

## THE STRIKES.

## FIRST ARTICLE.

THE last twelvemonth has been peculiarly marked in the manufacturing world as a year of strikes and combinations ; nor, though there are adjustments taking place, and bands of operatives returning to their employment after months of voluntary idleness, are they by any means yet at an end. Great fires and disastrous shipwrecks are both very terrible things ; but, so far as the mere waste of property is involved, a protracted strike is at least as formidable as either, and its permanent effects are often incalculably more mischievous. Wreck or conflagration never yet ruined any branch of industry. Were all the manufactured goods in London to be destroyed in one fell blaze, a few months of accelerated industry would repair the loss. The greatest calamity of the kind which could possibly take place would resemble merely the emptying of a reservoir fed by a perennial stream, that would continue flowing till it had filled it again. But the loss occasioned by a long-protracted strike is often of a deeper kind. It not only empties the reservoir, but in some instances cuts off the spring, and in this way robs of its means of supply the town or district whose only resource the spring had constituted. Nations have in this way, when there were competing nations in the field, been permanently stripped of lucrative branches of industry, and become the mere importers of articles with which they had been accustomed to supply their neighbours. In other instances the effects are disastrous, not to the nation generally, but to merely a class of its workers. A partial strike of one section of workmen, on the product of whose labours certain other sections are dependent