

CHAPTER XXIV

THE MOURNING PICKETS

I had a book to write that winter, and my wife's health to think about. We had got as far from the newspapers as we knew how—a little cottage in one of the remotest parts of the Bermuda Islands, with sand-dunes and coral-crags all about us, and a sweep of the Southern ocean in front. There we lived for several months, and thought we were safe. I never went anywhere, except to play tennis—so surely I ought to have been safe! But I wasn't.

All at once my clipping-bureau began sending me articles from newspapers all over the United States. I was starting a ranch for the training of incorrigible boys in Nevada! First, I was in Chicago for an assortment of boys; I wanted the very wildest and most blood-thirsty that could be found; I had picked out several young criminals who had been given up by reformatories. Then, a little later, I was out in Nevada, starting this "Last Chance Ranch," with a score or two of boys. And then one of the boys ran away; he complained that I fed him on vegetarian food, and he couldn't stand it. As it happened, I had not been a vegetarian for a long time; also, as it happened, I was in Bermuda instead of Nevada; but what did that matter to the newspapers? Before long I found myself riding on horseback across the desert, chasing this runaway boy, John Fargo. I had been riding for three days and had nothing in my saddle-bags but peanuts and canned beans.

And there I was left. To this day I don't know what happened to me; whether I caught "John Fargo," or what became of my "Last Chance Ranch." Is there a phantom Upton Sinclair, still chasing "John Fargo" over the Nevada desert, and living on peanuts and canned beans?

It may have been, of course, that there was some one impersonating me. A friend of mine, a school-teacher, told me the other day that one of her pupils had assured her quite solemnly that he knew me well; I was a cripple, and went about in a wheel-chair. Also, I was told by a waiter in a 143 Los Angeles hotel that a bald-headed man had reserved a table in my name, and given an elaborate dinner, and that the hotel staff had thought they were dining me. I am wondering what would have happened in the newspapers if that bald-headed man had drunk too much champagne, and had thrown a bottle through one of the dining-room mirrors?

I came back to America, and made an investigation of the Colorado coal-strike, and so began one of the most sensational episodes of my life. It is a long story, but I shall tell

it in full, because it is not a personal story, but a story of eleven thousand miners with their wives and children, living in slavery in lonely mountain fortresses, making a desperate fight for the rights of human beings, and crushed back into their slave-pens by all the agencies of capitalist repression.

I had been to Colorado, and knew intimately the conditions. Now the strike was on, and the miners and their families living in tent-colonies had been raided, beaten, shot up by gunmen. Finally a couple of machine-guns had been turned loose on them, their tent-colony at Ludlow had been burned, and three women and fourteen children had been suffocated to death. I sat in Carnegie Hall, New York City, amid an audience of three thousand people, and listened to an account of these conditions by eye-witnesses; next morning I opened the newspapers, and found an account in the "New York Call," a Socialist paper, and two inches in the "New York World"—and not a line in any other New York paper!

I talked over the problem with my wife, and we agreed that something must be done to break this conspiracy of silence. I had trustworthy information to the effect that young Rockefeller was in charge of what was going on in Colorado, though he was vigorously denying it at this time, and continued to deny it until the Walsh commission published his letters and telegrams to his representatives in Denver. Evidently, therefore, Mr. Rockefeller was the shining mark at which we must aim. It happened that one of the speakers at the Carnegie Hall meeting had been Mrs. Laura G. Cannon, whose husband was an organizer for the United Mine Workers, and had been thrown into jail by the militia and kept there without warrant or charge for a considerable time. So we called on Mrs. Cannon to go with us to the offices of Mr. Rockefeller.

We were received by a polite secretary, to whom we delivered a carefully phrased letter, asking Mr. Rockefeller to meet Mrs. Cannon, and hear at first hand what she had personally witnessed of the strike. We were invited to come back an hour later for our reply, and we came, and were informed that Mr. Rockefeller would not see us. So we presented a second letter, prepared in advance, to the effect that if he persisted in his refusal to see us, we should consider ourselves obligated to indict him for murder before the bar of public opinion. To this letter the polite secretary informed us, not quite so politely, there was "no answer."

What was to be done now? I had learned by experience that it would be necessary to do something sensational. An indignation meeting in Carnegie Hall, attended by three thousand people, was not enough. At first I thought that I would go to young Mr. Rockefeller's office and watch for him in the hall, and give him a horse-whipping. But this would have been hard on me, because I am constitutionally opposed to violence,

and I did not think Mr. Rockefeller worth such a sacrifice of my feelings. What I wanted was something that would be picturesque and dramatic, but would not involve violence; and finally I hit on the idea of inviting a group of people to put bands of crepe around their arms, and to walk up and down in front of 26 Broadway in dead silence, to symbolize our grief for the dead women and children of Ludlow. I called a group of radicals to discuss the project; also I called the newspaper reporters.

Picketing, except in labor strikes, was a new thing at that time, though the suffragists have since made it familiar. The novelty of the thing, plus the fact that it was being done by a group of well-known people, furnished that element of sensation which is necessary if radical news is to be forced into the papers. A dozen reporters attended our meeting at the Liberal Club, and next morning the newspapers reported the proceedings in full.

So at ten o'clock, when I repaired to 26 Broadway, I found a great crowd of curious people who had read of the matter; also, a number of reporters and camera-men. The reporters swarmed about me and besought me for interviews, but according to agreement I refused to speak a word, and began simply to walk up and down on the sidewalk. I was joined by three ladies who had been present at the meeting of the night before, one of them Elizabeth Freeman, a well-known 145suffragette. A number of others had promised to come, but apparently had thought better of it in the cold light of the morning after. However, the deficit was made up by a lady, a stranger to us all, who had read about the matter that morning, and had hastily made herself a white flag with a bleeding heart, and now stood on the steps of 26 Broadway, shrieking my name at the top of her voice. It had been agreed that the "mourning pickets" were all to preserve silence, and to make no demonstration except the band of crepe agreed upon. But alas, we had no control over the actions of this strange lady!

Of course there were a number of policemen on hand, and very soon they informed me that I must stop walking up and down. I explained politely that I had made inquiry and ascertained that I was breaking no law in walking on the sidewalk in silence; therefore I didn't intend to stop. So I was placed under arrest, and likewise the four ladies. We were taken to the station-house, where I found myself confronting the sergeant at the desk, and surrounded by a dozen reporters with note-books. The sergeant was considerate, and let me tell the entire story of the Colorado coal-strike, and what I thought about it; the pencils of the reporters flew, and a couple of hours later, when the first edition of the afternoon newspapers made their appearance on the street, every one of them had three or four columns of what I had said. Such a little thing, you see! You just have to get yourself arrested, and instantly the concrete-walls turn into news-channels!

There is one detail to be recorded about this particular action of the news-channels. The United Press, which is a liberal organization, sent out a perfectly truthful account of what had happened. The Associated Press, which is a reactionary organization, sent out a false account, stating that my wife had been arrested. My wife, knowing how this report would shock her family and friends in the South, sent a special delivery letter to the Associated Press calling their attention to the error, but the Associated Press did not correct the error, nor did it reply to this letter. My wife's mother, an old-fashioned Southern lady, took the first train out of Mississippi, to rescue her child from jail and from disgrace; but by the time the good lady reached New York, she was so ill with grief and shame that if her child had really been in jail she could have rendered but little assistance. All she could do was to inform her that even though she was not in jail, her father had disinherited her after reading his morning paper. My wife was informed by lawyers that she was in position to collect large damages from the Associated Press, and from every newspaper which had printed the false report. Some thirty suits were filed, but my wife's health did not permit her to go on with them.

We were taken to the Tombs prison, where the ladies sang the Marseillaise, and I wrote a poem entitled "The Marseillaise in the Tombs," and again found it possible to have my poetry published in the New York newspapers! The magistrate who tried us was an agreeable little gentleman, who allowed us to talk without limit—the talk all being taken down by the reporters. The charge against us read "using threatening, abusive and insulting behavior." The witnesses were the policemen, who testified that my conduct had been "that of a perfect gentleman." Nevertheless we were found guilty, and fined three dollars, and refused to pay the fine, and went back to the Tombs.

The newspapers tore me to pieces for my "clownish conduct," but I managed to keep cheerful, because I saw that they were publishing the news about the Colorado coal-strike, which before they had banned from their columns. The "New York World," for example, published a sneering editorial entitled, "Pink-tea Martyrdom." "No genuine desire to effect a reform actuates them, but only morbid craving for notoriety." But at the same time the "World" sent a special correspondent to the coal-fields, and during the entire time of our demonstration and for a couple of weeks thereafter they published every day from half a column to a column of news about the strike.

I spent two days and part of a third in the Tombs. Every day the reporters came to see me, and I gave interviews and wrote special articles—all the news about Colorado I could get hold of. And every day there was a crowd of ten thousand people in front of Twenty-six Broadway, and young Rockefeller fled to his home in the country, and

“Standard Oil,” for the first time in its history, issued public statements in defense of its crimes.

My wife had taken up the demonstration after my arrest, and I was amused to observe that the police did not arrest ¹⁴⁷her, nor did the newspapers ridicule her. Was it because she was a woman? No, for I have seen the police beat and club women doing picket-duty—working-women, you understand. I have seen the newspapers lie about working-women on picket-duty; in the course of this Colorado campaign I saw them print the vilest and most cowardly slanders about the wives of some strikers who went to Washington to make appeal to President Wilson. No, it was not because my wife was a woman; it was because she was a “lady.” It was because in the files of the New York newspapers there reposed a clipping recording the fact that her father was “one of the wealthiest men in this section and controls large banking interests.”

Please pardon these personalities, for they are essential to the thesis of this book—that American Journalism is a class institution, serving the rich and spurning the poor. It happens that M. C. S. is conspicuously and inescapably what is called a “lady”; she not merely looks the part, she acts it and speaks it in those subtle details that count most. All her young ladyhood she spent as what is known in the South as a “belle”; incidentally, of course, as an ungodly little snob. She has got over that; but in case of an emergency like our Broadway affair, she naturally used every weapon she had. Against the New York reporters and the New York police department she used the weapon of snobbery—and it worked.

In the South, you see, a “lady” takes for granted the slave-psychology in those she regards as her “social inferiors.” Not merely does she expect immediate obedience from all members of the colored race; she feels the same way about policemen in uniform—it would never occur to her to think of a policeman as anything but a servant, prepared to behave as such. I assured her that she might not find this the case with the husky sons of St. Patrick who lord it over the New York crowds. But M. C. S. answered that she would see.

Far be it from me to know to what extent she did these things deliberately; my advice in such matters is not sought, and I am allowed to see the results only. What I saw in this case—or rather learned about later—was that M. C. S. arrived in front of 26 Broadway an hour late, clad in supple and exquisite white broadcloth, military cape and all; and that on sight of this costume the New York City police department collapsed.

¹⁴⁸For two weeks the “lady” from the far South marshalled the demonstration, walking side by side with eminent poets from California, and half-starved Russian

Jews from the East side slums, and gigantic lumber-jacks from the Oregon forests. If those Russian Jews and Oregon lumber-jacks had tried such a stunt on Broadway by themselves, they would have had their scalps split open in the first five minutes. But the lady in the white military cape was there—never speaking, but looking firmly ahead; and so for two weeks the New York police department devoted itself to keeping everybody else off the sidewalks in front of 26 Broadway, so that our “free silence” advocates might have room to walk up and down undisturbed. They even had mounted policemen to clear lanes in the street, so that the cars might get through; and when some one hired thugs to try to pick quarrels with us and cause a disturbance, the police actually drove the thugs away. I feel quite certain that this was the first time in New York City’s history that thugs employed by a great corporation to terrorize strike-pickets had met with opposition from the police.

And lest you think that M. C. S. is still a snob, and got a sense of triumph from all this, I ought to add the humiliating truth—that each day after going through with her ordeal, she would come home at night and cry! She would talk quietly and firmly to the reporters who came to our apartment; but after they had gone, she would be in a nervous fever of rage, because we had had to do such a “stunt,” in order to get the truth into the rotten newspapers.

Ladies in the South are, of course, not accustomed to having their husbands in jail; so on the third day M. C. S. collected all our most respectable-looking “mourners,” Leonard Abbott, George Sterling, Frank Shay and Mr. and Mrs. Ryan Walker, and put them on duty. Then she betook herself to the Criminal Courts Building, where she caused much embarrassment to several gentlemen in high station. The District-Attorney told her what to do, and helped her to make out the necessary papers; then she set out to find the judge. But the Criminal Courts Building is confusing to strangers; there is a central balcony, and all four sides of it look exactly alike, and M. C. S. got lost. She stopped a gentleman coming out of a court-room, and asked where she could find Justice So-and-so. “He is in room seventeen,” was the answer. “But I can’t find 149room seventeen,” said M. C. S. “Please show me.” “What do you wish with Justice So-and-so?” inquired the gentleman, politely. “Why,” said M. C. S., “some imbecile of a judge has sent my husband to jail.” “Madam,” said the gentleman—still politely, “I am the judge.”

She found Justice So-and-so. His court was in session and he could not be interrupted. But in the South, you understand, anything from a court to a fire-engine will stop to pick up a lady’s handkerchief. And moreover, the father of M. C. S. is a judge, so she knows about them. She walked down the aisle and addressed his honor

with her quietest smile, and—the court proceedings halted while the necessary papers were signed, and a Socialist muck-raker was released from jail.

The reason for this step was our desire to test in the higher courts the question whether a man whose conduct had been “that of a perfect gentleman” could properly be found guilty of “using threatening, abusive and insulting behavior.” In order to appeal the case it was necessary to pay the fine under protest, so I paid one dollar, and came out on the last day—to behold the crowd of ten thousand people, and the mounted policemen, and the moving-picture operators in the windows of nearby office-buildings. And so, day after day, we were enabled to give information about the Colorado coal-strike to a group of reporters for the New York papers!

Several of these reporters were men of conscience. One, Isaac Russell of the “Times,” became our friend, and day after day he would tell us of his struggles in the “Times” office, and how nearly every word favorable to myself or to the strikers was blue-penciled from his story. So during this Broadway demonstration, and the affair in Tarrytown which followed it, we lived, as it were, on the inside of the “Times” office, and watched the process of strangling the news. We have seen the tears come into Russell’s eyes as he told about what was done. And on top of it all, Mr. Adolph Ochs gave a banquet to the “Times” staff, to celebrate some anniversary of the paper, and got up and made a speech to them—a speech to Isaac Russell!—telling what a wonderful institution he had made out of the “Times,” and how it stood consecrated to the public welfare and the service of the truth!

P. S.—Isaac Russell reads the above, and corrects one serious error. He writes in emphatic capitals:

“WE REPORTERS PAID FOR THAT DINNER!”

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CHAPTER XXV

THE CASE OF THE “A. P.”

It must be understood that at this time the Colorado coal-strike had been going on for six or seven months. Most of the tent-colonies had been broken up, and the miners were being slowly starved into submission. To one who comes into close touch with such a situation and realizes its human meanings, it becomes an intolerable nightmare, a slow murder committed in a buried dungeon. My mail was full of letters from the miners and their leaders, and I went out to Colorado to see what else could be done to reach the consciences of the American people. I arrived in Denver at a time when the first public fury over the Ludlow massacre had spent itself, and silence had

once more been clamped down upon the newspapers. I spoke at a mass meeting in the State capitol, attended by one or two thousand people, and when I called on the audience to pledge itself never to permit the prostituted State militia to go back into the coal districts, I think every person in the legislative chamber raised his hand and took the pledge. Yet not a line about my speech was published in any Denver newspaper next morning, and needless to say, not a line was sent out by the Associated Press.

The Associated Press was playing here precisely the same part it had played with the “condemned meat industry;” that is, it was a concrete wall. I have now to tell about a thorough test of this leading agency of capitalist repression. I consider the incident the most important which this book contains, and therefore I shall tell it in detail. By far the greater part of the news which the American people absorb about the outside world comes through the Associated Press, and the news they get is, of course, the raw material of their thought. If the news is colored or doctored, then public opinion is betrayed and the national life is corrupted at its source. There is no more important question to be considered by the American people than the question, Is the Associated Press fair? Does it transmit the news?

Some time previous to the Colorado coal-strike I had attended a dinner of the Socialist Press Club, at which the question of dishonest newspapers was debated, and one of the speakers was Mr. Fabian Franklin, then editor of the “Evening Post,” an amiable old gentleman who quite naïvely referred to the Associated Press as he would have referred to the Holy Trinity. He told of some radical friend of his who had pointed out that the Associated Press had circulated the news of a defeat of the Initiative and Referendum in Oregon, and subsequently, when the Initiative and Referendum had been victorious, had failed to report the victory. “Just think of it!” said this amiable old gentleman. “My radical friend actually believed that the Associated Press would have some motive in suppressing news about the success of the Initiative and Referendum in Oregon!”

I was called upon to answer this argument. I quote from an account of the discussion in the “New York Call”:

Sinclair was saying that when the fusion of capitalism beat Seidel (Socialist) in Milwaukee, the wires were full of it, but when Duncan (Socialist) beat a fusion in Butte, the press was as silent as the tomb. Franklin said that it was merely that Butte had no news value, while Milwaukee, “Schlitz beer—everybody wants to know about Milwaukee.”

Incidentally I might mention in passing that this amiable old gentleman, Mr. Fabian Franklin, who thinks that the Associated Press would be incapable of suppressing news about a triumph of the Initiative and Referendum, and that it would naturally send out political news about Milwaukee because Schlitz beer is made in Milwaukee, has just recently been selected by a group of reactionaries to conduct a weekly organ of safety and sanity, "The Review." The reader will be able from the above anecdote to form an idea of the intellectual status of Mr. Franklin, and the likelihood of his having anything worth while to say to the American people in this greatest crisis of history!

Shortly afterwards came the case of the "Masses," which published a cartoon representing the president of the Associated Press as pouring a bottle labeled "Poison" into a reservoir entitled "Public Opinion." The Associated Press caused the arrest of Max Eastman and Art Young on a charge of criminal libel. They knew that by starting such a proceeding they would gain an opportunity of propaganda, and of this they hastened to make use. They issued an elaborate statement attacking the "Masses" and defending their own attitude toward the news, which statement was published in practically every paper in New York. I remember particularly that our organ of civic virtue, the "New York Evening Post," published it in full. It included this sort of "dope":

If these young men had investigated before they spoke, they would never have said what they did; for if there is a clean thing in the United States it is the Associated Press. The personnel of the service is made up as a whole of newspaper men of the finest type; throughout the profession employment in its service is regarded as an evidence of character and reliability. No general policy of suppression or distortion could be carried on without the knowledge and indeed the active connivance of these men, stationed at strategic points all over the world. Aside from that, the Associated Press has the active competition of several other aggressive press associations and thousands of special correspondents, and any laxity or deliberate failure on its part would be exposed instantly to its members, who would be quick to resent and punish any such procedure. These members, some nine hundred in number, represent every shade of political and economic opinion, and it is absurd to suppose that a general policy of distortion or suppression could be carried on without immediate exposure.

The editors of the "Masses," of course, proceeded to collect evidence, and the Associated Press must have realized very quickly that they were in for serious trouble. They caused a subservient district attorney to bring another indictment, charging libel against the individual who had been portrayed in the cartoon: the purpose of the change being that they hoped to exclude from the trial all evidence against the Associated Press as an organization, and to force the "Masses" to prove that this one

individual had had personal knowledge of each instance of news suppression and perversion.

Gilbert E. Roe, who was preparing the case for the “Masses,” asked me to tell him of my experiences with the Associated Press, and in talking the matter over he explained what would be required to constitute legal evidence of the suppression of news. I had no such legal evidence in the case of the “condemned meat industry,” because I had not kept copies of my letters to the Associated Press, and I had not kept the clippings of what they actually did send out on the story. I promised Mr. Roe that the next time I went to the bat with the “A. P.,” I would take pains to get proper evidence; and now in Denver I came suddenly upon my opportunity. I got real legal evidence, and the Associated Press knows that I got it, and I have been told that because of this they will never again dare to bring radicals into court, or to defend the thesis that they handle the news impartially. In my challenge I deliberately repeated the words for use of which the “Masses” editors were indicted, as follows:

I now, over my own signature and as a deliberate challenge, charge that the Associated Press has poisoned the news of the Colorado situation at its source. Will the owners and managers of the Associated Press take up this challenge and make an attempt to send me to prison? I am waiting, gentlemen, for your answer.

This was published May 30, 1914, and I am still waiting. I made every effort, both public and private, to get this answer. I besieged the Associated Press and also the Associated Press newspapers, but no answer could be had, so I think I may fairly say that the Associated Press admitted its guilt in this case. The story, first published in the “Appeal to Reason,” was written within a few hours of the events narrated, and gave all the documents. With the addition of a few explanations, made necessary by the lapse of time, the story is given unchanged in the next two chapters. It is a long story, but it will repay study, for there are few narratives of recent events which take you quite so far into the “inside,” or reveal quite so clearly how Politics, Journalism, and Big Business work hand in hand for the hoodwinking of the public and the plundering of labor. I urge the reader to follow the narrative carefully, for every detail is necessary to the proper comprehension of the plot.

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CHAPTER XXVI

A GOVERNOR AND HIS LIE

The crux of the struggle in Denver during these critical months was the State militia. This militia had been called out and sent to the strike-field because of violence

deliberately and systematically committed by the armed thugs of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency. There were one or two thousand of these thugs in the field, and they had beaten up the strikers and their wives, and turned machine-guns upon their tent-colonies. The militia had come, supposedly to restore law and order, but the militia authorities had proceeded to recruit new companies from among these detectives and thugs. This was systematically denied by the newspapers, not merely in Colorado, but all over the country; later on, however, the State legislature forced the production of the roster of the militia, and it appeared that of one single company, newly recruited, one hundred and nineteen members out of one hundred and twenty-two had been employees of the strike-breaking agencies, and had continued on the pay-rolls of the coal-companies while serving in the State militia! They had been armed by the State, clothed in the uniform of the State, covered by the flag of the State—and turned loose to commit the very crimes they were supposed to be preventing! The culmination of this perversion of government had been the Ludlow Massacre, which drove the miners to frenzy. There had been a miniature revolution in Colorado; armed workingmen had taken possession of the coal-country, and the helpless State government had appealed to the Federal authorities to send in Federal troops.

The Federal troops had come, and the miners had loyally obeyed them. From the hour that the first regulars appeared, no shot was fired in the whole region. The Federal authorities preserved law and order, and meantime the State legislature was called to deal with the situation. This State legislature was composed of hand-picked machine politicians, and all its orders were given from the offices of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company. Senator Van Tilborg, machine-leader, personally declared to me his opinion that all the State needed was “three hundred men who could shoot straight and quick.” The State authorities meant to find these three hundred men; they passed a bill appropriating a million dollars for military purposes, and another bill providing for the disarming of all people in the State who were not in the service of the corporations.

The strike at this time had continued for seven months, and the strikers were in their tent-colonies, sullenly awaiting developments. The program of the corporations was to strengthen the State militia, then have it take charge and maintain itself by machine-guns. The attitude of the general public to this proposition may be gathered from the mass-meeting in the State capitol, where one or two thousand people raised their hands and pledged themselves that they would never permit the prostituted militia to go back to the mines.

So stood the situation on Saturday, May 16, 1914, the day the State legislature was scheduled to adjourn. President Wilson, who had sent in the Federal troops

reluctantly, was waiting in Washington to see what measures the State authorities would take to put an end to the prevailing civil war. By Saturday morning he had come to realize that no adequate measures were being taken, and he sent from Washington a telegram to Governor Ammons of Colorado:

Am disturbed to hear of the probability of the adjournment of your legislature, and feel bound to remind you that my constitutional obligations with regard to the maintenance of order in Colorado are not to be indefinitely continued by the inaction of the State legislature. The Federal forces are there only until the State of Colorado has time and opportunity to resume complete sovereignty and control in the matter. I cannot conceive that the State is willing to forego her sovereignty, or to throw herself entirely upon the government of the United States, and I am quite clear that she has no constitutional right to do so when it is within the power of her legislature to take effective action.

And now begins a story of political crookedness, the like of which had never come under my personal observation. I had been in Denver four days, and had opportunity to meet a score of people who knew the situation intimately, and who were able to put me on the "inside." So I can invite you into the Governor's private office at eleven o'clock on Saturday 156 morning, when the above telegram from President Wilson arrived. First, let me describe this Governor, as I wrote about him in the "Denver Express":

I went yesterday afternoon to see your Governor. I wish to be very careful what I say of him. He is apparently a kindly man; in intellectual caliber fitted for the duties of a Sunday-School superintendent in a small village. He is one of the most pitiful figures it has ever been my fate to encounter. He pleaded with me that he was a ranchman, a workingman, that he was ignorant about such matters as mines. When I pointed out to him that, according to government figures, there were twelve times as many miners killed and injured by accidents in the southern Colorado fields as elsewhere, his only answer was that he had heard some vague statement to the effect that conditions were different in other places. He pleaded tearfully that he had brought upon himself the hatred of everyone, he admitted that he was utterly bewildered, and had no idea what to do in this crisis. His every word made evident his utter ignorance of the economic forces which have produced this frightful situation. He cried out for some solution; yet, every time that I sought to suggest a solution, and to pin him down to a "yes" or a "no" upon a certain course of action, he lost control of himself and cried out that I was trying to make him "express an opinion." He, the Governor of the State, had no business to have opinions about such a dispute!

It is no accident, of course, that a man of this type comes to be governor of a State like Colorado. The corporations deliberately select such men because they wish to be let alone, and they prefer men who are too weak to interfere with them, even if they wish to interfere. So now at eleven o'clock on Saturday morning this poor pitiful Governor sends for his advisors—the leaders of the hand-picked machine majority in the State legislature. What is to be done? If the President's telegram is sent to the legislature, it may refuse to adjourn, and insist upon considering the President's demand.

Therefore, at all hazards, the telegram must be suppressed. Also, it must be sent to the coal-operators in the city, in order that they may consult and tell the Governor what reply to make to the President. All the newspaper men in Denver knew the names of the two men who took the message about to the operators. It was considered by the operators for three or four hours, and a reply drafted and sent; and meantime desperate efforts were made by the machine leaders to obtain the adjournment of the legislature. The reply drafted by the operators and sent by the Governor was as follows:

157Hon. Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, Washington:

I regret exceedingly that you have been misinformed. The legislature has just passed an act, which I have approved, providing for a bond issue of one million dollars for the purpose of paying the indebtedness which has been incurred and which may be incurred in suppressing insurrection and defending the State. As soon as these bonds can be issued, these funds will be available and this State can and will control the situation. This is the only constitutional method of raising funds in immediate future. In addition to this act the legislature has enacted a law permitting the Governor to close saloons in time of disorder, and also a law prohibiting the carrying and disposition of firearms in time of disorder. Moreover, a committee on mediation on the present strike has been provided for and appointed.

Now the heart of our story is this last sentence in the Governor's telegram: this "committee on mediation on the present strike." If such a committee had been appointed, the legislature might fairly claim to have done its best to settle the strife. But *had* such a committee been appointed? It had *not*. The coal-operators, confused by the President's sudden action, had caused their poor Governor to telegraph the President a lie; and now all their agencies of repression were brought to bear to keep the truth, not merely from the President, but from the whole country.

First of all, it must be kept from the State legislature itself! A senator tried to have the President's telegram and the Governor's answer read in the senate, but by parliamentary juggling this was prevented. All debate was forbidden; but a

Democratic woman senator, Helen Ring Robinson, succeeded in getting in a few words of protest, under the guise of an “explanation” of her vote. Senator Robinson read the last sentence of the Governor’s answer: “Moreover a committee on mediation on the present strike has been provided for and appointed.” Said Senator Robinson: “I know of no such committee which has been appointed by this assembly.”

Lieutenant-Governor Fitzgerald replied that the resolution providing for the “strike investigating committee” provided for mediation.

“But,” protested Senator Robinson, “I can’t find a sentence in that resolution that mentions ‘mediation.’ I can’t see a word on ‘mediation’ in the resolutions.”

“Whereupon” (I am quoting the account from the “Rocky Mountain News” of May 17th), “Senator A. N. Parrish, conservative Republican, objected that the motion was not debatable. 158Further discussion was shut off, the motion to read the President’s telegram was laid on the table, and the senate adjourned.”

Now on that critical Saturday evening it happened that I was a guest at the home of the late Chief Justice Steele of Colorado, and there I met Senator Robinson. She asked me if I could not do something to make this matter clear to the country. Could I, for example, find out if the Associated Press had gotten the point straight? With the Senator sitting by my side I called the Associated Press on the ‘phone and spoke with Mr. A. C. Rowsey, its night editor in charge in Denver. I told Mr. Rowsey that I was in consultation with an opposition Senator, and that my attention had been called to this point, which I endeavored to explain.

Mr. Rowsey laughed good-naturedly at my effort to enlighten his great institution. He informed me that they had trained men up at the capitol watching every point of the procedure, and that they had got the story quite correct. I endeavored to make the precise point about the phrase “mediation”; but not having any copy of the proceedings before me, and being really unable to believe that Senator Robinson could be correct in attributing such an open falsehood to the Governor of the State, I permitted Mr. Rowsey to back me down, and hung up the receiver feeling that I had made a fool of myself.

But later that evening I went to the office of the “Rocky Mountain News,” where I was able to see a copy of the official record in the case, the House Journal of the proceedings of May 15, 1914. The measure was contained on pages 7, 8, and 9, and on page 47 there was an amendment. I read the bill and amendment, line by line, and I did not find in it the word “mediation.” The measure provided as follows:

Resolved, That a joint committee of six members, three selected by the senate and three by the house, said members to be selected by the body of each house shall be appointed and directed to confer and advise with the Governor and other executive officers of the State to the end that the legislative department may render all assistance in its power to the executive department in the enforcement of law and the maintenance of order, and to consider ways and means of restoring and maintaining peace and good order throughout the State; and to investigate and make report at the next session of the legislature upon the following matters and subjects:

The bill then goes on to outline an elaborate series of 159 matters for investigation—whether the coal companies have obeyed the laws; what wages they have paid; the terms of the mining leases; the employment of gunmen; what efforts have been made to settle the strike, etc. The amendment provides for further inquiry into the names of strike leaders, their nationality, etc., and the causes of violence. These subjects were, of course, enough to occupy a committee for many months. There was nowhere in the bill anything suggested about settling the present strike. On the contrary, the express task of the committee was said to be “to generally investigate all matters connected with said strike; that remedial legislation may be enacted *at the next General Assembly* which will tend to prevent *a recurrence of insurrection and public disorder.*”

Now, do not think that I am juggling words over the question of the precise meaning of the above bill. The distinction between the bill which had actually been passed, and the bill which the Governor told President Wilson had been passed, was vital and fundamental. Here was a desperate struggle, the class-war in literal truth, involving the two greatest forces in modern society. The whole State was torn apart over it, and if anybody were going to “mediate” and “settle” it, the whole State wished to know it, and must have known it. At the time that this investigation bill was passed, it was an investigation bill and nothing else, and this was understood by everyone who had anything to do with it. The measure was regarded as of so little importance that the “Rocky Mountain News” of the day after its passage did not even refer to it. It was one more “committee to investigate,” and the State was sick of such. By actual count there had been more than sixty such committees appointed already—one of them a committee from Congress, which had taken testimony filling ten volumes! It was perfectly understood by everyone that the purpose of this new legislative committee was to collect a lot of facts prejudicial to the strikers. Its members were all machine politicians of the very worst type. The idea of such a committee attempting to “mediate,” or to “settle the strike,” would have been regarded as a joke by the whole State; but no one had any such idea. It was not until Governor Ammons and his

advisors found themselves “in a hole,” that they hit upon the scheme of calling this a “committee on mediation.”

160Also, let us get clear the purpose of this trickery. The purpose was to keep the President of the United States from intervening to force a compromise, as he was threatening to do. The legislature was to be adjourned, and the President was to find himself in a position where he would have to keep the Federal troops in the field and do the work of repression which the prostituted State militia of Colorado could no longer do. Such was the plan—and I might add that it was carried out completely.

Next morning, by consulting with other members of the legislature, and with several lawyers in Denver, I made quite certain of the facts. Also I made certain that the Associated Press had sent out no hint of these facts. The Associated Press had sent merely the President’s telegram and the Governor’s answer. Presumably, therefore, the President had swallowed the Governor’s lie. Beyond question the country had swallowed it. It seemed to me that here was an occasion for an honest man to make his voice heard; so I sent a telegram to President Wilson, as follows:

President Woodrow Wilson, Washington, D. C.:

As one in position to observe from inside the events in this capital, I respectfully call your attention to the lack of fairness of Governor Ammons in withholding your telegram from the legislature for four hours while efforts were made to adjourn. All newspaper men know that during that time your telegram was in the hands of all coal-operators in this city, and they know the men who took it to them. Furthermore, they know that Governor Ammons’ telegram to you contains a falsehood. The word “mediation” did not appear in the measure referred to, which provides for investigation only. There has been a ten-volume investigation already. Governor Ammons declared to me personally that he means to return the militia to the strike-fields. Twenty independent investigators, reporters, lawyers, relief-workers assure me result will be civil war on a scale never before known in American labor dispute. Miners by thousands pledged to die rather than submit to more government by gunmen.

Upton Sinclair.

I took this telegram on Sunday evening to the editor of the “Rocky Mountain News.” He said, “It is a splendid telegram; it covers the case.” I said, “Will you publish it?” He answered, “I will.” I said, “Will the Associated Press get it from the News?” He answered, “It will.” It might be well to finish this part of the matter by stating that on the next evening I had a conversation with Mr. Rowsey, in charge of 161the Associated

Press, as follows: "Did you get my telegram from the 'News'?" "We did." "You did not send it out, I believe?" "We did not."

The "Rocky Mountain News" had been for many years a hide-bound corporation newspaper, but at this moment the owner of the paper had, so I was told, some kind of a personal quarrel with the coal operators. At any rate, he had placed in charge a young Chicago newspaper man, Wm. L. Chenery, with orders to publish the truth. That the "News" was not favoring me personally will be clearly seen from the fact that on Tuesday morning it published a ferocious attack upon me by Gov. Ammons, and refused to publish a word of what I offered in reply. Nevertheless, on Monday morning the "News" published a two-column editorial headed: "To the Patriots of Colorado." Says the "News": "Not one word about mediation is contained in the entire resolution. The committee is given no power to mediate. They may investigate, examine and report, and that is all." And elsewhere the editorial says: "A committee on mediation has not been provided for; and none has been appointed. Think of the inutterable weakness of such conduct! Think of its stupidity!"

Such was the voice of unprejudiced opinion in the city of Denver on the subject of the Governor's telegram. And what did the country hear about the controversy? Not a word! The Associated Press had all facts. It came to the "News" office and got everything the "News" had; and it sent out not one word! On the contrary, the Associated Press did its best to persuade the country that the President was pleased with Ammons' reply. It sent out the following:

Washington, May 16.—President Wilson expressed satisfaction with the situation after he received Governor Ammons' reply late tonight. It was said by officials in close touch with the President that Wilson was greatly pleased with what had been done after he had been informed by Governor Ammons of the work of the Colorado legislature, and that he hoped the State would assume control of the situation in the near future so the Federal troops might be withdrawn.

That this was an Associated Press invention, made to help out the poor Governor, was made clear the next morning by the "News," whose own correspondent wired the following:

Washington, May 17.—At the White House it was stated that nothing had been given out which would justify the statement printed in some of the morning papers that the President is entirely satisfied with the telegram received yesterday from Governor Ammons.

162I was by this time thoroughly wrought up over the situation, determined that the country should somehow hear the truth. I besieged the offices of the Denver newspapers; as a result the “Denver Post,” on Monday afternoon, published on its front page, with a heading in large red letters, an interview with Governor Ammons, in which that worthy denounced me as an “itinerant investigator,” also as a “prevaricator.” The Governor’s defense on the point at issue was this:

In regard to Sinclair’s declaration that the word “mediation” did not appear in the resolution appointing a committee to investigate the strike, Ammons explained:

“Probably that particular word does not occur, but a reading of the resolution will show that it gives the legislative committee power ‘to assist in settling the strike.’ If that isn’t mediation I’d like to know the true meaning of the word.”

I felt pretty sick when I read that interview; I thought the Governor must “have” me for sure! With sinking heart I went and procured a copy of the House Journal, to see if I could possibly have overlooked such a phrase as “to assist in settling the strike.” I read over line by line the three pages of the bill, and the one page of amendment; and, behold, there was no such phrase: “to assist in settling the strike.” There was nothing in any way remotely suggesting it! On the contrary, there was the explicit statement of the purposes of the committee “*to generally investigate all matters connected with said strike; that remedial legislation may be enacted AT THE NEXT GENERAL ASSEMBLY which will tend to prevent A RECURRENCE OF INSURRECTION AND PUBLIC DISORDER.*”

The Governor had lied again!

So then I wrote the Governor a letter. I said:

You have relied upon the fact that the man in the street has not access to the volume of the House Journal, and will accept your statements upon their face. This, of course, puts me at a cruel disadvantage, for you are a prominent official and I am only an “itinerant investigator.” But I propose, if possible, to compel you to face this issue. I will name two friends as a committee to represent me to settle this question at issue. I request you to name two friends. I request you to point out to them in the measure in question the word “mediation” or the phrase “to assist in settling the strike.” Your two friends will then bring it to my two friends, who, seeing the phrase in print in the House Journal, will be obliged to admit that I am wrong. You have objected to my presence in the state, upon the ground that I am meddling in the affairs of the people of Colorado. Very well, sir, I hereby offer you a simple way to rid the state of my presence. 163I hereby agree that if your two friends can point out to my two friends the word or

phrase in question, I will quit the borders of your State within twenty-four hours and never return to it. Upon your acceptance of this proposition, I shall name my two friends.

This letter was mailed to the Governor on Monday night; also copies were mailed to the newspapers. At ten o'clock Tuesday morning, while dictating my article for the "Appeal to Reason," I called up Mr. F. G. Bonfils, editor in charge and one of the owners of the "Denver Post." The following conversation occurred:

"Good morning, Mr. Bonfils; this is Upton Sinclair. Did you receive the copy of the letter which I mailed to Governor Ammons last night?"

"I did."

"May I ask if you intend to publish it?"

"I do not."

"May I ask what is your reason for refusing?"

"The reason is that things have been stirred up enough, we think. The people in this city want peace."

"Does it seem to you that this is fair journalism?"

"Now, listen, my boy, don't try to argue with me; you have had plenty of room to spread your ideas in our paper."

"You are entirely mistaken, Mr. Bonfils. You have not reported a single speech that I made in this town. You did not even print my telegram to President Wilson. But you print the Governor's answer to it."

"Well, now, we don't want to stir up this question any further. We think this State is very much in need of peace. We are not looking for trouble. If we printed your answer to the Governor, we should have to print the Governor's answer to you. And so it would go on indefinitely, and we don't want people calling each other names in our paper."

"If that is the case, why did you print the Governor's attack upon me?"

"Now, listen, kid, don't get excited."

"I was never less excited in my life, Mr. Bonfils. I am simply asking politely for an explanation."

"Well, now, we don't care to argue this question with you."

“You have called me a liar in your paper, and refuse me an opportunity to defend myself? Is that correct?”

“Yes; it’s correct.”

“Well, then I simply wish to tell you this one further thing. 164I am at present in a stenographer’s office dictating an account of this conversation for a publication which has a circulation of five hundred thousand——”

“I don’t care if it has a circulation of five hundred million.”

“Then you are willing for this conversation to be reported as expressing the attitude of the ‘Post’?”

“Say, Bill, we have been attacked so often by fellows like you, and we have got so prosperous on it, that we don’t care anything about it.”

“Very well, then; good morning.”

The above conversation was recorded in the following way. The stenographer sat by my side at the telephone, and took down every word that I said. Immediately afterwards this was read off to me, and I filled in Mr. Bonfils’ answers. As it happens that I have a good memory for words, I can state that the above is for practical purposes a stenographic record of the conversation. And later on I went out and bought an early edition of the “Post,” and found the man had “carried over” the Governor’s attack, a reprint from the day before! And then, walking down the street, I came to the building of the “Post,” and looked up and saw—oh, masterpiece of humor!—an inscription graven all the way across the stone front of the building:

JUSTICE, WHEN EXPELLED FROM OTHER HABITATIONS, MAKE THIS THY DWELLING-PLACE.

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CHAPTER XXVII

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS AT THE BAR

Let us return to Monday evening, and to our main theme, the Associated Press. I saw here my long-awaited chance to put this organization on record. I believed, and still believe, that this was a perfect case of news-suppression. Here was the closest approach yet made to social revolution in America; here was the class-war, naked and undisguised—on the one side the lives of thirty or forty thousand wage-slaves, on the other side a hundred million dollars of invested capital, controlling the government of an entire state, and using this control to suppress every legal and constitutional right

of American citizens, and to drive them to armed revolt. To this conspiracy the Associated Press had lent itself; it was being used, precisely as the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, precisely as the puppets of the State government. The directors and managers of the Associated Press were as directly responsible for the subsequent starvation of these thousands of Colorado mine-slaves as if they had taken them and strangled them with their naked fingers. If it had been such individual crimes of strangling, all society would have agreed on the need of publicity. I have made it my task in life to force the same kind of publicity for the economic crimes of predatory social classes. I considered now that the time for action had come, and as my final test of the "A. P." I prepared a second telegram to President Wilson, as follows:

President Woodrow Wilson, Washington, D. C:

In interview tonight, Governor Ammons brands me as prevaricator for my statement to you that commission of mediation was not provided. He now admits the word "mediation" does not appear, but insists that the phrase "to assist in settling the strike" is equivalent. No such phrase occurs. I urgently request you to get the full text of this resolution and realize what it means that the Governor of this State is wilfully and deliberately endeavoring to deceive you and the public in this crisis.

Wishing to make quite certain in this vital matter, I took the trouble to write out my plan of action, and took it to a personal friend, a leading newspaper editor in Denver. He said, "Don't do it." I asked, "Why not?" The answer was, 166 "It will make you so many powerful enemies that you will be unable to do anything more to send out news." I answered that I had never been able to do anything with the Associated Press—it was always and invariably closed to what I had to say, and only mentioned me when it had something considered discreditable, such as my being sent to jail. My friend answered, "Well, if you can stand being hated and suppressed for the balance of your life, go ahead."

I could stand that. So I took the volume of the House Journal and a copy of my telegram to President Wilson, and went down to the office of the Associated Press in the Ernest & Cranmer Building, and saw Mr. A. C. Rowsey, with whom I had talked over the phone the night before. He was very pleasant and friendly; and I wish to state that the attitude manifested by the Associated Press in this test case was in no way due to any personal difficulty or ill feeling. Mr. Rowsey showed himself a gracious host, and I never had a more pleasant interview with anyone.

I showed him the House Journal, and he read the four pages with interest. He read my telegram to the President, and then stated that they would refuse to carry it, as they had refused to carry the one they had got from the "News" on the previous day. His

explanation was that it was the policy of the Associated Press “to avoid controversy.” If they once got started they would never know where to stop.

I said, “But Mr. Rowsey, this controversy is the most important item of news on the Colorado situation tonight. I have here put before you indisputable documentary evidence that Governor Ammons has lied to President Wilson; and surely the public would want to know that fact. Surely the public has at least a right to know of the charge, and to make up its own mind as to its truth or falsity.” Mr. Rowsey’s answer was, “Our wire from Colorado is very much crowded these days, and this controversy does not seem to us to be news.” I said, “Very well, Mr. Rowsey; will you now permit me to hand to you this letter, which I have drafted to serve as a record of the circumstances.”

He took the letter and read as follows:

Denver, Colo., May 18, 1914.

Correspondent Associated Press,

Denver, Colorado.

Dear Sir:

Yesterday I sent President Wilson a telegram, which I believed ¹⁶⁷and still believe was of vital public importance. A copy of this telegram was put into your hands last night by the “Rocky Mountain News” and was refused by you. I now offer you a second telegram, bearing upon this subject. At the same time I offer for your inspection a copy of the House Journal in order that you may verify the truth of the statements contained in my telegram to President Wilson. I shall first, in a personal interview, politely request you to send this telegram over your wires. If you refuse to do so, I shall—in order to put you upon record—place this letter in your hands and request you to sign the statement below. If you refuse to sign it, I shall understand that you refuse to send out this telegram over your wires, and I shall proceed to send it to the papers myself, and I shall subsequently take steps to make these circumstances known to the public.

Respectfully,

Upton Sinclair.

Mr. Upton Sinclair, City:

Dear Sir:—The undersigned, correspondent of the Associated Press in Denver, agrees to send your telegram to President Wilson over its wires tonight.

.....

Mr. Rowsey read this letter and handed it back to me, with the smiling remark: "I see you are getting a good story." I thanked him, and left. I went down-stairs to the telegraph-office and sent a copy of my telegram to President Wilson to a selection of newspapers all over the country. They were as follows: New York "Times," "World," "Herald," "Sun" and "Call"; Chicago "Examiner" and "Tribune"; Philadelphia "North American" and "Press"; Baltimore "Sun"; Washington "Times"; Boston "Herald" and "Journal"; Topeka "Journal"; Kansas City "Star"; Milwaukee "Journal"; Atlanta "Georgian"; New Orleans "Times-Democrat"; Omaha "News"; Pittsburg "Post."

Now, I submit that here is a definite test of the service of the Associated Press. Is it sending out all the material which its papers want? Is it suppressing anything which its papers would be glad to publish if they could get it? Let the reader observe that these newspapers are not merely radical and progressive ones; they include some of the staunchest stand-pat papers in the country, the New York "Times" and "Herald," for example. They are all save two or three of them Associated Press papers. To make the test automatic I sent the telegrams "collect." The editors had the right to read the message, and if they did not want it, to refuse to pay for it, having it sent back to me for collection. Out of the twenty papers, how many took this step? Only five! The other 168fifteen took the story that the Associated Press refused to send out. This is a remarkable showing, considering the fact that I sent the telegram late in the evening, and too late for most of the Eastern papers. It should be pointed out that a newspaper editor is far less disposed to print a dispatch which comes from an unauthorized person. My charge was a startling one, and an editor would naturally doubt it. He would say, "If it is true, why doesn't the Associated Press send it?" Mr. Rowsey, in Denver, had the House Journal before him; but the city editors of newspapers all over the country did not have this advantage, and would naturally be disposed to rely upon Mr. Rowsey.

It might be worth while to add that the claims made in my two telegrams to President Wilson were fully vindicated by subsequent events. The committee of six machine legislators, appointed to collect material discreditable to the strikers and their leaders, proceeded to vindicate the Governor and redeem his reputation by going through a pretense of "mediation"; but the public paid so little attention to the farce that it petered out in two or three days. The strike lasted for another seven months, and all that time the Federal troops remained in the field—the very thing which President Wilson had declared himself determined to avoid, and which the coal-operators had been determined to force upon him!

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS AND ITS NEWSPAPERS

I am giving a great deal of space in a small book to this one test of the Associated Press. I think that the subject is an important one, and that the documents in the case should be available to students. In the present chapter I give the reaction of the press of America to this particular test. If the reader is not interested in such details, he may skip this chapter.

I have talked over this case with many lawyers, and shown them the documents, and asked: "Is there any legal flaw in them?" They have never been able to point out one. Also I have talked the case over with journalists—some of the most eminent of capitalist journalists, as I shall presently narrate, and have asked them to point out a flaw. They have pointed out what they think is a flaw—that in presenting to the Associated Press my telegram to President Wilson, I was asking the Associated Press to give publicity to my name and personality, and the Associated Press might have been justified in refusing the request.

I answer that there were many ways in which the "A. P." could have handled this matter without mentioning my name: a fact which I plainly pointed out to Mr. Rowsey. The first time I spoke to him—over the telephone—I was speaking, not for myself, but for Senator Robinson. She, a duly elected representative of the people of Colorado, speaking in their legislature, had nailed the Governor's lie, and it was Mr. Rowsey's unquestionable duty to report her words. It was only when I realized how completely the "A. P." was in the hands of the coal-operators that I "butted in" on the matter at all. And when my telegram was refused by Mr. Rowsey, I was careful to point out to him that there were other ways he might handle this news. He might give the story as coming from Senator Robinson; he might send extracts from the editorial of the "Rocky Mountain News"; he might send a dispatch saying, "It is generally reported in Denver," or "Protests are being made in Denver." All this I made clear, and 170he in return made clear why he did not do so. Anyone who had been present at our long and partly humorous interview would have perceived that this was no error in judgment of an individual employe of the "A. P.," but a definite policy of the great machine. Mr. Rowsey went so far as to say to me that he was a Socialist, in sympathy with my point of view, and that he personally would have been willing to send out a straight story.

In exactly the same way, when I took this story to various newspapers and magazines, I tried to suppress my own personality. I said to the editors: "If you are not willing to discuss the grievance of Upton Sinclair, then make an investigation of your own. Send

a representative to Denver and interview Senator Robinson and write about the efforts of a progressive woman senator for fair play in this strike. Take the telegrams which passed between the President and the Governor of Colorado, take the pretenses of the fake mediation commission and the false reports of the Associated Press about it, and write the story without mentioning my name.” But all such suggestions were in vain. There was no capitalist magazine or newspaper in the United States that would take up the conduct of the Associated Press in the Colorado strike.

In one of its published statements in the “New York Evening Post,” the Associated Press had explained its stern attitude toward the editors of the “Masses”:

The Associated Press is not prosecuting the case in any vengeful spirit, but is fighting for a public vindication. For several years the association has sat silent under accusations of this kind, reflecting upon the integrity of the service and the personal honor of its responsible officers, because the charges were made either on the floor of Congress, where no redress is possible, or by persons who were careful or lucky in avoiding the legal limitations of civil or criminal libel. In several cases the persons making the charges retracted them absolutely. At last they have a case involving libel per se, and they purpose to avail themselves of the opportunity to present to the public the facts regarding the service.

This, you perceive, is dignified and impressive; dignity and impressiveness are virtues permissible to great capitalist institutions. But now make note: my challenge to the Associated Press, published in the “Appeal to Reason,” repeated the identical words for which the editors of the “Masses” had been arrested; and I sent a copy to all the leading officers of 171 the Associated Press; I afterwards saw a letter, signed by Melville E. Stone, general manager of the Associated Press, acknowledging that he had seen it. Here surely was a charge “involving libel per se,” and one which I had taken pains to make as emphatic, as unconditional, as damaging as possible. It was a public challenge, appearing on the front page of a newspaper whose circulation for that week was five hundred and forty-eight thousand and forty. Yet the Associated Press did not take up the challenge; it swallowed the insult.

Not only that, but every newspaper having the Associated Press service did the same; some nine hundred newspapers throughout the United States sat in silence and let this challenge pass unanswered. I had the “Appeal to Reason” send a marked copy of this issue to every one of the nine hundred Associated Press papers, and I wrote to my clipping-bureau, asking them to watch especially for mention of the matter. This clipping-bureau is the best in the country, and seldom misses anything of importance. It could not find me a single mention of my challenge to the Associated Press.

I next selected a list of forty of the leading papers of the country, including the twenty to which I had sent the telegram from Denver. I sent them a marked copy of the article, with a letter addressed to the managing editor, pointing out what my challenge meant—that I had publicly indicted the source from which this paper got the news which it gave to the public. Would the paper defend the integrity of its news? Would it force the Associated Press to explain this incident? Three papers replied to my letter. I shall deal with them a little later. The other thirty-seven papers left my letter unanswered. And let it be noted that this included all the papers which make the greatest pose of dignity and honor, such as the “Boston Evening Transcript,” the “Springfield Republican,” the “New York Times,” the “Philadelphia Public Ledger,” the “Baltimore Sun,” the “Chicago Tribune,” the “Louisville Courier-Journal,” the “Memphis Commercial-Appeal,” the “Atlanta Constitution.” Also, I tried the magazines. One week after the publication of my challenge to the Associated Press there had appeared in “Collier’s Weekly” a leading editorial entitled “In Justice to the A. P.”:

The officers and members of the Associated Press have been kept busy lately repelling attacks upon that organization. In so far as they are defending themselves from the charge of wilful distortion of the news, we sympathize with them. Six or seven years ago we printed a series of articles which dealt with the general subject of “tainted news,” and from time to time since then we have pointed out examples of this insidious practice. During this time not less than a score of persons have come to us with alleged examples of tampering with the news on the part of the Associated Press. All of these cases we looked into with care and pains, and many of the same were investigated by other publications and persons. We have never found a case that justified us in publishing the details or in making any charge of wilful distortion against the Associated Press.

I wrote now to “Collier’s Weekly.” They had investigated a score of cases, here was one more. Would they agree to investigate this, and to publish the facts? To this challenge “Collier’s Weekly” made no response. “Collier’s Weekly” did not investigate, and it never published a line about the matter. Then I wrote to the editors of the “Outlook,” the extremely pious instrument of the “clerical camouflage.” In its issue of May 30, 1914, the “Outlook” had published two articles dealing with the Associated Press. I now wrote and invited it to take up this case, and the “Outlook” did not reply. Also I wrote “The Independent,” which was once a liberal paper, and it too refused any publicity.

To return to the three newspapers which answered my letter: Mr. Frederick S. Forbes, acting managing editor of the “Philadelphia North American,” replied that his paper had “frequently had occasion to criticize the news distributing agencies of the

country,” and would investigate my story. That was the last I ever heard from the matter. When I wrote to remind the “Philadelphia North American,” they did not answer. In the course of a year I wrote several times, but they did not answer.

And then the “New York World.” The “World” had published a challenge, defying anyone to point out where it had failed to print important news. I now took this case of the Associated Press to the “World,” and the “World” answered that having published my telegram to the President from Denver, the “World” had published the news! The fact that the “World” had got this telegram from me instead of from the Associated Press—that was not news! The fact that I had published a challenge, deliberately repeating the words of the “Masses” editors, and that the Associated Press and all its newspapers had passed my challenge by—that was not news, in the judgment of the “World”!

173The third paper which replied to me was the “New York Evening Post”; the only one which took up the matter in what I considered the proper spirit. Mr. John P. Gavit, managing editor of the “Evening Post,” wrote as follows:

Your letter of recent date, together with the exhibit embodied in the first page of the “Appeal to Reason” for May 30th, is hereby acknowledged. I have undertaken an investigation of the matter which will take considerable time and I am writing now only to prevent your having the mistaken impression that your communication is to be ignored. I attach for your information copy of a self-explanatory letter which I have addressed to Mr. Melville E. Stone, General Manager of The Associated Press.

Dear Mr. Stone:

I hand you herewith copy of the letter which we have received from Mr. Upton Sinclair, together with a page from the “Appeal to Reason” published at Girard, Kansas, under date of May 30th, 1914. I have been out of town, which fact will explain my delay in taking this matter up with you.

I am perfectly aware of Mr. Sinclair’s reputation among newspaper men as an insatiable hunter of personal publicity; but it seems to me that his telegram to President Wilson, making specific allegations in connection with a matter of the utmost public consequence at a critical time, ought to have been transmitted by the Associated Press men at Denver. Of course, it is perfectly absurd for any Associated Press man to say that it is the policy of the Associated Press “to avoid controversy”; that theory of the service is long out of date, and two-thirds of its news reports relate to controversies in one way or another. I have not examined the reports of the matters to which Mr. Sinclair refers, but on its face his article certainly creates a prima facie of

suppression of important facts regarding the situation at Denver. At the time to which he refers, I realize that the Denver correspondent was in a very difficult position in all this business, but in this case I think he made a palpable mistake.

It is evidently necessary under the circumstances that the "Evening Post" should deal with this subject, and I shall be glad to have at your early convenience any statement which you will be willing to have published over your signature. I personally believe that this should include some explanation from the Denver correspondent as to his reason for refusing to mention Sinclair's telegram to the President; though, of course, that is a matter entirely within your discretion.

Yours very truly,

John P. Gavit,

Managing Editor.

The above letter was perfectly satisfactory to me. It did not trouble me what either Mr. Gavit or Mr. Stone thought about my reputation among newspaper men. All that I was concerned about, all that I have ever been concerned about, was that the truth about social injustice should be made public. 174Mr. Gavit sent me a copy of Mr. Stone's reply, promising to make an immediate investigation of the matter and report. I felt so sure of the outcome that I ventured to make an announcement in the "Appeal," June 20, 1914, to the effect that the "A. P." was to be "smoked out," it was to be compelled to answer my charges.

But alas for my hopes of fair play, my faith in the organ of arm-chair respectability! Time passed, and I wrote to Mr. Gavit, again reminding him of his promises, and in reply he asked me to call to see him. I called, and found myself up against the concrete wall. Mr. Gavit was as polite as I could have requested; all that he failed in was action. He would not tell me the result of the investigation which Mr. Stone had made, or had promised to make. He would not tell me anything, except that the case was a subtle and difficult one to judge, and that he could not see his way to take it up. I quoted to him his letter to Mr. Stone, "It is evidently necessary under the circumstances that the 'Evening Post' should deal with this subject"; Mr. Gavit was uncomfortable and embarrassed, but he would not make good his words, nor would he publish in the "Evening Post" the facts about my challenge to the Associated Press. He never published a line about it, and on the basis of the facts above stated, I believe that I can claim to have proven positively that the "New York Evening Post" is not what it pretends to be, a newspaper serving the public interest.

I make the same claim concerning the "New York Times." The "Times" did not answer my letter, it did not pay any attention to me; but it happens that I read the "Times," and know some of its editors, so I went after it again and again. I will quote from the last of my letters, so that the reader may see how desperately I tried to get something done:

New York City, June 15, 1914.

Editor, the New York Times:

Some time ago I wrote you a letter with regard to charges I had made against the Associated Press. I asked you to consider these charges and lay them before your readers, and give them an opportunity to decide of their truth. Not hearing from you, I wrote a second time, to ask you to do me the courtesy to let me know your intentions in the matter. Still not hearing from you, I assume that it is your intention to treat my communication with contempt. I want to call your attention to the fact that in writing to you I am making a test of the sense of honor of your publication. I am putting you on record, and I shall find means to make your attitude known to the public. You are an Associated Press newspaper, and your honor is definitely bound up with that of the organization which serves you. You sell Associated Press news to the public. If the Associated Press news is false news, you are selling false news to the public, and you are refusing the public any opportunity to judge a most serious, a carefully documented charge that this news is false. It is true that you published my telegram to the President in one edition of your paper. But it is also true that you published it only because I sent it to you. The Associated Press did not send it to you. And I cannot always be in Colorado, and cannot always make it my business to supply you with antidotes to the poison which you are getting from the Associated Press. Only today, for example, you are, through the agency of the Associated Press, responsible for suppressing an important piece of news from Colorado: that is to say, the fact that Judge Lindsey has issued a statement defending himself, and especially the women who went with him, against the charges which have been made against them by the "interests" in Colorado. The "New York World" gave that letter a column, from its special correspondent. The "New York Call," having the Laffan Service, also had some account of the letter. You, having the Associated Press service, have not a word about it. And this is a vital and most important piece of news.

I then went on to tell about the "Evening Post" and its promise to investigate. I said:

The "Times" is involved in the matter in exactly the same way, and to exactly the same extent as the "Evening Post." The "Times" published the officially inspired defense of the Associated Press in exactly the same way as the "Evening Post." I believe that it is up to you to explain the reasons for your silence in this matter. I believe that if you

maintain silence, I shall be justified in declaring to all the world that you have shown yourself in this matter a newspaper without a high sense of honor, and false to the motto which you carry, "All the News that's Fit to Print." I assure you that I shall make this charge against you on many occasions in future. You may think that the five hundred thousand a week circulation of the "Appeal to Reason" is a factor which you can afford to neglect, but I believe that in the course of time you will realize that you were mistaken in permitting me to place you on record in this matter.

So ends the story of my test of the Associated Press and its newspapers. In the second part of this book, which deals with causes, I shall return to the subject, and show exactly why these things happen: Why the "New York Times" is without honor where the Associated Press is concerned, and just how many thousands of dollars it would have cost the "New York Evening Post" if its managing editor had carried out his bold promise to me.

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CHAPTER XXIX

THE SCANDAL-BUREAU

There is one other incident which must be told before I finish with the subject of Denver, its criminal government and prostitute newspapers. I had been in Denver before, also I had read Ben Lindsey's "The Beast"; so I knew, before I arrived, what I might expect to encounter. Standing in the Pennsylvania station, bidding my wife farewell, I said: "Let me give you this warning; whatever you read about me, don't worry. If there is any scandal, pay no attention to it, for that is the way they fight in Denver."

And when I reached my destination, I had cause to be glad of my forethought. John Reed, who had just come up from the coal-country, told me of the vile slanders which had been invented and circulated concerning the women of the coal-fields who had been active in defense of their cause. The scandal-mongers had not even spared a poor, half-crazed Italian woman, whose three babies had been burned to death in the holocaust at Ludlow! Louis Tikas, a young Greek idealist, a graduate of the University of Athens, who had been trying to uplift his people and had been foully murdered by corporation thugs, they blackguarded as a "brothel hanger-on" before his corpse was under ground! John Reed himself they had got involved with a charming young widow in Denver; he had met her twice at dinner-parties! (In passing, to show you how far Colorado had progressed toward civil war, I might mention that this lady, upon learning what had been done to the strikers, sent to the East and purchased two

machine-guns and hid them in her cellar, ready to be shipped to the strike-field for use by the strikers in case the militia attempted to return.)

Every Socialist and magazine-writer, even every writer for conservative publications, was taken in hand upon his arrival in Denver, and fitted out with a scandal. So far as I know, the only one who escaped was Harvey O'Higgins—and this because he took the precaution to bring his wife along. I had not brought my wife; also I was a “divorced man,” and an easy victim. There was a young Jewish girl, a probation-officer in Judge Lindsey's court, whom I was so indiscreet as to treat to a sandwich in a dairy lunch-room; that was sufficient for the scandal-bureau, which had to hustle in these crowded days. I recollect a funny scene in the home of James Randolph Walker, where several of these “affinities” learned for the first time to whom they had been assigned. We had a merry time over it; but meanwhile, at the meetings of the Law and Order League, and other places where the ladies of “good society” in Denver gathered to abuse the strikers, all these scandals were solemnly taken for granted, and quoted as evidence of the depravity of “foreign agitators” and the radicals who abetted them!

For myself, let me explain that during my three weeks in Denver I kept two stenographers busy all day; I wrote a score of articles, I sent hundreds of telegrams and letters—working under terrific pressure, hardly taking time to eat. My wife was back in New York, risking her frail health in the midst of public uproar, and with reason to fear that she might be assaulted by thugs at any moment. Every thought I had to spare was for her, all my loyalty was for her; yet “good society” in Denver was imagining me involved in a dirty intrigue! In several intrigues—such a Bluebeard I am! I had been in the city perhaps a week, when a young lady came to me and spoke as follows:

“Mr. Sinclair, I represent the ‘Denver Post.’ We have a rumor concerning you about which I wish to ask you.”

“What is it?”

“We understand that you are about to move from your hotel.”

“I have no such intention. Who told you that?”

“Well, I hope you will not take offense; I will tell you the report, just as it was given to me.”

“Very well, go ahead.”

I am sorry I cannot remember the exact words of the rigmarole; it was five years ago, and I have had more important things to remember. Suffice it to say that it was a new

scandal—not the Jewish probation-officer; I had uttered a mysterious and portentous sentence, expressive of my guilty fear; if my wife were to learn why I had left the hotel, “it would be all over.” I looked the young lady from the “Denver Post” in the eye and answered: “Standing in the Pennsylvania 178 station, bidding my wife farewell, I said to her: ‘Let me give you one warning; whatever you may read about me, don’t worry. If there is any scandal, pay no attention to it, for that is the way they fight in Denver.’” And so the young lady from the “Denver Post” went away, and did not publish that awful “rumor.”

There are people who live upright and straightforward lives, and concerning whom no breath of scandal is ever whispered; such people are apt to think that all anyone has to do to avoid scandal is to lead upright and straightforward lives as they do. They see some man who keeps dubious company, and is given to “smart” conversation; concerning such a man an evil report is readily believed; and they conclude that if any man is a victim of scandal, he must be such a man as that. But how if a scandal were deliberately started, concerning a person who had done nothing whatever to deserve it? My wife tells of a woman in her home town who would destroy the reputation of a young girl by the lifting of an eyebrow, the gesture of a fan in a ballroom. She would do this, sometimes from pure malice, sometimes from jealousy for her daughter. You can understand that among sophisticated people such practices might become a subtle art; and how if it were to occur to great “interests,” threatened in their power, to hire such arts? Let me assure you that this thing is done all over the United States; it is done all over the world, where there is privilege defending itself against social protest.

There was a certain labor leader in America, who was winning a great strike. It was sought to bribe him in vain, and finally a woman was sent after him, a woman experienced in seduction, and she lured this man into a hotel room, and at one o’clock in the morning the door was broken down, and the labor leader was confronted with a newspaper story, ready to be put on the press in a few minutes. This man had a wife and children, and had to choose between them and the strike; he called off the strike, and the union went to pieces. This anecdote was told to me, not by a Socialist, not by a labor agitator, but by a well-known United States official, a prominent Catholic.

I cite this to show the lengths to which Big Business will go in order to have its way. In San Francisco they raised a million dollar fund, and with the help of their newspapers set to work deliberately to railroad five perfectly innocent labor-men 179 to the gallows. In Lawrence, Massachusetts, the great Woolen Trust planted dynamite in the homes of strike-breakers, and with the help of their newspapers sought to fasten this crime upon the union; only by an accident were these conspirators exposed, and all

but the rich one brought to justice. Do you think that “interests” which would undertake such elaborate plots would stop at inventing and circulating scandal about their enemies?

Most certainly they did this in Denver. I was assured by Judge Lindsey, and by James Randolph Walker, at that time chairman of Denver’s reform organization, that the corporations of that city had a regular bureau for such work. The head of it was a woman doctor, provided with a large subsidy, numerous agents, and a regular card catalogue of her victims. When someone was to be ruined, she would invent a story which fitted as far as possible with the victim’s character and habits; and then some scheme would be devised to enable the newspapers to print the story without danger of libel suits.

There are a hundred ways by which this can be done; watch “Town Topics” in New York, or “Town Talk” and the “Wasp” in San Francisco, and you will see. The victim will be asked if there is dissension between him and his wife; when he denies it, there will be an item to the effect that he denies it—the item being so worded as to cause people to smile knowingly. I know a radical whose wife nearly died of appendicitis; while she was still bed-ridden, she was taken to a sanatorium by her mother and her family physician, a man old enough to be her grandfather. The day after she left, her husband was called upon to “deny” a report that his wife “had eloped with a Jew.”

Or perhaps maybe a report will be brought to the man that somebody else has made charges against him; he is naturally indignant, and when he is asked if he will bring a libel suit, he answers that he will think about it; so the newspaper has a story that the man is thinking about bringing a libel suit. Or someone will be hired to slander him to his face, and when he knocks the slanderer down, the newspaper will have a story of a public disturbance, so worded as to put the victim in the wrong, and at the same time to make known the slander.

In extreme cases they will go as far as they did with Judge Lindsey—hiring perjured affidavits, and getting up a fake reform organization to give them authority. Lindsey, you understand, has made his life-work the founding of a children’s court, which shall work by love and not by terror. Love of children—ah, yes, all scandal-bureaus know what that means! So they had a collection of affidavits accusing Lindsey of sodomy. They brought the charges while he was in the East; a reporter went to the Denver hotel where his young bride was staying, and when she refused to see the reporter, or to hear the charges against her husband, the reporter stood in the hallway and shouted the charges to her through the transom, and then went away and wrote up an interview!

Or perhaps the Scandal-Bureau will maintain for its foul purposes a special publication which is libel-proof; one of those “fly-by-night” sheets, whose editor-in-charge is an office-boy, and whose worldly possessions are a telephone address and three pieces of furniture. This was a part of their scheme in Denver. The publication was called—oh, most delicious allurement!—“Polly Pry”! I don’t know if it is still published, but I saw copies of it during the coal-strike, and it was full of the cruelest libels concerning everybody who stood for the strikers.

I remember one full-page story about “Mother Jones,” a white-haired old woman of eighty-two years, who was being held in jail without warrant or charge for several months, because she persisted in coming back to the strike-field every time she was deported. And what do you think they said about “Mother Jones”? In her early years she had been the keeper of a house of prostitution! They went into the most elaborate detail about it; they gave the names of people who knew about it, they gave the address of the house—and then they had their “kept” congressman, a man by the name of Kindel, to read this number of “Polly Pry” into the “Congressional Record”! So, of course, it was “privileged”; all the “kept” newspapers all over the state of Colorado and elsewhere might quote the story without danger of punishment! They might quote it, not from “Polly Pry,” but from the “Congressional Record”!!

I took the trouble to ask “Mother Jones” about this story. It appears that in those early days she was a sewing woman; she earned a precarious living, and felt herself justified in working for anyone who would pay her. She did some sewing for a girl of the streets, and this girl died of tuberculosis, and the Catholic church refused her a burial service, and 181 “Mother Jones” wrote to a newspaper to protest against this action—her first appearance in public life, her first utterance of radicalism. And this had been remembered all these years, it was brought up against her in one labor struggle after another; only they made her the “madame” of the house where the poor girl of the streets had lived!

We who sympathize with the cause of labor grow used to such things, and do not care for ourselves. What hurts us is this—that in a time of crisis, when the need of labor is so great, our influence with the public is destroyed by these slanderers. The average law-abiding and credulous citizen has no remotest idea of the existence of such machinery for influencing his mind. He takes the truth of these stories for granted, and concludes that a cause which is represented by such advocates can have no claim upon him. While I was in Denver, the “Law and Order League” held several meetings in the parlors of the great hotels. I offered to address these ladies, and I know that if I had been permitted to do so, I could have opened the eyes of some of them. But the league voted against it, and I have no doubt that this vote was because of the Scandal

Bureau and its work. Instead of hearing me, the league heard a clergyman, the Rev. Pingree, who declared that if he could have his way he would blow up all the strikers' homes with dynamite! After that I always referred to this organization as the "Law and Murder League."

But the crowning achievement of the Scandal-Bureau was still to come. In the effort to induce President Wilson to intervene in the strike, I had evolved what I thought was a wonderful idea—that Judge Lindsey and his wife should escort three of the miners' wives to Washington to tell their story to the President. It took days and nights of diplomacy, for Lindsey had an election campaign ahead of him, and his wife was in delicate health; but the emergency was extreme, and at last "our little Ben," as the children called him, made up his mind to the sacrifice. The party set out, and spoke at large meetings in Chicago and New York, and interviewed the President in Washington, and afforded the Associated Press another opportunity to display its complete subservience to the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company.

And meantime, in Denver, the newspapers were pouring out an incessant stream of invective upon Lindsey. The Scandal-Bureau revived the old yarn, that he was "the insane 182son of insane parents." (I knew his mother, an excellent old lady, as sane as I am.) On every stage of this journey Lindsey was accompanied by his young wife, to whom he had been married only a few months; nevertheless, it was plainly stated in the Colorado papers, and generally believed by Denver "society," that the three strikers' wives constituted part of a harem. If only you could have seen them—three pathetic, bedraggled poor women, two of them in deep mourning! And when Mrs. Lindsey, owing to the strain of the journey, suffered a miscarriage, and had to be carried from the train to a hospital in Chicago, several Colorado newspapers reported that this was owing to mistreatment by her husband! At a meeting of the Denver Real Estate Exchange, it was proposed to appoint a committee to "spit on Lindsey's shoes" when he returned; and this was the kind of news that was thought worth forwarding out of Denver!

I write to Judge Lindsey, so that you may have these incredible incidents upon his authority, not upon mine. He confirms every statement I have made. He tells of a woman detective, employed by the Scandal-Bureau—

The Lewis woman circulated the story that my wife came out of a house of prostitution, and that her mother was a "madame"; and the corporations paid the woman for it. There is no doubt about this, and it can be proved.

Judge Lindsey goes on to narrate the extraordinary circumstances under which these proofs became available. One of the members of the State legislature, a man named

Howland, was caught receiving a bribe in the legislature. He had introduced a “strike bill” against the Tobacco Trust, and a messenger-boy had handed him an envelope of money, said to be from an agent of the Tobacco Trust. In order to save this man Howland, the head of the Scandal-Bureau, Dr. Mary Elizabeth Bates, came forward and testified before the legislative committee that she had sent this money to Howland in order to pay detectives to “get Lindsey.” Says Lindsey in his letter to me:

Mind you, *she testified* to her part in the infamy, and was backed up by some of our rich citizens, feeling that she was quite safe from prosecution—as she was. But Howland was found guilty of perjury in this case, having sworn that the money came for an entirely different purpose. Because of the general belief of the legislators that the whole thing was part of a frame-up against me, and the fear that it would lead to the truth being told about the fight against me, they came to a compromise in the case against Howland, which was merely to expel him from the legislature for perjury. He never was tried for perjury or conspiracy to ruin me and my court work, as was undoubtedly his plan.

And how stands the matter today? Let Lindsey tell it in his own words:

During the war I was absolutely outlawed from every opportunity to be of any patriotic service here by the privilege and special interest crowd who control all patriotism, especially in the food and other administrations. When I returned from France I was permitted to speak for the Liberty Loan, but the chairman of the meeting told me that one of Boss Evans’ old tools had threatened to “read him out of the Republican party” for daring to let me take part in that patriotic celebration. Fourteen bills for the protection of women and children were killed in the last legislature through the open statement of certain members of the legislature who were tools of the Interests that: “If Lindsey has anything to do with it, swat it.” All this you will understand is my heritage of hate because of the part my wife and I took in that strike, and against big crooks generally when they have time and again tried to rob our city. Since “The Beast and the Jungle” stories, and my part in the Colorado coal-strike, it has been almost impossible for me to speak before such assemblies as High Schools, Woman’s Clubs, Mothers’ Congresses and the like. As one woman said to me frankly, “Mrs. So-and-so’s husband is a big contributor to our club, and if we permitted you to appear on the program she would be highly indignant and withdraw her support.” I am sure you will understand just exactly what the influence is, and how insidiously it works.

As I read the page-proofs of this book, the great coal strike comes, and the miners in the Southern Colorado field are out again, and Federal troops are guarding the mines. But this time it is not necessary for the Scandal Bureau and the Associated Press to

muzzle the strikers and their sympathizers. This time the job has been done by the Federal court injunction!

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CHAPTER XXX

THE CONCRETE WALL

I returned to New York, and at a meeting in Berkeley Hall I told the story of conditions in Colorado. I did not get myself arrested, however, so the New York newspapers printed only a few words of what I said, and the Associated Press sent out nothing. It was again the concrete wall, impenetrable, insurmountable: on one side I, with my facts about the outrages upon the miners; and on the other side the public—as far out of reach as if it had been in the moon.

The greatest atrocity of the strike was the fact, previously set forth, that the state militia in the coal-fields had been recruited from strike-breakers and Baldwin-Felts gunmen. The facts had been refused, even to the state legislature; until finally the legislature appointed a committee to wait upon the militia general and not leave his office until they got the roster of the guard. So it was disclosed that in Company A of the state guard there had been one hundred and twenty-two members, and all but three of them coal-company employees, receiving the pay of coal-companies while they wore the uniform and carried the flag of the state!

It was an incredible prostitution of government; and what did the newspapers do with the story? What did the Associated Press do with it? I was unable to find the story in a single newspaper, outside of Denver. I brought the full-page story clipped from the “Rocky Mountain News” to New York with me, and tried the big New York dailies, and could not get one of them to publish it.

The “Chicago Tribune” had published in full a letter of mine to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., setting forth these facts in detail. Also the “Tribune” had published a very fair and just editorial, headed: “All the Truth,” from which I quote:

Facts are charged by Mr. Sinclair—and others, it must be said—which, if true, are a disgrace to the men responsible and to the community in which they existed. To ascertain the truth and to deal with the situation are duties which must be performed.... Let us have the facts about this terrible industrial tragedy, and all the facts. Let us know the guilty and all the guilty.

185Three days later the “Chicago Tribune” took up my definite charges concerning the guard. It said:

If, as he asserts, the Adjutant General's report shows any such abuse of the guard, the situation calls for prompt rebuke and effective action, if such action is possible under our laws.... We suggest the National Guard take cognizance of the above allegations of Sinclair, and if they are substantiated by the Adjutant General of Colorado that the guard publicly protest against the abuse.

Five days after that the "Chicago Tribune" published a letter from P. A. Wieting of Denver, as follows:

Referring to your editorial "Abusing the Guard," in your issue of June 5. If Upton Sinclair said that the official records of Adjutant General Chase showed that an overwhelming majority of the Colorado militia were mine guards and other employes of the coal companies, he deliberately lied. Mr. Chase's records showed nothing of the sort, and could not; for the statement is absolutely false and absurd. The National Guard of Colorado is made up like in other states, of young business and professional men, students, farmer boys and the like, and includes the sons of many of our best families.

It is surprising that a paper of the standing of the "Tribune" should accept offhand such a preposterous charge against a great state made by a professional muck-raker. If you still entertain the slightest belief in Sinclair's foolish charge, any banker, any reputable business man, any college president in Colorado will tell you, as I do, that the man who made the statement quoted lied and knew that he lied.

Now here was a direct issue of fact. If P. A. Wieting were a real person, living in Denver, Colorado, and if he read a morning newspaper, he must have read the "Rocky Mountain News," because that was the only morning newspaper published in Denver. And on the entire front page of the "Rocky Mountain News" had been published the roster of Company A of the Colorado state militia, as given to the press by a committee of the state legislature, also a report of this committee of the legislature, giving all the facts as to these members of Company A, the capacity in which one hundred and nineteen out of one hundred and twenty-two of them were employed by the coal-operators or the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, and the wages they were paid by these concerns. The evidence was as complete and as authoritative as it was possible for evidence to be; and therefore, when P. A. Wieting wrote this letter to the "Chicago Tribune," deliberately accusing me of deliberate lying, he was deliberately lying himself.

I thought, of course, that the "Tribune," having taken a brave stand and called for the truth, really wanted the truth, and would push the controversy to the end. Therefore I sent to the "Tribune" by registered mail a copy of the "Rocky Mountain News," containing the facts, and I looked to see this full-page report transferred to a

page of the “Chicago Tribune.” Or I looked to have the “Tribune” have some representative in Denver look up the facts, as it might so easily have done. Instead of that, I saw not one line about the matter. What strings had been pulled in the “Tribune” office, I don’t happen to know. All I know is that I wrote several times, protesting, and that no attention was paid to my letters. Now, while I am preparing this book, I write to the “Tribune,” lest by any chance the “Tribune” published something in some edition which I missed, and which my clipping bureau missed; but the “Tribune” leaves my letter unanswered!

Also I write to Denver to find out about P. A. Wieting—if he is a real person. I find that he is assistant cashier of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Co., Mr. Rockefeller’s concern which broke the strike!

All this time, you must understand, the “kept” writers on the other side of the concrete wall were having their will with the public. Arthur Brisbane, for example, whose editorial against the strikers was submitted to Mr. Rockefeller by Mr. Rockefeller’s press agent as a proof of the press agent’s skill! And Elbert Hubbard of East Aurora—you will find a special chapter in this book devoted to the “Fra,” and in it you may read how he sought to sell out the Colorado strikers. And the Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis, a clerical gentleman whom we have seen spurning George D. Herron in public, and apologizing in tears before his congregation because his greed for money had led him into a mess of lawsuits. This clerical gentleman preached a sermon, in which he referred to our Broadway “pickets” as “a lot of silly people,” and incidentally told some score of lies about the strikers. Somebody, name unknown, was circulating this sermon in expensive pamphlet form by the hundreds of thousands of copies; so George Creel wrote to Hillis—but in vain. If you are near a library, look up Creel’s “Open Letter” in “Harper’s Weekly,” May 29, 1915, and see how many lies a greedy preacher can pack into one sermon. I also wrote to the reverend gentleman, and succeeded in getting a reply from him. I quote my final letter, which covers the case, I think:

187Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis,

Brooklyn, New York.

My Dear Sir:

I have your letter and note that you are going West to Colorado, and that if you can find any errors in your sermon you will correct them. I would say that definite and specific errors are pointed out in George Creel’s letters; errors that you would not have to go to Colorado to find out about. They are proven in the sworn testimony given before the

Congressional Investigation Committee and before the hearings of the Commission on Industrial Relations. While you can, of course, not recollect who gave you this or that detail of information, you must certainly know from what source you took the definite false statements of figures and facts to which Mr. Creel calls your attention. Moreover, the most important questions in both Mr. Creel's letter and mine, you have entirely ignored. I wish to ask you, before you go West, will you answer the following specific questions?

Who is circulating and paying for the expensive pamphlet form of your sermon?

Second, did this party obtain your permission to circulate it in this form?

Third, did you receive any payment for permitting this circulation?

Fourth, if, after investigation of Mr. Creel's points in Colorado you find that you were wrong and he was right, will you compel the party who is circulating this pamphlet to give to your corrections the same amount of circulation?

I have, of course no right to insist that you should answer any of these questions. I will merely say that by failing to answer them, and answer them promptly and explicitly, you will leave your name open to exceedingly grave suspicions.

This letter remained unanswered; yet such utter lack of concern about his good name has not injured the pastor of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, with the great organs of capitalist opinion! Only recently "McClure's Magazine" has selected him for its prize anti-Bolshevik liar. Please make a mental note of him, for reference when we come to the anti-Bolshevik liars and their lies.

It was still our hope that President Wilson could be persuaded to interfere in the strike and force the Rockefellers to some compromise. It being the way of public officials to move only in response to public clamor, we were driven to keep on butting our heads against the concrete wall. Our "mourning picket" demonstration had gathered about us a group of young radicals, who could not endure to see the effort die down and the strangling of the strike completed. Every day one would come to us with some new idea. One group wished to go up to Rockefeller's home on Madison Avenue, and walk up and down in front of it. We objected to this, because we were not attacking Mr. Rockefeller personally, we were attacking his business policy, and his office seemed the proper place. Nevertheless, one boy ventured up on Madison Avenue, and was promptly arrested and sent to jail for sixty days.

There was another group which wished to visit Tarrytown, where young Rockefeller had retired to the seclusion of his country home, with a high iron fence all around it,

and iron gates, and a score or two of armed guards patrolling day and night. This group tried to hold a street meeting in the village of Tarrytown, and were arrested. So I was driven into a campaign on behalf of free speech. I have told in Chapter XII of my experience with the "Tarrytown News"; I have now to tell of my experience with the "New York Herald." It is one of the few of my newspaper adventures from the contemplation of which I derive satisfaction.

I had several sessions with the board of trustees of the village of Tarrytown. They were courteous, and permitted me to argue the issue of free speech—which I did courteously. I brought to them a charming letter from Georg Brandes, then a visitor in New York. They held a public session, addressed by Leonard Abbott, Theodore Schroeder, and myself, and in the course of my talk I pointed out that the result of repression of free speech was violence. In England, where the radicals were allowed to gather in Hyde Park and say what they chose, crimes of political violence were practically unknown. On the other hand, in America, where it was customary for the police to arrest radicals and club and jail them, such crimes were common. Only the other day the newspapers had told of the assassination of the chief of police of Seattle, where the I. W. W. had been prevented from speaking.

There were a dozen newspaper reporters present at this hearing, and accounts of it appeared in the New York papers next morning. The "Herald" stated that I had threatened the trustees of Tarrytown with violence in case they refused my request. I quote from the "Herald's" narrative:

Suddenly Frank R. Pierson, president of the village, leaped to his feet and said:

"We shall not be intimidated by threats. We will hear no more of this kind of argument. For one, I was willing to listen to what these people had to say and to hear them fairly and honestly, but when they come here with threats of death, of assassination and of mob rule, I will not hear them further."

189Now, concerning this account there is only one thing to be said: it was absolute fiction. I have never met a more agreeable gentleman than Mr. Pierson, president of the Tarrytown village board; he voted my way on every occasion, and from first to last we never exchanged a word that was not cordial. On reading this account I at once went to see him, and ascertained that both he and the other trustees considered the report to be false and inexcusable. I then sent a letter to the "Herald" informing them that they had libeled me, and threatening them with a suit. They sent a reporter to see me, and I explained to this reporter the basis of my complaint, and next morning the "Herald" published my letter of complaint, together with an article reiterating its

statement, and quoting three of the trustees as supporting its statement. I quote the “Herald” reporter’s words:

I saw Frank R. Pierson, president of the village, and asked his opinion of the correctness of the account published in the “Herald.” Mr. Pierson carefully read the article and then said:

“Mr. Sinclair certainly made the remarks attributed to him in the ‘Herald,’ if I heard aright, and I did jump up and declare that we should not be intimidated by threats. Mr. Sinclair may not have intended to make a threat, but the inference was plain. The ‘Herald’ did not misquote either Mr. Sinclair or me.”

And concerning the above interview also there is only one thing to be said; it was absolute fiction. I went to see Mr. Pierson again, and he assured me that he had given no such interview, and would appear in court and testify accordingly. Another of the trustees wrote me that the “Herald” interview with him was a “fake,” and so I put the matter into the hands of my attorneys, and a libel-suit was filed against the “New York Herald.” It dragged for a year or two, and I came to California and dismissed the matter from my mind. When the time came for the suit to come to trial, I was unwilling to take the trip to New York, and asked my lawyers to have the matter dropped. You may imagine my consternation when I received a letter from them, telling me that they had been negotiating with the attorneys for the “Herald,” and had succeeded in settling the case upon the basis of a payment of twenty-five hundred dollars damages! Never, if I live to be as old as Methuselah, shall I spend money that will bring me more satisfaction than that twenty-five hundred dollars!

Throughout these Tarrytown adventures, which lasted several 190weeks, each newspaper had one reporter who followed the story day by day, and two or three of these men became friendly to me. Isaac Russell, reporter for the “Times,” invited me to lunch in a restaurant in Tarrytown, with a couple of other men. I explained that I was ill and not eating anything, but would sit and chat with them. As they were finishing, there came in the reporter for the “World,” who, as it happened, had been drunk during most of the time. Next morning there appeared in the “World” a particularly nasty account of the day’s events, in which it was described how I had come to Tarrytown with four women in my train, had had lunch with several reporters, and had permitted them to pay the bill. I took the trouble to go down to the office of the “World” and see Mr. Frank Cobb, managing editor; explaining to him that I had come alone to Tarrytown, had spoken to no woman in Tarrytown, and had eaten no lunch in Tarrytown. Mr. Cobb admitted that I had a grievance, and by way of recompense allowed me to dictate a column interview about the meaning of the free speech fight

in Tarrytown; incidentally he took the drunken reporter off the assignment. From the other reporters I got the “inside” story of what had happened, and it throws an amusing light upon newspaper ethics. The drunken reporter had lost out in the contest with me, not because he had been drunk, nor because he had lied about a radical, but because he had implied in his article that a reporter was a social inferior! Was not a reporter privileged to invite an author to lunch, and to pay for the lunch if he saw fit?

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CHAPTER XXXI

MAKING BOMB-MAKERS

It had been agreed by the trustees of Tarrytown that while we might not tell about the Ludlow massacre at a street-meeting, we might tell about it at a meeting in a theatre or hall. I set out to find a theatre or hall, but there was no theatre or hall that could be rented for that purpose. I then went up on the heights, where the Rockefellers live, and appealed to the sense of fair play of Mr. Rockefeller’s neighbors. This is the Pocantico hills country, a line of magnificent estates and palatial homes, of which you see pictures in the “Sunday supplements.” You might have thought it poor territory for radical propaganda; nevertheless, I was able to persuade one of the residents, Mrs. Charles J. Gould, to allow the use of her open-air theatre for a meeting in defense of free speech. Imagine, if you can, the excitement of the New York newspapers, when they learned that there was to be an I. W. W. meeting—so they called it—in an open-air theatre on a millionaire estate almost next door to the Rockefellers!

We held the meeting, attended by some three hundred people of the town, rich and poor, including a number of laborers from young Mr. Rockefeller’s estate. John W. Brown, organizer of the United Mine-workers, told the story of the strike, and we moved a resolution that it was the sense of the meeting that Mr. Rockefeller’s treatment of his strikers had been such that we called upon the President of the United States to confiscate his mines. We discussed that resolution for a couple of hours, and we carried it *unanimously*! But alas, it happened that Adolf Wolff, an Anarchist sculptor and poet, got up and delivered a tirade, abusing me for having pleaded for free speech with the trustees of Tarrytown. “We shouldn’t plead, we should take!” declared Comrade Wolff. A lady from the South got up and sang negro-songs to pacify the tumultuous meeting, and so the newspapers could make a joke of the whole affair—which they did.

In their last public session with us, the trustees of the 192village had admitted that there could be no interference with a meeting held upon the strip of property through

which ran the city aqueduct—this property being under State control. So now the radicals whose friends were in jail wanted to hold a meeting on this aqueduct property. They asked me to come, but I happened to be ill. Leonard Abbott went with them, also a boy named Arthur Caron, whose story I must briefly tell. Caron had been one of the finest lads who had joined our Broadway demonstrations. He was a French-Canadian, whose wife and baby had starved to death during the Lawrence strike. He had come to New York and taken part in the unemployed demonstration of the previous winter, and the police had arrested him and beaten him in his cell, breaking his nose and one ear-drum. He was a non-resistant, he told us, and had been one of the most useful in helping us to keep our demonstration peaceable. Now he went, at my suggestion, to avail himself of the public assurance given by the Tarrytown trustees, that a meeting on the aqueduct would not be interfered with.

But, as it happened, the “Tarrytown News” was carrying on a furious war against the village trustees, because of their halfway-decent treatment of the “agitators”; the “News” wanted us all exterminated, and it called on the “law-abiding” citizens of the village to assemble at the aqueduct and stop that meeting. So the speakers were met by a mob of rich men and chauffeurs, who tooted horns and howled at them, threw rotten vegetables and sand and stones into their faces, filling their eyes and mouth with filth and streaming blood. Running through the village toward the railroad-station, the little group was ridden down by mounted members of the aqueduct police-force, who pursued them even on board the train, and clubbed them over the heads when they sought refuge in the seats. These incidents were described to me by several indignant newspaper reporters, including my friend Isaac Russell, of the “Times.” But the “Times” cut out from Russell’s story the incident of the clubbing on the train.

Here was another call for protest; but by this time the Sinclair family had reached the point of exhaustion. My wife had been a semi-invalid at the beginning of the affair, and was now near to nervous breakdown. We had spent every dollar we owned, and a great many that we did not own; so we were forced to retire, and let the Tarrytown rowdies and their 193 rowdy newspapers have their way. We remained in New York for a couple of weeks to straighten our affairs; and on the very day we had planned to leave for the country, the telephone rang, and my wife answered, and a voice said: “This is the 100th St. Police Station. Do you know a man named Arthur Caron?”

Yes, my wife knew Arthur Caron. “What about him?” she asked, and the voice answered: “We found your name in a note-book in his pocket. Will you come to the station and identify his body?”

There had been, it appeared, an explosion in a tenement-house on Third Avenue. At first the police thought it was a gas-explosion, but soon the truth became known; Arthur Caron and two or three of his friends had been making bombs with the intention of blowing up the Rockefellers. There had been a premature explosion, which had blown out several stories of the tenement, and killed the three lads.

It was interesting to observe the conduct of the New York newspapers during this affair. It made, of course, a tremendous excitement. Bombs are news; they are heard all the way around the world. But the outrages which have caused the bombs are not news, and no one ever refers to them. No one makes clear that these outrages will continue to cause bombs, so long as the human soul remains what it is.

Now the New York newspapers knew perfectly well that our Broadway demonstration, our "Free Silence League," as they had dubbed it, had been a peaceable demonstration. They knew that at the opening meeting, at which the plan was discussed, I had declared that I desired the co-operation only of those who would pledge their word to me personally that they would offer no resistance, no matter what was done to them; that they would not even speak a word, nor argue with anyone, they would do nothing but walk up and down. At our first meeting Frederick Sumner Boyd, an I. W. W. leader, repudiated my ideas, and called upon the meeting to organize itself to raise money and send arms to the coal-strikers. I replied that if any wished to organize such a group, it was his right, but I had called this meeting for the purpose of organizing one kind of demonstration, and I thought that those who wished to organize some other kind of demonstration should utilize one of the other rooms of the Liberal Club; whereupon 194 Boyd and about half the audience withdrew. All this had been fully reported in the New York papers, and was known to everyone.

Also it was known to the Rockefellers that at the headquarters of our Colorado Committee I personally obtained the pledge of every man and woman, before I allowed them to join us, that they would conform to the rule laid down. I say this was known to the Rockefellers, because they had spies among us; I knew perfectly well who those spies were, and allowed one of them to think he was my friend. From first to last I had nothing to hide, and for that reason I had nothing to fear, and this was as well known to the newspapers as it was to the police who were probing the explosion. Except for the first telephone call, which had come from a desk-sergeant who knew nothing about the matter whatever, the police did not trouble us, nor even question us; yet day by day, while that sensation was before the public, the whole effort of the New York newspapers was concentrated upon making it appear that Upton Sinclair was in some way connected with the bomb-plot. Day after day there would be circumstantial accounts of how the police and the coroner and other officials were

preparing to summon my wife and myself, and to subject us to a “rigid examination” concerning Arthur Caron and the other victims of the explosion. We would call up the police and the coroner and other officials, and inform them that we were perfectly willing to be questioned, but that we knew nothing but what we had told the public; to which the police and the coroner and the other officials would reply: “We have no wish to question you; that’s just newspaper talk.” All officials understand what “newspaper talk” means; but the public doesn’t understand, and so what the public carried away from this affair was the general impression that my wife and I were dangerous characters. We were too cunning to get caught, of course; but we incited obscure and half-educated young people to make bombs and set them off, and then we washed our hands of them and left them to their fate.

There is one final story which ought to be told in connection with these “mourning pickets.” You may recall that I had appealed against the decision of Police-magistrate Sims, to the effect that one whose conduct had been “that of a perfect gentleman” might properly be found guilty of “using threatening, abusive and insulting behavior.” I had told the story of 195 this court-decision at a public meeting in the State capitol in Denver, and again at a dinner of the Progressive Party workers in Chicago—saying: “I don’t know whom the magistrate supposed I had threatened, abused and insulted—unless perhaps it were John D. Rockefeller, Junior!” The audience had laughed appreciatively; they thought that was a funny joke; I, too, thought it was a funny joke. But now—can you believe it?—Justice Crain of the Court of General Sessions handed down his august decision, which had cost me several hundred dollars in lawyer’s fees and court costs to obtain; and this Daniel come to judgment upheld the decision of Police-magistrate Sims, and gave his reasons therefor—and lo, his reasons were my funny joke! Seventeen thousand, five hundred dollars per year the people of New York State pay to Justice Crain of the Court of General Sessions, for handing down such august decisions; and forever and ever, so long as capitalist civilization endures, that particular august decision will be printed on expensive paper, and bound in expensive sheepskin, and treasured in the libraries of learned jurists. Such a wonder of a decision deserves to be read, as well as preserved in law-books; so I will quote it here, as follows:

No citizen has a right to rebuke another citizen by subjecting him to ridicule or insult.

The defendant intended by his conduct in the presence of others to rebuke the conduct of Mr. Rockefeller. His action was in the language of the statute, abusive or insulting; abusive because it is derogatory to the one whose conduct is referred to, and the insult lies in part in the subject matter of the rebuke and in part in the publicity of the infliction.

Now let me put to you this problem. The “New York Herald” had published a cartoon, in which I was portrayed as a hideous monster with a filthy muck-rake; and now suppose that I had appealed to Justice Crain of the Court of General Sessions, complaining that James Gordon Bennett had “rebuked a citizen” by “subjecting him to ridicule or insult”—do you think that Justice Crain would have sent Bennett to jail? And do you think that the newspapers would have printed the decision with solemn and respectful comment, praising it as a proper rebuke to a disturber of public order?

I close the story of this long Colorado struggle with a benediction sent to me all the way across the continent: the “Los Angeles Times,” July 9th, 1914:

196It develops that Upton Sinclair only served two of his three days’ sentence, after all. He was on a hunger strike, and after he had gone unfed for two days, his wife came and paid the rest of his fine and forced him out of jail. Wait till they have been married a little longer, and perhaps she will let him serve three years if he wants to do it.

I enquire among friends and learn that the general impression is that I declared a “hunger-strike,” and couldn’t stick it out, and let my wife come to my rescue. Again the newspapers! The truth is that I was as comfortable as any man ought to ask to be in jail; I had a cell to myself, and it was clean, and near a window, and I was allowed to have my mail, and all the books I wanted, and visitors at reasonable hours. But I wanted to appeal from that stupid decision; and in order to appeal, the lawyers explained, I must have something to appeal *for*. I couldn’t appeal for the time I spent in jail, for no court could restore that to me. I had to pay some money—one dollar at the least; and having paid this, I had to come out, whether I would or no. So the newspapers had a chance to report that Upton Sinclair, who had written a book telling how he had fasted for ten or twelve days, had been unable to stick out a three-day “hunger-strike”!

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CHAPTER XXXII

THE ROOF-GARDEN OF THE WORLD

After these strenuous adventures I retired to private life to recuperate. I edited “The Cry for Justice,” and then, finding that I was still haunted by the Colorado situation, I wrote “King Coal.” Meantime I had moved to Southern California, seeking an open-air life. I have been here four years, and alas, I have had a new set of experiences with newspapers. As preliminary to them, there must be given a brief account of this “Roof-garden of the World.”

It exists because of climate. There are, of course, ranchmen who raise fruits and vegetables, and there are servants and chauffeurs and house-builders and plumbers, but the main industry of Southern California is climate. Everybody is consuming climate, and in addition to this, nearly everybody is trying to sell climate to “come-ons” from the East. The country has been settled by retired elderly people, whose health has broken down, and who have come here to live on their incomes. They have no organic connection with one another; each is an individual, desiring to live his own little life, and to be protected in his own little privileges. The community is thus a parasite upon the great industrial centres of other parts of America. It is smug and self-satisfied, making the sacredness of property the first and last article of its creed. It has a vast number of churches of innumerable sects, and takes their aged dogmas with deadly seriousness; its social life is display, its intellectual life is “boosting,” and its politics are run by Chambers of Commerce and Real Estate Exchanges.

There are, of course, a great number of ladies in Southern California with nothing to do. They have culture clubs, which pay celebrities to come and entertain them, and next to marrying a millionairess, this is the easiest way to get your living in Southern California. They will pay you as much as a hundred dollars for a lecture, and such an opportunity is naturally not to be sneezed at by a strike-agitator in debt. I had been living quietly for a year or so, working on “King Coal,” when I was invited to meet at luncheon one of the officials of the ultra-exclusive 198Friday Morning Club of Los Angeles. I was duly inspected and adjudged presentable, and received an invitation to set forth my intellectual wares before the club assemblage.

Now, this was an important opportunity, as my friends pointed out. There are many such clubs in Los Angeles, and scores of others in the leisure-class towns round about. This first lecture was a test, and if I “made good,” I would receive more invitations, and might be able to live quietly and do my writing. The ladies who came to hear Upton Sinclair would, of course, come expecting to be shocked. If I didn’t shock them at all, my lecture would be a failure; I must be judicious, and shock them just exactly enough, so that they would come for more shocks. I am fortunate in having a wife who understands the psychology of ladies, and who undertook to groom me for this new role of leisure-class lecturer.

In the first place, there was the question of clothes. “You haven’t had a new suit in four or five years,” said my wife.

“How about the one I bought in England?”

“That heavy woolen suit? If you wore that on a summer day, the perspiration would stream down your face!”

“Well,” I ventured, “mightn’t they think it proper for a Socialist to wear old clothes? Mightn’t I be pathetic——”

Said M. C. S. “They don’t want anybody around who is not well dressed. It’s depressing. You must have a new suit.”

“But—we just haven’t the money to spare.”

“You can get a Palm Beach suit for ten dollars.”

“Isn’t that rather festive? I never wore anything like it.”

“Idiot! Papa wears them all the time.”

Now “papa,” you must understand, is—well, what “papa” does is the standard. So it was arranged that I should go into Los Angeles an hour or two earlier in the morning, and provide myself with a Palm Beach suit and pair of white shoes for two dollars. “They will be made of paper,” said my wife, “but you won’t have far to walk, and they’ll do for other lectures.”

M. C. S. does not go with me on these adventures, having not been well since the Colorado excitement. She stays at home and mends socks and writes sonnets, while I administer shocks to the leisure-class ladies. Her last injunction was a hair-cut. “The day of long-haired geniuses is past. Promise me you’ll have your hair cut.”

I promise, and I get the Palm Beach suit and the shoes, 199and then look for a barber. It is ten or eleven months before America’s entry into the war, but the “preparedness” enthusiasts are having some kind of celebration in Los Angeles, and the streets are a mass of red and white bunting; I walk a long distance, and find half a dozen places with red and white ribbons wound about poles, but they are not barber-shops. At last, however, I find one, just in the nick of time, and at ten o’clock sharp I present myself, all freshly groomed, to the charming ladies of the club, and am escorted onto the platform.

My theme is “The Voice of the Ages,” and I bring with me a copy of “The Cry for Justice,” and read passages from eminent ancient authors, startling my hearers by the revelation that Plato and Euripides and Isaiah and Jesus and Confucius and Dante and Martin Luther and George Washington were all members of the I. W. W. of their time. I read them Isaiah on “Ladies of Fashion”—all save one obscene sentence, which could not be uttered before modern ladies. I give them just exactly the proper number of thrills, mixed with the proper number of smiles, and they bombard me with questions for an hour, and we have a most enjoyable time.

But one tragedy befalls. I am quoting Frederick the Great on the subject of Militarism, and am moved to mention the fact that Los Angeles is now in a military mood. "I promised my wife I would get a hair-cut before I came here, but I almost missed it, because there were so many red and white decorations on the streets that I couldn't find a barber-shop." The instant the words were out of my mouth, I realized that I had, as the boys say, "spilled the beans." Driving home with a friend who is a member of the club, she told me what a success the lecture had been, and I replied: "Ah, no, you are mistaken! I ruined everything!"

"How?" asked my friend.

"Didn't you hear me confuse the American flag with a barber-pole?"

"Nonsense!" said my friend. "They all laughed."

"May be so," said I. "But wait until you see the papers tomorrow morning!"

And sure enough, it was as I said! Next morning the "Los Angeles Times" published an account of the lecture, in which I was portrayed as a dandified creature who had appeared before the ladies decked in tennis flannels. Having since met Alma Whitaker, the woman who wrote this account, 2001 dare stake my life that she knows perfectly well the difference between a Palm Beach suit and tennis flannels; but she wanted to make me hateful, and that was such a little lie! She went on to tell about my lecture, in which I had sneered at Jesus, and compared the American flag to a barber-pole! My audience had been highly indignant, according to her account, and one eminent lady had left the room in disgust.

And so next morning there was an editorial in the "Times," of which I will quote about half. You will be struck by its peculiar style, and may be interested to know that it was written by General Otis himself, being a fair sample of the vitriol which every day for thirty years he poured out upon everything enlightened in California:

UPTON SINCLAIR'S RAVINGS

Many people believe that the prattlings of an anarchistic Upton Sinclair before a woman's club are unworthy of serious attention; but the fact that the hall of the Friday Morning Club was filled to overflowing at his programme, and that the great majority of them sat throughout the entire lecture, would seem to prove that such illogical ravings have at least some power to impress. Some few women have been found courageous enough to voice their indignation that the club rostrum should be used for such ungodly purposes.

It is depressing to find a great number of intelligent women, well able to think for themselves, lending time and ear to a piffling collection of more-or-less brilliant quotations upholding anarchy, destruction, lawlessness, revolution, from the lips of an effeminate young man with a fatuous smile, a weak chin and a sloping forehead, talking in a false treble, and accusing them of leading selfish, self-indulgent lives. It would be laughable if it were not a little disconcerting. These women, who are doing such earnest work for their city, who, indeed, rank among the best intellect of the city, who have deeds rather than words to their credit—it seems incredible that they should be prepared to lend encouragement to such unintelligent, witless, anarchistic outpourings.

While slyly veiling his false doctrines as quotations from “intelligent ancient peasants,” and the prophet Isaiah, and the Greek classics, Upton Sinclair nevertheless makes no secret of his sympathy with dynamiters and murderers, and considers it an example of exquisite wit to speak of Jesus Christ with patronizing irreverence. His sense of humor also demanded that he belittle the flag of the United States, and, after pretending to confuse it with a barber’s pole scoff at the great national wave of emotion for the country’s righteous defense and honor.

An assembly of men of the same standing as the women of the Friday Morning Club could never be induced to listen to such insults to their creed and their country without violent protest. Never before an audience of red-blooded men could Upton Sinclair have voiced his weak, pernicious, vicious doctrines. His naïve, fatuous smile alone would have aroused their ire before he opened his vainglorious mouth.

Let the fact remain that this slim, beflanneled example of perverted masculinity could and did get several hundred women to listen to him.

Now, as a matter of fact, it happened that I had given a far more radical lecture at the monthly dinner of the University Club, where three hundred men of Los Angeles had heard me with every evidence of cordial interest. The secretary of the club had told me that it was the only occasion he could remember when none of the diners had withdrawn to play chess until after the speaking was finished. But I had, of course, no way to make known this fact to the readers of the “Times,” nor even the true sentiments of the ladies of the Friday Morning Club. It happened that my friend George Sterling spoke at the club the following week, and I went with him and was asked to speak at the luncheon. I referred playfully to what the “Times” had said about me, and was astonished at the ovation I received. The women rose from their seats to let me know that they appreciated the insult to them involved in the “Times” editorial. It is the same thing that I have noted everywhere, whenever I refer to the subject of our

newspapers. The American people thoroughly despise and hate their newspapers; yet they seem to have no idea what to do about it, and take it for granted that they must go on reading falsehoods for the balance of their days!

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CHAPTER XXXIII

A FOUNTAIN OF POISON

I have lived in Southern California four years, and it is literally a fact that I have yet to meet a single person who does not despise and hate his "Times." This paper, founded by Harrison Gray Otis, one of the most corrupt and most violent old men that ever appeared in American public life, has continued for thirty years to rave at every conceivable social reform, with complete disregard for truth, and with abusiveness which seems almost insane. To one who understands our present economic condition, the volcano of social hate which is smouldering under the surface of our society, it would seem better to turn loose a hundred thousand mad dogs in the streets of Los Angeles, than to send out a hundred thousand copies of the "Times" every day.

You cannot live in Southern California and stand for any sort of liberal ideas without encountering the wrath of this paper. And when you have once done this, it pursues you with personal vindictiveness; no occasion is too small for it to lay hold of, nor does it ever forget you, no matter how many years may pass. My friend Rob Wagner writes me an amusing story about the feud between Otis and the city of Santa Barbara, a millionaire colony about a hundred miles from Los Angeles:

When the big fleet came around here some years ago I was director-generalizing a very snappy flower festival at Santa Barbara, and as the "Times" played up all the bar-room brawls the sailors got into and belittled my pretty show, I got hold of the local correspondent and says: "Mac, why are you crabbing the show and featuring the rough stuff?" "Well the truth is, Bob, my pay depends upon the kind of stuff I send. A rotten story is good for columns, against a few paragraphs of the birds and the flowers. You know the General has towns as well as individuals on his index, and Santa Barbara is one of them. The General once owned the Santa Barbara 'Press,' and with his usual cave-man methods got in bad with the villagers, and they bumped him socially so hard that he finally left in great heat and swore vengeance, which he practices to this day. This has been going on for years."

Now the old "General" is gone, but his "index" still stands. 203The song should read: "Old Otis' body lies a-moulderin' in the grave, but his soul goes cursing on!" It goes on

cursing, not merely movements of social reform and those who advocate them; it goes on cursing Santa Barbara! Soon after we came to Pasadena there was an earthquake shock, sufficiently severe to cause us to run out of our house. You understand, of course, that earthquakes are damaging to real-estate values; therefore there was no report of an earthquake in any Los Angeles paper next day—save that the “Times” reported an earthquake in Santa Barbara! A year or two later this happened again—and again it was an earthquake in Santa Barbara.

Also, Rob Wagner tells me of his own amusing experience with the “Times.” I quote:

During the Harriman campaign I deserted my class, kicked in and had Socialist meetings at my studio, and even enjoyed the degradation of offering hospice to Ben Reitman and Emma Goldman the night after they were run out of San Diego. So the General paid me the amazing compliment of putting me on his index, and gave orders that my name should not appear thereafter in his art columns. Anthony Anderson proved it to me by slipping in a harmless little notice of a portrait exhibit I was holding, which got the blue pencil. So you see that even an artist who might help the town in its very ingrowing aestheticism got the General’s axe if the General didn’t like his politics!

It happens, curiously enough, that I have met socially half a dozen members of the “Times” staff. They are cynical worldlings, doing a work which they despise, and doing it because they believe that life is a matter of “dog eat dog.” I met the lady, Alma Whitaker, who had written the account of my Friday Morning Club lecture. She had enjoyed the lecture, she said, but afterwards had gone to the managing editor and inquired how I was to be handled; she took it for granted that I would understand this, and would regard it tolerantly. I explained to her the embarrassments of an author in relation to an unpaid grocer’s bill. As a result of what she had written about me, I had not been invited by any other woman’s club in Southern California!

Also I met one of the high editors of the “Times,” an important personage whom they feature. Talking about the question of journalistic integrity, he said: “Sinclair, it has been so long since I have written anything that I believed that I don’t think I would know the sensation.”

My answer was: “I have been writing on public questions 204for twenty years, and I can say that I have never written a single word that I did not believe.”

I have had much to say about the Associated Press in the course of this book. I need say only one thing about it in Southern California—that its headquarters are in the editorial rooms of the “Los Angeles Times.” A good part of what goes on the Associated Press wire is first strained through the “Times” sieve; and so I can inform

Mr. Fabian Franklin, formerly of the “New York Evening Post” and now of the “Review,” that his sacred divinity, the Associated Press, has established here in Southern California a system which makes it impossible that any news favorable to the radical cause should get onto the Associated Press wires, and that everything dealing with the radical movement in Southern California which goes over the Associated Press wires should be not merely false, but violently and maliciously false. For example a prominent criminal lawyer in Los Angeles is blown up by a bomb, and the report goes out to the country that the police authorities believe that this was the work of “radicals.” But next day the police authorities state officially that they have no such belief; and a couple of days later the crime is proven to have had a purely personal motive.

I have myself tested out, not once but several score of times, the system of the concrete wall and the news channel as it works here in Los Angeles. For example, when I read that Russia had a Socialist premier by the name of Kerensky, and that he did not know what to do with the Tsar and his family, I wrote to him a letter suggesting “An Island of Kings”—one of the Catalina Islands, off Los Angeles, as a place where the dethroned sovereigns of Europe might be interned, under the guardianship of the United States government. This, you perceive, was a “boost” to Southern California; it conveyed to the outside world the information that Southern California has a wonderful out-door climate, and beautiful islands with wild goats running over them, and deep sea fishing off the shores. I offered this story to the “Los Angeles Times,” and they grabbed it, and it went out at once over the Associated Press wires.

Then, again, America went into the war, and I found myself compelled to revise the conclusions of a life-time, and to give my support to a war. I debated the issue at a gathering of Socialists; and here again was news which world-capitalism 205desired to have circulated, here was a well-known Socialist turning to the capitalist side! The “Times” printed the story and the “A. P.” sent it out. In order to make the record clear, I quote from the “Times”:

UPTON SINCLAIR FAVORS WAR

Has a Complete Reversal of Former Ideas.

Publicly Announces Views in Crown City.

Holds World’s Democracy Is in Danger.

Pasadena, Feb. 19.—After preaching vehemently against war for twenty years, Upton Sinclair, the Socialist writer, has joined hands with Mars. The propagandist’s exit from the ranks of the peace-at-any-price Socialists was made unexpectedly and

dramatically yesterday afternoon at a mass meeting at the Pasadena High School. Sinclair's announcement of his change of heart came after an address by Prof. I. W. Howeth of the University of California on the history and causes of war. In the open forum, which followed the addresses, Sinclair was the storm center in a discussion in which his stand was criticized by the Socialists and other peace advocates and applauded by others in favor of supporting the stand taken by President Wilson.

And then followed long extracts from my speech. As sent out by the Associated Press it was so garbled that I will ask the reader to read four paragraphs of the "Times" account. My reasons for asking this will appear later:

"My one interest in the world is democratic self-government. I have fought for this at every sacrifice of personal advantage for twenty years. I consider that all modern governments are evil, based upon injustice, but I am bound to recognize that there are degrees in this evil. The test is whether the government leaves the people free to agitate against it. This the British government to a great extent has done; so has the French; the German has not.

"For us to permit the Prussian ruling class to beat England to her knees by the methods of general piracy that have been adopted is to put democracy in peril of its life, and to make certain an age of military preparation in the United States, Canada and Australia.

"If we go into the war the thing to do is to decide in advance the terms, and let these be such as to unite all the democratic forces of the world behind us. We do not want Germany beaten to her knees and territories given to her enemies. We do not want to underwrite the program of Russia in Constantinople. We want to remove these points of contention from the arena.

"We want to heal up the ancient wounds. We want to teach all rulers and all peoples that civilization will permit no one to gain territory by war. We want to inter-nationalize the Dardanelles, Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium, Poland, and to say that we, all the world, will fight to put down any state which at any time attempts to invade them."

Again, on the first anniversary of the Russian revolution, 206before a mass meeting of the Russian Revolutionary Society of Los Angeles, I defended the idea that Russia must stand by the Allies until the Kaiser was overthrown. The "Times" gave two columns to this story, with big headlines. I quote the opening paragraphs, with apologies for the "Times'" atrocious English:

TOSES WRENCH INTO RED RUSSIAN MACHINE

Invited Speaker Gives the Bolshevik Adherents Talk on Patriotism.

Upton Sinclair threw a monkey-wrench of facts of American manufacture into a mass meeting of Socialists and near-Socialists at the Labor Temple yesterday, that after cheers and tears for the Bolsheviks, their red riot of revolution, pledges of support of Lenine and his associates, and a notable evasion of facts for the sake of indulgence in rhetorical idealism, wound up by adopting a resolution for home rule in Ireland.

“So long as the United States government is behind the small nations and for justice in the world, every Socialist and every revolutionist should be behind the American government,” Sinclair told more than five hundred men and women, ranging in their sympathies from pale pacifism and yellow disloyalty up, amid hisses and cheers.

Mr. Sinclair’s speech, while not unexpected by the committee in charge of the arrangements, was not in keeping with the spirit of the meeting and threw a damp blanket on the more radical element that had gathered to pass resolutions and cheer the social revolution and the economic disintegration of the Russian Empire.

The Sinclair speech, which bristled with loyal and patriotic utterances, was sandwiched between an address by Michael Bey, secretary to Prof. Lomonosoff of the Russian Mission, and the address of Paul Jordan Smith.

Such was my stand during the war, as set forth in the news columns of the “Times.” But when the Kaiser was overthrown, and I saw America’s war for democracy being turned into a war to put down the first proletarian government in history, I went back into the radical camp—and what happened then? What happened was that instantly the news channels became a concrete wall! If you know anything about my going back into the radical camp, and the reasons therefor, you know it from the radical press, and not from the capitalist press. Since the day when I announced the change, the Associated Press has sent out *not one word* about my point of view or my utterances; while the “Los Angeles Times” goes farther yet—the “Times” deliberately blinks the fact that I once “tossed a wrench into the red Russian machine,” and embarks on a campaign to make the public believe that I was disloyal during the war! You may find this beyond believing; but I shall prove it to you. And so far successful has it been that recently a high school principal in Los Angeles, addressing the pupils of her school, referred to me as a “notorious disloyalist and traitor”!

There are, of course, libel laws in California, so the “Times” dares not come out fairly and squarely with the statement that I was disloyal during the war. What it does is to scan my every word and action, and report them with subtly chosen phrases which expose me to suspicion, without making definite charges. Surely you must admit that

such calculated and systematic treachery on the part of an enormously rich and powerful newspaper is of public importance. You will expect me to prove my charge. Very well, here are two cases. Case one:

While I stood by the war, I didn't stand by the Espionage act, and when some of my friends were arrested as pacifists, and stood in danger of ten or twenty years in jail, I went to the authorities and interceded, and succeeded in having the cases settled on the basis of a plea of guilty and the payment of fines. The "Times" knew what I was doing, and was foaming at the mouth about it, so I was told by several of its staff; but it dared not say anything, because I had won both the Federal judge and the prosecuting authorities to my way of thinking.

The deputy United States attorney, Mr. Palmer, happened to be a Southerner, a type of man I understand, and I got to know him during these negotiations. Later on I went to see him and said: "Mr. Palmer, I am writing a story, 'Jimmie Higgins,' which I want to publish serially in my magazine. It is a story of a Socialist in war-time, and its purpose is to win the Socialists to the idea of supporting the war. But I am in this dilemma. If I am going to show a man converted from opposition to the war, I first have to show how he felt when he was opposing it; I have to make him a real character, I have to make his arguments real arguments—which is a difficult thing to do in war-time. I would not want anybody to misunderstand my purpose and point of view; so I wonder if you would read the manuscript, and tell me if there is anything in it that might be open to misunderstanding."

Mr. Palmer's answer was that he was forbidden to give official opinions on anything before publication, but he would be very glad to give me a personal, unofficial opinion. I answered that I would regard this as a favor, and Mr. Palmer read the manuscript. No doubt he spoke about it to others, and the "Times" must have heard of the matter. Some months later appeared the following paragraph on the editorial page of the "Times":

Upton Sinclair has stuck his fingers in the Tom Mooney mess. Sinclair has dropped his pen that for some time has been engaged in preparing the manuscript of a book whose loyalty had to be passed on by the United States District-Attorney, and is therefore in a position to sympathize with those who might run afoul of the law.

Now, note the subtle treachery of this phrasing. The loyalty of my manuscript "had to" be passed on. Practically everybody who read that paragraph would understand from it that the government had taken some action in the matter, had placed me under compulsion to submit the manuscript. Nobody would get the impression that the compulsion in the matter was the compulsion of my own conscience and judgment,

my wish to make sure that my piece of fiction was not open to misunderstanding. Needless to say, the “Times” didn’t mention the fact that Mr. Palmer, having read the manuscript, wrote cordially to assure me that there was no possibility of its being misunderstood, and no need of any changes being made.

Case two—and still more significant:

It happened a year or more ago that I had to undergo an operation for appendicitis. I requested the authorities at the hospital not to give out news about this operation, because I do not care to have purely personal matters exploited in the papers. Thus it was a couple of weeks later, after I was out of the hospital, before anything was known about my operation. A friend of mine called me on the phone to ask if I would meet the Pasadena correspondent of the “Times,” Robert Harwood, a decent young fellow who was trying to learn to write. I said that I could not meet him at that time, because I had just come out of the hospital. My friend explained these circumstances to Harwood, and Harwood sent in a news item, which appeared next morning under the headline: *“Anarchist Writer in Hospital.”*

Now, of course, the editors of the “Times” know perfectly well that I am not an Anarchist. When they call me an Anarchist, they do it merely to hurt me. When in war-time they add the words: “Sinclair is still under surveillance,” they mean, of course, that their readers shall derive the impression that the “Anarchist writer” is under surveillance by the Department of Justice; but if I should sue them for libel, they would plead that they meant I was under surveillance by a surgeon!

A couple of weeks later I met young Harwood, and he made an embarrassed apology for the item, explaining that he had turned in to the “Times” a perfectly decent and straight mention of my operation; the article had been rewritten in the “Times” office, and the false headline put on by the managing editor of the paper. The manuscript of the copy that Harwood had turned in had been read in advance by another man who was present at the dinner, Ralph Bayes, formerly city editor of the “Los Angeles Record,” so there were two witnesses to the facts.

To call a man an Anarchist at this time was to place him in obloquy and in physical danger. Both Harwood and Bayes were willing to testify to the facts, and I considered the possibility of suing the “Times.” I consulted a lawyer who knows Los Angeles conditions intimately, and he said: “If you expect to win this suit, you will have to be prepared to spend many thousands of dollars investigating with detectives the records and opinions of every prospective talesman. The ‘Times’ will do that—does it regularly in damage-suits. If you don’t do it, you will find yourself confronting a jury of Roman Catholics and political crooks. In any case you will have a jury which has no

remotest idea of any difference between a Socialist and an Anarchist, so the utmost you could possibly get would be six cents.”

A few days later young Harwood came to see me again. He was anxious for me to bring suit, because he was sick of his job. There was a strike of the Pacific Electric Railway employes in Los Angeles. The city, you understand, is celebrated as an “open shop” town, and the “Times” is the propaganda organ of the forces of repression.

“Mr. Sinclair,” said Harwood, “I was at the car-barns here in Pasadena all evening yesterday, and not a single car came in. I wrote the facts in my story, and the ‘Times’ altered it, reporting that the cars had run on schedule every ten minutes.”

This is the regular practice of the “Times.” All its accounts of strikes are hate-stories, entirely disregarding the facts; all its accounts of political events and conditions, local, state, or national, are class-propaganda. It will write its own views of political conditions in Washington, and label it “Exclusive Dispatch.” It will take the dispatches which come through the Associated Press, and put hate headlines over them—and sometimes it is so overpowered by hate that the headlines do not fit the context! Thus I read a large headline, “STOKES WOMAN SENT TO PRISON”; and when I read the dispatch under the headline I discover, quite plainly stated, that the “Stokes woman” is *not* sent to prison! Again, the Western Union Telegraph Company defies the United States Government, refusing to accept the decision of the War Labor Board. This is placed under the headline: “TELEGRAPH COMPANY DEFIES UNION LABOR.” A few days later comes the news that the telegraphers’ union is threatening to strike because of the company’s attitude. This bears the title: “TELEGRAPHERS’ UNION DEFIES GOVERNMENT.”

Needless to say, a newspaper which thus lies in the interest of privilege is deeply and reverently religious. Every Monday the “Times” prints a couple of pages of extracts from sermons, and now and then its editorial page breaks into a spiritual ecstasy of its own. I clipped one sample during the war—two columns, twelve point leaded, with caps here and there: “*The One Tremendous Thought.*”

And what is this thought which overwhelms the “Times”? The thought “that in this war the world is to be made safe, not so much for democracy, as for men’s souls.” This war, “sinister, cruel, bloody and bestial though it be,” has placed our soldier-boys under the care of religion. “Upon the Protestant soldiers are the sleepless eyes of the Young Men’s Christian Association. Around our Catholic soldiers are the faithful arms of the Knights of Columbus.” Christianity had been weakening before “the noisy school of the sciences”; but—

Now cometh the war! And behold, a professedly Christian world that had been slipping away from belief in THE GREAT MIRACLE OF THE AGES, now swings back to the old belief again. The Christian world is more truly Christian.

This then is the striking fact of the war.

And this is the one tremendous thought.

And from this overpowering sublimity, take a jump to the news columns, in which the "Times" reports family scandals 211 in minute detail. Observe the chaste refinement of its headlines—this pious organ of sanctity!

RACY CHARGES MADE BY RICH

Says Wife Sneaked Paramour Into Room to Beat Him.

She Avers He Made Love to Widow in a Flat.

Sensational Accusations in Wealthy Man's Fight.

Also the "Times" has deep convictions on the subject of Economics. I quote about half of one editorial:

MY LADY POVERTY

There is many a thing in this world much dreaded by us that we have no need to dread. We often regard as a foe that which is really a friend. And how many times we think of as being ugly that which is indeed beautiful.

Perverted thus as we are in our natures, how unwelcome at the door of life is the presence of poverty. Next to sickness and disease we dread to be poor. And yet poverty is not a curse but a blessing.

Have you ever dwelt upon the sweet dignity and the beauty with which St. Francis of Assisi clothed poverty? "My Lady Poverty" he called it, giving to his rags and his hunger a personality, and taking that personality into his heart.

And richly did his Lady Poverty reward Francis for his devotion and his love. She cast out the dross from his nature, made life unspeakably sweet and joyous for him, endeared him to the world forever and immortalized him as few men have ever been immortalized....

It must be that you will have thought often, too, of old blind Homer who begged his way from door to door in the old times of Greece. He was the master singer. He was the greatest, by far, of all the poets that sung before him or that since have sung. Not

Sappho, nor Shakespeare, nor Tasso, nor Longfellow nor any one of all that palm-crowned company was the peer of old blind Homer begging his way from door to door.

Now, had not My Lady Poverty claimed Homer as a lover, had he been rich, with a palace to live in and servants to wait upon him, there would have been no Odyssey, no Iliad.

It was My Lady Poverty that lured Schiller to his garret and the crust that was there; it was she who wove her fingers in Goldsmith's hair when he wandered through Erin playing for pennies on his flute.

So, if some day, there shall be some among us who will wake to find the Lady Poverty standing at the door, think not that fate will then have served us ill. Fling back the creaking hinges and let her in. Make room for her gracious presence in the wide guest chambers of your heart.

This, you perceive, is exquisitely written and deeply felt. In order to appreciate fully its passionate and consecrated sincerity you need to be informed that the newspaper which features it boasts a profit of something like a million dollars a year; this income being derived from the publication of the filthiest patent medicine advertisements, of pages upon pages of news about moving-picture rubbish, real estate speculations, oil stocks, gold mines, every kind of swindling—all paid for.

I shall have much to say in later chapters about the "Times" fortune and the way it was made. For the moment I give one anecdote, to round out my picture.

My authority is a gentleman who a few years ago was managing editor of the "Los Angeles Herald." The "Herald" was then a morning paper, a rival of the "Times," and was controlled and practically owned by the Farmers' & Merchants' National Bank of Los Angeles. The president of this institution is the biggest banker on the coast, and was engaged, with the connivance of the newspapers, in unloading upon the city for two and a half million dollars a water company which was practically worthless. It was found that the "Herald" was not paying, and the banker decided to reduce the price from five cents to two cents. But Otis of the "Times" got wind of it, and notified the banker that if he lowered the price of the "Herald," the "Times" would at once open up on the water company swindle. "Oh, very well, General," replied the banker. "If that's the way you feel about it, we'll forget it." So the price of the "Herald" stayed up, and the paper lost money, and finally Otis bought it for a song, ran it for a while in pretended rivalry to the "Times," and then sold it at a profit, upon condition that it be made an evening paper, so that it should not interfere with the "Times."

Reading this, you will not be surprised to learn that the particular page upon which appeared the rhapsody to “My Lady Poverty” bears the name of the particular “Times” editor who told me: “It has been so long since I have written anything that I believe, that I don’t think I would know the sensation!”