

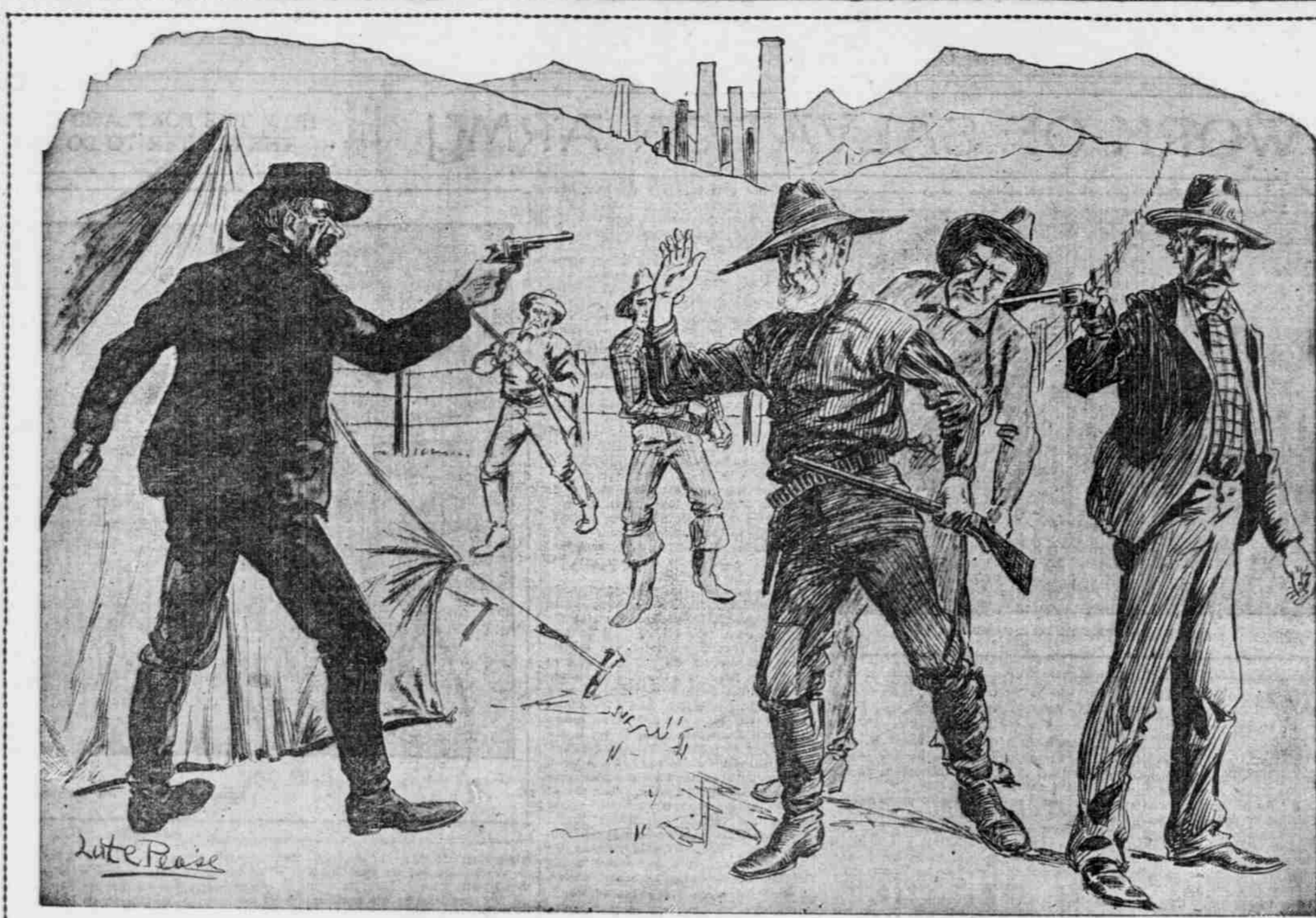
OVER ONE THOUSAND MEN IN CALIFORNIA SUSTAIN THEMSELVES IN IDLENESS

KEWICK, Cal., Dec. 30.—(Special Correspondence.)—A strike which has no parallel in the long history of labor troubles resulted on November 19 last in the complete shut-down of the immense plants of the Mountain Copper Company, Ltd., at Kewick and Iron Mountain, across the state line, in Shasta County, California, and for over a month not a wheel has turned in the big corporation's \$15,000,000 establishment. The 1100 employees quit to a man, and the story of the strike is so full of interesting incidents that it reads more like a romance of the "Looking Backward" type than a plain record of 20th century facts. The remoteness of the camp has thus far served to prevent the newspapers from getting anything save the most meager reports.

The strikers have taken absolute possession of the town of Kewick, have rented the hotels and lodging-houses, completely furnished, and comfortable quarters have been supplied without cost to all the men. This was done on December 5, when the company announced that it would not accede to the demands of the men, but would close its works down for 10 years, if necessary.

Everything Free. The result is that the strikers, in addition to quarters, have these things supplied them: If unmarried, they eat three meals a day at a great restaurant just equipped. If married, they draw regular rations of groceries, meats, etc., from a strike commissary, organized and conducted on a sort of military basis. They get free fuel. There are two barber-shops open day and night for their accommodation. Twice a day "sick call" is sounded and contract physicians attend to the ailing. Medicine also is free. Stamps and stationery are supplied to those who wish to do any correspondence. There is a free theater.

A STRIKE THAT HAS NO PARALLEL



A DEPUTY HAVING DRUNK TOO MUCH ATTEMPTED TO GO THROUGH THE PICKET LINE.

business in California, owns a refinery in Paterson, N. J., and has its own fleet of coal and coke-carrying ships. When it bought Iron Mountain—a misnomer, by the way, for the mountain is simply one great, inexhaustible mass of low-grade copper ore—there was no town of Kewick and no settlement of any sort in the vicinity.

Investment of \$4,000,000. The company sent over here as its general manager Lewis T. Wright and a large staff of assistants, all English. They opened mines at Iron Mountain, built the tremendous five-furnace smelter at Kewick, constructed a modern and fully equipped 13-mile railroad between them, and connected the smelter with the Southern Pacific by another road. It is said that they spent between \$5,000,000 and \$10,000,000 in making all these improve-

ments before ever a single ounce of ore was mined, and practical mining engineers who have seen the plant do not doubt the figures. But it proved a good investment, nevertheless. The percentage of copper ran only from 7 to 15 per cent, but there was a not inconsiderable amount of gold in every ton of ore, and during the past eight or 10 years the company has regularly been declaring large dividends. The money it has paid in taxes has not only supported Shasta County, but has given the county a surplus so big as to make it the envy of every other community in the state.

During all this time General Manager Wright employed nonunion men at both the mine and the smelter and on the connecting railroad. It was the one big nonunion camp in the West, and an eyesore to the labor organizations. The latter finally decided to take a hand in the matter, and the Western Federation of Miners sent B. F. Barbee, its organizer, to Kewick to form a union. He succeeded in doing this, but most of the work was done in secret, and it was some time before General Manager Wright and his staff knew what was going on. But as soon as he got wind of the affair he began to take retaliatory measures.

In the early part of November he in some way secured a list of the officers of the local union and some of its most active members, and by the middle of last month they had been dropped one by one from the company pay rolls. Among the first to go was John L. Donnelly, president of No. 143, who had been employed as a furnace feeder. There were individual protests in plenty, but a reason was given for every discharge—usually incompetence or insubordination to duty. Then, on November 13, to the utmost surprise of every man not in the secret, the men quit work. The day shift went off duty at 6 o'clock in the evening, announcing that they would not report for duty the next day, and the night shift stayed away altogether. In the space of 60 minutes the smelter, with its 15 towering stacks which had spouted fire by night and smoke by day without a moment's intermission since its first furnace was "blown in," lay silent in the big gulch, dying like some strange animal might die.

A STORY THAT READS LIKE A PAGE FROM "LOOKING BACKWARD"

leading into camp to warn away every man who might want to go to work. Nearly 200 men were on picket duty at a time, and this number has been slightly increased since. Of course trouble followed. Some strangers refused to be turned away from the camp, and these the strikers ducked in the Sacramento River and forced to board outgoing freight trains. Once they tackled a deputy by mistake, shooting followed, and there were arrests. Another time a Deputy, having drunk too much, attempted to go through a picket line with a big pistol in either hand. There was more shooting, but the weight of evidence in court was against the deputy, and he was sent to prison for two months by Justice of the Peace Thompson.

At Iron Mountain an unpopular boss was deliberately kidnapped, forced to walk to Kewick, and put aboard a train. He got off at Redding, swore out a score of warrants, and his assailants are out under heavy bail. Last week Thomas Cray, a smelter boss and special deputy, was assaulted, and in addition to causing the arrest of the men who attacked him, he had President Donnelly and Organizer Barbee taken into custody. They secured their liberty on \$5000 bail each, and will be tried December 23. The union is holding its men out as fast as they are arrested, and already it has furnished security to the amount of a small fortune. The company, too, is protecting its own employes in this way.

But it is not necessary to recount the many conflicts that have been brought about by the intense feeling on both sides, nor to give the detailed experience of the strike pickets in maintaining their iron-clad cordon about the camp and practically shutting out Kewick from the rest of the world. When this phenomenal condition of affairs was brought about, the citizens of the county, becoming alarmed, formed a committee to see that a settlement. Judge Sweeney, of the Superior Court, was at the head of this committee, and they interviewed both sides. But neither would budge an inch, and no progress was made.

WHERE WOMEN DO MEN'S WORK IN MINES

WASMES, Belgium, Dec. 12.—(Special Correspondence.)—I am in the heart of one of the richest coal mining regions of Europe. Belgium is only about one-third the size of the United States, but it has deposits of coal and iron which make it hum like a beehive. It is the busiest workshop upon the continent, and it supports about as many people to the square mile as any country of the world. Its annual product of coal amounts to 22,000,000 tons. It uses the greater part of this at home, and also imports fuel from Germany and England. At present the people are looking to the United States as a possible source of manufacturing fuel, and the day may yet come when the mills here will be largely run through coal from the United States.

The Black Country of Belgium. The Belgium mining conditions are entirely different from those of our country. Our mines are near the surface, and it costs but little to get the coal to the cars. Those of Belgium are far down under the earth, and every ton has to be lifted by machinery to the surface. Some of the mines which I visited today are more than a half mile deep. The water has to be fought at every turn, and mighty pumps are employed to keep the works dry. There are tunnels cutting the earth this way and that at a depth of 200 feet. Over them are other tunnels, and the whole country is a cata-combe, made by getting out the coal. The mines have to be timbered. The wood is cut from the forests near by, but the most of it is not over six inches thick, and as it comes to the mine it looks like telegraph poles, each 16 feet long, tapering to a point at the end. Such timber stands in great stacks about each mine. It is used to brace the cars by women who handle the poles like so many Amazons.

Belgium's Coal Pyramids. This coal region is far different from those of Pennsylvania, Ohio or Tennessee. There it is mountainous. Here at Wasmes the land is flat, and the only elevations are from the dumps of the mines. The coal here is filled with waste. It has to be sorted and the refuse is carried out upon cars. There is so much of it that a pyramidal mountain soon rises up beside each mine, standing out like a black cone against the blue sky. There are such pyramids everywhere in this part of Belgium. Some of them are deep, the mines which produced them having been worked out and abandoned. Others have ladders up their backs and a framework on the top, where women push the cars along and with a rattling sound empty them. Some of these pyramids are smoking. There is much sulphur in the coal and spontaneous combustion often starts a fire which burns for years. Instances are known of people going to sleep on the dumps and being suffocated by the fumes and gases.

Take your stand with me on one of these coal mountains just outside the mining town of Wasmes and look about you. See the farms covered with rich crops, with these coal mounds rising above them. There is one at our right with great, white, branching trees over them. They are not bogs. They are women who are picking up the coal that has been left in the waste. There comes a

car along the coal mountain. Two women are pushing it, and with the glass you can almost see their muscles swell as with bare arms they cast it on the dump. Now look at that mound at the left. It is hundreds of feet high, and like the others about it, it is an evidence of the enormous waste that the miners have to contend with. Every bit of coal that is brought to the surface has to be picked over and the waste is evidently more than the coal itself. Near every mound you see the huge buildings of the coal workers. They are not unlike those of the United States, but the scenes about them are different.

Three Girls were Loading Bricks. and hence those whom you see on the surface are young girls. They could get better wages down below, and many of them will leave the surface work and go into the mines as soon as they are old enough. As a result, the surface girls are not bent and broken, and those I saw were as well developed physically as the prize golf girls of the United States. And still they were toiling like so many horses, pushing the cars this way and that. Some were lifting great lumps of coal weighing from 15 to 20 pounds each, and others were doing all sorts of work which in America would be done by men. In one place a ditch was being dug and lined with brick and cement. A girl of 15 was mixing the mortar with a hoe, and a little further on at a brick pile three sturdy girls were loading bricks upon a wheelbarrow, which a fourth girl pushed upon the car when it was full. They were working hard, and the perspiration stood out in white beads upon their dusty faces. I took a photograph of them, and my heart came into my throat as they smiled.

Wages in Belgium. I have said that the women who sort the coal earn 30 cents a day. Some get less, but there are others who make as much as 40 cents, and in the mines they are paid as high as 45 cents. Men miners get 7 or 80 cents underground, and about 30 cents at the surface. Boys of 14 and 15 are paid 42 cents, and children about 20 cents and upward. Altogether, there are 124,000 miners in Belgium, and of them all I doubt whether 10 per cent make a dollar a day. And still the Belgian working day averages from 10 to 12 hours, and the average number of working days every year is more than 300. Low wages and long hours are the rule. There are 750,000 working people here, and of these nine-tenths work 10, 11 or more hours per day. Of all the workers one-fourth make less than 40 cents a day; one-fourth from 40 to 60 cents, and another fourth from 70 to 80 cents per diem.

Woman's Work and Wages. Women are everywhere paid less than the men, and about half of the female workers make less than 20 cents a day, while in half of whom are women, only 250 women get as much as 80 cents a day. Among the best-paid women here are those who work underground in the mines. The work is hard and degrading. It unsexes those who are thus working away day after day in the semi-darkness, and in time makes them animals. In old age they are little better than the horses and donkeys which work with them and

among the women miners of Belgium are far better off today than they have ever been in the past. Their condition has been notoriously bad. For a long time little children were employed in the mines. They were harnessed to carts and coal cars with straps and chains, so that they crawled along on their hands and knees, dragging the coal to the mouth of the shaft. Now women under 21 are prohibited by law from working underground,

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How the Miners Live. I have been interested in the life of the people. Every great mine has its dwelling-houses about it, a collection of little two-story brick built together in blocks. Each house has five rooms, two on the ground floor, two above and a little attic under the roof. The families are large, and the average number of children is six or seven. The miners are miserably poor. Nearly every one pays a rent of 10 or 20 francs for his home, but only the fewest have money. The people are great drinkers. In this region every third house is a saloon, and the most of the wages go for drink. The people drink alcohol, and the women drink as well as the men. Belgium spends more than eight times as much for liquor as it does for schools, and its annual drink bill is about 35 per cent of the number of saloons. They are known as "estaminets," and you see them everywhere. There is hardly a block in the city without one or more, and they are scattered along the country roads. There are more than 200,000 saloons in Belgium, and it is said that one person in every

of the whole population is employed in selling intoxicating drinks. Many of the workmen get drunk on Saturday and lay off over Monday. Similar conditions prevail in England, where drunkenness is, if anything, worse than here. There are a number of workmen's associations in Belgium, our export their trades unions and their co-operative societies. There is one kind of organization, known as "Mutualities," which has over 50,000 members. These are societies for mutual help so formed that the members support each other in times of trouble, providing medical attendance and other such things. The governments are protected by the Government, and to some the state gives subsidies, increasing their funds for medical attendance and support in time of sickness. The government now has pensions for such workmen of over 70 who need them, and also associations which insure the lives of workmen at low rates. Belgium has a ministry of industry and labor which has to do with matters relating to workmen, and there is also what is known as the superior council of labor, organized to consider labor interests and prepare measures regulating them for presentation to Parliament. This council is composed of 16 workmen, 16 manufacturers and 16 scientists. It is said to be of great value to labor interests. The governments are becoming more and more paternal in many of the European countries. They are taking the place of a father to the people and trying to benefit them in a variety of ways. In Belgium the state has erected dwellings for workmen in certain localities, and has arranged so that they can buy them on easy terms. It is helping the farming interests by schools of agriculture, and through its railroad service is reducing freights and facilitating the marketing. I have spoken of the postal arrangements in Switzerland and France, whereby the farmer can express his goods to consumers through the postoffice. Here in Belgium the government has put on fast trains for England for the shipment of dairy products. It facilitates trade, and it seems to be on the outlook to help the producing classes.

Mr. Carpenter writes of the Black Country of Belgium. Damaak barrels is carefully guarded, being handed down from father to son. Only the most skilled of the workmen can make these barrels. The ordinary rough-bored barrels are turned out in great quantities; they cost from 80 to 70 cents apiece, when ready for export. When the United States has finally settled the trade with Belgium, our exporters can study the Belgium market with profit. This country imports something like 2,000,000 tons of coal a year, the most of it coming from France, Germany and England, and necessitating, therefore, the payment of freight charges. There are six lines of steamers sailing between Antwerp and the United States, and American coal should be landed there at low rates. The freight rates of the present are based upon the grain rates, and are consequently high. The Belgium coal will not compare with the best grades of our coal. The anthracite here has not the hardness nor brilliancy of the Pennsylvania product, and it is lighter in weight. Some of the Belgium bituminous coal has 75 per cent slack, so that it is unfit for the steaming of brickettes rather than for export. Some of the Belgium mines have given out, and, as the coal area is limited, the country will eventually have to import more than it does now. Not only here, but in all parts of Europe, there should be a market for American coal, and if carefully nursed a business can be built up which will materially increase the balance of trade, which is already in our favor. FRANK G. CARPENTER. (Copyright, 1902.)