

'PAY OR STAY OUT' WAS EDICT OF HOSPITAL TO MILL STRIKE WOUNDED

This is the fourth of a series by Sinclair Lewis, noted author of "Main Street," on the conditions at Marion, N. C., in which six have been killed and twenty wounded. Lewis was sent to Marion by The Times and other Scripps newspapers.

BY SINCLAIR LEWIS

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PERHAPS the strangest thing I found in "the dugout," headquarters of the strikers at Marion, N. C., was that there was absolutely none of the corn liquor which has made the southern mountains famous. These men were serious. They were not drinking. They were not even particularly angry.

Oh, there were men among the strikers, not among their leaders, who did seem to be angry. There was a brother of one of the men who had been killed by the deputies of Sheriff Adkins. He said, rather gently, "This court proceeding ain't the end of this here."

There was another who said, "I'd rather murder 'em up than have 'em murder us up."

But mostly they were so quiet, so quiet. They went away from the hovel of the strike headquarters with their pour over their shoulders and said nothing.

After the battle with Sheriff Adkins and his men, the wounded strikers were taken to the Marion hospital. Now this is supposed to be a community hospital. At least, when they were building it, the workers in the mills were invited to contribute to its building, and most of them did so.

But when the men who had been shot down by the sheriff's posse were taken to this hospital, they were informed that they could not stay there unless they paid.

These men had no money with which to pay. So there was a somewhat unpleasant situation in the hospital.

Bill Ross, the local labor leader, had to telegraph to New York to beg money so that the men would not be turned out.

But all that has been solved now, because most of the men who were taken to the hospital after the little fracas with the sheriff are dead.

We're Not Responsible

The head nurse of the hospital explained to us that under normal conditions she would call the Duke Power Company, which would be very glad to provide for any charity patients. "But," said she, "of course, if these men want to go and get into a scrap we're not responsible, and they must take care of themselves."

I am coming to an end of this series—only there is no end. I could go on in Marion for a lifetime—that is, unless I happened to be shot down, in which case my lifetime would be very brief indeed—writing about the conditions in southern mill towns.

I am rather sorry that I am coming to an end, because normally I live in a Vermont farmhouse, and do not have a very close connection with actual men and events. But now, for four days, I have been out with men like John Peel and Frank Gorman and Bill Ross and Ben Stolberg. It has taken me out of myself so much that I hope that I am going to do it again.

Before I finish, I want to describe what I myself have seen of living conditions in Marion, N. C.

Looks Like Italy

From the courthouse in which the sheriff and his deputies were on trial, there is a view which recalls Italy. If you disregard a few littered backyards in the foreground, you can lose yourself in that smiling vista of hills and valleys, with a distant group of houses that are obviously plaster Italian villas.

Well, they aren't. They are houses in the East Marion mill village, and seen closer, are atrocious.

It is about two miles from the actual town of Marion to the two mill villages, which, along with the farmer-trade, support Marion and glorify it.

Marion itself has a book shop, two movie theaters, and shops in which gents can get furnishings. But the 100 per cent American mill operatives do not often travel that long two miles—partly because they do not own motor cars, and partly because they haven't much to spend in the way of furnishing gents. On a wage which averages less than \$13 a week, you furnish yourself and your family mostly with overalls.

No, the town of Marion proper is left to merchants, lawyers, doctors, and the like, most of whom just now are busy with the dead and dying and wounded after the sheriff's recent jest.

Here Is the Mill

But, going out the two miles, you come to East Marion, and to the mill of the Marion Manufacturing Company, which makes plain white cotton cloth, the sort of cloth that is used in cheap pillowcases. The mill is the center of the village, and to its 600 employees this mill is the most interesting thing to be seen. Its clamorous shuttles, its dirty floors, its roar and utter fatigue, take the place, for some 600 men, women and children, of the quiet mountain glens from which our civilization has rescued them.

Now, since the first strike at Marion, these 600 are working only fifty-five hours a week, but in the good old days, before "foreign agitators" came to disturb the peace of this idyllic village, they worked twelve hours a day or twelve hours a night, and had no time to think about such un-American ideas as how to get more than \$13 a week.

The Marion Manufacturing Company provides houses for its employees. I have examined these houses with considerable care. They are rented to the employees at the incredibly low cost of 20 cents a room a week. That means that a four-room house rents for \$3.20 a month on the basis of four weeks to the month. None of these houses has running water. Their water supply comes from pumps.

The houses are of the cheapest possible construction. I have tried to pry the boards of these houses apart and have found that it could be done with my little finger.

A four-room house, in which twelve people may be living, is just this. It is a box with an unscratched porch. It has three living rooms and a kitchen. In each of the living rooms there are, normally, two double beds. In these double beds there sleep anywhere from two to five people, depending on their ages.

Eat "Best" of Food

In the kitchen is being cooked the family food, which consists largely of flour biscuits, hominy, fatback—the cheapest sort of salt pork—and coffee which will be served without cream or sugar.

The sheriff, Oscar Adkins, who was a grocer up to the time he was

fore we became modernized and efficient, when kings prided themselves upon their willingness to bear sword and share meat with his humblest subject. There were even, a long, long time before that, a Man in Galilee who lived with the poorest and humblest.

It is doubtless too much to expect anything so exotic from the Governor of a state. But if Max Gardner will go to Marion, with his family, and live in one of Mr. Baldwin's mill cottages all winter, and work, under normal conditions—and this, of course, implies that all of his family will also work—in the mill, then I think that the Carolina situation will be solved before spring!

It must be stated that, in addition to this tremendous decrease in house rent, the worker at Marion and other southern mill villages gets free electric light. So far as I have been able to find out, this free electric light costs the company \$3 a month a house at the most.

I should think it would cost very much less, because when you have worked from ten to twelve hours a day—when you are looking forward to arriving at the mill at 6:45 each morning—you ordinarily do not sit up very late reading detective stories and consuming electric light.

One selected sheriff, told me that the mill people insist on eating the finest of food.

"Why," said he, "they eat Palace flour, and that's good enough that I eat it myself."

I want, therefore, in fairness to give the report of the other side, to say that there are authorities who assert that these 100 per cent Americans of the American mills eat flour good enough for Sheriff Adkins. But I must say that their babies, undernourished and dirty, playing about in the blazing red mud, do not look as though they eat food good enough for Sheriff Adkins.

This boy of a four-room house is set up on piles. All East Marion is up and down, and the piles are fairly high, to accommodate the slope of the hills. There is not the least vestige of plumbing or any other kind of water pipes in the houses.

Not Much Gardening

The yards are adorned only with rich North Carolina red mud, except where some worker has grown a flower garden—and when you are working, and your wife and the children of 16 upwards are working, from ten to twelve hours a day, you do not give a great deal of attention to gardening.

This packing-box on stilts above a welter of red clay is the refuge, the castle, the whole home of most of these workers at Marion; it is their reward for their work of ten or twelve hours a day; it is the way in which we teach them that in this blessed country the results of honest labor are a splendor unlike that of the hovels of the Old World.

Governor Max Gardner of North Carolina, himself a mill owner, has sold in a recent report on the Carolina textile industry that North Carolina has been misrepresented grievously in the matter of wages, because a part of the mill workers' pay is taken out in houses—such admirable houses I have just described—which are provided by the company at a low rent.

And it is true that the rent is low. In Marion, it is only 20 cents a room a week. That is low, isn't it?

But unfortunately it happens that precisely such bonny homes, owned by private persons and let for a profit, in Marion, rent for \$10 a month, so that all that the mill is free rent, to be added to their earnings of \$5 to \$13 a week a person, is \$6.80 a month. And when you divide \$6.80 a month among two to twelve people living in each cottage, it is not a tremendous increase.

Governor Gardner's own mill in Shelby, N. C., is among the model mills of the south. The houses which he himself gives to the workers are not at all the type I have described. But nevertheless, mill owner and Governor though he be, I suggest that his arithmetic is a little twisted.

And I suggest that he, who has done nothing as yet about appointing a committee to investigate conditions at Marion, might go to there and try living in one of those pasted boxes under which the wind howls in winter.

One for the Governor

If a man is to accept the responsibilities of so high an office as that of Governor of the state, it would seem to me to be noblesse oblige for him to share the lot of his humblest constituent. There was a time, before the spread of rabies.

Next: Sinclair Lewis will discuss "Luxuries" in Marion.

Dogs Quarantined

By Times Special CONNERSVILLE, Ind., Oct. 24.—All dogs in Fayette county are under quarantine as a result of a conference of state, county and city health officers here, in which it was decided the step should be taken to prevent spread of rabies.

Indiana mother proves her idea is right...

MY little son was bilious and upset," says Mrs. James McHugh, 810 Woodlawn Ave., Indianapolis. "He had no appetite, his breath was bad, his tongue was coated, and he was nearly always tired and sleepy."

"He seemed to have trouble with his stomach and bowels and I had an idea California Fig Syrup would help him. He brightened up marvelously with the first few doses. At the end of a week, he was a different boy. I have used California Fig Syrup with both my boys every time they have had a cold or upset, and I give it a lot of credit for their wonderful condition."

California Fig Syrup never fails to cleanse the system of bilious, headache, feverish or constipated children, quickly and gently. It never gripes or sickens. Children love its flavor. A pure vegetable product with the highest endorsement of doctors. It helps nature give tone and strength to the stomach and bowels.

All drug stores have the generous bottles. The name "California" marks the genuine.

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BLOCK'S BASEMENT STORE

Women's and Misses' \$16.50 to \$19.50

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Very Specially Priced

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FULL FASHIONED SILK HOSE

For Women and Misses

Gunmetal, Dusk Brown, Tan, Sun-Tan, Mist, Gray

79c

Dawn, Atmosphere, Bronze, Nude

These hose are irregulars of \$1.50 quality. When you see these values you will want to buy a season's supply.



These Shoes On Sale in the Basement

Friday Sale of Women's and Misses' Footwear

Specially Priced

\$2.79

Dozens of New Styles

Women's Arch Support Low Shoes, Special at \$2.79

Men's All-Wool Suits Topcoats and Overcoats

Friday Only

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A special one-day selling of suits in colors and fabrics appropriate to the season! Quality, style and service at the extraordianarily low price of \$10!

Men's All-Wool Blue Overcoats \$11.95

For Friday only! Long, collegiate or doublebreasted models.

U. S. Army Raincoats \$2.39
Made to Government Specifications

College Slickers \$2.89
Gossamerette Raincoats \$1.99

Men's Genuine Leather Coats

\$6.95

Blue Corduroy Sheep-Lined Coats \$7.95

Belt all around; 4 pockets
Beaverized Collar.

Genuine Horsehide Leather Coats \$8.95

Blanket Lined Tan Duck Coats \$2.79

Blanket Lined Blue Denim Coats \$1.94

Blanket Lined \$4.79 Corduroy Coats

Men's Hunting Coats \$3.99

French backs check and pencil stripes.

1,000 Pairs of Men's All-Wool Trousers

\$3.59

In a wide variety of suit patterns.

"Auto Brand" Corduroy Trousers \$2.69

Men's Blue or Dark Corduroy Trousers \$1.79

Hart Schaffner & Marx Trousers \$4.98

Men's Dark Work Trousers 94c

Men's Corduroy Riding Breeches \$2.49

College-cut Light Tan Corduroys \$2.89

Wide bottoms

All-Wool Blue Serge Trousers \$1.89

French backs check and pencil stripes \$2.98

Men's Part Wool Sport Sweater Coats

Special for Friday Only

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Heavy ribbed garments with button front and V neck, and two pockets. An ideal coat for the chilly fall days. Every one of these coats were meant to sell for a higher price.

