

THE CORE OF THE QUESTION.

The Carnegie company has made public an official statement of the questions involved in the strike at Homestead. There are but three of them: (1) a reduction in the minimum of the scale from \$25 to \$23 per ton for Bessemer steel billets; (2) a change in the date of the expiration of the scale from June 30 to Dec. 31; (3) a reduction in tonnage rates at those furnaces and mills where labor-saving improvements have been made which increase the output and consequently the earnings of the workmen. The first and third of these questions are the most material, and from the standpoint of the company's statement should be clearly kept in mind in coming to a decision. If the Amalgamated Association of workmen cannot disprove them then their cause is by no means as strong as they claim. They at least call for immediate explanation.

It is further set forth in this official statement that there are 3,800 men on the pay-rolls at Homestead. Of these 3,800 men only 45 are affected by the scale minimum and but 280 by the tonnage reduction. These 325 men, less than 10 per cent of the hands employed, are the only ones whose wages are to be reduced, and they alone are responsible for the trouble there. The remaining 3,475 men are not affected either by the questions of hours or wages. They have quit work without any grievance of their own, and are fighting the battle of 325 who have received the highest pay. It is further set forth in the official statement of the company that the wages of these 325 men range from \$2.25 to \$14.66 per day, and that the majority of them range from \$6 to \$10 per day. Surely if this statement be correct these men are not oppressed by their employers, nor are they the slaves of capital in any sense. They are drawing wages which millions of workingmen would be glad to get. They are receiving far more than the average of clerks, bookkeepers, school-teachers, accountants, and others engaged in intellectual labor. The official statement says: "There are men working in these mills who come down to work in their own carriages and have them call for them at the expiration of their shifts. These men are not overseers but mechanics who would not earn \$50 a month if dependent on their brains for a living. They are not open to reason, and think they can force us to pay anything they demand. There is no sense of justice about them."

This puts a different aspect on the situation at Homestead, if the statement of the company is correct. If it be not correct it devolves upon the Amalgamated Association to show it. It deserves their prompt attention. Is it true that only 325 of the 3,800 hands are quarreling with their employers about wages, and that 3,475 of them have no wage grievance at all? Is it true that a majority of these 325 strikers have been averaging from \$6 to \$10 a day for their work? If so, then the public should know it, for it entirely changes the general idea of the contention and cause of the disturbance and quarrel and justifies the Carnegie company in resisting an unjust demand. THE TRIBUNE has no comments to make upon the case until the other side has been heard. It may be that the company has not given a correct statement. In that case the Amalgamated Association should make an immediate reply. If it cannot refute what the company asserts it cannot blame the public if people come to the decision that these 3,475 men are not justified in the violent course they have taken in behalf of the remaining highly paid three hundred and twenty-five.