

this would have in strengthening their combination as against capital, the short-hour agitators, before even allowing the new statute to be tested, proceeded, *pari passu*, to organize simultaneous strikes at several great manufacturing centres. In Chicago, and at several other places in the West, large bodies of mechanics were so ill-advised as to demand an advance of wages along with a reduction of the hours heretofore constituting a working day. Moulders, boiler-makers, carpenters and railroad laborers, by the thousand, both in Chicago and St. Louis, were mad enough to join in this combination for self-destruction. In some cases resort was had to intimidation, where sober and industrious workmen refused to be dragged into the insane enterprise; and riots, which, for the time, threatened to be serious, were among the agencies to bring the employers of labor to terms.

The results of such attempts to overturn immutable economic laws, have not proved different in this case from what they have been in all others, except that the lesson taught is a lesson not alone for workingmen, skilled or unskilled, but for those political demagogues who were so prone to pledge themselves to the Eight-hour Labor Law. Take Chicago for an example. There the attempt to put the law in force, vigorous as it was, has ended in a fearful discomfiture of the workmen. There is already a plethora of labor, skilled and unskilled, in the city, such as has not been known for years. In all the great workshops, scores of applications for employment are made by those who, but the other day, were independent eight-hour strikers. Many of them now plead for work sufficient to enable them to pay their board. Their temporary success in crippling the manufacturing interests of the city has brought back upon them a terrible retribution. The turn of the employers has come. No one prominently connected with the strikes can get work on any terms. Strangers have rushed in and filled the places of the skilled mechanics who had reckoned upon the city as their permanent home. The co-operative system which one manufacturing firm has resolved to test, even if it should prove a success, is not the kind of enterprise in which men addicted to strikes would care to take an interest, and before the test is made, thousands of thoughtless workmen will find themselves driven away from their homes and associations, with nothing to console them in a new start in life, but the remembrance of their former failure.

From one end of New-York to the other, there is an overplus of skilled labor. Master carpenters especially represent the applications for employment as far exceeding those of previous years. Capable men are found ready not only to work ten hours a day, but to work any number of hours at reasonable wages, if they could only get a job. So much for the disgracefully short-sighted attempt of the Legislature to create an antagonism between capital and labor. Half the existing misery caused by the recent strikes might have been spared but for the insidious efforts of the communists to get the first wedge of their theory introduced into our industrial system by statutory enactment.

The Labor Question—Short Hours and Strikes.

Workmen who are addicted to strikes could not have chosen a worse time than the opening of the present season, to compel the employers of labor to make a general and uniform advance in the rates of wages.

A large part of the dull months of the year, especially in Massachusetts, New York, Wisconsin and Missouri, had been employed by that class of mechanics who usually lead in what are called Workmen's Unions, to agitate the question of reducing the hours of labor. Indifferent to the fact that almost every branch of manufacturing industry was in a backward condition, compared with the previous year, agents of the working-men's associations—many of them self-constituted—set to work before the elections of last Fall to organize a labor party, and with such nominal success, that in some half-dozen States, they succeeded in getting what is known as an Eight-hour Law passed. Trusting to the influence which