

an organization called the United States Steel corporation, and that it is in business and politics on its own account, and runs a few hundred mills and customs houses, and, through its coal and ore mines, assists the Almighty in running the universe. Incidentally it controls the output of steel billets, and will not sell them except at exorbitant prices. But these Hoosier Guys were not easy marks. They did more figuring and investigating, and concluded that they could buy steel billets in Belgium or Germany, pay the duty and freight on them, and lay them down at their mill for two dollars per ton less than the price demanded by the steel trust. Proud of their resourcefulness and independence of the steel octopus, they parted with more of their good money.

Pride goeth before a fall.

They bought 20,000 tons of billets at \$18 per ton. They expected to pay a duty of \$6.72 per ton, or \$134,000 on the lot. They expected this lot of billets would last them three months. At this rate they figured their tariff charges on billets at \$537,000 a year. But they were not politicians, and they expected to get this amount, and more too, back from the people who would buy wire and nails. They raised \$134,000 and had it ready to pay the duty on the billets, when they reached the custom house at Philadelphia. Alas, it was not enough. They were foiled again by the steel trust. The collector had gotten some tips from "it"—that is, his master—and he had made a "new ruling." He said that the rate of duty on steel billets valued above one cent per pound (\$22.40 per ton) was \$5.96, instead of \$6.72.

"But," said the wise Guys from Kokomo, as a new ray of hope lighted up their blank features, "we only paid \$18 a ton for these billets."

Whereat the steel trust customs official smiled and said: "Yes, yes; but the law permits us to fix the duty on the actual market value of the billets in the markets of the country from which the same have been imported. The German manufacturers who, like ours, are highly protected, have, as you should have known, two prices for their billets—one for their domestic customers and a very much lower price for export. We have been told to disregard the export price, which you paid, and to collect duty on the German domestic price, which is about \$24 per ton.

Cough up \$178,200 if you want your billets!"

The would-be manufacturers of Kokomo were dazed. Their vision of wealth was fast vanishing. They appealed from the decision of the collector to the board of general appraisers. This board is collecting testimony, and may announce its decision in a few months.

The Iron Age of October 16 tells us that "the difficulties over the duty on steel billets have stopped all negotiations for foreign steel for the present." It gives this additional explanation:

Probably the most serious feature of the matter from the standpoint of the importers and of the rolling mills who have purchased foreign billets, is the penalty for alleged undervaluations, which in some cases would reach a very large sum as compared with the advance in the rate of duty. In itself in certain territory the higher rate of duty on billets would not cut off importations.

The penalty is "an additional duty of one per cent. of the total appraised value thereof for each one per cent. that such appraised value exceeds the value declared in the entry." This means that if the appraised value is raised from \$18 to \$24 per ton the importers must pay a penalty of eight dollars per ton in addition to the duty of \$8.96. Thus their billets will cost them \$34.96 a ton, plus about six dollars freight, or a total of over \$40.

In view of the above circumstances some steel mill property in Kokomo is for sale cheap and some blooming chumps, who are poorer and sadder if not wiser, are talking less about prosperity and more about trust despotism and anarchy.

Brothers Hanna, Shaw and Beveridge will now tell us of the blessings of protection and the economies of industrial combinations.

BYRON W. HOLT.

#### WHY COAL MINERS STRIKE.

The following article, written by H. Gibson Gardner, appeared first in the Chicago Journal of September 28, 1900. It is so well adapted to illustrate the situation we are now confronting, that the fact that it was written more than two years ago gives it even greater weight. Mr. Markle has always been known as one of the most benevolent and easy of the coal operators.

The real causes of the strike in the anthracite fields are not to be found in the small disputes over the price of blasting powder or the number of hours which shall make up a day's work for a mule driver. The reasons lie deeper. A little fair-minded investigation shows that the movement

is a revolt against the system, which is an almost exact reproduction of the old English feudal system, with its lord of the manor and the serfs who are attached to the soil and render service to the hereditary lord.

There is no better illustration of the coal baron than the much-talked-about John Markle, of the W. G. Markle company. This company is no worse than the others; but the fact that it is independent of the railroad combination which makes up the coal trust has directed attention particularly to it.

John Markle himself is a well-meaning man, a nervous, earnest gentleman about 50 years of age, who was born to his present station, and naturally believes that the existing order of things is right. His father came into possession of the acres and square miles of rugged hilly country which have developed into collieries, villages, and the town, and this original Markle, by his energy and business ability, built up a great and prosperous mining business.

The father died, and John became by inheritance the hereditary lord of the Markle mines. To occupy this position means to live in a great stone house on top of a beautiful hill overlooking the valley. The immediate surroundings of the ancestral house are most elegant—there is a lawn and the park and the drives like an English estate. Clustering about, but a little lower down the slope, are the business offices of the company and the less pretentious houses of the employes who work in the offices and company stores. Then come the machine shops and the various accessories which are necessary to the mines.

About half a mile further on is the bed of the valley once covered with a scrubby growth of pines and dwarf oak, but now heaped and piled with unending acres of black coal dust and great mounds of the coarse, black slate rock, the refuse of the diggings.

In the midst rises a lofty structure of weather-darkened wood, a 10 or 15-story tower, precipitous on one side and on the opposite side slanting away to the ground on a network of props. With its hooded top it suggests a huge grasshopper, a relic of prehistoric times. This is a "breaker," and it marks the aperture from which the mine discharges its products. From the Markle hill half a dozen may be seen in various directions, each surrounded by its layers and heaps of refuse.

Railroad tracks skirt the diggings, and near them a dusty, unpaved road, bordered by the houses of the miners. The latter are tumble-down shanties, innocent of paint, and blackened with the sun and storms of 40 years. They are all alike, and were evidently built at the same time and by one contractor. Each has its little corral, which by courtesy is called a yard, the fences being extemporized by the use of stakes driven in the ground and patched up with stray sticks and boards picked up where they were to be had and fastened together with the ingenuity of shiftlessness.

There are two floors and a front and back room on each floor; but there are no division of quarters among the occupants. All rooms are bedrooms and nurseries and dining-rooms and kitchen. Old and young swarm together, and the pigs and chickens and goats share the same quarters. Many of the women are barefooted, and the children are squalid and thin faced. These are Markle's tenantry.

The houses occupied by the miners are owned by the Markle company. The whole valley is owned by the company, or by Mr. Markle, for he is the company. The real estate is rented but never sold. John Markle owns the mines, the street railroad, the brewery, the bank, and the coffin factory. The mines are situated in a section called Jeddo, and there are a whole series of small villages with pretty names stretching from the Markle palace to the town of Hazleton. They are practically all under the jurisdiction of John Markle. If a miner should get or save enough money to buy a house he must go outside the district comprising the Markle estates before he can become the owner of a home. Then, if he still works for the mines, he will pay tribute to Markle by riding on his trolley lines.

John Markle has been very much worried by the present strike. From his point of view it is all very silly and wrong.

"I can't understand why my men should act so," said he. "They are well fed and well clothed, and are treated with every consideration. Why, it is one of my wife's particular charities to look after the families of the miners and to relieve any cases of sickness or destitution. And the men can't win. They have no money at all. What can they strike on? They had their experience in

1885. I had just got out of college and had been put in here to manage the mines. They struck and were out for nine months. They were the stubbornest lot you ever saw.

"But it came along winter and cold weather, and I was compelled to resort to eviction. They had not paid any rent, and I evicted 157 families. That brought them to their senses. They came around voluntarily and asked for some arrangement by which the trouble could be fixed up. It was then that we got up the agreement under which the men are working now. It provided that the men should not belong to any union or labor organization, and that all disputes and grievances should be submitted to arbitration. The arbitrators to be selected one by the company, another by the men, and a third to be satisfactory to both. Every man who works for our company has signed this agreement."

A few days ago John Markle and President John Mitchell, of the Miners' union, addressed the employes of the Markle mines from the same platform, and Markle appealed to the men to live up to the conditions of this contract. Mitchell urged in reply that the contract was made under compulsion, and was not binding upon the men legally or morally. This seemed to be the opinion of the majority of the employes.

One of Markle's men, an intelligent Irishman about 20 years of age, had this to say in reply to a question as to whether he intended to join in the strike.

"Yes, I'll strike. I'll go out with the rest. But it won't do any good. The whole thing is wrong somehow. Strikin' don't do any good; but I don't know what will. But I know it ain't right as things is. Now, my old man has been working in the mines for 30 years. I began workin' in the breaker as soon as I was big enough to pick slate. Now the old man is too old and weak to work in the mine, and they have put him in the breaker along with the little kids.

"We've got no money; haven't been able to save anything or do any more than live and pay the rent. And now the old man has to go back where he began 30 years ago. And when he gets so his hands are stiff and he can't pick the slate fast enough he will be laid off, and we'll have to feed him until he is ready to go under the hill for good. It don't seem right."

Amid the conflicting testimony of interested parties as to whether the miners are sufficiently well paid, the testimony of Father Phillips is of value. The priest has worked among the miners for the better part of 30 years, and knows them all by name.

"In the old days," he said, "it was possible for a miner to make and save money; and there are a few isolated cases where miners have been very thrifty and have been able to save a little money and even buy a little house or a bit of land. But these are the rare cases. They are not the rule.

"With the combination among the mine owners wages have been kept down, and it has come to pass that a miner can do no more than make a bare living. He earns enough just to buy the necessities of life and can get together nothing for a reserve against hard times or his old age."

Meantime John Markle is perfectly sincere in thinking himself a much abused man and his men very unreasonable.

Hazleton, Pa., Sept. 29, 1900.

#### THE SUFFERINGS AND NEEDS OF THE BOERS.

##### APPEAL OF THE BOER GENERALS TO THE CIVILIZED WORLD.

It is still fresh in the memory of the world how the Boers, after a terrible struggle lasting more than two and a half years, were at last obliged to accept through their representatives at Vereeniging the terms of peace submitted to them by the government of King Edward VII. At the same time the representatives commissioned us to proceed to England in order, in the first place, to appeal to the new government to allay the immense distress everywhere devastating the new colonies. If we did not succeed we were to appeal to the humanity of the civilized world for charitable contributions.

As we have not succeeded up to the present in inducing the British government to grant further assistance to our people in their indescribable distress, it only remains for us to address ourselves to the peoples of Europe and America. During the critical days which we have passed through, it was sweet for us and ours to receive constant marks of sympathy from all countries. The financial and other assistance given to our women and children in the concentration camps, and to the prisoners of war in all parts of the earth, contributed infinitely to mitigate the lot of those poor sufferers, and we take advantage