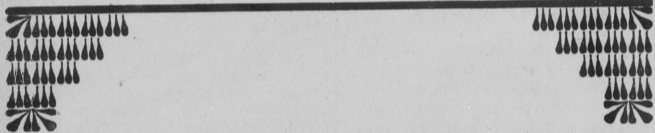


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### A HEART TO HEART TALK WITH THE MINERS.

MINERS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:—I take the liberty to have a heart to heart talk with you through the columns of THE STAR, and if you will ponder carefully and considerately over what I say, I believe that every reasonable and sensible man among you will admit that my words are pretty generally true. I believe them to be absolutely true, and I want you to at least give me credit for being sincere, for what I shall say in this article comes from the heart and what I consider the best information obtainable. I address you as fellow citizens, for are citizens of the greatest and grandest country on earth—a country in which the honest working man is esteemed more highly than in any other land beneath the skies. Those of you who are not naturalized citizens are here because you can do better than in your native countries, and as it is but natural for men to seek the place they think they can prosper most, I do not blame foreigners for coming to our shores.

Most of the miners of this region are not only fellow citizens of mine, but there are some, and a good many, too, that I can call fellow miners, for the reason that I used to mine coal with them, and at no very remote period. That being the case, it is but natural for me to have the welfare and best interests of the miner constantly at heart, knowing that the prosperity of all people in this region depends largely upon the wages and amount of work at the mines.

Simply because I am opposed to prolonging a useless and senseless strike in this region, is not in the least an indication that I am an enemy of the miner or his cause. It is because I am a friend of all the honest, sensible miners that I am opposing the strike, which has long ago been lost to the strikers. Do not understand me to be claiming friendship with all of you, for I am not. There are some miners in this region that I might not throw a plank to save them from drowning. Some of them are not worthy of the friendship of a yellow dog. They are untrue to their employers, to their fellow workmen, to their wives and children, to everybody who trusts them, and are even untrue to themselves. And there are a good many of that class in this region, too. It is the desire of all honest men to see the region purged of such dirty, criminal trash, and no one desires it more than I do.

However, not all of our miners are of the class just mentioned. Many of them are good, thrifty, law-abiding citizens—men that would be a credit to the citizenship of any community, and miners of the better class are worthy of all the respect that is due to the best of men.

There are good men and bad men working in the mines now, and good men and bad in the ranks of the strikers. I have not contended at any time that all the miners now at work are good men. The fact is a few of them now working are worthless, drunken, quarrelsome fellows that are always on the hunt for trouble, and it is truly nauseating to all decent people to see some of the company people coming to their rescue every time they find more trouble than they are looking for, no matter whether the trouble is of a kind

that pertains to their work or not. All men have a right to be protected in their pursuit of an honest living, but when company people come to the rescue of thugs when they get into trouble through their own meanness, the rescuers are only nursing vipers that will in due time turn and strike at their benefactors. And when they do, their benefactors will deserve no sympathy. Employ only decent, law-abiding people. Mr. Operator, and you will have little trouble with your employees, if you treat them right. The thug may be your friend today, but he is liable to become your enemy at any time.

I believe that most of the thugs and cut-throats in the region, however, are in the ranks of the strikers, and not only that, but I believe that they have the controlling hand in the miners' union. At any rate all indications make it appear that way, and any sensible man will admit that so far as the conduct of the strike-breakers is concerned, deputies and watchmen are not needed to guard property. The organized miners are the ones that must be watched.

But there are also some good, law-abiding citizens in the union and among the strikers. They are the ones that I feel the most concern for. They have been led astray by the agitators, remaining idle against their own best judgment, principally out of fear and an aversion to ill feeling. Some of them have comfortable homes and had considerable money saved, but the money is gradually slipping through their fingers, and their homes, too, in some cases are being mortgaged. Other men are coming into the region and taking their places, and they are a class of men, too, that will remain here, for the new-comers declare that they never worked anywhere else that they could make so much money and make it so easily as here in the big Elk Lick vein. To see some of our good native miners thus forced out of the region, and the danger of their homes being sacrificed, etc., is a picture that affords me only sorrow and regret. Yet, that is exactly what is gradually taking place, because good citizens will cling to a union dominated by thugs, and throttle their own better judgment in order to cling to a strike that has long been lost. And all because they fear the wrath and condemnation of men that are utterly unworthy of the slightest consideration.

The fact of the matter is the strike has been badly managed, and the union has been so insolent during the past few years that a reaction was bound to come with the first slump in the coal business. These are the facts, and there is no getting away from them. Isn't it about time for reason and common sense to return? I think it is; but the longer men walk about making wry faces at each other, allowing their petty spite to wax stronger and more bitter, the longer it will take to bring order out of chaos, and the longer it will take to heal the ugly scars that are now being inflicted on the hearts, minds and souls of our people.

I am ever ready to do all in my power to aid the toiling masses when they keep within the bounds of reason, law and order. But I have no sympathy for men that act like a set of idiots and criminals, as a great many of the miners in this region have been doing for the last six or eight months. I cannot help but notice the great contrast between the last strike and the strike of 1898-9. During the 1898-9 strike the miners' union had scarcely a foothold in this region, but during that struggle the miners behaved themselves remarkably well, and their demands and behavior were of such a nature as to enlist the sympathy and active support of the whole community. Through their good behavior, just demands and active support of the general public and local press, the miners won the victory at that time. But how have they kept faith with the people who so loyally aided them at that time? I am pained to say that so far as I am concerned, (and others tell me that they have had the same experience) I have been treated the meanest and the dirtiest by the very men I aided the most at that time. A large number of strikers patted me on the back and said: "Mr. Editor, you are sticking manfully to us, and we are going to stick to you. Put our names on your subscription list." Well, I put the names on the list, and they are on the list yet; but the great majority of you fellows who ordered your names put on the list while I had my coat off fighting your battle, have not paid me a cent to this day. Most of you that are now howling the loudest against THE STAR are the ones that owe me the most and want to be the biggest guns in organized labor circles. And you have been treating other faithful friends the same way, giving them promises or curses, according to the

moods you were in, while most of your cash has been carried to the saloons for that which you can afford the least to indulge in. Such is the treatment most of you have been according to me, while you were making the biggest wages you ever made in your lives. In spite of all your unkind conduct and rascally principle, you now feel greatly outraged because I will not stick to you, make a big fool of myself and allow you to use me for a good thing.

Had your union used good sense and manly principle in this region after it grew strong and powerful, and had all of you behaved as decently in the last strike as during the trouble of 1898-9, you could have held the support of the local press and the general public, and there is no doubt that matters would have been satisfactorily adjusted long ago. But there are too many hot-headed fools among you, men that have neither business sense nor manly principle, but who seem to hold the controlling hand in the union. Yes, you have too many fellows in your ranks who have got it into their heads that the union can win by bulldozing and intimidation. The public and the local press has not been appealed to in decency and reason, but coercion was resorted to from the very start, because the union could be flourished over our heads as a club, the unionists threatening boycott, etc., to all who would not knuckle to their whims.

Some of the strikers have been trying to win the battle by not speaking to those who went to work, while others have been resorting to abusing them, making threats, etc. Many more have been indulging in all sorts of inhuman wishes, saying they would like to see the men hurt or killed that do not stick to the union, etc., etc. What nonsense! What would men think of a politician who would resort to such foolhardy methods to win others to his way of thinking and voting? He would be considered a fool, and that is just what the general public thinks of the miners who resort to such tactics. That kind of business never wins, but disgusts all sensible people and turns their sympathy the other way. The boycotting principle also acts as a boomerang on the heads of those who make use of it, and all the kinds of foolishness mentioned, together with the free use of the word "scab," the cursing of the court, etc., are responsible for the thorough and much deserved "licking" the miners' union is now undergoing.

I favored unionism in this region until I saw its power abused and its true principles trampled under foot by a lot of human swine that are not yet sufficiently civilized to belong to an organization of any kind. There are some good men in the union in this region, but they seem to be powerless to control the many blatant fools in it, and the sensible thing for the decent ones to do is to get out of the rotten organization, go to work if they can get work, and not make fools of themselves any longer for a concern that is only beneficial to the idle and the indolent. Men of self-respect should cling to their homes and families, letting the booze hoisters, loafers, bums, deadbeats and other trash take care of themselves. If you will take notice, the men who "get there" in the world are not the ones who depend on the labor unions, anyway. The union is a good thing for the fellow that doesn't amount to much, but it is a handicap to the man of energy, brains and correct habits. The proof of this statement lies in the fact that nearly all of our wealthy and great men were once common laborers.

Some of you fellows that we are lecturing have also been guilty of acting the baby by threatening to boycott the churches if certain people were not refused admittance, and some of you have not been going to church because your capers have been ignored. You fools! You seem to think you are doing the Lord a great favor when you go to church, but you are not. You are simply profaning God's holy temple with your slimy presence when you go to the sanctuary with hatred for your fellow man rankling in your bosoms. If God would be as unrelenting and unforgiving as some of you fellows are, He would send you to hades as quick as a feather could be scorched in that awful place.

But probably the biggest mistake some of you strikers make is in urging your children to call strike breakers scabs and other vile names. That is simply teaching your children impudence, and impudent, saucy children usually grow up doomed to lead a life of crime, poverty and suffering. No good positions are in waiting for the impudent boy or girl that must depend on his or her own exertions for success.

Is it not also a fact, Mr. Union Man, that your union meetings are very fre-

quently the scenes of much drunkenness, profanity and vile remarks? I am told by union men themselves that such terms as "G— d— s— of b—s" and other language equally as bad is often uttered in your lodge rooms by men who are drunk, but who think they should do some speech-making, nevertheless. Can any good results come from an organization that will tolerate such vulgarity and blasphemy in its business meetings? I am afraid not.

A whole lot of you have also been gloating over injuries that recently befell some of the men at work in the mines. You have wished their misfortunes to them, and expressed sorrow that the injuries were not more severe. Those wishes will in all probability come home to many of you with compound interest.

You have made many other mistakes, both vicious and criminal, and the time has arrived for your reason to return. Those who keep on in the fool course they started will rue it when it is too late. It is too late for some of you now, but there are others who can yet make good their mistakes if they act quickly.

There's no use in bellyaching about the present social conditions, for the facts will not bear you out in your assertions along that line. The poor man's lot is better in this country than in any other country on earth, and there never was a time in the history of our country when the poor man had as good a chance to get something ahead as during the last five years.

This is about all I have to say, and I am as good a friend to the honest, sensible miner as I ever was. There is no man living that I respect more or that I would rather do a favor for. But I have no use for the fool miner, the fellow that is never satisfied unless he is doing something dirty and mean—the fellow that is always ready to dictate the policy of the local press in time of trouble, but who never has a dollar to pay on his subscription in times of prosperity.

This is not an operators' paper, and I have never been offered a cent from any coal operator in this region to fight his battles. Any man who says anything to the contrary is a liar. I speak my own sentiments and propose to continue doing so, and you know that I have told you nothing but the truth in this article.

Some of you have been threatening to boycott me. "As the feller, says, says he, boycott and be damned!" Some of you have blowed around that you would "stop the paper" at once if you had the money to square up. If that is all that bothers you, call at my den and give an approved note payable in one year, and I'll drop you from my list at once. If you can't get good security on a note for a few dollars, it's a sure sign that you are not regarded as an honest man in the community where you reside. Don't think for one moment that my living depends on the miners or any other one class of men. I appreciate the patronage of all honest men, whether miners or other people, but I am not courting the patronage of fools, and such as I have of that class I can easily spare.

Some of you have boasted that you are going to force me to the hayfield to make my living, by next summer. Well, I used to make my living at common labor, and I can do so again, if necessary. If I had no more energy and get up than some of you miners have, I never would have gotten out of the hayfield.

Some of you ought to talk a good deal less about "scabbing" than you do, for a whole lot of you striking miners are "scabbing" just as much as the men you are calling "scabs." You have brought down the price of common labor in this vicinity, and you have been gobbling up the jobs of men who never work in the mines. You have a right to do this, of course, and we believe every man should have the right and privilege to work for any man or firm that is willing to hire him. But remember, Mr. Striker and Mr. Union Man, that others have the same right you have. If you want to work at something outside of your regular occupation, you must accord others the same right.

I may have been a little radical in commenting on the strike at times, but if I have, it was because I was provoked to that limit where forbearance ceases to be a virtue, the provoking being done by a lot of middle-class strikers not content with deadbeating their subscription bills, but who at the same time have been adding insult to injury by trying to force me to print stuff in my paper that could do only harm to me and no good to them. I propose to run my own business, and I have no apologies to make for the course I have taken. The dirty deadbeats I have to contend with are nearly all union men, and if unionism makes deadbeats, I am done with it. I will uphold, protect and defend any union that obeys and respects law and common decency, but a union that is dominated by thugs as the one in this region, I want nothing to do with, and I know of some good people in it that should drop it like a hot biscuit, for their own good, the good of their families and the good of the community.

Yours in all sincerity,  
 P. L. LIVENGOOD.