

A MIGHTY STRUGGLE AHEAD

CAPITAL AND LABOR TO JOIN IN BATTLE TO-DAY.

THE CARNEGIE HOMESTEAD PLANT BARRICADED AND FORTIFIED—PRECAUTIONS AGAINST SURPRISES, BY THE WORKMEN WHO ARE TO STRIKE.

PITTSBURG, Penn., June 26.—The great combination of interests of which Andrew Carnegie is the head will enter to-morrow upon a conflict that will rank in the industrial annals of the country as one of the most remarkable ever engaged in. It will be a fight for supremacy between the strongest organization of steel workers in the country on one side and the largest individual steel manufacturers of the world on the other.

Upon one hand will be ranged the strength of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers of the United States, an organization 30,000 strong, with a balance in bank of \$250,000, and hundreds of thousands more in reserve, and on the other the prestige, power, and wealth of the Carnegie Steel Company, (Limited,) the new title of the associated interests of the Carnegie firms, with a capital of \$25,000,000. Broadly, the question will involve the right of capital to dictate terms to labor, and the recognized privilege of labor to obtain through organization the highest remuneration for its services.

More specifically, the struggle will be one against a reduction in wages of 30 per cent. by 3,500 workers and an attempt on the part of the Carnegie Steel Company to make such working terms as it deems applicable to the present condition of the steel business and the mechanical improvements effected in the process of manufacture.

This condition of affairs has arisen out of the expiration of a three years' sliding scale of wages in operation at the Homestead Works of the company and the action of the company in substituting another with marked reductions in rates. The Homestead employes are paid by the tonnage. Settlements during the last three years have been based on the selling price of steel billets, the minimum basis being \$25 per ton; that is, no matter how much the market price ran below \$25, payments were to be made on the basis of that figure. If the market price was higher, payments were to be made accordingly. As a matter of fact, billets have been selling for several months at \$22 and \$22.50, while settlements with the men have been made at \$25, and of course at a loss of the difference to the company.

In anticipation of the expiration of the three years' scale next Thursday, the Carnegie Steel Company formulated a schedule of rates to operate from July 1 next to the first of January, 1894. The minimum basis has been changed from \$25 to \$22, and reductions which average 30 per cent. have been made on the rates for the various kinds of employment. The workers on the other side presented the company with a scale which differed slightly from the current one. On a conference both sides made concessions, but parted without a settlement. The company had previously fixed the 24th inst. as the last day open to the workers for accepting the scale as an organized body. After that date the men were to be treated with only as individuals.

That day, last Friday, has passed without approaches from either side, and both parties are now actively engaged preparing for what must follow. It will be a strike—for such is inevitable—a strike which it is feared will overshadow the sanguinary struggle of 1889, when the same company succeeded after a long fight in effecting a reduction of wages.

In anticipation of similar scenes and occurrences at Homestead, the Carnegie company has for some time past been making careful and exhaustive preparations to guard the property and the men it may find necessary to employ against any violence on the part of the workers. To explain properly the extraordinary precautions taken by the firm a brief description of Homestead and the works is quite essential.

Both are situated picturesquely on the banks of the Monongahela River, overlooking one of the most placid water beds in the State of Pennsylvania. Across the river is a row of winding hills, now verdant with the bloom of summer. Towering bluffs and wooded mountains surround the valley which centres on the quiet little borough. And that entire valley might properly be named the seat of Andrew Carnegie's industries. It was he that built the borough as it now stands. It was he that planted there one of the greatest industries known to the living labor world. Here are 12,000 souls dependent for an existence on the wages paid by Andrew Carnegie weekly.

The monthly pay roll of the company amounts to \$200,000, sometimes exceeding that amount. This in itself shows the dependence of the town upon the manufacturer. Covering an area of 600 acres of land, the works stretch out from the Pittsburgh City Farm to Marshall Station, on the McKeesport and Youghiogheny Railway; roaring louder than the beat of the hurricane-driven ocean against granite cliffs; hissing more penetratingly than the swirl of Niagara's cataract; rivers of molten steel, hotter than the seething metallic streams from Vesuvius in the days of Pompeii; showers of golden meteors like the expulsion from one centre of the stars of the heavens; the earth vibrating as under seismic action; the air oppressively hot and sulphurous; a scene of ideal hell—the end of the world—dwarfing in its awful realism the ideas and descriptions of Dante, master of "The Inferno." As one hand controls the streams, the ocean, the stars, the universe, so one operator standing in a pulpit of levers, controls and guides that wonderful world of mechanism, the origin of that unearthly confusion.

To the practical operator, the sounds and scenes are as Rembrandt's to the artist, as sweetest melody to the musician. It is here that armor plate for most of America's war fleet has been made. The defensive coverings of the steamship Monterey have only just been completed, the last shipment of plate having been made yesterday. Huge ingots measuring 55 inches square by 14 inches wide and weighing 160,000 pounds are lifted from the pits, charged into the heating furnaces, and rolled into plates by machinery that is unequalled by any other in the world. Appliances imported from Scotland plane and mold and fashion the plates into the exact shape required by the contour of the ship's sides, so that when the material is placed in the cars it is ready for position on the vessel.

In perfecting the armor-making branch of its business the firm has invested over \$1,000,000. In other departments are manufactured massive beams up to forty inches high, plates of every kind, and structural material of all descriptions. Everywhere throughout the works labor-saving appliances have been introduced at great cost, and within the last three years the necessity for human labor has been very largely reduced.

The latter is one of the chief reasons why the firm insists on cutting the rates for work. The tonnage turned out by the mills is vastly in excess of the capacity of other plants, and the workers are consequently entitled to make higher wages. The prices that the company now offer are such, its officers argue, as will allow of its men earning good wages with less effort than other mill hands employed in older plants can accomplish with higher rates. Having invested its capital in labor-saving appliances, the company argues it should receive due interest on the investment.

That the Carnegie Steel Company is thoroughly in earnest in its position is amply shown by the nature of the preparations made to sustain it. If it cannot make terms with its present employes it will employ outsiders. As in 1889, this will be resisted by the old hands, and the company has so anticipated. It will not again be taken by surprise. Around the entire plant has been placed within the week a palisading nine feet high, topped with three strands of barbed wire. Even those will be charged with electricity to prevent any possibility of invasion.

All through the ground at various points are being erected huge tower lights and many points of vantage from which to view the outside scenes. Even every means of egress has been cut off, with one or two exceptions. Where the workmen and laborers entered heretofore from the railroad tracks and other points, stout barricades of wood and iron have been put up and bridges placed in their stead as a means of getting from one portion of the works to the other. Searchlights with strong reflectors have already been erected on the buildings, so that a blaze of light can be thrown on the entire place to prevent surprise in case of a night attack on the works. All approaches are firmly guarded by stout fortifications.

Half way between City Farm and Munnhall Station a new station has been built for the accommodation of the company. This will enable a train of watchmen, workers, and Pinkerton's men to be unloaded right in the centre of the works without possible interference from strikers. Once inside, ample refuge is guaranteed them in a big barrack-like frame building recently built for the purpose.

The river front is unprotected by any fence, but it was said yesterday that a steam launch had been purchased and fitted with a good equipment to serve as a river patrol and ward off any danger from that side.

Every man of the 4,000 steel workers is well aware of all these precautions, and is doing much hard thinking as a consequence. It is certain the men will resist the reduction or the offer, and will make a bitter fight against the sacrifice of their jobs. Their livelihood depends on their success, for such an enormous body of men could not find employment at any one or number of places at this particular time.

To-morrow the tussle for supremacy will begin. It will be watched with anxiety by every member of the Amalgamated Association of Iron Workers and the families they support, and by every manufacturer and member of the labor world.

Only a day or two ago did an eminent astronomer of this State return home from England. His description of the homes of Andrew Carnegie and his partner, Henry Phipps, Jr., best serves to tell what interest both men take in

the American industries which have made both name and fortune for them. Mr. Carnegie's home would make a sick man well to look upon it. It is one of the brightest spots in England. It was the home of the Herschels, where Sir William and Sir John did their nightly work, and where Caroline Herschel prepared the manuscript of all their observations and discovered the comets that made her name famous. The great mirror of the celebrated four-foot telescope is still preserved by the family, and although it weighs a ton it is still hung in a niche in the hall. The house is a veritable Eden to live in, with apparently nothing but sunshine looking over it.

At Knebworth House Henry Phipps, Jr., enjoys himself. Here Lord Bulwer-Lytton wrote his famous novels; and, dating as it does from the fourteenth century, the place is of great historic interest, and is certainly one of the most charming spots in Hertfordshire. It is a picturesque castle, surrounded by a beautiful park, and the woodland, lakes, and parks cover an area of 7,000 acres. The castle contains 110 rooms. Fish are in abundance in the lakes and over 300 deer roam at large in the magnificent grounds.

"Andrew Carnegie's home at Cowarth Park, Sunningdale, is a dream of curiosities," says the man who spent a day there but a month ago. "and Mr. Phipps's Lytton residence is a palace of splendor."