The Archive of American Journalism
Ray Stannard Baker Collection

McClure's Magazine
January, 1903

The Right to Work

The Story of the Non-Striking Miners

PUBLIC opinion seems to be coming around to the view that the trades' union is here to stay. From many unexpected quarters we hear every now and then a more generous acknowledgment that the organization of labor is not only as inevitable as the combination of capital, but a good thing in itself. At the same time, and from the same fair minds, you hear expressions of passionate indignation at the abuse of power by unions. This means that public opinion is beginning to distinguish between unionism and the sins of unionists, as it is between organized capital and the sins of capitalists.

Clear-headed labor leaders say that violence hurts the union cause, and they denounce it in general. In general, too, violence of the old brick-throwing sort has decreased. It has not disappeared, however, but has taken on a subtler, more deliberate, more terrible form, in many cases, nowadays. Consequently, conditions arise which make liberty and the pursuit of happiness, not to speak of life itself, well nigh impossible to certain of the strikers' fellow men and citizens. The public at large, and often the leaders of unions, do not realize these conditions. But it is manifestly the duty of both to understand them clearly.

We believe that the presentation of the facts—the conditions under which the seventeen thousand non-striking miners worked—will be helpful to the public, which is the final arbiter, and beneficial to those also who have in charge the administration of labor unions. Mr. Baker was, therefore, asked to make an impartial investigation and report, and the following article is the result—THE EDITOR.

"While the right to enter upon a strike is and must be conceded as a right belonging to the personal freedom of working men, this much must ever be demanded, and in the name of the some principal of freedom under which the men not who refuse to work; that they should cease to work must in no way interfere with the liberty of others who may wish to work. The personal freedom of the individual citizen is the most sacred and precious inheritance of America. The constitution and the laws authorize it. The spirit of the country proclaims it, the prosperity of the people, the very life of the nation, require it."—Archbishop IRELAND.

DURING the closing weeks of the great coal strike, seventeen thousand men were at work in and around the anthracite coal mines. More than seven thousand of these were old employees of the companies, long resident in the communities where they worked, with knowledge of the conditions of life there existing. Of the remaining ten thousand, part was made up of workers recruited from one section of the coal fields into another, men who dared not work

in their home villages, but ventured employment at collieries where they were not personally known; and part consisted of men having no special knowledge of mining, recruited from neighboring farms or more distant cities.

It seems profoundly important that the public should know exactly who these seventeen thousand American workers really were, how they fared, and why they continued to work in spite of so much abuse and even real danger. This inquiry may be made without bias, without contravening the rights of labor to organize, or impugning the sincerity of the labor leader, or defending the operator.

In order, therefore, to learn more of these non-striking workers I visited a large number of them, their families, and their neighbors, union and non-union, in various parts of the anthracite regions, reaching them both in their homes and at their work in and around the mines. I saw the men themselves in each case, examining at firsthand the evidence of their difficulties and dangers, recording exactly the reasons they gave for continuing to work, securing corroboration and further light from all sources, both union and non-union. The account of all the cases investigated would fill an entire number of this magazine; those here given are typical of the conditions generally prevailing, and show what the strike signified to the so-called scab, the non-striking worker.

The first man visited was David Dick, of Old Forge, a small town south of Scranton. I was led to visit Mr. Dick by a letter bearing his signature, published in the Scranton "Tribune." Here is the letter:

MR. DICK'S VERSION OF THE ATTEMPT TO KILL HIM.

EDITOR *Scranton Tribune.*

SIR: Your paper this morning (Monday) contained an account of the recent attempt on my life, which has several inaccuracies. I therefore send you a correct version, for I think the public ought to know how some persons are treated in this so-called "free country." On Tuesday evening, September 23, my next-door neighbor, Edward Miller, called at my house and spent some time with us. Shortly after 11 o'clock he left us to go home. I accompanied him to the gate in front of our house. Just as we said "good-night" I turned to re-enter the house. Two shots were fired behind me: the shots whistled past my head and lodged in the door in front of me. The night was dark and it was impossible to see any one. My wife is an invalid. Imagine the shock when my family realized that a deliberate attempt had been made on my life.

A short time ago, my son, James Dick, had his home attacked at night by an angry mob. The windows were smashed and the house so damaged that he had to move his family out and come to my place for shelter. Now, why these depredations? Because my son and I try to earn a living for our families. I have been in this country thirty years, and have worked all these years as an engineer. I have tried all my life to live peaceably with all men. I am not a member of the union or any other organization, except the Christian church. When the order was given for engineers to quit work, like many others, I did not obey the orders. Why should I? The company had given me a support in return for my work — I considered myself fairly treated; I had no grievance.

Further, I disagreed with the policy of destruction and revenge which the proposed flooding of the mines implied. I admired the attitude of Mr. Mitchell in the strike two years ago, when he said the property of the companies should be protected, and went so far as to say that

men who served as deputies should not be discriminated against when the strike ended. Now, all this is reversed, and I claim my right as a free man to do what my conscience approves.

My forefathers died in Scotland for what they believed to be right, and now, once for all, let me say that I propose to work for my home and loved ones. If I am murdered for this, then I ask my enemies to face me in the daylight and not come skulking around a man's house in the dead of night and fire when my back is turned.

No attempt has been made by the civil authorities to find a clue to the perpetrators of these outrages. 1 cannot but think if I occupied a position on the other side of the labor question what has happened would be heralded far and wide as an illustration of the tyranny of the operators or their friends. I write in the interest of freedom and justice and the rights of workingmen under the Stars and Stripes in this “land of the free and home of the brave.” We have our suspicions of the guilty parties, and if we are correct, they are not far away from us.

DAVID DICK.

Old Forge, *September* 29, 1902.

I found Mr. Dick in his engine house at No. 2 Colliery, Old Forge, a prosperous appearing Scotchman who had a singularly clear way of expressing his decided views. He told me he had written the letter, and would reassert all it said. He had come to this country without money, and had been able to save enough to purchase himself a good home of his own. He was a member of the Scotch Presbyterian Church. The company, he said, had always treated him well, and he had no reason for striking. He had been repeatedly threatened, once surrounded by a mob of Italians, once shot at, narrowly escaping death, as his letter shows, and he and his family were ostracized by the strikers of the community. But he said he proposed to work or not to work as he saw fit, and that no threat would deter him. Every day he walked over a mile to his work, going un-armed, though he showed me the riot gun which he had in the engine house to protect him in case the colliery was attacked, as it had been at one time.

Reasons of an Engineer

I talked with Charles Monie, another Scotch engineer of Moosic, Pa., who had worked for twenty-three years in the place he then occupied. He was a man of high intelligence, an elder in the Presbyterian Church of Avoca. He owned a good home, which I visited, and his children were finding good places in the greater world. I asked him why he had remained with the company. I quote his exact words:

“Unionism is all right when it is kept within bounds. But when it says to any man, ‘You can’t work until we give you permission,’ and when it plans to destroy property, I claim that the individual has a right to quit.

“I have got a home over there without a cent of debt on it. I must have my regular wages to support it.

“I have a right to work when I like, for what I like, and for whom I like.

“I thought about this matter, and as long as my conscience approves my course I don't care who is against me. I don't know your beliefs, but I have faith that the great God will protect me, so I am not afraid.”

How Gorman was Called Out

Another non-union engineer whom I called on in his engine house was J. R. Gorman, of Exeter Shaft, West Pittston, who had worked for the company twenty-five years. As he said, he was a “free born American citizen, not a made citizen.” This is his story:

“At the beginning of the strike Paddy Brann, the president of the local union, came to me and said he was requested to inform me that my presence would be .required at St. Alban’s Hall that evening to discuss the strike.

“ ‘I can’t go,’ I said, ‘ I’m working.’

“ ‘ You understand,’ he said, ‘that when the strike is over you won't have no work.’

“ ‘Won't I? ’ I said.

“ ‘No sir; we'll see to that, and you won’t be able to buy any goods at the store. We’ll boycott you.’

“ ‘Partner,’ I said to him, ‘look here. Don’t you bother your head about me; you’ve got troubles enough of your own.’

“They hung me in effigy and hooted me in the street. I had to go armed, but they didn’t dare lay hands on me. I stand on my rights. I won’t have anyone coming to me and telling me when I am to work and when I am to quit working. I don't join a union because I object to having some Dago I never saw before coming and ordering me to stop work or to go to work again. I can think for myself. I don’t need any guardians. What is the object of their union anyway? Why strike, pure and simple, causing all this rioting and trouble. Some labor organizations give their members benefits and insurance, help take care of the sick, and bury the dead. Do the mine workers? Not a bit of it. They pay in their money month after month, the officers draw fat salaries, and by and by they all strike, and begin persecuting and assaulting honest men who want to work.”

The Blinding of an Engineer

Another engineer whom I met was Abraham Price, of the Dorrance Colliery, Wilkesbarre. He had been with the company for twenty-two years. English by birth, he came to this country when four years old, and had made a place for himself in the life of the town. He never belonged to a union. He was never personally asked by union men to stop work, and had never been interfered with during the strike except to have strikers call him “scab.” He said:

“I thought it was best for my own interest to remain at work. The company has done better for me than any union could. I believe that a man should have a right, no matter what his reasons are, to work when and where he pleases without dictation from any one.”

Nearly three weeks after the strike was over, I am informed, on pay day, November 16, 1902, Mr. Price, with other non-union men, was assaulted, and his eyes put out with a blow from a stone.

William Thomas, a fine-looking Welsh engineer whom I met at the Exeter Colliery, had this to say concerning his reasons for staying:

“I thought I should be a coward to turn my back on people who had employed me for twenty-nine years and had always treated me well and paid me promptly. I’d rather be discharged than go back on my friends.”

Adventures of an English Miner

I met Hugh Johnson, a licensed miner of Forest City, who had spent nearly all his life in underground work. He was a good type of the English miner, a man of intelligence, a member of the Masonic fraternity, a communicant in the Presbyterian Church, the owner of two houses which he had bought and paid for from his savings, though he is not a vigorous man physically. I found that Johnson had been a member and officer of the union, indeed a delegate to the convention at Shamokin which declared the strike. He said:

"I believe in unions, and I have long been a member, but I could not agree with the methods of the United Mine Workers. I didn't think we had any cause to strike in the first place. I voted against the strike in the convention, but it was carried by the younger element. All the boys—about a third of all the members—are under age, and the Hungarians and Poles are allowed to vote, and they entirely overwhelmed the conservative element. I did not believe in destroying property by calling out the engineers and pump men, but still I staid out with the strikers until I began to see how the relief fund was distributed. I thought it should be share and share alike. I paid my dues regularly, and my expenses were going on, and I got to the point where I had to have help or else mortgage my home. So I applied to the officers of the local and they said: 'You've got property. Why don't you raise money on it?' And they gave me a good hauling over for presuming to ask for help. The men who got the relief were often those who had been intemperate and improvident before the strike—though there were plenty of genuine cases of poverty —and who had shouted loudest for the strike because they had nothing to lose. I know of some cases in which those relieved took out their relief orders at the store in hams and traded them off for beer. Now that system is putting a premium on improvidence, and fining every man who has saved up any money. As long as they do that of course the crowd that hasn't anything to lose is going to keep on striking."

A Non-union Man's Daughter

Mr. Johnson went back to work in the mines, and the union began at once a series of persecutions to compel him to come out. The school board, which was composed of strikers, refused to employ his daughter, who was an experienced teacher, on the ground that she was a "scab." His boy was hooted in school. He himself and other workmen were surrounded one night by a mob which shouted "Kill them! Kill them!" Stones were thrown and several men were injured, but Johnson was fortunately unhurt. Some of the stores refused to sell goods to him or any of his family, but he continued to work, and is working yet. All these things were done by his neighbors and friends, among whom he had lived an honorable life for years.

Many of the men who stayed at work, especially those of the less intelligent class, could, apparently, give no very definite reasons for their act.

Bellas, the "Scab"

One particularly determined worker was a teamster named Bellas, of the Lehigh Company. They heaped a mock grave in front of his house and set up the inscription:

"HERE LIES THE BODY
OF BELLAS THE SCAB."

That did not bother Bellas, nor did any of the threats. Once when they stopped him he said, “My father fought for this country up in the Wyoming Valley during the Revolutionary War, and I think I’ve got a right to work where I please.”

At another time they surrounded him and asked him for his union card. He pulled a revolver out of his boot with the remark:

“Here’s my card.”

They stoned his house, hung him in effigy, and fired at him at night. Part of the time, to prevent his house from being blown up, he watched half the night and his son the other half.

Struggles of the Snyder Family

At Wilkesbarre I met John Snyder, a non- striking worker, and his wife. Snyder is a strong-built young fellow, brought up in the coal regions, a fireman by trade, though he never had worked in the mines until this summer. His wife had been a shopgirl in New York City. Just before the strike began she inherited a legacy of $450.

“When we got that,” she said, “we thought that now we could have a little home of our own—I mean we could start one.”

But the legacy was small, and homes were costly, so Mrs. Snyder finally went out of the city to Stanton Hill, and bought a lot in a miners’ neighborhood, paying $100 for it. Then her husband and his father built a house, mostly of second-hand lumber, leaving the plastering until Snyder should be able to save something from his wages. There was now just money enough left to furnish the house meagerly, and they moved into it, with what joy one may imagine. At last they had a place, a home, in the world. Mrs. Snyder bought a hive of bees, her husband fitted up a chicken-house and made a little garden, hoping thus to add to their income and make the life of their children more comfortable. Every penny they possessed was expended on the home. But Snyder was an industrious fellow, did not “touch, taste, nor handle,” as his wife told me, and they knew that he could easily earn enough to support them comfortably.

In the meantime, however, the great strike was on, and every sort of job not connected with the mines was seized upon by union men who were willing to work for almost nothing while the strike lasted, so that Snyder, in order that his family might not be reduced to starvation, was forced, as he told me, to go to work in the mines. He had been thus employed barely four days when one of his neighbors--an Irish striker—came to him. Snyder thus reported to me the conversation which ensued:

“ ‘You're working, are you?’

“ ‘No,’ I said.

“ ‘We've got spies on you, and we find that you’re firing at the Dorrance.’

“ ‘I am a citizen,’ I said, ‘and I have a right to work where I please.’

“ ‘Well, I tell you,’ he said. ‘you can’t scab and live here. You ought to be killed, and you'll find your house blown up some morning if you don’t quit.’

“Then a big crowd gathered, mostly Irish, and began to yell ‘Scab! Kill him! Kill him!' and throw stones at me. I jumped on my bicycle and escaped.”

Snyder now remained within the stockade at the Dorrance colliery day and night, fearing death if the strikers caught him, leaving his wife and two babies in the new home on the hill, not dreaming that any harm would come to defenseless women. But crowds, both grown men and boys, gathered daily under the trees near the house, and every time Mrs. Snyder appeared they hooted at her, often insultingly, sometimes threateningly. After a few days of this treatment she

became so fearful of personal injury—for she had seen more than one account in the newspapers of what had happened to the wives of non-striking workers—that she took her babies and, having not even money enough to pay car-fare, fled to the city, where she found shelter for the night. For several days she returned to her home to feed the chickens and look after the bees, always subjected coming and going to the jeers and insults of her neighbors. One day she found that her bees had swarmed, and that the swarm was attached to a near-by tree. Here was the first of the increase. She tried her best to get them down and rehived, but, not strong and a woman, she could not do it. Venturing even insult, she ran out to the men on the hill asking help. Not a man of them would assist her. Instead, they hooted her back to her home, and presently she saw her bees rise and disappear to the hills. She could not tell this part of the story without a quivering lip and a tearful eye.

Their House Broken Into

A few days later she returned to find that her home had been entered, her new lamp smashed, a prized clock stolen, her husband's trunk broken open, rifled, and thrown out of the window. In terror she started back toward the city, but turned back to get her canary bird and two or three pet chickens, which, fortunately, she carried away with her. There was nothing now but to desert the new home. The terrified woman sought her husband, but he dared not leave the colliery, though he finally succeeded in getting an advance of $5 on his wages. With this money in hand, Mrs. Snyder hurriedly employed a drayman to move her furniture. When the team reached the house, however, the drivers were stopped by the crowd. She told me they shouted at her: “We’ll kill you and your husband if it takes twenty years. Your house will go up in smoke.”

And they turned back the teams, not permitting the removal of any of the furniture. In desperation, now, at the prospect of seeing her little home destroyed, Mrs. Snyder went to Mr. Mitchell’s headquarters in the Hart Hotel. She told me she had read somewhere that Mr. Mitchell wanted to have no violence committed—that he had promised to prevent violence to non-union men and the blowing up of houses. She met John Fallon, one of Mr. Mitchell’s assistants and chairman of the district board of the union, and to him she told her story.

“Why, yes,” he said, “I'll see to that; I’ll go right out now”—looking at his watch.

The Tragedy of a Home

Mrs. Snyder went away relieved. The next morning when she climbed Stanton Hill and looked up to see her home its place was vacant. She found only a cellar full of ashes. The chicken-house was also gone, and of all the chickens not one was left. Even the bees had been burned up, and the little garden was trampled and ruined. An old family dog that had recently brought a family of pups to the house was the only creature left, wandering about whining, looking for her pups. In the telling of this part of their story neither Mr. nor Mrs. Snyder could keep back the tears.

They searched in the ashes, hoping to find something left, but there was not even any remains of their cook stove, or sewing machine, or bed springs, and they learned subsequently—so they told me—that their house had been looted before burning, and that the furniture had been distributed among their neighbors on the hill. Everything was gone. Mrs. Snyder did not even have left a change of clothing for her children. While she and her mother were looking into the

ruins the crowd gathered and hooted "Scab, scab! Dynamite them!" so the two helpless women turned back toward the city.

Fresh from her loss, Mrs. Snyder went to see John Fallon, who said: "I didn't see about it in the newspapers."

Snyder continued to work until the strike was over and the union men came back to the colliery. At once every means was exerted by the strikers to displace non-union workers, Snyder among them, and such influence was brought to bear that the foreman finally discharged Snyder, and when I saw him two weeks after the strike closed he was still out of work, though the company had offered him another position. And Mrs. Snyder has been haunting the second-hand stores of Wilkesbarre, hoping against hope that some of her household goods may be pawned by the thieves, and that she may thus recover them.

I asked Snyder why he did not try to have the criminals arrested.

"In the first place," he said, "if they were arrested they'd never be punished, because everybody is in favor of the strikers, and they could get all their friends to swear they were not present when the house was burned. Besides, I am afraid they'd take it out of me if I did anything."

So nothing has been done, and it seems likely, from what I can learn, that nothing ever will be done to bring the perpetrators of these outrages to justice.

The case of the Snyders is by no means exceptional. There were many instances which I investigated of similar persecution.

The Murder of James Winstone

"All we want is investigation," a strike leader said to me. "Now, these murders they talk about. Look into them and you will find that they were the result of the presence of the armed coal and iron police, who were mostly city thugs with orders to shoot and kill. It's a trick of the operators to try to lay all the blame for disturbances on us; they want to work up public sentiment against us." So I went from Scranton to look into the case of James Winstone, of Olyphant.

Olyphant is a more than usually prosperous mining town of some 6,100 inhabitants, nearly all mine workers, over seventy per cent of whom own their own homes. The population is very diverse, being made up of some dozen different nationalities, but with an unusually large proportion of the English, Welsh, and Irish, the better elements among the miners. James Winstone lived in a neighborhood known as Grassy Island, of which he was the foremost citizen, having by far the best home and the most means.

His home was really a pretty place, a two-story house with trees in front, which Winstone himself set out, an arbor where there was shade in summer, a fine garden in which Winstone grew vegetables, and was experimenting with grapes. I came in by the back door to a shining kitchen, spotlessly clean. Indeed, the home was more than comfortably furnished, with an organ, books, pictures, and other evidences of enlightenment and comfort. Mrs. Winstone came in and told us quietly and sadly some of her story. Then we went out again through the spotless kitchen, and crossed to the next house, also the property of James Winstone, and the home of his son-in-law, S. J. Lewis, a worker in the mines. Here, too, was every evidence of comfort and spotless cleanness. The daughter, James Winstone's oldest, had been married only a year. Little by little the story came out, mostly through Mr. D. E. Lewis, a highly intelligent Welshman, the foreman of the mine where Winstone and his son-in-law were employed.

The Rise of an English Miner

Winstone had been in America only fourteen years, having come from Yorkshire, England. Reaching Pennsylvania without money, he was able, working as a common miner and supporting a family, to save enough in fourteen years to make him the possessor of two fine homes and everything paid for. Mr. D. E. Lewis told me that Win- stone averaged a net earning of $3.50 a day, for which he found it necessary to work only five or six hours. His son-in-law, young Lewis, earned $2.26 a day. Winstone was in the prime of life, forty-eight years old, with a wife and three children. His wife told me with sad pride how he had been respected in his community. He was treasurer, she said, for eight years of the Lackawanna Accident Fund, a member of the Sons of St. George and of the Red Men, and even, at one time, an officer in the United Mine Workers. She said he had not an enemy in the world, that all he wanted was to live peaceably and see his sons properly educated. He meant to keep them in school until they could work into good positions. They had done well in the mines, but they hoped the boys would do something better.

Winstone, a natural leader, opposed the strike from the beginning, as did others of the conservative element. He asserted publicly that he saw no cause for striking, that any man who was willing to work and was temperate could get ahead, that there was too much agitation. But he and the conservatives were overwhelmed and the strike declared. Winstone went out with the others, found employment for several weeks outside the mines at a fraction of his former wages, and then came back home. He now saw that he must mortgage his property to live. He went to the union, and was told that he would be given no assistance. He had property and he could raise money on that. This, however, he refused to do.

So Winstone went back to the mine to work. His son-in-law, S.J. Lewis, had already gone back, in company with some of the other mine workers of the community. Immediately the strikers began their tactics of intimidation and threats. Every morning and evening they gathered in the road and hooted Winstone, Lewis, Doyle, and others on their way to work. Sometimes they gathered in front of his home, threateningly, but Winstone would not be cowed. One night a larger crowd than usual appeared, and Patrick Fitzsimmons, secretary of the local and auditor of the general assembly, stood up and shouted a violent tirade against scabs. One of the things he said, reported to me by Mr. Lewis, was: “If there were half a dozen of loyal union men like me there wouldn’t be one of the scabs that would dare to go to work.”

These crowds were composed of Irish and English, with a large rallying force of Poles and others. Most of them were Winstone’s neighbors and fellow-workmen, and many of them had been his good friends.

A week before the final tragedy, a committee waited on Winstone and requested him to stop work, threatening him if he did not. Winstone told them that he would not desert his place. The persecutions now became so severe that Winstone and Lewis, instead of going to the mine by the road, were accustomed to go back through the garden, climb a fence, cross the rear of a lot occupied by a Polish miner named Harry Shubah, a neighbor well known to Winstone, and join William Doyle, another non-union man, the three men going together. They carried no arms.

Day of the Tragedy

The morning of September 25th was rainy. Winstone and Lewis had gone down through the garden. When they had climbed the fence into Shubah’s yard, Lewis took his father-in-law’s

arm, and was holding an umbrella over his head. Suddenly, hearing a noise, he glanced behind and saw Harry Simuralt, another Polish neighbor with whom both were well acquainted. Simuralt had a club lifted. Lewis cried: “Don’t strike us with that.” The words were hardly out of his mouth when he was felled to the earth. Jumping up again, half dazed, he ran toward Doyle’s house. Hearing Winstone shout, "Don’t kill me,” he glanced behind and saw several men pounding him with clubs. Lewis himself was now pursued and struck in the back with a heavy stick, but he succeeded in escaping. The assaulters having pounded Winstone to their satisfaction, left him lying in his blood. He was carried into Doyle's house, where he died a few hours later without regaining consciousness. Lewis was in bed three weeks.

Everything evidently had been plotted beforehand. The murderers were perfectly sober, making an evidently planned escape by train. Fortunately they were arrested at Hoboken, New Jersey, and brought back to Scranton, where they are now in jail. Ac- cording to Lewis, the three men most concerned were Harry Simuralt, Harry Shubah, and Tom Priston, all Polish miners, union men, and strikers—all near neighbors of Winstone, long known to him. The astonishing thing is that they had been in the country for years and spoke English well; one of them, Simuralt, owned his own home, a very comfortable place. Foreman Lewis told me that they all bore good reputations as industrious and temperate workers.

It is interesting, as showing the difficulty of protecting life, that seven hundred soldiers were camped within less than half a mile of the scene of this murder.

A Murder in the Fog

Through some peculiarity of location, the valley of the Susquehanna is singularly subject to fogs—not unlike those of southern England, appearing before dawn and often continuing until long after sunrise. Such a fog filled the valley on the early morning of September 8, 1902. It was so thick that a man could see only a few paces before him—familiar houses, fences, road-marks, seemed mysterious. It was on this foggy morning that a number of important things were happening in the vicinity of the Maltby Colliery. Though no one could see any evidence of life, nor hear any sound, yet men were gathering from several directions—men who hated one another. There were three parties of them, all armed. On the previous Saturday night there had been a joint meeting of three locals of the United Mine Workers of America—the Luzerne, the Broderick, and the Maltby. It was a special occasion. Reports were made by an officer that the company intended to add a large number of non-union men to its force at the Maltby Colliery on the following Monday morning. This news was received with jeers, and after much discussion a motion was made and passed calling upon all members of the three locals to be present at the entrance to the colliery on Monday morning. Great secrecy was enjoined, but there was a man present whose business it was to listen to just such news; he carried the word immediately to the officials of the Lehigh Valley coal Company. Sheriff Jacobs being notified, armed deputies were provided to escort the non-union men on Monday morning. This accounted for two of the parties gathered in the fog. The mob appeared in great force, many armed with clubs, some having large iron nuts at the end; some with stones; others with cheap revolvers. Lining them selves up along the roadways, they awaited the coming of the car with the non-union men.

In the meantime another party of two men was out in the fog. Sistieno Castelli and his friend and brother-in-law, Kiblotti, were going hunting. Castelli was a peaceable citizen, whose family was hungry. He had his gun on his shoulder, and was tramping jup the Lackawanna Railroad tracks on his way to the hills, hoping to find some rabbits or squirrels. Just as he and his

friend reached a point behind the house of John Keeler, outside foreman of the mine, the car with the non-union men had come to a stop. The mob, fully expecting to surprise the non-union men and have them instantly at their mercy, came up out of the fog to find themselves facing armed deputies. Under cover of this surprise the non-union men were hurried into Keeler's house, guarded by the deputies. The mob, gathering quickly, foresaw that an attempt would be made to rush the workmen from Keeler's house by the back way to the mine, so they turned and streamed up the tracks of the Lackawanna Railroad, between the colliery and the foreman's home. And here they came suddenly upon Castelli and Kiblotti there in the fog. Castelli cried out. Some one, said to be a Hungarian, struck him a frightful blow on the head, felling him to the earth. And then they seized his shotgun, placed the muzzle against Castelli's body, and pulled the trigger. In the meantime several others pitched upon his companion, but in the confusion Kiblotti succeeded in escaping. The mob then turned their attention to Castelli, in their fury horribly beating his lifeless body. Having glutted their passion, they turned the body over and went through the pockets, and this is what they found—a union card and a receipt for dues paid, showing that Castelli was a good union man, a member of the Broderick Local No. 452. They had killed him and left another widow and children, visiting upon him the fate they had planned for the non-union men. In the meantime the deputies and their charges were safe in the colliery.

A Wife's Experience

In the list read before the Arbitration Commission of the men murdered during the strike was the name of John Colson, and the memorandum, "Non-union man beaten to death at Shenandoah." I went to Shenandoah to learn more of the story of John Colson.

At first I could find no record of any workman named Colson. Shenandoah had her share of riot and bloodshed, but Colson was not remembered among those injured. But I finally heard of a man of that name who had been working at Shamokin, and I went down to find John Colson, not dead, but living and working tenaciously after an experience that would have daunted most men. He is an English born engineer. Previous to the strike he had lived at Gilberton, working as an engineer, the best position at the colliery. He did not believe in the strike, nor in the order withdrawing the engineers, and he had not been slow in saying so. But he went out with the other strikers and remained a month; then he went to work at the Henry Clay Colliery, at Shamokin. Spies at once found him out, but, living in a car close to the colliery, they could not reach him personally, so they brought to bear the usual pressure on his wife and family at Gilberton. She was boycotted at some of the stores, so that she could not buy the necessaries of life. She was jeered and insulted in the streets, and her home was stoned.

"Every night" she told me, "I was afraid to go to bed for fear they would blow up my home with dynamite. They did dynamite three houses in the same neighborhood."

How Colson was Attacked

So she finally wrote to her husband that she could bear it no longer, and he rented a house in Shamokin, and told her to move the furniture. This she tried to do, but the teamsters refused to assist her, and she feared that if she attempted to get away the strikers would attack her. Accordingly, Colson bought furniture at Shamokin to fit up a new home. On the evening of October 7 he came up from his work with several coal and iron police to look after the arrangement of his purchases, and when he had finished he started back alone along the railroad

tracks. The police had warned him of his danger, and he had, indeed, already been stoned, and yet, naturally fearless, he was going back alone. Having a revolver, he thought he could defend himself. A trainload of soft coal was passing; a mob of men appeared, shouting at him threateningly. He reached to draw his revolver, and a man on one of the cars dropped a huge block of coal on his head. Colson fell in his tracks, and after further beating him, the mob robbed him of his revolver and a new pair of boots, and left him for dead. For three days he lay unconscious in the hospital, and there, slowly, with careful nursing, he recovered, and as soon as he could walk went back to work again. His wife now succeeded in getting an undertaker from an adjoining town to move her goods, under guard of a deputy, and they settled at Shamokin. I found them in a comfortable, pleasant home—two boys at work in the mines and a comely daughter.

The Mother of a Non-union Man

In this case of John Colson I had an opportunity of seeing what it means, socially, for a man to work during a strike. At Mahoney City, in the last house in the town, one of the dingy red company houses, almost in the shadow of an enormous pile of culm, I found John Colson's father and mother. The old miner had just come in from his work, his face and clothing black with coal dust. His wife had hot water ready for him, and a tub stood waiting on her kitchen floor, so that he might wash off the marks of the mine. Yet some of the marks he could not wash off —the blue tattooing of powder which covered his face with ugly scars. Five years before he had been in a mine explosion. A careless Hungarian, cross-cutting through the coal, had set off his blast without giving warning, and Colson had been taken from the mine for dead, but he finally 1ived, blue-scarred, wholly blind in one eye and almost blind in the other. He was an old man even then; he had been mining, here and in England, for nearly fifty years, and his seven sons, miners all, told him that he might rest the remainder of his days. So for four years previous to the great strike he had lived quietly a comfortable old age, he and his wife alone in the red house at the end of the village, their sons and daughters around them.

But with the strike came hard times, and the sons, though willing to help their parents, had many mouths of their own to feed, and by the time the miners were ordered back to work in October they were all in straightened circumstances, so that old John Colson was compelled to go back into the mines. He told me he was doing a boy’s job now—turning a fan in a deep working, and that he earned only 75 cents a day, but he was glad to be employed again. The mother told me with pride of her boys—Anthony with his family of eight children, her other boys, and the married daughters. And so we came to speak of John, her oldest son, the one reported beaten to death. She flushed at the mention of his name, said at first that she would have nothing to say about him, and then, bitterly:

“He might better be dead, for he’s brought disgrace on the name.”

All the brothers, the old miner said, had been members of the union, and had come out when the strike was called, but John had gone back to work.

“He deserved all he got,” said his mother. “He wasn’t raised a scab.”

The Hardest Penalty of All

Then she told how, when he lay hovering between life and death in the hospital, she had not gone to him once, and yet she wanted so much to know whether he would live or die that she

called up the hospital on the telephone. "But I didn't give my name," she said, "so he didn't know about it." Since he was well again none of the family had visited him or paid the least attention to him. The strike had wholly crushed all family feeling. John was not again to be recognized. Such a story as this gives a faint idea of the meaning of a strike in the coal fields.

None of these Incidents Exceptional

I could, as I have said, fill a whole number of this magazine with other narratives of like incidents that I have myself investigated. Those that I have set down here are not chosen as especially flagrant cases; they constitute only a few among scores, even hundreds, of similar tragedies of the great coal strike.