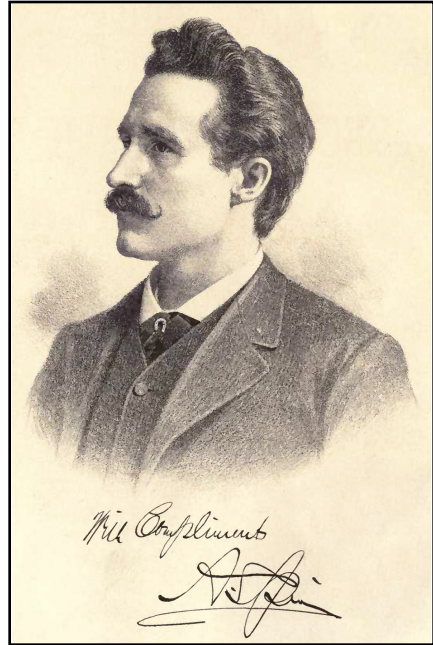

Pages from an Editor's Sketch Book

by August Spies

Published in *August Spies' Auto-Biography; His Speech in Court, and General Notes.*
Chicago: Niña van Zandt, January 1887; pp. 22-35.

In 1872 the Chicago section of the old International started a socialistic German weekly, *Vorbote*. "Vorbote" translated into English means "Fore-runner" or "Pioneer." The Honorable Pinkerton claims that the word means "free-booter"; he asserts this in a book written by himself, and since the gentleman's reputation for truth and veracity is almost monumental, we had better believe than dispute with him. The *Vorbote* remained a weekly until shortly after the police- and militia-riots in 1877, when there was added to it a tri-weekly. The wholly unjustifiable clubbing and killing of workmen, the unconstitutional assaults of the police upon peaceable meetings during these riots had given such an impetus to the labor-movement in this city, that in 1879 the tri-weekly *Arbeiter-Zeitung* had to be transformed into a daily, including a Sunday issue (*Fackel*). These papers, published by the Socialistic Publishing Society, of which any man, if he belonged to the Socialistic Labor Party, could become a member by paying an initiation fee of 10 cents, were very prosperous.



In the spring of 1879 the Socialistic ticket, headed by Dr. Ernst Schmidt as candidate for mayor, received over 12,000 votes. In the summer of the same year, however, the transactions and behavior of some of the members in connection with the judiciary election brought dissensions into the ranks of the young party, which greatly diminished its numbers and also

reduced the subscription list of the organ. Mismanagement and other causes, added to the loss of subscribers, soon brought the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* on the verge of bankruptcy. It was in the spring of 1880 when, upon the urgent request of the society, I took hold of the business management, and succeeded in saving the ship from sinking. Shortly after, I was elected to the editorship, which position I have held until the 5th of May [1886], the day of my arrest.

Six years of arduous labor! Aside from my editorial work (daily, Sunday, and weekly) I had to superintend the business — working from 12 to 16 hours a day. The exertion was too great and I broke down several times; however my strong constitution triumphed and I continued my labor.

Most people think that editing a paper is the easiest thing in the world. They will pardon me when I disagree with them. I am not particularly supercilious, but in this matter I maintain that there is scarcely to be found a calling more laborious, more wearing and ungrateful than that of the editor of a daily paper. If this is true with reference to the ordinary newspaper, it is thrice true when applied to workingmen's papers and journals who advocate progressive principles.

Every reader of the last mentioned papers is a critic, who considers it his most sacred duty to find fault. And among all the critics, the German is the most trifling, stickling, reckless, and merciless. Again, the readers of these journals, being of a progressive turn of mind, have their individual hobbies, and — woe to the editor if he fails to recognize in each one of them the long looked for panacea!

He is, moreover, looked upon as a sort of public conveyance, always expected to be at everybody's disposal. Every disappointment means so much more evidence that he is a "conceited ass," etc.

A lady reader is displeased with her husband's behavior. She comes to see the editor. It is a long and sorrowful tale she recites. Tears, handkerchief and heavy sighs give emphasis to her story.

"Madame, you desire to apply for a divorce — you want me to recommend you to a lawyer?" the editor interrupts her compassionately as the compositor's cry for copy, "I will."

"No, no! Let me tell you — I am coming to it," Madame imperturbably continues. And she finally does "come to it," that is, after having been told a dozen times to be brief, she finishes in about another hour with another deep sigh and the assurance that she could tell a great deal more if she only wanted to.

A divorce? No, no! she never thought of such a thing. She had simply come to get some sound advice from the editor of the paper that "stands up so bravely for the women."

On the following day the husband makes his appearance. He has come to have "a word" with the editor, but on beholding the complacent countenance of this important personage he contents himself by bestowing a disdainful look on him and ordering the "damned paper" to be discontinued.

It was nothing unusual to me to be called upon by husbands seeking advice as to how the infidelity of their spouses might be cured. But perpetual motion genii, poets, and other gentlemen of aspirations I consider the

most troublesome of the many plagues that combine to make “newspaper life” perfect and pleasant.

The editor of a workingmen’s paper has many other things, grave things, to contend with. Here an employer has cheated one of his workers out of his wages; there another one has made an improper proposal to a working girl; here a worker has lost a hand or some fingers in a machine because of the avarice of a boss, who refused to provide the necessary safeguards; there a man was discharged because he expressed his sympathy with some men “out on a strike,” etc.... It is the duty of a workingmen’s journal to record all these things, bring them to the knowledge of the public and show the effects of an economic system under which the producers are but articles of merchandise — a particular kind of merchandise of which the market is overstocked, and, which, like old worthless rags, can be picked up in the streets and alleys without difficulty. It is the duty, I say, of workingmen’s journals to publish these things, because the capitalistic papers refuse to do so. Why? Oh, the employer advertises in their columns, and, then, the publication of such villainies would tend to disrupt the “harmonious relations between labor and capital!”

Now, when such reports appeared in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the respective employer would generally draw up a denial of the charges, demand of his employes to sign it (purporting to come from them) and upon the strength of this document demand a retraction in our columns. While in some instances the charges may have been false or exaggerated, investigation showed that in almost every case they were only too true, and that the workers had been forced to sign the refutation, that is, they had signed it in preference to losing their job.

Yes, it is the task of a Sisyphus to work in such a field!

Another plague of which, however, I managed to get rid, were the politicians. When they saw that they could do absolutely nothing with

me, they, desisted in their endeavors, and put me down as a “damned crank.”

In this mercantile age, reader, everything is “business,” and it must be noted as a characteristic circumstance that whosoever is not in the market, not for sale, is at once looked upon as a crank! Truly, a most delightful condition of affairs!

While in this way I had brought the wrath of every factory czar and politician down upon me, there were others who were still more attached to me — the police.

The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* was the only paper in the city that dared to expose the outrageous villainies and criminal practices of these drunken and degraded brutes. And their blackmailing exploits as well as their other knightly sports were deservedly commented upon. They evidently did not appreciate the publicity of their professional manipulations, for I was frequently threatened and our reporters were often insulted when they went to the stations. About 1½ year ago a young servant girl (Martha Seidel) was arrested at the instance of a malicious person on a petty charge and was locked up at the West Chicago Avenue station.

In violation of all law the girl, who was of quite comely appearance, was kept in the station for several days and then secretly taken to the county jail. When she arrived at the latter place she was unconscious and showed symptoms of serious illness. It was rumored that everything was not as straight as it might be. I went to see the sick girl, taking her mother along with me; and to her she told a shocking story. While in the station she had been taken from the cell and carried into the private room of the desk sergeant. Her condition corroborated her assertion that there she had been repeatedly outraged; her undergarments also bore evidence of what had occurred I procured a warrant against the desk-sergeant, who was identified by the girl, and had him indicted. Need I add that the "gentleman" was acquitted like every other policeman that has ever been put to the comedy of a trial in Cook County? The poor girl, as far as I know, never fully recovered.

Friends told me at the time that the police were determined "to get even with me"; they cautioned me to be particularly on my guard when out at night, lest a stray "law and order" bullet might send me to the orcus. These friends, some of them politicians who often came in contact with the "guardians of the peace," were satisfied that "they would not stop at anything."

I narrate this particular case because it is one in which I took the part of a public prosecutor. The girl and her parents were poor and ignorant people, who knew not what to do, and neither Mr. Grinnell nor the Citizens' Association paid the least attention to the case. I narrate this particular affair, because it is more likely to show the kind and friendly feelings Bonfield's "law and liberty guards" have for me, and the high esteem in which they hold me, than many of the others I could relate.

During the reign of terror in this city in May last, the star-spangled shooting and clubbing votaries of Liberty, while searching for dynamite in private houses told the people that they just wanted to find "enuff of doinemoit to blow that Spies up with." And, skeptic though I am, I have never for one minute questioned the sincerity of this prettily expressed intention.

After this digression I will again return to my activity in the labor movement as editor of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. The National Green-back Convention which met in Chicago in 1880 caused a split in the ranks of the Socialistic Labor Party. There were some who believed in supporting the Greenback ticket, and there were a great many more who would not listen to any kind of a proposition in favor of a compromise. The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* at that time edited by Paul Grottkau, took the position of the latter. Several attempts were made to reunite the two factions, but they failed. And the anti-compromise faction, in the following year, called a National Congress, which was held in Chicago in 1881, for the purpose of reorganization. I was a delegate. But it was fully two years later when at another congress, held in Pittsburgh, Pa., the new organization, under the name of the International Working Peoples' Association, was perfected. Of the latter convention I was secretary. The platform adopted was based upon the economic principles of socialism; 86 cities of the United States were represented by delegates, while from an equally large number of places communications and congratulations were received. The work of the congress met with general approval and

the new organization grew very rapidly. And with this growth our work increased. It was nothing unusual for me to address 3 or 4 meetings upon different subjects in a week and attend to my editorial work besides. How have I been able to work that way for many years, I can hardly understand myself.

The editorial staff consisted of three editors and four reporters, sometimes more. Michael Schwab, one of the editors, and myself were frequently requested to lecture or speak in other cities, which was also the case with Albert Parsons and Samuel Fielden. I have addressed meetings in most of the large cities and industrial centers in the country. It was upon such occasions that I learned of the extreme, almost incredible poverty and sufferings of the hens who lay the golden eggs for the "great men" of the nation. Reader, have you ever visited the coalfields of Pennsylvania and Ohio? Your newspapers have told you a great deal about the misery of the Belgian miners. They might have told you more shocking things from home. Such conditions as have prevailed and still prevail in the Hocking and Monongahela Valleys among the coal miners could not possibly exist in Belgium, France or Germany. But the publishers of our large newspapers are financially interested, either directly or indirectly, in these enterprises and hence their profound silence upon the subject. They reason much in the same way as the ostriches, who, when pursued, put their heads into the sand, in order to escape detection. These patriotic and christian publishers think that by observing silence upon certain subjects the latter lose their real significance — escape detection, so to speak. They may before the elapse of very many revolutions of the planet that they have usurped as their private property find that their calculations were fundamentally wrong. Perhaps though they reason like Madame Pompadour — "*apres nous le deluge!*"¹

It was during the great strike in 1884; the state troops of Ohio and several hundred professional cutthroats, euphemistically styled Pinkerton guards, had taken possession of the towns and mines, and treated the starving miners very much like prisoners of war — only with less consideration, when I undertook a journey through the Hocking Valley to learn the true condition of affairs.

In Columbus, Ohio, I happened to get on the same train that was taking a lot of Slovaks and Hungarians to the valley. Several Polish Jews who had procured them for the good coal syndicate to take the places of the strikers, were guarding them — lest they might escape — like so many cattle. They were not exactly chained to each other like convicts. No, that would have been un-American, would have been in violation of the right of free contract! Nor was it necessary to chain the poor wretches, for they had been told that if any one should attempt to escape, he would be shot dead on the spot. And to give more weight to this threat the great state of Ohio had volunteered a detachment of militia. When I tried to speak to one of the poor devils, one of the jews interfered, and when I told the scoundrel that he had better get his carcass out of the reach of my boots, he called a Pinkerton man who gruffly demanded that I should leave the car. I summoned

¹ After the deluge.

the conductor but could get no satisfaction from him. He was sorry, but his orders were such that he dared not interfere.

It seems, however, that while this dispute was going on, one of the traders in human flesh espied my "reporter's star," for they not only apologized, changing their attitude suddenly, but called one of the attorneys of the syndicate who happened to be on the train and introduced him to me. He was very glad to meet a newspaper correspondent, who was about to "write up" matters in the valley.

"Yes," said he, at the same time offering me a cigar from his etui, "my dear sir, it is shameful, most shameful, I assure you, how we have been misrepresented in the press of the country. You are from Chicago — I am glad of that. I should be pleased to accompany you all through the valley personally, urgent business, however, prevents me — but you will stay at Mr. Buchtel's House — Mr. Buchtel is the superintendent of the company. Oh yes, he will be only too glad to entertain you. Besides there is no hotel within a distance of about 40 miles. Mr. Buchtel will give you all the particulars of this affair, and more, will take you all around. You ride horse back, of course — he has a lot of the finest racing horses in the country."

"Is there a likelihood that this unfortunate strike will be settled upon an equitable basis?" said I.

"Strike? Settled?" said he.

"Well, there is a large strike in the valley — some 8,000 or more."

"That is" — interrupting me before I had finished — "what the newspapers are saying, and that is the reason why I desire you to stop with Mr. Buchtel and inform yourself fully? There is no strike among our men; they are contented and happy and they ought to be. We always paid them high wages; and they are quite comfortably situated. There are a few agitators among them, however, who have kicked up this rumpus. We'll get rid of them though; most of them are in jail now, and those who are still at liberty will find that this is a very unhealthy country for them. The troops and Pinkertons will have none of their monkey-business. These men have intimidated the many thousands of our miners, who would be only too willing to return to work this minute—"

"Well," said I, "my information is that these striking coal miners did not average \$15 a month, before the recent reduction — which is given as the cause of this strike.

"Pshaw! any man can earn from \$85 to \$50 a month, providing he wants to work—"

"Then you are not going to restore the old wages?"

"Never! It is not so much a question of money with us — no, it is a question of principle! Let it cost what it may, we are going to establish the principle that we are to say what price shall be paid for the digging of coal, and if there is any law in this country we will succeed. Digging coal with these fellows (referring to the emigrants) costs us 3 times as much as we used to pay our men, but we can afford this where a vital principle is at stake. But here is Logan, where I have to get off. Joe! (calling one of the Pinkertons) you take my friend, Mr. S— to Mr. Buchtel's house, when you

come to Buchtel (a station). He will be pleased to see you (addressing himself to me).”

“What you have told me is authentic, is it?” I asked as he got up to leave — “I may use it?”

“Why, of course, I am the general manager of the company. Goodbye!”

As soon as he was gone I made notes of what he had said and then addressed myself once more to one of the emigrants. He did not understand me. But there was another one who could make himself understood in German. I asked him if he and his companions knew where they were going to. He did not. Did he know that they were about to take the bread away from their equally unfortunate brothers? That they were to be used as whips upon the backs of their struggling friends, and that they were in danger of their lives? Yes, they had been told so in a boarding-house ; and when upon this information they had refused to go any further, the soldiers had appeared, and then they had no longer hesitated. Where did they come from? From Pennsylvania. Agents (the Jews) had come to them and promised them big wages. Had they paid their own fare? Yes, it had been deducted from their last pay where they had worked before.² What had they earned? \$18 a month; they had paid \$16 for board, washing, powder, and oil.

The train stopped. It was midway between two stations. The “scabs” were hustled out in less than 2 minutes and taken up a hill under a strong escort. “It wouldn’t be safe — they’d get killed, if we took’m off at the station,” was Joe, the Pinkerton, reply to my inquiring look.

There was one other station this side of Buchtel. I got off here to get rid of the villain who was to accompany me to Mr. Buchtel’s house. I told him that I would be there by evening.

It was a small, dreary and dismal looking mining town at which I left the train, and appeared in sad contrast with the surrounding picturesque country. On the ridge of one of the hills which are covered with an abundance of green trees and, surrounded by which the narrow dale would seem an idyl, were it not for the wretched looking shanties that lie scattered along the slopes on both sides of the swiftly flowing brook, — a serious fight among a lot of drunken Pinkertons had taken place 2 days before, during which two of the combatants were killed and several wounded. The fight had originated over “the possession of several prostitutes, who — as it appeared — had been imported by the generous coal-syndicate for the special accommodation of their protectors of “law and order.” This may seem incredible to you, reader; yet, prior to this, nobody in this penurious valley had ever seen or heard of a prostitute. Still it is not unlikely, that the Pinkerton gentlemen had brought them along, thinking perhaps, that pimping (their business in the city) in the country might be a profitable pastime. Albeit, the report was given out that two gentlemen of Pinkerton’s standing army had been surprised and killed by strikers, while on guard; and this, notwithstanding the fact that their wounds showed to have been made by bullets from Winchester rifles (Pinkerton’s firearms.) And upon the strength

² This shows that there is a tacit understanding between the coal barons in matters of this kind.

of this report the syndicate demanded an increase of the military force! which, I may add, was duly granted.

The town was filled with newly arrived militia, and martial law had been proclaimed. The people were to be chastised, were they, because they had tolerated the Pinkertons to kill each other? Well, the place is almost the center of the coal region; the troops could easily be sent anywhere.

I called at the camp; "the boys" fared most sumptuously. The company furnished cheerfully whatever was wanted. From here I made my way over one of the hills in the direction of Buchtel. A most unfortunate circumstance was, that I wore a blue suit; thus some persons possessing no knowledge of physiognomy whatever, took me to be a "Pinkerton." A girl of about fourteen or fifteen was searching for berries, as I made my way up the steep hill (there was no regular road, but a labyrinth of footpaths.) At sight of me she screamed and turned to run away. "I'll not hurt you, my good girl; tell me, please, whether I am on the right way to Buchtel!" cried I. She seemed to be meditating whether it was better to stop or to run away and be shot; for she had concluded that I was a "Pinkerton." She stopped, the poor wretched thing, but was so confused that she was quite unable to utter a word or answer my questions at first. She was barefoot and scantily dressed, but neat and quite comely.

I assured her once more that I was not going to hurt her. I inquired where she lived. "Over there," she said, pointing to a shanty about 1 mile off. "Could I get a glass of milk at her ma's?" I inquired. "No, the sheriff has taken our cow from us, and I am afraid Pa would not like you to come to the house; he doesn't like the — the — the Mister Pinkerton..."

"But, darling, I am not a Pinkerton," I retorted.

"No? Are you really not? I thought you was, and I got so scared. I wanted to pick some berries for my little brother; he is sick and — and..." The tears rolled down her cheeks and she began to sob.

"You didn't find any berries — there are none here — why do you cry?"

"No, there were berries, but everybody is after them."

I did not quite understand why the poor thing was so distressed about the berries. She went along with me to her home and asked me if I would not let her carry my little satchel.

"Why do you want to carry it?"

"You'll not be angry, will you — you talk so kindly to me — you are rich, are you not? I should be so happy — I'll carry the satchel all away to Buchtel for you — if — if you will give me 25 cents — or if that is too much, 10 cents."

"Why — do you like money so much? I will give you that if you get me a good drink of water."

Meantime we had reached her home. Two men were sitting in the door, evidently lost in sad reflections. I told them where I was going, and that they would oblige me with a glass of water. They were Scotchmen, quite intelligent and courteous. They gave me the details in connection with the killing of the two Pinkertons and such other information as I asked for. And when I told them who I was they became very communicative. They had both worked for many years in the mines; but for the two last years had not

been able to make a bare living; some years ago they had bought the shanty, otherwise they would have been ejected like most of the striking miners who were now camping out. I asked them if they could not prepare a little lunch for me. I was quite hungry, and gave the girl who was anxiously watching me, lest I might forget my promise, a 50 cent piece. They all seemed very uneasy in consequence of my request, retired and held — as it appeared to me — a conference.

After a little while the wife of the one came back with tears in her eyes and said: Mister, we haven't got a morsel of bread, nor anything else to eat in the house; we haven't had anything to eat, outside of a few apples, since yesterday morning. My husband went to town this morning to get some flour from the relief committee of the strikers, but didn't get any. The railroad company delays ail freight of that kind, as we have found out — sometimes a week, sometimes longer. The men folks are ashamed to tell you that we have nothing to eat, that our little one is sick from want of good nourishment..."

Was it possible? I could hardly believe it! But the conduct of the girl — her distress — her singular request for money! Yes, it was true!

I went away, and soon after crossing the ridge could see Buchtel, that is a row of shanties extending over two miles in length.

"Halloh! Some more coming, are ye?"

It was an old Irishman, and a very bright one, as I soon had occasion to learn, who accosted me in this way.

"Why don't yes kill the people owtroite instead of starving thim to death?" continued the old fellow before I had yet said anything in reply to his first somewhat mysterious remark. He, too, had taken me for a "Pinkerton," but now looked at me rather dubiously.

"Must every man in a blue coat necessarily be a Pinkerton?" was my jocular reply.

The old fellow was very happy when he found that he had been mistaken and became quite enthusiastic when I told him for what purpose I had come.

"I am glad, sir," said he, "I have met you. I came up here this afternoon to look for a good place to camp me wife and children; the large trees here give some protection at any rate. There was considerable excoitment in the town this mornin'; over 75 families were driven out of the bloodsucking company's houses. They all have to camp out now. When the governor was here the other day, telling us to keep the law and peace, he promised to send us a lot of military tents in case we should be evicted. Now, that we have telegraphed him for them, he flatly refuses 'm. There are some sick people who have found shelter with such of the miners as have their own houses. The Pinkertons have blockaded the streets, and they have told the town marshall who is opposed to this, that they would arrest him and take him down to Logan if he dared in any way interfere with them. There is no law here, not a bit of it! — these loafing, drunken cut-throats get all the foine things they want, they live like lords — to be sure they do: see them sitting at their tables, all filled with the delicatist eatables, and cigars and whiskey

and everything, and holding them up to our hungry children, and then laughing at them—”

The old man continued in this strain, besides answering all the questions that I asked him, until we reached the first shanties; they were packed full of haggard and careworn women and children.

“Some of the families,” remarked my companion, “have clubbed together; the wives and children sleep in the houses, and the men sleep outside.”

“Well,” said I, “these — what you call houses have only one room; not very many, not more than one family, I should say, could possibly have room in them!”

“And so you say — I can take you around and show you that there is not one private house (those that do not belong to the company) but what has 3, 4, and more families living in them, and that’s a fact,” was the old fellow’s reply.

He had soon gathered a number of men around him whom he apprised of my arrival, instructing them at the same time to make the fact known and have every miner come to a certain place at 7 o’clock in the evening, where a meeting would be held.

At the appointed hour in the evening about 500 miners assembled in small groups, and about 80 Pinkertons with their rifles. No one dared call the strikers together but as soon as I jumped upon an old cart and told them to follow me in the public street, where we would hold our meeting in spite of the blockade the Pinkertons had erected, they became quite enthusiastic and followed me to the last man, the Pinkertons included. My speech consisted in the reading of the notes of my conversation with the general manager of the syndicate in the morning. I did not add anything; I simply read what the gentleman had told me.

And I have never in my life made a more “inflammatory speech” than this one!

The meeting had increased in the meantime, the entire town being present. All these could not possibly be “agitators!”

But why should the “contented workingmen” feel so indignant over what the gentleman had said, and why should they grow so excited? — Singular!

As I gave them the different points their master had made, *ad seriatim*, they retorted:

“Thirty-five to 50 dollars a month! Oh, the rascal! We haven’t averaged \$15 — take off from this \$2 for powder and oil and \$5 for rent; that leaves \$8 for a family to live upon and buy clothes with. Let him come here and tell us that to our faces and let him explain why he broke the agreement he made with us last spring. Did he think that \$8 a month was too much for a family to live on? If we had accepted the last reduction we would not be able to make \$12, that is, with expenses taken off, \$5 a month.”

These exclamations were unanimous. A roar of spontaneous laughter, that shook the very earth, went up from the gathering when I repeated their masters story of how comfortably they were situated, and how kindly they

were cared for ; how happy they were and how willing to return to work — if only the “discord-breeding agitators” were put out of the way.

“Yes,” remarked an old and energetic looking American, “they want to crush out of us the last bit of manhood. They expect to do that by sending such as have a little courage and notion of independence left in them to the jail and penitentiary — to frighten the other fellows. When a man is not agoing to be kicked around like a dog, they put him down for an agitator!”

This remark, calmly made, called forth a tremendous applause.

Somebody cried out: “Let’s chase the Pinkerton pimps out of town!”

“Yes, they knocked a woman down up on the hill this afternoon and kicked her, the bastards!” cried another.

“They’re here agin the law and that’s a fact!” philosophically joined in my old friend.

There was general commotion, the Pinkertons drew back out of the crowd...

“Are you mad?” I inquired. “Can’t you see that these men are armed with the best Winchester repeating rifles? That they can annihilate you in a few minutes? Your constitutional rights and laws are ridiculously inadequate weapons when confronted with the 16 shooter of a law-breaker.”

At this juncture a Pinkerton ruffian hurled a larger stone at me which barely missed my head. The situation was most critical.

Another moment and the crowd would have rushed upon the assailants, who were eagerly waiting for any kind of a pretense to fire. But my self-possession and my cautious words were not without effect. I continued to speak, and, changing my subject, showed the causes that brought about such conditions of things. They became quiet and listened attentively until adjournment, notwithstanding the boisterous howling and provocations of the drunken Pinkertons.

I note this incident, reader, to show you that it was not socialism that inflamed these men, for when I spoke of socialism to them, they became quiet and calm and interested; it was the words of the capitalist, their master — it was the teaching of capitalism that incited them almost to madness!

Socialism has nothing in it that incites to violence and bloodshed; these qualities are only peculiar to the doctrines of capitalism, doctrines based upon and maintained by force.

Who then, I ask you, are the incendiaries?!

After the meeting the lieutenant of the Pinkertons informed me that I “must leave the valley without delay; they had no use there for such men.” While assenting to the last portion of his speech, I told him that I should stay as long as I desired.

The miners wanted me to stay a few days, so that they might arrange a large meeting of all the strikers in the vicinity, but I could not remain away from my duties in Chicago so long, and therefore declined. They then took me all over the town and showed me the almost indescribable poverty under which they lived. They received some flour once a week, enough to last them for 2 or 3 meals, from the relief committee (i.e., outside assistance); the rest of the week they lived from a few apples, berries, and some had po-

tatoes. When I asked if there was no place, where I might get a little lunch, a large tall man began to cry, the tears rolling down his cheeks.

“We have been to the depot twice today, surely expecting that our provisions had arrived but I guess the Railroad Company, which is also the coal syndicate, have taken them, as they generally do, to another station, where they leave them until they are about spoiled — and then they bring them here und say it was done by mistake... I sold some tools this afternoon to get a little flour from the company’s store, but they wouldn’t let me have any — said they hadn’t any for the damned strikers; then I got some crackers for my children — I have six of them. But my wife and I haven’t tasted a piece of bread for 8 days.”

It was thus everywhere. I distributed the few dollars I had with me among the children, who looked at me dubiously as though they could not come to any satisfactory conclusion as to whether this was real or a delusion. A half dozen Pinkertons followed me all this time, step for step. I slept under a tree that night, having first declined the kind offers of some to sleep in “their house!”

During that night a number of Polish “scabs” who had worked in the mines about a week, and who were kept like prisoners, tried to escape — they were fired upon by the Pinkertons. Two were killed and a number wounded — that the “right of free contract” might live!

I left the following day. I had seen enough. The syndicate carried their point a few months later, established “their principle” and demonstrated to an astounded world “that there was law in this country!”

Edited by Tim Davenport

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