LOVE & LABOUR;

OR,

THE PERILS OF THE POOR.

A TALE OF A GREAT STRIKE.

BY JOHN ERIGENA BARRETT.

The incidents upon which the following story is founded are similarly derived from facts that have come under my personal observation. My aim is to show the perversity of the poor, and call attention to the evils of strikes which is a constant source of friction in our social system, for the purpose of rididing the one and correcting the other. I do not, however, denounce mob law, whether it be broadcloth armed with rifles, or in shirt sleeves and blackthorns. I believe that the time has arrived for prudent trade lies in a just and generous legislation, which will protect the rights of capital, and encourage, and safeguard poor from oppression.

JOHN ERIGENA BARRETT.

CHAPTER I.

A RAILROAD WRECK.

Like thunder, which rise with thunder, slake
Or stormy souls with rain:
Like the hoarse murmur of the pine-girt lake
Are the voices of our land,
The voice of the free mountain, and the railroad,
The voice of the free mountain, and the railroad,
The voice of our mills make
The voice of God more plain.

Whittier.

"Our up the track!" "down with the corporation!" "down to the black-hearted capitalists!" were the cries which rent the summer night, as the infuriated crowd of men dashed like a whirlwind through one of the mountain-passes of Pennsylvania traversed by the railroad. Darkness, the roar of an angry tempest, their indignation, and the deafening sound, and all argument or reason and order were speedily spurned. The hearts had become seared by misery; their sympathies had become poisoned by their wrongs; the fellow lines in every breast had become hardened by the cold, and the crowd seemed as if it would dash itself to death, if it could only by that deliver the corporations of the country into utter destruction.

Contested reductions in their wages had made desperate; their prayers for consideration met with contempt; the pride of petty tyrants had goaded them to madness, and among members were hundreds on the verge of starvation.

Yet to them it seemed there was no alternative but to strike! The time for fair play had been given up upon them for months, drawing the lines closer and closer about them until it had seemed to squeeze their very life-blood out in a tun grasp; and much as they hesitated, lonely as they had often discussed the subject, lonely as they had, in their hearts, dreaded the consequences and the cost, and dared to their heart of hearts that God would be with them aright, they finally resolved to STRIKE! Secret and most important step was to maintain the struggle, and keep others from taking the place of the strikers, but the law pretended to say man at his work, no matter what he may do work for, or even if he belonged to that disciplined and thoroughly detested class known as "blacklegs" and so they at first relied that they would be left to pursue their work in peace, and in all things behave themselves as best some of toil.

In the company, smarting under the indignity of being the vast and varied interests thrown idle number of workmen, had commenced negotiations for the employing of others to fill their places. This reached the ears of the strikers, and feared that their interests were being trodden underfoot, a vast majority decided to fling off all their responsibilities, and let the protection take care of their own property, since it had such little regard for the welfare of the poor. In vain did more temperate of the men argue against such course; they were out-voted and cried down by their hot-tempered, who, in the heat of their anger, were not to threats which, in their sober, second sight they would never have dared. Many of the men, in anticipation of defeat, conjured up the spectre of poverty which would greet them at their firesides, where dispirited wives and children sat in sickness and in suffering, no wonder that the fevered brains of such men, in infamy, and in the excitement of the moment, in the hot-tempered, and in the heat of their work, they would not even dream of in moments of sober sense. It was under this influence—the galling thought that they were displaced by others who would come and fill the great out of their mouths, and drink the cup of life from their darlings at home, and their vowed vengeance on the property they helped themselves to protect, and death to "black-legs" who should have the temerity to take their places.

The heart and brain are burning with grief and indignation, while the pangs of hunger are rending their way through a man's vitals, he will do very choice of his language, and a just law will hesitate before making him any more liable for his utterances than he would be for the words of a madman.

The cries of the crowd as they rushed like a raging river through the mountain pass in the dark of the little station of Irontown scared the workmen from their post, and they fled in from the place of safety.

The crowd, in its anger, was frequently heard cries crying, "Brothers, be calm!" and implore to be heeding, but the speaker might as well try to stop a whirlwind. At last, the "voice of the people" adopted different tactics, and finding a deaf ear on the ears of the crowd, commenced to cry, "Our up the track!" "down with the black-legs!" "down to the black-legs!" "down with the corporation!" "down with the black-legs!" "down with the corporation!" "down with the black-legs!" "down with the corporation!" "down with