events, the whole population, from the mayor down, was with the strikers. The works of the Company were surrounded, and guards were posted about them. A few watchmen and clerks employed by the Company were permitted to remain within. No strikers attempted to enter the works, but no outsider was permitted to approach them.

The sheriff was formally notified by the attorneys of the Company on the 4th of July that its property was unlawfully interfered with, and he duly issued his proclamation calling on all persons, in the usual phraseology, to abstain from unlawful acts. On the next day, the 5th of July, the sheriff having issued his summons to citizens to attend him as a *posse*, went to Homestead in person, and endeavoured to do his duty. He had a conference at Homestead with the Advisory Committee and the leaders of the men, and evidently thought he had reached an agreement with them by which he was to be allowed to put his deputies in the works. He succeeded in gathering together a dozen righteously-minded persons and dispatched them to Homestead; but when this squad reached the place, it was promptly hustled out of the town with something more than persuasion.

The truth is that the workmen took complete and absolute possession of the town and of the works, and proposed to retain possession until the Company gave in. No non-union man, no outsider of any sort, was to be allowed to enter; the works were to be closely guarded; the contest presented itself to them as one simply of waiting and endurance, in which the competition of other workmen was under no circumstances to be permitted. The works of the Company, it should be said, were not injured to the slightest extent; no particle of machinery was tampered with, no injury of any sort was done. After

the bloody events of the 6th of July, in the course of which the fence around the works was destroyed in part, that fence was rebuilt by the men. There seems to have been little drunkenness during the entire struggle. If they were mad and lawless, there was at least method in their madness. Nothing better illustrates their position and their feeling than the following note, which was sent on the 2nd of July to the assistant superintendent. It may be given *verbatim* :—

‘ Mr. E. F. WOOD, Assistant Superintendent.

‘ It has been noticed that the gas¹ is burning in the two limestone furnaces, No. 2, O. H. [open hearth] department. This action has greatly excited a number of our men, and there is a large number who on account of its being pay day cannot be held in check. If the gas is not shut off, we cannot be held responsible for any act that may be committed.

‘ Respectfully submitted,
‘ ADVISORY COMMITTEE.’

The town was regularly picketed. The force of 4,000 men was divided into divisions or watches. The river front, the railway stations and the main gates to the works were put in charge of steady men. The strikers methodically set to work at once to preserve order and protect the property, and to prevent any non-union man from entering the town or the works.

The Company, in anticipation of tactics of this sort, had engaged its force of 300 watchmen from the Pinkerton Detective Agency. The intention was to introduce these watchmen secretly into the works ; then to introduce non-union men under their protection, and begin operations in safety inside the half fortified camp into which the works had been converted. The opportunity for this presented itself by the river. The force of Pinkertons was brought by special train to a point on the river a few miles below Homestead, and there was transferred at dead of night to two large barges or flat boats, such as are used for carrying freight. These barges had been prepared some time in advance, and fitted with bunks and with cooking apparatus ; they were intended not only to convey the Pinkertons to the works, but later to house the non-union men. They were towed up the river by two tugs with the expectation of landing their human freight at the works. One of the tugs proved defective, and both boats had to be attached to the other. The movement was well planned ; but it was discovered by spies of the strikers. As the little flotilla moved up the river in the grey dawn of the summer day (July 6), whistles were booming in the town of Homestead, and an excited crowd gathered rapidly on the shore, following the boats. Before the boats reached their landing shots were fired. The landing was reached and a plank was run out, on which the captain and some

¹ Natural gas is used as fuel at the works.

of the leading Pinkertons stepped. An explosion of fire-arms followed and in the *mêlée* several were hit on both sides. The brunt of the evidence is that the workmen on shore fired first. Whichever party fired the first shot, it is certain that the workmen were resisting by force entrance on the property of the Company. The Pinkertons retreated to their boats, their leader seriously wounded and in danger of bleeding to death. After a wait of an hour or two, the captain of the steamer determined to return to Pittsburg, in order to bring the wounded men to hospital and save their lives if possible, and to get further instructions from his employers. The miserable Pinkertons, few of whom had seen fire before, were left in the barges, anchored in the stream, virtually at the mercy of the strikers. Cannon were fired at them; every man who showed his head was shot at: and barrels of burning oil were turned into the river in the attempt, fortunately unsuccessful, to set the boats on fire. The rage of the men on shore was unbounded. As the leader of the strikers, one O'Donnell, declared, in his testimony before the Congressional Committee, 'We looked on the Pinkertons as armed invaders, who are thoroughly antagonistic to all labouring interests, and allies of the capitalists.' The burgess, or mayor, of the town, who reflected faithfully the feelings of his constituents, said: 'Our people as a general thing think they are a band of cut-throats, thieves, and murderers, and are in the employ of unscrupulous capital for the oppression of honest labour.'

The wretched Pinkertons remained helpless in their boats all the day. Towards noon the steamer returned from Pittsburg with the intention of towing the barges back; but as she approached Homestead she was fired on, one man was wounded, the captain and pilot were driven from their posts in the wheel-house, and she drifted helplessly down stream. The barges were left at the mercy of the Homesteaders. Finally, late in the afternoon, they hoisted a white flag and surrendered. The surrender was negotiated by O'Donnell, the leader of the strikers, who promised that, on giving up their arms, the men should not be injured, and should be given a safe passage out of the town. He was unable to keep his promise. Here, as elsewhere, the leaders of the strikers and the upper tier of skilled workers, for whose benefit the strike was undertaken, seem to have done their best to maintain order, as they conceived order. But the news of the morning had brought a surging mob of thousands into Homestead from all the neighbouring country, and for the time all order was lost. As the Pinkertons marched off the boats and through the town, they were set upon and inhumanly beaten, the passage being a veritable running of the gauntlet. Beaten, bruised, half dead with hunger, wounds, and fright, they were kept in a large rink, or theatre, until midnight, when they were marched under guard of the members of the Amalgamated Association to the railway station, and thence carried by special train back to Pittsburg.

The 'battle' of July 6th, as it was called, rang through the country. For the moment the victory of the strikers was complete. Homestead

soon was more thoroughly than ever under the governorship of the Advisory Committee. The hotels were watched, and every stranger in town was required to give an account of himself. Newspaper correspondents were compelled to wear badges indicating their occupation; and those suspected of sending accounts unfavourable to the strikers were summarily marched out of the town. Telegrams were inspected, and their transmission forbidden if thought best by the ruling power.

The sheriff at once telegraphed to the governor, asking him to call out the military. The governor at first insisted that the civil authorities must make further efforts to maintain the law. He may have been affected by a deputation sent from Homestead to the Capitol, which assured him that the most perfect peace and tranquillity prevailed, and that the Carnegie Company was in possession of its property. That statement was probably made with perfect sincerity. The few watchmen in the Company's employ who had been left in the works from the start, were still there. The strikers had repaired the fence, and had retired from the works, simply maintaining their guards outside. The Advisory Committee was maintaining order in the town. Evidently they thought they were acting within their moral if not within their legal rights, in resisting the entrance of non-union men and of deputy-sheriffs or Pinkertons brought to protect non-union men.

The situation, however, was too anomalous to be long endured. After a few days of waiting, the governor ordered out the entire National Guard of Pennsylvania. It must be remembered that the process of calling out the military is a much less simple one in the United States than it is in European countries. The only troops which could legally be called on were those of the State, and these were militiamen, reasonably well trained and equipped it is true, but torn from their everyday occupations by the necessity of military service. The rapidity with which a body of 6,000 troops was got together and concentrated at Homestead is testimony to a high degree of efficiency in this citizen force. The governor called out the military on the 10th of July, on the 12th a large force of infantry, cavalry, and artillery entered Homestead and took possession of the town. A permanent camp was established, and through the summer months the weary duties of guard-keeping devolved upon the mechanics, clerks, and farmers constituting the soldiery. When the troops first entered the town, the members of the Advisory Committee waited upon the commander and offered to co-operate with him. They were but coldly received, however, and were referred to the sheriff under whose orders the troops, in the eye of the law, were acting,—the same sheriff whose deputies had been so unceremoniously hustled out of the town a few days before. The soldiers took possession of the works, and set guards throughout the town. The power of the Advisory Committee vanished.

With the entrance of the soldiers into the town the strike was

broken. The strikers did not recognise their defeat at first. It may be doubted whether the Company was at once certain of success. But from the moment of the appearance of the military, each day made it more clear that the strike would fail. Non-union men began to appear, and a steadily increasing number of them were introduced into the works. They were at first fed and lodged within the Company's property; later, when they ventured out, they were set upon and beaten when not protected by the soldiers. The strikers confidently proclaimed that the Company could not secure workmen, and that in the end it must submit to their demands. Other works owned by the Carnegie Company in Pittsburg and the neighbourhood, where members of the Amalgamated Association were employed, had strikes in the course of July; sympathetic strikes also occurred at some of the non-union works. But these movements caused little harm to the Company and great suffering to the striking employees. The end came slowly but surely. One department of the works after another began operations. Defections from the ranks of the strikers began, first among the unskilled workers, then among the mechanics not belonging to the Amalgamated Association, finally from among the members of the Union itself. After a dreary and hopeless struggle, the strike was at last declared officially 'off' by the Amalgamated Association on the 20th of November. The victory of the Company was complete. The men employed were thereafter dealt with individually, and were employed on the terms which the Company had laid down in the letter of May 30th. Each man for himself signed an agreement, in which, however, no pledge was required as to membership in labour unions.

During the progress of the strike, on the 23rd of July, Mr. Frick, the manager of the Company, was shot by a fanatic, a New York Anarchist, who had made the trip to Pittsburg for that purpose. But there is no evidence that this act was in any way instigated by the strikers, or by any one associated with them. Much more sad and serious was an act in which prominent strikers did have a share. Early in the present year (1893) it was stated in the newspapers that certain men prominent in the strike had been arrested for trying, in the course of the summer, to poison the men inside the works. The statement seemed incredible, and at first was treated as a canard; but the accused were tried in Court and convicted by a jury, and apparently this dastardly attempt was really made. That it had the sympathy of the great mass of the strikers, or was known to them, is not to be believed.

So far as the question of wages involved in the strike was concerned, the men probably had been receiving more than labour of the same sort commanded in the general market. That they should desire to retain their high pay is natural; that they should feel entitled to retain it, on the ground that the Company's profits were large, is again natural. The case was one in which, to use language familiar to the

economist, high wages were the effect and not the cause of price. The Company was earning high profits, partly because it took the lead in developing on a huge scale a great improvement in the arts, and partly because protective duties warded off the foreign competition which would have been most effective in keeping profits down. Domestic competition doubtless would tend to bring the returns down to a more normal level in time; and the decline in the price of steel, which was the occasion of the Company's proposal to lower the minimum, was the sign of a beginning of the levelling tendency. But for the moment the gains were still high. A reduction in the workmen's wages enured for the time being to the benefit of the employers, and not, by lowered prices, to that of the community. Since the high profits were due in part to protective duties, even the conservatives were not unwilling that a share in the plunder should go to the workmen. Considering what has been preached by the protectionists for the last twenty years as to the effects of high duties in bringing high wages, it is certainly natural that the workmen themselves should think they were entitled to a slice.

On the other hand, no community which purports to maintain the institution of private property could tolerate the proceedings of the strikers in Homestead. They set up a law of their own, in conflict with the law of the land; and their signal defeat here was inevitable. Even those who wished the strikers success in their demands had to admit that they had put themselves hopelessly in the wrong.

The Company throughout acted within its legal rights. It was clearly entitled to hire watchmen and put them on its property. The engagement of the Pinkertons was nevertheless a mistake, not only in the public interest, but probably also in the interest of the employers. The Company would have been better off if it had waited patiently until the slow growth of public opinion compelled the enforcement of the law by the usual machinery. The explosion at Homestead will check the resort to Pinkerton forces in the future; it will also stimulate the civil authorities in a more prompt and effective attention to their duties; and so far it may do good. That the representatives of the Company were not patient and conciliatory with their men, that they had no conception of any duty to guide and help them, has been already pointed out. It may be that the temper of the Amalgamated men was such that patient conciliation and conference could have yielded no result; but few would deny that the attempt should have been made, and that the responsibilities of wealth and power were in some degree disregarded.

F. W. TAUSSIG
