

stockade, and the buildings painted with fire proof paint. All non-union men went armed, and, as a rule, kept near the stockade. Provisions were brought by a guarded train, and the number of private police was increased. This was the company's last stronghold, and they meant to hold out at any cost. Tom fully realized that the crisis had been reached, but said nothing to increase the anxiety of Bertha and his mother. From time to time he had utterly ignored threatening letters, and on one occasion made a reputation by the grotesque manner in which he disagreed with a committee that had been sent to detain him. All these incidents and the stubborn persistence of the strikers increased Tom's anger to enormous bounds; but he knew full well that it was no time to be rash.

One morning in the last of September Tom felt that the time had come. He left the house in his usual quiet manner. He thought Bertha was more fearful, but he did not wish to increase her fear. Before he reached the colliery he heard the cries of a mob, but his education on the sea forbade him to turn back. With never a trace of suspicion or fear, but with anger and hatred that was only matched by his gigantic will, he walked steadily on. He neared the mob. The road seemed blocked before him, yet he moved on as if he neither saw nor heard the mob. Those who saw his approach gazed, wondered and gave way. No one so much as hissed at him. A sight to behold. Clothed as a working man, carrying his pail and leisurely finishing his morning smoke, while from his hip pocket protruded the stock of a thirty-eight calibre. The clamor hushed. As if by magic the mob gave way, and he passed through as unconcerned as if it were a circus crowd. He stepped over the ropes, paused to knock the ashes from his pipe, and crossed the intervening space between the ropes and the stockade. And it was not till he was safely out of sight that the clamor was again resumed.

"Are you mad or asleep," cried the chief of the guard, as Tom entered. "Mad," was Tom's prompt reply, "but that was no time to show it."

All was excitement within the stockade. Part of the track had