

labor, are artificially enhanced in price by the tariff, and a new enhancement, more onerous and oppressive than any that preceded it, has lately been made by the McKinley bill. The benefit of this accrues to the manufacturers of the articles thus protected, who have in many instances been secured against domestic competition" by combinations, and against foreign competition by the duties which they themselves have been permitted to dictate. The object of the McKinley bill has been to raise the prices of all products and to secure to the protected and associated manufacturers an altogether abnormal profit. This has been its actual effect in a multitude of trades. The reduction of one-ninth or even of one-fifth in the hours of labor would not be more than the fair share of labor in these products. Heretofore no man who works for wages has been able to assert that he found himself better off by reason of the McKinley bill. On the contrary, every such man is worse off by the rise in the prices of the things he has to buy. A strike for a reduction of hours without a reduction of pay in all the protected industries would at least make the division of profits much more equitable than it is now, and to such a strike no rational opposition can be made by the protected and combined employers.

MAY DAY AND EIGHT HOURS.

While the first Monday in September has been made in this State the statutory "Labor Day," on which Labor is to "demonstrate" and "show its power," the real labor day for business purposes, not only all over this country but all the world over, is May Day. For some years it has been agreed that the first of May is the day on which demands shall be made on behalf of Labor and on which Labor shall endeavor to enforce these demands. It is unfortunate that, all over Europe at least, the making of these demands is regarded by the powers that be as a threat against public order, and that the approach of May Day should be marked by the concentration of troops and by preparations to disperse what are expected to be disorderly assemblages. In this country things have not yet got to that pass. With the increase of immigration, however, which no steps have yet been taken to check, there is reason to fear that they will soon be brought to that pass. Nothing is more remarkable in all the labor demonstrations that do threaten the public peace than the fact that they are invariably headed by foreigners, who have not arrived at the American way of looking at things, and who consider themselves members of a "class" as workingmen of American birth do not. Florence is the only capital from which any serious disorders are reported. It is impossible to tell from the dispatches whether or not the intervention of the troops was necessary. But there is always the danger that the troops may be called upon before their intervention is necessary, and that is an argument against "demonstrations," which are so threatening that troops have to be held in readiness to suppress them. The present object of the demonstrations all over Europe and all over this country is single and definite. It is to obtain an "eight-hour day," and to obtain it without any diminution of the wages now paid for the work of nine or ten hours, or even more. It is possible that an industrious and interested workman can do in eight hours more than eight-ninths or eight-tenths of the work that he would do in the longer period. But, in a general way, the proposition is that employers of labor shall pay what they now pay for eight-ninths or eight-tenths of the equivalent they now receive. That is to say, the products of labor are enhanced in cost to the consumer in this proportion. The question whether employers of labor can afford to make this advance in wages is a question the answer to which depends upon so many and various considerations that it is quite absurd to discuss the question as a universal or even a general question. In order to answer it as to any particular trade it is necessary to know the conditions of that trade.

This fact makes a general strike for eight hours an absurdity, even in any single country, and much more such a strike that extends over Europe and America and affects all industries in which eight hours have not already been established as the normal day's work. It is impossible to discuss the feasibility of an eight-hour day, even in this country, though there are some general considerations that make a general strike for eight hours, on the part of skilled workmen in all trades, less ridiculous in this country than in any other. In the first place, our conditions have resulted in a greater number and variety of labor-saving appliances than are employed anywhere else. A workman with the assistance of a machine can do nine or ten times the amount of work that he could do before the machine was invented. His complaint that the machine does him no good, either in lessening the amount of his labor or in increasing its rewards is now a very old one. But it is by no means without plausibility. In the second place—if it should not rather be put in the first place—we are by far the most highly protected country in the world, and of this protection, imposed ostensibly for the benefit of the workingman, the workingman gets no benefit whatever. All products of labor, except of agricultural