

# The Strike at Little & Sons

There was a bad strike at Little's and the locked-out iron workers were desperately resolute. Just as determined were the masters, Messrs. Little & Son. Black as the faces of the men were wont to be with the grime of toil, how they were blacker still with the passion of hatred for the two rich men who were as obstinate as themselves and stronger.

The strike fund was gone; credit there was none. Every man's family was hungry, hollow-cheeked and hoarse. Every day fresh families were thrust from their homes into the streets, snowclad or frostbound, or sodden with rain—thrust out bodily, scant goods and all. Little & Son were behind the landlords; Little & Son were wealthy, and knew the power of gold. Every day the men gathered together, 500 of them, and vowed that day should end the strike, for Little & Son should give in; but noon came, dragged on to evening, evening to night, and still the strike went on, and the men slouched to their homes, whatever kind of places they were, growling threats against Little & Son such as might have turned white the full red wine Little & Son drank at their dinner.

Of all the desperate strikers, perhaps the most desperate was James Cassell. There was more than his own hunger to think about—there was the hunger of his wife and child. Other of Little's men had wives and children—in fact, most of them had—but to none of them was their family's hunger the same as in Cassell's case, for no man in the town of Grimly loved his wife and child as he loved his.

Cassell was big and brawny, with a heart full of tenderness. He wore a beard which grew up almost to his blue eyes, but which was not so thick that one could not see his firm-set mouth when he smiled.

Morning after morning Cassell left his home, his wife and boy, to see how the strike was going; night after night he went back with no news to tell, no food to give, no money to spend, with his waist strap pulled a hole tighter and a darker look than ever on his face.

One night he did not return until very much later than usual, and Mary Cassell was growing very anxious for him, for in such grim times no one knew what might not happen next, when he pushed open the door and entered. He kissed her as he had not done since the early days of the strike, with almost boyish excitement, and glanced joyfully at the corner of the dingy room, where little Jimmy sleeping lay. Then he began to empty his pockets of things that filled his Mary with speechless wonderment. There was butter and cheese, tea and a knuckle of bacon, and sugar and rice.

"I've sold myself," he said, solemnly regarding the provisions, "an' I don't know as who's got the best of the business—them or me."

Mary sprang up and seized his arm. "Sold yourself for the?" she exclaimed. "An' what are yer goin' to do?"

"There's no tellin'," he muttered. "I'm goin' out again."

"Jim, what d'yer mean? If the lockouts have bought yer, I know we'll rue the day; an' if Little's have bought yer, I'm almost a widdy woman now. Take 'em back, Jim; take 'em back where they come. I'd rather starve to death than die of sorrow on your grave, or 'ave a prison wall between my man and me!"

"Ow yer talk, Mary!" he replied, with an effort to command a reassuring manner. "There's no prison nor a grave in this job, so far as I know, but there's food."

"I couldn't touch a morsel," she said, looking at the bacon with dry, hungry eyes. "If I thought it was paid for you, my man."

"You eat the food my wages bought, an' the wages was paid for me," he argued. "Danger there ain't none, that I see."

"Tell me who gave yer the money?" she asked, looking him straight in the eyes.

"No."

"Tell me!"

"No, Mary, no. See what it's bought, an' take my word for it nothin's wrong."

He had not been gone long full twenty minutes when a knock fell on the door. Before Mary could get to it the door opened and a man looked in.

"The man 'ere?" he inquired, looking round the room, and his pale face darkening as his eyes fell on the provisions on the table.

"No," said Mary shortly. She was not pleased to see Sam Stains, for at one time he was a suitor for her hand, and he and Cassell were bitter rivals.

"Back soon?" he asked, as if it did not really matter.

"I expect 'e will."

Stains withdrew and closed the door, and she heard him muttering outside. This made her uneasy, because of the look that had sprung into the man's face when he had seen the food upon the table, and because of what her husband had said regarding the way he had obtained it. Had he sold himself to Little's as a spy on the men's designs, and did the men suspect it? It seemed possible.

If the men only half believed he was Little's spy his life would not be worth a fair day's wages, for the men were in a desperate mood, as men must be to scheme the plots men were scheming in hope of bringing Little to their knees. And it seemed to Mary Cassell that there was something ominously significant in the fact that Stains had been the one out of 500 odd who had called to know if her husband was in. Had Stains been following her husband?

Had he waited outside, lurking in the shadow, on the chance of discovering something more than whatever he had learnt; and had he watched Cassell leave the house again, and thought it a fair chance to see what evidence of Cassell's perfidy might be visible there? The idea fitted in with her knowledge of the man, whereas the notion that he had actually called to speak with her husband did not. The two were rivals still; starvation's bond had bound them in sympathy, and Stain's steely eyes still gleamed when they fell upon the face of the man who had married the woman he would have wed.

"There's ill a-growin'," was Mary's final conclusion, "an' Sam is at the 'andle end of it. What'll I do?"

She glanced hungrily at the knuckle of bacon again, and winced.

She snatched up her shawl and pinned it over her head and shoulders. She blew out the candle and went away, locking the door behind her.

It was a rather hopeless mission, hers; she wanted to know the truth, and was going to Little's great house to learn it. Would the rich employers ever consent to see the poor striker's rag-clad wife? She thought they would, for she intended sending in a message to say the matter was most urgent and concerned James Cassell; and she calculated that, if her husband were the Little's spy, they would be too interested by her message not to receive her.

The only difficulty she encountered was in getting the footman who opened the door to take her message in.

She was too much wrapped up in her mission to feel embarrassed at standing amid such light and warmth and color before the two grave gentlemen. She plunged straight into what she had to say, and as she spoke the grave expression faded from the faces of her hearers.

"It's true your husband has been here, Mrs. Cassell," said white-haired Mr. Little, glancing at his son; "but he did not come to report to us the plots of the strikers; that is done by the police, and that, I may say, alone has been the reason for our holding out against the men's terms; but we could not concede a point while the men threatened, and if any of the more serious threats had been carried out—the West mill blown up, for instance—we should have shut down, never to open up again. Cassell knows this. The police reported a week ago that the men had ceased to use threats against us. We were anxious to learn if this report were reliable, and sent for the striker whom we thought could and would tell us the truth, for we were only waiting for the threats to cease to take the men back on the old terms, or for some threat to be carried out for us to shut down. We sent for your husband and explained the matter to him."

"Rather unwisely," interposed the younger gentleman.

"I do not think so. Your husband fully corroborated the police report, and in consequence the foundry will be reopened tomorrow. Your husband was anxious to convey the news to the men—extraordinarily anxious, and, as I did not wish that, I gave him money to keep his silent. That is all, my good woman. You have no reason to think he has betrayed his fellow-strikers, or to fear that even if he had he would be in danger of violence from them. Violence has gone no farther than it could go in words, and even that has ceased."

"I have explained all this to you," the old gentleman concluded, "as I want it to become generally known after tomorrow why we have held out against the men's demands while admitting they were reasonable when trade was brisk, as it has since become—I want it known that we could not give way simply because the men

threatened us with divers perils unless we did. But until tomorrow you and your husband will keep the matter secret."

"We will, sir," said Mary, breathlessly. "I am only the wife of one of the strikers, but I say heaven bless you, gentlemen, for giving in."

"You can call it that, if you like," said Mr. Little, smiling.

Mary's heart was battled for by happiness and fear as she left the iron foundry's house and made her way to the town. The prospect was delightful, but the situation full of perils menacing that prospect. If the night passed as the other nights had done, without any violent acts on the part of the strikers, and Little & Son remained in their belief that the strikers had ceased to threaten them, the lock-out would be raised at noon. But for the last few days the men had been threatening less in words but more in looks and gestures, which was significant; and there was, Mary felt assured, some desperate plot afoot. If that plot were fixed for execution that night and carried out, the very worst would come of it. And what had the men to deter them? If they knew what she and her husband knew, the situation would be safe. But they did not! Was it not her duty to tell them, bind them not to betray that she had done so, and so arrest them in any evil designs they had conceived? She felt it was. But how was she to hunt up 500 loafing men or pick on those who might happen to have been appointed to execute some threat that night?

She quickened her steps and made in the direction of the foundry, whose gaunt smokestacks stretched up like appealing arms into the starry sky. She thought it probable she would find some of the strikers loitering around the foundry walls; the hour was late, but many of the strikers, having no homes, might still be loitering outside the foundry's bolted gates.

She reached the gates, but found no one there, the square before the gates was deserted. Wondering what she could do, she looked up at the factory, and as she looked something like a small cloud passed across the sky. It was followed by another and a train of others, and they seemed to rise from behind the West mill stack, drifting away.

"Oh!" she gasped. She could hardly contain the pleasure the sight gave her. The West mill fires were being kindled. It was many weeks since she saw the smoke that meant bread and meat to her and hers.

But who could be kindling the fires? She could only think of one man, and he was her husband. To him Little & Son had confided their secret intention to reopen the works next day, and he would naturally be the man they would appoint to light the fires.

Mary tried the great gates, but they were locked, barred and bolted, as they had been for weeks past.

Supposing! A terrible thought sprang into her mind. Supposing the oft-repeated threat to blow up the West mill were to be carried out that night? Her husband, the man who ruled her life, the father of her bonnie brown-haired boy—

Stains had called that evening. What had he called to learn? Supposing Stains had been appointed, or had resolved of his own choice, to carry out the awful threat that night—had by some strange chance heard that her husband would be in the mill!

She turned a sharp corner, and started back to avoid a man who was springing to the ground from a low part of the wall. As he set off at a hard, noiseless run she recognized him, and she felt full sure her awful fear was shadowed by the truth, for the man was no other than Sam Stains.

"Stop!" she cried, when she had thrown off her amazement to some extent. But the man was already lost to her sight.

It was useless to run after him, she could never catch him; and even if she could his capture would not save the situation if it were what she feared.

Without allowing herself longer to wonder, she began to attempt to

scale the wall. On her third attempt she got her hands on the ledge, her foot in a chink, and was able to draw herself up. It was an ugly drop on the other side, for the ladder which Stains had apparently used had been dropped back to the ground; but she did not hesitate. As her feet touched the ground her right ankle gave way, and with a moan of pain she fell in a heap.

For a moment or two the pain of the sprain blinded her and made her forget what she might have to do. Then she raised herself and looked across the yard towards the West mill. What she saw chilled the marrow in her bones. It was a small light, the size of a pea, perhaps, but in the deep shadow of the West mill wall it was clearly visible to her. And it spluttered.

She tried to rise to her feet, but sank on her knees and began to crawl towards the burning fuse. It was a race between the fuse and herself. Would she win? Yard by yard, she drew nearer to it. She grew faint and sick with pain, fear and excitement.

"I can't do it," she groaned. "It's going."

As she said it she saw a figure suddenly dart out of a black doorway. The next instant the fuse spluttered vividly, as it had been dashed to the ground and stamped upon.

"Jim!" she cried, "Jim!"

"Mary!" said the voice of her husband, in great surprise, "what are you doin' 'ere?"

"I was after that," she panted, as she fainted.

Little's opened at noon next day, and all the strikers returned to work except one. Sam Stains was absent. To this day Little & Son do not know why.

### Travel in Italy

London, June 7.—Americans who are planning a visit to Italy should be interested in the remarks of a writer in this morning's Times concerning the increasing horrors of railway traveling in that country.

The practice which this writer says that foreigners are finding most annoying is the failure to provide a sufficient number of railway carriages, and the consequent overcrowding.

"During a large part of the year," he says, "at every important station, comes a struggle—pushing, pulling, quarreling, fighting the way in and out of carriages." He adds that those who travel first class are as much imposed upon as the rest, and says that again and again, in first-class carriages, he has seen people standing for long distances, besides those who were jammed together on the seats. Men and women get to the stations half an hour ahead of time and wait there, even when it is raining, in order to be able to fight their way aboard the minute the train stops.

The writer adds that even between cities like Venice and Florence, there are few, if any, through trains, the passengers being turned out of one and wedged into another, solely, he believes, in order that the railroad employes may be able to mulct them in fees.

Except in the trains de luxe, into which only first-class passengers are admitted, at outrageous prices, no provision whatever is made for invalids, children or the folk who come to Italy for their health. Underlings are encouraged by their superiors to "work" the passengers for all they are worth, and the writer speaks of having seen a well-dressed official ordering baggage hidden in an out-of-the-way waiting room so that he might get a tip for unearthing it.

According to this traveler, the annoyances of which he complains were observed, not during the "rush" season, but on return, coming northward from Rome at the time when most voyagers were going in the other direction. He says that the passenger vessels which ply along the Italian coast are crowded with American, British and German travelers, who would much rather have taken the quicker and more picturesque railroad journey, but whom past experience has frightened off.

Job Printing at Nugget office.

Duncan Creek Landing and Stewart River Points

## STR. PROSPECTOR

WILL SAIL

THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2 P. M.

For Rates, Tickets, Etc., Apply

W. MEED, - - - S.-Y. T. Dock

## Japan American Line

Carrying U. S. Mails to Oriental Points.

### Steamer Every 2 Weeks

For Japan China and All Asiatic Points.

Ticket Office - 612 First Avenue, Seattle

## The Great Northern "FLYER"

LEAVES SEATTLE FOR ST. PAUL EVERY DAY AT 8:00 P. M.

A Solid Vestibule Train With All Modern Equipments.

For further particulars and folders address the GENERAL OFFICE - SEATTLE, WASH.

## The Northwestern Line

Is the Short Line to Chicago And All Eastern Points

All through trains from the North Pacific Coast connect with this line in the Union Depot at St. Paul.

Travelers from the North are invited to communicate with

F. W. Parker, Gen'l Agent, Seattle, Wn.

## Unalaska and Western Alaska Points

U. S. MAIL

## S. S. NEWPORT

Leaves Juneau April 1st and 1st of each month for Sitka, Yakutat, Nutchek, Orca, Ft. Licium, Valdes, Resurrection, Homer, Seldovia, Katmai, Kodiak, Uyak, Kerluk, Chignik, Unga, Sand Point, Belkofsky, Unasaska, Dutch Harbor.

FOR INFORMATION APPLY TO

Seattle Office - Globe Bldg., Cor. First Ave. and Madison Street

San Francisco Office, 30 California Street

## Pacific Packing and Navigation Co.

Successors to Pacific Steam Whaling Co.

### Copper River and Cook's Inlet

YAKUTAT, ORCA, VALDEZ, HOMER.

FOR ALL POINTS in Western Alaska Steamer Newport Sails From Juneau on First of Each Month

OFFICES SEATTLE Cor. First Ave. and Vesler Way. SAN FRANCISCO No. 30 California Street

Ever since the bloom fond recollection of the mind of the S. other day while re low jessamine and were paramount hacle he glanced and the only hum were four "cullud was that the S. "Happy Day" to River," and, th force of habit; list full note of the mo sounding snort of the cheerful kerpl as it rolls from a steam-covered pon latic floats out on breeze at the rate minute per square To cap the clim covered by the last Garlic Sykes. It ink blots and had of having been wr when a meal of ho being prepared From the tone lic's pathway th stream with pansy other hand his lot among weeds and letter is as follow "Cactus R "Dear Old Precept "You'd skace th have done passed

twixt your neas six weeks betwix read IT IS A O

"I was 5 year rly to say I ain't I am working keeping the fami ters is married a hands to support "Two year ag marry Palmetto fuked and hit Wren. A month wuk steers die weed that was tossed over the don't speak. "I have just f my cotten ov slough. "There was year and hogs r could ketch 'em skace. Pinders r also chinkey pin "Old Mac, the to the Joppa po but he ain't et sweet taters in whar he done k corral is still t still gather thart. "Revenooers i to make licker n ter "possum hid brung 20 cents three cents and cents a pound. kill by a bear and I got only "You remem She's dead and year. Granny singin' that ol lots o' fun an G "Outside o' of casual nigger is very quiet. "Corn and pany. So does "Hoping you messin'. I will