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EDITORIAL

METAMORPHOSIS OF THE BRICKBAT.

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WITH Philadelphia as the stage, "Law and Order" as the scenery, a transfiguration took place that should make Ovid of old, the great poet and stager of metamorphoses, green with envy. It was the metamorphosis, or transfiguration of the Brickbat.

Taking the plutocratic press as the source of information, the motormen's and conductors' strike against the Rapid Transit Company was the manifestation of "a brutality utterly reversive of settled society." The sign, symbol and mark of the reversiveness above named was the Brickbat. The Brickbat was the "unreasoning argument of ferocity"; it was the "message of destruction, hurled by rioters"; it was the "rude word shot from ruder hands"; it was the "crystallized howl of ferocious tigers"; it was the "Anarchist expression of illiterate foreigners"; it was the "destructive envoy of demons"; it was the "jagged breath of passion carrying destruction of life and property as it sped"; it was a "meteor of hell"; it was a substitute of "Force for Law"; it was an "unhinger of social order"; it was "Wrath instead of Reason"; it was "outrage," it was "savagery," it was "malevolence," it was "barbarism." All this the Brickbat was. So much so was the Brickbat all this that the appearance upon the scene of the State Constabulary, "men who asked no questions, obeyed orders, and shot to kill," was hailed as the only antidote for the unspeakable Brickbat, and, in that one word, the strike was compressed; and it was to be crushed, Brickbat and all.

Again taking the identical plutocratic press, only the issues of a week later, as the source of information, the Brickbat looks transformed. There is now no more talk of "crushing," not that the power is not there, but something else has happened to tone down and soften the hard corners and edges of the Brickbat. The "sympathies of the public" have turned against the Company; "business is

incommoded by the Company's uncompromising stand"; "public comfort demands that the Company put an end to the turmoil, and compromise"; "business men do not like to have to dodge brickbats on their way to their offices, all because of the stubbornness of the Company." And so forth. In short, one would not know the former jagged Brickbat in the angelic article now referred to.

In Ovid's tales rage, love, jealousy, the emotions of the mind and heart change men to trees, nymphs to babbling brooks, heroes to rocks, maids to flowers. An equal wizard is Capitalist Interests. So long as the Philadelphia strike was taken to threaten stocks by reducing dividends the Brickbat was a harsh-hard thing; just so soon as the suspicion grew rife that the Company itself had incited the strike so as to find a pretext to throw itself into the receiver's hands where the small holders would be squeezed out, and the concern re-organized with the large, though watered, stock holders in sole possession, just so soon was the Brickbat metamorphosed, in the eyes of the numerous stockholders whose holdings were endangered, into a thing of beauty lines and soft contours.

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