The Iron Puddler

James J. Davis

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MY LIFE IN THE ROLLING MILLS AND
WHAT CAME OF IT

Introduction by
JOSEPH G. CANNON

The man whose life story is here presented between book covers is at the time of writing only forty−eight years old. When I met him many years ago he was a young man full of enthusiasm. I remember saying to him then, "With your enthusiasm and the sparkle which you have in your eyes I am sure you will make good."

Why should so young a man, one so recently elevated to official prominence, write his memoirs? That question will occur to those who do not know Jim Davis. His elevation to a Cabinet post marks not the beginning of his career, but rather is the curtain−rise on the second act of one of those dramatic lives with which America has so often astounded the world. Bruised and bleeding in a southern, peon camp, where he and other hungry men had been trapped by a brutal slave driver, he drank the bitter cup of unrequited toil. And from this utter depth, in less than thirty years, he rose to the office of secretary of labor. There is drama enough for one life if his career should end to−day. And while this man fought his way upward, he carried others with him, founding by his efforts and their cooperation, the great school called Mooseheart. More than a thousand students of both sexes, ranging from one to eighteen years, are there receiving their preparation for life. The system of education observed there is probably the best ever devised to meet the needs of all humanity.

The brain of James J. Davis fathered this educational system. It is his contribution to the world, and the world has accepted it. The good it promised is already being realized, its fruits are being gathered. Its blessings are falling on a thousand young Americans, and its influence like a widening ripple is extending farther every day. It promises to reach and benefit every child in America. And to hasten the growth of this new education, James J. Davis has here written the complete story. I have known Mr. Davis many years and am one of the thousands who believe in him and have helped further his work.

The author of this autobiography is indeed a remarkable man. He is sometimes called the Napoleon of Fraternity. Love of his fellows is his ruling passion. He can call more than ten thousand men by their first names. His father taught him this motto: "No man is greater than his friends. All the good that comes into your life will come from your friends. If you lose your friends your enemies will destroy you." Davis has stood by his friends. As a labor leader and a fraternal organizer, he has proved his ability. Thousands think he is unequaled as an orator, thinker and entertainer. His zeal is all for humanity and he knows man's needs. He has dedicated his life to the cause of better education for the workers of this land. His cause deserves a hearing.

J G Cannon
WASHINGTON, D. C.,
JUNE, 1922.

PREFACE

"Where were you previous to the eighth and immediately subsequent thereto?" asked the city attorney.

The prisoner looked sheepish and made no answer. A box car had been robbed on the eighth and this man had been arrested in the freight yards. He claimed to be a steel worker and had shown the judge his calloused hands. He had answered several questions about his trade, his age and where he was when the policeman arrested him. But when they asked him what he had been doing previous to and immediately subsequent thereto, he hung his head as if at a loss for an alibi.

I was city clerk at the time and had been a steel worker. I knew why the man refused to answer. He didn't understand the phraseology.

"Where were you previous to the eighth and immediately subsequent thereto?" the attorney asked him for the third time.

All the prisoner could do was look guilty and say nothing.

"Answer the question," ordered the judge, "or I'll send you up for vagrancy."

Still the man kept silent. Then I spoke up:

"John, tell the court where you were before you came here and also where you have been since you arrived in the city."

"I was in Pittsburgh," he said, and he proceeded to tell the whole story of his life. He was still talking when they chased him out of court and took up the next case. He was a free man, and yet he had come within an inch of going to jail. All because he didn't know what "previous to the eighth and immediately subsequent thereto" meant.

The man was an expert puddler. A puddler makes iron bars. They were going to put him behind his own bars because he couldn't understand the legal jargon. Thanks to the great educational system of America the working man has improved his mental muscle as well as his physical.

This taught me a lesson. Jargon can put the worker in jail. Big words and improper phraseology are prison bars that sometimes separate the worker from the professional people. "Stone walls do not a prison make," because the human mind can get beyond them. But thick−shelled words do make a prison. They are something that the human mind can not penetrate. A man whose skill is in his hands can puddle a two hundred−pound ball of iron. A man whose skill is on his tongue can juggle four−syllable words. But that iron puddler could not savvy four−syllable words any more than the word juggler could puddle a heat of iron. The brain worker who talks to the hand worker in a special jargon the latter can not understand has built an iron wall between the worker's mind and his mind. To tear down that wall and make America one nation with one language is one of the tasks of the new education.

If big words cause misunderstandings, why not let them go? When the stork in the fable invited the fox to supper he served the bean soup in a long−necked vase. The stork had a beak that reached down the neck of the vase and drank the soup with ease. The fox had a short muzzle and couldn't get it. The trick made him mad and he bit the stork's head off. Why should the brain worker invite the manual worker to a confab and then serve the feast in such long−necked language that the laborer can't get it? "Let's spill the beans," the agitator tells him, "then we'll all get some of the gravy."

This long−necked jargon must go. It is not the people's dish. With foggy phrases that no one really understands they are trying to incite the hand worker to bite off the head of the brain worker. When employer and employee sit together at the council table, let the facts be served in such simple words that we can all get our teeth into them.

When I became secretary of labor I said that the employer and employee had a duty to perform one to the other, and both to the public.

Capital does not always mean employer. When I was a boy in Sharon, Pennsylvania, I looked in a pool in the brook and discovered a lot of fish. I broke some branches off a tree, and with this I brushed the fish out of the pool. I sold them to a teamster for ten cents. With this I bought shoe blacking and a shoe brush and spent my Saturdays blacking boots for travelers at the depot and the hotel. I had established a boot−blacking business which I pushed in my spare time for several years. My brush and blacking represented my capital. The shining of the

travelers' shoes was labor. I was a capitalist but not an employer; I was a laborer but not an employee.

"Labor is prior to and independent of capital," said Lincoln. This is true. I labored to break the branches from the tree before I had any capital. They brought me fish, which were capital because I traded them for shoe blacking with which I earned enough money to buy ten times more fish than I had caught.

So labor is prior to capital−−when you use the words in their right meaning. But call the employee "labor" and the employer "capital," and you make old Honest Abe say that the employee is prior to and independent of the employer, or that the wage earner is independent of the wage payer or, in still shorter words, the man is on the job before the job is created. Which is nonsense.

Capital does not always mean employer. A Liberty Bond is capital but it is not an employer; the Government is an employer but it is not capital, and when any one is arguing a case for an employee against his employer let him use the proper terms. The misuse of words can cause a miscarriage of justice as the misuse of railway signals can send a train into the ditch.

All my life I have been changing big words into little words so that the employee can know what the employer is saying to him. The working man handles things. The professional man plies words. I learned things first and words afterward. Things can enrich a nation, and words can impoverish it. The words of theorists have cost this nation billions which must be paid for in things.

When I was planning a great school for the education of orphans, some of my associates said: "Let us teach them to be pedagogues." I said: "No, let us teach them the trades. A boy with a trade can do things. A theorist can say things. Things done with the hands are wealth, things said with the mouth are words. When the housing shortage is over and we find the nation suffering from a shortage of words, we will close the classes in carpentry and open a class in oratory."

This, then is the introduction to my views and to my policies. They are now to have a fair trial, like that other iron worker in the Elwood police court. I know what the word "previous" means. I can give an account of myself. So, in the following pages I will tell "where I was before I came here."

If my style seems rather flippant, it is because I have been trained as an extemporaneous speaker and not as a writer. For fifteen years I traveled over the country lecturing on the Mooseheart School. My task was to interest men in the abstract problems of child education. A speaker must entertain his hearers to the end or lose their attention. And so I taxed my wit to make this subject simple and easy to listen to. At last I evolved a style of address that brought my points home to the men I was addressing.

After all these years I can not change my style. I talk more easily than I write; therefore, in composing this book I have imagined myself facing an audience, and I have told my story. I do not mention the names of the loyal men who helped work out the plans of Mooseheart and gave the money that established it, for their number is so great that their names alone would fill three volumes as large as this.

J.J.D.

CHAPTER I. THE HOME−MADE SUIT OF CLOTHES

A fight in the first chapter made a book interesting to me when I was a boy. I said to myself, "The man who writes several chapters before the fighting begins is like the man who sells peanuts in which a lot of the shells haven't any goodies." I made up my mind then that if I ever wrote a book I would have a fight in the first chapter.

So I will tell right here how I whipped the town bully in Sharon, Pennsylvania. I'll call him Babe Durgon. I've forgotten his real name, and it might be better not to mention it anyhow. For though I whipped him thirty years ago, he might come back now in a return match and reverse the verdict, so that my first chapter would serve better as my last one. Babe was older than I, and had pestered me from the time I was ten. Now I was eighteen and a man. I was a master puddler in the mill and a musician in the town band (I always went with men older than myself). Two stove molders from a neighboring factory were visiting me that day, and, as it was dry and hot, I offered to treat them to a cool drink. There were no soda fountains in those days and the only place to take a friend was to the tavern. We went in and my companions ordered beer. Babe, the bully, was standing by the bar. He had just come of age, and wanted to bulldoze me with that fact.

"Don't serve Jimmy Davis a beer," Babe commanded. "He's a minor. He can't buy beer."

"I didn't want a beer," I said. "I was going to order a soft drink."

"Yes, you was. Like hell you was," Babe taunted. "You came in here to get a beer like them fellers. You think you're a man, but I know you ain't. And I'm here to see that nobody sells liquor to a child."

I was humiliated. The bully knew that I wanted to be a man, and his shot stung me. My friends looked at me as if to ask: "Are you going to take that?" And so the fight was arranged, although I had no skill at boxing, and was too short−legged, like most Welshmen, for a fast foot race. Babe had me up against a real problem.

"Come on over the line," he said.

Sharon was near the Ohio border and it was customary to go across the state line to fight, so that on returning the local peace officers would have no jurisdiction. We started for the battle ground. Babe had never been whipped; he always chose younger opponents. He was a good gouger, and had marked up most of the boys on the "flats" as we called the lowlands where the poorer working people lived. A gouger is one who stabs with his thumb. When he gets his sharp thumb−nail into the victim's eye, the fight is over. Biting and kicking were his second lines of attack.

As we walked along I was depressed by the thought that I was badly outclassed. There was only one thing in my favor. I hated Babe Durgon with a bitter loathing that I had been suppressing for years. It all went back to the summer of 1884 when I was eleven years old. Times were hard, and the mill was "down." Father had gone to Pittsburgh to look for work. I was scouring the town of Sharon to pick up any odd job that would earn me a nickel. There were no telephones and I used to carry notes between sweethearts, pass show bills for the "opry," and ring a hand−bell for auctions. An organized charity had opened headquarters on Main Street to collect clothing and money for the destitute families of the workers. I went up there to see if they needed an errand boy. A Miss Foraker−−now Mrs. F. H. Buhl−−was in charge. She was a sweet and gracious young woman and she explained that they had no pay−roll.

"Everybody works for nothing here," she said. "I get no pay, and the landlord gives us the use of the rooms free. This is a public charity and everybody contributes his services free."

I saw a blue serge boy's suit among the piles of garments. It was about my size and had seen little wear. I thought it was the prettiest suit I had ever seen. I asked Miss Foraker how much money it would take to buy the suit. She said nothing was for sale. She wrapped up the suit and placed the pack. age in my arms, saying, "That's for you, Jimmy."

I raced home and climbed into the attic of our little four− dollar−a−month cottage, and in the stifling heat under the low roof I changed my clothes. Then I proudly climbed down to show my blue suit to my mother. "Where did you get those clothes, James?" she asked gravely.

I told her about Miss Foraker.

"Did you work for them?"

"No; everything is free," I said.

Mother told me to take the suit off. I went to the attic, blinking a tear out of my eyes, and changed into my old rags again. Then mother took the blue suit, wrapped it up carefully and putting it in my hands told me to take it back to Miss Foraker.

"You don't understand, James," she said. "But these clothes are not for people like us. These are to be given to the poor."

I have often smiled as I looked back on it. I'll bet there wasn't a dime in the house. The patches on my best pants were three deep and if laid side by side would have covered more territory than the new blue suit. To take those clothes back was the bitterest sacrifice my heart has ever known.

A few days later there was a fire sale by one of the merchants, and I got the job of ringing the auction bell. Late in the afternoon the auctioneer held up a brown overcoat. "Here is a fine piece of goods, only slightly damaged," he said. He showed the back of the coat where a hole was burned in it. "How much am I offered?"

I knew that I would get fifty cents for my day's work, so I bid ten cents−−all that I could spare.

"Sold," said the auctioneer, "for ten cents to the kid who rang the bell all day."

I took the garment home and told my mother how I had bought it for cash in open competition with all the world. My mother and my aunt set to work with shears and needles and built me a suit of clothes out of the brown overcoat. It took a lot of ingenuity to make the pieces come out right. The trousers were neither long nor short. They dwindled down and stopped at my calves, half−way above my ankles. What I hated most was that the seams were not in the right places. It was a patchwork, and there were seams down the front of the legs where the crease ought to be. I didn't want to wear the suit, but mother said it looked fine on me, and if she said so I knew it must be true. I wore it all fall and half the winter.

The first time I went to Sunday−school, I met Babe Durgon. He set up the cry:

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    "Little boy, little boy,
Does your mother know you're out;
With your breeches put on backward,
 And the seams all inside out!"
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This was the first time that my spirit had been hurt. His words were a torment that left a scar upon my very soul. Even to this day when I awake from some bad dream, it is a dream that I am wearing crazy breeches and all the world is jeering at me. It has made me tender toward poor children who have to wear hand−me− downs.

To−day psychologists talk much of the "inferiority complex" which spurs a man forward to outdo himself. But Babe Durgon and I didn't go into these matters as we trudged along through the dark on our way to do battle "over the line." At the foot of the hill, Babe exclaimed:

"What's the use of going any farther? Let's fight here." It was in front of a new building−−a church−school half completed. We took off our coats and made belts of our suspenders. Then we squared off and the fight began. Babe rushed me like a wild boar and tried to thrust his deadly thumb into my eye. I threw up my head and his thumb gashed my lips and went into my mouth. The impact almost knocked me over, but my teeth had closed on his thumb and when he jerked back he put me on my balance again. I clouted him on the jaw and knocked him down. He landed in the lime box. The school had not yet been plastered, and the quicklime was in an open pit. I started in after the bully, but stopped to save my pants from the lime. There was a hose near by, and I turned the water on Babe in the lime bath. The lime completely covered him. He was whipped and in fear of his life. Choking and weeping he hollered, "Nuff." We got him out, too weak to stand, and gently leaned him up in a corner of the school building. There we left the crushed bully and returned to town. But before I went I gave him this parting shot:

"Do you know why I licked you, Babe? It wasn't what you said in the tavern that made me mad. I didn't want a glass of beer, and you were right in saying I was a minor. Where you made your mistake was when you made fun of my breeches, seven years ago. And do you remember that blue suit you had on at the time? I know where you got that blue suit of clothes, and I know who had it before you got it. If you still think that a bully in charity clothes can make fun of a boy in clothes that he earned with his own labor, just say so, and I'll give you another

clout that will finish you."

All bullies, whether nations, parties or individuals, get licked in the same way. They outrage some one's self−respect, and then the old primordial cyclone hits them.

CHAPTER II. A TRAIT OF THE WELSH PEOPLE

My family is Welsh, and I was born in Tredegar, Wales. David and Davies are favorite names among the Welsh, probably because David whipped Goliath, and mothers named their babies after the champion. The Welsh are a small nation that has always had to fight against a big nation. The idea that David stopped Goliath seemed to reflect their own national glory. The ancient invasions that poured across Britain were stopped in Wales, and they never could push the Welshmen into the sea.

The Welsh pride themselves on hanging on. They are a nation that has never been whipped. Every people has its characteristics. "You can't beat the Irish" is one slogan, "You can't kill a Swede" is another, and "You can't crowd out a Welshman" is a motto among the mill people.

I didn't want to leave Wales when my parents were emigrating. Though I was not quite eight years old I decided I would let them go without me. The last act of my mother was to reach under the bed, take hold of my heels and drag me out of the house feet first. I tried to hang on to the cracks in the floor, and tore off a few splinters to remember the old homestead by. I never was quite satisfied with that leave−taking, and nearly forty years later when I had car fare, I went back to that town. I never like to go out of a place feet first, and I cleared my record this time by walking out of my native village, head up and of my own free will.

On that trip I paid a visit to the home of Lloyd George in Cricuth. Joseph Davies, one of the war secretaries to the prime minister, invited me to dinner and we talked of the American form of government. (Note the spelling of Davies. It is the Welsh spelling. When my father signed his American naturalization papers he made his mark, for he could not read nor write. The official wrote in his name, spelling it Davis and so it has remained.) "You have this advantage," said Mr. Davies. "Your president is secure in office for four years and can put his policies through. Our prime minister has no fixed term and may have to step out at any minute."

"Yes," I replied jokingly, "but your prime minister this time is a Welshman."

Since then four years have passed and our president is out. But Lloyd George is still there (1922). And he'll still be there, for all I know, until he is carried out feet first. The instinct of a Welshman is to hang on.

These things teach us that racial characteristics do not change. In letting immigrants into this country we must remember this. Races that have good traits built up good countries there abroad and they will in the same way build up the country here. Tribes that have swinish traits were destroyers there and will be destroyers here. This has been common knowledge so long that it has become a proverb: "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

Proverbs are the condensed wisdom of the ages. Life has taught me that the wisdom of the ages is the truth. The Proverbs and the Ten Commandments answer all our problems. My mother taught them to me when I was a child in Wales. I have gone out and tasted life, and found her words true. Starting at forge and furnace in the roaring mills, facing facts instead of books, I have been schooled in life's hard lessons. And the end of it all is the same as the beginning: the Proverbs,−−the Commandments,−−and the Golden Rule.

CHAPTER III. NO GIFT FROM THE FAIRIES

From my father I learned many things. He taught me to be skilful and proud of it. He taught me to expect no gift from life, but that what I got I must win with my hands. He taught me that good men would bring forth good fruits. This was all the education he could give me, and it was enough.

My father was an iron worker, and his father before him. My people had been workers in metal from the time when the age of farming in Wales gave way to the birth of modern industries. They were proud of their skill, and the secrets of the trade were passed from father to son as a legacy of great value, and were never told to persons outside the family. Such skill meant good wages when there was work. But there was not work all the time. Had there been jobs enough for all we would have taught our trade to all. But in self−protection we thought of our own mouths first. All down the generations my family has been face to face with the problem of bread.

My Grandfather Davies, held a skilled job at the blast furnace where iron was made for the rolling mill in which my father was a puddler. Grandfather Davies had been to Russia and had helped the Russians build blast furnaces, in the days when they believed that work would make them wealthy. Had they stuck to that truth they would not be a ruined people to−day. Grandfather also went to America, where his skill helped build the first blast furnace in Maryland. The furnace fires have not ceased burning here, and Russia is crying for our steel to patch her broken railways. Her own hills are full of iron and her hands are as strong as ours. Let them expect no gift from life.

Grandfather told my father that America offered a rich future for him and his boys. "The metal is there," he said, "as it is in Russia. Russia may never develop, but America will. A nation's future lies not in its resources. The American mind is right. Go to America."

And because my father believed that a good people will bring forth good fruit, he left his ancient home in Wales and crossed the sea to cast his lot among strangers.

I started to school in Wales when I was four years old. By the time I was six I thought I knew more than my teachers. This shows about how bright I was. The teachers had forbidden me to throw paper wads, or spitballs. I thought I could go through the motion of throwing a spitball without letting it go. But it slipped and I threw the wad right in the teacher's eye. I told him it was an accident, that I had merely tried to play smart and had overreached myself.

"Being smart is a worse fault," he said, "than throwing spitballs. I forgive you for throwing the spitball, but I shall whip the smart Aleckness out of you."

He gave me a good strapping, and I went home in rebellion. I told my father. I wanted him to whip the teacher. Father said:

"I know the teacher is a good man. I have known him for years, and he is honest, he is just, he is kind. If he whipped you, you deserved it. You can not see it that way, so I am going to whip you myself."

He gave me a good licking, and, strange to say, it convinced me that he and the teacher were right. They say that the "hand educates the mind," and I can here testify that father's hand set my mental processes straight. From that day I never have been lawless in school or out. The shame of my father's disapproval jolted me so that I decided ever after to try to merit his approval.

To−day there is a theory that the child ought never to be restrained. Solomon said: "Spare the rod and spoil the child." We have no corporal punishment at Mooseheart, but we have discipline. A child must be restrained. Whenever a crop of unrestrained youngsters takes the reins I fear they will make this country one of their much talked of Utopias. It was an unrestricted bunch that made a "Utopia" out of Russia.

Anyhow, my father lived his life according to his simple rules. He is living to−day, a happy man in the cozy home he won, by his own work. The things he taught me I have seen tested in his long life, proved true. He never expected any gift from life. I thought once to surprise him. I wanted to buy a fine house and give it to him. He wouldn't have it. He stayed in his own little cottage. It was not in his theory of life that a house should come to him as a gift. It was a sound theory, and like a true Welshman, he hangs on to it to the end. He is a good man, and the fruits that his life of labor has brought forth are good fruits.

CHAPTER IV. SHE SINGS TO HER NEST

From my mother I learned to sing. She was always working and always singing. There were six children in the house, and she knitted and sewed and baked and brewed for us all. I used to toddle along at her side when she carried each day the home−made bread and the bottle of small beer for father's dinner at the mill. I worshiped my mother, and wanted to be like her. And that's why I went in for singing. I have sung more songs in my life than did Caruso. But my voice isn't quite up to his! So my singing has brought me no returns other than great chunks of personal satisfaction. The satisfaction was not shared by my hearers, and so I have quit. But my heart still sings, and always will. And this I owe to my mother.

I can see her yet in our tiny Welsh cottage, her foot on a wooden cradle rocking a baby, my baby brother, her hands busy with her knitting, her voice lifted in jubilant song for hours at a time. And all her songs were songs of praise.

She thanked God for life and for strong hands to labor for her little ones. In those days furniture was rare, and few were the pieces in a worker's home. It took a dozen years for her to acquire two feather beds. And when at last we owned two bedsteads, we rated ourselves pretty rich. We boys slept five in a bed. Why were bedsteads in those days harder to get than automobiles are to−day? Because the wooden age still lingered, the age of hand work. And it took so long to make a bed by hand that people came into the world faster than beds. But within my lifetime the iron mills have made possible the dollar bedstead. The working man can fill his house with beds bought with the wage he earns in half a week. This, I suppose, is one of the "curses of capitalism."

I have heard how "the rights of small peoples" have been destroyed by capitalism; and if the right to sleep five in a bed was prized by the little folks, this privilege has certainly been taken away from them. At the Mooseheart School we are pinched for sleeping room for our fast−growing attendance. I suggested that, for the time being, we might double deck the beds like the berths in a sleeping car. "No," cried the superintendent. "Not in this age do we permit the crowding of children in their sleeping quarters." So this is the slavery that capitalism has driven us to; we are forced to give our children more comforts than we had ourselves. When I was sleeping five in a bed with my brothers, there was one long bolster for five hot little faces. The bolster got feverish and a boy sang out: "Raise up." We lifted our tired heads. "Turn over." Two boys turned the bolster. "Lie down." And we put our faces on the cool side and went to sleep.

Those were not hardships, and life was sweet, and we awoke from our crowded bed, like birds in a nest awakened by their mother's morning song. For, as I have said, my mother was always singing. Her voice was our consolation and delight.

One of the most charming recollections of my boyhood is that of my mother standing at our gate with a lamp in her hands, sending one boy out in the early morning darkness, to his work, and at the same time welcoming another boy home. My brother was on the day shift and I on the night, which meant that he left home as I was leaving the mills, about half past two in the morning. On dark nights−−and they were all dark at that hour−−my mother, thinking my little brother afraid, would go with him to the gate and, holding an old−fashioned lamp high in her hands, would sing some Welsh song while he trudged out toward the mills and until he got within the radius of the glare from the stacks as they. belched forth the furnace flames. And as he passed from the light of the old oil burner into the greater light from the mills, I walked wearily out from that reflection and was guided home by my mother's lamp and song on her lips.

Happy is the race that sings, and the Welsh are singers. After the tiring labor in the mills we still had joy that found its voice in song. When I was six years old I joined a singing society. The whole land of Wales echoes with the folk songs of a people who sing because they must.

The memory of my mother singing, has made my whole life sweet. When blue days came for me, and hardship almost forced me to despair, I turned my thoughts to her, singing as she rocked a cradle, and from her spirit my own heart took hope again. I think the reason I have never cared for drink is this: the ease from mental pain that other men have sought in alcohol, I always found in song.

CHAPTER V. THE LOST FEATHER BED

I didn't care very much for day school. The whipping that I got there rather dulled the flavor of it for me. But I was a prize pupil at Sunday−school. Father had gone to America and had saved enough money to send for the family. I asked my mother if there were Sunday−schools in America, but she did not know. In those days we knew little about lands that lay so far away.

My boy chums told me we were going to Pennsylvania to fight Indians. This cheered me up. Fighting Indians would be as much fun as going to Sunday−school. A trip to America for such a purpose was a sensible move. But when mother exploded the Indian theory and said we were going to work in a rolling mill, I decided that it was a foolish venture.

This shows how much my judgment was worth. I thought it foolish to go to America merely to better our condition. But I thought it a wise move to go there and kill Indians to better the living conditions of the Americans. I know grown men to−day with the same kind of judgment. They are unwilling to do the simple things that will save their own scalps; but they are glad to go fight imaginary Indians who they believe are scalping the human race. "Capitalism" is one of these imaginary Indians. And Lenin and Trotsky are the boy Indian−fighters of the world. These poor children are willing to go to any country to help kill the Indian of capitalism. Meanwhile their own people are the poorest in the world, but they do nothing to better their condition. Such men have minds that never grew up.

When our household was dissolving and we were packing our baggage for America, I tried to break up the plan by hiding under the bed. Mother took the feather ticks off the two bedsteads and bundled them up to take to America. Then she reached under the bedstead and pulled me out by the heels. She sold the bedsteads to a neighbor. And so our household ended in Wales and we were on our way to establish a new one in a far country.

As I said before, the feather beds were mother's measure of wealth. Before she was married she had begun saving for her first feather bed. It had taken a long time to acquire these two tickfuls of downy goose feathers. The bed is the foundation of the household. It is there that the babies are born. There sleep restores the weary toiler that he may rise and toil anew. And there at last when work is done, the old folks fall into a sleep that never ends.

We traveled steerage to Castle Garden. Having passed the immigrant tests, we found ourselves set out on the dock, free to go where we pleased. But our baggage had disappeared. Some one had made off with our precious feather beds!

This was the first real tragedy of my mother's life. All the joy of setting foot in the new land was turned to dismay. The stored−up pleasure with which she awaited the greeting of her husband was dashed in a moment, like sweet water flung upon the ground. When I saw the anguish in my mother's face, I was sobered to life's responsibilities. The song had died out of her heart, and I must make it sing again. While she was crying in distraction, I wrapped my own tearful face in her skirts and prayed to God that I might grow up in a day−−that He would make my arms strong so I could go to work at once earning money to replace the lost feather beds. I was then not quite eight years old. It was early in April, 1881. Before the month was out I had found a job in the new country and was earning money. I gave all my earnings to my mother. I have been earning money ever since. As long as I lived at home I turned over all my wages to my mother. When I went away I sent her weekly a percentage of my earnings. This I have ever continued to do.

My love for my mother and her grief at the loss of the feather beds turned a careless boy into a serious money−maker. This led to the study of economics and finance. A man's destiny is often made by trifles light as feathers.

CHAPTER VI. HUNTING FOR LOST CHILDREN

The loss of our baggage was only the beginning of our troubles in New York. With the feather ticks went also the money mother had got from selling the bedsteads and other furniture. She had nothing with which to buy food and while we were walking the streets we smelt the delicious odor of food from the restaurants and became whining and petulant. This was the first time mother had ever heard her children crying for bread when she had none to give them. The experience was trying, but her stout heart faced it calmly. In the Old World, her folks and father's folks had been rated as prosperous people. They always had good food in the larder and meat on Sunday, which was more than many had. They were the owners of feather beds, while many never slept on anything but straw. True they could not raise the passage money to America until father came and earned it−−that would have been riches in Wales. Now we were in America hungry and penniless, and hard was the bed that we should lie on.

From Pittsburgh father had sent us railroad tickets, and these tickets were waiting for us at the railroad office. All we would have to do would be to hold our hunger in check until we should reach Hubbard, Ohio, where a kinsman had established a home. But while mother was piloting her family to the depot, two of the children got lost. She had reached Castle Garden with six children and her household goods. Now her goods were gone and only four of the children remained. My sister was ten and I was eight; we were the oldest. The baby, one year old, and the next, a toddler of three, mother had carried in her arms. But two boys, Walter and David, four and six years old, had got lost in the traffic. Mother took the rest of us to a hotel and locked us in a room while she went out to search for the missing ones. For two days she tramped the streets visiting police stations and making inquiry everywhere. At night she would return to us and report that she had found no trace of little Walter and David. To try to picture the misery of those scenes is beyond me. I can only say that the experience instilled in me a lasting terror. The fear of being parted from my parents and from my brothers and sisters, then implanted in my soul, has borne its fruit in after−life.

Finally mother found the boys in a rescue home for lost children. Brother David, curly−haired and red−cheeked, had so appealed to the policeman who found them that he had made application to adopt the boy and was about to take him to his own home.

After finding the children, mother stood on Broadway and, gazing at the fine buildings and the good clothes that all classes wore in America, she felt her heart swell with hope. And she said aloud: "This is the place for my boys."

Every one had treated her with kindness. A fellow countryman had lent her money to pay the hotel bill, telling her she could pay it back after she had joined her husband. And so we had passed through the gateway of the New World as thousands of other poor families had done. And our temporary hardships had been no greater than most immigrants encountered in those days.

I later learned from a Bohemian of the trials his mother met with on her first days in New York. He told me that she and her three children, the smallest a babe in arms, tramped the streets of New York for days looking in vain for some one who could speak their native tongue. They slept at night in doorways, and by day wandered timid and terrified through the streets.

"At last a saloon−keeper saw that we were famishing," the Bohemian told me. "He was a−−a−−Oh, what do you call them in your language? I can think of the Bohemian word but not the English."

"What was he like?" I asked to help find the word. "Red−headed? Tall? Fat?"

"No; he was one of those people who usually run clothing stores and are always having a 'SALE.'"

"Jew," I said.

"Yes, he was a Jew saloon−keeper. He took pity on us and took us into his saloon and gave us beer, bread and sausages. We were so nearly starved that we ate too much and our stomachs threw it up. The saloon−keeper sent word to the Humane Society, and they came and put us on the train for Chicago, where our father was waiting for us."

The Bohemians saved from starvation by the pity of a Jewish saloon−keeper is a sample of how our world was running fifty years ago. Who can doubt that we have a better world to−day? And the thing that has made it better is the thing that Jew exhibited, human sympathy.

When I found myself head of the Labor Department one of my earliest duties was to inspect the immigrant stations at Boston and New York. In spite of complaints, they were being conducted to the letter of the law; to correct the situation it was only necessary to add sympathy and understanding to the enforcement of the law.

An American poet in two lines told the whole truth about human courage:

"The bravest are the tenderest,

The loving are the daring."

Tenderness and human sympathy to the alien passing through Ellis Island does not mean that we are weak, or that the unfit alien is welcome. The tenderer we treat the immigrant who seeks our hospitality, the harder will we smash him when he betrays us. That's what "the bravest are the tenderest" means. He who is tenderest toward the members of his household is bravest in beating back him who would destroy that house.

For example, I received a hurry−up call for more housing at Ellis Island in the early days of my administration. The commissioner told me he had five hundred more anarchists than he had roofs to shelter.

"Have these anarchists been duly convicted?" I asked.

He said they had been, and were awaiting deportation.

I told the commissioner not to worry about finding lodging for his guests; they would be on their way before bedtime.

"But there is no ship sailing so soon," he said. "They will have to have housing till a ship sails."

Now this country has a shortage of houses and a surplus of ships. There aren't enough roofs to house the honest people, and there are hundreds of ships lying idle. Let the honest people have the houses, and the anarchists have the ships. I called up the Shipping Board, borrowed a ship, put the Red criminals aboard and they went sailing, sailing, over the bounding main, and many a stormy wind shall blow "ere Jack come home again."

On the other hand I discovered a family that had just come to America and was about to be deported because of a technicality. The family consisted of a father and mother and four small children. The order of deportation had been made and the family had been put aboard a ship about to sail. I learned that the children were healthy and right−minded; the mother was of honest working stock with a faith in God and not in anarchy. I had been one of such a family entering this port forty years ago. Little did I dream then that I would ever be a member of a President's Cabinet with power to wipe away this woman's tears and turn her heart's sorrowing into a song of joy. I wrote the order of admission, and the family was taken from the departing ship just before it sailed. I told the mother that the baby in her arms might be secretary of labor forty years hence.

CHAPTER VII. HARD SLEDDING IN AMERICA

It had been our plan to go from New York to Pittsburgh, but the mill that father was working in had shut down. And so he had sent us tickets to Hubbard, Ohio, where his brother had a job as a muck roller−−the man who takes the bloom from the squeezer and throws it into the rollers. That's all I can tell you now. In later chapters I shall take you into a rolling mill, and show you how we worked. I believe I am the first puddler that ever described his job, for I have found no book by a puddler in any American library. But I wanted to explain here that a muck roller is not a muck raker, but a worker in raw iron.

When we boarded the train for Ohio, mother had nothing to look after except the six children. When the porter asked her where her baggage was, she smiled sadly and said that was a question for a wiser head than hers to answer. She was glad enough to have all her babies safe. Everything we owned was on our backs. Our patient father had toiled for months in Pittsburgh and had sent us nearly every cent to pay our transportation from the Old World. Now he was out of a job, and we were coming to him without as much as a bag of buns in our hands.

Before leaving New York, I want to tell what kind of city it was in those days.

In a recent magazine article a writer picturing our arrival at Castle Garden said that we "climbed the hill into Broadway and gazed around at the highest buildings we had ever seen." But there were no tall buildings in New York at that time. The spires of Trinity Church and St. Paul's towered above everything. And we had seen such churches in the Old Country. Brooklyn Bridge had just been built and it overtopped the town like a syrup pitcher over a plate of pancakes. The tallest business blocks were five or six stories high, and back in Wales old Lord Tredegar, the chief man of our shire, lived in a great castle that was as fine as any of them.

The steel that made New York a city in the sky was wrought in my own time. My father and his sons helped puddle the iron that has braced this city's rising towers. A town that crawled now stands erect. And we whose backs were bent above the puddling hearths know how it got its spine. A mossy town of wood and stone changed in my generation to a towering city of glittering glass and steel. "All of which"−−I can say in the words of the poet−− "all of which I saw and part of which I was."

The train that was taking us to Ohio was an Erie local, and the stops were so numerous that we thought we should never get there. A man on the train bought ginger bread and pop and gave us kids a treat. It has been my practice ever since to do likewise for alien youngsters that I meet on trains.

When we reached Hubbard, father met us and took us to an uncle's. We did not stop to wash the grime of travel from our faces until after we had filled our stomachs. Once refreshed with food, our religion returned to us, in the desire to be clean and to establish a household. I learned then that food is the first thing in the world. Cleanliness may be next to godliness, but food is ahead of them all, and without food man loses his cleanliness, godliness and everything else worth having. When I wish to sound out a man, I ask him if he has ever been hungry. If I find he has never missed a meal in his life, I know his education has been neglected. For I believe that experience is the foremost teacher. I have learned something from every experience I ever had, and I hold that Providence has been kind to me in favoring me with a lot of rather tough adventures.

Our hardships on entering America taught me sympathy and filled me with a desire to help others. I have heard aliens say that America had not treated them with hospitality, and that this had made them bitter, and now these aliens would take revenge by tearing down America. This is a lie that can not fool me. My hardships did not turn me bitter. And I know a thousand others who had harder struggles than I. And none of them showed the yellow streak. The Pilgrim Fathers landed in the winter when there were no houses. Half of them perished from hardship in a single year. Did they turn anarchists?

The man who says that hard sledding in America made a yellow cur out of him fools no one. He was born a yellow cur. Hard sledding in America produced the man who said: "With malice toward none; with charity for all."

CHAPTER VIII. MY FIRST REGULAR JOB

We stayed a week with father's brother in Hubbard. Then we went to Sharon, Pennsylvania, where father had a temporary job. A Welshman, knowing his desperate need of money, let him take his furnace for a few days and earn enough money to move on to Pittsburgh. There father found a job again, but mother was dissatisfied with the crowded conditions in Pittsburgh. She wanted to bring up her boys amid open fields.

In those days the air was black with soot and the crowded quarters where the workers lived offered no room for gardens. Mother wanted sunlight and green grass such as we had about Tredegar. There Lord Tredegar had his beautiful castle in the midst of a park. On certain days this great park was open to the villagers, and the children came to picnic, and Lord Tredegar gave them little cakes and tea in doll−size cups. Doubtless he looked upon us as "my people."

But the lords of steel in Pittsburgh were too new at the game to practice the customs of the nobility in beautifying their surroundings. The mills had made things ugly and the place was not what mother thought it ought to be for bringing up children. So father took us back to Sharon, and there we had sunlight and grass and trees. We rented a neat little company−house with a big garden in the rear, where we raised enough potatoes to supply our table. There were window boxes filled with morning−glories, and lilacs grew in the yard. They company had planted those lilacs to nourish the souls of the worker's children. They gave me joy, and that is why the Mooseheart grounds are filled with lilac bushes.

As soon as we landed in Sharon I started out to earn money. Those feather beds were on my mind and I couldn't rest easy until we should replace them. Neither could the rest of the family. I have often told how I scraped up some capital and invested it in a shoe−shining outfit. Nearly every traveling man who came to the hotel allowed me to shine his shoes. The townsfolk let their shoes go gray all week, but the gay commercial travelers all were dudes and dressed like Sunday every day. They brought the new fashions to town and were looked upon as high−toned fellows. Their flashy get−up caught the girls, which made the town−boys hate them. But I liked them very well because they brought me revenue. "Where a man's treasure is, there is his heart also," says the proverb, and my experience proved it true. On my first visit to the hotel I got acquainted with the landlord and he put me on his pay−roll. Behind the hotel was a cow pen where the milk for the guests was drawn fresh from the cows. The cows had to be driven to a pasture in the morning and back at night. I got a dollar and a quarter a month for driving the cows. And so I had found a paying job within thirty days after landing in America. The cost of pasturage was a dollar a month for each cow. That was less than four cents a day for cow feed to produce two gallons of milk, or about two cents a gallon. The wages of the girls who milked them and my wages for driving them amounted to three cents a gallon. In other words, the cost of labor in getting the milk from the cows more than doubled the cost of the milk. This was my first lesson in political economy. I learned that labor costs are the chief item in fixing the price of anything.

The less labor used in producing milk, the cheaper the milk will be. The reason wages were high in America was because America was the land of labor−saving machinery. Little labor was put on any product, and so the product was cheap, like the landlord's milk. In the iron industry, for instance, the coal mines and iron ore lay near the mills, as the landlord's pasture was near his hotel. To bring the coal and ore to the blast furnaces took little labor, just as my driving in the cows cost the landlord but four cents a day. Next to the blast furnaces stood the mixer, the Bessemer open hearth furnaces, the ingot stripper building, the soaking pits and then the loading yards with their freight cars where the finished product in the form of wire, rails or sky−scraper steel is shipped away.

Because the landlord had his cows milked at the back door of his hotel the milk was still warm when it was carried into his kitchen. And so the steel mills are grouped so closely that a single heat sometimes carries the steel from the Bessemer hearth through all the near−by machines until it emerges as a finished product and is loaded on the railroad cars while it is still warm. It was this saving of labor and fuel that made American steel the cheapest steel in the world. And that's why the wages of steel and iron workers in America are the highest in the world.

Father was in the mills getting these good wages, though no puddler was ever paid for all the work he does, and all of us young Davises were eager to grow up so that we could learn the trade and get some of that good money ourselves. My hands itched for labor, and I wanted nothing better than to be big enough to put a finger in

this industry that was building up America before my very eyes. I have always been a doer and a builder, it was in my blood and the blood of my tribe, as it is born in the blood of beavers. When I meet a man who is a loafer and a destroyer, I know he is alien to me. I fear him and all his breed. The beaver is a builder and the rat is a destroyer; yet they both belong to the rodent race. The beaver harvests his food in the summer; he builds a house and stores that food for the winter. The rat sneaks to the food stores of others: he eats what he wants and ruins the rest and then runs and hides in his hole. He lives in the builder's house, but he is not a builder. He undermines that house; he is a rat.

Some men are by nature beavers, and some are rats; yet they all belong to the human race. The people that came to this country in the early days were of the beaver type and they built up America because it was in their nature to build. Then the rat−people began coming here, to house under the roof that others built. And they try to undermine and ruin it because it is in their nature to destroy. They call themselves anarchists.

A civilization rises when the beaver−men outnumber the rat−men. When the rat−men get the upper hand the civilization falls. Then the rats turn and eat one another and that is the end. Beware of breeding rats in America.

CHAPTER IX. THE SCATTERED FAMILY

For three years after we came to Sharon I went to school, and in my spare time worked at my shoe shining and other odd jobs. We had bought feather beds again and our little home was a happy one. By hanging around the depot spotting traveling men who needed a shine, or their grips carried, I got acquainted with the telegraph agent. And so I got the job of telegraph messenger boy.

Few telegrams were sent, and then only when somebody died. So whenever I carried a telegram I knew that I was the bearer of bad news. Accidents happened in the mines and iron mills. And when a man was killed, it often meant his wife and babies would face hunger, for the jobs were not the kind for women and children; muscular men were needed. Aside from the occupation of housewife, there was nothing for a woman to do in those days except to take in washing or sewing.

Of the many death messages that I bore to the workers' homes in Sharon, few found a home that was able to last a day after the burial of the bread−winner. He had failed to make provision for such an accident,−−no savings in the bank, no life insurance. As soon as the worker was stricken his children were at the mercy of the world. I saw so much of this, that the pity of it entered deep into my boy−heart and never afterward could I forget it.

I talked with the station agent, the banker and the hotel keeper. The station agent had money in the bank which he was saving to educate his boy to be a telegrapher. He also carried life insurance. "If I should die," he said, "my wife would collect enough insurance to start a boarding−house. My boy would have money enough to learn a trade. Then he could get as good a job as I have." The hotel keeper told me that if he should die his wife could run the hotel just the same, it being free of debt and earning enough money so that she could hire a man to do the work he had been doing. The banker owned bonds and if he died the bonds would go right on earning money for his children.

These men were capitalists and their future was provided for. Most of the mill−workers were only laborers, they had no capital and the minute their labors ended they were done for. The workers were kind−hearted, and when a fellow was killed in the mill or died of sickness they went to his widow and with tears in their eyes reached into their pockets and gave her what cash they had. I never knew a man to hang back when a collection for a widow was being taken. Contributions sometimes were as high as five dollars. It made a heartrending scene: the broken body of a once strong man lying under a white sheet; the children playing around and laughing (if they were too young to know what it meant); the mother frantic with the thought that her brood was now homeless; and the big grimy workers wiping their tears with a rough hand and putting silver dollars into a hat.

With this money and the last wages of the dead man, the widow paid for the funeral and sometimes bought a ticket to the home of some relative who would give her her "keep" in return for her labor in the house. Other relatives might each take one of the children "to raise," who, thus scattered, seldom if ever got together again. When I became an iron worker there were several fellows in our union who didn't know whether they had a relative on earth. One of them, Bill Williams, said to me: "Jim, no wonder you're always happy. You've got so many brothers that there's always two of you together, whether it's playing in the band, on the ball nine or working at the furnace. If I had a brother around I wouldn't get the blues the way I do. I've got some brothers somewhere in this world, but I'll probably never know where they are."

Then he told how his father had died when he was three years old. There were several children, and they were taken by relatives. He was sent to his grandmother, whose name was Williams. That was not his name. Before he was seven both his grandparents died and he was taken by a farmer who called him Bill. The farmer did not send him to school and he grew up barely able to write his name, Will Williams, which was not his real name. He didn't even know what his real name was.

"Probably my brothers are alive," he said, "but what chance have I got of ever finding them when I don't know what the family name is. Maybe they've all got new names now like I have. Maybe I've met my own brothers and we never knew it. I'd give everything in the world, if I had it, to look into a man's face and know that he was my brother. It must be a wonderful feeling."

These things are the tragedies of the poor. And although such a misfortune never happened to me, this problem stared me in the face when I began carrying those fatal telegrams. I tackled the problem with a boyish

mind. I soon resolved it into these propositions:

When a laborer dies his little children are scattered to the winds. Brothers and sisters may never see one another again.

When a man with property dies, his children are kept together. Their future is made safe by the property.

Labor provides for to−day. Property provides for to−morrow.

That truth was driven into my mind when I saw one family after another scattered by the death of a laborer. A merchant in Sharon died, and his children, after the funeral, kept right on going to school. There was no doubting the truth of my rule: Labor makes the present day safe−−but the present day only. Capital safeguards the future.

From that day on, I argued that we should buy a home and save a little every day for capital. It was our duty thus to protect ourselves, should our father die, against being scattered among strangers.

CHAPTER X. MELODRAMA BECOMES COMEDY

Every race gets a nickname in America. A Frenchman is a "frog," a negro a "coon" and a Welshman a "goat." All the schoolboys who were not Welsh delighted in teasing us by applying the uncomplimentary nickname. This once resulted at the Sharon operahouse, in turning a dramatic episode into a howling farce.

I was acting as a super in the sensational drama She, by H. Rider Haggard. Two Englishmen were penetrating the mysterious jungles of Africa, and I was their native guide and porter. They had me all blacked up like a negro minstrel, but this wasn't a funny show, it was a drama of mystery and terror. While I was guiding the English travelers through the jungle of the local stage, we penetrated into the land of the wall−eyed cannibals.

The cannibals captured me and prepared to eat me in full view of the audience while the Englishmen behind the trees looked on in horror. The cannibals, who were also supers led by an actor of the "troupe," set up a hot pot to boil my bones in. I was bound hand and foot, while the cannibals, armed with spears, danced around me in a heathen ceremony, chanting a voodoo chant and reciting a rigmarole by which cannibals are supposed to make their human feast on a sacred rite. As they danced about me in a circle, they sang:

"Is it an ox? Him−yah, him−yah." And they jabbed their spears into me. Some of the supers jabbed me pretty hard, among them Babe Durgon, who delighted in tormenting me.

"Is it a sheep? Him−yah, him−yah." Again they jabbed me, and I was so mad I was cussing them under my breath.

"Is it a pig? Him−yah, him−yah."

The audience was breathless with tense excitement.

"Is it a goat?"

The entire gallery broke into a whirlwind roar: "Yes! yes! He's a goat."

Laughter rocked the audience. They all knew I was Welsh and saw the joke. The horror and suspense had been so great that when it broke with comic relief the house was really hysterical. It stopped the show.

I played supernumerary parts in many shows that winter including Richard III and other Shakespearean plays. At the battle of Bosworth field where Richard cries: "A horse, a horse; my kingdom for a horse," the supers in the army were clattering their swords on the opposing shields in a great hubbub and shouting, "Hay, hay hay!" I was of a thrifty turn of mind, and said: "Hold on, boys. Don't order too much hay until we see whether he gets the horse or not."

A hypnotist came to the opera−house and I volunteered to be hypnotized. He couldn't hypnotize me. I felt rather bad about it. I was out of the show. Later I learned that all of the "Perfessor's" best subjects came with him under salary, and the local boys who made good were faking like the professionals. The whole thing was a cheat and I had not caught on. I was too serious−minded to think of faking. But several of the boys took to it naturally, and among them was Babe Durgon, the bully. He could be hypnotized and I couldn't. But several years later I had the satisfaction of "hypnotizing" him myself, as I told about in my first chapter.

Although I always regarded myself as a humorist, the impression I made on my comrades was that of a serious and religious fellow. I quoted the Bible to them so often that they nicknamed me "the Welsh Parson." I was the general errand boy of the town. Everybody knew me. And when there was a job of passing hand−bills for the operahouse, or ringing bells for auction sales, I always got the job. Every nickel that rolled loose in the town landed in my pocket and I took it home to mother. Mother was my idol and what she said was law. One night I heard the band playing and started down−town. Mother told me to be sure to be in bed by nine o'clock. I found that a minstrel show had been thrown out of its regular route by a flood and was playing our town unexpectedly. The stage hands knew me and passed me in. I was seeing a high− priced show for nothing. But when it came nine o'clock, I went home. I told my mother that I had walked out of the most gorgeous minstrel show. She asked me why and I told her because she wanted me to be in bed by nine o'clock.

"Why, Jimmy," she said, "I wanted you to be in bed so you wouldn't be in bad company. It would have been all right for you to have stayed at the minstrel show. All I want to know is that you are in good company."

I guess mother thought I was a bit soft, but I had seen the best part of the show, as in those days the curtain rose at seven forty−five.

Minstrel shows were the greatest delight of my youth. I learned to dance and could sing all the songs and get off the jokes. Dupree Benedict's were the first minstrels I ever saw. I marched in their parade and carried the drum. George Evans (Honey Boy) was a life−long friend. We were born within three miles of each other in Wales and came to this country at about the same time.

CHAPTER XI. KEEPING OPEN HOUSE

Our little four−room company−house in Sharon had its doors open to the wayfarer. There was always some newcomer from Wales, looking for a stake in America, who had left his family in Wales. Usually he was a distant kinsman, but whether a blood relation or not, we regarded all Welshmen as belonging to our clan. Our house was small, but we crowded into the corners and made room for another. His food and bed were free as long as he stayed. We helped him find a job, and then he thanked us for our hospitality and went out of our house with our blessings upon him. This form of community life was the social law in all the cottages of the Welsh.

It was like the law of tobacco among Americans. Tobacco has always been "nationalized" in America, and so have matches. Your pipe is your own, but your tobacco and matches belong to everybody. So it was with food and shelter in the Welsh colony at Sharon. Each newcomer from the Old Country was entitled to free bed and board until he could get a job in the mills. When he found a job his money was his; we never expected him to pay for the food he had eaten any more than you would expect pay for the tobacco and matches you furnish your friends.

These sojourners in our family were heroes to us kids. They brought us news from the Old World, and each one had tricks or tales that were new to us. One man showed us that we could put our hand on the bottom of a boiling teakettle and find the bottom cool. Another told us about milking goats in the Old Country. We asked him how much milk a goat would give. He said, "About a thimbleful," and we thought him very witty. Another had shipped as an "able seaman" to get his passage to America. When out at sea it was discovered he didn't know one rope from another. During a storm he and the mate had a terrible fight. "The sea was sweeping the deck and we were ordered to reef a shroud. I didn't know how, and the mate called me a name that no Welshman will stand for. I thought we were all going to be drowned anyhow, and I might as well die with my teeth in his neck. So I flew into him and we fought like wildcats. I couldn't kill him and he couldn't kill me. And the sea didn't sweep us overboard. But after that fight the mate let me do as I pleased for the rest of the voyage."

Knowing how strong are the arms of an iron worker and what a burly man is a ship's mate, we realized that the fight must have been a struggle between giants.

We were fluent readers, much better readers than our parents, but we had no books. We took the Youth's Companion, and it was the biggest thing in our lives. Every week we were at the post− office when the Companion was due. We could hardly wait, we were so eager to see what happened next in the "continued" story. Surely so good a children's paper as the Youth's Companion could never be found in any country but America. America was the land of children, and that's why parents broke their old−home ties and made the hard pilgrimage to America; it was for the benefit of their children.

Our home was a happy one, for we children were fond of one another and all loved the father and mother who worked so hard for us. We were the first to realize that our home was insecure, upheld by a single prop, our father's labor. The breaking of his right arm might have broken up our home. We wanted to acquire property so that mother would be safe. For we knew that God was a just God. He did not ordain that one class should labor and be insecure while another class owned property and was safe. I learned that the banker, the hotel keeper and the station agent had all been poor boys like myself. They started with nothing but their hands to labor with. They had worked hard and saved a part of their wages, and this had given them "a start." The hotel keeper had been a hack driver. He slept in the haymow of a livery stable. He had to meet the train that came at two o'clock in the morning. No other man was willing to have his sleep broken at such an hour. He hated to lose the sleep, but he wanted the money. At the end of four years he had saved a thousand dollars. He wanted to buy a hotel but needed more money. The banker, knowing he was a stayer, lent him the cash he needed, and so he became a property owner. He no longer slept in the haymow but had a room of his own and other rooms to rent to the "high−toned traveling men."

From this I learned that laborers became capitalists when they saved their money. Right then I made up my mind that some day mother would own a home. If father couldn't save the money to buy it, I would. Years afterward a wealthy Pittsburgh man who had just built a fine residence in the fashionable section of that town found himself in difficulties and unable to occupy the house. He offered it to me at a bargain. So I took my parents to this place and told them it was to be theirs. Mother declared that she certainly never dreamed of having

a "magnificent home like this." She seemed to be greatly pleased. But now I know that the sparkle in her eyes was for me. Her boy had done all this for his mother. If I had given her a pair of shoes that pinched her feet, she would have worn them smiling for my sake. Father looked out the windows at the neighboring residences. "Who lives there?" he asked. "And who lives yonder?" I told him the great names of his neighbors.

"Son," he said, "you do not wish to lock your parents up in a prison, do you?"

Then he explained: "We do not know these people. We are too old to make new friends. We would never be at ease here, we would be lonely. We like the little home that we bought with our own savings. It has become a part of ourselves; it fits us like the wrinkles on our faces. If we moved here our old friends would never come to see us. This magnificence would scare them away. No, son. We thank you for offering us this house, but it is not for us. We will stay in the little cottage where our old friends will be free to come and light a pipe and chat and drowse away the evening hours that yet remain.

How wise he was! He knew the fitness of things. His simple comforts, his old friends, these he valued more than riches, and the valuation that he put upon them was the right one.

CHAPTER XII. MY HAND TOUCHES IRON

When I was eleven I got a regular job that paid me fifty cents a day. So I quit school just where the Monitor had sunk the Merrimac in the "first fight of the ironclads." Thereafter my life was to be bound up with the iron industry. My job was in a nail factory. I picked the iron splinters from among the good nails that had heads on them. This taught me that many are marred in the making. Those that are born with bad heads must not be used in building a house or the house will fall. In the head of the nail is its power to hold fast. Men are like nails, some have the hold−fast will in their heads. Others have not. They were marred in the making. They must be thrown aside and not used in building the state, or the state will fall.

I put the good nails into kegs, and the headless nails and splinters were sent back to be melted into window weights. Handling sharp nails is hard on the hands. And the big half− dollar that I earned was not unmarred with blood. Every pay−day I took home my entire earnings and gave them to mother. All my brothers did the same. Mother paid the household expenses, bought our clothing and allotted us spending money and money for Sunday−school.

This is a cynical age and I can imagine that I hear somebody snicker when I confess the fondness I had for the Sunday−school. I don't want any one to think I am laying claim to the record of having always been a good little boy; nor that everything I did was wise. No; I confess I did my share of deviltry, that some of my deeds were foolish, and (to use the slang of that time) I often got it in the neck. Once I bantered a big fat boy to a fight. He chased me and I ran and crawled into a place so narrow that I knew he couldn't follow me. I crawled under the floor of a shed that was only about six inches above the ground. Fatty was at least ten inches thick and I thought I was safe. But he didn't try to crawl under the floor after me. He went inside the shed and found that the boards of the floor sank beneath his weight like spring boards. And there that human hippopotamus stood jumping up and down while he mashed me into the mud like a mole under a pile−driver. I had showed that I had "a head on me like a nail" when I crawled under that floor and let Fatty step on me. There is a saying, "You can't keep a good man down." But Fatty kept me down, and so I must admit he was a better man than I was. Some people say you should cheer for the under−dog. But that isn't always fair. The under−dog deserves our sympathy, the upper−dog must be a better dog or he couldn't have put the other dog down. I give three cheers for the winner. Any tribe that adopts the rule of always hissing the winner has found a real way to discourage enterprise.

I owned a part interest in some pigeons with a boy named Jack Thomas. The pigeons' nests were in Jack's back yard. He told me that my share of the eggs had rotted and his share had hatched, so that my interest in the young pigeons had died out and they were all his now. I was sure it was a quibble and that he was cheating me. It made me mad and I sneaked up to the pigeon loft and put a tiny pin prick in all the eggs in the nests. This was invisible but it caused the eggs to rot as he said mine had, and I felt that this was only justice. Turn about is fair play.

When Jack's eggs didn't hatch he suspected me, for I had been so foolish as to predict that his eggs wouldn't hatch. And so he was sure I was responsible, although he didn't know how. In fact his mother had seen me enter the barn and had told Jack about it. One day when I went to the pasture to get the hotel keeper's cows, I ran into Jack hunting ground squirrels with his dog. He set his dog chasing the cows and then ran away out of my reach. The dog yelped at the cows heels and they galloped about the pasture in a panic. I shouted to Jack to call off his dog or there would be trouble the next time I met him. But Jack, who was out of reach, shouted encouragement instead. Round and round the cattle raced with that howling dog scaring them into fits. At last the dog tired of the fun and trotted off to join Jack, who was disappearing over the hill. I then tried to round up the cows and get them out of the pasture. But the brutes were wet with sweat and as wild as deer. I saw that they could not be milked in that condition and felt that Jack's conduct was outrageous. He had not only made trouble for me; he had injured the hotel keeper. There would be no milk that night fit to be used.

I started straight for Jack's home to tell his mother of his lawless act. As I went along, I turned the case over in my mind, and the case grew stronger and stronger all the time. Before I reached Jack's door I had, satisfied myself that his mother would be shocked at the news and would at once cut a big switch to give Jack the licking he deserved.

But when I began to tell Mrs. Thomas of her son's crime, she sided with Jack and wouldn't listen to me. "Don't come to me with your troubles, you nasty little whiffet," she cried. "You started the whole thing when you sneaked in and ruined Jack's pigeon eggs. Now that you've got the worst of it you come here with your tattle−tales. You ought to be ashamed to show your face−−" She had become so threatening that I turned and ran. My whole case had gone to pieces on her sharp tongue like a toy balloon pricked with a pin. I had been blowing it up until it got so big I couldn't see anything else. It burst right in my face, and there wasn't even a scrap of rubber to tell where it had been.

This taught me one of the best lessons I ever learned. By looking only at his side of a case a man can kid himself into thinking that he is wholly right, that his cause is greater than himself and represents the rights of the entire community. But a counter−blast from the other side will deflate his balloon in a second and he'll come down to earth without even a parachute to soften the jolt when he lands.

I learned that blood is not only thicker than water, but it is thicker than curdled milk, and you can't line up a mother against her own child even if he chased the cows until they got so wild they gave strawberry pop instead of milk. Any argument that goes contrary to human nature has struck a snag before it is started. A man must come into court with clean hands. I had started by rotting the other fellow's eggs and he finished by souring my milk. I wanted justice and I got it, but I didn't recognize it when it landed on me with all four feet. Chickens come home to roost, and my pigeons had found a nesting−place on my anatomy; and the spot they had chosen was right in the neck.

CHAPTER XIII. SCENE IN A ROLLING MILL

The rolling mill where father worked was Life's Big Circus tent to me, and like a kid escaped from school, eager to get past the tent flap and mingle with the clowns and elephants, I chucked my job sorting nails when I found an opening for a youngster in the rolling mill. Every puddler has a helper. Old men have both a helper and a boy. I got a place with an old man, and so at the age of twelve I was part of the Big Show whose performance is continuous, whose fire−eaters have real flame to contend with, and whose snake−charmers risk their lives in handling great hissing, twisting red−hot serpents of angry iron.

In this mill there is a constant din by day and night. Patches of white heat glare from the opened furnace doors like the teeth of some great dark, dingy devil grinning across the smoky vapors of the Pit. Half naked, soot−smeared fellows fight the furnace hearths with hooks, rabbles and paddles. Their scowling faces are lit with fire, like sailors manning their guns in a night fight when a blazing fire ship is bearing down upon them. The sweat runs down their backs and arms and glistens in the changing lights. Brilliant blues and rays of green and bronze come from the coruscating metal, molten yet crystallizing into white−hot frost within the furnace puddle. Flaming balls of woolly iron are pulled from the oven doors, flung on a two−wheeled serving tray, and rushed sputtering and flamboyant to the hungry mouth of a machine, which rolls them upon its tongue and squeezes them in its jaw like a cow mulling over her cud. The molten slag runs down red−hot from the jaws of this squeezer and makes a luminous rivulet on the floor like the water from the rubber rollers when a washer−woman wrings out the saturated clothes. Squeezed dry of its luminous lava, the white−hot sponge is drawn with tongs to the waiting rollers−−whirling anvils that beat it into the shape they will. Everywhere are hurrying men, whirring flywheels, moving levers of steam engines and the drum−like roar of the rolling machines, while here and there the fruits of this toil are seen as three or four fiery serpents shoot forth from different trains of rollers, and are carried away, wrought iron fit for bridging the creek, shoeing the mule and hooping the barrel that brings the farmers apples into town.

"Life in these mills is a terrible life," the reformers say. "Men are ground down to scrap and are thrown out as wreckage." This may be so, but my life was spent in the mills and I failed to discover it. I went in a stripling and grew into manhood with muscled arms big as a bookkeeper's legs. The gases, they say, will destroy a man's lungs, but I worked all day in the mills and had wind enough left to toot a clarinet in the band. I lusted for labor, I worked and I liked it. And so did my forefathers for generations before me. It is no job for weaklings, but neither was tree−felling, Indian fighting, road−making and the subduing of a wild continent to the hand of man as was done by the whole tribe of Americans for the sheer joy of conquering the wild.

There is something in man that drives him forward to do the world's work and build bigger for the coming generations, just as there is something in nature that causes new growth to come out of old dirt and new worlds to be continually spawned from the ashes of old played−out suns and stars. When nature ceases to mold new worlds from the past decay, the universe will wither; and when man loses the urge to build and goes to tearing down, the end of his story is at hand.

A tired Thomas whose wife supported him by running a rooming house once asked me:

"How many do you 'spose there are in the United States that don't have to work?"

"None," I replied, "except invalids and cripples. Every healthy man in this country has to work just the same as he has to breathe. If you don't want to work it is because you're sick. I'm a well man, and I've got to be working all the time or I'd go crazy. I have no more desire to be idle like you than I have a desire to wear women's clothes. It is contrary to normal nature, and that's why I say that any man that gets that way is a sick man."

The fellow was a "free thinker," as he called himself. He was too lazy to shave and his beard was always about two weeks ahead of him. He was working out a plan for communism in the United States. He believed that enough work had now been done to supply the race forever. It was just a question of so evenly dividing the goods that all men instead of a few could loaf the rest of their years.

He had such a tired feeling that he didn't have the ambition of an oyster. He didn't have enough energy to realize he was all in. He took it for granted that the whole race was as tired as he was.

He thought he needed one of the Utopias they talk so much about. What he needed was a dose of castor−oil. I

never knew a communist in my life that was a well man.

CHAPTER XIV. BOILING DOWN THE PIGS

An iron puddler is a "pig boiler." The pig boiling must be done at a certain temperature (the pig is iron) just as a farmer butchering hogs must scald the carcasses at a certain temperature. If the farmer's water is too hot it will set the hair, that is, fix the bristles so they will never come out; if the water is not hot enough it will fail to loosen the bristles. So the farmer has to be an expert, and when the water in his barrel is just hot enough, he souses the porker in it, holding it in the hot bath the right length of time, then pulling it out and scraping off the hair. Farmers learned this art by experience long before the days of book farming.

And so the metal "pig boiler" ages ago learned by experience how to make the proper "heat" to boil the impurities out of pig− iron, or forge iron, and change it into that finer product, wrought iron. Pig−iron contains silicon, sulphur and phosphorus, and these impurities make it brittle so that a cast iron teakettle will break at a blow, like a china cup. Armor of this kind would have been no good for our iron−clad ancestors. When a knight in iron clothes tried to whip a leather−clad peasant, the peasant could have cracked him with a stone and his clothes would have fallen off like plaster from the ceiling. So those early iron workers learned to puddle forge iron and make it into wrought iron which is tough and leathery and can not be broken by a blow. This process was handed down from father to son, and in the course of time came to my father and so to me. None of us ever went to school and learned the chemistry of it from books. We learned the trick by doing it, standing with our faces in the scorching heat while our hands puddled the metal in its glaring bath.

And that is the way the farmer's son has learned hog scalding from the time when our ancient fathers got tired of eating bristles and decided to take their pork clean shaven. To−day there are books telling just how many degrees of heat make the water right for scalding hogs, and the metallurgists have written down the chemical formula for puddling iron. But the man who learns it from a book can not do it. The mental knowledge is not enough; it requires great muscular skill like that of the heavyweight wrestler, besides great physical endurance to withstand the terrific heat. The worker's body is in perfect physical shape and the work does not injure him but only exhilarates him. No iron worker can be a communist, for communists all have inferior bodies. The iron worker knows that his body is superior, and no sour philosophy could stay in him, because he would sweat it out of his pores as he sweats out all other poisons.

The old man that I worked with when I first entered the rolling mill was gray with his sixty years of toil. Yet his eye was clear and his back was straight and when he went to the table he ate like a sixteen−year−old and his sleep was dreamless. A man so old must conserve his strength, and he made use of his husky helper whenever he could to save his own muscles and lengthen his endurance. My business was to do the little chores and save time for the helper. I teased up the furnace, I leveled the fire, I dished the cinders in to thicken the heat, and I watched the cobbles. During the melting of the pig−iron the furnace had to be kept as hot as coal could make it.

Before the use of coal was discovered, the ancient iron makers used charcoal. So iron could only be made where there were forests to give fuel. Even as late as 1840 the iron smelters in Pennsylvania were using wood in their furnaces. Our forefathers did not know that coal would burn. And yet here lay the coal, the ore and the limestone side by side, which meant that Pittsburgh was to be the iron capital of the world. But Americans will not long sleep in the presence of such an opportunity. Other races will. The Chinese have slumbered for five thousand years above a treasure trove of oil, coal and iron. They never discovered its uses. Instead of oil they lit themselves to bed with mutton tallow. Instead of burning coal they put on two pairs of pants when winter came. In place of steel plows drawn by oil−burning tractors they scratched the ground with a wooden stick, and when the crop failed they starved to death by millions. With our steel ships we send bread to China to save them. If they had the wit to use their resources they could save themselves. In man's fight against the hostile forces of nature, his safety lies in applying his wit to the resources that nature gave him. The Americans can do that. There are others that can not.

I was riding on a train in Indiana when a gypsy−looking youth came in and sat beside me. His hair was black, his skin was yellow and he was dressed in flashy American clothes. He had a cock−sure air about him that attracted my attention. I have seldom seen a young man more pleased with himself. He was entirely too cocky for me. He began talking. He said he was a Syrian and was worth a thousand dollars. Soon he would be worth a

million, he said. He was already putting on his million−dollar airs.

"While selling bananas and ginger pop, he told me, "I made some money and learned the American ways. I have a brother in South Bend who has made some money shining shoes. I am going to get my brother and we will go back to the old home in Asia Minor. The hills where we were born are full of coal. The people call it black stone. They do not know that it will burn. We will go back there with our American knowledge and set the world on fire."

There is a people who have been kicking coal around for five thousand years and have not yet learned that it will burn. Those hills produced gypsies who travel around cheating, dickering and selling gewgaws that are worth nothing. They come among a people who have used their heads. From these people they learned to heat a banana stand with a little coal stove. Having mastered that coal−stove principle, they are going back to their native hills with black magic up their sleeves.

"What a superior man am I," thought that young tribesman swollen with vanity, although he had done nothing.

This taught me that some of these thick−headed tribes can be all swelled up with pride when they have little to be proud of.

CHAPTER XV. THE IRON BISCUITS

In the Sharon town band I played the clarinet from the time I was thirteen until I left that town several years later to chase the fireflies of vanishing jobs that marked the last administration of Cleveland. A bands−man at thirteen, I became a master puddler at sixteen. At that time there were but five boys of that age who had become full−fledged puddlers. Of these young iron workers, I suppose there were few that "doubled in brass." But why should not an iron worker be a musician? The anvil, symbol of his trade, is a musical instrument and is heard in the anvil chorus from Trovatore. In our rolling mill we did not have an anvil on which the "bloom" was beaten by a trip−hammer as is done in the Old Country. The "squeezer" which combines the functions of hammer and anvil did the work instead.

When I became my father's helper he began teaching me to handle the machinery of the trade. The puddling furnace has a working door on a level with a man's stomach. Working door is a trade name. Out in the world all doors are working; if they don't work they aren't doors (except cellar doors, which are nailed down under the Volstead Act). But the working door of a puddling furnace is the door through which the puddler does his work. It is a porthole opening upon a sea of flame. The heat of these flames would wither a man's body, and so they are enclosed in a shell of steel. Through this working door I put in the charge of "pigs" that were to be boiled. These short pieces of "mill iron" had been smelted from iron ore; they had taken the first step on their journey from wild iron to civilized iron. There isn't much use for pig−iron in this world. You've got to be better iron than that. Pig−iron has no fiber; it breaks instead of bending. Build a bridge of it and a gale will break it and it will fall into the river. Some races are pig−iron; Hottentots and Bushmen are pig− iron. They break at a blow. They have been smelted out of wild animalism, but they went no further; they are of no use in this modern world because they are brittle. Only the wrought−iron races can do the work. All this I felt but could not say in the days when I piled the pig−iron in the puddling furnace and turned with boyish eagerness to have my father show me how.

Six hundred pounds was the weight of pig−iron we used to put into a single hearth. Much wider than the hearth was the fire grate, for we needed a heat that was intense. The flame was made by burning bituminous coal. Vigorously I stoked that fire for thirty minutes with dampers open and the draft roaring while that pig−iron melted down like ice−cream under an electric fan. You have seen a housewife sweating over her oven to get it hot enough to bake a batch of biscuits. Her face gets pink and a drop of sweat dampens her curls. Quite a horrid job she finds it. But I had iron biscuits to bake; my forge fire must be hot as a volcano. There were five bakings every day and this meant the shoveling in of nearly two tons of coal. In summer I was stripped to the waist and panting while the sweat poured down across my heaving muscles. My palms and fingers, scorched by the heat, became hardened like goat hoofs, while my skin took on a coat of tan that it will wear forever.

What time I was not stoking the fire, I was stirring the charge with a long iron rabble that weighed some twenty−five pounds. Strap an Oregon boot of that weight to your arm and then do calisthenics ten hours in a room so hot it melts your eyebrows and you will know what it is like to be a puddler. But we puddlers did not complain. There is men's work to be done in this world, and we were the men to do it. We had come into a country built of wood; we should change it to a country built of steel and stone. There was grandeur for us to achieve, like the Roman who said, "I found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble."

The spirit of building was in our blood; we took pride in the mill, and the mill owners were our captains. They honored us for our strength and skill, they paid us and we were loyal to them. We showed what bee men call "the spirit of the hive." On holidays our ball team played against the team of a neighboring mill, and the owners and bosses were on the sidelines coaching the men and yelling like boys when a batter lifted a homer over the fence. That was before the rattle heads and fanatics had poisoned the well of good fellowship and made men fear and hate one another. Sometimes the Welsh would play against the Irish or the English. At one time most all the puddlers in America were English, Irish or Welsh.

In these ball games, I am glad to say, I was always good enough to make the team. After telling of being a bandsman at thirteen and a puddler at sixteen, I would like to say that at seventeen I was batting more home runs than Babe Ruth in his prime, but everything I say must be backed up by the records, and when my baseball record is examined it will be found that my best playing on the diamond was done in the band.

CHAPTER XVI. WRESTING A PRIZE FROM NATURE'S HAND

After melting down the pig−iron as quickly as possible, which took me thirty minutes, there was a pause in which I had time to wipe the back of my hand on the dryest part of my clothing (if any spot was still dry) and with my sweat cap wipe the sweat and soot out of my eyes. For the next seven minutes I "thickened the heat up" by adding iron oxide to the bath. This was in the form of roll scale. The furnace continued in full blast till that was melted. The liquid metal in the hearth is called slag. The iron oxide is put in it to make it more basic for the chemical reaction that is to take place. Adding the roll scale had cooled the charge, and it was thick like hoecake batter. I now thoroughly mixed it with a rabble which is like a long iron hoe.

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  "Snake bake a hoecake,
And lef' a frog to mind it;
    Frog went away, an'
De lizard come and find it."
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Any lizard attracted by my hoecake would have to be a salamander −−that fire−proof creature that is supposed to live in flames. For the cooling down of that molten batter didn't go so far but that it still would make too hot a mouthful for any creature alive.

The puddler's hand−rag is one of his most important tools. It is about the size of a thick wash−rag, and the puddler carries it in the hand that clasps the rabble rod where it is too hot for bare flesh to endure.

The melted iron contains carbon, sulphur and phosphorus, and to get rid of them, especially the sulphur and phosphorus, is the object of all this heat and toil. For it is the sulphur and phosphorus that make the iron brittle. And brittle iron might as well not be iron at all; it might better be clay. For a good brick wall is stronger than a wall of brittle iron. Yet nature will not give us pure iron. She always gives it to us mixed with the stuff that weakens it−−this dross and brimstone. Nature hands out no bonanzas, no lead−pipe cinches to mankind. Man must claw for everything he gets, and when he gets it, it is mixed with dirt. And if he wants it clean, he'll have to clean it with the labor of his hands. "Why can't we have a different system than this?" I heard a theorist complain. "I'll bite," I said. "Why can't we?" And I went on boiling out the impurities in my puddle.

Man's nature is like iron, never born in a pure state but always mixed with elements that weaken it. Envy, greed and malice are mixed with every man's nature when he comes into the world. They are the brimstone that makes him brittle. He is pig−iron until he boils them out of his system. Savages and criminals are men who have not tried to boil this dross out of their nature. Lincoln was one who boiled it out in the fires of adversity. He puddled his own soul till the metal was pure, and that's how he got the Iron Will that was strong enough to save a nation.

My purpose in slackening my heat as soon as the pig−iron was melted was to oxidize the phosphorus and sulphur ahead of the carbon. Just as alcohol vaporizes at a lower heat than water, so sulphur and phosphorus oxidize at a lower heat than carbon. When this reaction begins I see light flames breaking through the lake of molten slag in my furnace. Probably from such a sight as this the old−time artists got their pictures of Hell. The flames are caused by the burning of carbon monoxide from the oxidation of carbon. The slag is basic and takes the sulphur and phosphorus into combination, thus ending its combination with the iron. The purpose now is to oxidize the carbon, too, without reducing the phosphorus and sulphur and causing them to return to the iron. We want the pure iron to begin crystallizing out of the bath like butter from the churning buttermilk.

More and more of the carbon gas comes out of the puddle, and as it bubbles out the charge is agitated by its escape and the "boil" is in progress. It is not real boiling like the boiling of a teakettle. When a teakettle boils the water turns to bubbles of vapor and goes up in the air to turn to water again when it gets cold. But in the boiling iron puddle a chemical change is taking place. The iron is not going up in vapor. The carbon and the oxygen are. This formation of gas in the molten puddle causes the whole charge to boil up like an ice−cream soda. The slag overflows. Redder than strawberry syrup and as hot as the fiery lake in Hades it flows over the rim of the hearth

and out through the slag−hole. My helper has pushed up a buggy there to receive it. More than an eighth and sometimes a quarter of the weight of the pig−iron flows off in slag and is carted away.

Meanwhile I have got the job of my life on my hands. I must stir my boiling mess with all the strength in my body. For now is my chance to defeat nature and wring from the loosening grip of her hand the pure iron she never intended to give us.

CHAPTER XVII. MAN IS IRON TOO

For twenty−five minutes while the boil goes on I stir it constantly with my long iron rabble. A cook stirring gravy to keep it from scorching in the skillet is done in two minutes and backs off blinking, sweating and choking, having finished the hardest job of getting dinner. But my hardest job lasts not two minutes but the better part of half an hour. My spoon weighs twenty−five pounds, my porridge is pasty iron, and the heat of my kitchen is so great that if my body was not hardened to it, the ordeal would drop me in my tracks.

Little spikes of pure iron like frost spars glow white−hot and stick out of the churning slag. These must be stirred under at once; the long stream of flame from the grate plays over the puddle, and the pure iron if lapped by these gases would be oxidizedÄburned up.

Pasty masses of iron form at the bottom of the puddle. There they would stick and become chilled if they were not constantly stirred. The whole charge must be mixed and mixed as it steadily thickens so that it will be uniform throughout. I am like some frantic baker in the inferno kneading a batch of iron bread for the devil's breakfast.

"It's an outrage that men should have to work like this," a reformer told me.

"They don't have to," I replied. "Nobody forced me to do this. I do it because I would rather live in an Iron Age than live in a world of ox−carts. Man can take his choice."

The French were not compelled to stand in the flame that scorched Verdun. They could have backed away and let the Germans through. The Germans would not have killed them. They would only have saddled them and got on their backs and ridden them till the end of time.

And so men are not compelled to face the scorching furnaces; we do not have to forge the iron that resists the invading cyclone and the leveling earthquake. We could quit cold and let wild nature kick us about at will. We could have cities of wood to be wiped out by conflagrations; we could build houses of mud and sticks for the gales to unroof like a Hottentot village. We could bridge our small rivers with logs and be flood−bound when the rains descended. We could live by wheelbarrow transit like the Chinaman and leave to some braver race the task of belting the world with railroads and bridging the seas with iron boats.

Nobody compels us to stand shoulder to shoulder and fight off nature's calamities as the French fought off their oppressor at Verdun. I repeat, we could let nature oppress us as she oppresses the meek Chinese−−let her whip us with cold, drought, flood, isolation and famine.

We chose to resist as the French resisted−−because we are men. Nature can chase the measly savage fleeing naked through the bush. But nature can't run us ragged when all we have to do is put up a hard fight and conquer her. The iron workers are civilization's shock troops grappling with tyrannous nature on her own ground and conquering new territory in which man can live in safety and peace. Steel houses with glass windows are born of his efforts. There is a glory in this fight; man feels a sense of grandeur. We are robbing no one. From the harsh bosom of the hills we wring the iron milk that makes us strong. Nature is no kind mother; she resists with flood and earthquake, drought and cyclone. Nature is fierce and formidable, but fierce is man's soul to subdue her. The stubborn earth is iron, but man is iron too.

CHAPTER XVIII. ON BEING A GOOD GUESSER

The charge which I have been kneading in my furnace has now "come to nature," the stringy sponge of pure iron is separating from the slag. The "balling" of this sponge into three loaves is a task that occupies from ten to fifteen minutes. The particles of iron glowing in this spongy mass are partly welded together; they are sticky and stringy and as the cooling continues they are rolled up into wads like popcorn balls. The charge, which lost part of its original weight by the draining off of slag, now weighs five hundred fifty to six hundred pounds. I am balling it into three parts of equal weight. If the charge is six hundred pounds, each of my balls must weigh exactly two hundred pounds.

I have always been proud of the "batting eye" that enables an iron puddler to shape the balls to the exact weight required. This is a mental act,−−an act of judgment. The artist and the sculptor must have this same sense of proportion. A man of low intelligence could never learn to do it. We are paid by weight, and in my time, in the Sharon mill, the balls were required to be two hundred pounds. Every pound above that went to the company and was loss to the men.

I have heard that "guessing pigs" was an old−time sport among farmers. To test their skill, each farmer would guess the weight of a grazing pig. Then they would catch the porker, throw him on the scales, and find out which farmer had guessed nearest the mark. Sunday clothes used to be badly soiled in this sport.

But the iron worker does not guess his pigs. He knows exactly how much pig−iron he put into the boil. His guessing skill comes into play when with a long paddle and hook he separates six hundred pounds of sizzling fireworks into three fire balls each of which will weigh two hundred pounds.

The balls are rolled up into three resting places, one in the fire−bridge corner, one in the flue−bridge corner, and one in the jam, all ready for the puddler to draw them.

My batch of biscuits is now done and I must take them out at once and rush them to the hungry mouth of the squeezing machine. A bride making biscuits can jerk them out of the oven all in one pan. But my oven is larger and hotter. I have to use long−handled tongs, and each of my biscuits weighs twice as much as I weigh. Suppose you were a cook with a fork six feet long, and had three roasting sheep on the grid at once to be forked off as quickly as possible. Could you do it? Even with a helper wouldn't you probably scorch the mutton or else burn yourself to death with the hot grease? That is where strength and skill must both come into play.

One at a time the balls are drawn out on to a buggy and wheeled swiftly to the squeezer. This machine squeezes out the slag which flows down like the glowing lava running out of a volcano. The motion of the squeezer is like the circular motion you use in rolling a bread pill between the palms and squeezing the water out of it. I must get the three balls, or blooms, out of the furnace and into the squeezer while the slag is still liquid so that it can be squeezed out of the iron.

From cold pig−iron to finished blooms is a process that takes from an hour and ten minutes, to an hour and forty minutes, depending on the speed and skill of the puddler, and the kind of iron. I was a fast one, myself. But you expected that, from the fact that I am telling the story. The man that tells the story always comes out a winner.

CHAPTER XIX. I START ON MY TRAVELS

Now that I was a master puddler, I faced the problem of finding a furnace of my own. I saw no chance in Sharon. Furnaces passed from father to son, so I could not hope to get one of the furnaces controlled by another family. My father was not ready to relinquish his furnace to me, as he was good for twenty years more of this vigorous labor.

I wanted to be a real boss puddler, and so, when I was eighteen I went to Pittsburgh and got a furnace. But a new period of hard times was setting in, jobs were getting scarce as they had been in 1884. That was the year when we had no money in the house and I was chasing every loose nickel in town. The mill at Sharon was down, and father was hunting work in Pittsburgh and elsewhere. Then after a period of prosperity the hard times had come again in 1891 and '92. My furnace job in Pittsburgh was not steady. The town was full of iron workers and many of them were in desperate need. Those who had jobs divided their time with their needy comrades. A man with hungry children would be given a furnace for a few days to earn enough to ward off starvation. I had no children and felt that I should not hold a furnace. I left Pittsburgh and went to Niles, Ohio, where I found less competition for the jobs. I worked a few weeks and the mill shut down. I wandered all over the iron district and finally, deciding that the North held no openings, I began working my way toward the iron country in the South.

The Sharon mill did not shut down completely. The owner operated it at a loss rather than throw all his old hands out on the world. Twenty years later I met him on a train in the West and we talked of old times when I worked in his mill. As long as he lived he was loved and venerated by his former employees.

Father was putting in short time at Sharon and was badly worried. He was thinking of setting out again to go from town to town looking for work, but I had advised him against it. I had told him that he would merely find crowds of idle men roaming from mill to mill along with him. My brothers gave him similar advice.

"Father," we said, "it is a time of business depression and wide−spread unemployment. If you went to Pittsburgh you might find a few weeks' work, but it would not pay you to go there for it. You would have to lay out cash for your board and lodging there before you could send anything home to mother. Keeping up two establishments is harder than keeping up one. You have a home here partly paid for, and a big garden that helps support that home. It is better for you to stick with this establishment and work at half time in the mill than to roam around at big expense seeking full time in some other mill. There may be no mill in the land that is running full time."

This had not occurred to him. What lay beyond the hills was all mystery. But we young fellows had been brought up in the American atmosphere, we had read the Youth's Companion and the newspapers, and our outlook was widened; we could guess that conditions were the same in other states as they were in our part of Pennsylvania, for we were studying economic causes.

"It is better for you to stay here and wait for good times to come again. Hang on to your home, and if in a few months or a few years the mills begin booming again you will be secure for life. But if the iron industry doesn't revive, give up that trade and find other work here. If necessary go out and work on a farm, for the farming industry will always have to be carried on."

Father saw the force of our argument. So he stayed and kept his home. He has it to−day. But if he had wandered around as millions of us did in those hard days he would surely have lost it. This was my first little attempt to work out an economic problem. I had studied all the facts and then pronounced my judgment. It proved right, and so I learned that in my small way I had a head for financiering. This encouraged me, for it taught me that the worker can solve part of his problems by using his head.

The fear of ending in the poor−house is one of the terrors that dog a man through life. There are only three parts to the labor problem, and this is one of them. This fear causes "unrest." This unrest was used by revolutionists to promote Bolshevism which turns whole empires into poor−houses. Such a "remedy," of course, is worse than the disease. I think I know a plan by which all workers can make their old age secure. I will go into it more fully in a later chapter.

CHAPTER XX. THE RED FLAG AND THE WATERMELONS

I have said that the labor problem has three parts. I call them (1) Wages, (2) Working Conditions and (3) Living Conditions. By living conditions I mean the home and its security. My father had reached the stage where this was the problem that worried him. He was growing old and must soon cease working. But his home was not yet secure and he was haunted with the fear that his old age might be shelterless. We told him not to worry; the Davis boys were many and we would repay him for the fatherly care he had given us. But he was a proud man (as all muscular men are), and he could find no comfort in the thought of being supported by his sons. I am glad he never had to be. Independence has made his old age happy and he has proved that a worker, if he keeps his health, can provide for his old age and bring up a big family too.

We older boys left home and hunted work elsewhere. I was young and not bothered about working conditions or living conditions. I was so vigorous that I could work under any conditions, and old age was so far away that I was not worried about a home for my declining years. Wages was my sole problem. I wanted steady wages, and of course I wanted the highest I could get. To find the place where wages were to be had I was always on the go. When a mill closed I did not wait for it to reopen, but took the first train for some other mill town. The first train usually was a freight. If not, I waited for a freight, for I could sleep better in a freight car than in a Pullman−−it cost less. I could save money and send it to mother, then she would not have to sell her feather beds.

All of this sounds nobler than it was. In those days workers never traveled on passenger trains unless they could get a pass. Judges and statesmen pursued the same policy. To pay for a ticket was money thrown away; so thought the upper classes and the lower classes. About the only people that paid car fare were the Knights of Pythias on their way to their annual convention. Railroad workers could get all the passes they wanted, and any toiler whose sister had married a brakeman or whose second cousin was a conductor "bummed" the railroad for a pass and got it. None of my relatives was a railroad man, and so to obtain the free transportation which was every American's inalienable right, I had to let the passenger trains go by and take the freights.

Once I got ditched at a junction, and while waiting for the next freight I wandered down the track to where I had seen a small house and a big watermelon patch. The man who lived there was a chap named Frank Bannerman. I always remember him because he was a communist, the first one I ever saw, and he filled my pockets with about ten pounds of radical pamphlets which I promised to read. He made a bargain with me that if I would read and digest the Red literature he would give me all the watermelons I could eat.

"I'm a comrade already," I said, meaning it as a merry jest, that I would be anything for a watermelon. But he took it seriously and his eyes lit up like any fanatic's.

"I knew it," he said. "With a face like yours−−look at the brow, look at the intellect, the intellect." I was flattered. "Come here, wife," he called through the door. "Come here and look at the intellect."

The wife, who was a barefooted, freckle−faced woman, came out on the porch and, smiling sweetly, sized up my intellect. I made up my mind that here were the two smartest people in America. For they saw I was bulging with intellect. Nobody else had ever discovered it, not even I myself. I thought I was a muscle−bound iron puddler, but they pronounced me an intellectual giant. It never occurred to me that they might have guessed wrong, while the wise old world had guessed right. If the world was in step, they were out of step, but I figured that the world was out of step and they had the right stride. I thought their judgment must be better than the judgment of the whole world because their judgment pleased me. I later learned that their judgment was just like the judgment of all Reds. That's what makes 'em Red.

"Are there many of us where you come from?" the man asked.

"Many what?" I asked.

"Communists, communists," he said excitedly.

I wanted to please him, because we were now cracking the melons and scooping out their luscious hearts. So I told him how many comrades there were in each of the rolling mills where I had worked. I had to invent the statistics out of my own head, but that head was full of intellect, so I jokingly gave him a fine array of figures. The fact was that there may have been an addle−pated Red among the mill hands of that time, but if there was I had never met him.

The figures that I furnished Comrade Bannerman surprised him. I counted the seeds in each slice of watermelon and gave that as the number of comrades in each mill. The number was too high. Comrade Bannerman knew how many Reds there were in the country, and it appeared that the few mills I had worked in contained practically the whole communist party. He got rather excited and said the numbers were growing faster than he had imagined. He had figured that it would take forty years to bring about the Red commonwealth, but with the new light I had thrown on the subject he concluded that the times were ripening faster than he had dared to hope, and that there was no doubt the revolution would be upon us within three years.

The comrade told me he was not popular in the village for two reasons. The capitalistic storekeepers called him a dead beat and the church people had rotten−egged him for a speech he had made denouncing religion. I saw by his hands that he didn't work much, and from the hands of his wife I learned who raised the watermelons he was feeding to me. I remember wondering why he didn't pay his grocery bill with the money he spent on pamphlets to stuff in the pockets of passers−by.

CHAPTER XXI. ENVY IS THE SULPHUR IN HUMAN PIG−IRON

While I was feasting on the watermelons and feeling at peace with all the world, a long passenger train pulled into the junction. The train was made up of Pullmans and each car was covered with flags, streamers and lodge insignia. On the heels of this train came another and then another. These gay cars were filled with members of the Knights of Pythias going to their convention in Denver.

At the sight of these men in their Pullmans, my friend the communist first turned pale, then green, then red. His eyes narrowed and blazed like those of a madman. He stood up on his porch, clenched his fists and launched into the most violent fit of cursing I ever heard. The sight of those holiday−makers had turned him into a demon. He thought they were capitalists. Here was the hated tribe of rich men, the idle classes, all dressed up with flags flying, riding across the country on a jamboree.

"The blood−sucking parasites! The bleareyed barnacles!" yelled Comrade Bannerman. He shook his fists at the plutocrats and cursed until he made me sick. He was a tank−town nut who didn't like to work; had built up a theory that work was a curse and that the "idle classes" had forced this curse on the masses, of which he was one. He believed that all the classes had to do was to clip coupons, cash them and ride around the country in Pullman palace cars. Here was the whole bunch of them in seven "specials" rolling right by his front door. He cursed them again and prayed that the train might be wrecked and that every one of the blinkety blinkety scoundrels might be killed. If all these idle plutocrats could be destroyed in a heap they would be lifted from the backs of the masses, and the masses would not have to work any more.

Bannerman was a fool, and I could even then see just what made him foolish. He was full of the brimstone of envy. The sight of those well−dressed travelers eating in the dining cars drove him wild. He wanted to be in their places, but he was too lazy to work and earn the money that would put him there. I knew that they were not rich men; they were school−teachers, doctors, butchers and bakers, machinists and puddlers. They had saved their money for a year in order to have the price of this convention trip to Denver. Comrade Bannerman was pig−iron, and envy made him brittle. He should have been melted down and had the sulphur boiled out of him. Then he would have been wrought iron; as were the men he was so envious of.

He was not envious of me, of course, because he thought I was a tramp. Indeed he thought I was as envious as he, and so he classed the two of us as "intellectuals." From this I learned that "Intellectuals" is a name that weak men, crazed with envy, give to themselves. They believe the successful men lack intellect; are all luck. This thought soothes their envy and keeps it from driving them mad.

I thanked Comrade Bannerman for his pamphlets and threw him a few coins to pay for the melons he had given me. But my peep into his soul had taught me more than his propaganda could teach me. Later I read all the pamphlets because I had promised I would. They told of the labor movement and the theories at work in Germany. One of them was called Merrie England and declared that England had once been merry, but capitalism had crushed all joy and turned the island into a living hell. I remembered my mother in Wales rocking her baby's cradle and singing all day long with a voice vibrant with joy. If capitalism had crushed her heart she hadn't heard about it.

When the lodge excursion train had passed on toward the convention city, I hopped a freight and bade Comrade Bannerman goodby. Had I told him that from my earnings I had salted away enough money to buy his little shack he would have hated me as he hated the lodge members in the Pullmans. I did not hate those men. They were doing me a service by traveling across the country. For they belonged to the fare−paying classes; their money kept the railroads going so they could carry politicians and some of us working men free.

CHAPTER XXII. LOADED DOWN WITH LITERATURE

After I had read the various pamphlets that Bannerman gave me I was like the old negro who went to sleep with his mouth open. A white man came along and put a spoonful of quinine in his mouth. When the negro woke up the bitter taste worried him. "What does it mean?" he asked. The white man told him it meant that he "had done bu'sted his gall bladder and didn't have long to live." A mighty bad taste was left in my mouth by those communist pamphlets. If they were telling the truth I realized that labor's gall bladder had done bu'sted and we didn't have long to live. One book said that British capitalists owned all the money in the world and that at a given signal they would draw the money out of America and the working men here would starve to death in twenty−nine days. It seemed that some crank had fasted that many days in order to get accurate statistics showing just how long the working man could hope to last after England pushed the button for the money panic.

Another book said that Wall Street now owned ninety per cent. of the wealth in America and was getting the other ten at the rate of eight per cent. a year. Within twelve years Wall Street would own everything in the world, and mankind would be left naked and starving.

The wildest book of all was called Caesar's Column. It was in the form of a novel and told how the rich in America worshiped gold and lust instead of God and brotherly love, and how they drove their carriages over the working man's children and left them crushed and bleeding in the street. America had ceased to be a republic and was an oligarchy of wealth all owned by a dozen great families while the millions were starving. The end of the book described a great revolution in which the people arose, led by an Italian communist named Caesar Spadoni. The mob took all the fine houses and killed the rich people. Caesar took the bodies and, laying them in cement like bricks, he built an enormous column of corpses in Union Square towering higher than any building in New York. He established his headquarters in a Fifth Avenue palace and was directing the slaughter of all men who owned property, when some of his followers got jealous of his fine position and killed him and burned the house. By that time everything in America was destroyed, and the hero of the book, having invented an air−ship, flew away to South Africa to escape the general demolition. This book was being circulated by communists as a true picture of what the country was coming to.

These pamphlets came into my hands at a time when work was getting scarcer every day and a million men like myself were moving about the country looking for jobs. Then for the first time I realized my need for a broader education. If these things were true, it was my duty to stop chasing the vanishing job and begin to organize the workers so that they might destroy the capitalists. But how could I know whether they were true? I had no knowledge of past history. And without knowing the past how could I judge the future? I was like the old man who had never seen a railroad train. His sons took him thirty miles over the hills and brought him to the depot where a train was standing. The old man looked things over and saw that the wheels were made of iron. "It will never start," he said. He knew that if his wagon had heavy iron wheels, his team could never start it. But his sons said: "It will start all right." They had seen it before; they knew its past history. Soon the train started, gathered speed like a whirlwind and went roaring away down the track. The old man gazed after it and then, much excited, he exclaimed. "It will never stop!"

The wisest head is no judge unless it has in it the history of past performances. I had not studied much history in my brief schooling. The mills called me because they needed men. Good times were there when I arrived, and as for hard times, I was sure they "would never start." Now the hard times were upon us and panic shook the ground beneath our feet. "It will never stop," men cried. Had they studied the history of such things they would have known that hard times come and hard times go, starting and stopping for definite reasons, like the railway train.

I had done the right thing in quitting school and going to the puddling furnaces at a time when we needed iron more than we needed education. The proverb says, "Strike while the iron is hot." The country was building, and I gave it iron to build with. Railroads were still pushing out their mighty arms and stringing their iron rails across the western wheat lands. Bridges were crossing the Mississippi and spanning the chasms in the Rocky Mountains. Chicago and New York were rising in new growth with iron in their bones to hold them high. My youth was spent in giving to this growing land the element its body needed.

Now that body was sick. What was the matter with it? Lacking an education, I was unprepared to say. When I left school my theory was that every boy should learn a trade as soon as possible. Now I saw that a trade was not enough. A worker needs an education, also. The trade comes first, perhaps, but the education ought to follow on its heels.

During the next ten years of my life I was a worker and a student, too. My motto was that every one should have at least a high−school education and a trade.

CHAPTER XXIII. THE PUDDLER HAS A VISION

That caravan of railroad cars bearing the happy lodge members to their meeting in the Rockies, had started a train of thought that went winding through my mind ever after. In fancy I saw the envious Bannerman shaking his fist at his thriftier, happier brothers. Should I denounce the banding together of men for the promotion of fun and good fellowship? Were these men hastening the downfall of America as the communist predicted? Is not good fellowship a necessary feeling in the hearts of civilized men?

Love of comrades had always been a ruling passion with me. I joined my union as soon as I had learned my trade, the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers of North America. It was a long name, and we liked every word in it. We felt the glow of brotherhood, and as I said before, we used to share our jobs with the brother who was out of work. The union paid a weekly benefit to men who had to strike for better working conditions. At that time there were no death benefits nor any fund to educate the children of members killed in the mills. When such a death happened, the union appointed a committee to stand at the office window on pay−day and ask every man to contribute something from his wages. There is a charitable spirit among men who labor together and they always gave freely to any fund for the widow and orphans. This spirit is the force that lifts man above the beasts and makes his civilization. There is no mercy in brute nature. The hawk eats the sparrow; the fox devours the young rabbit; the cat leaps from under a bush and kills the mother robin while the young are left to starve in the nest. There is neither right nor wrong among the brutes because they have no moral sense. They do not kill for revenge nor torture for the love of cruelty, as Comrade Bannerman would in praying that the train be wrecked and the rich men burned to death in the ruin. The beasts can feel no pity, no sympathy, no regret, for nature gave them no conscience. But man differs from all creation because he has a moral sense, he has a conscience. My conscience has been a very present thing with me through all my life. I am a praying man. I never take a doubtful step until I have prayed for guidance.

"You'll never get anywhere, Jim," fellows have said to me, "as long as your conscience is so darn active. To win in this world you have got to be slick. What a man earns will keep him poor. It's what he gains that makes him rich." If this is so, the nation with the lowest morals will have the most wealth. But the truth is just the opposite. The richest nations are those that have the highest moral sense.

But this was a great problem for a young uneducated man. To be told by some of my fellows that dishonesty was the only road to wealth, and to be shown in communist documents that the capitalists of America were stealing everything from the workers, put a mighty problem up to me. And that's what made me pray for guidance. I pray because I want an answer, and when it comes I recognize in it my own conscience. Praying banishes all selfish thoughts from mind, and gives the voice of conscience a chance to be heard. I pray for a higher moral sense, that which lifts man above beasts, and when my answer comes and I feel morally right, then all hell can't make me knuckle under. For civilization is built on man's morals not on brute force (as Germany learned to her sorrow), and I fight for the moral law as long as there is any fight left in me.

Nature planned that when the cat ate the mother robin, the young robins in the nest must starve. Nature had other robins that would escape the enemy. But among men it is wrong for the little ones to suffer when the hand that feeds them is destroyed. For man has sympathy, which beasts have not. Sympathy is the iron fiber in man that welds him to his fellows. Envy is the sulphur that pollutes these bonds and makes them brittle. Suppose some master puddler of humanity could gather thousands of men into a melting−pot, a fraternity whose purpose was to boil out the envy, greed and malice as much as possible, and purify the good metal of human sympathy. How much greater the social value of these men would be. Bound together by good fellowship and human sympathy these men could pool their charity and build a happy city where all the children of their stricken comrades could be sent to school together, there to learn that man is moral, that the strong do not destroy the weak, that the nestling is not left to fate, but that the fatherless are fathered by all men whose hearts have heard their cry.

This vision came to me in the darkest days of my life. I had seen the children of my dead comrades scattered like leaves from a smitten tree never to meet again. I had left my parents' roof to be buffeted about by strikes and unemployment, and I feared that our home would be lost and my brothers scattered forever. The voice of hate was whispering that the "classes" would ride down the children of the poor, and with this gloomy thought I went to

bed. My couch was a bed of coal slack, and I was journeying to a mill town in a freight car.

As we rolled along, I saw in a vision train after train of lodge men going to some happy city. They were miners and steel workers, as well as clerks and teachers, and they were banded together, not like Reds to overthrow the wage system, but to teach themselves and their children how to make the wage system shed its greatest blessings upon all. The city they were going to was one they had built with their own hands. And in that city was a school where every trade was taught to fatherless children, as my father taught his trade to me. And with this trade each child received the liberal education that the rich man gives his son but which the poor man goes without. This was the wildest fancy I had ever entertained. It was born of my own need of knowledge. It was a dream I feared I could not hope to realize.

CHAPTER XXIV. JOE THE POOR BRAKEMAN

A brakeman stuck his head in the end window of the box car and shouted at me:

"Where're you going?"

"Birmingham," I answered.

"What have you got to go on?"

I had some money in my belt, but I would need that for the boarding−house keeper in the Alabama iron town. So I drew something from my vest pocket and said:

"This is all I've got left."

The trainman examined it by the dim light at the window. His eye told him that it was a fine gold watch. "All right," he said as be pocketed it and went away. I never knew whether I cheated the brakeman or the brakeman cheated me. The watch wasn't worth as much as the ride, but the ride wasn't his to sell.

I had bought the watch in Cincinnati. A fake auction in a pawnshop attracted my attention as I walked along a street near the depot. The auctioneer was offering a "solid gold, Swiss movement, eighteen jeweled watch" to the highest bidder. "This watch belongs to my friend Joe Coupling," he said, "a brakeman on the B. O. He was in a wreck and is now in the hospital. Everybody knows that one of the best things a railroader has is his watch. He only parts with it as a matter of life and death. Joe has got to sell his watch and somebody is going to get a bargain. This watch cost eighty−five dollars and you couldn't buy the like of it to−day for one hundred. How much am I offered?" Some one bid five dollars, and the bidding continued until it was up to twenty−five dollars. At that price the watch was declared sold, and I strolled on, thinking the matter over. I figured that the story of Joe the injured brakeman must be false. If he had an eighty−five−dollar watch he could borrow forty on it. Why should his "friend" have sold it outright for twenty−five? The fakery of it was plain to any one who stopped to think. Who then would be fool enough to pay twenty−five dollars for a fake watch at a side auction? Not I. I was too wise. "How easy it is," I said to myself, "to solve a skin game."

The next day I happened to pass the place again and they were selling the same watch. I listened for the second time to the sad story of Joe the brakeman. He was still in the hospital and still willing to sacrifice his eighty−five−dollar gold watch to the highest bidder. Just for fun I started off the bidding at two dollars. The auctioneer at once knocked down the watch to me and took my money. The speed of it dazed me, and I stumbled along the street like a fool. What was the game? I held the glittering watch in my hand and gazed at it like a hypnotized bird. I came to another pawnshop and went in. "What will you give me on this watch?" I asked. The pawnbroker glanced at it and said he couldn't give me anything but advice.

"I can buy these watches for three dollars a dozen. They are made to be sold at auction. The case is not gold and the works won't run."

I had been caught in the game after all. The whole show had been put on for me. The men who did the bidding the first day were "with the show." Their scheme was to get a real bid from me. When I failed to bite, they rung down the curtain and waited for the next come−on. The show was staged again for me the following day, and that time they got me. I had the "brakeman's watch" and he had the laugh on me. In the next wreck that Brakeman Joe got into I wished him the same luck Comrade Bannerman wished for the trainload of plutocrats. "If I should meet Joe now," I said, "I'd gladly give him back the timepiece that he prizes so." Let us hope that the brakeman I gave the watch to down in Alabama was Brakeman Joe.

There was much to think of in that auction incident. Experience will often give the lie to theory. My theory of the game was good enough for me. I acted on my theory, and they got my money. Perhaps the theory of Bannerman was wrong. He claimed he knew just how the capitalists were robbing labor. Suppose we backed his theory with some money and got stung? I was now theory shy and I have stayed away from theories ever since.

If you know the facts, no swindle can deceive you. I spend my life in getting facts. I now have seen enough to know that capitalism is not a swindle. If all hands labored hard and honestly the system would enrich us all. Some workers are dishonest and they gouge the employers. Some employers are dishonest and they gouge the workers. But whether employer or employee does the robbing, the public is the one that's robbed. And they are both members of the public. In making the world poorer they are rendering a sorry service to the world.

Dishonesty is the thing that does the trick. And it is not confined to any class. It was not a capitalist but a slick wind worker who robbed me by the watch swindle. He had to swing his jaw for hours every day in order to steal a few dollars.

CHAPTER XXV. A DROP IN THE BUCKET OF BLOOD

In Birmingham I found a job in a rolling mill and established myself in a good boarding−house. In those days a "good boarding− house" in iron workers' language meant one where you got good board. One such was called "The Bucket of Blood." It got its name because a bloody fight occurred there almost every day. Any meal might end in a knock−down−and−drag−out. The ambulance called there almost as often as the baker's cart. But it was a "good" boarding−house. And I established myself there.

Good board consists in lots of greasy meat, strong coffee and slabs of sweet pie with gummy crusts, as thick as the palm of your hand. At the Bucket of Blood we had this delicious fare and plenty of it. When a man comes out of the mills he wants quantity as well as quality. We had both at the Bucket of Blood, and whenever a man got knocked out by a fist and was carted away in the ambulance, the next man on the waiting list was voted into our club to fill the vacancy. We had what is called "family reach" at the table (both in feeding and fighting). Each man cut off a big quivering hunk of roast pork or greasy beef and passed the platter to his neighbor. The landlady stood behind the chairs and directed two colored girls to pour coffee into each cup as it was emptied.

These cups were not china cups with little handles such as you use in your home. They were big "ironstone" bowls the size of beer schooners, such as we used to see pictured at "Schmiddy's Place," with the legend, "Largest In The City, 5c." (How some of us would like to see those signs once more!) To prevent the handles from being broken off, these cups were made without handles. They were so thick that you could drop them on the floor and not damage the cups. When one man hit another on the head with this fragile china, the skull cracked before the teacup did. The "family reach" which we developed in helping ourselves to food, was sometimes used in reaching across the table and felling a man with a blow on the chin. Kipling has described this hale and hearty type of strong man's home in Fulta Fisher's Boarding− House where sailors rested from the sea.

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"A play of shadows on the wall,
  A knife thrust unawares
And Hans came down (as cattle fall),
  Across the broken chairs."
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But the boarders did not fight with knives at the Bucket of Blood. Knifing is not an American game. We fought with fists, coffee cups and pieces of furniture, after the furniture went to pieces. We were not fighting to make the world safe for democracy, although we were the most democratic fellows in the world. We slept two to a bed, four to a room. Not always the same four, for like soldiers on the firing line, some comrade was missing after every battle.

These fights started in friendly banter. One fellow would begin teasing another about his girl. The whole table would take it up, every man doing his best to insult and enrage the victim. It was all fun until some fellow's temper broke under the strain. Then a rush, and a few wild swings that missed. Then the thud of a blow that connected, and the fight was over. These men had arms with the strength of a horse's leg, and as soon as their "kick" struck solid flesh, the man hit was knocked out. He wouldn't be back for supper, but the rest of us would, without having our appetites disturbed in the least. I didn't like these methods, but if the boys did I was not going to complain.

My practice of studying at night offended my roommates. The lamplight got in their eyes. There were three fellows in the room besides myself. For several nights they advised me to "cut out the higher education, douse that light and come to bed." Finally they spoke about it in the daytime. "Majority rules," they said, "and there's three of us against you. We can't sleep while you have that lamp burning. The light keeps us awake and it also makes the room so hot that the devil couldn't stand it. If you stay up reading to−night we'll give you the bum's rush."

I was so interested in my books that I couldn't help lingering with them after the other fellows went to bed. Everything grew quiet. Suddenly six hands sized me and flung me out the window. It was a second−story window

and I carried the screen with me. But as it was full of air holes it didn't make a very competent parachute. I landed with a thud on the roof of the woodshed, which, being old and soft with southern moss, caved in and carried me to the ground below−−alive. The fellows up above threw my books out the window, aiming them at my head. They threw me my hat and coat and my valise, and I departed from the Bucket of Blood, and took up my abode at "The Greasy Spoon."

CHAPTER XXVI. A GRUB REFORMER PUTS US OUT OF GRUB

The Greasy Spoon isn't an appetizing name; not appetizing to men who live a sedentary life. But it was meant as a lure to men who live by muscular toil. It sounded good to us mill workers for, like Eskimos, we craved much fat in our diet. We were great muscular machines, and fat was the fuel for our engines. Muckraking was just beginning in those days, and a prying reformer came to live for a while at the Greasy Spoon. He told us that so much grease in our food would kill us. We were ignorant of dietetics; all we knew was that our stomachs cried for plenty of fat. The reformer said that our landlady fed us much fat meat because it was the cheapest food she could buy. Milk, eggs and fruits would cost more, and so this greedy cruel woman was lining her pocket at the expense of our lives.

The landlady was a kindly person, and she took the reformer's advice. She banished the fat pork, and supplied the table with other food substitutes, but she was generous and gave us plenty of them. We ate this reformed food and found we were growing weaker every day at the puddling furnace. We got the blues and became sullen. Gradually all laughter ceased in that boarding− house. We even felt too low to fight. At the end of two weeks there was one general cry: "Hog fat, and plenty of it!" Our engines had run out of fuel; and now we knew what we needed. We were so crazy for bacon that if a hog had crossed our path we would have leaped on him like a lion and eaten him alive.

Fat came back to the table, and the Greasy Spoon again rang with laughter. How foolish that reformer was! He did no work himself and was a dyspeptic. He tried to force his diet upon us, and he made us as weak as he was. How many reformers there are who are trying to reshape the world to fit their own weakness. I never knew a theorist who wasn't a sick man.

To−day we understand that we can't run a motor−car after the gasoline is played out. The burning of the oil in the engine gives the power. The burning of fats in the muscles gives the laborer his power. Sugar and starches are the next best things to fat, and that's why we could eat the thick slabs of sweet pie. We relished it well and have burned it all up in our labor in the mills. We came out with that healthy sparkle that dyspeptics never know.

When we realized that the reformer didn't know what he was talking about, and that in his effort to help us he was hurting us, we saw he was our enemy, and we gave all of his ideas the "horse laugh." His theory that the boarding−house keepers were in a conspiracy to rob the workers by feeding them pork instead of pineapples turned out to be much like all the "capitalist conspiracies" in Comrade Bannerman's pamphlets. I am glad I have lived in a world of facts, and that I went therefrom to the world of books. For I have found there is much falsehood taught in books. But life won't tell a fellow any lies.

A man who knows only books may believe that by writing a new prescription he can cure the world of what ails it. A man who knows life knows that the world is not sick. Give it plenty of food and a chance to work and it will have perfect digestion.

CHAPTER XXVII. THE PIE EATER'S PARADISE

The Greasy Spoon was all right. It was a peaceful place. The landlady was Irish, and her motto was: "If there's any fighting to be done here I'll do it myself." On the sideboard she kept a carving knife as big as a cavalry saber. Whenever two men started a row, she grabbed this carving knife and with a scream like a panther she lit into them.

"Stop yer fightin' before I hack your hands off!"

The men were in deadly fear of her because they knew she meant business. The sight of that swinging knife quelled every riot before it got started. We fellows were like children in that we only thought of one thing at a time. And when we saw the landlady's carving knife we forgot whatever else was on our minds. This woman was a real peacemaker. She not only wanted peace, she knew how to get it. Such things afford us lessons that are useful all our lives. This woman had learned by sad experience that healthy men will quarrel and thump each other; that these fights put men in the hospital, after breaking her dishes and splattering her tablecloths with blood. Hating bloodshed, she prevented it by being ever ready to shed blood herself. She stood for the moral law, but she stood armed and ready.

Impractical men have told me that right will always triumph of itself; it needs no fighters to support it. The man who believes that is ignorant, and such ignorance is dangerous. Right is always trampled down when no fighter upholds it. But men will fight for right who will not fight for wrong. And so right conquers wrong because right has the most defenders. Let no man shirk the battle because he thinks he isn't needed.

The reason a woman with a carving knife was strong enough to put a stop to fighting in the Greasy Spoon was this: she had behind her every man except the two who were fighting. Had either of those men struck down the woman, then twenty other men, outraged by such a deed, would then and there have swarmed upon the two and crushed them. The woman stood for right and she always triumphed because she had (and these two knew she had) the biggest bunch of fighters on her side.

This is what peace means, an equilibrium between forces. It is the natural law,−−God's way of keeping peace. And any plan for World Peace that is builded not upon this law is nothing. Justice must stand with an upraised sword. When two states quarrel she must admonish them, and let them know that should they overthrow her, all good nations would rush in and crush them. The same law that keeps peace in a rowdy boarding−house will keep the peace of the world. For what is this world but a big wide boarding−house, and all the nations rough and greedy grabbers at the table?

I left the Greasy Spoon and went to the "Pie Boarding−House." The Greasy Spoon had peace, but peace is not enough. After peace comes prosperity. The Pie House represented prosperity. For the woman who ran it knew how to make more pies than the fellows ever heard of. You see, we were all from the British Isles where they have pudding. The pie is an American institution. Nobody knows how to make pies but an American housewife. And lucky that she does, for men can not thrive in America without pie. I do not mean the standardized, tasteless things made in great pie factories. I refer to the personally conducted pies that women used to make. The pioneer wives of America learned to make a pie out of every fruit that grows, including lemons, and from many vegetables, including squash and sweet potatoes, as well as from vinegar and milk and eggs and flour. Fed on these good pies the pioneers−−is there any significance in the first syllable of the word−−hewed down the woods and laid the continent under the plow. Some men got killed and their widows started boarding−houses. Here we workers fed on proper pie, and we soon changed this wooden land into a land of iron. Now the pie is passing out and we are feeding on French pastry. Is our downfall at hand?

Life in the Pie Boarding−House was a never−ending delight. You never knew when you sat down at the table what kind of pie would be dealt you. Some of the fellows had been there half a year and swore that they had seen fifty−seven varieties and were expecting new ones at any meal. The crowd here was a selected crowd. It was made up of the pie connoisseurs of mill−town. Word was quietly passed out among the wisest fellows to move to this boarding− house and get a liberal education in pie. So it was a selected and well−behaved crowd. They didn't want to start any rumpus and thus lose their places at this attractive table.

And that is one way that virtue is its own reward. Only the well−behaved fellows were tipped off to the pie

bonanza. From this I learned that the better manners you have, the better fare you will get in this world. I had steadily risen from the "Bucket of Blood," through the "Greasy Spoon" to a seat at the cherished "Pie" table. Here the cups were so thin that you couldn't break a man's head with them. I was steadily rising in the social world.

CHAPTER XXVIII. CAUGHT IN A SOUTHERN PEONAGE CAMP

It was while I was in Birmingham that the industrial depression reached rock bottom. In the depth of this industrial paralysis the iron workers of Birmingham struck for better pay. I, with a train load of other strikers, went to Louisiana and the whole bunch of us were practically forced into peonage. It was a case of "out of the frying pan into the fire." We had been saying that the mill owners had driven us "into slavery," for they had made us work under bad conditions; but after a month in a peon camp, deep in the swamps of Louisiana, we knew more about slavery than we did before. And we knew that work in the rolling mills, bad as it was, was better than forced labor without pay. To−day when I hear orators rolling out the word "slavery" in connection with American wages and working conditions, I have to laugh. For any man who has ever had a taste of peonage, to say nothing of slavery, knows that the wage system is not real slavery; it's not the genuine, lash−driven, bloodhound−hunted, swamp−sick African slavery. None is genuine without Simon Legree and the Louisiana bloodhounds. The silk−socked wage slave, toiling eight hours for six dollars, is not the genuine old New Orleans molasses slave. He may carry a band and give a daily street parade, but if he's not accompanied by Simon Legree and the bloodhounds, he is not a genuine Uncle Tom, his slavery is less than skin deep. You can't fool me. I know what real slavery is. I know as much about slavery as the man that made it. He's the guy that taught me. I worked under Simon Legree in Louisiana.

On the way to New Orleans we paused at a siding, and a native asked me, "Who are all them men, and which way are they goin'?"

I told him "which way" we were going, and that we were needing jobs. He replied:

"You−all are comin' down hyah now looking for food and work. In '65 you was down hyah lookin' fo' blood!"

When we reached the great city on the Mississippi, we scattered over the town looking for jobs. I saw a pile of coal in the street before a boarding−house. I asked for the job of carrying in the coal. There were two tons of it. I toted it in and was paid a dollar. New Orleans was a popular winter resort where northerners came to escape the severe cold of the North Atlantic States. I was given the job of yard−man in this boarding−house. I carried in groceries, peeled potatoes, scrubbed the kitchen floor and built fires each evening in the guests' rooms. Each room had a grate, and I carried up kindling and coal for all of them. For this work I received a dollar a day, with two meals (dinner and supper) and was permitted to carry away from the kitchen all the cooked food that remained after the guests had eaten. This privilege had grown out of the custom of the colored help in the South having their "man" to feed. I had several men to feed. My "gang" was still looking for work and not finding any. Times were desperate. For five cents a man could get a glass of beer and floor room to sleep on in a lodging−house for homeless men. This was called a "Five Cent Flop" house. My pals were not able at times to raise the five cents a day to buy sleeping quarters. It was late fall and too cold to sleep in the "jungle" down by the levee. The poor fellows were able to stave off starvation by visiting various free lunches during the day. Every night I arrived with my dollar, and that meant beer and beds for a score. I also brought along a flour sack half full of biscuits, cold pancakes, corn bread, chicken necks and wings and scraps of roasts and steaks. These hungry men, with their schooners of beer, made a feast of these scraps. My loyalty in coming every night and giving them everything I could scrape together touched them deeply. They regarded me as deserving special honor, and while they believed in democracy as a general proposition, they voted that it would be carrying equality too far if they permitted me to get no more out of my work than all the rest got. So they decided that I was to have a fifteen−cent bed each night instead of a five−cent flop with the rest of them. And I was assigned to the royal suite of that flop house, which consisted of a cot with a mosquito bar over it.

At this time they were holding "kangaroo" court in the New Orleans jail. Every vagrant picked up by the police was tried and sentenced and shipped out to a chain−gang camp. Nearly every man tried was convicted. And there were plenty of camp bosses ready to "buy" every vagrant the officers could run in. My bunch down at the flop house was in deadly terror of being "kangarooed" and sent to a peon camp in the rice swamps.

One day when I was renewing the fuel in the room of a Mrs. Hubbard from Pittsburgh, I found no one in the apartment and Mrs. Hubbard's pearls and other jewels lying on the dresser. Immediately I was terrified with thought of the kangaroo court. I knew that the jewels were valued at several thousands of dollars. If I went away

some one else might come into the room and possibly steal the jewels, for they were lying in plain sight and were valuable enough to tempt a weak−willed person. I sounded an alarm and stayed in the doorway. I refused to leave the room until Mrs. Hubbard returned and counted her valuables.

She found them all there and thanked me for guarding them. She said it was by an oversight that she had gone away without locking up her treasures. She asked me how she should reward me. I told her that I was already rewarded, for I had guarded her jewels in order to protect myself from being suspected of their theft and so kangarooed into a slave−camp.

But in spite of all my precautions, I landed there after all. The gang down at the flop house was dazzled by an employment agent, who offered to ship them out into the rice country to work on the levee for a dollar a day and cakes. The men were wild for a square meal and the feel of a dollar in their jeans. So they all shipped out to the river levee and I went along with the gang.

As our train rattled over the trestles and through the cypress swamps the desperate iron workers were singing:

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"We'll work a hundred days,
  And we'll get a hundred dollars,
And then go North,
  And all be rich and happy!"
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When we reached the dyke−building camp I learned how ignorant I really was. I could not do the things the older men could. I was young and familiar only with the tools of an iron puddler. The other men were ten years older and had acquired skill in handling mule−teams and swinging an ax. They saw I couldn't do anything, so they appointed me water carrier. The employing boss was what is now called hard−boiled. He was a Cuban, with the face of a cutthroat. Doubtless he was the descendant of the Spanish−English buccaneers who used to prowl the Caribbean Sea and make headquarters at New Orleans. Beside this pirate ancestry I'll bet he was a direct descendant of Simon Legree. He suspected that I couldn't do much in a dyking camp, so he swarmed down on me the second week I was there and ordered me to quit the water−carrying job and handle a mule team and a scraper. I saw death put an arm around my neck right then and there. But I wouldn't confess that I couldn't drive a team.

I put the lines over my head, said "Go 'long" as I had heard other muleteers say, and, grasping the handles of the scraper, I scooped up a slip load of clay. My arms were strong and this was no trick at all. But getting the load was not the whole game. The hardest part was to let go. I guided the lines with one hand and steadied the scraper with the other as I drove up on the dump. Then I heaved up on the handles, the scraper turned over on its nose and dumped the load. But that isn't all it dumped. The mules shot ahead when the load was released, and the lines around my neck jerked me wrong side up. The handle of the scraper hit me a stunning blow in the face and the whole contraption dragged over my body bruising me frightfully. I staggered to my feet with one eye blinded by the blood that flowed from a gash in my brow. Simon Legree cursed me handsomely and told me I was fired. I asked him where I would get my pay, and he told me he was paying me a compliment by letting me walk out of that camp alive. I went to the cook shack and washed the blood off my face. I was a pretty sick boy. The cook was a native and was kind to me.

"Boy, you're liable to get lockjaw from that cut," he said. "I'll put some of this horse liniment on it and it'll heal up." He then bandaged it with court−plaster.

"It's a long way back to New Orleans," the cook concluded. "And you might as well have something to keep your ribs from hitting together." He cut off a couple of pounds of raw bacon and put it in my pocket together with a "bait" of Plowboy tobacco. And so I hit the road. When I came to the place where my pals were working, cutting willows along the levee, I told them of my plight.

"Never mind, boy," they said. "You go back to New Orleans and wait for us. After we've worked our hundred days to get a hundred dollars each, we will work a few days more to get a hundred dollars for you. Then we'll all go north and be rich together."

I began footing it thirty−five miles to the city. I decided, like Queen Isabella, to pawn my jewels to enable me to discover America again. I had an old ring and I met a darky who had a quarter. He got my ring. After tramping

all day I was exhausted. I came to a negro cabin and went in and offered the "mammy" a pound of bacon for a pound of corn pone. I further bargained to give the first half of my other pound of bacon if she'd cook the second half for me to eat. She cooked my share of the bacon and set it and the corn bread on the table. I ate heartily for a while, but after two or three slices of the bacon, I was fed up on it. She hadn't cooked enough of the grease out of it. I began feeding this bacon to a pickininny who sat beside me.

"Man, don't give away your meat," the mammy said. I told her that I had had all I wanted. Then she said to the pickininny:

"Child, doan eat that meat. Save it foh you papa when he come home."

When I got into New Orleans the next morning, I traded my Plowboy tobacco for a bar of laundry soap. With my twenty−five cents I bought a cotton undershirt. Then I went into the "jungle" at Algiers, a town across the river from New Orleans, and built a fire in the jungle (a wooded place where hoboes camp) and heated some water in an old tin pail I found there. Then I took off all my clothes and threw my underwear away. A negro who stood watching me said:

"White man, are you throwing them clothes away?"

"I certainly am," I replied.

"Why, them underclothes is northern underelothes. Them's woolen clothes. Them's the kind of underclothes I like."

"You wouldn't like that bunch of underclothes," I said.

"Why not?"

"Because if you look in the seams you will find something that is unseemly. I've been out in a levee camp."

"Hush mah mouf, white man," laughed the negro. "Them little things would never bother a Louisiana nigger. Why we have them things with us all the time. We just call 'em our little companions."

He picked up the garments and walked off proud and happy. I took my soap and warm water and scrubbed myself from crown to heel. I put my clothing in the pail with more soap and water and boiled the outfit thoroughly.

Then I went back to New Orleans and got my old job in the boarding−house. I saved all my money except my fifteen cents for the nightly flop. A month later my gang came roaring back from the peon camp. They had worked thirty days and had not got a cent. Slave−driver Legree had driven them out when they demanded a reckoning. They were lucky to escape with their lives, their cooties and their appetites. Instead of financing me, I had to finance them again. They finally got cleaned up and we all went back to Birmingham, where the strike was over.

"Show us that spieler," they said, "who told us the wage system was the worst kind of slavery. If daily wages is slavery, God grant that they never set us free again."

CHAPTER XXIX. A SICK, EMACIATED SOCIAL SYSTEM

The hard times I have been describing were in the early nineties. The year before there had been a financial crash. Nobody seemed to know what was the matter at the time, but it has since been learned that the hard times were the fruit of crop failures, if one can call failure fruit. All over the world bad years had destroyed the harvests. This great loss of foodstuffs was exactly the same as if armies in war had ravaged the fields. Farmers had to borrow money to buy food. They had no other buying power. So trade languished, credit was strained, and finally came the financial collapse. It happened after the good crop years were returning. That's why the people could not understand it. Farmers were raising crops again, but labor was idle and could not buy bread.

The lesson is this, when commerce is starved down to a certain point, it goes to pieces. Then when the food comes it can not assimilate it. It is like a man who has been without food for thirty days. His muscles have disappeared, his organs have shrunk, he can not walk; he is only skin and bones. The disappearance of the muscles is like the disappearance of labor's jobs in hard times. The shrinkage of the vital organs is like the shrinkage of capital and values. When the starved man is faced with food he can not set in and eat a regular dinner. He must be fed on a teaspoonful of soup, and it is many months before his muscles come back, his organs regain their normal size and he is a well−fed man again. So it is with the industrial state. It can be starved by crop failures, by war waste or by labor slacking on the job. Anything that lessens the output of field and factory, whether it be heaven's drought or man's loafing, starves the economic state and starves all men in it. If crop failure should last long enough, as it does in China, millions of men would die. If war lasts long enough, as it did in Austria, millions of citizens must starve. If labor should try slacking, as it did in Russia, the economic state would starve to death and the workers die with it.

Men who have been through strikes and lockouts until they have been reduced to rags and hunger place no trust in the Russian theory that men can quit work and loaf their way to wealth. We loafed our way to hunger, misery and peonage. We saw that the whole world would come to our fate, if all should follow our example. Luckily we won our point, so we went back to work and helped feed the starved social state, and in a few years America was rich again. And America continued rich and fat until the World War wastage shrank her to skin and bones again. Much of her muscle has disappeared (1921: five million workers are idle) and she must be nursed back by big crops, and big output by labor before she will be strong enough to reabsorb into her system every muscle in America.

That's my belief. That's my gospel. I did not make this gospel. It is God's law and we can not alter it. If I were asked to write the BIBLE OF LABOR, this chapter would be the law and the prophets. And from these truths I would advise each man to write his own Ten Commandments.

CHAPTER XXX. BREAKING INTO THE TIN INDUSTRY

I decided to leave Birmingham as soon as my stomach had got used to regular meals and my pocket knew what real money felt like again.

The dry years had ended and once more the northern farms were yielding mammoth crops. But the country was so sick that it couldn't sit up and eat as it ought to. So the farmers were selling their crops at steadily falling prices. This drove some of them frantic. They couldn't pay interest on their mortgaged farms, and they were seeking to find "the way out" by issuing paper money, or money from some cheap metal with which they could repudiate their debts. Banks could not collect their loans, merchants could not get money for their goods, manufacturers were swamped by their pay−rolls and had to discharge their men. Coxey was raising a great army of idle men to march on Washington and demand that the government should feed and clothe the people.

All my savings had long since gone, and from the high life in the Pie Boarding−House I had descended to my days of bread and water. All men were in a common misery. If a hobo managed to get a steak and cook it in the bushes by the railroad track, the smell of it would draw a score of hungry men into the circle of his firelight. It was a trying time, and it took all the fortitude I had to look hopefully forward toward a day when things would begin picking up and the wheels of industry would whirl again. The idle men who had camped by the railroads had drunk their water from, and cooked their mulligan stews in, tomato cans. The tin can had become the badge of hoboing. The tin trade was new in America and I foresaw a future in the industry, for all kinds of food were now being put up in tin, whereas when I was a child a tin can was rarely seen. I decided that two trades were better than one, and I would learn the tin plate trade. I went to Elwood, Indiana, and found a place there in a tin mill. My knowledge of puddling, heating and rolling, occasionally working in a sheet mill similar to a tin mill, prepared me for this new work. In tin making a piece of wrought iron is rolled thin and then covered with a thinner coating of pure tin. After this is done the plate remains soiled and discolored, and the next process is to remove the stain and polish the tin until it shines like silver.

To have a job and eat pie again made me happy. Our union contained several hundred members, so I had a lot of prospective friends to get acquainted with. I was then nearly twenty−one and a pretty good mixer; I liked men and enjoyed mingling with them and learning all I could from what they told me. When they drifted into a saloon I went along for the company. I did not care to drink, so I would join some impromptu quartet and we would sing popular songs while the other fellows cheered us with the best will in the world. A drink of beer or two heightens a man's appreciation of music, and the way the boys applauded my singing makes me rather regret the Volstead Act. It queered my act. Since beer disappeared nobody has asked me to sing. Prohibition may be good for the health but it is sure death to art.

Those were happy days. But just when all my troubles seemed ended and the rainbow of promise in the sky, a new cloud appeared, black and threatening. In fact it swept down like a tornado. The men decided to strike.

A strike! Of all things! We owned about the only jobs in Indiana. Our strike wouldn't last long−−for the mills. For us it would last forever. The day we walked out, others would walk in. And it would be so small a part of Coxey's army that the main body would march on and never miss it. I had just gone through that long, soul−killing period of idleness and had barely managed to find a job before I collapsed. Now that we were to strike I would have to push that job aside and sink back into the abyss.

In reaching Elwood, I had tramped from Muncie, Indiana, to Anderson, a long weary walk for one whose feet, like mine, were not accustomed to it. From Anderson I tramped to Frankton, and there I caught a freight and rode the bumpers to Elwood. The train took me right into the mill. It was summer and the mill had been shut down by the hard times. The boss was there looking over the machinery. They were getting ready to start up. I faced him and he said: "Do you want a job?"

"Yes," I said.

"What at? Greasing up to−night," he said. Weary and hungry as I was from my hoboing, I went right to work, and all night I, with a few others, greased the bearings. The next day he gave me a job as a catcher. A catcher is one who seizes the rolled plate as it comes out and throws it back to the roller. It has to be rolled many times. The boss who gave me this much−wanted job was Daniel G. Reid, who afterward became one of the big men in the tin

industry.

After I became Secretary of Labor I was a dinner guest at the White House. When I arrived the President said: "Here's an old friend of yours." To my surprise and keen pleasure President Harding led forward my old boss, Daniel G. Reid. There was much laughing and old−time talk between us. "Do you recall," said Mr. Reid, "how during the tin strike of '96, you steered to the lodge room and unionized men who came to take the place of the strikers?" Mr. Reid thought this was a great joke. He had always been favorable to ending the strike and signing the men's agreement, but for a long time had been deterred by his partners. Mr. Reid in nearly every conference was selected for chairman, and this was considered by the employers a very fine tribute of respect and confidence. Turning to the president, Mr. Reid said: "If Jim is as industrious in your service as he was in the Elwood tin mill you have got a good secretary. Jim knew more about the tin plate business when he was a worker than any other man in America. I wanted to get him to join our sales department but he declined my offer!"

When the matter of the Elwood strike was referred to the next regular meeting I had been working only three weeks. I wrote to my father in Sharon asking for his counsel on the subject. He wrote back: "In as much as it isn't a question of wages or rules, I'd vote to stay on the job and wait for my pay. There's no pay out here to be had even by waiting. The mill is down, and if we hadn't raised a big potato crop we wouldn't know where to look for our next meal."

CHAPTER XXXI. UNACCUSTOMED AS I AM TO PUBLIC SPEAKING

With father's warning on my mind I went to the meeting where the strike was to be voted. Nobody had opposed the strike, for the cause was plainly a just one. The men wanted their pay to be issued to them every week, and they were entitled to it. The only question in my mind was one of expediency. Could we hope to win a strike at a time like that when the mills were on the verge of closing because of bad business?

While the speakers were presenting the reasons for the strike I noticed that not a man examined or discussed the dangers in it. The mind of the meeting was made up. I was talking to the fellow who sat beside me, and I told him what my father had written me.

"I agree," he said. "A strike at a time like this doesn't seem to be the right thing to do."

"If you don't think it a wise move," I said, "why don't you get up and say so. For this meeting is going to vote strike in the next two minutes, sure as fate."

"I can't make a speech," he said. "You do it."

The men were paid monthly checks and had never heard any complaint from their landlords and grocerymen who were willing to wait for their pay. The complaint had been made by a few outsiders who wanted to see money circulate faster in town and thus boom things up a bit. They had aroused the strike spirit of the men by speeches like this:

"The bosses own you body and soul. They regard you as slaves. Your work makes them rich and yet they won't pay for your work. While they are piling up profits you go around without a nickel in your jeans. At the end of the week you want your pay. Why don't they give it to you? Because they would sooner borrow money without interest from you than go to the bank and pay eight per cent. for it. You men are their bankers and don't know it. You could have your money in the bank instead of in their pockets−−it would be drawing interest for you instead of drawing interest for them! The interest on the wages of you men is five hundred sixty dollars a month. No wonder they hold your pay for a month and put that five hundred and sixty dollars in their pockets. But those wages are yours as fast as you earn them. The interest on your money belongs to you. That five hundred and sixty dollars a month belongs in your pockets. But it will go into the bosses' pockets as long as you are willing to be robbed. You have rights, but they trample on them when you will not fight for your rights. Are you mice or men?"

When it was put that way they answered that they were men. The strike was "sold" to them before the meeting, without their having had a chance to state their side of it. I felt that this was wrong. There are lynch verdicts in this world as well as verdicts of justice. When men have a chance to make up their own minds their verdict is always just. But here a little group who knew what they wanted had stampeded the minds of the men, and a verdict won that way is like a mob verdict.

I decided to get up and speak, although it was really too late. It seemed to me like calling a doctor after the patient is dead. "Men," I said, "I'm a newcomer here and I never made a speech in my life. I wouldn't try to now, only I've been asked to by others−−by somebody that's been here a long time. He thinks there ought to be a little more said before we ballot. It's a hot day and I don't want to keep you here if you don't want to listen to me. What I've got to say probably don't amount to much."

"Go ahead," somebody said.

"We've decided to strike, and I don't know how it will turn out. I've been out of work for several months and you fellows haven't, so I can tell you what it's like. The country is thronging with idle men. If we lose this strike we can roam all over the country before we find another job. I came all the way here from Alabama, where they drove a bunch of iron workers into the peonage camps, and I was glad to get out alive. Conditions are awful bad in this country and I have been trying to study 'em. Money is scarcer now than it's ever been before. They tell us that the bosses are keeping our wages in their pockets. That's a mistake. They haven't got anything in their pockets. They've mortgaged their homes and pledged everything they own. They're having a devil of a time to rake up the money every month to meet the pay−roll when it's due. They aren't taking in the money as fast as they're paying it out. Their salesmen are on the road trying to sell tin plate, but the tinners are so hard up that few of them can buy.

"I believe we ought to get our pay every week, but how can we get it if the boss hasn't got it? We've got to

look at this thing in the light of facts. The facts are that we have our jobs and are sure of our pay once a month. There are a million men who would like to have what we have. Those men will swarm in and take our jobs. You can't stop them. A hungry man can't be stopped by the cry of 'scab.' You all know that there are so many union men now idle that we have to pass around our jobs to keep the men in this town from starving. When word goes out that we have struck, you'll see the workers swarm in here like locusts. They'll be glad to take their pay by the month. What's the use of a strike that hasn't got a chance to win? We joined the union to make our jobs secure and to get good pay. We're getting good pay. Our jobs are secure unless we lose them in this strike.

"I don't believe we've looked at both sides of the case. I don't believe the boys really want this strike. The demand for it originated outside our ranks. Who started it? Wasn't it started by fellows who want us to get our pay quicker so they can get it quicker? They're the ones that worked up this strike. They tell us that the bosses are robbing us because they hold our pay till the end of the month. They say we ought to have it in the bank. They know we wouldn't put it in the bank. You know we wouldn't put it in the bank. We don't want to put it in the bank, and you bet your boots they don't want us to put it in the bank. They're liars when they say they're boosting for the banks. They're boosting for their own pockets.

"But we've really got our money in a bank−−or what's good as a bank. The mill keeps our money for us just the way a bank would. No bank in town pays interest on checking accounts, you know that. Then why take our money out of the mill office and put it in a bank? It's just as safe in the mill office. And you've got the right to draw on it if you really need money in the middle of the month. Only in case of death or accident does a man need money in the middle of the month. And he can go to the pay window and get it when he needs it. The doctor doesn't send his bill till the end of the month. The landlord doesn't collect the rent till the end of the month. The grocer and butcher let you run a bill till the end of the month. Some of us are really better off getting our pay at the end of the month. For it's all there for us and we can pay our bills promptly and hold up our heads as men. If we didn't leave our money in the office until the end of the month, we might blow it in at a bar, and when the wife wanted money to pay the rent and food bill we would have to tell her we were broke and she would have to hang her head. When the landlord and butcher came for the money she would have to try to stand them off. Do we want to let the rent go unpaid until the landlord cusses us out? Is that what we are striking for? If the landlord and butcher are willing to wait till we draw our pay, we ought to be willing too. Isn't it better to wait a month for pay than to wait a year? I'm right here to tell you that after this strike we'll wait for our pay until hell freezes over and the devil goes skating.

"Let us make no mistake. We are calling this strike not of our own free will, but were shoved into it by a lot of slick talkers that are in business and are not workers. They have hoodwinked us. They have made fools of us. A speaker asked are we mice or men. I ask them are they rats or men. I want these rats to come out of their holes and stand upon this floor. Who was the first man that suggested this strike? I want to see the color of his hair. Stand up, if he's in the hall. If he isn't here, why isn't he?"

No one answered.

"If this strike was called by outsiders," I cried, "why don't the outsiders do the striking? Whose jobs will be lost in this strike−−our jobs or the outsiders' jobs? If the man who started this strike has a job that won't be lost in the strike, then I claim that we have made a bad mistake. And if we're making a mistake, men, what are we going to do about it?"

I sat down, exhausted by the first attempt at public pleading I had ever made. Everything grew dark about me, and I knew that I had done my best and that I was through. I was quite young, and I went to pieces like an untrained runner who had overdone himself.

The men were talking to one another, and somebody moved that the meeting take a recess until after supper. It would give time to think it over and find out what the men really thought about the strike proposition.

CHAPTER XXXII. LOGIC WINS IN THE STRETCH

At seven o'clock we met again and several men made short talks opposing the strike. Each fellow, when he got up, seemed to have a lot of ideas, but when he tried to express them he grew confused, and after stammering a while he could only put forth the bare opinion, "I don't think we ought to strike." This meeting was quite different from the other one. Here every man was thinking for himself but nobody could say anything. In the previous meeting the speakers had talked passionately, and the rest had been swept along with them as a unit. In other words, the first session had become group−minded instead of individual− minded. It is like the difference between a stampede and a deliberative body. The second meeting was calmly deliberative and it finally voted a reconsideration, and the strike resolution was overwhelmingly defeated.

If this were a novel, it would be fine to record in this chapter that the young orator who at the last moment turned the tide and saved the day became the hero of the union and was unanimously elected president. That's the way these things go in fiction. And that is exactly what happened. In due time I found myself at the head of the Local, and nearly every man had voted for me. I started negotiations for more frequent paydays, and a few months later we were being paid on the first and fifteenth of the month. Life is indeed dramatic,−−at least it has seemed so to me. Some men say that life has no meaning; that men are the playthings of blind forces that crush them, and there is no answer to the riddle. This is nonsense. I admit that we are in the grip of blind forces. But we are not blind. We can not change those forces. If we fight against them they will crush us. But by going with them, guiding our careers along their courses, they will bear us to the port we're steering for.

The mob spirit in man is one of those blind forces that so often lead to shipwreck. The mob−mind differs from the mind of reason. To tell them apart is like distinguishing mushrooms from toadstools. They look alike, but one means health and the other is poison. Life has taught me the difference between a movement and a mob. A movement is guided by logic, law and personal responsibility. A mob is guided by passion and denies responsibility.

I have seen meetings turned into mobs and mobs dissolved again into meetings. Swept by passion we willed a strike. That strike would have been just, and, yet, it would have ruined us. We were like a mob in which every man forgets his own responsibility, The mob mind would have rushed us to our own ruin. My speech called for individuals to stand up. That set each individual thinking: "If I stand up, that crazy guy will smash me." Each man became responsible again. The mob was gone, and all we had was individual men, each thinking for himself. That thinking then went on and each man reached a verdict based on logic, sense and duty. The meeting could no longer speak with one voice. It couldn't talk at all. It stammered. The action showed that each mind stood apart, alone. And yet the vote revealed that they were all together.

I have watched the long struggle of unionism in America and I know the law that has governed all its ups and downs. Wherever it was still a movement it has thrived; wherever it became a mob it fell. The one Big Union was a mob. No movement based on passion finally wins; no movement based on reason finally fails. Why then say life is a riddle and man helpless?

When I became Secretary of Labor, one of the first letters I received was from Mrs. Eli Baldwin whose coal oil I burned shamelessly, studying far into the night. Mrs. Eli Baldwin wrote from Atlanta, Indiana, where she now lives:

"When your roommates complained because your light kept them awake, I knew what you were doing. I knew that you were studying their problems for them, getting yourself an education so you would know how to get them better wages and better working conditions."

This letter pleased me more than I can tell. This kind old lady, now eighty−two, had faith in me and feels that her faith was justified. Now, then, can I believe that life is meaningless,−−that there is no plan, and that all man's efforts are foredoomed to failure?

CHAPTER XXXIII. I MEET THE INDUSTRIAL CAPTAINS

Elwood, Indiana, was a small village that had been called Duck Creek Post−Office until the tin mill and other industries began making it into a city. In my capacity as president of the local union and head of the wage mill committee, I was put in personal contact with the heads of these great industrial enterprises. This was my first introduction to men of large affairs.

I approached them with the inborn thought that they must be some sort of human monsters. The communist books that Comrade Bannerman had given me taught me to believe that capitalists had no human feelings like ordinary mortals. I therefore expected to find the mill−boss as cunning as the fox and ape combined. I supposed that his word would be worthless as a pledge and would be given only for the purpose of tricking me. His manners I expected to be rude; he would shout at me and threaten me, hoping to take away my courage and send me back to my fellows beaten.

What I found, of course, was a self−possessed man, the model of courtesy and exactness. He differed from us men in one respect. His mind was complex instead of simplex. That is, he could think on two sides of a question at the same time. He had so trained his mind by much use of it that it was as nimble as the hands of a juggler who can keep several objects tossing in the air at the same time. We men were clumsy thinkers, and one thing at a time was all we could handle without fumbling it.

The great manufacturer never showed any emotion. He was never angry, domineering, sneering or insulting. He kept these emotions under control because they could do him no good, and because they would give pain to others. We fellows never hesitated to show how we felt. We would jibe one another, laugh at a fellow to his chagrin, and when we were angry bawl each other out unmercifully. For a fellow to smile when he was angry and not let the other fellow know it, was a trick we had not learned. That a bloodthirsty, cruel capitalist should be such a graceful fellow was a shock to me. I saw from the start that the communist picture of a capitalist as a bristling, snorting hog was the farthest thing from the truth. The picture was drawn by malice and not from a desire to tell the truth.

I learned that when Mr. Reid and his fellows gave their word they never broke it. It was hard to get a promise from them, but once they made a promise they always fulfilled it. If they said they would meet us at a certain hour, they were always there on the minute. They were patient, firm and reasonable, and they always treated us as their equals.

They always gave us the reasons for the stand they took. At first I doubted their sincerity, but in the end I learned that the reasons they cited were the true reasons. At first they thought that they would have to guard themselves against roguery and doubledealing on the part of the tin workers. This showed that they had had unpleasant experiences. For, men who knew their business as well as they did must surely have had some cause for their suspicion. Baseless suspicion is a trait of ignorant men, and these men were not ignorant. A burnt child dreads the fire.

I decided to take them as my models, to learn all their virtues and let them know that I was as square in my dealings with them as they were with me. I studied their business as thoroughly as I studied the case of the men. I soon got from them all the concessions we had demanded when we called the strike. It was fortunate for us that the strike was cancelled, for we kept our jobs and in due course got all the things that we were going to strike for.

In fact, I got so many concessions by dickering with those bosses that I made life a burden for them at times. I knew the cost of every different kind of plate the mill put out, and so I could demand a high rate of wages and support my demands with logic. My midnight studies had not been in vain. It all came back in cash to the working man; and yet it was my own pals who had rebuked me for being too bookish. This did not make me sour. I loved the fellows just the same, and when they showed their faith in me, it more than paid me back.

But I had learned this general rule: The average working man thinks mostly of the present. He leaves to students and to capitalists the safeguarding of his future.

CHAPTER XXXIV. SHIRTS FOR TIN ROLLERS

In summer the temperature in the tin mills is very high. It is as hot as the Fourth of July in Abyssinia. One day a philosophical fellow was talking religion to me. He said, "I don't believe in hell as a place where we boil forever in a lake of brimstone. It can't be as hot as that. My constitution never could stand it." His constitution stood up under the heat in the tin mill. So it is plain that the tin−mill temperature was somewhat less than the temperature of the Pit.

Outsiders began coming into the mills and giving us workers a chill by telling us that the heat was killing us. The men used to cool themselves down with a glass of beer at the close of the day. The social investigators told us that alcohol taken into the system at such a time would cause sunstroke. If beer was fatal, most of us figured that we had been dead for years and didn't know it. The effect of constant complaints was to demoralize us and make our work harder. I thought at first that these investigators were our friends and I gave them all the help I could. But instead of helping us, they only hurt us, and then I soured on their misapplied zeal. They were a species new to me that seemed to have sprung up in the hard times, just as cooties spring up in time of war. And like cooties, they attached themselves to us closer than a brother and yet they were no brothers of ours. The social investigators nibbled away at the men and kept them restless in their hours of ease. They sat at our boarding table and complained of the food. Corned beef and cabbage was one of our regular dishes. Mr. Investigator turned up his nose and said: "I never touch corned beef. If you knew as much about it as I do, you would insist on steaks or roast beef instead. You know what corned beef is, don't you?"

The men got mad and one fellow said: "Yes; it is dead cow. All meat is dead animals. Now give us a rest."

"Yes, it's all dead, but some of it is a whole lot deader than you imagine. I've been investigating the packing business, and I'll tell you all about corned beef and wienies." He then went on with a lot of sickening details and when he got through he found that the younger men had not eaten any dinner. The older men paid no attention to him and worked right ahead to the pie and toothpick stage, but the younger fellows had been euchred out of dinner and went back to work with wabbly steps and empty stomachs.

This convinced me that the investigator was a false alarm. If corned beef was poison, as he said, there wouldn't be a working man alive in America. But millions have eaten corned beef all their lives and have thrived on it. Things are never one tenth so bad as the agitators say. They merely take the heart out of men and send them back to work weakened and unhappy.

This fellow had a favorite joke which he sprang every meal. After sniffing at the soup and meat and cabbage he would exclaim: "Hebrews, 13−8." We thought it was some jibe about the fat pork, and after he had sprung it every day for a week we learned that he was hitting at the monotony of the diet. The verse in the Bible reads:

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to−day, and forever."

The fellow came into the mills and sympathized with us because we worked with our shirts off. To withstand the heat we stripped to the waist. We didn't want to wear a shirt. It would have clung to our flesh and hampered our moving muscles. We were freer and cooler without any cloth to smother us. It was a privilege to go shirtless. Adam enjoyed that blessing in the Garden of Eden. And when he sinned they punished him by putting a shirt, collar and necktie on him. And yet this theorist in the mills demanded working conditions that would let us wear shirts. Why? Who was asking for shirts? Only he, and he had a shirt. In their own words, the fellows would have enjoyed making him eat it.

CHAPTER XXXV. AN UPLIFTER RULED BY ENVY

The uplifter saw the men between heats drinking beer out of tin pails.

"Why do those big fine fellows drink beer," he asked me, "when they have plenty of water?"

I asked him: "Why don't you drink beer?"

"It makes me bilious," he replied. "If I drink one glass of beer every day for a week it upsets me and I get weak and dizzy."

"Do you think that one drink of beer a day will upset those fellows and make them dizzy?"

"Evidently not."

"Then when you oppose beer you are doing it to keep yourself from getting sick, aren't you? Do you really care a darn whether those fellows get sick at the stomach or not?"

"Certainly, I−−"

"You don't want them to get sick at the stomach ?"

"Then, why did you give that lecture on corned beef and make those strong fellows all sick at the stomach while you enjoyed your own dinner?"

"I didn't know it would disturb them so. Besides I wanted to keep them from getting sick later."

"Well, they prefer to have their health now, and wait for their sickness until later on. You are doing no man a favor by making him sick when he is feeling well. If God is willing for them to be well, and they want to be well, and the only thing that keeps them from being well is you, aren't you afraid that they will pile on to you and knock the daylights out of you?"

"I am really working for their good."

"Then you want their stomachs to have what agrees with them?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I'll tell you something, then. Water doesn't always agree with the stomach as well as beer does. You never worked at terrific muscular exertion handling white−hot iron in a mill like this. You haven't got the muscles to do it, and I doubt if you've got the heart. You can not know the condition a man is in when he hits his hardest lick here. But they know, and I know. Some of the men feel they can't drink water at that time. My pal tells me that his stomach rejects it; his throat seems to collapse as he gulps it. But beer he can drink and it eases him. The alcohol in beer is a blessing at that time. It soothes his laboring stomach until the water can get into his system and quench the man's thirst. Iron workers in the Old World have used malt beverages for generations. Why take away the other man's pleasure if it doesn't injure you? If it was deadly we would have been weakened in the course of generations. But look at the worker's body. It is four times as strong as yours." I saw an envious look in his eye.

"Of course I inherited my muscular build," I apologized, "and so I try to make the most of it in boasting to you fellows who haven't any muscle. But really I envy you. You have education and brain power. That's what I lack and that's what I want above all other things. I try to study at night and educate myself. But I haven't got any chance against you fellows who are born intellectual and have college training on top of it. So if I have talked sharp to you, my cussedness is really due to envy. I really want to be in your shoes, and I haven't got the brains for the job."

This worked.

"There is nothing about me for a fellow like you to envy," he said condescendingly. "I'm no better off than you are. In fact, I envy you fellows. You are never sick; you can eat and digest anything. I really envy you. You are built like a young Hercules and are never ashamed when you strip. When I put on a bathing suit I am embarrassed until I get out of sight in the water, because I'm all skin and bones. My arms and legs are the size of broomsticks."

"Oh, well," I said, "you're just as well off without the Hercules shape. You are always healthy."

"Healthy? What I call health, you fellows would regard as the last stages of decrepitude. A little beer and tobacco knocks me over. If I drank coffee and ate pie the way you do, I'd have to take morphine to get a night's sleep. You fellows need never envy us intellectuals. You can drink and smoke and eat anything, and all the

poisons you take in are sweated out of your pores in this terrific labor, so that every night you come out as clean and lusty as a new−born child. I'd swap all my education in a minute for the mighty body and the healthy and lusty living that you enjoy. If you knew how much I envy you, you would never think of envying me."

He had blurted out the truth. It wasn't love of comrades that gave a motive to his life. It was envy that turned him inside out. Envy was the whole story, and he admitted it.

CHAPTER XXXVI. GROWLING FOR THE BOSSES' BLOOD

I thought I made a number of enemies among the men while I was head of the mill committee. When a man dissipated and afterward came back to work, trembling and weak, the boss would refuse to let him take up his tools, but would lay the man off for a few days. The man usually thought this a useless and cruel punishment; and to lose a few days' wages would make him all the poorer.

The man thus laid off would come to me and ask that I get him reinstated.

"Tell 'em you'll call a strike," the man would say. "Tell 'em that if they don't let me work, nobody will work."

I always refused to take such complaints to the office. I never approached the boss with a demand that I did not think was right. Some of the men thought we ought to be vindictive and take every opportunity to put a crimp in the business for the owners. I envied the owners (we've all got a touch of that in our system), because they were rich and were making profits. I knew what their profits averaged. By calling fussy little strikes often enough I could have kept the profits close to the zero mark. Thus the men would be making wages out of the business and the owners would be making nothing. But I declined to let my actions be governed by envy. The Ten Commandments forbid covetousness. The Golden Rule also forbade my practicing sabotage. And I have never tried to find a better guide than the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule. The test of my misconduct would have come when, having cleverly destroyed their profits, I found them quitting in discouragement, closing up the business and throwing us all out of our jobs for keeps.

I tried to point out these things to the men. Some of them felt as I did about it. Others couldn't see it. So I learned darn early in life that you can't reform 'em all.

I used to say to the complaining man:

"Look here, Bill; you're in no shape to work. Go home and lie down for a couple of days. You wouldn't last here two hours in your present shaky condition. You'd pinch the rolls with your tongs and probably get your neck broke. That's why they won't let you work. You can't work. So back to your bed, Bill, we will not call them out to−day."

Bill usually went away cursing me as the friend of the "plutes" and the enemy of labor. "I'll get you yet," he'd say, "you black− headed buzzard."

And so while I was making enemies among many of the men who thought I wasn't standing up for their rights, I was making myself even more unpopular with the owners by sticking up too firmly for the rights of the men. They told me they believed I knew as much about the tin plate business as any man in the trade. This knowledge would enable me to do better in the distributing end of the business, while as a worker I could only make the union wages that all the fellows were getting. This gave me an idea that has since become the dominating purpose of my life. Handicraft is the basis of the best schooling. By working with my hands as well as with my head I learned the actual cost of production of every kind of plate they put out. This was something that I could not have learned from books. Without such knowledge the business would have to be run partly on guesswork. With a thorough knowledge of the production end of the business I became a valuable man. The way was open for me to get out of the labor field and into the field of management.

But here is where my natural feeling of fraternity stepped in. I liked to be among the men. I felt at home there. I was only twenty−two, and salesmanship was a field I had never tried, except for a season when I sold Mark Twain's book, Following the Equator. There were plenty of men who had the knack of selling. My natural gift, if I had any, was to smooth the path for working men and help them solve their problems. I had learned that labor was the first step on the road to knowledge. It was the foundation of all true knowledge. I wanted to help the fellows take the next step. That step would be to learn how labor can enrich itself and do away with strikes and unemployment. That is a question that still fascinates me. I did not care to dodge it and become a manufacturer. I am the kind of fellow who, when he takes hold of a question, never lets go. The picture of Comrade Bannerman shaking his fist at the trainload of "plutes" lingered with me. I still heard the voice of the knock−kneed reformer who envied my husky limbs. The cry for bloody revolution was already in the air. When would the mob be started and what would it do? When Comrade Bannerman had robbed the rich and piled their corpses in a Caesar's column, would not the knock−kneed uplifter break my legs in making all men equal? These men were moved by

envy and they lusted for blood. I faced the problem with a thirst for accurate knowledge, and my passion was not for bloodshed but for brotherhood.

CHAPTER XXXVII. FREE AND UNLIMITED COINAGE

It was during the panic in 1894 that the strike vote was defeated. We worked on until the first of July, 1896, when our agreement expired. By that time the tin mill was on its feet. The town of Elwood had grown from a country cross−roads to a city of the first class. As president of the union, I had steadily gained concessions for the workers. We were getting paid every two weeks. It is not practical to pay oftener in the tin trade. A man's work has to be measured and weighed, and the plate he rolls on Saturday can not be cut and measured in time for him to get his pay for it that week. For the pay envelope is handed to him Saturday noon, and his Saturday's rolling will not go through the cutter until Monday. He can not be paid for it until it is in shape to be measured. So we were satisfied to be paid twice a month.

But the mill was now making big profits and we demanded a raise in pay. The mill owners countered by refusing to "recognize" the union. They would deal with the men only as individuals. A strike was called, and the union won. We recovered our raise in pay and signed a new contract. The strike was off in September after two long months of idleness, and within a few days after the dust had settled we smelt the fireworks of political oratory. I am telling it now as it appeared to me then, and of course I beg the indulgence of those concerned.

Bryan, the bearcat of the Nebraska ranches, had roared with his ears back, and the land was in a tumult. "Coin's Financial School" had already taught the people that the "gold−bugs" owned the country and that the people could save themselves from eternal serfdom only by changing the color of their money. Bryan told the westerners that the East was the "enemy's country" and that the gold standard was a game by which the East was robbing the West, and the only way the people of the West could save themselves was to move East and clip bonds or else change the color of the money!

This is the way it looked to me as a working man, and I hope my good friend Bryan will pardon me for writing of his "great paramount issue" in a joking way. For after all it was a joke, a harmless joke−−because we didn't adopt it. I got excited by the threatened "remedy" and went into politics. While the tin trade was on strike, crazy propagandists from everywhere poured into Elwood and began teaching the men bi−metalism, communism, bolshevism and anarchy. A communist propagandist is like a disease germ; he doesn't belong in healthy bodies. If he gets in he can't increase and is soon thrown out again. But let a strike weaken the body of workers, and the germs swarm in and start their scarlet fever.

As soon as the strike was won, I threw myself into the task of combatting the rising tide of class hatred led by Bryan, representing agrarians in a fight against bankers and industrialists. I was chairman of the mill workers' Sound Money Club. Bryan was running for president on a platform declaring that the laboring man should "not be crucified upon a cross of gold." No laboring man wanted to be. I was on the same side of the fence with Bryan when it came to the crucifixion question, but on the opposite side of the fence regarding the gold question. Of course I knew little about finance, and could not answer the Nebraskan. But had he advocated the free and unlimited coinage of pig−iron I could have talked him into a gasping hysteria. For, we mill fellows figured that this was exactly what Bryan's money theory amounted to. His farmer friends had borrowed gold money from the bankers, spent it in drought years plowing land that produced nothing, and then found themselves unable to pay it back. They wanted to call silver and paper cash and pay the debt with this new kind of money. He wanted a money system by which a farmer could borrow money to put in his crop, then having failed to raise a crop (I have mentioned the great drought years) could yet pay back the money. But no farming nation can suffer great crop losses without being set back financially and starved to where it hurts. You've got to figure God's laws into your human calculations.

"Bryan might as well try to dodge the hungry days by advocating the free and unlimited coinage of tomato cans," is the way one of the fellows put it; "then every man could borrow a dollar and buy a can of tomatoes. After eating the tomatoes he could coin the can into a dollar and buy another can of tomatoes. And so on until he got too old to eat, and then he could use the last dollar from the tin can in paying back the banker." Schemes like that are all right for orators and agitators who make their living with words. But farmers and iron workers know what it is that turns clods into corn and what makes the iron wheels that bear it to market. It is muscle applied with the favor of God.

Without labor, no crops. Without rain, no crops. It was world−wide crop failures that finally brought the lean years of the nineties. The return of big crops was already reviving the sick world. It rejected the radicals' "remedy" and next year it was well. Had we taken that wrong medicine in the dark it would have killed us. Thirty years later Russia let them shoot that medicine into her arm and it paralyzed her. The rain falls upon her fields and the soil is rich, but it brings forth no harvest and the people starve.

Russia has had famines before, but they were acts of God. The rain failed and there was no harvest. Their present famine is an act of man. Labor ceased. And the ensuing hunger was man's own fault. Nations that think labor is a curse, and adopt schemes to avoid labor, must perish for their folly.

In 1896 we came within an inch of adopting financial bolshevism. This taught me that a people are poorly schooled who can not tell the good from the bad. The wise heads knew what was good for the country. Hard work and good crops would cure our ills. But millions voted for a poison that would have destroyed us. From that time on I dreamed of a new kind of school, not the kind we had that turned out men to grope blindly between good and folly. But a school based on the fundamental facts of life and labor, the need of food and housing, and the sweating skill that brings man most of his blessings. A school from which no man could come out ignorant. That school should teach the eternal facts, and he that denied the facts would then be known for a fool or a rogue−−and not be thought a Messiah.

I love sentiment, and I believe in God. And I believe that facts are God's glorious handiwork. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free." The man who shuns realities because they belittle him is on the wrong road; he is hopelessly lost from the beginning.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. THE EDITOR GETS MY GOAT

Madison county, Indiana, was a Democratic stronghold outside the mill towns, and a few farming townships. Free silver orators were telling the farmers that under a gold standard no factory could run. The farmers could see the smoke of the tin mills which had built a great city just beyond their corn−fields. The silver men explained that smoke as "a dummy factory set up by Mark Hanna with Wall Street money to make a smoke and fool the people into thinking that it was a real factory and that industry was reviving under a Republican tariff." The orators said the best proof that it was a sham mill lay in the fact that the plutocrats claimed it was a tin mill, while "everybody knows it is impossible to manufacture tin plate in America."

My method of getting votes for the tariff was to take young Democrats from the mill and transport them to Democratic rallies in the far corner of the county where they heard their Democratic orators saying that the mill was a sham put up to fool voters and that it was not manufacturing any tin. When the young Democrats heard such rot they turned against their party. They were farm boys who had been brought up in that county and had quit the farm and gone into the tin mill because they could earn twice as much making tin as they could farming. A worker at work is hard−headed enough to know that when an orator tells him he is not working and not earning any money, the orator is an ass. These lies about fake factories hurt the Democrats by turning all the mill Democrats into Republicans. This is the only method I have ever used in campaigning. The Republicans carried the town. When, two years later, I ran for city clerk, they passed around the rumor that I was a wild Welshman from a land where the tribes lived in caves and wore leather skirts and wooden shoes, and that I had had my first introduction to a pants−wearing people when I came to America. They said that I had not yet learned to speak English, could not spell my own name, and was unable to count above ten.

These charges printed in the opposition paper offered me my only chance for election. I went to all my meetings with a big slate. I asked my audience to call out numbers. I wrote down the figures and then did sums in arithmetic to prove that I could count. I would ask if there was a school−teacher in the audience (there was always one there). He would rise, and I would ask him to verify my calculations. I would also have him ask me to spell words. He would give me such words as "combustion," "garbage disposal," "bonded indebtedness" and so on. I would spell the words and write them on the slate. He would then ask me questions in history, geography and political economy. Then the school− teacher would turn to the crowd and say:

"Friends, I came to this meeting because I had read that Mr. Davis is an ignorant foreigner unfitted for the duties of city clerk. I find to my surprise that he is well informed. I am glad we came here and investigated, for we can all rest assured that if he is elected to the office, he is entirely capable of filling it."

I handled the money and kept the books for the union, and this work in addition to my campaign efforts wore me down at last. Two nights before the election I decided that I had small chance of winning. I was on the Republican ticket, and the Republicans had been in office four years and their administration had proved unfortunate. There had been rich pickings for contractors in that new and overgrown city, and the people blamed the Republicans and were determined on a change.

I was passing the office of the opposition editor late at night after canvassing for votes all day. I thought of the nasty slurs he had written about me and my whole ancestry. I had fought hard to educate myself and had been helpful to others. My self−respect revolted under this editor's malicious goading. I happened to see him in his front office, and on a sudden impulse, I went in, took hold of his collar, and gave him a good licking.

The next day he bawled me out worse than ever. He said I was not only a wild Welshman and a blockhead, but what is more deadly still, I was a gorilla and an assassin.

And the next day I was elected.

CHAPTER XXXIX. PUTTING JAZZ INTO THE CAMPAIGN

I will go back and relate more details of my race for office. Having won the nomination, I thrilled with pleasure and excitement, but I was at a loss as to how to begin my campaign for election. Should I hope for support among the white−collar classes in the "swell" end of town, among the merchants and mill owners or only in the quarter where the workers lived?

The first act of a candidate is to have cards printed and pass them out to every one he meets. My cards bore my name and my slogan: "Play the game square." I argued that the workers should take part in the city government. I quit the tin mill and went around making speeches. And as there were no movies, and the men had nothing to do evenings but listen to speeches, it was no trouble at all to find an audience. I learned that a politician or an orator has the same appetite for audiences that a drunkard has for gin. When is an orator not an orator? When he hasn't got an audience. I found that when a horse fell down on the street and a crowd gathered to pick it up, somebody began "addressing the gathering on the issues of the day."

Now I know why the cranks from everywhere swarm into any region where a strike is on. They are seeking audiences. They have no love for humanity except that portion of humanity which is forced to be an audience for their itching tongues. I have known rich Jawbone Janes to travel half across the continent to harangue a poor bunch of striking hunyaks. These daughters of luxury wanted one luxury that money could not buy. The luxury of chinning their drivel to an audience. You can't buy audiences as you buy orchids and furs. Accidents make audiences. When a horse falls down and a crowd gathers, he'll be up again and the crowd gone before a girl from Riverside Drive can come a hundred miles in a Pullman. But when the job falls down, the strike crowd sticks together for days. This gives the crack−brained lady opportunity to catch the Transcontinental limited and get there in time to pound their ears with her oratory. She prefers a foreign crowd that can not understand English; they are slower to balk on her. Not understanding what she says, it fails to irritate them greatly. I know of one radical rich girl who boasts she has spread the glad tidings to audiences of thousands representing every foreign language in America. She still hopes some time to catch an audience that understands her own language. That would be a little better fun, she thinks; but still the joy of talking is the main thing, so it matters little whether their audience understands. She wants her audiences to be alive, that's all; she doesn't care much what they're alive with.

When the worker comes to understand that these "leaders" from high society care nothing for him but only want a prominence for themselves and have no natural talents with which to earn that prominence, then the worker will get rid of that tribe forever. Bill Haywood lacked the qualities that made Sam Gompers a labor leader. Bill decided to be a leader without qualifying for it, and history tells the rest.

I circulated among the audiences that were listening to other candidates and waited for the men to express their opinions. I heard one stalwart old fellow declare he was going to vote for Jazz. "Jazz is the fellow we want for City Clerk," I heard him tell his comrades. I had never heard of Jazz in those days: Jazz was decidedly a dark horse. But the man was strong for him and wanted his friends to vote the same way.

There is a trick that was often used in small−town elections. When the "reform element" made a fight on the "old gang" it was customary for the gang to lie down and place the name of the new man on the ticket. The reformer thought the gang beaten and that his own election was sure, so he didn't make a hard campaign. But the gang quietly passed around word to scratch the name of the reformer and to write in the name of a gang candidate in the secrecy of the polling booth.

Was this trick being played on me? Were they now passing around the word to scratch me and write in the name of their friend, Jazz, who had not come out as a candidate before? I edged in closer to the man who was boosting Mr. Jazz for my job, and after listening for a while I learned that "Jazz Davis" was the man he was electioneering for. He caught sight of my face and said: "There he is now."

"My name isn't Jazz," I said. I handed him my card. It read:

JAS. J. DAVIS

"What is it then?" he asked.

I saw that I would lose a vote if I humiliated him. So I laughed and said: "Yep, I'm him. I was just kidding. I'm

mighty glad to have your support. Have a cigar."

But I went away worried. My personal friends knew me as Jimmy. The men electioneered and handed cards to thought my name was Jazz. On the ballot my name would appear JAMES. Between "Jimmy," "Jim," "James" and Jazz" my fellows would find lots of room for confusion. Every vote that I lost on that account would be due to my own carelessness.

It taught me the lesson of exactness. I never again put out any puzzling language, but tried to stick to words that could not be misunderstood.

CHAPTER XL. FATHER TOOK ME SERIOUSLY

There was an interval of nearly five months between the time of my election, which was in May, and the date of taking office in September. I decided to use this time to improve my qualifications for the job. I returned to the old home town of Sharon and took a course in a business college. Again I walked the old familiar paths where as a boy I had roamed the woods, fished the streams, brought the cows along the dusty road from pasture and blacked the boots of the traveling dudes at the hotel.

There is a great thrill for the young man who comes home with a heart beating high with triumph, to see the love and admiration in his parents' eyes. Father shook my hand and said. "You're a good boy, Jimmy, and I'm proud of you. I always knew you'd make your mark."

"I haven't made much of a mark, dad," I laughed. "City clerk isn't much. County recorder is what I'm aiming for." In fact, I had gone so far as to dream of being auditor of the state of Indiana.

A jolly old uncle who was there and who was looked on as the sage and wit of the Welsh settlement, began kidding me.

"From city clerk to county recorder is only a step, Jimmy," he said. "Next you'll be governor, and then president."

Father took it seriously.

"You'll never be president, lad," he said, "because you wasn't born in this country." He seemed to think that was the only reason. He turned to my uncle and explained regretfully: "Of all my boys, only one has got the full American birthright. My youngest boy, Will, is the only one that can be president."

"Well," said the jolly old uncle, "the rest of 'em can be government officers."

Even this joke father took as a sober possibility. I saw then the full reason why he came to America. He wanted to give his boys boundless opportunities. A humble man himself, he had made all his sacrifices to broaden the chances for his children. This was a lesson to me. I could not repay him. I could only resolve to follow his example, to stand for a square deal for children everywhere.

Mother was as pleased with my humble success as was father. When I sat down to the table she apologized for her cooking and said:

"After the fine food you have been eating in the big hotels, you will find our table pretty common."

"You're wrong, mother," I said. "The best food I ever had I got right here at your table. You've never lived in boarding−houses, but father has. He knows that it's a rough life, and they don't feed you on delicacies. Hotel cookery is not like the cookery in the Old World. Over there they make each dish as tasty as they can, and good eating is one of the main objects in life. But Americans don't like to eat. They begrudge the time they have to spend at the table. They get it over as soon as they can. They seem to take it like medicine; the worse the medicine tastes, the better it is for them. An egg is something that is pretty hard to spoil in the cooking. Yet some of these boarding−house cooks are such masters of the art that they can fix up a plate of steak, eggs and potatoes and make them all as tasteless as a chip of wood. I've had this kind of fare for the last few years, and getting back to your table is the best part of home−coming."

Father was still a puddler, and to show my appreciation of all he had done for me, I went into the mill every afternoon that summer and worked a heat or two for him while he went home and rested in the shade.

The workout did me good. It kept my body vigorous and cleared my brain so that my studies were easy for me, and I advanced with my education faster than ever before.

This proved to me that schooling should combine the book stuff with the shop work. Instead of interfering with each other, they help each other. The hand work makes the books seem more enjoyable.

CHAPTER XLI. A PAVING CONTRACTOR PUTS ME ON THE PAVING

I was the only Republican elected that year. But for this exception the Democrats would have made a clean sweep of the city. If the editor had not charged me with being illiterate I would neither have been nominated nor elected. When I appeared before audiences in the "swell end" of town and wrote my lessons on my little slate, I gained their sympathy. They believed in fair play. And I found I had not lost their support by thrashing the editor.

Nearly all of the mill workers in Elwood voted for me. I supposed that I had made many personal enemies among the men by refusing to take their grievances up with the bosses when I thought the men were wrong. But the election proved they were my friends after all. The confidence of my own fellows pleased me greatly. Later on, the men as a further token of their good will clubbed together and gave me a gold watch. This gave me greater joy, no doubt, than Napoleon felt when, with his own hand, he placed a gold crown upon his head.

When it came time to qualify and be sworn into office I found trouble. The Republican boss was disgruntled because only one Republican was elected while the Democrats got everything else. He wanted me to give up the office. "Let the tail go with the hide," he said. "Let 'em have it all." His idea was to give the Democrats a closed family circle, so that when temptation came along, they would feel safe in falling for it. He feared that a Republican in the house to watch them would scare them away from the bait. He wanted them to take bribes and be ruined by the scandal, and that would bring the Republicans back to power. It was a good enough way to "turn the rogues out" by first letting them become rogues, but my heart was not set on party success only. I believed in protecting the public. So I went ahead and got bondsmen to qualify me. But as often as I got men to sign my bond, the boss went them and got them off again. A firm of lawyers, Greenlee Call, stood by me in my struggle to make my bond. These men were ten years older than I. I was twenty−five. They acted as godfathers to me. They gave me the use of their library, and throughout my term as city clerk I spent my nights poring over their law books. I became well grounded in municipal law and municipal finance. I was able to pay back their kindness some years later when C. M. Greenlee aspired to be judge of the Superior Court of Madison County. I went to the convention as a delegate and worked hard for Judge Greenlee until he was nominated, and elected.

The city administration of which I was a member let many contracts. As I said before, a cross−roads town had become a city and there were miles of paving and sewer to put in, and scores of public buildings to go up. Old Francis Harbit was the Democratic mayor, and he didn't intend that the contractors should graft on the city nor give boodle to the officials. I remember one stirring occasion. There was a big contract for sewers to be let, and if a certain bid should go through, the contractor would profit greatly. Big Jeff Rowley (I'll call him) was the grafting contractor who had ruined the Republican administration. He was six feet, two inches tall in his stocking feet. He had put in his sealed bid and then had approached everybody with his proposition. His overtures were scorned and he was told that we were not out for boodle but were "playing the game on the square" (that had been my campaign slogan). It finally dawned on the corrupt old bully that the lowest bid would get the contract. He then came into my office and took down his bid to revise it. It was such a big contract that he could not afford to lose it. I told him that if his bid was not back in time I would so note it.

Bids were to be opened that night and read by me before the mayor and council. I was familiar with every detail of the law governing municipal bonds and contract letting. We had advertised that bids must be filed before seven−thirty that evening. Big Jeff took down his bid at seven−fifteen and filed his new bid at seven forty−five; fifteen minutes after the legal time limit.

The council was in session and hundreds of citizens were there to protest against any more deals in letting contracts at exorbitant prices. I opened and read aloud the various bids, including that of the big boss, Jeff Rowley, adding that Jeff's bid had been filed too late to be legal.

"You lie!" he screamed. "You're a Welsh liar, and I'll kill you for this!" The threat was heard by the council and the citizens. But the man seemed so terrible that no one dared reprimand him.

A few moments later the city attorney sent down to the clerk's office for some blanks. Jeff was waiting behind a corner of the hall. He hit me a blow in the neck that knocked me four yards. It was the "rabbit blow" and he expected it to break my neck. The hard muscles that the puddling furnace put there saved my life. I sprang up, and he came after me again. I seized the big fellow by the ankles and threw him down. Then I battered his head

against the floor until I was satisfied that he could do me no more harm. He went home and took to his bed.

He announced that when he got out he would charge me with assault. I went before the mayor and offered to plead guilty to such a charge. The mayor protested against it. He said I had done the right thing in protecting the honor of the city, and that the citizens would not permit my action to cost me money. The local banker took up a collection to pay my fine in case a fine should be assessed against me.

My salary as city clerk was forty dollars a month. My wages in the tin mill were seven dollars a day. A week in the mill would have brought me more than a month's pay in the city office. But I hoped the clerkship would lead to something better.

One incident that happened while I was city clerk I have already related. The city attorney almost sent a man to jail because he couldn't understand the lawyer's questions. I put the lawyer's language into simpler words, and the man then understood and quickly cleared himself of the charge against him. At another time, the mill owners petitioned for the vacation of an alley because they wanted to build a railroad switch there to give access to a loading−out station of the mill.

"I suppose," their representative told me, "that since this would be a favor to the mill, and you were opposed by the mill owners, you will hand it to us in this matter."

"Why should I?" I asked. "Don't you think you ought to have this alley?"

"Certainly we do, or we wouldn't have asked for it."

"Do you think the city needs the alley worse than you do?"

"No. It is an alley only on paper. There are no residences there and nobody needs the alley but us."

"But you think because I am a labor man and you are a mill owner, and you and I have had many hot fights over wage questions, that I will fight you on this just for spite?"

"Such things have been done."

"Well, I am not spiteful. Many a time I have made the men mad at me by being fair to you. Spite and malice should have no place in dealings between employer and employee. If you had a chance, would you give the men a dirty deal just for spite?"

"We're business men," he said. "And we never act through malice, but we often expect it from the other side."

"Well, don't expect it from me. As a city official my whole duty is to the city. If we give you that railroad switch it will help the mill and can't hurt the city. Without your mills there would be no city here, and all the alleys would be vacated, with grass growing in them. If I took advantage of my city job to oppress your mill business, I would be two kinds of a scoundrel, a public scoundrel and a private one. I favor the vacation of the alley and when the council meets next Wednesday I am sure they will do this for you."

CHAPTER XLII. THE EVERLASTING MORALIZER

I played the game fair throughout my term of office. I hate dishonesty instinctively. I like the approval of my own conscience and the approval of men. This is egotism, of course. I claim nothing else for it. I am no prophet. I do not claim to be inspired. The weaknesses that all flesh is heir to, I am not immune from. I write this story not to vindicate my own wit nor to point out new paths for human thought to follow. I am a follower of the old trails, an endorser of the old maxims. I merely add my voice to the thousands who have testified before me that the old truths are the only truths, and they are all the guidance that we need. I am an educator of the young, not an astounder of the old; and it is for the boys and girls who read my book that I thus point the morals that life's tale has taught me.

Had I proved unfaithful in my first office I could not have gone to higher offices. My opponents would have "had something on me." As secretary of labor, I am called on to settle strikes and to adjust disputes between employers and employee. I could do nothing if either side distrusted me. But since both sides believe me to be honest, they get right down to brass tacks and discuss the cases on their merits only. Sometimes the employees ask too much, sometimes the employers. When either side goes too far I feel free to oppose it.

I approach each problem not only from the economic but from the human angle. I took my guidance from the words of President Harding, when he said:

"The human element comes first. I want the employers to understand the hopes and yearnings of the workers, and I want the wage earners to understand the burdens and anxieties of the wage payers, and all of them must understand their obligations to the people and to the republic. Out of this understanding will come social justice which is so essential to the highest human happiness."

The Labor Department has been able to settle, after candid argument, thousands of disputes saving millions of dollars for workers and employers and relieving the public from the great loss and inconvenience that comes with strikes and industrial war. I have but one aim, and that is justice. I know but one policy, and that is honesty. I am slow to reach decisions. I must hear both sides. I want the facts, and all the facts. When all the facts are in my mind the arguing ends; the judgment begins. I judge by conscience and am guided by the Golden Rule. Decision comes, and it is as nearly right as God has given me power to see the right.

Out of four thousand disputes handled by the Department, three thousand six hundred were settled. These directly involved approximately three and one−half million workers and indirectly many others. At first seventy per cent. of the cases were strikes before conciliation was requested. Now, in a majority of the cases presented, strikes and lockouts are prevented or speedily adjusted through our efforts.

This was due to perfect candor in talking. Honest opinions were honestly set forth. Both sides took confidence in each other, and both sides accepted my suggestions, believing them sincere and fair. And so I say to the young men that honesty is the best policy because it is the only policy that wins. The communists tell the young that honesty is not the best policy. They say that the rich man teaches the poor to be honest so that the rich can do all the stealing. They say that the moral code is "dope" given by the strong to paralyze the weak and keep them down. It is not so. Honesty is the power that lifts men and nations up to greatness. It is a law of nature just as surely as gravity is a natural law. But one is physical nature and the other moral nature. A fool can see that physical laws are eternal and unbreakable. The wise can see that the moral law is just as powerful and as everlasting.

Had I not won the people's confidence while I was city clerk of Elwood, Indiana, my public career would have ended there. But after four years in that office I aspired to be county recorder. The employers who once had feared that I would be unfair, now said, "Davis is the man for the job," and so I got their vote as well as the vote of the workers, and I was elected to that higher office by a great majority.

CHAPTER XLIII. FROM TIN WORKER TO SMALL CAPITALIST

During my term as county recorder at Anderson, Indiana, I saved money. I was unmarried and had no dissipations but books, and books cost little. I had lent money to several fellows who wanted to get a business education. By the year 1906, or ten years after I quit the mill, the money I had lent to men for their education in business colleges had all come back to me with interest. All my brothers had grown up and left home, and mother wrote that I ought not to send so much money to her as she had no use for it. Although unmarried, I had bought a house, and still had several thousand dollars of capital. So from time to time when some friend saw an opportunity to start a business in a small way, I backed him with a thousand dollars. My security in these cases was my knowledge of the man's character. Some of these ventures were in oil leases in which my chance of profits was good and they ranged from novelty manufacture down to weekly newspapers in which no great profit was possible. So many of the ventures thrived, that by the time I was forty I was rated as a prosperous young man. This gave me a great confidence in myself and in the institutions of this country. A land where a boy can enter the mills at eleven, learn two trades, acquire a sound business education and make a competence in his thirties is not such a bad country as the hot−headed Reds would have us believe. I was now launched on a business career and my investments were paying me much larger revenues than I could earn at my trade. It was a rule of the union that when a man ceased to work in the iron, steel or tin trades he forfeited his membership. However, the boys thought that Mahlon M. Garland−−a puddler who went to Congress−−and myself had done noteworthy service to the labor cause, and they passed a resolution permitting us to remain in the organization. Mr. Garland served six years in Congress and died during his term of office. I still carry my membership and pay my dues.

I was in France when the great Hindenburg offensive in the spring of 1916 overwhelmed the Allies. The French soldiers I met were worried and asked what word I brought them from America. I said: "I am an iron worker and can speak for the workers. Their hearts are in this cause. They will work as one man until all the iron in the mountains of America is hurled into the belly of the Huns."

The war was an iron war. The kaiser had the steel and the coal that move armies. France lacked these, and the Germans thought she was doomed. They cut the French railroads that would have brought the troops and munitions to defend Verdun. Then the Germans attacked this point in overwhelming numbers. But the French troops went to Verdun without the aid of railroads. The Germans did not dream that such a thing was possible. But America had given the world a new form of transportation, trains that run without rails and with−out coal. Motor−trucks, driven by gasoline, carried the troops and munitions to Verdun. And so, after all, the genius of America was there smiting the crown prince to his ruin long before the first American doughboy could set foot in France.

For years the names of oil king and iron master have been a hissing and a byword among the hot−heads in America. Yet oil king and iron master filled a world with motor lorries. The blessings these have brought to every man are more than he can measure. We mention this as one: They stopped the Germans at Verdun and saved our civilization. It was an iron war and our iron won.

My days were spent at forge and puddling furnace. The iron that I made is civilization's tools. I ride by night in metal bedrooms. I hear the bridges rumble underneath the wheels, and they are part of me. I see tall cities looking down from out the sky and know that I have given a rib to make those giants. I am a part of all I see, and life takes on an epic grandeur. I have done the best I could to build America.

If God has given it to the great captains to do more than the privates to make the plan and shout the order, shall I feel thankless for my share of glory? Shall I be envious and turn traitor and want to crucify the leaders that have blessed mankind?

I am content to occupy my secondary station, to do the things that I can do, and never to feel embittered because other men have gifts far surpassing mine.

CHAPTER XLIV. A CHANCE TO REALIZE A DREAM

On October 27, 1906, I joined the Loyal Order of Moose at Crawfordsville, Indiana, and a new chapter in my life began. The purpose of the Order was merely social, but its vast possibilities took my imagination by storm. For I believed that man's instinct for fraternity was a great reservoir of social energy which, if harnessed aright, could lift our civilization nearer to perfection.

On the night of my election and initiation to membership, the Supreme Lodge was in convention and they requested me to make a talk. I suggested a scheme to save the wastage of child life resulting from the death of parents and the scattering of their babies; and also to provide for the widows and aged. This problem had haunted me from boyhood when, as I have told, I was the bearer of death news to the widows and orphans of the mill town. I felt that the Loyal Order of Moose could cope with this problem. They elected me supreme organizer and put me in charge of the organization work, and after several years I showed so much zeal that the office of director general was created and I was put in full charge.

The Order was then nineteen years old, having been founded in St. Louis as chartered in 1888, in Louisville, Kentucky. It had thrived for a while and then dwindled. At the time I joined there were only two lodges surviving, with a total roll of some two hundred and forty−six members. I set to work with great enthusiasm, hoping to enroll a half million men. This would make the Order strong enough to insure a home and an education for all children left destitute by the death of members. In fancy I again beheld the vision of long trains of lodge men going to their yearly meeting, but this time, in a city of their own building, and over the gateway to this red−roofed town I saw the legend:

THE CITY OF HAPPY CHILDREN

But alas for dreams! Any one can have them, but their realization is not always possible. The men in the Moose before me had fought vainly for these high ideals. At the end of my first year as director general I had not made one−tenth the progress I had hoped for. Figuring on the rate of progress I was making, I saw that a lifetime would be too short to accomplish anything. It was then that I would have despaired, if my Welsh blood had not been so stubborn. I summoned new courage and went on with the work. At the end of the fourth year I began to see results from my preliminary efforts. The convention of 1910 showed that the membership was eighty thousand, distributed among three hundred and thirty−three lodges. It was resolved to start the actual work of founding an educational institution. A tax of two cents a week was laid on members and later increased to four cents. Land was bought, a building erected and in 1913 the school was dedicated by Thomas R. Marshall, Vice−President of the United States. There were eleven children established in the home. Soon the lodge membership increased enormously. Having passed the hundred thousand mark it swept on to the half million goal. The "Mooseheart idea," as we called it, had caught the imagination of the men. To−day the city of Mooseheart in the Fox River Valley, thirty−seven miles west of Chicago, is the home of more than a thousand fatherless children and one hundred and fifteen mothers who are there with their children, and several old men whose working days are over. The dream of the Moose has come true. In many ways the "City of Happy Childhood" is the most beautiful and the most wonderful city in the world.

CHAPTER XLV. THE DREAM COMES TRUE

What kind of school is Mooseheart? That can not be answered by making comparisons, for it is the only school of its kind. When the Moose committee met to decide what sort of school it would build, somebody suggested a normal school, a school to teach the young how to become teachers.

I objected. "The world is well supplied with teachers," I said. "Everybody wants to teach the other fellow what to do, but nobody cares to do it. Hand work will make a country rich and mouth work make it poor. All the speeches I have ever made have never added a dollar to the taxable value of America. But the tin and iron I wrought with my hands have helped make America the richest country in the world. The Indians were philosophers and orators; they could outtalk the white man every time. But the Indians had no houses and no clothes. They wouldn't work with their hands. A race that works with its hands has run the Indian off the earth. If we quit working now and try to live on philosophy, some race that still knows how to work will run us out of this country. The first law of civilized life is labor. Labor is the giver of all good things. Let us teach these orphans how to apply their labor, and after that all things will be added unto them."

And so we established a pre−vocational school where the young people are taught farming, carpentry, cement construction, blacksmithing, gas engine building and dozens of other fundamental trades that nourish our industrial life, a life that draws no nutriment from Greek or Latin. I am not opposed to literature and the classics. I make no war on the dead languages. The war that killed them did the business. Why should I come along and cut off their feet, when some one else has been there and cut off their heads? But as an educator I promote the industrial trades, because they educated and promoted me. I have done well in life, and if you ask me how I did it, I'm telling you. Industry first and literature afterward. And if you wish to see that kind of school in action, you can see it at Mooseheart, Illinois.

There is a school with more than a thousand students, boys and girls of various ages, ranging from one month to eighteen years. Some of the students were born there, the mother having been admitted with her youngsters soon after the loss of the father. Each lad will get an introduction to a dozen trades, and when he selects the one that fits him best, he will specialize in that and graduate at eighteen, prepared for life. This education is the gift of more than half a million foster fathers. The Moose are mostly working men, and so they equip their wards for industrial life, and then place them on the job.

A boy that knows how to build concrete houses will not have to sleep in haystacks. If every high−school boy in America was a carpenter and cement builder how long would the housing shortage last? "The birds of the air have their nests," says the Bible. And we know why they have them. Every bird knows how to build its nest. Nature teaches them their trade. But men must learn their trades in school. I visited a college once and saw how Greek was taught. They showed me a clay model of ancient Athens and pointed out the house that each philosopher and poet lived in thousands of years ago. "Where are the houses," I asked the graduates, "that you are going to live in to−morrow?" "Heaven only knows," they said. "We'll have to take our chances in the general scarcity; our fate is on the knees of the gods." The luck of the Mooseheart boy is not on the knees of the gods; it is in his own hands.

I visited the Latin department and heard of Rome's ancient grandeur. "The Romans," they told me, "were not philosophers, but builders. They built concrete roads to the ends of the earth. But their soldiers brought back malarial fever from Africa. It destroyed the builders and their secret perished with them. Eighty years ago concrete was rediscovered." I asked the students: "Do you know how to make concrete?" "I'll say we don't," they answered. And that's how much good their Latin education had done them.

The Mooseheart boys know how to make those concrete roads and how to build the motor−trucks that travel on them. "Transportation is civilization." We teach civilization at the Mooseheart school. We teach art, too. But what is art without civilization? The cave men were artists and drew pictures on their walls. But you can't eat pictures. There is a picture on every loaf of bread. You always slice the colored label off the loaf and eat the bread and throw the art away. The Russians quit work a few seasons ago, and now they are selling their art treasures cheap to the roughneck nations that stuck to the pick− ax and the plow. The moral is: Keep working and you'll get the chromo. This truth was taught at Mooseheart long before the Russians saw the point and awarded us their

picture gallery.

What I want to emphasize is that we are not opposed to art and literature. All men want them; need them. We teach how to get them.

CHAPTER XLVI. THE MOOSEHEART IDEA

The majority of the Moose are men in the mechanical trades. But the primary trade, the one on which all others rest, is agriculture. The men knew this, and so they founded Mooseheart on the soil. It is an agricultural school. It occupies more than a thousand acres in the richest farming region of Illinois. The first thing the students learn is that all wealth comes out of the earth. The babies play in the meadows and learn the names of flowers and birds. The heritage of childhood is the out−of−doors. I heard of some children in the city who found a mouse and thought it was a rabbit. But when the city−born children come to Mooseheart they come into their own. They trap rabbits and woodchucks, fight bumblebees' nests, wade and fish in the creek and go boating and swimming in the river and the clear lake.

When a boy gets old enough to leave the kindergarten and start in the primary school he mixes agricultural studies with his books. First he plants a small garden and tends it. Then he is taught to raise chickens. Next he learns swine husbandry and then dairying and the handling of horses. The girls learn poultry− raising, butter−making, gardening, cooking, dressmaking and millinery.

After the boy has had a general course in all the branches of agriculture he is permitted to specialize in any one of them if he wants to. He can make an exhaustive study of grain farming, dairying, stock breeding, bee culture, horticulture and landscape gardening.

After this grounding in agriculture, which all the boys must have, the student gets an introduction to the mechanical trades. Then he may select a particular trade and specialize. The usual grammar−school and high−school courses are taught to all the students, also swimming and dancing and music, both vocal and instrumental. The kindergarten has a babies' band, and both the girls and boys have their own brass bands and orchestras.

Students are graduated when they are eighteen. Up to that time they are permitted to stay and learn as many trades as they can. Learning comes easy in such a school as Mooseheart, and many of the boys go out with two or more finished trades. Music is one of the trades that the boys double in. We have graduated many fine musicians, but none who didn't know a mechanical trade as well and, on top of it all, he knew how to run a farm. Such a boy can serve his country in peace or war. Before men can eat they have to have food, and he knows how to raise it. To enjoy their food they must have a house to live in, and he knows how to build it. After a house and food comes music. This lad can play a tune for the cabaret.

One of Mooseheart's earliest graduates made a high record in his academic studies and mastered the trade of cook, pastry cook, nurseryman, cement modeler, cornetist, saxophone player and landscape gardener. He was brilliant in all these lines and ready to make a living at any one of them. And if all these trades should fail, he was yet a scientific farmer and could go to the land anywhere and make it produce bigger crops than the untrained man who was born on the soil.

What other school in the world will give a boy at eighteen an equipment like that? I ask this, not to disparage the old− fashioned schools, but to call their attention to what the new are doing.

CHAPTER XLVII. LIFE'S PROBLEMS

Mooseheart is at once a farm, a school and a town. The boys help handle the crops and herds under the guidance of the experts who teach the classes in agriculture. For extra work in the fields the boys receive pay. They save their money to buy the tools of their trade. The bandsmen when they graduate go out with fine instruments bought with their own earnings during their school years. "Preparation for life" is the one aim of Mooseheart. Therefore at Mooseheart the boy or girl will encounter every problem that he will encounter in his struggle in the wider world. Nothing is done for him that he can do for himself. He is taught no false theories. But every fact of life is placed before him in due time. The first wealth of facts comes to these city−bred children when they are set down in the middle of this great, busy, beautiful farm. John Burrows says: "No race that does not take to the soil can long hold its country. In the struggle for survival it will lose its country to some incoming race that loves the soil." Already the Japanese farmers in California have shown that if we should let them in they would take this whole country in a few years. They drive the American farmer out because they have a passion for the soil, and they turn their whole families in to till it. What is the answer? Teach our young to love the soil and to till it well, or else an alien race will take away their heritage. The first lesson in Mooseheart is to till the soil.

But in addition to being a farm, Mooseheart is a town. The young folk live in cottages and do their own cooking and house−keeping. There are no great dormitories where hundreds sleep, and no vast dining−room where they march in to the goose−step. We are preparing them for a free life, and the only place they use the goose−step is in the penitentiary. Mooseheart is a town instead of an institution. All "institutionalism" is cast away. In each cottage is a group of boys or a group of girls living under family conditions. They are not all of the same age; some are big and some are little, and the big ones look after the little ones. Each cottage has its own kitchen and orders its own supplies from the general store. The girls' cottages have each a matron (sometimes a widow who with her little ones has been admitted to Mooseheart), and she advises the girls how to do the buying and the cooking.

In the boys' cottages there is a proctor to advise them and usually a woman cook. The boys who care to can learn cookery and household buying under her supervision. All the boys do their own dishwashing, sweeping and bed−making. Once three boys about fourteen years old went on strike because the proctor asked them to scrub the dining−room floor on their knees. They thought this work would degrade them, and they started toward the superintendent's office. On the way they met me and told me their troubles.

"I think it is all right for a young man to scrub a floor on his knees," I said. "I've done it for my mother many a time. I have been a bootblack. But it didn't hurt my character. You are going to the superintendent for his opinion. He is a Harvard man, but he worked his way through school and one of his jobs was bellboy in a hotel. Had he been too proud to work as a servant he would never have gotten the education that makes him head of this great school. Didn't you ever scrub a floor on your knees? You can see the dirt come out with the suds and you can watch the grain of the wood appear, where before it was hidden by dust and grease. If you never saw that, you have missed something that I have seen many a time. To know how to scrub a floor is as much a part of your education as to know how to sandpaper a floor and varnish it. We could hire this work done better than you can do it, but that wouldn't be giving you a chance to learn the work. Now I'm not telling you boys to go back and do the work if you don't want to. Use your own judgment. But fellows that balk on a job never go far. A balky man is like a balky horse, everybody gets rid of him as quickly as they can. A quitter is never given a good job. They always keep him in a place where it doesn't make any difference whether he quits or not."

The leader of the boys said: "Aw, piffle, cut it out. We might as well be scrubbing the floor as listening to this talk. Come on, fellows." He led them back, one of them protesting that he would never scrub a floor for any man. He went ahead and scrubbed the floor still saying that he wouldn't. That lad was weaker than the leader. He went wherever he was led. The leader was a boy who made his own decisions. He was ashamed of calling off the strike, but he did it because he felt the strike was wrong.

This is the Mooseheart idea of education. Every boy must use his own judgment. He faces every fact that he will face in life, and by the time he is eighteen his judgment is as ripe as that of the much older average man. The Mooseheart boys are not selected students. They come from the humblest families, from homes that have been

wiped out early. But the training at Mooseheart is so well adapted to human needs that these orphans soon outstrip the children of the more fortunate classes. They become quick in initiative, sturdy in character and brilliant in scholarship. Visitors who come from boys' preparatory schools where the children of the rich are trained for college are amazed to find these sons of the working people so far ahead of the young aristocrats. The Mooseheart boys as a group have the others beaten in all the qualities that go to make a young man excellent. We have prepared them for life.

CHAPTER XLVIII. BUILDING A BETTER WORLD BY EDUCATION

And so the great dream of my life has been realized. In youth I saw the orphans of the worker scattered at a blow, little brothers and sisters doomed to a life of drudgery, and never to see one another again. No longer need such things be. The humblest worker can afford to join an association that guarantees a home and an education to his children. In Mooseheart the children are kept together. Family life goes on, and with it comes an education better than the rich man's son can buy.

As individuals, the Moose are not rich men, but in cooperation they are wealthy. They have a plant at Mooseheart now valued at five million dollars, and they provide a revenue of one million two hundred thousand a year to maintain and enlarge it. They received no endowment from state or nation. They wanted to protect their children and they found a way to do it. They based their system of education on the actual needs of men. They know what life is, for they have lived it. In mine and field and factory they had tasted the salty flavor of real things, and they built a school that has this flavor.

The war drove home a lesson that will forever make false education hateful to me. Education in the wrong direction can destroy a nation and wreck the happiness of the world. The German worker was taught that he would get rich, not by patient toil, but by taking by force the wealth that others had created.

On my return from France, where I had witnessed the Hindenburg drive into the heart of France, I addressed the Iron Workers in their national convention. "I am glad," I said, "that I was born an iron worker and not a Chancellor of Blood and Iron. For the iron I wrought has helped build up a civilization, while the German's 'Blood and Iron' has sought to destroy it.

"France stands knee−deep in her own blood while the iron of Germany is being hurled into her breast. Iron Workers of America, to you has God given the answer to the German thunderbolt. The iron of the republic shall beat down the iron of the kings. Wherever I walked behind the battle lines in France I told them I was an iron worker and I gave them this message for you:

"'The American iron worker will not fail you. We have been taught to believe in justice as the German believes in might. We will back up our soldiers with ships and guns until Kaiserisim is beaten. We will set the workers of Germany free−−free from their foul belief in murder and in kings. And when we have bound up our wounds we will build a new world that shall be a freer world than man has ever known.'

"I have dedicated my life to this purpose. We will build this freer world by the right instruction of our young. Education is of two kinds, one kind is good and the other is poison. A poisonous education took but one generation to turn the German working men into a race of blood−letters. Wrong education tears a nation down. Right education will build it up. One generation of right education will remake the world. Who will furnish this new education? I, for one, will do my share, and more. My heart is in this one cause, and my whole life from now on shall be devoted to it.

"You will hear me speaking for it on every rostrum and in every schoolhouse in America. I have been handicapped in life because I had no education. But it is better to have no education than a false one, for I was left free to know the truth when I found it. I went into the mills when I should have been in school. As a working man I have helped get better conditions for the worker. Think how much more I could have done if I had had an education. Your leaders have done much for the iron workers because they could see farther than the common man. The worker with an education can see far. He can judge quickly and be guided rightly, for he has knowledge to guide him. I have knelt and prayed to God to direct me. Now I know He has answered my prayer. My mission is to bring to the poor man's boy the ample education that the rich man gives his son. Equal education will make men equal in the gaining of wealth. Education is Democracy.

"A French soldier lay dying on the battle−field, and a comrade kneeling by him asked what last word he wished carried to his wife and children. And the dying man said with his last breath: 'Tell them that I gave my body to the earth, I gave my heart to France and I gave my soul to God.'

"And so I say to you in the spirit of the French soldier that this, my body, I will give at last back to the iron earth, in whose deep mines and smoking metal shops my muscles took their form. This heart of mine that beats for liberty and equality I give−−and give to its last beat−−to the cause of equal education for our young. And my

soul at last I shall render back unto my Maker knowing that I have served His cause as He has given me to see it."

CHAPTER XLIX. CONCLUSION

H. G. Wells has asked all scholars to unite in writing a "Bible of the New Education." I am no scholar, but if Wells will take suggestions from an iron puddler, I offer him these random thoughts.

This generation is rich because the preceding generation stored up lots of capital. We are living in the houses and using the railroads that our fathers built by working overtime.

When labor loafs on the job it makes itself poor. We are not building fast enough to keep ourselves housed. Were it not for the houses our fathers built this generation would be out−of− doors right now, with no roof but the sky.

No matter who owns the capital, capital works for everybody. Ford owns the flivver factory, but everybody owns the flivvers. The oil king owns the gasoline, but he has to tote it to the roadside where every one can get it. Equal division is the goal that capitalism constantly approaches. No man wants all the gasoline. He wants six gallons at a time, with a service station every few miles. Capital performs this service for him. Under "capitalism," soÄcalled wealth is more equally divided than under any other system ever known.

Work is a blessing, not a curse. This country had the good luck to be settled by the hardest workers in the world. Their big production made us rich. If we slacken production we will soon be poor. The Indians owned everything in common. They did not work. And they were so poor that this whole continent would support less than two million of them. Thousands of Indians used to starve and freeze to death every hard winter.

The white man who doesn't want to work is sick. He needs a dose of medicine, not a dose of the millennium. The Bible says that in the sweat of his face man shall eat bread. When labor loafs, it injures labor first and capital last. For labor grows poor to−day while the capitalist gets poor to−morrow. But to−morrow never comes. The capitalist can turn laborer and raise himself a mess of pork and beans.

The laborer who does not turn capitalist and have a house and garden for his old age is lacking in foresight.

Men will never be equal. John L. Sullivan had many fights, and John always whipped the other fellow, or the other fellow whipped John. When all men are equal, every prize fight will end in a draw, and every batter will knock as many home runs as Babe Ruth.

"There is enough already created to supply everybody if it were equally divided." Yes. And there is enough ice at the North Pole to cool off the Sahara Desert if it were equally divided. There is enough water in the seven seas to flood the six continents if it were equally divided.

The time to quit work and divide the wealth is just two weeks before the end of the world. For the world's surplus of supplies is just two weeks ahead of starvation. Wheat is being harvested in one country or another every week in the year. And yet with all the hard work that men can do, they can not boost the world's supply of bread so as to increase our two weeks' lead on the wolf of famine. The wolf is ever behind us only two weeks away. And if we stumble for a moment, he gets nearer.

American machinery enabled the western farmer to raise and harvest as much wheat as twenty Russian peasants. In India where wheat is raised by hand, the labor of one family will only feed one family. But in the Dakotas, the labor of one man will deliver in Chicago enough flour to feed three hundred men a year. This increase in man's power to produce wheat caused the world's population to double itself since McCormack invented the reaper. The Chinese and Hindu millions who would have starved to death, have been fed, and that's why they're with us to−day. The natural limit of population is starvation. The more bread the more mouths, less bread, fewer people. Europe and the Orient reached the starvation limit before America was settled. A bad crop meant a famine, and a famine started a plague. This plague and famine would sweep off a third of the population, and the rest could then raise food enough to thrive on. England and Wales have had famines, Ireland has had famines, France has had famines, Russia has a deadly famine after every bad crop year, while in India and China famine is a chronic condition.

America has never had a famine. But we are not exempt from famine. In the year 1816, known as the year of "eighteen−hundred− and−froze−to−death," the crops failed throughout America because of freezing weather all summer long. Little or no food was raised and the Americans would have perished from famine had it not been for the wild meat in the woods. The people lived on deer and bear that winter. To−day if our food supply fails we

can not live on venison. No country is by natural law exempt from famine. Our famine will come when we fill this country as thickly as men can stand; China and India have so filled themselves. Famine awaits us when we repeat their folly. That day will come soon unless we bar the unworthy from our gates.

But cold weather and crop failure are not the only things that could bring a famine in America. Slacking in production has the same effect as crop failure. A farmers' strike could bring a famine. A railroad strike could do the same. Many men advocate a combination farmers' strike and railroad strike to destroy capital (that is, to destroy the food supply). Don't get impatient, boys. You shall have your famine, if you will wait long enough. And the less work you do while you are waiting, the sooner it will come. Nature is never whipped. Nature will take a crack at you, if you leave an opening. The generation that went before you worked ten to fourteen hours a day; they battled face to face with a raw continent in their fight with Nature. And by their muscle they drove Nature back and she surrendered. She went down like crumpled Germany, and she signed a treaty. Hard were the treaty terms our fighting fathers made with Nature. They took an indemnity. She delivered to them more houses than her cyclones had destroyed, she furnished them millions of cattle in place of the wild deer and buffalo. She yielded up her coal regions to warm them in payment for the torture her winters had inflicted. By this treaty she gave them everything she had and promised to be good.

We are the inheritors of the good things of that peace treaty. We were born rich; we revel in the "reparations" that our fathers wrung from a conquered Nature. But Nature, like Germany, is not really whipped. If we relax, she will default on her payments. As long as Nature is not really whipped, her treaty is a scrap of paper. Nature, right now, is preparing for a come−back. She will not arm openly, for we would then arm to meet her. She is planning to attack us by a method that is new. She will weaken us by propaganda, and when we are helpless she will march over us at will.

Who then are the propagandists that Nature is using to undermine the race that conquered her? Communists, slackers, sick men and fools. The man who says let us "quit work and divide our cake and eat it" is opening the way for Nature to strike suddenly with a famine. The man who advocates "one big strike" to destroy our capital is the secret agent of starvation. Nature when up in arms can sweep men off like flies. She has always done it and she always will, unless man uses his intelligence and his cooperation to fight the evils in Nature and not to fight his fellow men.

"Capitalism," as the communists call it, is an imperfect system. But it is the only system that has banished famine. Under communism and feudalism there was hunger. Under capitalism the world has been able to feed twice as many mouths as could be fed before.

Capitalism found a world of wood and iron ore, and made it into a world of steel. How? It puddled the pig−iron until the dross was out, and the pure metal was bessemered into steel. Now the task is to purify men as we have purified metals. Men have dross in their nature. They break under civilization's load. A steel world is hopeless if men are pig−iron. There is greed and envy and malice in all of us. But also there is the real metal of brotherhood. Our task is to puddle out the impurities so that the true iron can be strong enough to hold our civilization up forever.

I have been a puddler of iron and I would be a puddler of men. Out of the best part of the iron I helped build a stronger world. Out of the best part of man's metal let us build a better society.

I have no new cure for the ills of humanity.

Life is a struggle, and rest is in the grave.

All nature is in commotion; there is wind and rain; and out of it comes seed harvest. The waters of the sea are poured in thunder wrack upon the hills and run in rivers back into the sea. The winds make weather, and weather profits man. When will man's turmoil cease, when will he find calm? I do not know. I only know that toil and struggle are sweet, and that life well lived is victory. And that calm is death.

Man must face an iron world, but he is iron to subdue it.

The lessons of my life were learned at the forge and I am grateful for my schooling.

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"Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
  For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of Life
  Our fortunes must be wrought,
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Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
  Each burning deed and thought"
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