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MINERS' UNIONS.

The miners of the State do not improve their opportunities for the amelioration of their condition in life. There are miners in every district of the State of philanthropic views, fine intelligence, and sound judgment, who, with properly directed effort, might become real benefactors of their followers, and leave the world better than they found it. All their energies seem directed to organization for maintaining the price of mining at the highest point the coal markets will afford the operators to pay. This is all right and proper, in itself, but is by no means the sole duty of life. The establishment of night-schools, of libraries and reading-rooms, of Sunday-schools and churches, open wide a field of usefulness. In those districts of the State, and of every State, where there are intelligence and sobriety; where there are reading-rooms and libraries, and where saloons are few and far between, there are greater contentment, better wages paid, and fewer strikes, than where ignorance and saloons prevail.

The miners of Germany have superb organizations, which deserve to be studied by the miners of Ohio and other States. These unions have brought contentment to the Germany miner, and might be adopted by the miners of the United States with advantage, and in their formation the operators of the mines ought to lend a helping hand.

The miners' unions of Germany are the oldest associations of the kind in the world, having originated in the silver mines of the Hartz mountains more than six hundred years ago, and now they extend over every mining country of continental Europe, receiving corporate rights from any government. The system has been perfected in Prussia, and is simply admirable. Every miner, a member of the union, is required by law to contribute $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of his earnings, and the owner or operator 1 per cent. of the yield of the mine into the benefit fund of the association, and the money thus collected is applied in payment to members during periods of sickness or disability resulting from accident in the mines.

The members of the union are divided into two classes—permanent members and temporary members. Temporary members only possess personal rights, while permanent members, who be-

come such after having belonged to the union for five years, have their rights in the association extended to all their family. Members forfeit their rights to any benefit fund, and in fact cease to be longer members, when they refuse to pay their regular monthly contribution. All the funds of the union are under the control of the inspector of the mines, who is responsible for all defalcations, and who is obliged by law to see that all members are fairly treated. Any miner who belongs to the union, who may be hurt in the mines in pursuit of his calling, or who may become sick and unable to work from any natural cause, draws pay from the funds of the association during the whole time he is off work, and he also receives medical assistance free of charge. Should accident or disease prevent a member from working in the mines, or when a member is no longer able to work, through old age, he draws a life pension in consequence, and after his death his widow receives a monthly pension till she marries again, and all his children draw pensions until each arrives at the age of fourteen years. When a member is killed in the mines, or dies from any cause, the association pays all funeral expenses. There is no compulsion exercised to get members to join; the union is simply and only a benevolent association like the Free Masons or Odd Fellows, except that there is no secrecy about its operations. It partakes in no sense of a trades union organization, associations of this character being contrary to law until the year 1869, when the ban was removed forever.

The result of such legislation has made the miner of Germany proud of his occupation. "He is as proud as a miner" is a common proverb. Very few German miners ever emigrate to this country, being secured by this superb organization against want in their old age. Thousands of Germans work in the coal mines of the United States; but question them and you will find that they, with rare exceptions, never saw a coal mine in the fatherland.

Were organizations of a character similar to these established in the mining regions of the State, and facilities provided for the education of the boys, and young men of the mines, strikes would become as scarce as they are now common; and instead of the Sheriff of the county being required to call upon the Governor of the State every few months for aid to quell some threatened disturbance against persons and property, the miners, through the vast influence

which their intelligence and numbers would give them, would be sending representatives to the State Legislature to make laws which we are all, Sheriff and Governor included, bound to obey. The proper adjustment of the relations of labor and capital can only come through increased intelligence, sobriety, firm union and moderation on the part of employes. The workingmen, if left to their own resources, will not, as a general rule, seek to improve his condition in this country, for the tendency in all countries where wage-laborers are paid good wages is to produce thoughtlessness as to the future. The growth of intelligence among our workingmen must keep pace with the increased demands of individual restraint. Reason, not bayonets, are demanded by our age and nation. Workingmen must govern themselves and respect the laws and rights of others. Only this way can civil liberty continue.
