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***Cheers For Nellie Bly***

***She Goes Out to Pullman Once More and Has to Make a Speech***

***Says She is A Good Striker Now***

***Though When She Went West She Was Very Bitter Against the Workingmen of Pullman***

***Wages Ever Down—Rents Always Up***

***Stories Told by Many More Men of What Life Meant for Them in  
“Paradise Town,” with Philanthropy at 6 Per Cent***

Chicago, July 14—I found in my mail this morning an earnest request from the Pullman A. R. U. for me to be present at a meeting which was to be held in the Turner Hall, Kensington.

Thinking something of importance was on I went out there, to find assembled some two thousand men and that I had been invited to present to a minister, Rev. Mr. Cawardine, a resolution of thanks for the brave stand he has taken in behalf of the Pullman strikers. All this was confided to me in whispers, for the meeting was in session when I arrived.

I tried to plead off, and told them it was more appropriate to have one of their union make the presentation. They would not listen, and I was saved from a very embarrassing position by an accident. Rev. Mr. Cawardine could not be found. So the presentation was postponed until this evening in the open square in Kensington.

Several of the workmen made speeches this afternoon trying to cheer the spirits of their hungry and disheartened brothers. I was introduced and asked to say a few words to the men.

I was frightened and said so, but they kept on applauding until the managers told me I would have to speak to quiet them.

So I took my nerves in hand and my place before the table near where the speakers sat. I don't intend to repeat what I said, but I told them several truths. They were especially amused when I told them that I had come to Chicago very bitterly set against the strikers; that so far as I understood the question. I thought the inhabitants of the model town of Pullman hadn't a reason on earth to complain. With this belief I visited the town, intending in my articles to denounce the riotous and bloodthirsty strikers. Before I had been half a day in Pullman I was the most bitter striker in the town.

*Nellie Has Flopped*

That is true, I've flopped, as they call it, and I turn brave enough to confess it. If ever men and women had cause to strike, those men and women are in Pullman. I also said to these men, sitting so quietly and peaceably before me, hungry for a word of sympathy or a word of hope, that if any of them wished to make any statements to me I would be glad to have them do so. After the meeting I was besieged. If I attempted to tell half the tales of wrong I've listened to I could tell an entire copy of *The World*.

"Are you at all discouraged by the calling off of the strike?" I asked one of the committee.

"No, we see no reason why other workmen should suffer because of our wrongs," was the reply. "Their being hungry also will not help us. Mr. Debs says at no time since the strike nine weeks ago has the situation looked so favorable, and we believe this to be true also. The thing we hope and pray for, I might say, our only salvation, is arbitration. Mr. Pullman says he has nothing to arbitrate, but if he is forced to it we will submit to the result, be it what it may. If we are wrong it will be proved, and we will uncomplainingly accept our punishment."

"Are the strikers getting enough to eat?" I asked.

The man smiled.

"We starved when we were working and we have food now; that's the only difference. If Pullman had reduced the rents and given us a chance to buy food there would have been no kick."

"I'll give you a statement and sign it, too, if you want it," said a fine-looking man as he came forward. "I've been in Pullman thirteen years and know the story from the beginning. I am a toolmaker or a steelmaker. I do the fine steel work you see in the cars. I used to live in another state, and the Pullman Company was looking for the best workmen they could hire. They came after me four times before I consented to give up my job and my pretty little home and move to Pullman. I had a wife and two children, and as I say I moved here thirteen years ago.

### *Wages Down, Rents Up*

"When I came first I received \$4 a day, and when I gave up my work—I didn't strike, mind you, I was starved out on the wages and quit a month before the men went out—I could only make \$1.92 a day.

"With the reduction of wages my living expenses went on just the same. They did not decrease. I moved into a four-room flat for which I paid \$14 a month, with 71 cents for water tax. To give you some idea of the situation, say that I had been able to earn \$2.75 a day, of course you understand I did not; I only got \$1.92, I paid 50 cents a day for rent and water and that if I had got \$2.75, would have left 37.12 cents per capita for maintaining my family. But that average would have required that I work 365 days in the year. But you know we have Sundays and holidays and three weeks every summer everything shuts down for repairs, so If I did get \$2.75 every working day it would only average 20 cents a day per capita to support and educate my family, and with the poorest beefsteaks 16 cents per pound, you can understand how much I could do.

"I can say for myself and brother workmen," he added, "that if rents had been reduced with the pay there would have been no strike. Instead of that rents have been increased since I came to Pullman. A cottage of five rooms cost thou \$14.71, and now we have to pay \$14.71 for a four-room flat."

### *Too Much Red Tape*

“Another trouble,” spoke up a man who had been listening, “was the tyranny of the bosses. We had too many, and they were incompetent. There was too much red tape about the whole concern. Mr. Pullman was an autocrat. He never came to Pullman without from twelve to twenty people at his heels, and no workman dared speak to him. We had to give complaints to a boss and he sent it up the line, until at last it reached Mr. Pullman, who couldn’t see how things could be helped anyway. To put it roughly, the head of the dog was too far from the tail.”

“I wish you would state my case,” spoke another man. “It has been claimed by Mr. Pullman that his workmen were not required to live in Pullman. I am what they call an inside wood-finisher. I used to make \$8.25 a day, and I was cut to \$1.40. Then I moved out of Pullman. I got a five-room cottage for \$1, and then I was laid off. There was no work for me. When I asked why, the manager told me if I would move back to Pullman I would not have to lose a day’s work. It was either occupy a Pullman house or do without work.”

“I was also reduced, said a newcomer, “from \$3 a day to \$1.50. My rent was \$0.50 and at one pay day I had only been given thirteen days work. After they took out my rent I had a check for one cent to live on for two weeks and keep my wife and child.”

### *The Cost of Vestibules*

“I am a vestibule builder,” said a man who had spoken at the meeting. “You know the vestibule of the Pullman cars. I used to be paid \$12 and \$15 previous to the first quarter in 1893. Then I was cut from \$15 to \$9. Perhaps you remember seeing the World’s Fair Pullman cars. For the first I received for vestibule building \$110 or \$55 an end. We have seven cuts during the time we were building them, and for the last build I received \$40, or \$20 an end. Just the same amount of labor and time was put on them, but that was the reduction, from \$110 to \$40.”

### *A Tax on Gas Stoves*

“I wish to tell you, Miss Bly, about the gas,” interjected another man. “Contrary to the city ordinance governing the price of gas, which places the toll at \$1.25 per 1,000 feet, Mr. Pullman charges his workmen \$2.25, and we were notified that we could have gas at \$1.75 per 1,000 feet if we rented from the company a gas stove at 50 cents per month. The gas stove is an ordinary one, with two lids, costing at most 75 cents for a stove, but we had to pay Mr. Pullman continually 50 cents a month rent for one in order to have our gas at \$1.75 per 1,000 feet instead of \$2.25.”

“Don’t forget the water tax,” suggested a newcomer. “Mr. Pullman paid 4 cents and at the very smallest figuring charged his people 14 cents. I estimated that over and above everything he cleared annually on the water alone \$15,000.

“I don’t think any department of work had a worse reduction than mine, and I’ll give you a signed statement if you want it.” Said another man: “I put washstands in the cars. Two years ago for fitting out a car with wash stands I got \$12.50, and I was cut to \$2.70.”

“That’s no worse than mine,” spoke another, pressing forward. “I work at general repairs, that is, repairing cars. I used to get for repairing one car \$250, and I was cut to \$65 a car. Mr. Pullman has made the statement that three-quarters of his work was contract. I can swear that

when the biggest and heaviest cut was made it was all his own work. I can swear to that, and when the strike came on seven-eighths of the work was his own.”