

latter the selfimportant superintendent was no favorite and it was whispered around that his boasted business ability, had consisted in the betrayal of his fellow-workmen during the last strike. Mr. Atkins probably knew of this illfeeling borne towards him, for he took not the slightest pains to conciliate the miners, but on the contrary, by his arrogant manner made them consider his authority doubly unbearable. Taken all in all, Mr. Atkins' respect and regard for his own genial self was proportionally greater, as his respect and regard for the rights of others was reduced to a low point indeed. However, there was a class of persons for whose interests, it need hardly be mentioned, he had the greatest possible regard, since their interests were so closely connected with his own. These were his employers, the members of the coal trust, whose very trusty, useful, and obedient servant he flattered himself he was.

Perhaps he had reason for this flattering conclusion after the very confidential interview he had just had with Mr. Ursa the President of the Trust, in which the latter had been unusually kind and attentive towards him, and had finally entrusted him with a task of an extraordinary nature. After a great deal of hesitation, for he seemed somewhat afraid that his superintendent's conscience still retained a few troublesome scruples of honesty, (he might have set his mind at rest on that point,) the coal magnate confided to the latter that the profits of the company had been smaller than usual of late months owing to the supply of coal at hand already mined, and that he would shut down the mines himself if he were not afraid of what people would say about this deed. He had thought of another way to remedy this and at the same time to turn public indignation away from the operators. Could he trust Mr. Atkins' secrecy? Mr. Atkins assured him that he would not say a word about it, even to save his life. "Well," Mr. Ursa continued, it would be a good thing if the men would strike now, instead of later on as they will surely do. And if it could be managed, and Mr. Atkins' ability is well known, to have the strike at the present time, the company would not be ungrateful, and ten or twenty thousand dollars would not ruin them, especially if it went to a faithful, em-