IN NON-UNION MINES

The Diary of a Coal Digger

By POWERS HAPGOOD of the U. M. W. of A.

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IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

August—September, 1921

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INTRODUCTION

The public manages to think a little about the country's non-union coal fields on days when the newspapers headline stories of savage strike conflicts, men and women killed, marching armies, machine guns, airplane bombing of mine camps. Recently West Virginia has furnished the headlines, on episodes in the Mingo strike, which began in the summer of 1920 and was still on in 1922. A little before it was Alabama and Kentucky; each time the cause was the same—diggers in the non-union fields were joining the United Mine Workers.

Tomorrow it will be Pennsylvania. A greater potential battle-field than West Virginia lies in Pennsylvania—in Somerset, Fayette, Westmoreland and parts of Indiana and Cambria counties, a region twice the size of Rhode Island. Graves of strikers in past conflicts are in these fields. The counties are dominated by the huge steel companies whose labor policy is to keep unions out. The West Virginia conflict may be as a Balkan fight to the World War, if the 65,000 miners in Southwestern Pennsylvania start organizing.

What happens there in strike time will have had its roots in the coal digging conditions prevalent there now. To sample those conditions a union miner was sent into Somerset County to hunt work where he could find it in non-union mines and to make a diary of how the digging went and how the diggers lived. He had no scheduled instructions to "investigate" or make a "survey" or watch for this, that and the other specific thing—just to hunt work like any other miner, dig coal, and move on when he felt like seeing another mine. At the end he wrote few generalizations about the conditions he saw.

The coal operators of these Pennsylvania counties, with the non-union operators of West Virginia, believe that their mines form the last bulwark between the operators' ability to dictate their own terms to their men and a system of complete collective bargaining in the coal industry. The unorganized mines in Central Pennsylvania are a strategic factor in settling disputes between miners and operators in all parts of the Eastern and Middle Western mining regions. Coal from these mines can go a long way toward breaking any strike called by the union in the Central Competitive Field.
Any attempt at mutual aid between the miners and steel workers or the miners and the railroad men could be hamstrung by the coal mined in these strategically located non-union fields.

Coal from these sections not only makes it difficult for miners of organized districts to bring pressure to bear on their employers for better conditions, but it also prevents union operators from granting concessions that they otherwise might willingly make. The non-union operators of Central Pennsylvania are free to lower the wages of their miners at will. If the operators of the Central Competitive Field and outlying districts of Pennsylvania and Maryland sign contracts with the United Mine Workers giving their miners higher wages than those of the non-union operator of the unorganized Pennsylvania counties, their competitor can undersell them. It is not so much high wages that the union operators fear as the differential between the wages paid by them and those paid by their competitors. In this way these non-union operators exert a control on the working conditions of all miners as well as fixing those of their own men.

It is the belief of union and non-union miners, of union and non-union operators everywhere, that a drive for organization will ultimately be launched here. It is believed that an organizing movement will be resisted by the operators with all the means at their command, including the support of nationwide steel interests.

Consideration of these matters by the public is the first step in any attempt to prevent the bloodshed and bitter strife which have heretofore attended every effort at organization on the part of the coal miners.

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289 Fourth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

NOTE.—Powers Hapgood, member of the United Mine Workers of America, left Harvard in 1920, and went to work in coal mines in Montana and Colorado. This non-union mining was at the request of the Bureau of Industrial Research. Last December-January, during the slack period, he hunted the mines in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky without finding a job open. He is now working in an anthracite colliery in Pennsylvania.

The map on the cover indicates the relations of the great unorganized fields to the adjacent districts. The towns named in this diary are in the region about Johnstown, in Cambria and Somerset Counties.

Parts of the diary have been omitted here—personal notes, repetitions, sections, etcetera—but this pamphlet contains all of the essential, typical record. In some instances the real name of a miner has been changed to a name of the same nationality, especially where the miner expresses secret sympathy with unionism. Publication of the sympathy might put that miner's job in jeopardy.
Wednesday, August 3.

This morning I got up and caught the 5 o'clock car for Scalp Level, where I had breakfast, and had my dinner bucket filled. I arrived at the mine 1 at a little after 6, and waited in the rain near the drift mouth, 2 where the tracks disappeared into the side of a hill. Soon men began to appear from all directions, dinner buckets in their hands and unlighted mine lamps on their caps that had once been white, but which were now jet black with coal dust. About 6:30 an electric motor rumbled out of the locomotive barn, and was attached by a brakeman to a trip of empty cars. The men seated themselves on the edge of the cars, four to a car, as these were the smaller of the two sizes used in this mine. Just before the trip 3 was ready to start the mine foreman appeared and told me to work drawing pillars 4 with a likable-looking American named John Mason. I climbed into one of the cars, and soon after the motor started and the cars followed, each with a jerk as it felt the pull of the one before it. The miners took their lamps from their caps and rolled the flints on the reflectors. One by one jets of flame spurted from the burners and the lamps were consigned to the caps.

The trip was now plunging forward into the darkness, lighted only by the lamps on the heads of the miners, who were bending forward to escape from hitting the heavy beams flashing past above them. At times we rushed along with timbers or solid rock only a few inches above our heads, and then for a

1 Known as "No. 40" of the Berwind-White Company Mines.
2 The "drift mouth" of a mine is the entrance of a tunnel into the side of a hill and the vein of coal. In hilly or mountainous regions this is the common form of entrance. In flat country a shaft is sunk.
3 A "trip" is a "train" of underground mine cars in which the coal is hauled out.
4 "Pillars" are rectangular blocks of coal, usually about two hundred feet long, thirty feet wide, and as high as the vein of coal is thick. These blocks are left in for the purpose of supporting the roof. When the surrounding coal has been extracted, the pillars are mined, the roof is allowed to cave in, and the part of the mine where the pillars have been taken out is abandoned. Drawing a pillar is the process of taking it out, the coal farthest from the transportation way being taken out first.
few seconds we could sit upright as we passed under places where fifteen or twenty feet of the overlying strata of rock had caved in and been cleared away, leaving yawning, jagged chasms overhead. The cars bumped along at the rate of about ten miles an hour for a little over twenty minutes, and then came to a stop on a side track, where the mine was lighted by electric lights. Here the miners disembarked, and, bending over to keep their heads from striking the low roof, they walked along to their respective places, just as another man trip with its cargo of miners was rumbling past, bound for the end of the main heading. Our man trip had stopped at the 18th heading, on the left, which is at right angles to the main heading; “18 left” is a little over half way into the mine, as the farthest heading in so far is 27.

John Mason and I walked down 18 left, until we came to 5 right off of 18 left. After going down this for some distance we turned into 5 left, off of 5 right, and finally turned into room 8. Thus our place is known as 18 left, 5 right, 5 left, room 8.

The room had been carried forward as far as it was going, and the pillar was now being drawn back toward the heading. As a great deal of coal had been taken out, the pressure of the roof was very great. There were many props along the track to hold the roof up, but three-fourths of them were bent or broken under the pressure.

My companion had been telling me about the place as we were walking toward it. “We won’t be able to load any coal today,” he said, “and maybe not for some time. My old buddy and I have been doing dead work half of every day for the last three weeks and getting nothin’ for it. I tell you, buddy, we’re goin’ to have a hell of a time with this place. That assistant boss told us to turn our track off to the right, and then after we did that and had taken a lot of coal out there, along came the foreman and tells us to carry the room on straight. So the roof is sinking and the place is squeezing. The track’s too low for

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1 “Heading” is synonymous with tunnel or “drift” and is a passage way cut in the vein of coal. The main heading is the transport artery from which subheadings branch off at right angles. In large mines the main heading sometimes extends ten miles or even further underground.

2 When the overhead pressure is too great to be supported by props and pillars the roof and floor squeeze together or the roof caves in.
the cars to come up to the face, so we'll have to take up the bottom under the track and lower it so the cars can come in. Then we got to put in a lot of props. I'll have the motorman bring us in an empty full of them this morning.

"Yes, the place is so bad my old buddy got disgusted and left. I would, too, but I got my family and some furniture to pay for that I got from the company store. I've paid a lot down on it, so I got to stay."

The roof was only about four and one-half feet, and in some places less, above the bottom, so we had to work doubled up like jack-knives. All morning we worked in the dust and the dark, breaking the layer of bottom coal under the tracks with our picks and shoveling away the coal and the rock. My partner is a great worker and very strong. We made good progress, lowering seventy or eighty feet of track, enough to let a car pass under the roof. But we still had twice as far to go, and a great quantity of props to put in. All this is dead work, and is not paid for by the company. The Berwind White Company pays for nothing except tonnage and yardage—and not very much for the latter.

After bolting the contents of our dinner buckets, my companion taking hardly ten minutes to his, we started to prop up the roof. All afternoon I carried props, about the size of railroad ties, along the track from the car of props to the places where we were propping the roof.

John would skilfully cut them with a short axe into the proper lengths, and, while I held the props, or without my aid when I had gone back to the car for more timbers, he would drive a cap piece cut like a wedge between the top of the prop and the roof. Frequently he would shake his head when he noticed the condition of the roof over our heads, and would put up another prop only three or four feet from where we had put up the last. At the end of a couple of hours we had used up all the props in the car, and then we pushed another car up from the heading and proceeded to cut and wedge in more props.

Toward the close of the afternoon the mine foreman and the assistant, who were making the rounds of the mine, came

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1 The "face" is the part of the seam where coal is being mined. As coal is taken out the face advances.
2 "Yardage" is the payment for rock or clay taken from the top, center, or bottom of a vein of coal. In union mines a man is paid by the number of yards of rock which he extracts.
into our place. "Well, you fellows sure are in bad, ain't you?" exclaimed the foreman, as he squatted on his heels to avoid stooping, and looked at our roof and the forest of props that we had put in. "Hell's fire, John, you shouldn't have taken all that coal out of that rib before you had worked out that stump."

"But it ain't our fault, Sam," said John Mason, in his slow, quiet voice; "we was told to turn our track up yonder, and we had to take out that much coal to get the cars through."

"Well, I don't know how it happened, but your roof's sure in bad shape. The only thing you can do now is to work on that stump and get a good cave and then your roof won't be so bad, with all that pressure taken off. You watch these fellows, Ernest," he said to the assistant mine foreman, as he was about to leave, "and don't you let anybody get away with anything like that again."

"Say, Sam," said John, as the mine foreman was lighting a large pipe with his lamp which he had taken off his cap, "don't you think you can give us a little something for all this dead work we've been doin'? It's three weeks now since I've loaded enough coal to make a good day's wages."

"'Fraid I can't, John," said the foreman; "we might give you a little for yardage, but orders from the office tells us we can't pay anything for dead work. It's a question of cutting rates for tonnage below the present scale or not paying anything for dead work and it's better for you fellows to keep the present scale."

With that the mine foreman got on his feet, and soon the little glimmers from his lamp and that of his assistant had been swallowed up in the blackness of the mine.

"Well, buddy," said John, "there ain't nothin' to it but for us to put in some more props. We got to have lots of props. There's about 15 inches of draw slate that'll come before the roof starts, and when the roof does come I don't know whether we'll have time to get out. I sure would leave if I wasn't fixed the way I was."

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1 A "rib" is the side of a working place.
2 A "stump" is a small pillar.
3 The term "cave" means a caving-in of the roof. By removing the stump allowing a consequent cave-in, the roof in the vicinity would be relieved.
4 "Draw slate" lies above the coal. The slate is not attached firmly to the rock above it, and is likely to come down in large chunks, when the coal which supports it is removed.
We put in props until 3:30, when it was time to leave in order to catch the man trip. Going out, we got into a trip of big cars in the fifth right. I thought it was going to be better riding in these big cars, but so many men got in each one that we could not sit on the floor, and we had to duck our heads lower than ever. At 18 left we changed into the regular man trip, and at 4:30 we pulled out of the drift mouth and into the open air once more.

Thursday, August 4.

The mine was not working today and I longed to stay in bed when a borrowed alarm clock waked me at five. But I had promised John that I would be with him to do some more dead work for the company for nothing, so I arose and put on my black pit clothes. As John said yesterday, "Yes, buddy, it's hell to be a working man, ain't it?"

It was a group of miners only about half as large as yesterday's that collected near the drift mouth shortly before six-thirty this morning. The mine was not working and no coal would be hauled out, but these men had dead work to do in order to keep their places so that they could get out coal on the days that the mine runs.

I heard a man swearing profusely as I was standing near the little shed on which the tonnage sheet¹ for the preceding day is kept, and I went inside to see what was the matter. "The -----", he growled, as I asked him what the matter was, "look at what the weigh boss gave me yesterday. Four cars I got out, all of them well over two ton. And look what I got. 3800's the highest. And there's one that's only marked 1800 and she was as big as that one that's marked 3800."

"She sure is hell, ain't she?" remarked a young fellow as he glanced at the board.

"Why don't you fellows get a checkweighman?" I asked.

"Checkweighman?", exclaimed the young fellow. "He'd last about five minutes on a tipple that this company owns before they'd run him off."

¹The "tonnage sheet" is a large paper posted near the entrance of every mine on which is recorded the number of pounds of coal which each miner has dug the day before. The man complaining had mined four carloads, each of which he judged to have held at least two long tons or 4,500 pounds; the highest weight for one car with which he was credited was 3,800 pounds, so that he believed that he had been cheated out of at least 2,800 pounds or about $1.50.
We worked all day today, with the exception of a little over half an hour at the last when we loaded a car of coal, digging up the bottom and lowering the track.

"You ought to have a union here at this mine," I explained when a particularly painful twinge went through my back as I stooped to lift up a chunk of rock. "You wouldn't 'a seen us fellows where I worked at a union mine in Montana gettin' nothin' for all this work. The company sure has us where it wants us here, all right."

"Yes, buddy, that would be good," said my partner, "but the company's too strong for us to organize."

"So you been out in Montana?" he continued later. "That's good union country out there, ain't it? I was all out through the west a few years ago, out in Portland, Frisco, Spokane, Seattle, and all around. Was you in the I. W. W. out there? I was. That's the best organization there is. I tell you, buddy, if all the working men was in the I. W. W. we'd not be so bad off as we are today."

Shortly before lunch time, or rather noon, as we eat our lunch in bites all through the day, we reached a point in the track where a prop stood a couple of feet to one side, its base resting on some loose rock. My companion stopped and looked at it and then sounded the roof.

"No, buddy," he said, "I guess we don't dare take any bottom out from under that tie there. If we do this rock'll slide down and then the prop'll come with it and then this slate will come. And there ain't anywhere else to put up a prop to hold up that piece of slate either."

He studied the situation and then decided that the only thing we could do was to bring the rock down that was hanging over our heads. The piece of slate was about five inches thick and was loose from the roof. It extended over a considerable area. John stood under one edge of the rock and tried to knock the prop out, but it wouldn't come. He then wedged his pick in between the edge of the rock and the roof. Finally a great chunk of it fell with a crash—four or five hundred pounds—enough to kill a man if it should hit him. John tried to bring down some more of this layer of slate, but it would not come. Finally after working on it and sounding it for some time he pronounced the rest of the roof safe.

The piece of rock had fallen all over the track, so with a sledge we broke it into pieces and carried it away.

"No buddy," my companion said, "you see how this place is. If I didn't have a family and wasn't fixed so I couldn't leave, I'd go
and if I couldn't get another job I'd live in the jungles. Did you ever live in the jungles, tramping around the country-side, stealing corn and potatoes from the fields and anything else you can get to eat and then cooking it in the woods? I've been in the jungles in hard times before, and I sure would rather be there than under this roof. When we get that cave back there after we get the stump out, I don't know whether we can get out of here before the draw slate hits us or not."

Working in pillars this way was full of experiences. I learned more in those two days about real mining than I did in all my work driving headings and loading machine coal in rooms in Montana and Colorado.

Late in the day we got our track fixed so that the big cars could run up to the face. We pushed two empties in—it took both of us to push one of them—and then loaded a little coal that was loose. After that we picked enough coal from the side of the pillar to fill the car.

"We'll be lucky if we get 3800 for her," remarked my buddy.

"What!" I exclaimed, "why she'll easy hold almost three ton."

"I know it, but 3800 or two ton's all we get for 'em here."

I'm sure that these cars will hold far more than two tons. The cars I loaded in Montana were much smaller than these we load here, and yet I got as high as 4400 for some of them that I chunked up well and got two tons' and 3800 right along. I wish there was some way I could find out exactly just how much these cars weigh.

When we were through loading this one car, we started out of the mine. No man trip runs out on idle days, so we had to walk. To my surprise it only took us fifty minutes of fast walking to get out. I thought we were much farther in than that. I think our place must be in nearly four miles, however, as it was a very fast pace that my partner set.

When we got out, John and I hunted up the boss. I asked him if he did not have a place where we would not have to do so much dead work.

"No," he said, "places is pretty scarce. Keep on there, where you are. You'll get coal out of there pretty soon."

John and I then walked away up the railroad tracks. I told him I might not show up tomorrow as I was thinking of looking for a place in another mine. This was good news for him, as then

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1 In Montana coal is measured by the short ton rather than by the long ton of 2,240 lbs. used in Pennsylvania.
the little coal that might be taken out would not have to be divided between two men. A miner would much rather work by himself where it is hard to get out coal, as one man alone can mine much more than half as much as two men.

Friday, August 5.

I was up again early this morning, but, thank God, I was not going into the mine. Last night I had decided that I would take today off and try to get a job in one of the other Berwind mines and see if this dead work condition is something which is monopolized by No. 40.

I took a 6:30 train for St. Michael, as I had decided for several reasons to try there first for a job. I had never worked in a shaft mine and I wanted to see if there is any difference between the conditions in shafts and those in slopes and drifts. Also what the electrician had said yesterday about the mine at St. Michael made me think that jobs there might not be scarce, and that conditions might be worth investigating.

When I reached the mine at St. Michael the foreman had not yet come up from below, so I waited in his office until he appeared. After a few questions and some hesitation because I appeared like a casual laborer who would not stay more than a few days in one place, he told me he'd try me out, and gave me a blank form to take to the superintendent.

Another man was taken on at the same time I was as a miner. He had been a company man, employed as a track layer, and had been laid off some time ago. He told me that while he had no desire to dig coal in this mine, he had to do it in order to keep from losing his company house. When I asked him about conditions in the mine he smiled and merely said, "Well, I don't like to tell you about them before you see them for yourself. You go down tomorrow and see what you think of them."

We talked a little about the unions, and he told me that while this is a non-union mine, there are a good many union miners working here.

"The foreman and the rest know it, too," he said, "but they don't care."

1 Paid by the day rather than by the ton. Such men as motormen, brakemen, mule-drivers, track-layers, etc., are known as "company men." They make up about twenty per cent of the mine workers, the others being actually coal getters to whom the term "miners" refers.
This morning I took a walk over the hills northeast of Johnstown and was very much impressed by the combination of natural beauty and large scale industrialism which one views from the heights. Johnstown lies partly in the valley of the Conemaugh River, running east and west, and partly in the valley of Stony Creek, which flows into the Conemaugh from the south. Against the high surrounding hills the tremendous works of the Cambria Steel Company, now part of the Midvale Steel and Ordnance Company, impress one with the magnitude of man's technical undertaking. Far up the Conemaugh, on the south side, the black stacks of the open hearths and the great towers of the blast furnaces with their maze of tubes begin and run for a number of blocks west along the river. A few blocks of tracks connect these Franklin works with another cluster of buildings and stacks, and then, after another stretch of tracks, come the Cambria Works on the north side of the river. The whole plant, Franklin works, Cambria works, the works in between and the railroad, all are part of the Cambria Steel Company. Added to all these are the drift mines at the Franklin Works and the large drift mine which runs for many miles under the hill to the southwest of town from which trips of loaded coal cars run over a bridge across the river into the center of the Cambria plant. A short distance up a valley which runs up from the Conemaugh in a northeasterly direction, some new furnaces and a coking and by-product plant are being put up and a shaft has just been sunk for a coal mine. This plant also is part of the Cambria Steel Company. And all around this vast outlay of iron, steel, cement, is the human element, the element that furnishes the power without which this plant could not function. Rows and rows and clumps and clumps of weather beaten ugly houses stretch out in all directions, and among them, as seen from the hill, the figures of men and women are walking around or sitting on door steps, and children are playing in the streets.

In the course of my walk over the hills I came upon a couple of men sitting on the brink of a hill, gazing out over the Franklin plant, and the buildings and houses of Johnstown. I stopped and talked with them for some time. They told me many things about the Cambria, how one has to sign a statement before he is employed that he is not a member of a union and does not intend to become affiliated with one, how laborers in the steel plant are
now being paid only 30 cents an hour, how on the sixteenth of this month they will be cut to 25 cents, and how prices are not only not coming down but even in some cases going up. Nice place to work in, the Cambria.

All afternoon I wrote my journal, and finally, just before supper time, I had completed it through Saturday. After supper I took a car for South Fork and from there walked almost into St. Michael before I was picked up by an automobile. To my surprise and joy when I arrived at the boarding house, I found that I was to occupy my bed alone as the other occupant had moved out. In this respect at least, this boarding house is better than those in which I lived on the Mesaba Iron Range and in the mining camps of Montana and Colorado.

Monday, August 8.

The landlady pounded on my door this morning at 5:30 and a few minutes later I was in my pit clothes and eating a breakfast of fried eggs, potatoes, and coffee in the kitchen. Four or five other men were there in their mining clothes, talking about their experience of yesterday—the one day of the week that they live in daylight and above ground.

At a little after six I stood in line with many others at the little supply shed near the shaft head. Here I purchased a shovel and a new kind of pick that they use here. It is called a patent pick and consists of a head with sockets in either end, which one fits onto a pick handle. Six sharp little picks come with the outfit, one of which goes into one of the sockets in the head piece. I had never seen this kind of pick before, but almost all the miners use it in this mine for undermining coal. It is very convenient, as all one needs to bring up from the mine when he wants his pick sharpened is his set of little pick points which he takes to the blacksmith.

A little before half past six I climbed up to the platform on the shaft head and there awaited my turn to go down. Soon a group of ten of us entered the cage, our little lamps flickering on our caps, and a few seconds later were dropped downward into the darkness and the wetness at the foot of the shaft, 706 feet below. The bottom reached, the rest of my companions set out for their places, but I had to wait until nearly seven o'clock for my tools to come down. Miners are not permitted to carry tools with them in the cage, but are required to leave them at the top.
of the shaft. The tools are sent down when the last of the miners have descended.

Five or six other new arrivals and I, after we had picked our tools out of the car that had come down on the last cage, walked up the tracks to the mine foreman’s office. Here we sat down on the floor of a little outer room to wait to be assigned to places. In the inner room four or five men, with safety lamps in their hands or hanging by hooks from their clothes, were looking at a large blue print of the mine and discussing the problems of the day.

In a few minutes the big boss came out to us, followed by his assistants. “What am I goin’ to do with them all, fellows?” he queried with a laugh as he saw the group of newcomers. “I guess I got enough all right, didn’t I.”

The assistants talked over the problem of places for all of us, and they seemed to have much difficulty in solving the question. Finally, however, one of them, whom the others called “Shorty,” picked up his safety lamp from the floor and told another man and me to follow him. We walked some distance along the tracks, under a very low roof which forced us to bend over at a sharp angle, and then arrived at the Three Right Dip. A trip of empty cars was passing us and the assistant yelled to the motorman to stop. We climbed into an empty car and the trip rumbled us along for some distance down the heading. We stopped while we were still in the Three Right Dip and sat down in a little room cut in the rib of the mine. Here there was further discussion among some assistant bosses as to where we should go, and I was finally told to walk on until I came to Seven Right and then go to Room 17.

This I did and arrived at Room 17 just as a short, well built miner was pushing an empty car onto the switch. He was James Thompson, my partner in Room 17, a very energetic and pleasant fellow of twenty-five or thirty.

“Well, buddy, guess we better push this empty in and get her loaded,” he said after we had asked each other where we came from and where we had worked before, “the motor’ll be along pretty soon and we got to get these empties out of the way.” Then began the pushing that was to take up so much of our time and strength. Putting our backs against the car and pushing with all our might we got it started and then turned and pushed with our arms at full length in front of us. As we went up toward the
face, the roof seemed to get lower and lower until there were only about six inches between the top of the car and the roof.

When we had the car in place, my partner picked up his pick and sitting on his heel began hacking at the face in order to undercut it. I did too, but, owing to my lack of experience at pick work, my partner and I decided that I would load coal and that he would do the undermining. There was a little loose coal in places which I pried from the face with my pick, and I then began to shovel it into the car. On the right the roof was an inch or two above my back if I bent at right angles from the waist, and I could shovel without much difficulty. But I will never forget the agony I suffered when I worked on the left side of the room. Here there was a roll of rock three or four inches thick all over the bottom, and even if I bent double from the waist my back all the way up to my neck would touch the roof. In order to shovel I had to keep my legs bent as well as my body and when I threw the coal from my shovel it would either hit the roof or the side of the car. Only about half of each shovelful would go where it was intended, and the rest would fall down on the floor by the track. When I was shovelling near the car I would put one knee on the floor and get along very well, but when I was shovelling the coal in the corner twelve or fifteen feet away I could not throw quite as far as the car if I did not have two feet on the ground. And when I saw how easily Jim could shovel coal and throw it, without spilling any, into the six inches between the car and the roof and how he could do it from any part of the room, I felt very much chagrined. True, my partner’s legs were much shorter than mine, but far taller men than I can get along comfortably in this low coal of the Miller Seam.

Almost before I had loaded a car, holding about a ton, Jim had put a mining’ several feet under part of the face. We started to drill with the breast auger, and here again I had difficulty as one has to hold the breast plate against his knees or sometimes against his shins and bore the hole into coal that has suddenly seemed to become hard as rock. While Jim was finishing the drilling, I made a cartridge out of a piece of newspaper, rolling it into a tube and filling it with about six inches of powder. It seemed very small to me, as I had been used to using from sixteen to thirty inches of powder in Montana. The method of firing the

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1 An under-cutting.
shot was also new. Instead of putting the cartridge and a long fuse into the hole and then tamping it with cartridges of clay, Jim put the cartridge in all by itself and before he began tamping he put a long copper rod into the hole. He then tamped bits of coal with his tamping rod until the hole, in this case only about three feet deep, was filled up. When he drew out the long copper rod, known as a needle, a small hole remained leading to the cartridge. Into the entrance to this he placed a short white fuse, known as a squib, and told me that when it had burned a few inches it shot itself back through the hole into the powder.

When everything was ready, he lit the squib with his mining lamp and we hurried to the room neck. Hardly had we arrived than there came a dull boom and our lamps went out in the concussion. My partner relit his lamp and led the way back into the room. Here we set to work in the powder smoke which burned our nostrils and set my companion into a fit of sneezing.

The shot had gone well and had knocked down a fair amount of coal and loosened more. In a few minutes another car was loaded and, with a hard initial push to get it started, we set it rolling down toward the heading, holding back on it with all our might to keep it from going too fast. Once the car had swung around the curve onto the main track, I kept clinging to it while Jim ran alongside and stuck a sprag' into one of the wheels, which locked it. The car slowed down and would have stopped had not Jim removed the sprag and allowed it to move slowly down until it bumped lightly into a trip of loaded cars which had come down from above. James coupled this car onto the trip and we then shoved another empty car out of a switch and up into our room.

On the way past our lunch buckets we each took a sandwich, and, after gobbling them down, we were back at work, Jim hacking at the face with his pick to undermine the coal, and I loading the car, my back scraping the roof as I did so.

On one of our trips with cars past our lunch buckets, it was about noon, and we stopped for lunch. I timed my companion with a watch, and, at the end of seven minutes, he had swallowed his meal and was on his way to the face. I, secretly very unwilling, followed him.

Jim is a terrific worker, although as such he is typical of

1 A piece of wood or iron a foot or so long and an inch or two in diameter used to poke into one of the holes in a wheel to stop the car. It strikes the bed of the car and keeps the wheel from turning.
the majority of miners. With great thuds his pick bit into the coal as he swung it hard and fast against the face, not from the loose and comfortable position in which a lumberman swings his axe but from the cramped position which a miner cutting a slice out of the bottom of a vein of coal must necessarily take. Hardly had he finished undercutting a section of coal before he was on his feet, fairly rushing for the auger and tamping bar. A hard wearisome grind of five or ten minutes and the hole would be drilled. Tamping on the cartridge is a relief to the muscles of the body, but it leaves one's biceps tired and weak. No sooner is the shot fired than Jim is back in the white stinging smoke that does not clear away between shots, slipping his shovel under the loose coal and flinging its contents from five to over twenty feet into the car. And when the car is loaded, there is no rest. It has to be dropped down to the heading and stopped by means of a sprag in the wheel, and a new car is pushed to the face.

Jim has a wife and five children to support besides himself, and he can't afford to let a minute slip by in which he might be getting out the coal for which he is paid $1.28 a ton. This is the same as the union scale for pick coal. Coal that is undermined by machinery, known as machine coal, pays about 95 cents a ton. It is all pick work in the "Maryland Shaft," as this mine is called.

In spite of the energy with which we worked, the day went badly and we only got out six cars of coal. First one thing, then another, would happen which would cause us to leave our work at the face and do just as hard work which brought us nothing. At one time it was a loaded car which came off the track as we went around the curve and which made us sweat and steam for five or ten minutes to pry it on with ties. At another time a trip of ten or a dozen cars was in the way of the switch where our empties were kept, and we had to get it out. A sprag was jammed in the wheel of one car in about the center of the trip, and sitting down with our feet against a car and our hands grasping and pulling on the rails, we had to work four or five loaded cars a few feet up the slope until we could push the jammed car in the direction from which it had come, and thus loosen the sprag. When we had finally got the trip in a condition in which we could get it started we then had to drop it down the slope, running alongside and sticking sprags, made of short, thick pieces of wood, into the holes in the wheels to
lock them and thus keep the trip from getting beyond our control and piling up in a wreck.

At about a quarter of four we laid aside our tools, picked up our buckets, and set out for the shaft bottom. It was a long walk under a low roof of about half an hour before we came in sight of a large crowd of black-faced miners, their dinner buckets under their arms and their lamps burning low on their caps, waiting to go up. We sat in a long, narrow room with a bench on either side, each waiting his turn. In groups of ten the large man in charge of the shaft bottom let the miners enter the cage. This time the miners ahead of me disappeared upwards into the black, the last I could see of them being their feet. Up above it had been their lamps that vanished last from sight.

My, what a relief it was at the end of this day to feel oneself rising upward in the cage, to see the sides of the shaft gradually lose their heavy blackness and take on a lighter shade, and finally to burst out and upwards into the warm light of the afternoon sun.

I walked slowly along the road toward the boarding house, gazing off over the valley and the sparkling stream near the high hill on the other side. It is somewhere under that green hill with the farmer driving his team and plow over it in the sunlight that the miners in the third right dip spend their days, in the blackness and in the dust, with the roof in places barely three and a half, and rarely over four and a half, feet from the floor. All during the hours when the sun is shining brightest on the meadows and fields of that green hill, the miners, hundreds of feet below, are working with their backs bent at right angles from their waists, hewing at the black coal by the dim light of the lamps on their caps, shoveling coal in the stinging white smoke of the powder, or straining against cars which are heavy and stiff.

At the boarding house I found two men washing each other's backs in the inky water of the bath tub. They are both from South Fork, where most of the mines are shut down, and they seem very well satisfied here. When I asked them about the weight they were getting on their cars one of them replied, "We get as good weight here as on any union mine I've ever worked in."

Conditions in this mine are evidently much fairer than in the
mines of the Berwind White Company around Windber. There seems to be no complaint here about the weight the miners receive. Also they are paid for dead work. A young fellow living at the boarding house has been spending two days cleaning up a roof cave in his room, but he has been paid for it at somewhere around seven dollars a day.

The Maryland Shaft here at St. Michael is one of the Berwind White Mines. There are two possible explanations of the difference in policy toward the men in this mine and the Windber mines. One is that the foreman and superintendent here are more lenient and try to be fairer. The second is that the Company instructs the officials to be fairer as it is so essential to keep the miners contented here. St. Michael is farther away from the cities and harder to get men to. The up-keep of the mine is much greater. it is a deep shaft and must have hoisting engineers on duty all the time. It is pronounced gaseous by the mine inspector and must have a certain number of fire bosses always around. It also has to be pumped continuously and in general has to have so many men that the mine must turn out lots of coal to pay for itself.

Then, too, they are trying to cut headings through into the mines around Windber.

I think this latter reason is the main one. The mine foreman at No. 40 when he was telling me why dead work was not paid for said it was on account of orders from above. He was anything but arbitrary, and I think it doubtful if he would naturally be any less fair than the officials at St. Michael.

After supper I read a little, but soon went to bed as I was anxious to do as well by my buddy in the morning as possible.

**Wednesday, August 10.**

Last night I had decided that I had learned about all that was necessary about the Maryland shaft, and that I would give up my job after today. When I told Jim I was leaving he expressed himself as being very sorry, and told me again that in a week I would be doing as much as an older miner, and that we would make a good living together. He was very curious to know what I was going to do, and I told him I had another job “traveling around for a New York firm.”

This morning when the assistant foreman came in I told him I was leaving, and he said he would send another buddy in for Jim.
The assistant and Jim had quite a talk about the direction in which the room was running, and spent some time looking over the sights along the roof. It was decided that the track must be moved farther to the left, and the assistant told Jim to take up the roll of rock on the left side of the floor. He said he would give us so much a yard for it, the exact price of which I've forgotten.

We mined coal in the morning and spent the afternoon digging up the bottom and laying track. It was far different from dragging up bottom in No. 40. We were paid well for it here. There we did it for practically nothing.

While the assistant and Jim and I were sitting talking near the face this morning there had come a series of loud cracks in the roof just above our heads. "Well, what in hell's happening?" said the assistant. "Is the roof coming down a'ready?"

I had jumped for a prop at the sound of the second or third crack, but the two others sat still, calmly chewing and talking.

"What's the matter, buddy?" the assistant asked, "she ain't coming yet." And Jim added, "She's just a workin' a little."

It certainly sounded to me as if I had better stay near the prop, but I came back and sat down with the others. I wonder how much and what kind of noise overhead it would take to move them.

Jim needed some extra points for his pick and some other tools, so I willed him my picks and handle, shovel, and powder can. It would be useless to try to carry tools around from job to job.

When the day was over we shook hands and said goodbye at the top of the shaft. I was very sorry to leave him.

I went up to the office after parting and asked for my time. I was informed, however, that I would have to wait until pay day unless I worked out a ten-day notice. The office people said that I might be able to persuade the boss to give me an order for my time, so I could get it before pay day, but as he was away and my time only amounted to a few dollars after a can of powder had been deducted, I decided to let it go. I was anxious to get to Johnstown for a bath, a good night's sleep, and mail.
Friday, August 12.

This morning I returned to Johnstown from Somerset, and at noon went to Ebensburg. Here I got a room at the Hotel Bender, and then set out along the Pennsylvania tracks for Revloc, a small mining town of several hundred people, owned by the Monroe Coal Mining Company. It is in the Black Lick, a non-union strip of mining country.

After a walk of about two miles along the tracks, I came in sight of Revloc. A quarter of a mile ahead of me, on the other side of a little stream rose the tall, black shaft head, the hoisting wheels spinning rapidly as car after car was hoisted in the cage and dumped into the tipple. A long line of coal cars of the Cambria and Indiana Railroad, which at this point parallels the Pennsylvania, stretched out from under the tipple, and just in front of the shaft head was a group of low, red brick buildings, comprising the power house, with its several tall, black stacks, the blacksmith shop, and the house for the hoisting engines.

After walking around I returned to the mine and took up my post by the small shaft head, which is used for hoisting men and materials other than coal. The cage was coming up and going down continuously, raising and lowering men. In little groups the miners on the day shift were coming out, and when they reached the surface were knocking the carbide from their lamps and trudging homewards. The headings were being worked night and day, and forty or fifty miners were working night shift. I watched groups of ten enter the cage, and saw their lamps drop downwards out of sight as the hoisting engineer let the cage go down. This shaft, I was told, is 365 feet deep.

I talked with miners sitting near the shaft on a pile of lumber, and found that they seemed to have no complaint. Many of them told how they drew upwards of $100 every two weeks, although some complained a little because the mine was overcrowded. This coal company sells its coal to the government for its ships, and so works every day. The coal here is said to be some of the best steam coal in the country.

About half past three the mine foreman came up, and I followed him to the office part way up the hill, where several other men were waiting.

“Yes, I’ve got room for one English-speaking fellow,” an
assistant boss was saying, in answer to a question from the foreman when I came in.

"What nationality are you?" the foreman asked when he saw me standing before him.


"Ever work in a mine before?"

"I've worked out in Montana and Colorado and a little bit around Pennsylvania."

"Here's a man for you, Davis," the foreman called to his subordinate, and the latter, in appearance and speech more like a school teacher than an assistant pit boss, gently told me that if I would show up Monday he would give me a good place loading machine coal. For the first time in a long while the mine was not working Saturday, so he could not set me to work until Monday.

When I left the office, much surprised that I had been taken on, as several men had said the mine was full, I set out in search of a boarding place. The assistant mine foreman had suggested that I try a Mrs. Brown, and I inquired my way to her house, a small one of red brick, like every other house in the row. A rather pretty young woman came to the door when I knocked, and in answer to my questions as to whether she took in boarders and roomers, and whether she would take me in, she replied in the affirmative, and informed me that board was $12.50 a week. It was arranged that I was to come out Monday morning for breakfast.

Monday, August 15.

Next morning the widow Brown, as she is called, had breakfast ready for me and packed my lunch bucket so that I got to the shaft head on time at about a quarter of seven.

When the cage had carried me down to the bottom of the shaft, I stepped out into the cleanest and best looking mine I've yet seen. The roof in the main headings is high, and one can walk most of the time without bending his head. This is not because the coal is higher than in the other mines where I've worked. The coal here is part of the Miller Seam, but so much of the bottom has been taken out along the headings that one can walk in comfort. The mine is lighted by electric lights at much more frequent intervals than the other mines, and the whole appearance is more cheerful and less confining.
About fifteen minutes of walking with Davis, the assistant, brought me to Main C, where I was to work. The other man who was working in my room was not here today, and the boss told me I could work company work,1 pumping out my room, which was going to the dip, and was wet, and helping a company man on his odd jobs.

We set to work pumping out my room, pushing a water car down to the face, and, with great difficulty in cramped quarters between the car and the rib, taking turns pushing and pulling the pump handle. When the tank was full of water, my companion attached a cable to the front of the car and then started an electric hoist at the top of the hill, which wound the cable up on a drum and pulled the car up the grade. As he did so, the hoist made a loud, grinding noise, and bright blue lights flashed out from the interior of the motor.

Once we had the car at the top of the hill, we had to push it on level ground for a few feet, so it was now past the hoist, and then drop it downwards toward the main heading. The cars in this mine have brakes, and, unlike the cars in the Maryland shaft, one does not have to stop them here by poking sprags in the wheels. When we had the car out of the main heading, we opened the draining valve and the water ran out into the ditch which runs along the tracks.

Seven times we repeated this process, pushing and lowering the car down the face, pumping it full of water, and hoisting it upwards. My buddy, Bill Masters, taught me the intricacies of the clutches and control levers of the hoist, and I hoisted out several cars. Several times, because of my wet feet and hands, sharp electric shocks went through me as I handled the controls of the hoist. Bill was not bothered in this way, as he had on heavy rubber boots, called “gums.” These are such good non-conductors that it’s almost impossible for him to be shocked. To prove it he took hold of the trolley wire with his bare hand and scraped against it with the lamp on his cap. Had I done it I would have considered myself fortunate to be picking myself up off the ground.

Bill was a great talker and we conversed steadily. He

1 “Company work” paid for by the hour.
2 A room “going to the dip” goes down grade in following the vein of coal. One “going to the rise” is going upgrade.
seemed very well off in this mine, earning his $7.20 a day regularly for his eight hours' work.

While he did not seem intolerant of radicals and union officials, he did not seem to care much whether the mine was unionized or not.

No one with whom I talked when I wandered around in various rooms seemed to have any grievances except one young fellow, who thought he was being cheated in weight. The general run of the men here is apathetic or indifferent to unions. They are well off, no doubt, especially in these times, but they don't realize that it is the union, supported by the dues of miners in other fields, that sets the high tonnage scale and the good conditions from which they benefit.

In the afternoon Bill and I dug out man-holes in the rib on one side of the Main C heading. These are places in which men walking along the tracks can take refuge when trips and motors come through.

The blasting here is done in a far different way from that in other mines where I've worked. Here we put sticks of powder into the holes and put a cap in the top of each stick. To the cap we attach wires, forty or fifty feet long, and then, after tamping in the sticks, we take the wires with us around a corner and touch them to a battery. A sharp, quick bang, instead of the dull, heavy roar of black powder, greets us when we touch the wires to the battery, and our lamps go out, leaving us in blackness. By taking our lamps from our caps and rolling the flints in the palms of our hands, we ignite the carbide gas coming from the little jets and restore our lamps to our caps.

The day passed quietly and agreeably. Fortunate is the lot of the company man! Today with half the energy and fatigue and none of the nervous worry, I made twice the money I had made in any day in the Maryland shaft.

The quarters in my little boarding house are exceedingly cramped. The boarding Mrs. has five boarders and lodgers and one plain boarder, the village barber. Two of us, who sleep here as well as eat, are miners, two others carpenters, and the fifth a fire boss of the last vintage, who recently passed his examination. The two carpenters, the fire boss, and I occupy one small, hot bedroom, with one little window which opens about a foot. Two double beds and a dresser are crowded into this little room, and we have just room enough to dress and undress. I
caused some interest by "dressing up" in pajamas to go to bed, something which I never attempted in the bunk houses of the West. The others simply undressed until they came to their underwear, and then crawled into bed.

About ten o'clock we were safely stowed away—the two carpenters in one bed, the fire boss and I in the other. The fire boss set a Big Ben for 2:30 A.M., as he goes below at 3 o'clock in order to inspect for gas and bad roof before the rest of us come down the shaft. He does his sleeping in two shifts—one from whenever he goes to bed in the afternoon until supper time, and the other from 10 P.M. to 2:30 A.M.

Tuesday, August 16,

The fire-boss' alarm clock woke me thoroughly as it took my bed mate several seconds to arouse himself enough to shut off his Big Ben. It was a very pleasant feeling to be waked up this way and to go back to sleep realizing there were still three and a half good hours in which to sleep.

The boss told me this morning that he would get a buddy for me, as the man that used to be driving the heading in which I'm working had left. In the meantime I was to pump out the water that had accumulated in the heading over night and then proceed to load out all the loose coal so the cutter could undercut the face with his machine.

Bill Masters and I spent three hours pumping out the water in my heading, and there was still water left when we got through. The boss gave me three hours' credit for this work.

About the middle of the morning a sad thing happened to my lunch. As I was walking up from the face of my heading and was passing my dinner bucket I noticed one of the numerous rats that inhabit this mine scurrying away into the darkness out of the little circle of light cast by my lamp as I walked along. The little animal, which I spoke of as a damn pest at the time, had pried the lid off my dinner bucket and when I came along and disturbed him, was busily eating my lunch. His little dusty feet had left my sandwiches almost black. He had messed a piece of cream pie all over the inside of the bucket, and, worst of all, he had spilled a little jar of pork and beans so that its contents ran all over the bottom of the bucket and the food resting thereon. When I looked at the mess, I didn't know what I was going to do for lunch. But a miner can't be too particular about who walks over his meals.
and these rats are cleaner than other rats, so I rescued a couple of sandwiches and two little pears from the wreck.

Some miners declare they would not work in a mine that did not have rats in it. When a section of a mine becomes unsafe the rats sense the danger and leave for better parts, thus giving the miners warning, at least so Bill Masters and one or two others say. Also they do a great service in keeping the mine clean.

In this mine, however, the rats have become far too plentiful. The few pairs that were brought down the shaft when the mine was opened have multiplied into a regular army. One can hardly walk fifty feet in the back headings without seeing the little gray animals running away from the light into the darkness. When there is food around, they become quite bold. When Bill and I eat our meals in the Main C. heading, four or five of our friends, the rats, are continually running around us and picking up the crumbs. Yesterday when we were returning to the manhole that we were digging, after having set off two shots to blow up some bottom rock, we found one of the little animals torn and bleeding in the middle of the track. He had been passing along just as we shot and a flying piece of rock had hit him. We felt sorry for him. Down in the darkness one appreciates all forms of life.

I loaded two cars from the loose coal on the floor and that which I knocked down from the face, thus getting the place ready for the cutter. In loading this coal I got very wet half way up to my knees as I had to splash around in water which reached to my ankles. The wetness and the rats, however, are all part of a miner's life.

It was only a little after two when my place was cleaned up, so I picked up my bucket, and after a few minutes of gossip with Bill whom I passed as I went down the heading, I went to the shaft bottom and was hoisted up into the outer world.

Wednesday, August 17.

I did not go into the mine this morning, as I had decided last night to take the day off and look for a new job farther down the Black Lick. The officials at Revloc seem very lenient about letting miners absent themselves from their work.

A train left Revloc at 8:04 going toward Indiana town, and I took this as far as Vintondale, a few stations past Nanty-Glo.
I had only been off the train about five minutes in Vintondale before I was hailed from behind as I was walking toward a mine and coking plant owned by the Vinton Colliery Company. On turning around I beheld a young man in riding breeches and a gray shirt, with a revolver protruding from his hip pocket and a visored cap on his head. When he came nearer I noticed some sort of an insignia on his cap, in which were the initials C. & I., which I was told afterwards meant "Coal and Iron."

"Would you mind telling me what your business is in this town?" he asked, stepping a few feet in front of me.

"Just lookin' for work," I responded.

"What are you, a miner?"

"Yes, lookin' for a job."

"Where you from?"

"Oh, out Indiana way."

"Well, you'll find the mine office right across the tracks by the coke ovens," and with that the policeman turned around and walked up town.

I was somewhat puzzled as to what kind of a policeman this man was. His uniform was the same color as that of the state police, but it was different in appearance and the insignia was not the same. I concluded he was a policeman paid by the coal operators at Vintondale, and this I found out later was correct.

There was a large plant here at Vintondale, consisting of a row of coke ovens, most of which were casting red flames upward as I approached, two mines, and a great number of buildings. The mine foreman was not around when I went into the office but I was told he would be back about eleven o'clock.

While waiting for the foreman I walked up town to Colliery No. 2 to look this mine over. On a little platform near the mine I saw a young man resting, so I walked over and began to talk to him. He was from Patton and was looking for work. He said he had just been told by the foreman at the No. 2 mine that all the places were full. I asked him whether he had been questioned by the policeman.

"No, he ain't seen me yet," the young man answered. "I heard about him, and I've kept out of his way. If he sees you he'll keep track of you till you leave town. I spent the night in the school house and if he'd a known that he'd a given me a place in jail."

When I returned to the office of the big mine about ten-thirty, the foreman was there and told me he'd hire me if I could find a
place to board. It only took me a few minutes to locate a fine place to board, with a room to myself, for $50 a month, and I then returned to the office.

When I saw the boss again, a very unusual thing happened and one which will make me keep my thoughts to myself in the future if I want a job. While the foreman was writing down a few answers which I gave to his questions, I thought it would do no harm to ask him about the conditions of work.

"What do you pay here?" I asked.

"Seventy-two cents a ton."

"Do you pay anything for dead work?"

As soon as I asked this the foreman threw his pencil on the table and said: "I guess you don't want a job bad enough to get one here. You might as well go along."

"I don't see anything wrong in asking about the conditions of work," I objected. "I didn't say I wouldn't work if you didn't pay for dead work. I only wanted to find out what the policy of the company is so I'd know what to expect."

"Don't make no difference," answered the foreman. "You might have waited at least until you'd seen your place and gotten started and found out about it. You don't need a job. You might as well go along."

He remained obstinate to all my remarks about the unusualness of being fired just after being hired. I therefore walked up to the railroad station to wait for a train that was due in a few minutes and was going on down the Black Lick. It was very disappointing to me to lose this job, but the action of the foreman on firing me because I wanted to know what the conditions were was in itself an interesting information about non-union mines. The scale has evidently been cut here, as 72 cents a ton is 23 cents lower than the price in the union mines and also in the non-union mine where I'm now working at Revloc. Revloc is still paying the scale established by the union.

While I was waiting in the station I fell into conversation with two other men who were also waiting for the train. They were Hungarians who spoke good English and were trying to interest the Hungarians in Vintondale in a colonization scheme near Cleveland.

"Did that policeman ask you all kinds of questions?" I asked them.

"I should say he did," one of them answered. "He came up
to us this morning. 'What you selling," he said. We told him and he did not even know what colonization meant. 'Well, you can't sell colonization here,' the policeman said after we told him what we were doing. 'We leave town then,' I told him. 'No, you can't leave,' he said. 'You got to go see the superintendent first before you can leave.' So the policeman took us up to the big office and into the super's room. We had to explain to the super what we were doing. 'Well, you can't sell your scheme here,' the super said. 'The Company owns the town and you got to get out. You leave on the next train.' So here we are," the Hungarian concluded, "and we're waiting for the next train to take us out of this damn town."

Just as the train pulled in, the policeman came riding up on a black horse and sat in his saddle watching who got on and who got off. I was very doubtful whether this company policeman had authority to drive people out of town in this way or to question them about their business, and I stated my doubts to the Hungarians.

"He's acting in his rights, all right," said one of them. "The Company pays him to watch the town for them and they can keep anyone out of town just the way you can keep a man out of your house. They own the town and can do as they please."

This train only went as far as Wehrum, a few miles from Vintondale and we got off there. Many men were loafing on the grass near the station, and I learned from them that the one mine here is owned by the Lackawanna Coal and Coke Company. The town is also owned absolutely by the Company.

"This town's owned more solid by the Company than Vintondale," one of the men said. "There's not a single thing in Wehrum except the railroad station that the Company don't own. And they've got three or four policemen too, but they're not so strict. A man can come in here unmolested, just so he don't start something like organizin' the union or something like that."

The mine here is only working one and sometimes two days a week, and I decided it would be useless to try for a job. This is a non-union mine and the men are working for 72 cents a ton and reduced company time rates. None of the group I talked with seemed much interested in unionism, either for or against. They seemed, like most other non-union men I've met, too inactive mentally to consider the question. They'd probably rather have a union than not have one, but, as far as thinking about how they're going
to get one, they’re just too lazy to exert themselves. When the mine works, they work, and when the mine doesn’t work, they sit on the grass, talking about whatever amuses them and spitting continuously.

After a while I set out along the tracks for Vintondale. The more I thought about the coal and iron policeman the more I wanted him to order me out of town or to make things unpleasant for me so I could get more information about him. I wanted to work in Vintondale very much, and I decided to try the foreman at the No. 2 mine in spite of the fact that the young fellow who was looking for work told me that he had been refused a job.

A walk of about three quarters of an hour brought me back to Vintondale, just a few minutes before the train came back from Wehrum. As I walked along the main street of the town, the policeman came riding toward me on his way to meet the train.

“Got a job?” he asked.

“No, still lookin’ for one,” I answered.

He said nothing more but rode on towards the station. I walked through the town to the mine, and, after waiting for some time for the mine foreman at No. 2 to appear, I was turned down for a job.

I had lunch at a little restaurant and then, thinking of nothing more to be done in Vintondale, I set out along the tracks for Nanty-Glo, as there was no train for several hours. At Nanty-Glo I took the street car for Johnstown, where I got my mail, wrote a couple of letters, and then boarded a car for Ebensburg. I slipped into my bed at Revloc, between the fire boss and the wall, at a little after ten.

Thursday, August 18.

I went back to work in the Revloc Shaft this morning, although I decided before I went down that this was to be my last day as I had already found out enough about this mine. The boss had given me a buddy today and before the day was over I grew so attached to him that I hated to leave. His name is Tom Plateck and he is just about the same age as I am. For five years he had been a locomotive fireman on the Pennsylvania,—since he was seventeen,—but he had been laid off along with 1,400 others on the Conemaugh division. He said he was third in line to be called back when the road began calling firemen. It will be some time before he is called, however, as men who had been engineers and
who were dropped back to firemen are still firing. So Tom is now
top in the mines, where his father had taken him when he was
only eleven, and he finds it much harder work than firing locomo-
tives.

My buddy had just finished a room and did not like this
heading at all. He kicked to Davis, the assistant boss, and
asked him to give us a room.

"Hell, you've got one of the best places in the mine as soon
as you've worked it a while," the boss responded to his request,
"and, besides, I ain't got another place open except one with
two and a half feet of coal."

"Well, I'd like to get in a place where two of us could load
out at least twelve or fourteen cars a day," said my partner.

"Why, they ain't a pair of miners in the mine that's gettin'
out that many cars," the boss then said. "Times aren't what
they used to be. We've got nearly 300 miners in here now, and
they're not getting out any more coal than when we only had
a hundred. You can't expect to draw the pay you used to before
this mine got crowded."

A little while after lunch one of our cars came off the track
at the curve, and, after we had jacked it back on the track after
ten or fifteen minutes of work, it proceeded to come off again
on a perfectly straight track, as the scraper from the machine
from which we had borrowed the jack was running the hoist
for us while we were watching the car. This was the last straw.
It gave me a good chance to give up my job, and my buddy said
this was his last day in the mine unless he got a new place.

I found that I would have to wait until a ten-days' notice
period had expired before I could get my pay, which amounted
to something over twelve dollars, because of the company time
I had put in. Tom wanted to help me and offered to "buy me
out," although he said he would have to borrow the money to
do it. We went up to the office together, and I signed my pay
over to him, so that he will get it pay day. He told me where
he lived, and we agreed to meet there after we had washed and
changed our clothes.

The "boarding Mrs." was washing dishes when I reached
the little box-like house, so I had to wait for her to get through
before I could undress in the kitchen. By the time I had bathed
and dressed it was nearly 4 o'clock, and a train, which I wanted
to catch, was due to leave at 4:30.
I hurried over to the place where Tom was boarding, and found him sitting on his porch, smoking the pipe which he seemed to have in his mouth continuously. His brother, from whom he was to borrow the money to pay me off had not yet returned, so we sat on the porch and talked. He showed me some photographs of the little girl, not yet 19, whom he speaks of as “the old woman.” They have been married about a year and have a baby. At present his wife is boarding near Conemaugh, waiting for him to be called back to the railroad.

As my buddy’s brother was slow in coming and I thought that Tom certainly deserved interest for waiting until pay day for the money that was being transferred from me to him, we settled for eight dollars and some change which he had in his pocket. I also gave him my pick and shovel.

Mrs. Brown relieved me of my eight dollars for board and lodging, and I then set out for the train, arriving just in time.

Sunday, August 21.

I set out this morning for Heilwood, taking an 8 o’clock train for Cresson. The Cresson branch train left at 9:15, and, after winding North through Cambria County to Cherry Tree and then West into Indiana County, arrived about noon at the end of the line in Heilwood.

From what I had heard of Heilwood, I expected it to be a fair-sized town, at least as large as Spangler or Nanty-Glo, but when we arrived I saw nothing but a small station and a road leading up a hill. When I followed the road up the hill I saw nothing but a few rows of houses, each similar to all, and the brick smokestack of a mine rising above a hill. This was all there was to Heilwood, the town of which I had expected so much. As I walked along the dusty road, suitcase in one hand and dinner bucket and umbrella in the other, the natives eyed me as if to say, “Poor boob, don’t he know there ain’t no work here?” I don’t like to drag a dinner bucket and umbrella around with me, but I cannot bear to part with either, and besides, the bucket serves as a supplementary suitcase.

After asking several people the way to the hotel, which I concluded must be somewhere around, I reached an old house, where I got a room. This was Heilwood’s leading hotel—in fact, the only hotel in town.

In the early afternoon I started out on a tour of the five
mines, which I had been told were here. These mines are all part of the Bethlehem Mines Corporation.

The first mine I came to, where there is a power house which generated electricity for all the other mines, was fairly large, with Penn Mary Mine No. 1 inscribed in large white letters on the black tipple. A man who looked as if he was a miner was standing gazing at the sheet on which the weights of the last work day had been written down, and I walked up to ask him some questions.

"Are you workin' around here now?" I asked.

"Oh, two, sometimes three, days a week," the man replied. "We're only going to work two days this week—Tuesday and Friday. Not much good around here."

"Can you make anything when the mines are working?"

"Seventy-two cents a ton for machine coal. That's all we get. And we can't get much coal out, either. The mines is too crowded."

"Seventy-two cents a ton," I repeated. "I guess you haven't got a union around here."

"No, no union here. Company won't stand for any. I mind the time about a year ago when they bought up a union mine over at Tipperary, a few miles away from here. They shut down the mine until all the union men and their families had to move away, and then they opened it up with scabs. Yes, we're all scabs around here."

"What's the matter you haven't got a union around here?" I then inquired.

"Dunno," said the man, "the company's too strong, I guess."

"Does the company force the miners to trade up at their store?"

"No, a man can trade where he wants to. I don't trade up there. The prices are too dear."

We talked for some time up there by the little shed where the weights were posted. This man was a foreigner of some kind, but he talked good English. He said that since the cut in wages came motormen are being paid $5.36 a day and spraggers $4.99. He didn't think that many of the men around Heilwood are contented.
Wednesday, August 24.

I did not think it worth while to spend any more time on this branch, so I set out this morning for Stoyestown, a mining village on the B. & O. Railroad, west of Central City. It was about ten miles over here, and I had a suitcase to carry, but I was in hopes of getting a lift by an automobile. About two miles out of Central City I was picked up and carried as far as Bucks-town, on the Lincoln highway. I thought the Lincoln highway would be a fine place for getting rides, but, as I trudged along up one hill and then another, the automobiles whizzed past relentlessly. Finally, one did stop, however, and carried me to Stoyestown. As it was the trip took only a little over two hours, whereas, if I had taken the one morning train from Central City up to Winber, the car from there to Paint Creek, and then the B. & O. south to Stoyestown, it would have been after lunch before I arrived.

Near Stoyestown there are a couple of mines, of which the Reading Mine is running every day. While I was checking my suitcase at the station, I fell into conversation with a Negro who had once worked there, and had come over to see about getting a job again, but when he learned that the price for machine coal had been reduced to seventy-two cents a ton he decided not to go to work. The coal vein is only two and one-half feet high in most places, and in no part of the mine is it higher than three feet, so it would be pretty hard to earn much at seventy-two cents a ton.

"All the men have to work an their knees," said the colored man in very good English. "Some of them wear the knee pads you can buy at the company store, and others get along without them. This mine's got a wash house with shower baths and places to keep your clothes—the first one I've seen around here—and the company treats you pretty fair—handles your cars for you in some places and pays on the places you have to push. But I wouldn't work on that low coal again, anyway."

"There isn't a union here, is there?" I said.

"No," he answered, and then added with much emphasis: "The men are too damn ignorant around here to know what the union'll do for them. So they don't get organized."

In talking further with this Negro, I learned that this mine belongs to the "Reading Iron Company" and dumps its coal into
"Philadelphia and Reading steels," "steel" meaning railroad coal car. From this I concluded that the mine belonged to the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, and I decided to try for a job.

A walk of about a mile, partly by road and partly along a switch running out into the country, brought me to the Reading Mine. Here I waited near the drift mouth for the mine foreman to come out, only to hear at last that the mine was full.

As the other mine at Stoyestown was very small and did not seem to be working, I got my suitcase and walked for an hour and a half along the B. & O. tracks to Hooversville, where I understood there were four or five mines. After leaving my suitcase at the station I went to the nearest mine—a drift belonging to the Old Colony Coal Mining Company. It was after 4 o'clock when I arrived, and the boss had gone home, but an electrician who was working in the office and seemed to have some authority told me that if I would come back in the morning I would undoubtedly get a job, and that if I came in my mining clothes that I might be able to start in in the morning.

Thursday, August 25.

When I reported to the foreman of the Old Colony Mine this morning at 6:30, he told me he would be glad to take me on, but that he must first find a buddy for me, as the car pushing in the various rooms was too hard for a single man to do. He told me to wait for a while around the mine, so I sat down on the steps of the office and proceeded to do what I usually do when I have to wait in the course of mining—pulled off the top of my dinner bucket and ate part of my lunch. This is a habit which many workers, especially miners, seem to fall into. When they can't work, they eat.

While I was waiting there I talked with a young fellow about my own age, who was also waiting. He and his partner were unable to go to work because the machine runner had not yet cut their place that morning.

In our conversation I learned that the scale for machine coal here is fifty-eight cents a ton, and five cents extra for car pushing. This is the lowest scale I've struck yet.

While the men at this mine do not belong to the union, they evidently have some sort of an organization among themselves as

\[1\text{ The union scale was } \$0.95 \text{ cents a ton.} \]
they have a checkweighman on the tipple, whom they elect and whose wages they pay.

About half past seven the foreman returned to the office and informed me that he could not put me to work today as he could not find any single men. He told me that if I could get a buddy or if I'd come back later and if he had a single man available he would give me a job.

Friday, August 26.

At Ralphton there is a group of mines of the Zimmerman interests, operating under the name of the Quemahoning Coal Company. I decided to go over there and see if I could get a job. An hour's walk east over the State Road and south over a road through forests brought me in sight of a good sized shaft mine. I crossed the tracks under the tipple, and climbed a hill past the power house and the shaft-head up to the mine foreman's office. The foreman had not yet gone inside. At first the boss was doubtful if he could give me a job because I was alone, but he then decided that he could find me a buddy and told me to come back ready for work tomorrow; that he would give me a buddy and a place. Just after I had started away, he called me back and asked if I had ever done any pillar work. I told him I had done a little, and he said he would give me a pillar where the squeeze was so great that I would not have to blast the coal, but where I could pick the coal down and shovel it up. He said all my partner and I would have to do would be to do a little picking, shovel the coal, and put in lots of props.

After getting my job I walked on to Ralphton and there got board and room—a single room with two windows—at the Ralphton Hotel for $45 a month. After this I walked back to Boswell, took the noon bus to Holsopple, and went to Johnstown by street car. At Johnstown I got mail and wrote letters and at 5:20 started back to Ralphton.

Saturday, August 27.

After breakfast this morning I put on my mining clothes and left my good clothes in a little cellar room, where the miners wash and dress after work. The mines here are working regularly, but today some of them could not work, as the B. & O. had failed to bring in enough steel cars during the night. No. 3,
where I worked, however, had three cars on hand and the necessary ten or twelve cars came in about 8 o'clock.

After waiting around the mine foreman's office for about an hour he took me inside. The shaft here is only about seventy feet deep, so the men walk down a steep slope instead of going down in the cage. The mine foreman turned me over to a motorman, who was taking a trip of empty cars from the shaft bottom to the working places, and directed him to let me off at the nearest place to One Right, 8 East, Room 15.

When I arrived at my room, which is now in the pillar stage, I found my buddy there—an American named Berger. He was sitting down when I arrived, gazing contemplatively off into the black forest of props supporting the roof from under which the coal had been taken out. He was very gloomy about the room, saying that the roof was so solid that it did not squeeze in the least, and that the coal in our pillar was consequently not at all easy to take out. He had already put in two shots, and had not been rewarded with much loose coal.

Berger doesn't seem to like this mine very much, and he dislikes the mine foreman exceedingly, who, he says, has never obtained foreman's papers by passing state examinations, but who is here only because he is a good friend of the superintendent. He thinks the foreman sells the good places in the mine to foreigners who will keep silent about it. I don't know how true this is—it may be only gossip—but the foreman certainly put one over on me when he said the coal in this pillar would just burst out from the rib without our shooting it.

My buddy told me that several months ago he had a good place in the mine and was doing well. He was called for jury service for a week, and when he returned his place had been given to some other miners. There were no other good places available and he was placed on company work, handling cars at the shaft bottom. When the cut in wages came he was reduced to fifty cents an hour, which amounts to about four dollars a day, in contrast to the $7.50 a day in union mines. Recently, he asked to be given a place to mine coal and was given this pillar three days ago. The two days preceding he put in laying track up from the heading, for which he is paid nothing. This is evidently another mine in which dead work is done for nothing, or rather for the sake of having a place to work.
Berger had loosened a little coal, so we went down to the heading for an empty car. The motorman had left four cars for us, just above the switch. We dropped one of them down below the switch, threw the latches, and started to push the car up.

Car-pushing here is the hardest I've ever done. There's a push of only about one hundred feet, or possibly a little more, but at the end of it we are so out of breath we have to sit down and rest. Coming up from the heading around the curve, we usually get stuck a couple of times and have to let the car back a few inches and give an extra hard push to get it started. For the first fifth of the distance each of us has to push with one arm and shoulder and grasp the rail with our other hand and pull. I push with my right arm and pull with my left, as I'm on the left side of the car. Berger, on the right side, pulls on the rail with his right arm and pushes with his left. Then, when we once get over the rise, we still have to push very hard. Before quitting time, the legs of both of us were weak with the pushing.

Dropping our loaded cars down is no easy matter. We both hold back for all we're worth, and Berger puts sprags in the wheels, but the car goes much too fast and bumps into the loads on the main heading with a great jar.

Monday, August 29.

Work proceeded today just about as it had Saturday. Eight cars were all that the motorman brought us, so that's all we could load; four cars apiece gives us each four dollars for a day's work.

Today we made a great dent in our pillar. There is a cross cut through about fifteen feet away toward the heading, so we are now working on a small stump, boring our holes and shooting from the solid on any side of the stump where we think we can loosen the coal to best advantage.

We mined the coal necessary for four cars, pushed our cars in, loaded them, dropped them out, and had our coal mined and ready to load for the next four cars before a quarter after eleven. From that time until half past twelve we sat with our backs against the rib down by the heading, waiting for the motorman.

When Chris and I reached the main haulage way on going
home, a trip of loaded cars was being hauled toward the shaft bottom. On each car as it passed, much to my surprise, a miner was lying at full length on his stomach, his head just grazing the roof. When a loaded car finally came past that had no occupant, Chris threw himself and his dinner bucket on top of it, and I did the same on the next unoccupied car. When we reached the place where we had to get off in order to go up the slope, the trip did not stop, but the miners jumped off the moving cars.

I know that this is a flagrant violation of the mining law, as it is only on regular man trips that men are supposed to ride. Yet the mine foreman does nothing to stop this practice.

He violates the law in allowing this to go on, and he violates it in many other particulars. The mine foreman or his assistant is supposed to visit every working place every day. But I have not seen any official in our place in the two days I've worked here. Chris said the foreman rarely visits the working places, that he knows of rooms where he has not been for three months. He said that when he used to work at the shaft bottom, the foreman would come down about nine o'clock and sit down by the shaft bottom until noon, when he would go outside for the rest of the day. Chris said that the company used to pay the men yardage for taking up bottom, but, owing to the fact that the mine foreman was too lazy to walk around to the places to measure the yardage the practice was stopped.

Tuesday, August 30.

Today, as we worked, the stump that we were blasting out kept getting smaller and smaller until it gradually became no longer than a tree trunk, and finally disappeared entirely. We drilled holes, made cartridges, tamped them in, lit squibs, and took refuge in the nearest cross cut many times during the day until we had finally taken out the stump. There still remains about forty feet of pillar to be taken out between the cross cut we reached today and the next one farther down. Below the next cross cut we cannot take out coal as heading stumps are supposed to be left in. Thus there is only about five days work left for us in this place, and we will then have to spend a couple of days laying track at a new place before we can begin work. My buddy had to spend two days laying track up along this pillar before he could begin loading coal, and he has only about a week and a half's work here. Two
days of free work for the company in order to be given a week
and a half's work!

I gave Chris all the cars Saturday, because he had put in that
dead work without my aid. He only took them because I had no
checks to put on the cars that first day, and yesterday he wanted
me to check all the cars until I caught up with him, but I refused.
I've been trying to get him to take extra cars because we're shoot­
ing up his powder which he pays for at $2.50 a keg, but he won't
do it. I wonder if he would take more cars if he really knew what
I was doing, and that I'm getting another salary?

Today the motorman brought us twelve cars, although we had
to wait for him from a quarter after eleven until noon, and again
from half past one to half past two, in which time we had great
conversations about hobo experiences and unionism. I told him all
about the 'larger program' of District No. 2 of the U. M. W. of A.

We rode to the shaft bottom on top of loaded cars again today
with many other men who were going out. Neither the boss nor
his assistant showed up in our place today.

Wednesday, August 31.

Chris and I started today on the next stump of our pillar,
shooting off coal from the solid and loading it on our cars. The
motorman brought us two trips, one of four cars, the other of six,
so we each got five cars today.

My legs have been getting steadily more tired in this low coal,
as I have to walk not only bent over from the waist, but also with
my knees bent. Drilling with the breast auger and pushing against
the breast plate with my legs have also served to give them a per­
petual ache. This afternoon something occurred which made them
worse.

We were dropping our tenth car down to the heading about
three o'clock when one of the rails spread and the car came off
the track. It took us over an hour to put it back by means of a
long tie which we used as a lever and short ones which we placed
under the lever for fulcrums and which we also placed under the
car to hold what progress we had made. After we had both pushed
with all our might downward on the lever to raise the car, bracing
our shoulders against the roof and pushing with our legs, I would
have to stand on the lever and push upward with my back and
downward with my legs to hold the car in its raised position while
Chris manipulated the blocks in order to hold the car where we had raised it. Several times one or the other of us was pinned between the lever and the roof, and the other had to come to his rescue and loosen the lever. When we had the car raised so that the bottom of the wheels were a little higher than the track we would try to slew the wheels over onto the track, but it was only after lifting and slewing, first the back end and then the front of the car, many times that we finally got the car onto the track and started home.

When we got to the main heading we sat down and stretched out our tired legs in order to wait for a trip to come by going toward the shaft bottom. Chris said that for the first few days after leaving his company job at the shaft bottom and working on this low coal, his legs pained him so that he could hardly get out of bed in the morning. The car pushing has something to do with our sore legs as well as the low coal.

It was quite late when we had started out from our place, so when the trip came by there were no other miners on it. Chris took the first car behind the motor and I took the second as it came past.

When we were about half way to the shaft bottom the motor-man yelled back at us to roll over to the left so as to miss a loose piece of live wire that was hanging down from the right. As we did so the trolley wire, which runs along the left side of the roof going out, almost grazed us. This loose piece of live wire is another piece of carelessness in this mine which should have been looked after at once.

Among other things my buddy told me was that he had once worked with his brother, who used to teach school and is now a mine foreman somewhere, and that he had figured out how much the coal in these cars should weigh. I was very eager to find out how he had done it, as I had often wanted to get proof on how much the men were cheated in these non-union mines. When I found out I felt like kicking myself for not thinking of it before. My buddy's brother had merely taken the measurements of the car, calculated its capacity in bushels, and multiplied by the weight of a bushel of coal. He had found these cars to hold twenty-eight bushels of coal and had taken the weight of coal as eighty pounds to the bushel. This had made the weight of coal in a car loaded
just bed full' as being 2240 pounds, and we were only getting one ton for our cars. I determined to bring a ruler into the mine tomorrow and take the measurements of a car. Why did I not think of this simple thing when I was at Windber?

By a little after eleven we had our first four cars loaded, and a little later had enough coal ready for four cars more. At noon the motorman came with another trip of four cars.

My buddy helped me load the first one, and then we pushed the three other cars, one by one, up to our place. He then had to leave to go to the bank at Stoyestown, but I told him I would load the cars for him and drop them down the heading.

In a little less than an hour I had loaded the three cars and dropped them down. I was afraid the second car was going to come off the track when I let it down, as, when I was running alongside trying to sprag the wheels, I poked the sprag clear through the wheels and it consequently did no good. The car went tearing around the curve, but fortunately it held to the track and stopped with a bang against the first car I had dropped down. The other cars I had no trouble with, however. I then walked out of the mine and went back to the boarding house.

Friday, September 2.

I had obtained a foot rule in Johnstown last night and brought this with me into the mine this morning. When our first set of empty cars arrived this morning I took the measurements of the car and wrote them down on a diagram which I had drawn last night.

"You know it's a damn lucky thing for you," said Chris as he helped me take the measurements, "that no one except me knows what you're doing here. They'd go wild up at the office if they found it out and they'd lynch you before you got out of town."

We got great pleasure out of measuring the car, and, after we had loaded the first trip and were waiting for more cars, I began measuring everything in sight. Chris thought that the mining law required that room-necks be no wider than ten feet until they had advanced fifty feet, and he pointed to where the room where we were now drawing the pillar had widened out

1 "Bed full" means level with the top of the car. Ordinarily the miners have to put "topping" on the cars, coal piled up a foot or more adding from 1/5 to 1/4 or more to the "bed-full" weight.
before it was fifteen feet in from the heading. I measured a 
distance fourteen feet back into the room from the heading, and 
and this point took the width of the room, which I found to be twenty 
feet. I then went back to the face of the room, two or three hundred 
feet in, and measured its width. It was 35.5 feet wide here, and 
the room to the right was 38.5 feet wide, although Chris said 
the limit of width for a room is supposed to be 25 feet.

The following violations of the mining law, I am sure of:

1. The mine foreman or his assistant does not visit the 
working places every day. It has been a week today that I 
have worked here, and I've seen neither the foreman nor his 
assistant in our place. The only time I've ever seen the mine 
foreman inside the mine was when he took me down to the shaft 
bottom and left me there to find my own way to my working 
place. In every other mine where I've ever worked I've been 
visited every working day by either the foreman or the assistant 
foreman, and the law distinctly says that one or the other shall visit 
each place every day that the mine works. Chris took me to visit 
two men who were driving a room through a solid block of coal 
that had been left in, probably by mistake, and one of them told 
me that he and his buddy hadn't been visited by either the assist­
ant or the foreman in three months, that the only place he ever 
saw the foreman was outside the mine.

2. The foreman does not look after his job well enough to keep 
the men from riding to the shaft bottom on the loaded coal cars. 
Three times when I was on my way out of the mine, a trip hap­
pened to be coming past and Chris and I each selected a car and 
flipped it. Almost every car usually, from the motorman back to 
the spragger, was occupied by one man, lying face downwards 
on top of a loaded coal car, his head and back almost scraping the 
roof and only a few inches to the right of the trolley wire. When 
the trip reaches the place where the miners want to get off it does 
ot stop, but the miners jump off the moving trip.

It is the same way going in to work. A trip of empties in 
which I was riding did not stop for me when we arrived at my 
heading and I had to jump off between the moving cars and the rib 
of the mine.

3. The man-ways in the mine are not kept clear. Going out, 
my buddy and I had to walk for a hundred feet or more over a fall 
of rock on the floor of the manway, the debris being piled over two
feet thick in places and making us bend over just that much more to keep from hitting the roof.

Out of curiosity I measured the height of the coal in the place where Chris and I were working. Its greatest height was three feet, six inches, and there were places where we had to work with the roof only two feet, eleven inches from the floor.

We loaded eight cars today, all we could get, and then came out of the mine. I told Chris I was quitting, much as I hated to leave him. "Don't forget to give this mine the reputation it deserves," he said, as we said goodbye, "and don't forget to drop me a line."

I saw the fat little mine foreman before I went home, told him I was leaving because we couldn't get enough cars and had to sit around too much, and got an order for my time.

Saturday, September 3.

My buddy and I had loaded fifty four cars of coal, all but two of which had weighed one ton, these two exceptions weighing 1800 pounds. This made us about $54, or, if I had taken all my cars, $27 apiece for the week's work. For these times, when so many men are getting nothing, that's a fair week's work for a miner, but it's very poor for normal times. If we had had all the cars we wanted, we would have done well, but this mine, like every other that's working every day, is crowded so that each miner's share of cars is small.

This morning I wanted to catch the nine-thirty train for Somerset, but when I went to the office of the Quemahoning Coal Company at eight o'clock and asked for the money for my fifteen cars I was told I would have to wait for the superintendent to sign my time slip. The superintendent was away and did not get back until noon. When he did get back, all he did was to sign my time slip almost without looking at it. Just for a mere matter of red-tape, the Company keeps a man loafing around all morning and makes him miss his train.

And even then the Company did not give me my money. They gave me a statement for $14.30 ($15 less fifty cents for doctor fee and less twenty cents for blacksmith fee) and then I had to go with my statement up to the Company store, where I had to pay fifty cents for having it cashed.
CONCLUSIONS

In the pages of this journal are some of the hardships and injustices which are part of the daily life of a coal miner. It was not my intention to make an exposure of any coal companies, but rather to give a recital of conditions as I saw them. Many of these conditions are not monopolized by non-union mines but exist in organized mines as well. The nature of the work itself, which is so little known to ordinary folks who live their lives in the sunlight and freshness of the upper world, is hard and severe, whether the miners be union or non-union. This journal is first a narrative description of that work and secondly it throws light on the kind of grievances that exist only in non-union mines.

The lack of checkweighmen in unorganized mines is the cause of one of the greatest grievances of the miners. Because they have no one to check up on the weights which the company weighboss gives them on their cars of coal, the non-union miners feel that they are given poor weight. Often the suspicions of the miners are well founded. In many cases the men are not paid for all the coal they mine. Whether or not the men in any one mine are being given poor weight, in every non-union mine in which I worked miners grumbled and were suspicious because there was no checkweighman.

In many non-union mines the kind of work known as dead work, consisting of any kind of labor which is not directly connected with mining and loading coal, is not paid for. In these workings, if a miner has to spend most of his time propping up a very bad roof to keep it from caving in, as was the case with me in the mine at Scalp Level, he gets nothing for it. If part of the roof over his place falls in overnight and he has to clean up the rock in order to be able to work in his place he does it for nothing. Or if he has to lay a track up to his working place, he is not paid for it but does it merely for the sake of having a chance to mine the coal for which he is paid by the ton. In all union mines, however, and in some non-union mines, when it is necessary for a miner to do a great deal of dead work, he is paid for it by the hour.

Coal and iron policemen employed by the coal operators are one of the greatest evils of non-union coal towns. My experience with the company policeman at Vintondale is by no means a rare

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1 "Deadwork" such as track-laying, putting in props, picking out bony, cleaning up cave-ins, etc., which must be done in order to get out coal.
2 Private police paid by operators and deputized as state officials.
occurrence in the unorganized coal fields. Any stranger coming into certain mining villages is followed by the private policemen and subjected to an investigation. Even travelling salesmen, as in the case of my acquaintances at Vintondale, are ordered to leave town on the first train.

The scale of wages in an unorganized mine tends to be much lower than that in union mines. In one of the non-union mines described in my journal, for instance, I worked as a pick miner for $1 a ton, whereas the union scale is $1.28. In the Rolling Mill Mine of the Cambria Steel Company at Johnstown, where I worked for a few days in September, I loaded machine coal for seventy-two cents a ton, in contrast to the union scale of ninety-five cents. When I was looking for work in the central part of Somerset County, most of the miners whom I saw were working for a tonnage rate for machine coal ranging from fifty-eight cents a ton to seventy-two cents. Day wage rates in non-union mines averaged over two dollars a day less than those in union mines. A motorman in organized mines, for instance, received $7.50 a day, while in unorganized mines the average rate for motormen was $5.36 a day.

In addition to these main grievances of the unorganized miners there are countless others. New ones are constantly arising; and the men are always discontented, because they have no sure way of getting fair treatment. The following section from my journal, written while I was looking for my first mining job in this region, shows the grouch which I found later to be typical of many unorganized miners:

About two o'clock I started for the No. 40 mine. Two men were leaning against a fence, waiting to see the mine foreman, when I arrived. One of them was looking for work, but the other wanted to see the mine foreman to tell him he was leaving.

"This company is the worst I ever worked for," this man said. "My buddy loaded a little bit of dirty coal and we both got put on a ten day rest for it. This is the second day of the rest and I can't wait around for eight more days before I can work. And when a fellow is working he can't make anything. The Berwind White Company pays regular union prices for

1 Coal with a little bony in it. As bony looks very much like coal it is hard to pick it all out in the feeble light of a miner's lamp.
tonnage, but they only give you about three quarters weight on your coal. Look at them big cars over there. You're lucky if you're given two tons on them and often you only get 3,600 lbs. They hold three tons easy. I take up two feet of bottom coal for 50 cents a yard too. No sir, no more Berwind White Mines for me."

His partner then wandered up. Both of them were young Americans whose home was at Fulton Run, in Indiana County. The mines in that section of the country are organized.

"I tell you, you wouldn't see these conditions in the union field where I come from," said the more talkative of the two men. "You wouldn't do dead work for nothing and you wouldn't take up two feet of bottom coal for 50 cents a yard. You'd get paid full weight for what you loaded. If you had a grievance like we got now you'd bring it up in the local union and the pit committee would take it up with the company. But here the company's get a man where it wants him, and the man can either take it or leave. I'm going to leave."

This is typical talk in the non-union fields of Pennsylvania. Grievances of one kind or another always seem to exist. The greatest is the feeling among the miners that there is no organization to enable them to have an equal chance with the operators in the settling of differences. When the discontented young miner at Scalp Level said: "The company's got a man where it wants him here and the man can either take it or leave," he expressed the feeling of hopelessness that most unorganized miners feel in respect to getting their rights. That feeling of hopelessness gives way to intense determination when a drive for union organization begins, and this intense determination, if it is met with force by the operators, leads to the long strikes, the bloody conflicts, and the suffering that have existed in the dreary mining camps of Colorado and Alabama and which are going on now in the mountains and valleys of West Virginia. Some day these Pennsylvania miners will begin to join organizations.

1 Coal lying next to the floor with some bony in it so that it cannot be used but must be taken up in order to lay tracks for the cars.
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