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Ominous Times

Lucy E. Parsons

June, 1892

There are some ominous disturbances of special moment in the Labor world. At New Orleans the street-car men are engaged in a desperate struggle, and, according to the capitalistic press, some “rioting” has occurred, the strikers, it is said, having fired on the police. The Granite Cutter’s union has been locked out by the bosses’ union, who are engaged in an effort to compel the cutters to change the time of signing the yearly contract from January to January instead of, as heretofore, from May to May.

The men claim that this would give the bosses an increased advantage over them, because in January most of the members are idle and would be compelled to make terms that they would not in May. In several mining districts in Idaho and Wyoming there is a general rebellion, and President Harrison has been requested to hold the United States army in readiness to assist the mine-owners in subjugating their wage-slaves. It also seems that the “all-wise” and “all-merciful” God is adding his quota to the sum of human wretchedness, for he is having the “windows of heaven” all thrown open and pouring down floods upon the bowed heads of his most devout worshipers—the Negroes of the South and the farmers of the West—in the most

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awful devastation and death! What, with floods, famine, lock-outs, strikes, and the unemployed millions, can we expect of the near future?

The contemplation of the misery in store for the farming and wage classes next winter is simply appalling! Yet this need not be if the produce of these producers had not, in former years, passed from their hands and gone to fill the elevators of speculating Board of Trade pirates, and the land belonged to actual settlers, and not, as now, to mortgage sharks, and the wages of the wage-earners had remained in their possession, there would always remain wealth enough among the people to tide them over any unforeseen calamity. When will the people see the real cause of all their woe—the private ownership of the means of life?