

The Strike At Little's.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mary sprang up and seized his big arm. "Sold yerself for them!" she exclaimed. "An' what are yer goin' to do?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"No."

"Tell me!"

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

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

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

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

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

"I expect 'e will."

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

Mary understood that her husband

would not consider such conduct traitorous; he would argue in his simple-minded way that his first duty was to provide for his wife and child, and if he could do so by warning the Littles of any illegal plots and plans that the strikers were hatching, there was nothing on earth, no duty to his fellow-strikers, no loyalty worthy of the name to make him hesitate. But he would be running through the direst peril. If the men only half believed he was Little's spy his life would not be worth a fair day's wages, for the men were in a desperate mood, as men must be to scheme the plots the men were scheming in hope of bringing Little's to their knees. And it seemed to Mary Cassell that there was something ominously significant in the fact that Stains had been the one out of five hundred odd who had called to know if her husband was in. Had Stains been following her husband?

Had he waited outside, lurking in some shadow, on the chance of discovering something more than what ever he had learnt; and had he watched Cassell leave the house again, and thought it a fair chance to see what evidence of Cassell's perfidy might be visible there? The idea fitted in with her knowledge of the man, whereas the notion that he had actually called to speak with her husband did not. The two were rivals still; starvation's bond had bound them in no sympathy, and Stain's steely eyes still gleamed when they fell upon the face of the woman he would have wed.

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

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

"Is that the price of my man?" she muttered. "Is that, and them"—nodding at the other packages—"to tempt my man to lay 'imself out? Not if my name is Mary, an' my wits is as good as they was."

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

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

Her natural logic stood her in good stead. The only difficulty she encountered was in getting the footman who opened the door to take her message in.

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

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

"Rather unwisely," interposed the younger gentleman.

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

"I have explained all this to you," the old gentleman concluded, "as I want it to become generally known after tomorrow while we have held out against the men's demands while admitting they were reasonable when trade was brisk, as it has since become—I want it known that we could not give way simply because the men threatened us with divers perils unless we did. But until tomorrow you and your husband will keep the matter secret."

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

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

Mary's heart was battled for by happiness and fear as she left the ironfounders' house and made her way to the town. The prospect was delightful, but the situation full of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stains had called that evening. What had he called to learn?

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

She turned a sharp corner, and started back to avoid a man who was springing to the ground from a low part of the wall. As he set off at a hard, noiseless run she recognized him, and she felt full sure her awful fear was shadowed by the truth, for the man was none other than Sam Stains.

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

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

Without allowing herself longer to wonder, she began to attempt to scale the wall. On her third attempt she got her hands on the ledge, her foot in a chink, and was able to draw herself up. It was an ugly drop on the other side, for the ladder which Stains had apparently used had been dropped back to the ground; but she did not hesitate. As her feet touched the ground her right ankle gave way, and with a moan of pain she fell in a heap.

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

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

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

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

"Jim!" she cried, "Jim!"

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

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

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

Cumulus or thunder-cloud rarely rises over two miles. Seven miles is the outside height for any cloud.



APPLYING BARNYARD MANURE.

As a general rule, barnyard manure is best applied as soon as it is available. Some farmers will not agree with this, but most of those who have tried it know that if the manure is applied to the land, there will be less waste than if held in piles until a more convenient season. Of course, if the manure is well taken care of in the barnyard or under a shed, there is not much loss. The difficulty comes, however, in giving it the proper care to prevent fire-fanging and loss of nitrogen, the most valuable element.

As a general proposition then, distribute the manure as it comes from the barn or feed lot. In winter time spread it over plowed fields when the ground is frozen and over meadows and pastures when the fields are not too soft to hold up a wagon or team. Do not place in piles, as is the common practice in many localities. There can be no possible advantage from this. The soluble elements are washed down into the soil, small patches over the field have an oversupply, while others are lacking in fertility. Distribute the manure evenly over the ground. It will be taken up and held by the soil until needed as plant food.

There are circumstances under which it is preferable to hold the manure for some time before putting on the ground. For example, where a large amount of coarse material is used for bedding. In this case it should be placed in heaps and worked over frequently until the whole

MASS IS WELL ROILED.

The best way to do this is to put it under a shed where rains cannot reach it. Fork it over frequently, or what is still better, allow hogs to roat it over. If it becomes dry wet it down. If kept in this condition for several months it will then be ready for application.

Arrange so that the manure can be taken out of the barn and deposited in this shed without much work. This can be accomplished by the proper arrangement of tracks and traveling boxes. Of course this method of treatment requires more work than hauling direct to the field, but under some circumstances it will pay.

Then, too, there are periods, notably during the growing season, when it is not possible to distribute the manure, as the fields are occupied with growing crops. In this case it should be heaped up and given proper attention until such a time as it can be spread on the land.

Where cattle or sheep are kept in a feed lot during the winter, the manure is seldom in condition for spreading in time for the spring crops. If a great deal of bedding has been used, this will not be sufficiently rotted. It is the general rule to allow this manure to remain untouched until after the harvest; when it is spread during the comparatively leisurely interval between harvest time and the opening of

THE FALL WORK SEASON.

The manure can then be applied to the stubble fields and plowed under at once. It is also desirable to spread manure on worn-out meadows and pastures which need renewing. This is especially true where hay has been fed. The seed in the manure will take root and result in a thickening of the sod.

Nothing is better or more economical for distributing manure than the modern manure spreader. It will take care of any kind of fertilizer, whether fine or coarse, and will put it on the ground evenly. The results are much better than is distributed by hand, as perfect uniformity of distribution is not possible without the employment of a spreader. The work can not only be done better but can be done much more quickly. The machine will last a lifetime if it is well taken care of. It is then not necessary to get the wagon dirty and make cleaning imperative once a week or oftener. The machine will tear up great chunks of manure, will distribute material from feed lots where corn fodder has been fed, will spread perfectly manure from around a straw pile or will distribute any kind of fine fertilizer like lime, gypsum, etc.

LICE ON CATTLE.

Where cattle are housed there is a possibility of lice getting into the stable and on to the stock. When such occurs it is very important that the parasites be exterminated as soon as possible, or they will not only infest the cattle but the stable as well. Occasionally we hear a report of a farmer who had apparently got rid of the lice about the time his cattle go out to pasture and he flatters himself that he has got rid of the pests. What is his surprise to find the following winter that his stock begins to show the appearance of the louse again, and he is at a loss to understand where they came from. He does not know that the pests will readily live through the summer and be ready to attack the cattle again at the opening of winter. Thus the importance of making a thorough effort to rid the stable as well as the stock. We have seen sheep dip used to good advantage. It may be applied to the backs of cattle with a coarse brush, and if necessary about the places most infected. Sheep-dip is rather

an ill-smelling material, but it has the faculty of doing good execution.

THOROUGH MILKING.

The richest portion of the milk is that drawn from the udder at the last. In experiments made to test the matter it was found that the difference was so great that with some cows the strippings consisted almost entirely of butter fat.

It is important, therefore, that milking the cows should be done in a thorough manner, leaving nothing in the udder. If this is done the cow will not be so liable to become dry as soon as when the milk is not entirely removed at each milking. The practice of careful stripping also serves as a check upon careless milkers, as the farmer can, and should, examine each cow after she is milked in order to observe if the milking has been done thoroughly. Where there is no supervision the milking is sometimes performed carelessly and at a loss to the farmer.

ENGLISH EXPERIENCE.

The county of Essex has for some years past set an example to other counties in the way of scientific agricultural experiments and its technical committee has just concluded a six years' experiment dealing with pasture land and the hay crop. These experiments have been conducted in nine different localities and on as many different soils, and the net result shows that by judicious fertilization the hay crop can be enormously increased. For instance, it has been proved that nitrogenous manures, nitrate of soda and sulphate of ammonia, have a greater effect on newly laid down pastures than on old. Thus 1½ cwts per acre of nitrate of soda produced on new grass land an average increase of 49½ per cent. Sulphate of ammonia has, with scarcely an exception, produced more hay than nitrate of soda in the first years of the experiment, but latterly nitrate of soda has produced the better yield, showing that sulphate of soda is the more exhausting to the soil, and that the other in the long run is the more profitable. Phosphatic manures also produced a large increase, the average being 49½ per cent. with the further advantage that when these manures are used the herbage improves each year.

It is, however, when the nitrogenous and phosphatic manures are combined that the greatest results are shown, and the increase obtained from a combination of the two has amounted to as much as 102 per cent. Experiments were also made with ordinary barnyard manure, and the results show that while the increase obtained from each year's manuring was considerable, very little permanent improvement is effected, and that the manuring of a previous year is only responsible for 10 per cent. increase in the hay crop.

Another interesting experiment was the mowing of the hay and grazing of sheep in alternate years. For this purpose a field was divided, one-half being grazed by sheep fed on oil cake, and the other half by sheep not fed. The result of the hay crop next year was that on the part where the sheep were fed oil cake the cut was 19½ cwts per acre, and where the sheep were not fed oil cake, only 14 cwts.

HIS BEST GIRL.

He hurried up to the office as soon as he entered the hotel, and inquired eagerly:

"Any letters for me?"

The clerk sorted out a package with a negligent attention that comes with practice, then flipped one—a very small one—on the counter. The travelling man took it with a curious smile. He smiled more as he read it. Then, oblivious of the other travellers who jostled him, he laid it gently against his lips and actually kissed it. A loud laugh startled him.

"Now, look here, old fellow," said a loud voice, "that won't do, you know. Too spoony for anything."

Said the travelling man:

"The letter is from my best girl."

"The admission was so unexpected that everyone stared."

"It's no use, you've got to read it to us," said one of them. "We want to know all about your best girl."

"So you shall," said the one addressed, with great coolness. "I'll give you the letter, and you can read it for yourselves."

"No, you don't," said one who had been the loudest in demanding it; "we like to chaff a little, but we hope we are gentlemen."

"But I insist upon it," was the answer; "there is nothing to be ashamed of, except the spelling; that's a little shaky, I'll admit; but she won't care in the least. Read it man, and judge for yourself."

This urged, the other took the letter shamefacedly enough and read it. First he laughed, then coughed suspiciously, and as he finished threw it upon the table, and again rubbed the back of his hand against his eyes, as if troubled with dimness of vision.

"Pshaw! if I had a love-letter like that—!" and then was silent.

"Fair play!" cried one of the others, with an uneasy laugh.

"I'll read it to you, boys," said their friend, "and I think that you'll agree with me that it's a model love-letter—"

"My Oween Dear Papa,—I sa mi Praises every nite, and wen I kiss your Pieschere I ask God to bless you. Good bi, Papa, yours best gurl."