

THE WESTERN FEDERATION OF MINERS

In the issue of May 19 last The Outlook published an article by Mr. William Hard on the Western Federation of Miners, in which, as an interpreter, he explained their principles as avowed by themselves. The article was accompanied by an editorial saying that the object in publishing Mr. Hard's paper was to enable readers to see this organization as they saw themselves, and at the same time expressing vigorous condemnation of certain of those principles. We give to our readers herewith an article which will enable them to see the Western Federation of Miners as they are seen by their opponents. The article is not signed because the writer believes that his life would be imperiled if his name were known, but it comes to us with such indorsement as to justify us in assuring our readers of the sincerity of the writer, of his opportunities for acquaintance with the facts, and of the representative character of his convictions. We comment editorially on this article elsewhere.—
THE EDITORS.

THE Western Federation was organized in Butte, Montana, in 1893, the year succeeding the dynamiting and destruction of the Frisco Mill at Wardner, Idaho, and the calling in of Federal troops, which occupied that Territory for many months. Peter Breen, a prominent leader, in a speech at Butte on July 11, 1893, two months after the organization started, said that this was the happiest moment of his life, and that he was at all times willing to be classed as one of the dynamiters of the Cœur d'Alene.

A few months later, in commenting on the shooting to death, in broad daylight, by forty Federation miners, with rifles and shotguns, of John Kneebone, who had been driven from the country and had returned, the "Silver Star," the organ of the Federation, said that the unions could not be held responsible for this murder because the Gem mine owners had not discharged "scabs," as had been requested by the unions. The Grand Jury summoned to investigate this case reported that the officials were so in sympathy with the criminals that convictions could not be had, and that no witnesses could be found to testify for fear of deportation or death.

The following year non-union men were driven from the Cœur d'Alene in groups by armed and masked Federation men, and in no instance did arrests follow. How far in this early day this policy met with official approval is to be

inferred from the following extract from a speech of Edward Boyce, President of the Federation, delivered at Salt Lake on May 8, 1897. He said: "Every union should have a rifle club. I strongly advise you to provide every member with the latest improved rifle, which can be obtained from the factory at a nominal price." This appeal met with a prompt response, for five days later, on May 13, Federation men entered the building at Mullan, Idaho, where the arms and ammunition of the State militia were stored, and forty-six rifles and ten thousand cartridges were stolen. No arrests followed. The County Commissioners of the county (Federation sympathizers) petitioned the Governor to disband the militia companies because they were "a continuous menace to the peace and good order of the county." Shortly afterward a foreman of the Helena-Frisco mill, who had offended the Federation, was taken from his bed by masked men and murdered. No arrests followed.

On April 29, 1899, a thousand Federation men, armed with rifles and other firearms, forcibly stole a Northern Pacific train, proceeded to the great mill of the Bunker Hill-Sullivan Mining Company, killed and wounded several non-union men employed there, placed three thousand pounds of dynamite in the mill, and blew it up. The Federation Sheriff of the county accompanied this mob. The "Idaho Tribune," the organ of the

Western Federation, reported this affair as follows:

The train reached Wardner at one o'clock, and the work of clearing the country of all opposition was begun. A detachment of union miners, armed with Winchester rifles, was dispatched to the mountainside beyond the mill, and the work of placing under the mill three thousand pounds of dynamite, taken from the magazine of the Frisco mine, was commenced. All the details were managed with the discipline and precision of a perfectly trained military organization. . . . Sixty armed scabs in the employ of the Bunker Hill Company offered the only resistance, and they gave expression to the most pitiable and lamentable cowardice. Only a few desultory shots from the miners were necessary to send them fleeing over the mountains.

Governor Steunenberg, for whose assassination with dynamite Moyer and Haywood, President and Secretary of the Western Federation, are now charged as accomplices, called for Federal troops. Martial law continued for six months, and the troops were not withdrawn for a year.

In May, 1895, a local union of the Western Federation was established at Leadville. Within a year a strike was called, following a dispute over wages. On July 10 a consignment of Marlin rifles, about five hundred in number, arrived at the store of Charles McHugh and quickly disappeared. On June 24 an executive committee was appointed by the union to manage and conduct the strike. About June 30 this committee ordered a hundred rifles and paid for them about July 11 out of moneys on deposit in the Carbonate Bank. "Regulators," armed with revolvers, moved about through Leadville, intimidating and assaulting and abusing non-union men. Five captains of these "Regulators" were deputy sheriffs under appointment by the Sheriff of Lake County. On September 21 a mob of men attacked the Coronado mine, within the city limits, using dynamite bombs and firearms. The mine buildings were burned, and Jerry O'Keefe, of the City Fire Department, was killed while holding a nozzle to extinguish the flames.

On March 13, 1899, striking Federation miners at Lake City, Colorado, following the Cœur d'Alene example, broke into the State Armory and robbed it of

fifty Springfield rifles and a thousand rounds of ammunition. Again there were no arrests.

In February, 1901, Vincent St. John became President of the Telluride Miners' Union, a local union of the Western Federation at Telluride, Colorado. On May 1 a strike was declared against the Smuggler-Union Mining Company. Non-union miners to the number of two hundred were at work on July 3, when at daybreak two hundred and fifty Federation miners, again armed with rifles and other firearms, took position near the exit from the mine, and when the night shift came off began shooting into the building. Two men were killed, and the mine superintendent and one shift boss were crippled for life. A parley followed, in which President St. John represented the rioters. It was agreed finally that the non-union men should go to Telluride unmolested. After the surrender and disarming of these men, to the number of eighty-three, they were surrounded and subjected to the most infamous abuse. They were kicked and beaten, and many of them forced to take off their shoes and stockings and throw them away. They were then lined up and forced to march over the rugged mountain trail and out of the district. Their assailants followed, beating the footsore stragglers, and during the tramp an old and respected citizen of Telluride was wantonly shot through both arms and crippled for life. On November 9, 1902, Manager Arthur L. Collins, of this mine, was shot by his fireside with buckshot fired through the window. Vincent St. John was indicted with others for this crime, and, since the arrest of Moyer, Haywood, and Pettibone for complicity in the murder of ex-Governor Steunenberg, has been apprehended in Idaho, where he was living under an assumed name and had again become President of the local miners' union of the Western Federation.

Some officials of the Western Federation pretended to be indignant at these crimes; and yet it was discovered that two hundred and fifty rifles and fifty thousand cartridges were ordered by the union, on union letter-head, and paid for by a draft signed by President Vin-

cent St. John, who was conducting the strike under the direction of Federation officials. Nowhere will be found an instance where any man has ever been expelled or suspended from membership in the Federation for this act or any other similar act; and how is it conceivable that Vincent St. John's course was not approved by the Federation, since he shortly after was again at the head of a local union, although a fugitive from justice and under indictment for murder?

To pass over the strike in Cripple Creek in 1894, conducted by the Western Federation, which surpassed any previous record in its catalogue of crime, there comes again, beginning with 1899, in Cripple Creek, a series of assaults, dynamiting, and murders, which affrights humanity. These crimes, where names, dates, and all attending circumstances can be submitted, are numbered by scores and scores. The victims were uniformly men who were giving or had given offense to the Federation. The woman in the home was notified that if the husband persisted in whatever course he might be following, opposed to the Federation, some day he would not come home. Dynamite was hung by strings down chimneys in a home where a lesson was to be taught to a man prominent in prosecuting members of this organization for stealing ore, and his home demolished by the explosion which followed the fire started by his wife in preparation for supper. The influence of these notices and of these methods, which exhausted every ingenuity in the way of intimidation, naturally produced a reign of terror so universally felt by every individual of the community that he who had knowledge of the guilt of any member of this Federation was induced to remain quiet in order to secure protection for himself and his family. One of the notices posted generally over the district, which Mr. Hard has in some way omitted, and which does not conform to what he finds in the philosophy of this organization on the open shop, reads as follows:

Hence take notice: That on and after September 15th, any one working in or around the mines, mills, or power plants of

the Cripple Creek District, who cannot show a card of membership in good standing of some local union of the Western Federation of Miners, will be considered a scab, an enemy to us, himself, and to the community at large, and *will be treated as such.*

By Order of the Cripple Creek Executive Board of the Western Federation of Miners.
JOHN CURRY, President.

Walter Wellman, the well-known newspaper writer, who made a thorough and exhaustive examination of the conditions surrounding the strike in Cripple Creek, referring to the notice above quoted and to the explosion of June 6, 1904, at Independence Station, when thirteen were killed and a large number of others maimed and wounded, says:

Tacked upon a telephone pole, within a stone's throw of the ruined station at Independence (I was about to say within reach of one of the flying legs or arms of the victims of that awful crime), I saw a rain-beaten but still decipherable poster reading as follows: [Here follows the notice above set forth.]

The badly shattered railway station near by stood as grim evidence of what was meant by "will be treated as such."

On the afternoon of this awful crime shots were fired from the union headquarters at Victor into a crowd of citizens gathered in mass-meeting to express their horror of the deed of the early morning, and two men were killed. The local militia company was called out, and, after the exchange of many shots, forced the surrender from this hall of some forty Federation men, and in the hall captured a large number of rifles and other firearms. Significantly enough, within this hall and in the desk of the secretary of this union was found a photograph of a group of miners, some of whom had been murdered and some of whom had been forced from the district. A cross stood against the murdered and the absent, clearly indicating that the score was settled so far as these individuals were concerned. Two of the murdered men were shortly before killed by a bomb placed in the shaft of the Vindicator mine, which was automatically exploded by a pistol-ball fired into it as the cage passed. Can any sane man escape the logic applied by Mr. Lincoln in one of the debates with Douglas, when he referred to Pierce, Taney, Buchanan, and Douglas as workmen who had

produced timbers which, when brought together, exactly formed a framework, and concluding that in such case it was impossible not to believe that "all understood one another from the beginning and all worked upon a common plan"?

From the foregoing it would seem to be clear enough why evidence has been almost impossible to secure for the conviction of the perpetrators of this interminable series of crimes against life, property, and personal liberty. It is to be noted in addition that this organization did not stop with the violences already enumerated as part of its system of defense against the consequences of its course, but in addition systematically aimed to control all local civil officers. At the tenth annual Convention, held in 1902, the following declaration was adopted:

We, the tenth annual Convention of the Western Federation of Miners, do declare for a policy of independent political action, and do advise and recommend the adoption of the platform of the Socialist party of America by the locals of the Federation. . . .

This programme had practically been in operation from the beginning. The avowed aim and practice of the Federation have been to enter the local political field and secure control of all officers affecting the execution of the law. At their tenth, eleventh, and twelfth annual Conventions they resolved, among other things, to take measures "for securing the overthrow of the present iniquitous system of government." As an instance of the thoroughness with which they dominate a local field, the list of civil officers in the Cripple Creek District, the scene of their last activity, shows not a single officer outside of membership in the Western Federation of Miners authorized to make arrests, serve writs, or institute any other legal process. This, moreover, is entirely in keeping with the fundamental law of the organization. Paragraph 6 of the preamble to the Constitution of the Federation is as follows:

To prevent by law any mine owner, mining company, or corporation, or the agents thereof, from employing detectives or armed forces, and to provide that only the lawfully elected or appointed officers of the county, State, or province, who shall be bona-fide

citizens thereof, shall act in any capacity in the enforcement of the law.

This provision is significant in that it seems to anticipate the necessity for detectives and to fear their work, and is a covert declaration against the use of the militia. As an example of the practical working of this condition, the following is characteristic:

J. T. Hawkins, a young Englishman of an independent character, was Justice of the Peace in Teller County in an outlying precinct. Some Federation members were fined by him for carrying concealed weapons. At midday, after he had left his court-room, he was assaulted by two Federation men, one of whom was an officer of the local union, and barely escaped with his life after being knocked senseless and terribly beaten with guns in the hands of these men. The Federation official who took part in his beating was arrested for it, but the Sheriff, who was himself a member of the Federation, the next day released him, saying that he "did not wish to offend a whole raft of people." The man who was liberated is still a fugitive from justice. This act was both a warning and a punishment. This instance is one of scores of instances where, because of fear of the consequences, or because of direct sympathy on the part of law officers with lawless acts, no convictions, often no arrests even, were secured in crimes of every degree of hideousness.

The Federation as an organization is an outlaw with the avowed purpose of destroying existing government. It is an example of an organization which may have been originally formed for an honest purpose, but which has fallen under the complete domination of men who are essentially Anarchists. Secretary Haywood, the dominating spirit of the organization, has said, in characteristic style, that "the nation is only strong whose yeomanry bask in the sunlight of liberty that is free from the noxious effluvia of an atmosphere that breeds in the human heart the germs of murder." He referred to the present industrial situation, and whether that situation has bred those germs in his heart is now the subject of judicial investigation.

No just appreciation of the situation which confronted the men in the mining districts of the West is possible without a recognition of the fact that in the contests which have occurred they have fought for personal and business freedom in a sense which no other men have during this generation. The contest was not in any large measure industrial. It was for freedom of speech and of the press; for the protection of "the present system of government." It was not against workmen striving for just recognition, but against armed bodies standing in open defiance of constituted authority, with an avowed purpose of "overthrowing the present iniquitous system." It is not proposed to justify everything that has been done in the effort to destroy the power of such an organization and drive out the terrorism that brooded over the lives of women and children and made strong men tremble. These were endured until the

dominating characteristic of American men asserted itself.

The people of the West regret that their Eastern friends have not, as a rule, taken the time to ascertain the facts in this matter, but, as is perhaps natural, have been influenced by "sympathetic" narratives pretending to deal with the situation as a "philosophical agitation" instead of a bloody crusade. And while the regret is genuine, there is a grim resolve to bear the criticisms of those who little understand conditions, rather than to endure again the reign of anarchy and fear. The true story of the Federation has been told in connection with the assassination of Governor Steunenberg. That it has not been given to the public is due to the action of the accused officials in securing a delay of their trial. The people who have opposed that organization await with confidence the verdict of the country when the truth is known.

AN ASCENT OF VESUVIUS

BY GEORGE KENNAN

PROBABLY the most complete it was almost as easy to get to the summit of Vesuvius as to get to the top of the Flatiron Building in New York. The accompanying tourist agency of Cook & Son had built an electric road up the western base of the mountain from Poggiore to a point half a mile beyond the observatory, and had there connected it by means of a wire cable tram or lift, up the steeper part of the cone, to a station almost only a few hundred feet from the crater edge. From this upper station to the top there were good paths, and if one did not feel equal to a walk of five or ten minutes, one might be carried to the summit by a couple of guides in an easy chair. An ascent of the volcano, therefore, might be safely and comfortably made even by an invalid or a cripple. If you wished to go up all that you had to do was to buy one of Cook's excursion tickets and get yourself in the

hands of a well-trained conductor. The electric road, the cable lift, and the comfortable guides would "do the rest," and one knows after having "Vesuvius" one might be looking down into the crater without having walked even as much as fifty yards. The recent eruption, however, has changed all this. On the night of the 16th of April the upper station of the cable lift was set on fire by molten stones and burned to the ground, and a day or two later the lower station, the whole of the cable tram, and a part of the electric road were so completely buried or swept away by avalanches of dust and slag that it is impossible now even to ascertain where they were. A path, of course, was obliterated, and the slope of the mountain on the Naples side, as far down as the observatory, was covered with a thick deposit of dust, slag, and slag to an average depth of six or eight feet. There are now no roads, no trails, and no paths on the upper half of the cone. Under these changed conditions an ascent to the crater involves a good