Autobiography of Samuel Fielden

To the Editor: In accordance with a desire on your part that I should give you a history of my life for publication of your valuable paper, I have written the following incidents of my life, with the influences under which I was born and reared, hoping that they may not prove altogether uninteresting to my friends and readers of your paper.

I was born in the town of Todmorden, part of which is in the West Riding of Yorkshire and part in the East Riding of Lancashire, England. I was born in the Lancashire part. The town is like all towns in Lancashire— a manufacturing one. It lies in a beautiful valley, and on the hillsides are small farms; back about a mile are the moorlands, which could be made into fine farms, as the topography of the moors is more level generally than the inclosed land. But though thousands of starving Englishmen would be very glad to work them, they must be kept for the grouse and the gamekeeper and the gentry. Grouse sport for the privileged classes being esteemed of more importance than the happiness of thousands of human beings. The inclosed lands rent for about two pounds an acre (about $10). The farms are small, running from 10 acres to 60 acres, hardly any being larger than the latter figure. The farms are all dairy, the milk all being sold in town. There are numerous large mills in the town, Fielden Bros, being the largest; it contains about 2,000 looms.

Here I was born in the year 1847, on the 25th day of February. My father's name was Abram Fielden, he was one of a family of four sons and three daughters. They were of very powerful physique; my father stood nearly six feet in height; they were a family of hand-loom weavers, until the application of steam to weaving. This occurred when my father was hardly out of teens, and then they became steam-loom workers. My father became a foreman when quite young in the mill of Fielden Bros., where he worked until incapacitated by informities and age. He was a man of more than ordinary intelligence, and was generally acknowledged "to know a thing or two." There were very few that cared to cross swords with him in argument among those with whom he came in contact. I remember that when I was quite young he and a few more of the most intelligent of the factory kind of the place, instead of going to church on Sunday, would meet at our house and discuss politics, religion, and everything else. These discussions used to become quite warm, and carried on as they were in the rich Lancashire accent, they contained a peculiar charm. I used to wonder how they could know so much. Although I cannot recall anything that was said at this distance, yet I have no doubt that what I understood of these discussions have had an influence on my life and opinions.

My father was a peculiarly eloquent conversationalist, and the recital of the most ordinary incident from his lips bore the charm of romance. When the

ten-hour movement was being agitated in England[75] my father was on the committee of agitation in my native town, and I have heard him tell of sitting on the platform with Earl Shaftesbury, John Fielden, Richard Otler, and other advocates of that cause. I always thought he put a little sarcasm into the word earl, at any rate he had but little respect for aristocracy and royalty. He was also a Chartist,[76] and I have heard him tell of many incidents connected with the Chartist agitation and movement. He was an earnest champion and admirer of the principles advocated by that noble but unfortunate Irishman, Fergus O'Connor.[77] I have heard him say that on the day *the Northern Star,* O'Connor's paper, was due, the people used to line the roadside waiting for its arrival, which was paramount to everything else for the time being. He was also one of the incorporators of the Consumer's Corporation society in the town of Todmordan and one of the managers of that society for a long time. [78] I remember that he used to go with the other managers and work in the warehouse of the store after he came home from his work at night. From a small room where these pioneers first stored and dispensed the few barrels of potatoes, a few barrels of flour, a barrel of molasses, one of sugar and a very limited supply of other articles, that society had risen to owning two stone buildings, where they conducted the business of the society in 1880, when I was there last, besides having branch stores in the outskirts of the town. He also owned some shares in some of the co-operative manufacturing establishments of the vicinity. He was also one of the managers of a local odd fellows' benevolent society, which flourished amazingly until in 1880 it owned some 50 or 60 houses and paid a very handsome rate to its sick members and also to the families of its deceased members.

In his family relations my father was very severe, at the same time he was kindhearted in the extreme. I remember one time that he was going to work after his dinner and a tramp fell in a fit at the bottom of the lane. He immediately picked him up and carried him some distance to our house, while the people at whose door he had fallen were wringing their hands with pity and compassion. He was a great lover of children, and the children of all the neighbors used to make common property of his knees. There seemed to be a sort of spontaneous freemansonry between him and every child that he came in contact with, but in his own house he was a very strict disciplinarian, but, notwithstanding this, there was hardly ever a father who was more idolized by his children than ours was. There was such a sense of justice and right in all his severity that when he grew older we appreciated his motives. I will relate one instance of his severity. On the hillsides in the vicinity of my home were small clusters of woods, and it seemed that here particularly the birds delighted to build their nests. These woods seemed to be full of nests in the summer time; in the more open places the wren would build its nest in some tuft of grass; the thrush would build its nest in the trees, and in the adjoining meadow the musician of the skies, the skylark, would build her nest. It used to be our delight as children to find these nests.

On the occasion I refer to my elder brother and my sister had been having a stroll some distance from home, and on their return had quarrelled, and in revenge for something my brother had done, my sister told my father that her brother had taken a young bird out of one bird's nest and put in the nest of another. I shall never forget the scene that followed: My father rose from the table, he advanced toward the trembling culprit, while we all thought that something terrible would take place. Not one of us, for our lives, dared utter a word; he seemed by a mighty effort to control himself, then in a voice trembling with suppressed anger he told my brother to get down on his knees and there beg pardon and promise to never do so any more. He then told him to go and take the bird back to its own nest, making my sister go with him to see that he did it. When I visited England in 1880 my sister and brother both asked me if I remembered the circumstance, and as we recalled the affair it was not with feelings of bitterness, but with honor and respect, that we discussed it. If severity to children, as some writers have said, be a vice, it will be admitted that vices of this kind lean to virtue's side.

If he ever had studied socialism I believe his strict sense of justice would have led him to adopt it; as it was he was a hater of all forms of affectation, deceit and hypocrisy; in politics of late years he was ostensibly a liberal—in reality and republican. He took a great deal of interest in the political agitations which have been going on, and having a fairly good memory he could discuss intelligently the political problems that have agitated his country during his lifetime. He was always a staunch supporter of every measure for the relief of the Irish peasantry from the greed of the foreign bloodsucker-the English landlord.

I well remember the intense interest he took in the disestablishment of the protestant established church in Ireland.[79] As I at that time was engaged in religious work I did not have as much time to go to the meetings which were held in my native town for the promotion of that measure, but I was still earnest-minded enough to attend some of them, and also frequently found myself "defending the measure. When I did this in the presence of my religious associates some of them regarded this as wordly wisdom and unworthy of one who was thought to be solely occupied in furnishing a suite of rooms in the sky. But as Satan is always on the alert, I suppose he used to get his oar in on me occasionally, and this was one of his brief triumphs. Also in the intense excitement consequent upon the movement for the extension of the franchise in 1866.[80] Such was my father.

Of my mother I cannot remember so much, as she died when I was a child of 10 years of age. I can remember her as small of stature, with dark eyes and hair, and with pleasing and regular features. I remember in the later years of her life she was a very devoted member of the primitive Methodist church. Her maiden name was Alice Jackson; the family to which she belonged was very poor, and I have often heard her and father tell on the cold winter nights,

when the wind would shriek around the corners of the house, of the first meeting of herself and father. How that she was walking in her bare feet through the snow, carrying a basket which contained sand, which she was trying to sell to the poor people to sprinkle upon their stoneflag floors. You can imagine how poor a family must be when I tell you that this sand was sold for one-halfpenny (1 cent) a quart, and how much a child could carry in a basket, but they were compelled to put their children to this means of earning a few cents. The sand they procured from refuse piles at quarries and picking out the whitest scraps, then taking them home, and with a large stone beating them up into fine sand. I well remember how she used to take my father's rug and wrap it around her on class-meeting nights, and travel down the lonesome road which skirted to the top of the piece of woods which covered the side of the hill, to go on the coldest and roughest nights to her class meetings. Such was my mother.

I remembered vividly the foreman under whom I worked in the cotton-mill coming to me and telling me that I was wanted at home, one summer afternoon. I instinctively knew what it was, for my mother was sick when I left home. With breathless haste and with beating heart I climbed the steep hill to find my mother dying. My father was walking the floor. He took me and led me to a chair on which he sat down and took me between the knees. He tried to tell me, what I already knew, that my mother was dying. But the words would not come, and he laid his cheek against mine until I released myself from him and rushed upstairs to the bedside of one who to every man's best and truest friend, and I saw the pale face of my mother. She was unconscious. She gasped for breath. Her breast heaved in the last throes of life. Words cannot describe my feelings. It seemed as though the bright summer day grew black, and my life seemed to be going out as that of the form before me was going. But I will not dwell upon this painful scene. Many of your readers have doubtless undergone similar experiences, but it had a wonderful effect upon me, and I have had the scene before my mind in all the pain and anguish in all my wanderings and all the changes that have occurred in my life. I do not recall it now for the first time. I do not think that there has ever been a day that I have not had it before me since the occurrence, and the words of Cowper, [8]' in his lines on the death of his mother, come home to me very forcibly when he says:

But while the wings of fancy still are free, And I can take such mimic views of thee. Time has but half succeeded in his theft, Thy self removed, thy power to soothe me left.

She was laid in the little churchyard at Walsdan Under the hill. On my visit to England in 1880,1 went with an uncle of mine to see the grave. I knew the spot, but when we got to where we thought it should be, I experienced some difficulty in finding it. My uncle remarked, they have been selling graves between the graves as the place has filled up, and crowding bodies in between

the others. I remarked they have crowded us while we live, and they are not satisfied but they must follow us to our graves, and make us move over there also to satisfy their greed. Since my visit home my father has also found a resting place there. He died Aug. 27, 1886, the present year. The Todmorden Adviser contained the following on Aug. 28, 1886: "Abraham Fielden, of Burnley, formerly of Todmorden, a moral force chartist, died at Burnley on Friday last and was interred at Walsden churchyard." I undoubtedly inherited from my father that hatred of shame and hypocrisy which I hope I possess to some extent; from my mother that sympathy that I find it impossible not to feel for every form of suffering and which has impelled me to try to do something toward alleviating it, and I believe now today that I was fortunate in having such a father and mother.

When I think of those who have no higher idea of human life than the desire to make money, that if my lines had fallen in different places I could do a great deal worse. But circumstances over which I had no control placed me under these influences, and whether there is any necessary connection between these influences and my subsequent opinions, the readers will decide for themselves.

I was born of these parents as I have said in the year 1847, of the years between my birth and my eighth year I of course know or remember but little. I have heard my father tell of myself, when I was but 3 years of age, and himself both having the malignant fever at the same time, and as our surroundings were not of the very best, we both occupied the same bed during our sickness. He always in after years, when referring to the circumstances, referred to me as the most patient child in sickness that he ever knew. Perhaps I at that time and under those circumstances began to display the germs of that philosophical character which some people have given me credit for possessing in later years. When I was, as near as I can remember, in my sixth or seventh year, I went for about six months to a small school kept by a spinster lady; here I learned to read. I very early became a good reader, and after I had learned the rudiments I used to read all the advertisements that I could see on the dead walls and in the shop windows. In this way I became very proficient in that branch of the limited education I have been able to attain.

The house that we occupied stood in the midst of some meadows that were owned by two wealthy brothers, who were engaged in flour milling. Their mill was situated at the bottom of the hill. They need to cut the grass from these meadows and cart it down to their stables near the mill. During these days I was engaged in bringing the haymakers their ale and bread and cheese, which they used to indulge in during their morning and afternoon siestas. The people of the vicinage all being engaged in the mills, the men employed in <the harvest were mostly strangers, who came from different parts of England and Ireland. I thus became somewhat acquainted with strangers, and

perhaps thus laid the foundation which afterward developed into cosmopolitanism. These hay-fields had a peculiar charm for me, and years after, when I had grown to be a young man, I used to manage to get off from the mill for a week to work in these hay-fields with the men who came from Ireland to earn, by the hardest labor and the most abstemious living, the money to pay for their little holdings in their native country and the thatch above the heads of their wives and little ones. Thousands of these men are led this merry dance every year between the two countries, by this scheme. These men are compelled to harvest the crops in England for the privilege of living in their own country; for the money they earn in the English harvest the English landlord compels them to give up again, and his lordship brings it back again to England, until Pat comes again and harvests his crops for him. I accumulated the evidence for this charge by my contact with these men in the harvest fields, but I did not "tumble to the enormity of the racket" until I became a socialist.

When I arrived at the mature age of 8 years I, as was usual with the poor people's children in Lancashire, went to work in a cotton mill, and if there is any of the exuberance of childhood about the life of a Lancashire mill-hand's child it is in spite of his surroundings and conditions, and not in consequence of it. As I look back at my experience at the tender age I am filled with admiration at the wonderful vitality of these children. I think that if the devil had a particular enemy whom he wished to unmercifully torture the best thing for him to do would be to put his soul into the body of a Lancashire factory child and keep him as a child in a factory the rest of his days. I think that would satisfy the love of cruelty of his satanic majesty. The mill into which I was put was the mill established by John Fielden, M.P., who fought so valiantly in the ten-hour movement. It was then and is now conducted by his sons, Samual, John and Joshua. The last was for some time member of parliament for the West Riding of Yorkshire.

I have read of John Fielden's description of the treatment of the pauper children that were shipped into the Lancashire mills from the unions of the large cities when Lancashire received its first great impetus as a cotton manufacturing center. And, horrible as it reads, it was hardly any worse than the treatment that was meted out to the innocents when I became acquainted with the sober side of life as a factory child. The infants, when first introduced to these abodes of torture, are put at stripping the full spools from the spinning jennies and replacing them with empty spools. They are put to work in a long room where there are about twenty machines. Each child is furnished with a little stool on which to sit. There will be from eight to ten children on each side of the machine. They begin at one end of the room and strip the full spool off, then from there to the next machine, and so on until they get to the other end of the room. When they get there the machine at which they started will be full again. The spindles are apportioned to each child, and woe be to the child who shall be behind in doing its allotted work.

The machine will be started and the poor child's fingers will be bruised and skinned with the revolving spools. While the children try to catch up to their comrades by doing their work with the speed of the machine running, the brutal overlooker will frequently beat them unmercifully, and I have frequently seen them strike the children, knocking them off their stools and sending them spinning several feet on the greasy floor. Hell, or the Spanish inquisition, never witnessed more heartless barbarity than is practised upon these poor innocents. It is a pitiful sight to see these children, as they rush from one machine to another trying to recover their lost ground, the tears streaming down their cheeks and sobbing as though their little hearts would break; a sight one would think that would melt the heart of a savage; and all that these children have done to merit this is to be born poor. Such is the penalty of poverty in Lancashire.

I toiled at this work enduring all its horrors and barbarities for about two years. About that time, being about 10 years of age, I was out to tending the elevator, my work being to take the spools that came up from the carding room to the machines on the floor on which I worked, and to take the full spools, after they had undergone the process of being spun into a condition for the warpers to take them and make the warps of them for the weavers, and load them onto the elevator car and send them up to the warpers. This was heavy work for a boy, but as I was thought a stout boy I was put to this, and, notwithstanding that it was heavier work, I liked it better, and I worked at it till I was 18 years of age, when I became, according to law, a full-timer. The children under that age at that time not being allowed to work had a half a day at the mill and were compelled to go to school the other half. The factory act of England compels each employer of half-timers to keep a school for them to go to the other half day; they are very strict about this; so much so that no child could stay away from school a half-day without being compelled to lose a half-day in the mill also. This, when you take in consideration the importance that the child's wages are to the family, is practically compulsory education. For this work we used to get from one shilling and six pence (36 cents) to two shillings and six pence (60 cents) a week.

If I remember rightly, when I first became a full-timer, I received six shillings ($1.50) per week. At this time I was given work in the warehouse or filling-room, where the weavers received their filling. I worked here two years, when I went to learn to weave. I learned to weave under my father. I worked at this branch of factory-work until I became 10 years of age, when I went to work as a beamer. That is, I wound warps onto beams, and at this I continued until I came to the United States, at the age of 21, in 1868.

Soon after I left the half-time school and had become a fulltime worker in the mill, I was called upon to testify in a celebrated trial, between two of the residents of town which was tried at Liverpool. The case grew out of the intense religious partisanship which existed in the neighborhood, and was

between the Unitarians[82] and the Methodists. About this time the religious feeling had been running unusually high, though it never ran very low; but at this time it was at fever-heat. I believe the immediate cause of the trouble was some lectures which had been delivered by a fiery advocate of the mysterious doctrines of the trinity. I remember trying to get into the hall to hear the fun, but could only get within some distance of the door; however I saw through the door, when it opened, the flaming countenance of the orthodox gladiator. I thought the gentleman was in the last stage of apoplexy. However, the upshot of the affair was that a methodist grocer, named Ainley, charged the Unitarian teach of the factory school which I had attended, with taking advantage of his position to inculcate Unitarian heresies into the minds of the children of orthodox parents. This made the teacher, Mr. Harrison, mad, and he thought that his reputation had been injured at least 500 pounds worth. Since recent decisions of law have come under my observation, I think this was very foolish; he ought to have had Dr. Brindley arrested and held accountable, since he had set causes at work which had resulted in his being charged with this heinous offense.

But this only shows how slow and dull people are under the effete monarchies of Europe. If he could only have found out who had set Dr. Brindley at work, and prosecuted him, he would have been still nearer the actual criminal, and if he had been conscientious enough in his determination to find out who was the first person to set causes at work which had resulted so disastrously to his reputation, he would undoubtedly have summoned Martin Luther, the members of the councils of Trent and Nice, Jesus Christ and God Almighty. It was true that the schoolmaster had introduced the bible into the school and had taught us some things that were not orthodox. I, who had received my theological training in a methodist Sunday school up to this time, was somewhat impressed one day when, after reading a lesson in the new testament, the schoolmaster in explaining it to the scholars, said that we were not to believe everything that was in the bible to be absolutely true. This so impressed me that when my father came home that night I called his attention to the heresy of the schoolmaster.

My father mentioned this to some of his associates, upon which a discussion had arisen, and through this I was brought to the attention of the lawyers of Mr. Ainsley. A lawyer came to the house and took down my statement, and told me that I should have to go to Liverpool to testify in the case. He left a sovereign for me to get some things to take with me, and in about a week I was informed that I must go in a day or two, telling me the day. Now if there was one place above another that I would have wished to see that place was Liverpool. I had read much of it in the newspapers, and I knew that the sea was there, and that ships from every point of the world were to be seen there. I had read much of adventures by sea; shipwrecks and hairbreadth escapes of sailors, and in my imagination a sailor was the man above all to be envied, and his occupation the most pleasant, and, to my mind, romantic. About this

time I had been mastering a plan of running away from home and going to sea, and strange as it may appear, I do not remember a single factory lad of my acquaintance who was not thinking of doing the same. It makes me shudder now to think of the horrible conspiracies we used to enter into, and what a good thing it was for the North American Indians' peace of mind that they did not know of the plans that these factory lads were laying for their destruction, for, coupled with the romance of going to sea was the romance of the trapper and hunter and backwoods settlers, for the dime novel had appeared, and I had devoured all the contents of half a dozen of them.

I remember that I even thought of sneaking away from the party when I should get to Liverpool, and letting the schoolmaster and the grocer go on with their quarrel about the bible without my assistance. Well, the eventful day arrived for my departure for the legal-theological duel. I had never ridden on a railroad before, but the novelty of a railroad ride was soon lost in the anxiety to arrive at my destination, and I worried the elderly gentleman, as indeed we all did, for there were about a dozen of the graduates of Mr. Harrison, of both sexes in the party, with questions at every mile that we traveled, as to how far we had to go yet, and how long it would take us before we could see the masts of the shops? At last the wished-for destination was reached, and as soon as we had our dinner we insisted on going down to the docks and seeing the ships and those gallant and romantic heroes—the sailors.

Well, I was shocked and indignant at seeing these heroes as I found them. Instead of finding Mercantile Jack, as Dickens calls him, with a dark blue cap, with ribbons hanging down behind, upon his head, and the dark blue blouse, with wide collar, around his body, and white pants, very wide below the knees; instead of this kind of being I saw him as he was, with a battered old hat, or a souwester (such as I had seen the canal men use at home), an old patched shirt of almost any and every color, a pair of greasy and well-tarred pants—indeed he resembled what we would call a roustabout; this was Jack stripped of his romance and as he appeared to me, though I have no doubt that in this greasy, tarred form there beats as brave a heart as ever romance could conjure or imagination could depict. But if Jack was not all that I had expected, the ships made up for it, for I was never tired of admiring them. I wandered through all the docks and took notice of all the names and destinations or the ports from which they hailed, and in this way I imagined that I caught a glimpse of strange lands and strange people.

We stayed in Liverpool about a week waiting for the trial to commence, and in the meantime seeing the sights of the far-famed city. On the Sunday that we were there we went on an excursion to the famous Menai bridge in Wales;[83] I believe at that time the longest suspension bridge in the world-this was in 1860. The day of trial at length arrived, and we went to court and there I was not only astonished but positively alarmed; there sat the judge with his gown

on, and on his head an enormous gray wig with flounces of curls hanging down over his shoulders, and in front of him were, I should think, as I remember, some thirty or forty gentlemen wearing the same ridiculous and awe-inspiring headgear. When I was called upon the stand to testify, and felt that the small eyes of these strange animals were turned upon me, I was, in the language of American slang, perfectly paralyzed. I could not find my tongue when the learned counsel began to question me, but looked imploringly to the monster upon the bench for protection. I was afraid, when I saw that he noticed me, that he would demolish me altogether. Judge my surprise when the judge repeated the kindest voice that I ever remember to have heard, the question of the learned counsel. I found my voice, and immediately felt as though I was recovering. After this there was no difficulty, and I escaped with my life, but I have hardly ever looked at a court house since that time without the feeling of thankfulness taking possession of me at the thought of the narrow escape I had on this occasion.

But as everything must come to an end, so the celebrated case of Harrison V. Ainley did the same, the result being that instead of Mr. Harrison getting £500, the judge gave him 1 farthing *(1/2* cent) and ordered both parties to pay their own expenses. The case created a great deal of interest in Todmorden, and the people had kept track of it, so that when we arrived home on the next day the streets around the station were packed with people. This may seem strange, but to a people to whom every day of their lives was one continual animal existance, sensations did not occur often, and when there was an excuse for the making of one, they did not allow the opportunity to slip by without being improved, and so out of this little affair we who had figured in the case were the lions of the hour. To Mr. Ainley, the defendant in the case, it was a dear trial. He was ruined, and soon after left the town a sadder if not a wiser man. As to Harrison, no doubt the rich Fielden Bros., whose factory school teacher he was, paid his legal expenses, as they were the main support of the Unitarian church in the town. Soon after this a charge was made against him of indecent behavior toward some of the older female scholars. Opinions were divided as to his guilt, and the fact that one of the children who made the charge was the grandchild of the prominent methodist local preacher went a little way to support the claim that it was blackmail and persecution, which many of the people believed. Be this as it may, I never believed the charge, and though I have suffered many a thrashing at his hands, I always thought of him with a feeling of compassion. He was a very strict master but I believed that he was a good scholar and thoroughly devoted to his profession, and I always believed that the scholars learned a great deal more under him than under his predecessors.

For some years before this time of which I now write there had appeared in my native town at different times, several colored lecturers who spoke on the slavery question in America. I went frequently to hear them describe the inhumanity of that horrible system, sometimes with my father, and at other

times with my sister. One of these gentlemen called himself Henry Box Brown;[84] this gentlemen brought with him a panorama, by means of which he described places and incidents in his slave life, and also the means of his escape. He used to march through the streets in front of a brass band, clad in a highly-colored and fantastic garb, with an immense drawn sword in his hand. He claimed that he had been boxed up in a large box in which were stowed an amount of provisions, the box having holes bored in the top for air, and marked, "this side up with care." Thus he was shipped to Philadelphia via the underground railroad, to friends there, and this was why he called himself Henry Box Brown. He was a very good speaker and his entertainment was very interesting.

Another one of these gentlemen was called, if I remember right, Henry Green; he was a very fiery orator. I heard him very often. These lectures had a . very great effect on my mind, and I could hardly divest myself of their impressions, and I used to frequently find myself among my playmates dilating much upon the horrors of slavery. I read much of the system from the books of travelers. I remember to have read at a very early age the travels of Harriet Martineau.[85] I also read "Uncle Tom's Cabin." When the American civil war broke out I was an enthusiastic champion among my fellows of the cause of the north, and, in fact, so were all the family, my sister not being undone by any of us. During all that terrible struggle intense interest was manifested by the people of Lancashire, and all during the summer months every night in the week there would be seen groups of men collected in the streets, and at the prominent corners, discussing the latest news and forecasting the next, and in these groups there was always to be heard the advocates and champions of both sides. I used to listen to these orators with a great deal of interest.

I remember that on one occasion I had the effrontery of challenging something that was said; whether it was that I had said something that was worth refuting, or whether the gentleman was so enthusiastic in the cause of the south that he could not stop to consider me as being too young for his steel, I do not know; all that I know is that, at the age of 15 years I was soon in the midst of a heated argument with a man old enough to be my father. Now, it so happened that my father was taking a stroll in the cool of the evening, looking, I suppose, as he used to say about this time when he would go out at night, to see if he could find any slave-drivers, and in his stroll he meandered towards the group that I was trying to enlighten on the horrors of slavery and the hopelessness of the cause of the slave-drivers. He came up to the crowd without my seeing him, but he no sooner saw me that he got me by the scruff of the neck and, in a tone of thunder, demanded what I meant to be talking to people older than myself. He ignominiously dragged me out and sent me home, while the crowd laughed and shouted, "Oh! he's a chip off the old block!" I don't think that he was as angry as he tried to look; anyway, for some reason I did not feel as much afraid of meeting him in the morning as I had often before when I knew he had found me doing something wrong.

But the struggle continued, and its effect upon the people became more and more apparent. Mills began to run short time, then no time at all. Then when they could get a little Surat cotton from India, they would run a few days a week. This Surat cotton was terrible stuff to weave; it was full of little chips, and the threads were always breaking, so that the weavers were compelled to have all their looms stopped at once, until they could get time to go from one loom to the other to tie up the threads. How the people prayed for the "war to cease." Famine, gaunt and fierce, stalked abroad in the land, and in many cases brought death to end the sufferings of the wretched Lancashire operative. The finances of the relief system was exhausted, private charity was taxed until it could expend no more. Tramps filled the streets and highways, young women went from town to town, and when they would come to some town they would walk slowly over the streets, holding each other by the hand, and singing some song, which it was hoped would bring some gift of succor to appease their hunger and preserve their weary lives. Many in their desperation were compelled to barter their honor for their lives. Such is the penalty of poverty.

During the panic, as we called it, the mill in which I, my father, sister and brother worked, shut down entirely several times. I went to work assisting to drain some land on which one of my employers has since built a magnificent castle, which is called Dobroyd castle. I was put to work carrying tiles to the men who laid them; it was in the winter time, and I had to pick the tiles up out of the ice and water. One day I became chilled to the marrow; I began to grow dizzy, then it grew dark and I fell to the ground insensible. I was carried home and thawed out, and the next day I had to go out to the same work again.

My elder brother had for some time been working as undergardener for one of our employers. He was a young man of more than ordinary intelligence, and much of the information which I was enabled to pick up I gleaned from his books. He was also quite radical in his views, and therefore it was a constant torment to him to have to debase himself before his master as lackeys were compelled to do in England. Now one of these means of debasement was being compelled to put his hand to his cap, in fact, to bow down to Gasler. He endured this as long as he could bear it, when one day he met his master in the town accompanied by his brother. My brother walked past him, pretending not to see him, and therefore did not pay his obedience to his master. The next day, as he was working in the garden, his master came to him and asked him if he had met him the night before on the street and why he had not made his manners to him. My brother told him that he did not think of it. His highness then fixed his eye upon him and replied, "I thought of it, and so did others," meaning his brother, and added, "you must be a boor." This was too much; and my brother telling me about it after we had retired at night, said he would never humble himself before him again, as it would be harder than ever to do it after what had occurred. He soon after left Mr.

Fielden's employment. Thus must the proletariat bow the knee to the bourgeoisie or starve, and some people call this liberty of contract. There was no work to be had in the town, and he was compelled to go on a tramp.

Having heard that there were fine gardens about Edinburgh, Scotland, he tried to work his way thither, walking all the way and trying to get work on the road; sometimes he would get a little to do; sometimes he had to ask for bread; sometimes he had to apply to the town authorities for lodging, for which he had to break stone on the turnpike to pay for it. Arriving at Edinburgh he found it impossible to get work there; off again he pursued his fruitless search, until one morning he found himself within forty miles of home. He felt that he must make home that day or die. He therefore with the resolution of despair set out at night. He came into the house emaciated, hungry and sick, a mere shadow of himself. After eating his supper he tried to make his way to bed, but his legs refused to carry him. The next morning a violent fever had taken possession of him; for weeks he lay between life and death, and this was the penalty of refusing to bow the knee to Gesler.

All these horrors we suffered, as did thousands of others, and be it remembered the Lancashire operatives never passed a resolution to recognize the south as a belligerent, never dreamed of interfering in any way, morally or otherwise, though they were the only sufferers, and those who did in England were those who were placed above the possibility of being affected by the war.[8] [7] But the war at last came to a close, and New Orleans cotton arrived. It was a time of thanksgiving, and remarkable scenes were witnessed in some of the Lancashire towns when the first installment of cotton arrived. The operatives gathered about the depots, brass bands were in readiness, and men with patched clothes and thin features, and women with haggard looks and draggled garments, holding their children in their arms or leading them by the hand, according to their size, crowded around. Eyes that seemed but a short time before had lost their luster, now beamed with a light which had seemed to have left them forever but a short time before; forms whose every motion had seemed for months to speak of despair, were now animated by elasticity and eager hope had come again to the despairing, and work would now be had; and this was the open sesame to heaven and earth. At least the gates of the yards are thrown open and large lumbering draught horses are seen moving slowly toward the gates, while piled high into the air behind is seen that which to those poor starving people meant the staff of life—cotton, American cotton.

A shout goes up which is almost enough to shake the bales from their foundations; men shake each other's hands; the tears of gladness are seen in the eyes of the women; such hilarity, such congratulation, such quaint jokes are thrown around when amidst the confusion the band strikes up an air which had become as familiar in England as in America—"John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave, but his soul goes marching on." [88] The men

joined in, the women joined in, and the children joined in, while the players tried in vain to make themselves heard except at intervals. And thus they marched in front of the great loads of cotton to the mills. Work immediately became more plentiful, and as nothing prospers when workingmen are poor, so everybody soon became happy and comparatively prosperous.

About this time, 1865, I joined the methodist (Wesleyan) church. [8] [9] I had not been a member long before I began to speak in the prayer and experience meetings, and indeed it became such a usual thing for me to talk in these meetings that on one occasion, when it seems that the spirit did not move me and I really did not feel as though I wished to speak, the minister remarked that it was getting late, but there was one person who he wished to hear from before he adjourned. Everybody knew who was meant and I had to speak. I think I may say that I became somewhat popular in these meetings. I was most thoroughly in earnest and nothing that I could do did I leave undone to further the cause I had espoused. I had not been a member of the church long before I and three others formed what we called the Methodist exhorters, and we used to go around and hold meetings in houses and outside meeting-places. Almost every night in the week I was out to some meeting of some kind.

Around the town there were several small villages within a distance of three or four miles. These were composed of from twenty to fifty houses, in the neighborhood of which there was a cotton mill, and here, for the convenience of the people who lived here, there were small chapels or meeting-houses. These were included in what was called the Todmorden circuit, the central church being situated in the town of Todmorden. There were two regular ministers appointed by the general Methodist conference of Great Britain to this circuit there were also a number of what we called local preachers, who were taken from members of the churches in the circuit. They were composed of men from all walks of life, and among them were men who had hard work to provide the wherewith to feed their familes, and yet there were men of this class who were better preachers and speakers than the regular ordained ministers. I call to mind men who earned their bread at the loom, at the spindles and in the quarries, whose eloquence would have graced the grandest cathedral in the land. I have always thought that the strength and the power of the Methodist church was more due to these intelligent, earnest, talented and self-sacrificing men, than to any other merit that it possessed. I saw this disinterestedness. I came in contact with them. I was moved by their rude eloquence. I could not conceive of anything more worthy of imitation than they were, and I accompanied them to their appointments. I assisted them by leading out the hymns; sometimes by making the opening prayer. I thus became imbued with their devotion and sincerity. I tried to imitate them, for, to my young mind, there was not anything more worthy of imitation than these grand men.

It is true that I was ignorant and inexperienced, but though I have lived nearly twenty years of a somewhat varied life since that time, and though I now think that these men's ideas were wrong, yet never, until my hand has dropped nerveless by my side, until my eyes shall have closed in the eternal sleep and my tongue shall have become incapable of doing good or ill by its utterance of my thought, and until my heart shall have fluttered its last feeble pulsation- never till then will I refrain from saying the thanks of a grateful soul that I became inbued with the sterling honesty of these men by my coming in contact with their noble and generous lives in my youth.

Through my constant attendance at the different places of worship I became enabled to understand the technicality of the theology of the Methodist church, and consequently I became enabled to defend and advocate the doctrines of the church. I became one of the superintendents of one of these village Sunday schools. I became prominent at the revival meetings, and many a night have I wandered through the snow to meetings miles away from my home.

Thus my life was spent from the time between the ages of 18 to 21. In the spring of 1868 I was placed on the plan on trial as a local preacher, and in the same spring, the Halifax (Yorkshire) *Courier* contained the notice that the chapel anniversary sermons of the Blackshawhead Wesleyan chapel had been preached by John Greenwood and Samuel Fielden.

I continued to follow this life until July, 1868, when I left home for the United States. I had frequently talked to my father of my desire to come to America. My father had tried to dissuade me from doing so, but seeing that I was determined to go, he told me that when I became of age, that is 21 years of age, he would have no more control over me, but until then he refused to give me consent to leave the parental roof. I accordingly remained until the month of July, 1868. On the morning of my departure there were present quite a number of those who had known me and had been associated with me in my religious work. During my trial here, a letter was written and published in the Chicago *Tribune,* by some person signing himself J.H. of New York, in which the writer states that he knew me in England and was a member of the same church. He states that I was well-known there, and from his acquaintance with me says that at that time I gave promise of becoming what he, the writer, calls himself intelligent man, saying that I was a good debater. He refers to my departure from my home as being something remarkable for a young man, who had spent all his life in a Lancashire factory; numbers of my friends flocked around me to bid me God speed. I arrived in New York in the latter part of July, 1868, with £3 in my pocket. I immediately procured work in Prentice's hat factory, Brooklyn. I only worked there two days when I left, as the wages were very low and the work not very agreeable.

I next went to Providence, and procured work in Chapin & Downs' Riverside mills, working at the washing machine at first. I seemed to gain favor with the foreman, and he soon gave me a better job in the warehouse at packing the cloth in cases for shipment. My wages had been $7.50 a week, and I received $8 at my new work. I worked at this for some time, when I was offered $8.50 a week at the adjoining delaine mills, owned by the Sprague Bros. I gave notice to the superintendent, who was a brother of Mr. Downes, and with whom for the time I had been in his employ, I had become quite intimate and friendly. He asked me where I wanted to go, and I told him. I did not know that I was getting any one into trouble, but I was. There was an understanding between the two mills that neither one was to entice the help of the other away from them. When I went home a few days after this I was met by the foreman who had offered me the job in the other mills, who informed me that Mr. Downes had reported him for trying to entice his best help, and that I could not get the job, as it had become known and was against mutual understanding between the two mills. Now as I taught another man to do my work because I did intend leaving the following Saturday, I thought that I was in a pickle, as it looked as if I was thrown out of both mills. Immediately there and then I posted off to Mr. Downes' house in a very angry frame of mind. I found him in, and I immediately charged him with being guilty of a very mean act in thus heading me off from improving my prospects. To my surprise he took it very coolly, and finally told me that if I would stay with him he would give me in a short time a better job than I should have had at the delaine mills. I finally begged pardon for my hastiness, and we were both of us good friends afterwards. He was as good as his word. In a few weeks he gave me a light job by the piece at which I could make from two to two and a half dollars a day. I worked there all that fall and winter, but in the later part of the following March I lost some time through the non-arrival of material to work upon. I therefore determined that I would take this opportunity of leaving, and put into effect my determination of going west. I therefore drew what was due me and left. It was the more easy to do this as the superintendent was away at that time.

I had been a constant reader of the New York *Tribune,* and I had become infatuated with the idea of farming and the glorious opportunities held out by the philosopher of the *Tribune,* to the young man in the West.[90] I therefore took his advice and started for the west. During my stay in Olneyville, North Providence, I had attended the Baptist church in that place, as there was no Methodist church there. I had however, attended the Methodist church in Providence where a somewhat well-known divine named Rev. Mark Trafton, was the pastor. On my way west, I stopped at Niagara Falls to view that world-renowned phenomena. From there I went to Cleveland. I had no well-defined idea of where I was going up to my arrival in Cleveland, but as I had saved a little money, I thought I would make an excursion into the country to see if I should find any place to suit me. I went to the lake shore depot, and I

looked over a railroad map and I thought that Berea would be a good thing to try, as it was only about 15 miles out, and I thought it would ruin me anyway, so I went there.

I arrived there in the afternoon, and took the first road I saw that seemed to lead into the country. I was soon outside the town, and after traveling for about a mile through the sticky clay roads which were churned to the consistency of butter, I came to a farm house and at the risk of being eaten up by two of the most villainous dogs that I ever saw, I climbed through the fence and approached the house. I found that the inhabitants were of that race which are to be found in every place and country on the face of the globe. They were Irish. I found that the lord of the manor was not at home, but the wife asked me to come in, with true Irish hospitality. After I had told her what I was .after, which was work on a farm, she made me partake of some milk and bread and butter, to which I did simple justice. She then directed me to a Mr. Adams, whom she thought I might hire out to. I started out across the wet fields and reached Mr. Adams' house just before dark. I succeeded in inducing him to try me, and the following day I was set to work at the wood-pile. Now, this was new work for me, and before I had been at it an hour I began to think that my back was broke, especially as the woodshed was attached to the kitchen, and I was afraid that if I stopped for a moment he would think I was lazy. I managed to live, however, and I successfully passed the period of probation.

Mr. Adams was a deacon of the Methodist church in the town of Olmstead Falls, and I, of course, joined the church. I stopped with Mr. Adams until the following August, during which time I preached several times in the Methodist church there. Mr. Adams advised me to stop with him, promising me that during the following winter he would board me for the chores I could do nights and mornings, while he would lend me a horse to ride to and from the Methodist college at Berea, and thus I could find myself for the ministry. I, however, declined, and in the month of August I arrived in Chicago, and, strange as it may appear, the first house that I entered was the frame house adjoining the brick building on the northwest corner of Randolph and Desplaines street and directly opposite to me when I addressed the Haymarket meeting on the 4th of last May. A plumber named Mr. Still lived there at the time. He was born in the same town that I was born in England, as well as his brother John, and also their brother-in-law John Mills, who occupied a plumbing store on the south side of Crane's alley, in the rear of Bryan's saloon. I was acquainted with their relatives in England.

The first work I did in the state of Illinois was on the farm of John Wentworth at Summit station. I worked there during the fall, and following spring worked for the Fox & Howard Co. on the Illinois and Michigan canal. During that winter, however, I had overhauled my religious opinions, and having found some cobwebs therein I brushed them away and became a freethinker.

I visited Farwell hall, where I heard the since world renown Dwight L. Moody.[9]: On reaching home I indicted a letter to Mr. Moody, and in a few days I received an answer, in which he informed me that he would like to see me. On the following Sunday evening I went again to Farwell hall and heard Mr. Moody refer to the letter he had received during the week.

After the service was over, and as Mr. Moody was going down below to gather in the spiritually wounded, I tapped him on the shoulder and informed him that I was the guilty wretch that had written the letter to him. He tried to get me to go down stairs with him, but I declined, and he informed me that he would talk with me at Illinois street mission the next night. Well, I went there, and soon after my arrival an honest looking fellow got upon the floor, and during his remarks referred to the rascality of the methods of business, concluding by expressing the opinion that no businessman could be a Christian. A young stripling, evidently of the genus counter-jumper, then rose to his feet and informed the audience that he was a Christian and a businessman, and went on to dilate upon the virtues of businessman and their piety until I was thoroughly convinced that all a man needed to do in this world in order to make his calling and election sure in the next was to sell for a dollar what only cost fifteen cents. This little speech seemed to relieve the audience greatly, which had undoubtedly been much discomposed by the speech of the common and ordinary-looking man who had preceded him. At last the meeting came to a close, and I moved up toward the stove and presented myself to Mr. Moody. We sat down and we had quite a good and at times animated conversation for perhaps an hour and a half, when I thought that it was about time for my opponent to be convinced, and Mr. Moody thought the same about me, so that we each moved out to meet the starlight. I think Mr. Moody will remember this occurrence, and I will say that there was nothing said on either side that would or did hurt the feelings of the other. We parted at the door with the best feeling toward each other. I am only sorry to say that my opponent has persisted in following the wrong path to this day. I am truly sorry for him. I only wish that we both turn to the right before it is everlastingly too late.

I worked as I stated, on the Illinois and Michigan canal. In the next fall I went south, having heard much of the opportunities there were to make money there in the winter. I embarked as a deck passenger on a steamboat, with two others who accompanied me from Chicago, for Vicksburg, Miss. After nearly a week we arrived at our destination. As we rounded the bend above the city I saw the national cemetery where lay all that remained of those who had left their homes in the full flower of their youth and health, filled with enthusiasm, to battle and to die for their country. I had no sooner landed than I proposed to visit this cemetery at once, which we did. As we walked up the narrow street toward the outskirts of the city I overheard a Negro, who was detailing to another some everyday occurrence, and I heard him say: "I told Mr. Johnson if he would give me $2 for the job I would do it, but I would not

do it for $1.50." This made quite an impression upon me and I remarked to my companions: "There speaks the man and not the slave. The man could say no; the slave had to do as he was bid. The man could resist; the slave must submit." And what a difference there is in this man's condition, from what it had been but a few years ago; that he could say I won't unless you give me what I want or ask, and as I wandered through the cemetery and looked at the little pieces of board which marked the resting place of the brave men who had died in the mighty struggle, the American civil war, I thought these men have died that that Negro might be able to say, "No, if you give me $2 I'll work for you, if you don't I won't." This was the light in which I saw these conditions then, but I saw these things in a different light before I came north; in a light that made me feel as though the inhabitants of the silent graves in the cemetery had almost, if not entirely, given their lives for nothing as far as any advantage accruing to the Negro was concerned.

I worked before my return to north in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas, and I took every opportunity I could get to learn about the condition of the Negro, and I learned that in many cases he was as much a bondsman as ever he was, and in many cases worse. I inquired particularly into the share system which took the place of the much dreamed of ten acres and a mule, which Sambo had so confidently looked forward to possessing after his emancipation. I found that this system was nothing more or less than a species of robbery, and that by its means the Negro was held in as absolute bondage as he was before the war.

The share system operated in this wise: It is well known that the result of the rebellion left the southern planter generally stripped of everything in the shape of property but his land. That property which he had held in human beings had been taken from him by a strong arm of force. It also left the Negro without a master, and the first thing Sambo had to do was find a master, and the first thing the former slave owner had to do was to turn the only means in his possession to some account, and he might possibly have thought that it was worth the considering how he should get possession of the property which had been taken away from him, and the brilliant idea may have entered his head that the remaining property might be utilized for that purpose. Be that as it may, if he did not think of this then it certainly occurred to him afterward and he did not fail to take advantage of it in the near future, but at the present the old master or his residuary legatees had the land, but had no slaves to work it whereby it might be made to support its owner in idleness, the southern slaveholder having constitutionally as much of an objection to work as Harry L. Gilmer has of the truth. Sambo had the necessary qualification, that is a willingness to work, but he had nothing to work with or upon. Thus it came that the old master said to Sambo, how would you like to rent ten acres of land from me and raise a crop of cotton for yourself? Sam thought he saw visions of a condition beside which the ten acres and a mule faded into insignificance.

Arrangements were at once entered into, and Sambo being furnished with a mule, and having agreed that half of the crop of cotton should pay for the use of the land, and that he should have a certain amount of rations advanced for his support and the mule's, and that out of his share of the proceeds of the experiment he should reimburse the landlord for the advance of rations to himself, family and mule, a careful account of which should be kept by his benefactor, the landlord.[92] These things having all been satisfactorily arranged, especially to the satisfaction of the landlord, Sambo started the mule and started on the road to fortune and glory. All through the hot summer he worked with a light heart and visions of future greatness before him, on into the fall when the bolls of cotton plant burst open, and before the eyes of the delighted Sambo is exposed the realization of all his dreams. The cotton is picked and baled, and to the nearest market or landing is the cotton hauled, in many cases Sambo taking all the family in his enthusiasm. The cotton is weighed, and Sam's share is told of. Sam is delighted when he is told that his share amounts to $150 or $200. He immediately begins to think about buying the old master out, but he whistles on the other side of his mouth when the little bill which the master presents for advanced rations and the loan of the mule is brought forward, and which amounts to more than his share of the crop.

There is a terrible dissappointment but there is no getting over it. The master having pocketed all the share of the same, and having realized as he had foreseen that it has been a profitable arrangement, has another scheme ready for this emergency. He has a large tract of timber land, which, if he can get cut up into cord wood, will furnish him with fuel and also bring in some money at the adjacent landing, and seeing the despondent attitude of Sambo, he magnanimously comes forward with a proposition to allow him the privilege of paying his indebtedness to his kind benefactor by clearing this land.

This scheme and others of a similar character have been played very successfully upon the so-called freedmen of the south. In cases where the unfortunate victim has tried to escape this form of slavery by attempting to leave the country, he has been arrested and imprisoned, and sometimes as a prisoner of the county he has been hired out to planters or contractors. Thus did the latter kind of slavery becomes worse than the former. I have received in every state that I visited in the south incontrovertible proof that this prevailed, not only from the statements of the victims themselves, but I have heard the perpetrators boast of it, and this was the chief cause of the exodus of the Negro from the south to the west and north.[93] The south has been blessed by nature with a soil that is calculated to support a vaster population than would or could settle in it for the next hundred years if it were not for the blighting curse of human avarice which there, as everywhere else, makes the bounteous gifts of nature to her children to produce, instead of happiness and comfort, which they are naturally calculated to produce, in their stead misery, want, degradation and crime.

In the fall of 1870 I first went into the south, in the month of October. I stayed there until the following May, when I returned to Chicago. During my sojourn there I visited every principal city on the Mississippi river from St. Louis to and including New Orleans. I lived among the roughest class of men on the face of the earth. I worked with this class of men on railroads and upon levees. I tramped hundreds of miles in search of work. I lived in levee camps and rail camps. I slept in calico tents and on the bare wet ground. I slept in lodging houses in towns, which were always associated with the inevitable saloon, and where was sold the most wretched liquor that ever went down a fool's throat. The keepers of these places seemed to look upon the levee laborers with something like the same interest that Dickens has described the grog-shop keepers and others of Liverpool as having for mercantile Jack, that is, as their legitimate prey. The whisky was poor, the food was poor, the sleeping arrangements were horrible, and the charges were damnable.

As illustrating this, I heard a conversation as I lay in bed in a den of this kind in a small river town in Louisiana between two evidently disgruntled Irishmen, who occupied another bed in the same room. After grumbling for a while, one of them asked what was the name of the woman who kept the place we were staying in; the other one replied that he thought it was Mrs. Killpatrick. After a short pause the other one replied, "Faith, if it is not her name, it ought to be, for she'd kill the devil, let alone Patrick." I thought the remark did not do Mrs. Killpatrick any injustice considering the supper I had and the bed I was vainly trying to sleep on and the prices I had to pay for such miserable accommodations.

After my return to Chicago in May I worked upon the dredge I had worked upon the year before, and which was finishing up the deepening of the canal at Sagbridge. I worked there until the work was all finished. Soon after that three west parks were commenced, Douglas, Central and Humboldt parks. I was one of the first men who turned a sod in Douglas park. I worked in this park until about three weeks before the great Chicago fire, which occurred this same year (1871). At the time of the fire I was living in the town of Lyons, and was working in Mud Lake. Mr. Nickerson, I believe, was doing the work, which was about two miles north of where Mud Lake joins the Desplaines river. I came into Chicago on Tuesday following, and walked through the streets of smouldering ruins. The following year I worked in Chicago, and since that time I have lived and worked mostly, in fact almost entirely, in Chicago. I have worked at street scraping all over the prairie between Ashland avenue and Lawndale. I lived a little west of Lawndale when there was but one house there; but this was before the fire.

I pass over the next few years as containing but little that would be of interest to the average reader. During those years I worked almost entirely in stone yards up to 1879. I worked at all kinds of work in these yards, including driving team. During those years I was somewhat studious in my habits. I

spent a considerable part of my spare time in the reading room of the public library. I attended quite a number of lectures, hearing Mr. Bradlaugh, the English reformer and freethinker, Tilton, Bayard Taylor, Robert Collier, James Freeman Clarke, Joaquin Miller, Robert Ingersoll, James Parton,[94] and many others. I attended regularly the 10 cent lecture held at McCormick's hall. I forget the year now, but I think it was in 1876.1 took books from the public library almost all the time from its inauguration until the present.

In the fall of 1879 I paid a visit to England. I had intended for years to visit my native home, but financial embarrassments had interposed insurmountable obstacles. My principal reason for going was to fulfill a matrimonial engagement which I had entered into eleven years before. Another was to see my aged father once more. I also thought that I might be able to find something which would offer at least as favorable inducements to stay there as any that I had found on this side of the Atlantic; but I found that while there had been a period of very great prosperity during my absence, at the time of the visit, the condition of industry was very disheartening. I fulfilled the engagement referred to above and returned to the United States in February, 1880. The fruit of my marriage has been two children, one a girl of *2^/2* years age, the other a boy who has been born since my imprisonment.

On my return I invested what money I had in a team of horses, so that I became what Chicago *Tribune* calls a capitalist. I have earned my living by this means, that is, hauling stone, from that time to the time of my arrest. In the summer 1880 I was informed that there was being attempted to formation of the treamsters' union. I learned of the place, and went to listen to what it was intended to do; on my second visit to this embryo union, I took some part in the proceedings. A temporary organization was effected, with a temporary president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. A Mr. Oberndorf was elected president; he being a German, suggested to some persons present that the vice-president ought to be an Irishman; this was approved, and your humble servant was elected. The organization did not prove a success, and it finally died. I believe there is a teamsters' union in the city, but I believe that it is confined to the brick-hauling branch of that industry.

About this time, in the fall of 1880, I was informed of the calling of a meeting for the reorganization of the liberal league, the principal object of which organization was the total separation of church and state. I attended the meeting at 54 West Lake Street, and after listening to the preceedings and the statement of the objects of the proposed society, I joined the society then and there. A hall was rented at the corner of Halsted and Madison streets, and the society entered upon its mission. Lectures and discussions were the feature of the exercises. Theology, science, philosophy, of every quantity and quality; political economy, social economy, domestic economy, and, in fact, every kind of economy, and perhaps a little extravagance thrown in once in a while as a condiment, the diet being of a rather heavy character. However, I became

acquainted with a very intelligent, as well, I believe, as a very conscientious class of people. I took part in the discussions and became more or less prominent in the society, being elected financial secretary, vice-president and delegate to the national congress held at Milwaukee in the fall of 1889, which I attended, taking part in the proceedings and supporting the adoption of a labor plank in the platform or constitution of the society. -

During the year 1883 labor meetings were held on the lake front and I was invited to speak there. I hesitated and asked what was the object. The person who asked me replied, "You are not afraid to speak in the cause of labor, are you?" I replied "No!" and I accordingly spoke there several times that fall, as well as at other parts of the city in the open air. I had not at that time any preference for any labor organization but thought the subject of labor offered a broad enough field for agitation. I spoke on the general question of the wrongs of labor. I continued my connection with the liberal league.

In the following summer, having become a socialist by conviction, through listening to and taking part in the discussions at the Labor league, I became connected with the International Working People's Association. As a member of that organization I have spoken all over the city of Chicago, in the open air on the lake front and in halls in other parts of the city. I have also addressed meetings in St. Louis and Cincinnati. At the latter place 1 was speaking to a large mass meeting in front of the custom house, and would you suppose one of the truthful reporters of the Chicago *Times* swore on my trial that I was urging an audience to sack Marshall Field's store at a meeting held the same day and same hour on market square in this city. I have also spoken in Pittsburgh, Pa., Canton, Ohio, and other smaller places, as well as at meetings in the suburbs of this city.

I was a member of the American group, which held meetings in different halls in the city for the discussion of social and industrial economy. For the purposes of attending one of these meetings I went to Griefs hall on the evening of Sunday, May 2, 1886. I had to speak that night at Zepfs hall at Brewers' union, but thought I could speak to the brewers and then attend the American group meeting before it adjourned. I therefore went into Griefs hall in order to tell any one of the American group that I might see that I would try to come there after leaving the Brewers' union. I met a member of the American group and told him, and as I was leaving the saloon a gentleman who is a member of the International Cigarmakers' union called me to sit down a minute until he could inform me of what had transpired at the Trade and Labor assembly that afternoon, at which meeting he had been present. While this gentleman was detailing the proceedings of the Trade and Labor assembly a young German came to me and asked me to speak the following night at the same place, 54 West Lake Street, to the wagonmakers. I promised him I would. Another middle-aged German, whom I knew to be associated with the Central Labor union; asked me if I could address a meeting at 358

West Twelfth street on the following Tuesday night which would be May 4. After thinking a little and finding that I had no other engagement I promised to do so, and after hearing what my friends had to relate about the T. and L. assembly, I went to Zepfs hall, and read to the English-speaking brewers the proposition of the employers to them. After I was through I left them to discuss it between themselves, leaving the copy of the proposition with them and I went to the American group at Griefs hall, which was then drawing to a close. I afterwards went back to Zepfs hall to see what they had done about the terms of the employers.

I found two or three of them sitting at a table, and in response to my question, they said they had not decided. I had a glass of beer with them and then went home. On the following day I worked three-quarters of a day and at night I went to the wagon-makers' meeting, which I addressed afterwards leaving the hall and entering into a conversation with some of the men on the sidewalk in front of the saloon. After talking with them for some time I went inside with them, and after a short talk there I went home, leaving the hall with Mr. Brown.

I worked all the next day, which was the 4th of May, taking a load of stone to Waldheim cemetery, which is a day's work. I returned home, getting to the stable about half-past 5 in the evening, when I took care of my horses and went home to my supper, intending to go to the meeting at 368 West Twelfth street. Just before going into the house I brought an *Evening News,* and looking over the announcement column, I saw that there was a call there for the American group to meet at 107 Fifth avenue. I hardly knew what to do. I knew that I ought to attend the American group, as I was treasurer of the group, and it was the period for election of officers, and I also knew that if it was a meeting that would require any money I ought to be there. I finally concluded to go there.

I left home about 7:20, taking a Twelfth street car. I stood on the front platform, as I was smoking. When a car reached the Van Buren street viaduct the bridge swung and we were bridged. We were held there quite a while; the light on the board of trade was visible, and a conversation sprung up between a fireman and the driver as to the time by the board of trade clock. They, afterwards, began to talk about the horses that were attached to the cars in which I joined and spoke about driving street cars myself ten years ago. At last the bridge swung back to its place and the cars started. I left the car at the corner of Washington, as did also the fireman. I think the fireman walked east on Washington. He was a tall, spare man, with a moustache, and possibly a goatee, but not a beard, as I remember now.

If he should see this statement he will doubtless bear testimony that I speak the truth when I say that it was close to 8 o'clock when he left the car at the corner of Washington and Fifth avenue on the evening of the 4th of last May,

and yet at that time I did not know that there was going to be,-or had been, a meeting called at the Haymarket that night. We had both got off the car on the north side of Washington, and as 107 is a few doors south of Washington, I walked back across Washington to 107 and went up stairs. I found a number of persons in the front room of the first floor in the business office and there and not till then at that hour, 8 o'clock, did I know that there was to be a meeting at the Haymarket. I found out after entering the room that the meeting had been called for the purpose of considering whether the American group should attempt the organization of the sewing girls of the city, whose wages were pitilessly low. Mr. and Mrs. Parsons had anticipated that the group would vote in the affirmative and had taken the responsibility of having a number of hand-bills printed, which hand-bills were present at the meeting, or some of them. On asking what the meeting was called for, I was shown one of these bills, and was told that was what the meeting was called for. I tried to tell the jury this, but was told that that was not the law, although I had been sworn to tell the whole truth. Is it not a queer thing, law? When I entered the room I had seen and spoken to Mr. Rau, and he had asked me to go over to the Haymarket

I told him that I had come in response to the advertisement in the *Evening News,* and knew nothing about the meeting at the Haymarket; that if it had not been for the announcement I would have been speaking at Twelfth street, where I had an engagement to speak that night. I therefore sat down and waited until Mr. and Mrs. Parsons should come. After waiting some time they came, and we decided to try to organize the sewing girls of the city. Mr. Parsons made a motion that the treasurer should pay over to the ladies the sum of $5, which should pay for the bills which had been printed, $4, and the other dollar should go for the car-fare and incidental expenses in looking around for halls, etc. This was agreed to. I paid the money and received a receipt for the same; in the meantime Mr. Schwab had come in and a telephone dispatch had been received asking for speakers at Deering, where there had been a meeting called. The young man, Louis Brandt, attended to the telephone. Mr. Schwab went out, and I did not see him any more that evening.

About this time Mr. Rau came in and said that he had been over to the Haymarket and there was a large crowd over there and no one to address them but Mr. Spies, and that he wanted Mr. Parsons and I to go over there and assist him. We went over there, and Mr. Spies, who was speaking, stopped in a short time after we arrived and introduced Mr. Parsons. Mr. Parsons spoke at considerable length, as has been reported.

When I was introduced by Mr. Spies, the audience was getting smaller and I had told Mr. Spies that it was hardly worth while for me to speak. He said I might make a short speech. I spoke for about fifteen to twenty minutes, when, without the slightest intimation or thought of such a thing, on turning my face

to the south, I saw the police approaching. They were, in fact, very close to me when I first saw them. I stopped talking and was undecided what to do. The meeting had been more than ordinarily peaceable one, and had been getting smaller and more quiet up to that time, so that there were not more than two or three hundred at the most, in my opinion, when the police arrived. A few minutes before this the weather had become somewhat threatening; a very large black cloud had rolled up from the north, causing quite a stampede. On this account Mr. Parsons called out from the crowd that the meeting had better adjourn to Zepfs hall on the next corner. Some one replied that this hall was occupied, and then I said to the audience that I would be through in a minute or two and we would all go home. I then began to draw my remarks to a close. Before I could do this, however, the meeting was invaded by the police, and Capt. Ward, in a very loud voice cried out: "In the name of the people of the state of Illinois I command this meeting to peaceably disperse."

Whatever had been my doubts at the intention of the police, they were at once removed and I at once thought that I would try to prevent any trouble between the meeting and the police. This was my object in staying on the wagon after I saw the police on the ground, and as Capt. Ward uttered the above expression I stepped down toward him and replied: "Why captain, this is a peaceable meeting." I did this for the purpose, more than anything else, of trying to allay the excitement and nervousness under which he was laboring, and thus, by this conciliatory manner, showing to him that we were not disposed to be quarrelsome. Had the captain at the time met me in the same manner, even though he had still insisted on the dispersal of the meeting, I myself would have dispersed it, and believe all would have been well, but the captain, in a very violent manner, altogether ignoring my pacific attitude, turned to the police, saying as near as I can remember: "I command this meeting to disperse, and I call on you to disperse it now." This is what I thought he said at the time. He said, "I call upon you to assist in dispersing it now." As this is a true and dispassionate recital of the events transpiring at the Haymarket meeting on the night of May 4, 1886,1 will not dispute with him about this; he may tell the truth about this, and I may be mistaken.[95]

I say this may be possible, because, as the captain began to give the second command, I stepped from the wagon, leaping down at the south end of the wagon. As soon as I reached the ground I said: "All right, we'll go," or "Well then; we'll go," and walked towards the sidewalk. I think I had just stepped on the sidewalk when I saw the flash in the middle of the street and heard the explosion of the bomb. Almost if not entirely simultaneously with this explosion the police began to fire into the crowd. The crowd ran in every direction. I happened to have my face turned to the south at the time of the explosion, and I ran in that direction. Immediately after the explosion, I was struck in the knee by a bullet, which after striking the bone, traveled upward and slightly across, and then came out making two holes. I felt the blow, but did not know what it was.

I continued to the corner of Randolph and Desplaines streets, running as fast as I could, for the crowd who were falling down and crawling on the sidewalk, and calling: "o, God! o, God! Save us," while volley after volley of bullets were poured into the wildly flying and unresisting mass. I finally reached the corner and ran east. As soon as I felt myself safe I felt of my knee and found that my knee was wet. I knew that I was wounded. After going over to the south side to look for some of my companions of the evening, being anxious to discover what had become of them, I went and had my knee dressed.

The next morning I was arrested. On the afternoon of the same day, 5th of May, without having had an opportunity of seeing a friend or a lawyer, I, with A. Parsons, A. Spies, and Mr. Schwab, was railroaded through a coroner's jury, at which jury the assistant state's attorney stood between the coroner and the several witnesses and, in whispers, prompted them what to say.

How different this coroner's jury from the jury that inquired into the death of poor Bealey at the stock yards, and where the Pinkerton murderers were allowed to have able lawyers who bull-dozed the coroner and all the witnesses, and which was adjourned from time to time until the jury got ready to let the suspects go, and where the obliging coroner and attorneys of the suspects retired into the ante-room from time to time in the most fraternal manner! From that time until the present I have been confined in the county jail of Cook county, Illinois. I had forgotten to state that I was arrested at my home, where I waited to give myself up to the authorities if they should want me. Of my subsequent trial and conviction the public are aware.

This is a truthful narrative of my life and my connection with the Haymarket affair, for which I am held as accessory to the act of a person with whom I have no connection or knowledge, and with whom no witness had ever during the whole of this trial, stated that I knew of his existence, and, as far as this record goes, who is as much a stranger to me as he is to Judge Gary or the state's attorney.

Hoping the reader of this will calmly and dispassionately consider those facts, and feeling sure that whoever does so will feel that if any person can be connected and convicted as accessory to the act of some person unknown to the accused, the innocence of a crime is no shield or security to any member of society. If this conviction is just, then whenever any crime is committed all that is necessary for the authorities to do is to find some persons obnoxious to them, present them to the jury and tell the jury that though they may not have committed the crime they are charged with, yet it is the opinion of the prosecution that it will be a good thing to get rid of them anyway, and this is the handy way of doing it. Patient reader, I remain faithfully yours,

S. Fielden.