BURGOYNE ARTHUR GORDON

HOMESTEAD

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Homestead A Complete History of the Struggle of July, 1892, between the Carnegie-Steel Company, Limited, and the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers:

Содержание

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

At the suggestion of many members of labor organizations, the publishers of "Homestead" have decided to set apart five per cent. of the net profits derived from the sale of the work as the nucleus of a fund for the erection of a monument in commemoration of the battle of July 6, 1892. A suitable design shown in the engraving opposite page 288 has been chosen, and it is hoped that the workingmen of the United States will co-

operate to secure the successful execution of the plan. Men and events of prominence in almost all other fields of human activity are immortalized by enduring testimonials; but organized labor has practically nothing to mark its achievements and serve as a reminder to future generations. A better beginning could not be made than with the heroes of Homestead, and it is especially fitting that the first impetus should be given in connection with this history. Such aid as it is in their power to lend to the formation of a Homestead Monument Association and the accomplishment of its object is cheerfully tendered by

The Publishers.

INTRODUCTION

The demand voiced by representative workingmen in the Pittsburgh district, not only on their own account but on that of their brethren the world over, for a correct and impartial history of the Homestead trouble, sufficiently explains the appearance of this volume.

The importance of the theme requires no demonstration. Since labor first organized for its own protection it has passed through no period more prolific in soul-stirring events and significant developments than that extending from July to November, 1892, and including the lock-out at the Carnegie mills, the battle with 300 Pinkerton guards, the military occupation of Homestead, the trial of labor leaders on capital charges and the ultimate collapse of the Amalgamated lodges for lack of funds to continue the struggle against non-unionism. This was a conflict of far more than local interest. It was watched with anxiety by both friends and foes of organized labor on both sides of the Atlantic; it claimed the attention of leaders of thought in all departments of human activity; it stirred up the British House of Parliament and the United States Congress, agitated the newspaper press of both continents, became an issue in the election for President and is said to have contributed more largely to the defeat of Benjamin Harrison by Grover Cleveland than any other influence.

The injection of partisan considerations into public discussion of the Homestead affair led naturally to a vast amount of misrepresentation, and even at this late day the causes and character of the struggle are widely misunderstood. It has been the mission of the author of this history to sift out the truth, to make clear the motives and methods of the disputants on both sides, and to recount in detail the events of the contest without sacrificing historic accuracy to romantic effect.

Personal observations in the course of visits to the "seat of war" while hostilities were in progress, and subsequent conversations with the leaders has made the task a comparatively easy one.

Little attempt is made to philosophize on the varying phases of the labor question as presented at Homestead. It is left largely to the reader to form his own deductions from the facts set forth and from the opinions of recognized authorities, not forgetting Mr. Carnegie himself, which are liberally cited.

That through the perusal of "Homestead" new light may be borne in upon some of the many who persist in regarding the American workingman as a mere piece of mechanism, deservedly at the mercy of his employer, is the earnest hope of

The Author.

Pittsburgh, November 22, 1893.

CHAPTER I.
Capital in Its Stronghold

Homestead and its Mills – The Rise and Progress of the Carnegie Firm – How The "Star-Spangled Scotchman" Made His Fortune – He Labors For Years and Then Lapses Into Luxury – H. C. Frick's Career as Coke King and Iron Master – The Fine Art of Crushing Strikes – Carnegie and Frick Join Hands and the Latter Becomes the Master-Spirit – Condition of Organized Labor at Homestead

IN a bend of the south bank of the Monongahela River, eight miles from Pittsburgh, nestles the thriving town of Homestead, a place of about 12,000 inhabitants, built up by the wealth and enterprise of the Carnegie Steel Company and the thrift of the artisans employed by that great manufacturing corporation.

Without the Carnegie mills there would be no Homestead. Like the mushroom towns that sprang up along the Northern Pacific Railroad while the line was in process of construction and that died out as fast as the base of operations was shifted, so Homestead sprang into being when the site now occupied by

the town was picked out by Andrew Carnegie as a producing center, and so, too, if the Carnegie firm were to move its works to-morrow, would Homestead be blotted off the map, or, at best, reduced to the rank of an insignificant village.

The interdependence of the works and the town is absolute.

The mill property covers 600 acres, bordering on the river, and includes thirty-seven acres under roof. The products comprise boiler and armor plates, beams and structural iron of various kinds. The manufacture of armor-plate for the United States Navy is conducted on a scale of unparalleled magnitude. From the huge hydraulic cranes lifting and carrying from place to place a weight of 200 tons, yet operated easily by one man, down to the delicate machinery in the finishing department, the equipment of the armor-plate mill is a marvel of mechanical perfection. The great beam and structural mills, the Bessemer department and the bloom and billet mills are also magnificently equipped and are conducted on a mammoth scale, in comparison with which the operations of other American steel mills are almost insignificant.

Railroad tracks gridiron the yards and nineteen locomotives are required for the transportation of material. The repair shops cut an important figure and an army of blacksmiths, roll-turners, carpenters, tinners and other mechanics is employed to keep every detail of the working equipment in perfect order.

The plant is lighted throughout with electricity.

Within easy reach of the mills are the offices of the

mill superintendent and his corps of clerks, draughtsmen and engineers. Eight handsome residences, farther back from the yard, are occupied by the assistant managers. There is also a club house for the use of guests and officers.

The foundation of this immense concern, representing a capital of many millions of dollars, and employing nearly 4,000 men, was laid in 1880, when, according to the census report, Homestead had a population of less than 600. The firm which has made all this possible, which, by virtue of intelligent effort and phenomenal accumulation and utilization of capital has called into being a full-fledged American town, with schools, churches, prosperous mercantile establishments, independent minor industries and a well-organized municipal government, is controlled by two men, whose names have, through the events to be recorded in this volume, been made familiar as household words the world over – Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick.

Andrew Carnegie is a self-made man, the son of a poor weaver of Dunfermline, Scotland. In 1845, the lad, then 12 years old, emigrated to the United States with his parents and settled in Pittsburgh. He was put to work tending a small stationary engine, and afterwards became a telegraph messenger boy and, in course of time, an operator. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company made him clerk to the superintendent of its Pittsburgh office and manager of its telegraph lines. About this time he met Woodruff, the inventor of the sleeping-car, and took a share in his venture. The enterprise was profitable and yielded what may

be considered the nucleus of Mr. Carnegie's wealth. Again the young man was promoted, securing the superintendency of the Pittsburgh division of the Pennsylvania road. His future was now assured if he chose to continue in the railroad business; but his tastes, or rather his keen foresight led him in another direction. In company with his brother Thomas and others he purchased an established rolling mill, and from this grew the most extensive and profitable system of iron and steel industries in the world.

Mr. Carnegie has frequently challenged public notice by acts of philanthropy. He has given free baths and a free library to his native town of Dunfermline, a histological annex, known as the Carnegie laboratory to Bellevue Hospital, New York; a free library and music hall to Allegheny City; a free library and music hall, costing more than $1,000,000, to Pittsburgh; a free library to Edinburgh, Scotland, and similar donations to Braddock and other places where he has business interests. He has a fondness for literature, has written several books, of which "Triumphant Democracy; or Fifty Years' March of the Republic" is the most pretentious, and at one time controlled eighteen English newspapers in the Radical interest. Mr. Carnegie married late in life and has since maintained establishments in New York and at Cluny Castle, Scotland, rarely visiting his mills.

Estimates of Andrew Carnegie's character vary widely. To those associated with him in business he is known as a firm and considerate friend, quick to discern ability and generous in rewarding it. As an employer of labor he bore a high reputation

for liberality and sympathetic regard for the well-being of his employees until the occurrence of the trouble at Homestead in 1892. How far he was personally chargeable with responsibility for Mr. Frick's iron-handed policy in that affair has never been positively determined; but it is certain that the relentless spirit shown by Mr. Frick cost Mr. Carnegie much of his popularity.

The connection of Henry Clay Frick with the Carnegie iron and steel industries, did not begin until Andrew Carnegie had reached the zenith of his success. Mr. Frick, however, had already carved his way to wealth along a different line, and was himself a millionaire. His success was gained in coke, and he came to be known as "the Coke King." Coke is indispensable to the manufacture of steel, but for a long time its production remained a separate industry. The Connellsville region, lying about fifty miles south of Pittsburgh, was occupied by a number of small producers, whose cut-throat mode of competition was highly advantageous to the steel men. Starting with small holdings, Mr. Frick gradually increased his territory and the number of his ovens until he obtained a practical monopoly of the Connellsville production and was able to dictate terms to consumers. He further strengthened his grip on the trade by investing heavily in coal lands and thus acquiring an unlimited source of supply for his ovens.

Mr. Carnegie perceived the rich possibilities of a union between the steel and coke industries, and, in 1882, bought a half interest in the Frick Coke Company for $1,500,000. Six

years later, on the death of one of his partners, he induced the coke king to enter the Carnegie Company, and the interests thus combined have since been, to all intents and purposes, a unit.

The details of Mr. Frick's early career may be recited in very few words. He is the son of a farmer and was born at West Overton, Pa., in 1850. After gaining the rudiments of an education in the common schools of Fayette County, he began business life as a dry goods clerk in Mount Pleasant. Leaving the dry goods business he became book-keeper in his grandfather's distillery at Bradford. He lived economically and with the money which he saved out of his salary he embarked in the coke business with A. O. Tintsman and Joseph Rist. Although barely 21 years old, he was the senior partner of the firm, which began with an equipment of 300 acres of land and 50 ovens. The opening of the Mt. Pleasant and Broad Ford railroad imparted new life to the coke trade about this period and young Frick took advantage of the boom to add to his firm's plant. The firm also built the Henry Clay works of one hundred ovens on the Youghiogheny River near Broad Ford.

In 1876 Mr. Frick bought out his partners and continued the business on his own account. In the following year a depression of trade placed the lease of the Valley coke works at his disposal. The young operator put Thomas Lynch in charge, and despite the dullness of the market, kept the works going every day in the year.

In the fall of 1877 Mr. Frick took into partnership E. M.

Ferguson, the owner of a plant of 70 ovens, and the new firm operated as H. C. Frick & Co. A year later the firm leased the Anchor works and the Mullen works near Mt. Pleasant and admitted Walton Ferguson as a partner.

In 1879 the coke trade revived amazingly, prices advancing from a maximum of $1.15 a ton to $4 and $5 a ton. The Frick Company continued to extend its business until, in 1882, it controlled 3,000 acres of coal land and 1,026 coke ovens. Meanwhile Mr. Frick organized the Morewood Coke Company, limited, and built the Morewood works of 470 ovens, the largest works in the region. Carnegie Bros. & Co., Limited, were admitted into the firm in January, 1882.

The Frick corporation now pushed its operations with such vigor that, in 1890, according to a semi-official statement, it "owned and controlled 35,000 acres of coal land and 43 of the 80 plants in the region, aggregating 10,046 ovens, three water plants with a pumping capacity of 5,000,000 gallons daily, and 35 miles of railroad track and 1,200 railroad cars. 11,000 men were then employed by the company, and for the equipment of its plants it had 23 locomotives, 72 pairs of stationary engines, 172 steam boilers and 816 horses and mules."

Mr. Frick had several serious strikes to contend with. His plan of campaign was always the same – to crush the strikers by main force and make no concessions. The Coal and Iron police, an organization of watchmen maintained under a state law, the drilled and armed watchmen of the Pinkerton detective agency,

and the state militia were pressed into service as the occasion demanded, and the shedding of blood and sacrifice of human life resulted on more than one occasion.

Mr. Frick's character need not be analyzed at this point. It will be illustrated clearly enough as our narrative progresses.

The Homestead mill and the Frick coke works, vast as they are, constitute merely a fraction of the Carnegie Company's interests. In addition to these the Company owns the Edgar Thompson furnaces and the Edgar Thompson steel works at Bessemer, eleven miles from Pittsburgh on the Pennsylvania railroad; the Duquesne steel works, on the same side of the Monongahela river as the Homestead works; the Lucy Furnaces, Pittsburgh; the Keystone Bridge Works, Pittsburgh; the Upper and Lower Union Mills, Pittsburgh; the Beaver Falls mills at Beaver Falls, 32 miles from Pittsburgh on the P. & L. E. railroad; the Carnegie Natural Gas Company; the Scotia ore mines in Center County, Pa.; the American Manganese Company, and interests in several large ore companies in the Lake Superior region. About 13,000 persons are employed in the various concerns operated by the firm, and of these about 3,800 are engaged in the works at Homestead.

In June 1892, Andrew Carnegie, while maintaining the controlling financial interest in the firm, transferred the managing authority to H. C. Frick. At that time the firm was reorganized, the separate enterprises which had previously been conducted under the names of Carnegie Bros. and Company,

Carnegie, Phipps & Co., and other independent titles, being merged under the control of a single corporation known as the Carnegie Steel Company, Limited. H. C. Frick was made chairman, the other partners being Andrew Carnegie, Henry Phipps, Jr., George Lauder, H. M. Curry, W. L. Abbott, John G. A. Leishman, F. T. F. Lovejoy, Otis H. Childs and sundry minor stockholders whose interests were conferred upon them by Mr. Carnegie by way of promotion.

The power of the firm in the iron and steel industries was now dictatorial. On the fiat of the Carnegie Company depended almost entirely the price of steel in the market. Rivalry was dwarfed and competition nullified. Rarely in the industrial history of the world has a similarly powerful monopoly been built up on no other foundation than the combination of brains and capital, with such indirect aid as the protective tariff system affords.

Against this tremendous power, – a power equal to the control of 13,000 men and more than $25,000,000 of capital, the men of Homestead were destined to pit themselves in a life and death struggle; how destructive and hopeless a struggle will appear from the story told in these pages.

The men of Homestead, on their side, had comparatively limited resources to count upon in a battle against such fearful odds. They reckoned, to begin with, upon that species of *esprit de corps* which prevails among workingmen, especially those of the more intelligent class, and which is the solid ground under

the feet of organized labor.

Not that the 3,800 workmen in the Homestead mills had a complete and comprehensive organization. On the contrary, out of this number, not more than one thousand were enrolled in the eight lodges of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers maintained in the town. These were the workers known as "tonnage men," because the nature of their employment permitted the graduation of their wages on a scale determined by the price of billets per ton. Outside the lodges were the mechanics and laborers, working, for the most part, for daily wages. At the same time, the joint influence of fraternity and of confidence in the force of organization was deemed sufficient to inspire all the Homestead workers, in and out of the lodges, to make common cause in the event of a quarrel between the lodges and the Carnegie firm. Should this emergency arise, it was argued, the firm could not find enough non-union steelworkers in the United States to take the places of its army of employees, and as a consequence, if the men went out on strike, the mills would have to be shut down and the heavy loss resulting would force the firm to come to terms.

With this impression ingrained in their minds, the men smiled confidently at the suggestion of a cut in wages, and tacitly defied the new chairman, Mr. Frick, to do his worst.

That the new chairman was liable to make some disagreeable departure had to be admitted by the most confident. Dubious associations hung around the name of this man H. C. Frick.

He had acquired unpleasant notoriety by reducing wages in the coke regions, and by crushing the labor insurrections which followed by the employment of Pinkerton detectives and even by calling in the state militia. There was no dilettantism or liberally-advertised philanthropy of the Carnegie stripe in Frick's composition. Everybody knew that. He was a man of blood and iron like Bismarck, so the workmen said; cared not a penny whether his underlings loved or hated him, and rather preferred an opportunity to crush – crush – crush intractable working folk under his heel than not.

Was this man placed in power by Andrew Carnegie in order to carry out at Homestead what he had carried out in the coke regions; to challenge organized labor by the submission of conditions which it could not accept and, on its refusal, try the old game of crushing the unions under foot? Did Carnegie shrink from the task himself and pick out Frick as a willing and capable instrument? Such were the questions discussed in the lodge-room and in the privacy of the domestic circle at Homestead during the time which intervened between the re-organization of the Carnegie interests and the next annual signing of the wage scale. Whatever conclusions might be reached, there was one thing certain at all events, in the not too penetrating judgment of the unionists: Frick might reduce wages, and Frick might fight, but Frick could not repeat in conflict; with the 3,800 brawny and intelligent artisans at Homestead the comparatively easy victories which he had gained over his poor coke workers. So said they all,

and they believed it, too, as firmly as if it were Holy Writ.

The feeling of ownership had a place in the reasoning of these simple people. Many of them had bought and paid for their homes and were pillars of the borough government. Some were still paying for their dwellings – paying off the mortgages held by the Carnegie Company, which had been in the habit of helping those who cared to build, and which even did a regular banking business for the advantage of its employees. It was clearly impossible that men of substance, heads of families, solid citizens of a prosperous municipality could be rooted up, as it were, out of the soil in which they were so firmly planted and beaten to earth by the creature of their labor – for without labor, it was argued, capital would be impotent and valueless.

In this mood, with suspicions as to the mission of Chairman Frick, but with impregnable confidence in themselves, the men prepared to settle the scale of wages, which was to be agreed upon in the spring of 1892 and to go into effect on July 1.

They sought no advance in wages, but it was a foregone conclusion that, if wages were to be depressed, they would offer implacable resistance.

There was calmness in all quarters at this time. No smoldering embers of dissatisfaction; no long nourished grievances were in existence to precipitate a sudden outbreak.

Mr. Potter, the superintendent of the Homestead mill, calmly discharged his daily round of duties.

Mr. Frick sat in his comfortable office in Pittsburgh, and

calmly mapped out a plan of some, as yet, unheralded campaign.

Mr. Carnegie calmly continued to hob-nob with European celebrities and to indulge his *penchant* for the erection of free libraries.

There was not a cloud the size of a man's hand to mar the serenity of the horizon that bounded the little world of the Carnegie interests.

The gathering of the storm had not yet begun.

CHAPTER II.
The Gathering of the Storm

History and Methods of the Amalgamated Association – Operation of the Sliding Scale at Homestead – Superintendent Potter Makes Amicable Suggestions *a la* Carnegie – An Ultimatum From Frick – He Threatens Non-Unionism and Fortifies the Mills – Lodges Hold a Sunday Morning Meeting – Burgess McLuckie's Bold Speech – "High Fences, Pinkerton Detectives, Thugs and Militia" – Political Exigencies Give Hope to the Workmen

THE Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers is, with the possible exception of the Association of Window Glass Workers, the best generaled and most substantially organized labor organization in the United States. One of the fundamental principles in the doctrine of the association is to avoid and discourage strikes; and so closely has this article of faith been observed that the number of strikes officially ordered in the iron and steel industries has been small in comparison with the record of most other labor unions.

The adjustment of wage scales by the association is largely the affair of the lodges. The equipment and requirements of different iron and steel mills vary considerably, and hence, each mill or kindred group of mills must have a separate scale, adjusted to its needs. It is incumbent on the lodges to report their respective scales to the association at large through the medium of an annual delegate convention. Should there be a dispute in any district, the convention passes upon the merits of the case and decides whether or not it shall be taken up by the association as a whole. If not, the usual mode of procedure is to notify the belligerent lodge or lodges to yield the disputed points. If, on the other hand, the association decides to intervene, the chief executive officers are authorized to act, and it becomes their duty to exhaust all fair means of bringing the recalcitrant mill-owners to terms, before countenancing a strike. An official order to strike commits the association to the payment of weekly benefits to the strikers.

The president of the Amalgamated Association is always chosen with special reference to his capacity for cool, stable, conservative leadership. Mental brilliancy is not so much sought after in the man who is called upon to fill this responsible position, as level-headedness and inflexible nerve. William Weihe, who served as president during the troublous days of 1892, fully met these requirements. A giant in stature, slow and deliberate in speech and action, and never committing himself without being perfectly sure of his ground, Weihe was just the man to preserve the dignity and influence of the association when

the spectres of riot and anarchy stalked abroad and organized labor, smarting from a thousand gaping wounds, threatened to break down the bulwarks of law and order and to sacrifice the good-will of its friends. At no time throughout a contest which set men's souls aflame from one end of the land to the other did President Weihe lose his self-possession or his ability to stand between the solid fabric of the association and those of its friends, who, in the rashness of the hour, would fain have involved it in the ruin which engulfed the lodges at Homestead.

The Homestead scale was prepared early in the spring. In January, the superintendent of the mill, Mr. Potter sent for the joint committee of the local lodges and requested that the men prepare a scale. It was not the policy of the Carnegie firm, Mr. Potter said, to leave the way open for a strike. If there were differences of opinion between employer and employees, the proper method of settlement was by arbitration, and it was, therefore, advisable that the scale should be presented early, so as to leave ample time for an amicable adjustment of disputed points.

For three years previous, the men had been working under what was known as a sliding scale, an expedient which at the time of its adoption was regarded as a sure preventive of strikes. This scale established as the basis on which wages were to be determined, the market price of steel billets, in the manufacture of which the Carnegie Company was extensively engaged. When the price of billets went up, wages were to go up correspondingly,

and when the price of billets went down, wages were to be correspondingly lowered. $25 a ton was agreed upon as the minimum. If billets were quoted below that figure, there was to be no further depression of wages. In other words, the men and the firm were practically in partnership, increased profits to the latter meaning increased earnings to the former, unless the bottom fell out of the market, in which case it became the duty of the stronger partner to protect the weaker.

The circumstances under which this equitable compact was made are of interest in so far as they exhibit the very different temper of the Carnegie Company towards its men in the past from that which marked its line of conduct after Mr. Frick was placed at the helm. In January, 1889, the men, who had been working under a yearly scale, quarreled with the firm over the terms proposed for the ensuing year and a strike was declared. William L. Abbott, a man of comparatively mild and liberal disposition, was then serving as chairman. Mr. Abbott undertook to break the strike, and when the men resorted to riotous conduct, called upon the sheriff of the county for aid. The sheriff, Dr. Alexander McCandless, an official who enjoyed great popularity, and possessed the courage and tact essential in such an emergency, went promptly to the scene with a force of deputies recruited for the occasion. At the first encounter with the mob, the deputies let their courage ooze out at their fingers' ends and fled from the town.

The sheriff, nowise disheartened by the desertion of his

forces, took the best possible means of ending the trouble by constituting himself a mediator between the Carnegie firm and the strikers. Through his efforts a conference was arranged, and peace was restored through the adoption of the famous sliding scale, with the understanding that it would hold good until June 30, 1892. Mr. Carnegie, then absent in Europe, professed to be much pleased with the amicable settlement arrived at and the incidental guarantee of peace for three years to come, and for the time being the names of Sheriff McCandless and William L. Abbott were surrounded with a halo of glory.

When Superintendent Potter, in January, 1892, spoke to the men about a new scale, he gave no hint of the prospect that the firm contemplated sweeping away the beneficial arrangement which had so long governed their earnings. As already noted, Mr. Potter touched upon the subject of possible differences of opinion and of the firm's desire that such differences should be settled in a friendly way.

The shadow of Mr. Frick loomed up gloomily in the background, it is true, but there was really no occasion to think of shadows when the genial Potter presented himself as the very embodiment of sunshine. The ideas put forth by this gentleman bore the special brand of Mr. Carnegie. Mr. Carnegie was on record as being opposed to the use of force in settling disputes between capital and labor. In 1886, he had written for the magazines on this question, and the liberality of his views had elicited general commendation. Thus he said in the *Forum*:

"Peaceful settlement of differences should be reached through arbitration. I would lay it down as a maxim that there is no excuse for a strike or a lock-out until arbitration of differences has been offered by one party and refused by the other."

Mr. Carnegie declared further, that "The right of the workingmen to combine and to form trades unions is no less sacred than the right of the manufacturer to enter into association and conference with his fellows, and it must sooner or later be conceded." Manufacturers should "meet the men *more than halfway*" and "To expect that one dependent upon his daily wage for the necessaries of life will stand by peaceably and see a new man employed in his stead is to expect much."

This was the gospel of Carnegie in 1886, and, the shadow of Frick to the contrary, notwithstanding, it was not singular that it should have been the gospel of Potter in January, 1892.

It was, then, with a feeling of reasonable security that the men went to work upon their scale. This, when completed, differed little from that of the previous three years. It was presented to Mr. Potter in February, but, strange to say, did not seem to please that worthy exponent of the Carnegie idea of harmony. The joint committee of the lodges waited frequently upon the superintendent in the hope of reaching some definite conclusion, but the conferences were barren of results.

At length, to the amazement of the men, the Carnegie firm officially promulgated a new sliding scale, based on billets at $26.50 per ton as a standard, but fixing as the minimum basis

of wages, $22 per ton, instead of $25 as formerly. As the billet market was now abnormally depressed – a condition which, it was claimed by many, had been designedly brought about in order to give the Carnegie Company a pretext for wage reductions – it was apparent that a serious reduction in many departments of the mill would follow the acceptance of the firm's propositions.

June 24 was fixed as the last day on which the men could accept as members of the Amalgamated Association. After that date, the firm would not consent to treat with them otherwise than as individuals. In short, Mr. Frick wanted it to be understood, definitely and finally, that, if his employees did not yield promptly and with a good grace, he would non-unionize the mill and abolish the right of self-protective organization, to which Mr. Carnegie, six years before, had feelingly referred as "sacred."

There was a flavor of coke region discipline about the Frick ultimatum which was not calculated to promote good feeling at Homestead. Nor did it. The men who drove the sheriff's deputies out of Homestead in 1889 might yield to milder measures, but the crack of the whip was irritating. "Are we to be lashed into Mr. Frick's way of thinking?" men asked one another, and the very thought bred insurrection.

If there was a calm now, it was the calm that preceded a hurricane.

As if to accentuate the sentiment of disaffection among the

Homestead people, Mr. Frick accompanied the issuance of his ultimatum with preparations of a warlike character. A large force of men was employed upon the construction of a solid board fence, three miles in extent, surrounding the property of the firm between the Pittsburgh, Virginia & Charleston railroad and the Monongahela river. All the workshops were included within this enclosure. The offices and stables, situated on the other side of the railroad, were similarly enclosed. An elevated wooden bridge connected the two enclosures. The fence was surmounted with strands of barbed wire, and perforated at intervals, as if for the convenience of sharpshooters stationed within, although Mr. Frick, in his testimony before a committee of Congress, averred that the holes were simply for the purpose of observation. High in the air, at the ends of the tall mill buildings, twelve-foot platforms were erected, on which were placed electric search-lights, designed to enable sentinels to keep watch at night over every part of the mill yard.

There was a cold and sanguinary determination about these provisions which boded ill for the workmen. Clearly, the redoubtable tamer of the coke-workers had made up his mind to force a bloody conflict with organized labor, and the wage ultimatum was his defi. One of King John's barons could not equip his feudal castle with more elaborate offensiveness than this nineteenth century ironmaster displayed in fortifying his mill, with the apparent intention of making war – actual war with arms upon the men of Homestead. So it was that the men viewed

the preparations at the mill. The supposition that Mr. Frick might regard their disposition as one of invincible stubbornness, sure to lead to deeds of violence, and that his fences, barbed wire, loopholes, platforms and search-lights might be pure measures of self-defense was not entertained for an instant.

The fortification of the mill was a huge threat – a challenge – an insult. With this exhibition of brute force held up before them, the workmen deemed their manhood, as well as the life of their organization to be at stake. Come what might, they must now burn their boats behind them, as the firm had done, and refuse to recede an inch from their demands.

While affairs were taking this ominous turn at Homestead, the annual convention of the Amalgamated Association met at Pittsburgh, the session opening on June 7. Of the stormy conditions under which the delegates came together and which caused their deliberations to be protracted for an unusual period, mention is reserved for another chapter. Suffice it to state here that the delegates from Homestead duly submitted their scale; that it received the indorsement of the association, and that the local lodges were empowered to persist in their demand for the retention of the rate of $25 a ton on billets as the minimum basis of tonnage men's wages. This made it optional with the local lodges to declare a strike, although it followed by implication only, and not of necessity, that the strike, if ordered, would receive the sanction and support of the association.

Excitement in Homestead mounted rapidly to fever heat.

The first concerted public demonstration on the part of the men was on Sunday, June 19, when the lodges held an open meeting in the opera house. Some of the leading officials of the association and many delegates to the Pittsburgh convention from other states were present. The gathering included almost the entire working force of the Homestead mill. William A. Carney, First Vice-President of the association acted as chairman. The speechmakers, for the most part, while exhorting the men to stand firm, counseled moderation and respect for the law.

A young vice-president of the association, Jere Doherty, touched upon the place of the wage-worker in politics and the efficacy of the Homestead struggle as a test of the protection guaranteed to labor by the Republican party.

The crowning address of the day was made by John McLuckie, the burgess of the town, a simple, earnest, straightforward man, whose rugged eloquence told more forcibly with the brawny multitude who heard him than if it had been couched in the language of a Cicero or a Demosthenes. Burgess McLuckie said:

"What brings you here this morning? Is it idle curiosity, or is there a real, tangible reason beyond? The cause of this wage trouble is not generally understood. We were persuaded to vote the Republican ticket four years ago in order that our wages might be maintained. As soon as the election was over a widespread feeling on the part of the manufacturers towards a reduction of wages was exhibited all over the land. As soon as

the McKinley bill was passed, the article in the production of which we work was the only article that suffered a reduction. It is Sunday morning, and we ought to be in church, but we are here to-day to see if we are going to live as white men in the future. The constitution of this country guarantees all men the right to live, but in order to live we must keep up a continuous struggle. This is the effect of legislation and nothing else. The McKinley bill reduced the tariff on the four-inch billet, and the reduction of our wages is the result. You men who voted the Republican ticket voted for high tariff and you get high fences, Pinkerton detectives, thugs and militia!"

There was politics in this speech, but almost every member of a labor organization is a politician in a small way, and McLuckie's bill of indictment against the Republican party struck fairly home. It had been freely charged that, when the McKinley tariff bill was being prepared, Andrew Carnegie had waited on the conference committee which put the finishing touches to the measure and secured as a return for his generous contributions to the Republican campaign funds, a reduction in the duty on steel billets, this product being the single standard of wages in his Homestead works. As the Carnegie firm controlled the billet market, there was nothing to hinder a depression of prices, as a seeming consequence of a lower duty, and this was to serve as a cover for the new scale and the Frick ultimatum.

The plausibility of this story, and the bluntness with which McLuckie, himself a poorly paid workman of the Carnegie

Company, put the political duplicity involved before his fellow workmen exercised a telling effect. Particularly did the pointed allusion to "high fences, Pinkerton detectives, thugs and militia" carry weight in the estimation of the workingmen present at that Sunday morning meeting. Nor did it stop there, for within the next twenty-four hours this, the first public arraignment of the Republican party and the Carnegie Company jointly was flashed over the telegraph wires to newspapers in all parts of the United States, and the country at large began to realize that there were two ways of looking at the doctrine of "protection to American labor," and that the difference between them was on the eve of receiving an impressive demonstration.

The temper of the people of Homestead after the meeting of the lodges, was, in spite of the scarcely concealed militant resolution harbored in the breasts of the men as individuals, moderate and orderly. There was still time, they reasoned, for Mr. Frick to withdraw his defiant ultimatum. Nearly two weeks remained until the new wage scale would be enforced. In the mean time there would be conferences. Possibly Mr. Carnegie might be heard from over the cable. Perhaps even the great men who were interested in proving that protection protects would use their influence to obviate the astounding object lesson which would be presented to the world if the Carnegie firm, at the noontide of its prosperity, should reduce the wages of its employees. If there was hope in this way of looking at the prospect, it was a forlorn hope, and the most sanguine of the

tonnage men, who were the first to be affected by a change in the scale, could not consider it otherwise.

The cloud was plain to be seen, but of the silver lining not a vestige was perceptible.

So the men went to bed on that Sunday night with McLuckie's bold words ringing in their ears, and a strong conviction deep down in their hearts that a crash was coming, that somebody was destined to go under, and that, come what might, the victors of 1889 would not show the white feather.

CHAPTER III.
Locked Out

Frick's Allies – A Plan of General Assault on the Amalgamated Association Falls to the Ground – The Labor Question in Politics – Democrats Make Capital out of Wage Reductions – Frick Confers with a Workmen's Committee and Rejects a Compromise – Mills Shut Down and are Declared Non-Union – "Fort Frick" – Lodges Appoint an Advisory Committee. Guarding the Town

ABOUT the time of the assembling of the delegates to the convention of the Amalgamated Association, the Pittsburgh *Post*, a Democratic newspaper, printed an article in which it was alleged that the impending conflict at Homestead was to be precipitated not in the interest of the Carnegie Company alone, but in that of all the iron and steel manufacturers of Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio. Homestead, it was said, was chosen as a battle ground, (1) because of the ease with which the mill property could be equipped for offensive and defensive purposes; (2) because the ruin wrought in that town

by a disastrous strike would be more sweeping and complete than could be effected anywhere else, and (3) because the Carnegie Company had the largest interests to serve and should, therefore, be willing to bear the brunt of the battle. If war was declared, and the lodges at Homestead were broken up, the other manufacturers were to follow the lead of the Carnegie Company, defy the Amalgamated Association and reduce the wages of their employees to an extent varying from 20 to 60 per cent.

The *Post's* story received little credence when it appeared, but later on the course of events gave it a strong coloring of probability. Mr. Frick proceeded to fortify the Homestead mills with every evidence of inviting a desperate conflict. At the same time, the other manufacturers commenced to show their hand, those of the Mahoning and Shenango Valley, a district located about fifty miles from Pittsburgh, taking the initiative by announcing a general reduction of wages ranging from 20 to 60 per cent. The Pittsburgh manufacturers avoided taking a distinctly aggressive stand, but gave out significant statements to the effect that the condition of the iron and steel market rendered it impossible for them to continue paying the rate of wages maintained during the previous year.

These symptoms of depression in one of the most generously protected industries within a short time after the passage of the McKinley tariff bill afforded a prolific subject of commentary to the opponents of the high tariff system. Both political parties made their nominations for the presidency in the month of June,

when the labor trouble was waxing warm, and it became only too plainly perceptible that, since the Republican party took its stand mainly on the benefit resulting to American labor from the protective tariff, Republicanism would be held answerable by the working classes for the proposed wage reductions in Pennsylvania. As a matter of fact the efficacy of the tariff as a wage-maintaining agency had been grossly overdrawn by stump orators and over-zealous partisan newspapers. For years it had been dinned into the ears of the workingman that it was his duty to vote for Republican candidates because the Republicans in Congress maintained the high protective tariff and the high protective tariff meant high wages.

But now, at the opening of a presidential contest, the workingman was confronted with what seemed to be proof positive that the high tariff had lost its virtue, and when the Democratic press pointed to the astonishing spectacle of wage reductions ordered by the "pampered iron barons" of Pennsylvania, as illustrating that the protective system was a sham and a fraud, what wonder that organized labor was quick to accept the indictment as a just one!

The Democratic national convention did not lose sight of the opportunity thus offered, and in the platform on which Grover Cleveland was nominated at Chicago perhaps the most telling plank was that which denounced the protective system as fraudulent and referred to the strikes in the iron trade as an immediate attestation of the failure of "McKinleyism."

Meanwhile, newspapers friendly to President Harrison sought to dissuade the iron and steel manufacturers from making the threatened cut in wages and precipitating a general conflict with the operatives. In Pittsburgh, especially, a bitter discussion was carried on, the papers controlled by the manufacturers persistently asserting that the tariff has nothing to do with the making of wage scales and that a general wage reduction and consequent strikes during a presidential campaign could not be construed as reflecting upon the efficacy of the McKinley bill and the Republican party's pledges to American labor; while the Democratic and independent press subjected the manufacturers to merciless criticism.

All this was full of encouragement to the workingmen. They felt that their cause was expanding from the dimensions of a mere local trouble to those of an affair of national importance, affecting the destinies of the dominant political parties. At Homestead, which had previously been a Republican stronghold, the Democratic propaganda found special favor. "If all else should fail us," thought the men, "we can, at least, have revenge at the polls in November."

And they kept their word.

It is not within the province of the writer of this narrative to analyze the peculiar aspect put upon the case of the workingmen by political agitators for campaign purposes. Merely the facts are stated here, leaving it to the reader to make his own deductions as to the justice or injustice of the assaults on the American system

of protection to labor provoked by the seeming selfishness of tariff-enriched manufacturers. Suffice it to state that every shot told and that, if the whole truth were known, it would be found that political considerations went a long way to prevent the other manufacturers from joining Mr. Frick in a body and using their combined resources to destroy the Amalgamated Association and strip their employees of all means of self-defense.

It will be seen that the position of the Homestead workers was greatly strengthened by the common danger. Homestead was not to be alone in its fight. The entire Amalgamated Association was threatened, and the spirit of mutual helpfulness was, therefore, powerfully stimulated at all points. The good old unionist principle, "One for all, and all for one," was bound to receive a full and magnificent exemplification.

On June 15, the convention of the Amalgamated Association completed the general wage scale for iron mills and presented it to the manufacturers' committee. The manufacturers responded by producing a scale of their own, embodying extensive reductions. This was the beginning of a dispute, stubborn on both sides, which was kept up long after the final adjournment of the convention, that body assigning the duty of conferring with the manufacturers to a special wage committee.

The consideration of the scales for steel mills, including that prepared by the Homestead lodges, was not completed by the convention until June 23. On that day, a committee, headed by William Roberts, one of the most intelligent of the Homestead

mill workers, appeared at the offices of the Carnegie Company, on Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, and was escorted to Mr. H. C. Frick's private room. Mr. Frick, General Manager Potter, H. L. Childs and F. T. F. Lovejoy acted for the company in the conference which followed. Mr. Roberts, acting as spokesman for his colleagues, presented the Homestead scale as approved by the convention, and explained that the employees were prepared to concede several points, admitting, however, of no reduction exceeding 15 per cent, in any department. The men were willing even to reduce the minimum selling price of billets on which the rate of wages should be estimated to $24 per ton, but the firm insisted upon the $23 rate, which, as previously explained, signified a serious depression in wages.

The conference, after a discussion lasting several hours, broke up without accomplishing anything.

The following day, June 24, had been fixed by Mr. Frick as the last on which the Carnegie firm would treat with its employees as members of the Amalgamated Association. The day passed without a conference. It was believed, however, that, in view of the concessions which the men had stated their willingness to make, even though they refused to make the complete surrender which Mr. Frick demanded, the firm would consent to fresh conferences with the committee. Yet the fact that the firm, which had sufficient orders on hand to keep the mill busy for many months, was canceling these orders, coupled with the extraordinary preparations for warfare which were being made

at the mills, cast a damper on the hopes of the men. There was hardly a ray of sunshine to brighten the gloomy outlook.

On June 25, Mr. Lovejoy, secretary of the Carnegie Company, stated through the newspapers that the conferences were at an end, that the firm had decided to make the rate of $23 a ton on billets the basis of wages, and that this rate would be enforced without regard to the opinion of the Amalgamated Association. It was also the intention to change the time of fixing the wage schedule from June to January, so that if a strike or lock-out should occur, the hardships of the winter season would strengthen the company's hand. So, at least, the men interpreted the proposed change.

Mr. Lovejoy's statement, although given out in an informal way, was generally accepted as meaning that the ax was forthwith to be let fall upon the neck of organized labor at Homestead, and that no human power could stay the hand of the executioner.

Still all was quiet at Homestead. June 25 was Saturday and pay-day, but the day was marked by less activity and bustle than usual. The stores were not crowded, and little money was spent. In the face of trouble, the end of which it was impossible to foresee, men carefully put away the contents of their pay envelopes. The wolf might come to the door before long and resources had to be husbanded. Few cared for the little Saturday jollifications common at other times. Wherever a group of mill men came together, the one theme of discussion was the ultimatum of the firm, the prospect of a wholesale discharge of

union men on July 1 and the meaning of the warlike equipment of the mill property.

A new and significant name was devised for the Carnegie enclosure, with its ramparts, watch towers, search-lights and other suggestions of war, and flew from mouth to mouth with the rapidity of lightning.

"Fort Frick."

An ill-omened name it was, bristling with offensive associations; but its propriety as a descriptive epithet could not be questioned.

Who was to occupy the "fort?" Whose guns were to be used through those loopholes?

"Pinkerton detectives," said some, and the rumor that an army of "Pinkertons" had been hired and might already be on its way to garrison the works and shed the blood of the men of Homestead found ready credence and deepened the feeling of resentment abroad in the town. Many were disposed to believe that Pinkerton scouts had arrived and were making things ready for the coming of the main guard.

On Tuesday, June 28, the company ordered the armor-plate mill and the open-hearth department shut down, throwing 800 men out of employment.

This was the beginning of the lock-out, for a lock-out it was, and not a strike, as has been very generally represented.

A strike occurs when dissatisfied workingmen cease work of their own accord and refuse to return until the cause of

dissatisfaction is removed.

A lock-out originates with the employing individual or corporation, and consists in the refusal to let the employees work until they come to terms with the employer.

As Mr. Frick took the initiative, the trouble at Homestead was distinctively a lock-out, although, if Mr. Frick had chosen, he could have permitted it to take the form of a strike.

It made little difference in the end which of the contestants took the first aggressive step. Once the Frick ultimatum was promulgated, a struggle was inevitable, and if the firm had not thrown down the gauntlet, the men most assuredly would have forced the fighting on their own account.

The night of June 28 witnessed strange scenes in Homestead. The pent-up feelings of the men now found vent unrestrainedly. Effigies of Frick and Potter were hung on telegraph poles. Denunciations of the firm and its policy were heard on every hand. Knots of angry men gathered outside the board fence that hedged the mill enclosure, peered through the loopholes at the watchmen on duty within and talked defiantly of what would happen if the methods that triumphed over the poor, disorganized serfs in the coke regions were to be tried upon four thousand sturdy and intelligent steelworkers. If an apostle of non-unionism had ventured upon the streets of Homestead that night he would have fared badly.

The next morning, at the call of the officers of the local lodges, 3,000 steelworkers met in the opera house. The chairman of the

executive committee stated to the meeting that, at a conference of committeemen representing the eight lodges, held on the preceding evening, it had been decided to submit the question of shutting down the mechanical department of the mills to the steelworkers *en masse*, irrespective of affiliation with the lodges, and that the decision thus arrived at should be binding on all. This report was approved and a motion was made that a committee be appointed to request the mechanics and day laborers to quit work at once. A workman asked if the watchmen were to be included, and another answered: "Three years ago the watchmen wanted to come out and now they *must* come."

The motion passed amid tremendous cheering.

The chairman of the executive committee, resuming his address, refuted the report spread through the newspapers that six or seven hundred mechanics and day laborers had signed a scale arranged by the firm. A committee of this class of workmen, he said, had waited on General Manager Potter and had been thrust aside pending the settlement of the tonnage men's wages. After this, the mechanics and laborers had resolved to cast their lot with the Amalgamated Association, and had signified their decision to the lodges.

William Roberts, chairman of the conference committee, which had waited on Mr. Frick by authority of the Amalgamated convention, took the platform and detailed the action of his committee. Mr. Roberts told of the committee's offer to concede a basis of $24 and of the firm's demand that the scale terminate

on the last day of the year. "We wouldn't agree to this," he said, "and I now ask you had we any right to do so?"

"No! No! No!" shouted 3,000 voices.

The speaker described how, when the committee presented as its last and only demands that a $24 basis be adopted and that the scale expire on the last day of June, Mr. Frick jumped to his feet and exclaimed hotly: "Gentlemen, that ends all conferences between you and this firm." "So you see," Mr. Roberts went on to say, "This is not a strike. The firm put a snag in our road… We filled our contract. Now the firm has laid the entire mill off one day ahead of time. Has it lived up to its contract?"

Again 3,000 voices shouted "No," and the action of the wage conference committee was ratified without a dissenting voice.

A resolution was offered providing that, in case any man left Homestead during the coming trouble without permission from the lodge officials, the men should refuse to work with him on his return. The chairman asked all who were in favor of the resolution to rise. Instantly every man in the hall sprang to his feet and the resolution was adopted with three cheers and a tiger, followed with hisses for H. C. Frick.

A motion to appoint a press committee, consisting of one member from each of the eight lodges, was carried after a discussion as to unreliable reports. The membership of this committee was kept secret for the time being.

A whirlwind of excitement was roused when a speaker told of a report that 200 non-union workmen were coming

to Homestead disguised in the blue uniform of Pinkerton detectives. "Watch the depots," was the unanimous cry that followed this alarmist statement.

When, after a session of two hours, the meeting adjourned, there remained not the least doubt as to the unity of feeling among all classes of workers in the town. Every man was ready to enter upon relentless strife, and if there was a coward or malingerer in any quarter, he wisely held his peace.

After the general meeting, the eight lodges held a secret session, at which an advisory committee was appointed, with full power to direct the workmen's campaign. This body, which played the most important part in the tragic drama soon afterwards enacted, was composed of the following members: David H. Shannon, John McLuckie, David Lynch, Thomas J. Crawford, Hugh O'Donnell, Harry Bayne, Elmer E. Ball, Isaac Byers, Henry Bayard, T. W. Brown, George W. Champene, Isaac Critchlow, Miller Colgan, John Coyle, Jack Clifford, Dennis M. Cush, William McConeghy, Michael Cummings, William Combs, John Durkes, Patrick Fagan, W. S. Gaches, Nathan Harris, Reid Kennedy, John Miller, O. O. Searight, John Murray, M. H. Thompson, Martin Murray, Hugh Ross, William T. Roberts, George Rylands and George W. Sarver.

Special committees were appointed to patrol the river stations and all entrances to the town. The patrols were directed to cover their beats night and day and report to the advisory committee. Arrangements were also made to have the river patrolled in

skiffs, and the steamboat "Edna" was secured to aid in this service.

Headquarters were established in a commodious public hall, with accommodations for telegraph operators, the committee being expected to maintain communication with all parts of the country, so as to obtain instant information of any movement of non-union men designed for service at Homestead. The liquor saloons were visited and the proprietors requested to use special precautions against the promotion of drunkenness and disorderly gatherings, under pain of being required to close their establishments.

Eight effigies of Carnegie officials were cut down by the committee, and notice was given that persons outraging decency in this manner in the future would be disciplined.

The burgess of the town, John McLuckie, was informed that he might call upon the Amalgamated Association for whatever number of men he might deem necessary to assist him in preserving the peace.

In short, the government of Homestead had now passed absolutely into the hands of the advisory committee of the Amalgamated lodges, and the committee was determined to use its arbitrary authority for the preservation of order and decency and the protection of life and property as well as the exclusion from Homestead of non-union men, better known to the unionist as "scabs" or "black sheep."

On July 2 the entire force of employees at the Carnegie mills

was paid off and served with notices of discharge.

With the exception of a slight altercation between General Manager Potter and some of the men who were guarding one of the gates of the mill there was no disorder.

Secretary Lovejoy now made his final statement on behalf of the firm declaring the mill to be permanently non-unionized. "Hereafter," he said, "the Homestead steel works will be operated as a non-union mill. We shall not recognize the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers in our dealings with the men. The mill will be an open one where all men may work regardless of their affiliation with a labor organization. There will be, no doubt, a scale of wages; but we shall deal with the men individually; not with any organization. Such a thing as a union will not be recognized. There will be no further conferences with the Amalgamated Association."

The mammoth steel plant was now deserted, except by a few watchmen and the government steel inspectors, with whom the advisory committee did not interfere.

The locked-out men were perfectly organized and ready to fight against any odds at a moment's notice. A report that strangers were on the way to Homestead along either of the railroads brought a battalion of stalwart fellows to the stations on the outskirts.

Mr. Frick might as well have undertaken to storm Gibraltar as to introduce a force of non-unionists into the town.

Meanwhile the convention of the Amalgamated Association

had finished its business, elected new officers, including a successor to President Weihe in the person of Mahlon M. Garland, and left it to a committee to fight it out with the manufacturers. This the committee was doing with considerable success. The ominous turn which affairs were taking at Homestead, together with the endless reproaches heaped upon the graceless beneficiaries of the protective tariff by Mr. Harrison's campaign managers had a most discouraging effect on the manufacturers' committee and it was plain to be seen that the "fight all along the line," inaugurated a month before, was to end in a compromise favorable to the Amalgamated Association.

Mr. Frick was left to do his own fighting, single-handed and alone.

CHAPTER IV.
The Pinkerton Guards

Planning a Siege – History of the Pinkertons – Hatred of Organized Labor For Soldier Policemen – Frick's Cold-Blooded Letter – The Sheriff of Allegheny County is Enlisted in the Carnegie Forces – Millmen Dispose of a Sheriff's Posse – The Gathering of the Invaders – Departure of the Pinkerton Barges for Homestead

WHILE Mr. Frick's men were busily engaged in perfecting a martial organization and putting the government of the town of Homestead on a war footing, Mr. Frick himself was not idle. He did not waste any time in considering projects for immediately introducing non-union men into the mills, being well aware that, if men foolhardy enough to take the risk of "blacksheeping" at Homestead could be found, it would still be impracticable to get them past the picket lines of the locked-out steelworkers, and that, even if a force of non-unionists could be piloted into the mill their presence would be the signal for an attack by the union men and possibly for the destruction of the firm's property.

Mr. Frick had another plan – a plan suggested by his successful encounters with the Connellsville coke-workers. He conceived the idea of garrisoning "Fort Frick" with a sufficient number of armed and disciplined Pinkerton guards to hold any attacking force at bay and later on to bring in non-union workmen under cover of the Pinkerton men's rifles.

How long this project had been maturing in the mind of the Carnegie Company's chairman cannot be told. Certain it is that he had made up his mind to carry it out long before he met the wage conference committee for the last time, and that when, on June 23, he went through the form of a discussion with Mr. Roberts and Mr. Roberts' confreres, he had not the least notion of coming to any kind of an understanding other than that which might be brought about by force.

Mr. Frick was too well acquainted with the estimation in which the Pinkerton men are held by the labor unions to underrate the import of his action, and can hardly have been ignorant of the fact that in bringing on these myrmidons, he was making doubly sure of sanguinary times at Homestead.

A sketch of the personnel and methods of the "Pinkerton National Detective Agency," as it is styled by its chiefs, will make clear to the reader the reasons for the hatred and contempt entertained for this body by workingmen everywhere.

The agency was founded in 1850 by Allan Pinkerton, a young Scotchman, who had been brought into public notice at Elgin, Ill., by his success in ferreting out a counterfeiter. Allan

Pinkerton's fame as a detective became national. He organized a war secret service, was trusted by Lincoln, whose life he once saved; by Grant and other national leaders in war times, and aroused continual interest by his strokes of skill and daring. The enterprise from which sprang the Pinkerton "standing army" of to-day was set on foot in a shabby little office in La Salle Street, Chicago, and there the headquarters of the agency still remain.

Pinkerton detectives came into great request and were soon engaged in the unraveling of crimes and the hunting down of criminals all over the continent. Allan Pinkerton meanwhile discerned a fresh source of profit and turned it to account by hiring out his men as watchmen for banks and great commercial houses. The "Pinkerton Preventive Watch," composed of trained men, uniformed and armed, and acting independently of the municipal police, was established.

The emblem adopted by the agency was a suggestive one. It consisted of an eye and the motto, "We never sleep."

As old age came on Allan Pinkerton and his business kept growing, he turned over the work of supervision to his sons, William A. and Robert A. Robert was placed in charge of a branch bureau in New York and William remained in Chicago. Agencies with regular forces of men were established in Philadelphia, Boston, St. Paul, Kansas City and Denver. By communication with these centres, the chiefs could control, at a few days' notice, a force of 2,000 drilled men, and this could be expanded by drawing on the reserves registered on the books

of the agency for service on demand, to 30,000, if necessary, – more men than are enrolled in the standing army of the United States.

When a large number of recruits is needed, the Pinkertons usually advertise in the newspapers asking for able-bodied men of courage, but without stating for whose service. In New York, prospective recruits are brought to a building on lower Broadway where the Pinkertons have an armory, stocked with Winchester rifles, revolvers, policemen's clubs and uniforms. After the number of men needed is secured, the addresses of the eligible applicants for whom there are no places are taken and they are notified to hold themselves in readiness for a future call. Men who have served in the army or as policemen receive the preference.

Pinkerton detectives have no real authority to make arrests. They are rarely sworn in as special constables or as deputy sheriffs and the uniform which they wear is merely for show.

Of late years they have been employed very frequently to protect the property of great manufacturing corporations during strikes or lock-outs. This is, without exception, the most trying and perilous service which they have to undergo. The pay is good, however, the rate agreed upon for duty at Homestead, for example, being $5 a day for each man.

In the great strike on the New York Central railroad, which cost the Vanderbilt corporation $2,000,000, the item for Pinkerton service was about $15,000. The guards were posted at

danger points all along the line. Conflicts with the strikers were frequent, and, in many cases, the guards used their rifles with deadly effect. On August 17, 1890, they killed five persons, one a woman. So freely were the Pinkerton rifles brought into play during this trouble that the people of New York state became thoroughly aroused and forced the legislature to pass an anti-Pinkerton bill.

The agency was responsible for the killing of a boy during a longshoremen's strike in Jersey and at Chicago during the Lake Shore railroad strike a man named Bagley fell a victim to Pinkerton lead. The guard who shot Bagley was spirited away and never brought to justice.

Pinkerton guards have done duty in the miners' strikes in the Hocking Valley, at the H. C. Frick Company's mines in the Connellsville region and at Braidwood, Ill., as well as in all the great railroad strikes since 1877.

In recent years, the conversion of the guards into an irresponsible military organization, with self-constituted authority to overawe striking workmen has provoked a feeling of intense hatred on the part of organized labor towards these soldier-policemen. Attempts to abolish the Pinkerton system by legislation have succeeded in only a few states, New York and New Jersey among the number, for the reason that the corporations which find use for armed mercenaries have sufficient wealth and influence to control legislative action.

Congressman Thomas Watson, of Alabama, a representative

of the Farmers' Alliance, introduced a bill in Congress making it illegal for private persons to maintain a "standing army" to usurp the police powers of the states, and made a strong plea for its passage, but the measure failed. The great industrial corporations have a hold upon the federal legislature too strong to be broken by the insistence of common people.

As has already been told, the men of Homestead entertained a profound abhorrence of the Pinkertons and were resolved to push resistance to any extreme rather than permit themselves to be whipped into submission by armed hirelings. They had no knowledge of Mr. Frick's dealings with the agency, although their familiarity with the Frick policy in the coke regions, coupled with the equipment of the mill property for occupation by a garrison excited a well-defined suspicion of what was coming.

Mr. Frick gave the final order for a supply of guards in a letter written to Robert A. Pinkerton, of New York, on June 25, the day after his meeting with the wage committee from the Amalgamated convention. The order was given in as matter-of-fact a manner as if the Carnegie chairman were bespeaking a supply of coke or pig-iron.

"We will want 300 guards," he wrote, "for service at our Homestead mills as a measure of precaution against interference with our plan to start the operation of the works again on July 6, 1892."

"These guards," Mr. Frick went on to direct, "should be

assembled at Ashtabula, O., not later than the morning of July 5, when they may be taken by train to McKees Rocks, or some other point on the Ohio River below Pittsburgh, where they can be transferred to boats and landed within the enclosures of our premises at Homestead. We think absolute secresy essential in the movement of these men, so that no demonstration can be made while they are en route."

As Mr. Frick acknowledged in his letter the receipt of "your favor of the 22d," it was evident that the negotiations with the Pinkerton agency had been pending for some time.

Immediately after having despatched his order for a Pinkerton battalion, Mr. Frick sent for Captain Rodgers, of the towboat Little Bill, and directed him to fit up two barges with sleeping accommodations and provisions for 300 men, who were to be taken on board at some point not then determined, brought to the works at Homestead, and subsequently lodged and boarded on the barges.

He also notified the sheriff of Allegheny county, William H. McCleary, through Messrs. Knox & Reed, attorneys for the Carnegie Company, that there would be a strike at Homestead and that 300 Pinkerton watchmen had been engaged, and requested the sheriff to deputize the entire force; that is to say, to appoint them police agents of the county. The sheriff maintained afterwards that, on the advice of his attorney, he had declined to deputize the Pinkerton men until they should be installed in the mill and had reserved the right to act at his discretion when that

time came. Mr. Frick, on the other hand, declared on the witness stand that the sheriff consented to deputize the men and assigned his chief deputy to swear them in.

The train was now laid; the fuse was lit, and all that remained to be done in the Carnegie camp was to wait for the explosion.

To disarm suspicion on the other side, however, Mr. Frick, as the crisis approached, gave out information leading the public in general and the locked-out men in particular to believe that he meant to rely on the ordinary processes of law to protect him in the non-unionizing of his works. On the evening of July 4, after a conference with the other chief officers of the firm, he furnished a statement to the newspapers alleging that there was no trouble to be feared, that the men were weakening, a large number of them being anxious to get back to work, and that the plant would be placed in the hands of the county, the sheriff being requested to furnish enough deputies to ensure adequate protection.

With all his firmness, the doughty chairman of the Carnegie Company dared not make a clean breast of his program. The way for the *coup de grace* had to be cleared by strategy and dissimulation.

The locked-out men celebrated Independence Day with due patriotic fervor. The force of guards was increased from 350 to 1,000, the picket system being expanded so as to form an outline five miles in extent, covering both sides of the river.

In the afternoon an alarm was sent in to headquarters. Two men had been seen landing from a boat near the works and were

taken for spies. Quick as a flash a thousand men rushed to the river bank and inclosed within a semi-circle of stalwart forms the place where the suspects had landed. It proved that the latter were merely honest citizens of the town returning from a picnic across the river, but the incident showed how effectually the men kept themselves on the *qui vive*, precluding the entry of an enemy at any point.

When Sheriff McCleary reached his office in the Allegheny County court-house, on the morning of July 5, he found awaiting him a formal application from the Carnegie Company for the services of one hundred deputies at Homestead. The Sheriff was discomfited by the demand. His predecessor in office, Dr. McCandless, had been forced to engage in a long and irksome legal battle in order to recover from the Carnegie Company the money due for the service of deputies at Homestead in 1889, and the prospect of a fresh dispute over the pay of special officers was not inviting. So Mr. McCleary, who was gifted by nature with a strong tendency to evasiveness, returned an evasive answer, and conceived the idea of going to Homestead with his own office force of twelve men and making some sort of dignified showing pending the arrival of that army of Pinkertons, which he already knew to be moving on the devoted town.

The Sheriff and his little posse proceeded accordingly to Homestead and were received by the men, if not with cordiality, at all events with decent consideration. A proclamation was issued embodying the usual warning against breaches of the

peace. Then a phalanx of strong-limbed steel workers escorted the officers to the mill and pointed out that nobody was trespassing upon or damaging the Carnegie Company's fortified territory.

The sheriff stated that, under the law, the company should be permitted to bring in whatever men it chose and to operate its own works.

The men responded that neither the county authorities nor anyone else would be permitted to bring non-union men into the mill, and, having thus emphatically signified their purposes, escorted the sheriff and his followers – all of them more or less afflicted with nervousness – to the railroad station and saw the little party safely out of town.

Had the sheriff been less evasive, less nervous, less of a politician and more of a man, there was still time for him to avert disaster. He, as chief police officer of the county, had been informed of the coming of Mr. Frick's hired army. He could not fail to be aware that a collision between the Pinkerton men and the 4,000 steelworkers was bound to come, that blood would run like water at Homestead, that demoralization and disgrace, and perhaps even heavy financial loss to the county would follow, and that, therefore, to remain supine in the face of all this, to let the crash come and not lift a finger to prevent it was literally a dereliction of duty.

There was no obligation resting on this official to keep Mr. Frick's operations secret. On the contrary, he was under a strong

moral obligation to prevent the execution of those operations at all hazards by giving them prompt publicity and enabling the exhaustion of all available legal means of stopping an invasion of the county by armed mercenaries of a class condemned by law in two neighboring states and bitterly hated by workingmen in every state of the Union.

It did not appear to occur to the sheriff that the hiring of Pinkerton detectives was an offensive arraignment of himself as the county's chief executive officer. The one idea uppermost in his mind seemed to be to steer clear of the whole unpleasant business as far as he conveniently could and to trust to luck and the Pinkertons to pull Frick through somehow.

Decidedly a weak and inefficient man, this sheriff. For the time being, he had abdicated in favor of Frick and the Pinkertons and it would not be his fault if the devil were not unchained.

And now from a score of cities came the Pinkerton myrmidons to the headquarters at Chicago, few among them knowing or caring on what mission they were bound, as long as they got their daily rations and their daily pay, but all comprehending that blind obedience was the watchword. Captain F. H. Heinde had been detailed to take charge of the expedition, and under his guidance the men proceeded from Chicago to Youngstown, and thence to Bellevue, on the Fort Wayne railroad, opposite the Davis Island dam, arriving at this point at 10:30 o'clock on the evening of July 5.

Early in the day, Mr. Frick had issued final orders to Captain

Rodgers, directing him to tow his two barges down the Ohio River to the dam in time to meet the battalion of Pinkerton guards. Captain Rodgers duly carried out his orders. With the boats Little Bill and Tide, each having a barge in tow, he arrived at the dam at 10 P. M. There he was met by Colonel Joseph H. Gray, Sheriff McCleary's chief deputy, who had been dispatched by the sheriff to "keep the peace," if his own testimony and that of the sheriff are to be accepted, whereas, according to Mr. Frick's story, his real mission was to deputize the Pinkerton guards and thus render the county liable for the acts of these strangers.

At 10:30 P. M., the trainload of guards arrived; the men embarked in the barges; the Little Bill and the Tide puffed away as cheerfully as if they were towing a pleasure party, and in the stillness of the beautiful July night the expedition moved slowly in the direction of Homestead.

CHAPTER V.
The First Shot

On Board the Barges – Floating Barracks Equipped for Bloody Warfare – Up the Monongahela at Midnight – Homestead Gets Warning – Defenders at the Mill Landing – Frick's Army Repulsed with Heavy Loss – Hugh O'Donnel Takes Command of the Workmen – Sheriff McCleary's Appeal To the Governor – Frick Refuses to Interfere

THE barges on which Captain Heinde and his 300 men embarked were primitive specimens of the boat builders' art, previously used for the transportation of freight. Unlike the ordinary coal barge, these were roofed in, and, were it not for the flat roof, would have exactly resembled Noah's ark. They measured 125 feet long and 20 feet wide. One was known as the Iron Mountain; the other as the Monongahela. These floating barracks had been purchased a week before the time of the Pinkerton expedition by an agent of Mr. Frick's, and quietly fitted up at the landing-place of the Tide Coal Company, in Allegheny City. The Iron Mountain was equipped as a dormitory,

several tiers of berths being constructed on both sides and furnished with bed clothes. Two rows of cots occupied the middle of the floor. The Monongahela was converted into a vast dining-room. Two rows of tables were placed in the middle and board seats were provided. In the stern was a commodious kitchen, with a full outfit of stoves and cooking utensils. An experienced steward and a corps of twenty waiters were employed. At the last moment a number of mysterious looking cases were put on board. These contained Winchester rifles and had been forwarded to the Carnegie Company by Adams Express. Watchmen at the landing met all inquiries with the explanation that the barges were intended for the transportation of laborers to the Beaver dam on the Ohio River.

It has been said that most of the Pinkerton men had no idea of the nature of their mission. The fact is that only the officers of the expedition comprehended the gravity of the work in hand. However, when the men found themselves being conveyed up the river in the close quarters which the barges afforded to so large a number, many of them became uneasy, and, weary as they were after their long trip by rail, but few were able to close an eye.

As the barges approached the mouth of the Monongahela River, the lights of the two great cities of Pittsburgh and Allegheny illuminated the surface of the waters; but no midnight wayfarer who saw the Little Bill and the Tide, with their odd-looking tows, dreamt for an instant that within those coffin-like craft was the Frick army of invasion and that, within a few hours,

those same craft would harbor terror, bloodshed and death. The two cities slept on, unconscious of the thunderbolt that was to fall at the dawning of the day.

When the boats drew near the Smithfield Street bridge, which connects South Pittsburgh with the city proper, there were, however, keen eyes to note their coming. A scout from Homestead, who was one of a detail appointed to look out for suspicious movements along the Pittsburgh wharves under the cover of night, detected the ominous procession and, hurrying to a telegraph office, wired the warning to Homestead: "Watch the river. Steamer with barges left here." On receipt of this news, the advisory committee prepared to issue a general alarm at five minutes' notice. The belief at headquarters was that 100 special deputies were on the way to take charge of the mill under orders from the sheriff.

With the exception of the disabling of the Tide, nothing occurred to mar the serenity of the invading force until near daylight. Up the Monongahela steamed the little tugs, the barges gliding stealthily in their wake. Captain Rodgers, somewhat inflated with the idea of his dignity as commodore of a war fleet, stood on the deck of the Little Bill and chatted with Pinkerton Detective J. H. Robinson, of Chicago. The Tide being disabled, the Little Bill had to "lock" both barges through at Lock No. 1, where a dam crosses the river.

At 3 A. M. the barges reached the B. & O. railroad bridge at Glenwood. Day was breaking, but a heavy fog overhung the

water, so that the barges were not visible from the shore; nor could the watchers on deck perceive what was going on a few hundred yards away on the Homestead side of the river.

Yet, while the signs of danger were hidden from the eye, there were manifestations, the significance of which could not be misunderstood.

The voices of men, women and children were heard breaking in harshly upon the stillness of the early morning. Scout called to scout almost loudly enough for their words to be caught by the listeners on the water.

Captain Heinde, although a brave man, and used to dangerous situations, felt a sinking of the heart at this unmistakable proof that the secret of the expedition was no longer a secret and that if a landing was to be made at Homestead, it would have to be gained by fighting for it.

A feeling of alarm seized upon the green hands among the guards. There was danger in the air, and numerous as they were, what chance was there for self-defense as long as they were cooped up within four walls? It took the utmost tact and firmness on the part of the experienced guards, who served as officers, to calm the anxious ones and lead them to believe that they would soon reach safe quarters on *terra firma*.

About this time, a horseman riding at breakneck speed, dashed into the streets of Homestead giving the alarm as he sped along. In a few minutes the news that barges, supposed to be filled with deputies, were nearing the town had spread far and

near and, with one accord, the people rushed to the river bank. Here, for two hours that seemed like weeks, thousands of men and women waited for the arrival of the enemy – a dangerous enemy, they felt sure, judging by the manner of his coming.

As the barges drew nearer to Homestead, the noise on the shore grew louder and louder and soon the sharp crack of rifles rang out, giving a foretaste of what was in store for the unwelcome visitors. Whether these shots, which were fired before the Pinkertons attempted to land, were intended as signals or were aimed, in a random way, at the barges has never been determined. There is no doubt, however, that the firing from the bank stopped as soon as the Little Bill and its tow drew up opposite the mill landing.

This landing was on the beach within the mill enclosure, Mr. Frick having had the wire-topped fence carried down to low-water mark, so as to shut off all access by land. Above the landing-place frowned a steep eminence largely composed of slag and other refuse from the mill. At this point, also, rise the piers of an iron bridge, over which the P., McK. & Y. railroad runs into the mill yard. This bridge is familiarly known at Homestead as the "Pemickey."

No sooner did the waiting multitude on the river bank perceive that the occupants of the barges meant to put in at the Carnegie Company's landing-place than, with a roar of anger, strong men tore down the fence that barred their path, and ran to the spot where, had they delayed five minutes longer, the Pinkerton men

would have disembarked in safety.

Prior to this time the workmen had religiously refrained from trespassing upon the company's property. It had been their set purpose to avoid the odium which would attach to any act suggesting vandalism or arbitrary assaults upon property rights.

But now was not the time to think of conservative methods. Who could tell what kind of invaders were in those ugly-looking barges?

Were they deputies whom the sheriff sought to bring in like a thief in the night? Were they – and at this thought every man's blood boiled – a regiment of Pinkertons brought there to repeat the Pinkerton exploits of a few years before in the coke regions?

What were the odds, one way or the other? Whoever the visitors were, they came with every manifestation of an evil purpose, and was not self-preservation the first law of nature, applying as such to a Homestead steelworker in danger of losing his job and, perhaps, his home?

So the fence went down, and the straight road from the river to the mill was blockaded by a band of resolute fellows that neither Pinkerton men nor sheriff's deputies could hope to overcome.

The scene at this time within the barge Iron Mountain, which had been towed close to the shore, was one of wild confusion. The plan of a secret landing had been frustrated, and there was nothing for it now but a hand-to-hand conflict against terrible odds.

The cases of rifles were broken open and these weapons and

revolvers were hastily distributed among the men. About fifty men were armed with clubs. Captain John W. Cooper, of the New York and Philadelphia division, Captain Charles Norton, of the Chicago division, and Captain Heinde, who had general charge of the expedition, supervised these arrangements. When all were in readiness for battle, a gang-plank was shoved out and the three captains stepped forward, with Heinde in the van. Twenty of the rank and file appeared behind them on the bow of the boat.

At this offensive move, the Homestead men, most of whom were armed, shouted a fierce warning.

"Go back," they cried, "go back, or we'll not answer for your lives."

There were blue uniforms among the group on the bow of the Iron Mountain, and these told their own story to the excited people on the shore.

For a moment the Pinkerton men stood at bay. The scene before them was one to appal the bravest. On the beach several hundred men and women – for mothers, wives and sisters had joined in the mad rush to the landing-place – some of them half dressed, some carrying loaded guns, some with stones or clubs in their hands; in the distance hundreds more rushing to the defense; in the background a huge embankment intercepting the passage to the mills; behind them the river and the chance of saving themselves by flight. Retreat, however, would have been ruinous to the prestige of the Pinkerton agency besides

resulting probably in throwing upon the agency the entire cost of the fruitless expedition, for Mr. Frick would hardly be willing to pay for services not even fairly begun.

So the warning of the workmen was disregarded, and, with a word of command to his men, Captain Heinde pressed forward.

Suddenly a shot was fired – whether from the barges or from the shore has always been a mystery.

Captain Cooper turned instantly towards the barges and in a loud voice gave the order: "Fire!"

A score of Winchester rifles were discharged into the crowd on the bank with deadly effect. Several of the workmen were seen to fall. The first blood had been shed and now the one thought of the men of Homestead was *vengeance*, merciless and complete, on the strangers who had come to shoot them down.

The volley fired from the barges was repaid with interest, and when the smoke from the answering discharge cleared away it was seen that havoc had been wrought on the barges. Captain Heinde had been shot through the leg; J. W. Kline and another detective were mortally wounded and perhaps a dozen others on the Pinkerton side were wounded more or less severely. The Little Bill was fairly riddled with bullets, and Captain Rodgers, having taken the injured men off the barges, lost no time in steaming away from his uncomfortable quarters, leaving the Pinkertons to land, if they could, and if not, to remain where they were and make the best of a desperate situation.

Both sides now withdrew, the workmen abandoning their

exposed position, where they offered an easy target to the marksmen on the barges, and establishing themselves on the heights, while the Pinkertons retired into the barges and proceeded to prepare for renewed action by cutting loopholes in the sides of the craft. It would have been suicidal to attempt another sally.

One of the last of the workingmen to leave was an intrepid fellow who had thrown himself, face down, upon the gang-plank just as Captain Heinde came out, and waited, with revolver cocked for the advance of the enemy. If the guards had landed, they would have done so over his body.

The leadership of the Homestead defenders in this crisis devolved, by common consent, upon Hugh O'Donnell, a man who, in outward appearance, showed none of the customary attributes of a labor leader. A young, handsome individual he was, pale-faced and black-moustached, and rather slight of build. His attire suggested rather the man of fashion than the horny-handed individual generally accepted as the correct type of mill-worker. O'Donnell, however, was one of the superior class of workmen; enjoyed a comfortable income, and owned his own well-appointed residence, over which one of the plumpest and prettiest little wives in Homestead presided. Of the great influence exercised by this man over his fellow-workmen there could be no question. "Hughey," as they called him, was admired and looked up to. Fluent of speech and quick of action, he was the right man to take control on an occasion such as this. Associated

with him in the government of the crowd that had come together haphazard to repel the Pinkertons were Hugh Ross and Jack Clifford, both pugnacious and the latter with a strong trace of the daredevil in his disposition.

O'Donnell's first design was to drive the Pinkertons away without firing a shot, and if the latter had heeded his advice and desisted from the attempt to land, there would have been no sacrifice of life and limb. But once the attack was made, the young leader saw that it was useless to plead for peace, and devoted himself accordingly to the task of getting the women and children out of the way and removing the wounded, among whom were William Foy, Michael Murray, Andrew Soulier, John Kane and Harry Hughes.

The workmen now occupied themselves with the construction of ramparts out of pig and scrap iron. Enough of these were piled up to accommodate scores of sharpshooters. Men armed with rifles also took positions at various points of vantage in the mill buildings and a desultory fire was kept up. At the same time armed men appeared on the other side of the river and began a fusillade on the barges. The non-combatants – men, women and children to the number of about 5,000 – thronged the steep hills which rise above Homestead, whence they had an unobstructed view of what was taking place in the mill yard and on the river.

A few venturesome spirits pulled out in skiffs and fired into the barges at close quarters.

The Little Bill crossed to Port Perry, opposite Homestead,

without further mishap. There is a B. & O. railroad station at that place, and there Captain Rodgers and Deputy Sheriff Gray put Captain Heinde and five other wounded Pinkertons on a city-bound train with instructions to have them taken to the West Penn and Homeopathic hospitals.

The burgess of Homestead, honest John McLuckie, issued a proclamation ordering the liquor saloons to be closed and calling upon all good citizens to help him in preserving the peace. As the burgess was a staunch Amalgamated man and himself a sharer in the common tribulation, everybody understood, as a matter of course, that the preservation of the peace, from his point of view, consisted in a united effort to make short work of the Pinkertons.

While these events were transpiring at the scene of action, the telegraph wires were carrying the news of the battle to all parts of the country. In Pittsburgh excitement rose to fever heat. Sheriff McCleary reached his office early and, having come to the conclusion that, where 300 Pinkerton men were worse than powerless, it was useless for him to think of interposing, sent a message to Governor Pattison, briefly detailing the situation at Homestead and the inability of the civil authorities to cope with it, and soliciting "instructions at once." The governor promptly answered as follows: "Local authorities must exhaust every means at their command for preservation of peace."

The sheriff, who had been hoping that the militia would be ordered to his relief, was much discomfited by this plain intimation that, as chief peace officer of the county, he was

expected to be up and doing instead of collapsing under fire. Being a prudent man, however, he took no risks, but remained in the safe seclusion of his office.

At the Carnegie offices there were no signs of perturbation, although Mr. Frick and his associates were early informed of the bloody outcome of their scheme of invasion. President Weihe, of the Amalgamated Association, urged a conference with the men as the only expedient which might be successfully employed to stop the shedding of blood.

The answer to this humane suggestion was characteristic. It was a flat refusal. "Our works are now in the hands of the sheriff," said Secretary Lovejoy, "and it is his official duty to protect the property from destruction or damage. If it is necessary in his judgment to call out troops, he is the proper authority to do so. Everything is in his hands."

This, at a time when the sheriff was publicly announcing that he was powerless, and when the chances were a hundred to one that the entire force of Pinkertons would be destroyed like rats in a trap, betokened very clearly that the sacrifice of life was a trifle in the eyes of the Carnegie officials compared with the sacrifice of the non-unionist policy to which the firm had tied itself down. The Pinkertons might be killed to the last man, but the Frick ultimatum must stand. No doubt, the firm also considered that the worse the turn taken by affairs at Homestead, the stronger the probability that the militia would be ordered out, and that, with soldiers on the ground, there would be no trouble about bringing

in non-unionists.

There was, then, nothing to be looked for in the way of humane mediation at the hands of the firm, and nothing in the way of masterful intervention at the hands of the sheriff.

Four thousand infuriated steelworkers and three hundred caged Pinkertons were to be left to fight out their deadly quarrel without let or hindrance.

The dictates of law and humanity were alike suspended upon that July day – the most unfortunate day in the history of organized labor in the United States.

CHAPTER VI.
The Bombardment

Cannonading the Barges – Silas Wain's Sad Death – The Little Bill Returns and Runs the Gauntlet – A Car of Fire Terrifies the Pinkertons and Drives Captain Rodgers to Flight – Amalgamated Officials Arrive – Dining Under Fire – Horrors in the Guardsmen's Quarters – The Killing of Detective Connors – Dynamite – Suicide on the Barges – Messages From Abroad – Congress Acts

WHILE the heroes of the battle at the landing were building breastworks in the mill-yards and keeping up an intermittent fire on the enemy, a busy scene was in progress at the telegraph office in the advisory committee's headquarters. Here a temporary arsenal was established and rifles, shot guns and ammunition were distributed to volunteers eager to take a hand against Mr. Frick's emissaries.

Soon a new terror was added to those already menacing the Pinkertons. The dull roar of a cannon was heard proceeding from the heights across the river, and, at the first shot, a huge

gap was torn in the roof of the outer barge. Another shot flew wide of the barges and struck Silas Wain, a young steelworker who was standing in an exposed part of the mill yard, killing him instantly. Wain's sweetheart, a young English girl named Mary Jones, to whom he was to have been married in a few weeks, almost lost her reason when the news of her lover's death reached her, and was delirious for hours. In consequence of this unfortunate occurrence, the cannon that did the mischief – a twenty-pounder – was subsequently shipped across to the Homestead side. Another piece of ordnance, of smaller calibre, was taken from the quarters of the Homestead Grand Army post and mounted at the pump-house of the county poor farm, adjoining the mill-yard. Owing to the elevation of the position, however, and the inexperience of the men who were handling the guns, it was found impossible to get the range of the barges and both pieces were ultimately abandoned.

As the morning advanced, the workmen began to realize that some more effective means than rifle bullets must be resorted to in order to dispose of the barges and their obnoxious freight. The Pinkertons took care not to expose themselves, unless when one more venturesome than the rest undertook to make a reconnoissance and emerged on the bow of either barge. As this exploit invariably attracted a hail of bullets it was not frequently attempted. About 50 of the guards, all of them old hands in the Pinkerton service, kept up a regular fire through the loopholes cut in the sides of the barges, rendering it unsafe for

a workman to show himself outside the furnace-stacks and piles of metal used as ramparts. George Rutter, an old and respected Amalgamated man and a member of the Grand Army, forfeited his life by taking chances on the accuracy of the Pinkerton men's marksmanship. He was shot in the thigh and died from the wound a few days later. John Morris, another mill-worker, and Henry Striegel, a young man who was on the field merely as a sympathizer, met the same fate. Striegel accidentally shot himself with his own gun, and was struck by shots from the barges after he fell.

Shortly after 11 o'clock, the Little Bill steamed back towards the landing-place flying the Stars and Stripes, Captain Rodgers having conceived the idea that the mill men would not dare to fire on the national flag, despite its being hoisted above a hostile craft. The captain's mind was speedily disabused of this idea. Volley after volley was poured into the little steamer, smashing the glass in the pilot-house and making the splinters fly in all directions. The man at the wheel, Alexander McMichaels, had to abandon his post and rush below. John T. McCurry, who had been hired the day before as watchman on the boat, without being informed of the kind of service in prospect, was shot in the groin, and Captain Rodgers only saved his life by throwing himself on his face on the deck. According to the story told afterwards, the Captain had purposed connecting with the barges and releasing them from their perilous position, but was glad enough to run the gauntlet with his own boat without attempting to relieve others.

The Little Bill arrived at a moment when the escape of the Pinkertons seemed hopeless. A body of desperate men had formed the design of burning the barges, and commenced by setting fire to a raft composed of timbers soaked with oil and floating it down the river.

A groan of agony was sent forth from the unhappy wretches in the barges when this messenger of death was seen drifting towards them. Some of the men, driven to the verge of insanity by the suspense of the morning and the dread of death at any moment, proposed to desert the barges and try to swim to a place of safety. One of the captains put a quietus on the plan by threatening to blow out the brains of the first man who endeavored to desert his fellows in the face of danger which menaced all equally.

The burning raft failed to accomplish its mission. The flames which shot up from it when it was launched were gradually extinguished by the water and, by the time it reached the barges, it was only a charred and blackened mass.

Nowise discouraged by their failure, the men on shore turned their hand to a new plan of incendiarism. From the converting department of the mill down to the water's edge where the barges were moored runs a railroad switch, forming a steep incline. A car was run on to this switch and loaded with barrels of oil, lumber, waste and other combustibles. A torch was applied to the inflammable pile, and the car of fire, from which the flames mounted high in the air, was sent whirling down

the incline. Thousands of eyes were fixed upon this spectacle. The Pinkertons gazed with blanched faces and trembling limbs, confident that their last hour had come. Far back on the hills, women and children watched what was being done and shouted their approval. The sharpshooters dropped their guns and looked on with bated breath.

Surely that fiery monster, looking like a thing of life as it sped downward, would crash into the barges and do its work with infernal effectiveness.

But no. Great as was the momentum of the car, it came to a sudden stop when the wheels embedded themselves in the soft soil at the water's edge, and the workmen were again baffled.

The Little Bill, which, in the absence of the wheelman, had been knocking about aimlessly between the barges and the shore, was the only sufferer. The little tug was badly scorched, and those on board had to labor like Trojans to preserve her from total destruction. After this crowning stroke of misfortune, Captain Rodgers decamped with all possible celerity, and went on down the river to Pittsburgh. His departure was a blow to the Pinkertons, who were hoping that the Little Bill might tow them out of danger. Now that the tug was gone, the last ray of hope vanished, and it seemed to be a question of only a short time until the expedition, already badly shattered, would be burnt up or blown up.

The Little Bill's departure was the signal for renewed firing, which was maintained so vigorously that probably not less than

1,000 shots were fired within ten minutes.

At this time the scenes in Homestead beggared description. The streets were filled with women, weeping, wailing and wringing their hands and begging for news of husbands, sons and brothers. Females were excluded from the mill yard, and very wisely, for if admitted they would only have hampered the fighting men and exposed their own lives without benefit to anyone. In some places, substantial citizens gathered and discussed plans for stopping the conflict, the only drawback to which was that not one of them was feasible. Elsewhere groups of belligerents canvassed projects for the killing of the Pinkertons in a body. And all this amid the crackling of rifle-shots and the din of a legion of angry voices.

President-elect Garland and Vice-President Carney, of the Amalgamated Association, arrived early on the ground and were met with due honors by the local committee. Mr. Garland's well-known figure was recognized at once by the men. He was deeply affected by the gravity of the occasion and expressed regret that things had reached such a lamentable extremity. One of the leaders escorted the visiting officials to the front and let them ascertain, by personal observation, how little use there was in striving to mediate between the workmen and the Pinkertons, since every shot fired by the former was meant to avenge the death of their comrades. Vice-President Carney said openly that if Mr. Frick had consented to waive the demand to have the scale expire on the last day of the year, instead of the last day

of June, the wage question might have been amicably settled and the present carnage avoided.

At noon a telegram was received at the headquarters of the advisory board stating that the governor had refused to call out the militia and that the sheriff had started up the river with a squad of deputies. The gratification of the people over the governor's attitude was not a whit keener than their resolve to send the sheriff and his deputies to the right-about if it was proposed to clear the way for the introduction of the Pinkertons into the mill.

However, nothing was further from Sheriff McCleary's mind than a visit to Homestead while the bullets were flying. The sheriff held a consultation with Judge Ewing, of the quarter sessions court, and with other gentlemen learned in the law, but without results other than those exhibited in an order to close the saloons in Homestead and Mifflin township, which was sent out at noon, and in a second message to the governor. The latter communication embodied an urgent plea for aid, recited the episodes of the early morning at Homestead, declared that there were "no means at my command to meet the emergency," and that any delay in ordering out troops might lead to further bloodshed and destruction of property.

The governor made no response to this appeal.

By noon, the men who were posted behind the ramparts in the yard of the Homestead mill were almost worn out with fatigue and hunger. Most of them had been up all night without

tasting food, and the strain upon them had been enough to tax sorely the most robust physique. At 1 o'clock a relief expedition was organized and a squad of men carrying baskets of provisions made their way into the yard and by dodging behind furnace stacks and piles of iron managed to reach their suffering comrades without exposing themselves to the fire of the enemy. Cheers from the throng on the hills behind greeted this successful maneuver. The men on guard, after eating a hasty meal, tired and begrimed as they were, announced their intention of staying at their posts to the end.

From time to time, the Pinkertons waved a flag of truce, but it was not respected any more than was the national flag hoisted on the Little Bill. Sentiment had no place in the calculations of the men who formed the garrison in the mill yard. The Pinkertons had made the attack; they had been warned off and refused to go when they had the chance, and they had fired upon the workmen and taken many lives. Therefore, they need expect no quarter. So the flags of truce were shot down one after another and as the display of these symbols made it necessary for one of the Pinkertons to expose himself in every instance, and exposure invariably meant being wounded, this recourse was soon dropped altogether. The horrors of the position of these men increased every hour. The atmosphere of the barges was stifling. The relentless rays of the July sun beat down upon the roofs of the craft and raised the temperature within beyond the limit of endurance. There was scarcely a breath of air to carry away the

noxious exhalations from the lungs of the 300 men within and the fumes of smoke and powder. Bullets, bolts, scrap metal and other missiles struck the frail structures on every side and gave promise of demolishing them piecemeal before sunset. Occasionally a missile found its way through a loophole and brought down one of the guards. It was in this way that Thomas J. Connors, of New York, was killed. Connors was sitting under cover in the outer barge, with his head buried in his hands, when a rifle bullet whizzed through the open doorway of the barge and struck him in the right arm, severing the main artery. He died in a few hours. This man's death is a matter of special interest, since it was afterwards made the basis of indictments for murder lodged against several of the Homestead leaders.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.