

PREFACE

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mines, both master and miner and miners' leader made stupendous efforts to cope with the immense difficulties which lack of man-power, lack of material and war nerves created.

There is, indeed, underlying the present coal situation, a deep psychological and sociological problem which, though it has manifested itself in relation to this industry, is in existence equally in the case of other industries. Upon the solution of this problem depends the existence or elimination of the present system whereby capital employs labour. It is obvious that we have here one of the Grand Disputes, full of combustible material, full of intellectual difficulties, full of importance, pregnant with possibilities and impossibilities.

Yet though this is so, though we have reached perhaps one of the turning-points in the industrial history of our country, we must realize that of those who will have the decision in the last resort only a very small fraction have any clear idea either of the problem or the industry.

In such circumstances it is always desirable to sweep away personalities and permit facts to take the place of prejudices. This is the second purpose of this book.

As the problem is so largely a psychological and so little a material one, I have, after much consideration, decided to include two short chapters on the history of the industry. My doubt as to the propriety of this course was due to the fact that the past history of the coal trade shows many grave