# A BAD SYSTEM

## Nellie Bly Says It Is the Cause of the Brooklyn Strike.

## She Is Convinced That Something Is Wrong in the United States.

**MEN NOT PERMITTED TO DISTINGUISH SUNDAY FROM OTHER DAYS.**

**The Profitable Time Spent by the Fair Writer With the Cars for Conductors and Motormen in Their Homes—The Scale of Wages—Living Plainly and Savingly—How New Men Are Kept by the Company.**

NEW YORK, Feb. 2.—I have spent a day among the strikers in Brooklyn, and I am more than ever convinced that something is wrong, not in Denmark, but in the United States, the land of the free and the home of the brave.

I am not a striker; I am not a capitalist; but I believe in justice, and I say that when a sober, industrious, saving man has worked for seven-fifteen years for one company, and in that time has not been permitted to know the difference between Sunday and any other day in the week, and whose only vacation has been one solitary day in the year, losing that day's wages that he might spend the hours uninterrupted with his wife and children, and still this man, sober, industrious and saving, is only been able to earn enough to maintain the plainest life, devoid of everything except the most pressing necessities—then, I repeat, there is something woefully wrong in the whole system of things.

As I have said, I spent the day with the strikers, and it was profitably spent. It is one thing to see men in their uniforms as conductors and motormen, under the stern pressure of harshest rule, and another to meet them in their homes and in the dress that makes all men alike.

I rode in a trolley car from near the bridge to Ridgewood, I believe. At any rate, it was where the car stables are located and from which cars start. It was a fair stable, the long line of dead cars and a crowd of men standing idly by. Quite a number of policemen were in sight, as if to act as a threat to possible visitors.

Upon another corner at the foot of the elevated station stood a smaller group of men. They were very quiet, and I rightly judged them to be the strikers.

A nice-looking man, with frank blue eyes and a winning expression, came to me, and I felt instantly that I liked him.

"I would like to visit some of the strikers' homes, if I explained to him. "Will you kindly give me some addresses?"

Without asking who I was or my purpose he made reply: "If you will come with me to our hall I will get some addresses for you."

Side by side we walked down the sloppy streets until, having walked a number of blocks, we came to a door, and my guide preceded me up the icy steps, and pushing the door open I found we were in a large room closely packed with men.

My guide led me to a table in the corner, around which sat three men. I had been set in a chair first, and afterwards my guide explained my request.

The men were ready to grant it. They explained that if I wished they would have a man who was on the night force accompany me.

"Those hours are naturally sensitive in regard to their poverty, one man explained, and if you, a stranger, should visit their homes alone they would tell you nothing.

As I had just come from the starving people in Nebraska, where I had been before and during the strike, and knowing of the cause events proceeding from that, I questioned the man.

"We are striking for three things," explained a good-looking, clear-eyed, well-spoken man. "First, we ask the abolishment of the ten-hour law. Second, if compelled to work over ten hours, we ask extra pay for the extra work. The rate we asked was 25 cents for a trip, and a trip meant two hours' work. Third, we asked for a reduction of the number of trippers."

"What had been the scale of wages previously to your strike?" I asked.

"For four years, or a little longer, we've had a man who was on the company's pay to