



A YEAR IN A COAL MINE

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By **JOSEPH HUSBAND**

CHAPTER I. The New Man.

TEN days after my graduation from Harvard I took my place as an unskilled workman in one of the largest of the great soft coal mines that lie in the middle west. It was with no thought of writing my experiences that I chose my occupation, but with the intention of learning by actual work the "operating end" of the great industry in the hope that such practical knowledge as I should acquire would fit me to follow the business successfully.

The mine "workings" were entirely electric, the latest inventions in coal mining machinery were everywhere employed and every precaution for the safety of the men was followed beyond the letter of the law.

It was half past 8 on a July morning when the day shift began streaming out of the washhouse—some 400 men, white, black and of perhaps twenty-eight nationalities—dressed in their tattered black and greasy mine clothes. The long stream wound out of the washhouse door, past the power house, where the two big generators that feed the arteries of the great mine all day long with its motive power were screaming in a high, shrill rhythm of sound, past the tall skeleton structure of the tipple tower, from which the light morning breeze blew black clouds of coal dust as it eddied around the skeleton of structural iron work to a small house at the mine mouth sheathed in corrugated iron, where the broken line formed a column and the men, one by one, passed through a gate by a small window and gave their numbers to a red faced man who checked down in a great book the men who were entering the mine.

From the window we passed along to a little inclosure directly above the mouth of the main hoisting shaft. There above it the black tower of the tipple pointed up into the hot, blue morning sky, and the dull, dry heat of the flat Illinois country seemed to sink down around it. But from the square, black mouth of the shaft a strong, steady blast of cool air struck the faces of the men who stood at the head of the little column waiting for the next hoist. On the one side of the shaft mouth long lines of empty railroad cars stretched out beyond into the flat country, each waiting its turn to be filled some time during the day with coal that would come pouring down over the great screens in the tipple, and on the other side of the shaft mouth, under the seamed roof of the building where the checker wrote down the numbers of the day shift, sat the hoisting engineer.

Beside him was the great drum on which the long steel cables that lifted and lowered the hoisting cage were rapidly unwinding, and in his hand he held a lever by which he controlled the ascent or descent of the "cage." The first cage had been lowered, and as I watched him and the dial before him I saw his hand follow his eye, and as the white arrow passed the 300 foot level the hand drew back a notch, and the long, blue wire began to uncoil more slowly. Three hundred and fifty feet—and another notch—and as the



Photo by American Press Association.

The Working Day Was Begun.

arrow reached near the 400 foot mark his foot came down hard on the brake, and a minute later a bell at his elbow sounded the signal of the safe arrival of the hoist. A minute, and another signal, and then, releasing his other lever toward him, the drums, reversed, began to rewind, and as the arrow flew backward I realized that the cage was nearing the top. It was a great steel box divided into four superimposed compartments, each holding ten men, and I stood with nine others crowded on the first or lowest deck. As the last man pushed into his place and we stood shoulder to shoulder the hoisting engineer slowly stepped his lever again toward him and as slowly the cage sank. Then in an instant the white blue of the sky was gone except for a thin crack below the

deck above us, through which a sheet of white light sliced in and hung heavily in the dusty air of our compartment. The high song of the generators in the power house, the choking puffs of the switch engine in the yards and the noise of men and work which I had not noticed before I now suddenly missed in the absence of sound. There was a shuffling of feet on the deck above, and again we sank, and this time all was darkness while we passed for the third deck to fill. Once more and again for the fourth. Then as the cage started and the roar of the shoes on the guide rails struck my ears I looked at the men about me. They were talking in a whirl of foreign words, and in the greasy yellow light of their pit lamps, which hung like miniature coffeepots in the trims of their caps, the strong, hard lines of their faces deepened. The working day was begun.

As the cage shot down the wall of the shaft seemed to slip up, and from its wet, silty surface an occasional spatter of mud shot in on the faces of the miners. Strong smells of garlic, of sweat and of burning oil filled the compartment, and the air, which sucked up through the cracks beneath our feet as though under the force of a piston, fanned and puffed the yellow flames in the men's caps into smoking streaks. Then I felt the speed of the "hoist" diminish. A pressure came in my ears and I swallowed hard, and a second later a soft yet abrupt pause in our descent brought me down on my heels. The black wall of the shaft before me suddenly gave way, and we came to a stop on the bottom of the mine.

It was cool, and after the heat of a July morning the damp freshness of the air chilled me. With dinner pails banging against our knees we pushed out of the hoist, and as the men crowded past me, I stood with my back against a great timber and looked around me. Behind the hoist had already sunk into the "sump," or pit at the bottom of the shaft. In order that the men on the second compartment might pass into the mine, and a second later they swarmed by me—and still I stood, half dazed by the roar of unknown sounds, my eyes blanketed by the absence of light, and my whole mind smothered and crushed. I was standing just off the main entry or tunnel of the mine, which began on my left hand out of blackness and passed again, on my right into a seaming wall of darkness. The low, black roof, closely beamed with great timbers, was held by long lines of great whitewashed tree trunks. A few electric lights shone dimly through their dust coated globes, and the yellow flames from the men's pit lamps, which had flared so bright in the compartment of the hoisting cage, seemed now but thin tongues of flame that marked rather than disclosed the men.

Out of the blackness on the left two tracks passed over a great pit and stretched on into the blackness on the right as though into the wall of the coal itself. Then, far off, a red signal light winked out and made distance visible, and beyond it came the sound of grinding wheels; there was the gleam of a headlight on the steel rails. The ray grew larger and two yellow sparks above it flamed out into pit lights. A train was coming out of the entry, and I waited until it should pass. With a grind of brakes it suddenly loomed out of the blackness and into the dull haze of light at the shaft bottom. With a roar it passed by. The locomotive, a great iron box, was built like a battering ram, the headlight set in its armor plated bow and behind, on two low seats, as in a racing automobile, sat the motorman and the "trip rider" or helper. The motor man with one hand on the great iron brake wheel, the other on his controller and the trip rider swinging on his low seat, half on the motor and half over the coupling of the rocking car behind, clinging to the pole of the trolley. Their faces were black with the coal dust—black as the motor and their clothing—and from their pit lamps the flames bent back in the wind and streamed out straight along their cap tops. Low above the head of the trip rider the wheel on the trolley streaked out sudden bursts of greenish white sparks along the wire, and as the train passed by the roar of the locomotive gave place to the clattering of the couplings of the long string of black cars, each heaped high with its load of coal. Some one seized me by the elbow.

"What's yer number?" he asked. "410." "Leader? New man?" I nodded. "Come along with me." He was a tall, thin man, who walked with his head thrown forward and his chin against his chest as though in constant fear of striking the low beams overhead. I followed him, stumbling rather clumsily over the broken coal beside the track. The train had come to a stop over the pit between the rails

and men with iron bars were testing the frogs and releasing the bumper bottoms of the cars. Heavy clouds of fine coal dust poured up from the cars as the coal roared down into the bins, and the clanking of metal, the crash of falling coal and the unintelligible shouting of the foreigners filled the entry with a dull tumult of sounds. Dodging the low trolley wire which hung about five feet above the rails, we crawled across the coupling between two of the cars to the other side of the entry and walked to the left, past the locomotive, where the motorman was still sitting in his low seat waiting to pull out his train of empty cars into the sudden darkness of the tunnel beyond. Then for the first time I learned that mines are echoless and that sound, like light, is absorbed by the blotter-like walls of the tunnels.

We walked down the entry between the rails and after a hundred yards turned with the switch in the track sharply to the right, and again on. Sense of direction or angles was lost, and, like the faces in a foreign race of people, where one can see little or no individuality, so here, each corner seemed the same, and in a hundred yards I was utterly lost. Above was the smooth, black roof, below the ties and the rails, and on either side behind the two long rows of props the face of the coal seam, which glittered and sparkled in the light from our pit lamps like a dull diamond. We talked a little. My companion asked me where I had worked before, how much I knew of mines and a few other questions. And still we walked on, dodging the low wire that comes level with one's ear and stumbling over the layer of broken coal that lay strewn here and there between the rails.

The silence was like the darkness—a total absence of sound rather than stillness, as my first impression of the mine had been that of an absence of light rather than of darkness. The smoking lights in our caps seemed to press out through the blackness twenty feet around us, where the light disappeared and was gone, and always in front of us, out of the black darkness, the two long lines of props on either side of the track stepped one by one into the yellow haze of light and sank again into darkness behind us as we walked.

The air was cool and damp, but as we turned the last corner the dampness seemed suddenly gone from it. It was warmer and closer. Here the track swerved up from one of the main tunnels into a "room," and at the end, or "heading," of this room, which we reached a few minutes later, empty and waiting for its first load, stood one of the square cars which I had seen before at the mine bottom and which we passed several times on sidings by the track. The car was pushed up to the end of the track and its wheels "sprung" by two blocks of coal. Here the tunnel suddenly ended, and from the blank, black "face" a rough, broken pile of coal streamed down on both sides of the car and reared up before it against the roof.

"Just shove 'er full, then wait till the motor takes her out and send in an empty, and fill that one. I'll look in on you once in awhile and see how you're getting along."

Then he turned and walked down the track and left me to the dim light of my single pit lamp.

(To be continued.)

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION—Coal Entry. (Secs. 2348-52, R. S.) Land Office at Salt Lake City, Utah, February 5, 1913. Notice is hereby given that Charles H. Gosling of Ogden, county of Weber, state of Utah, who, on the 11th day of March, 1912, filed in this office coal declaratory statement for sec 8 1/2 NE 1/4 and NW 1/4 SE 1/4 of Sec. 10, Twp. 13 South, Range 9 East, Salt Lake meridian, has this day filed in this office application to purchase said land under the provisions of Sections 2348 to 2352, U. S. Revised Statutes, Serial 92499. Any and all persons claiming adversely the lands described, or desiring to object for any reason to the entry thereof by applicant should file their affidavits of protest in this office during the thirty-day period of publication immediately following the first printed issue of this notice. E. D. R. THOMPSON, Register. First pub. Feb. 13; last Mch. 13-12.

STATE TIMBER SALE—NOTICE IS hereby given that the state board of land commissioners will offer at public sale at the front door of the county court house at Price, Utah, on Tuesday, March 18, 1913, at 2 o'clock p. m., the timber on Section 22, Township 12 South of Range 9 East, Salt Lake meridian, as specified herein. The offering and sale is to be made in accordance with Sections 2319 to 2342, Laws of Utah, and the timber is to be removed from said section within a reasonable time, to be determined by the state board of land commissioners. No bid will be received at less than the following prices: The bidder must offer at least \$1.50 per thousand for saw timber, four cents each for mine ties, and one cent per linear foot for mine props. Successful bidders must deposit 10 per cent at the time of sale and the balance upon signing the contract after the sale is approved by the state land board. STATE BOARD OF LAND COMMISSIONERS, by Wm. J. Lynch, Secretary, Salt Lake City, Utah, February 8, 1913. First pub. Feb. 13; last Mch. 13-12.

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NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE AND Sale Under Chattel Mortgage—Notice is hereby given, that by virtue of a chattel mortgage executed by the Lewis Jewelry and Music company, a corporation, as mortgagor, to Max M. Weil, as mortgagee, dated April 3, 1912, and filed and recorded in the office of the county recorder of Carbon county, Utah, on the 19th day of April, A. D. 1912, in Book 3 of Chattel Mortgage, at Page 286, and upon which said chattel mortgage there will be due on the 26th day of January, A. D. 1913, the date of the first publication of this notice, the sum of \$1034.29, the undersigned, Max M. Weil, the said mortgagee, will foreclose said chattel mortgage by a sale of the property described in said mortgage and hereinafter described, and to that end will expose and offer for sale at public auction, on Friday, the 14th day of February, A. D. 1913, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon of said day, at and in front of the place of business of the Lewis Jewelry and Music company, in Price, Carbon county, state of Utah, the property described in said chattel mortgage and hereinafter described, as follows, to wit: The entire stock and fixtures of the Lewis Jewelry and Music company, in its store at Price, Utah, consisting of stocks, watches, silverware and all jewelry. Terms of sale, cash. MAX M. WEIL. Dated, January 29, 1913. First pub. Jan. 30; last Feb. 13-13.

NOTICE—THE WELLINGTON CANAL Company, Wellington, Utah, January 28, 1913.—There are delinquent upon the following described stock, on account of assessment levied on the 7th day of December, 1912, the several amounts set opposite the names of the respective shareholders as follows:

Name	No. of Shares	Amt.
Thomas Jones	15	\$ 75
John Powell	25	1.25
John F. Tidwell	627	15.98
Fanny E. Vance	11	.30
Hopken Jones & Bros	437	21.85
Raymond Ellis	20	.50
James Morgan	8	.42
F. P. Sweet	350	17.50
John C. Vance	529	2.65

And in accordance with law, so many shares of each parcel of such stock, as may be necessary, will be sold at the United States postoffice at Wellington, Utah, on the 17th day of February, 1913, at the hour of 2 o'clock p. m., to pay delinquent assessment thereon together with the cost of advertising and expense of sale. EDGAR THAYN, Secretary, Wellington, Utah. First pub. Jan. 30; last Feb. 13-13.

4-366.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION—Coal Entry. (Secs. 2348-52, R. S.) Land Office at Salt Lake City, Utah, February 5, 1913. Notice is hereby given that David S. Tracy of Ogden, county of Weber, state of Utah, who, on the 11th day of March, 1912, filed in this office coal declaratory statement for the S 1/2 SE 1/4, Sec. 10, NW 1/4 NE 1/4, NW 1/4 of Sec. 15, Twp. 13 South, Range 9 East, Salt Lake meridian, has this day filed in this office application to purchase said land under the provisions of Sections 2348 to 2352, U. S. Revised Statutes, Serial 92499. Any and all persons claiming adversely the lands described, or desiring to object for any reason to the entry thereof by applicant, should file their affidavits of protest in this office during the thirty-day period of publication immediately following the first printed issue of this notice. E. D. R. THOMPSON, Register. First pub. Feb. 13; last Mch. 13-13.

4-366.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION—Coal Entry. (Secs. 2348-52, R. S.) Land Office at Salt Lake City, Utah, February 5, 1913. Notice is hereby given that William J. Norton of Ogden, county of Weber, state of Utah, who, on the 11th day of March, 1912, filed in this office coal declaratory statement for the S 1/2 SW 1/4 and NW 1/4 SW 1/4 of Sec. 10, Twp. 13 South, Range 9 East, Salt Lake meridian, has this day filed in this office application to purchase said land under the provisions of Sections 2348 to 2352, U. S. Revised Statutes, Serial 92497. Any and all persons claiming adversely the lands described, or desiring to object for any reason to the entry thereof by applicant should file their affidavits of protest in this office during the thirty-day period of publication immediately following the first printed issue of this notice. E. D. R. THOMPSON, Register. First pub. Feb. 13; last Mch. 13-13.

4-348 b.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION—(Publisher.) Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at Salt Lake City, Utah, January 29, 1913. Notice is hereby given that Calvin Christopher Clauson of Hiawatha, Utah, who, on November 9, 1909, made Homestead Entry, No. 05067, for N 1/2 SW 1/4, NW 1/4 SE 1/4, Sec. 19, and NE 1/4 SE 1/4, Sec. 20, Twp. 15 South, Range 9 East, Salt Lake meridian, has filed notice of intention to make final three-year proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before the clerk of the district court at Price, Utah, on the 3d day of April, 1913. Claimant names as witnesses Peter Jankovic of Hiawatha, Utah; Peter Frazdosen of Price, Utah; Joseph Frazdosen of Price, Utah, and Frank E. Smith of Hiawatha, Utah. E. D. R. THOMPSON, Register. First pub. Jan. 30; last Mch. 6-13.

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4-348 d.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION—(Publisher.) Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at Salt Lake City, Utah, January 19, 1913. Notice is hereby given that E. Ashby, whose postoffice is at 201 Dooly Building, Salt Lake City, Utah, did, on the 28th of September, 1912, file in this office sworn statement and application No. 010562, to purchase the NE 1/4, Sec. 14, Twp. 13 Range 9 East, Salt Lake meridian and the timber thereon, under provisions of the act of June 1878, and acts amendatory, as the "Timber and Stone" such value as might be fixed by appraisal, and that, pursuant such application, the land aforesaid has been appraised at \$100.00, the same offer will offer final proof in support of his application and sworn statement on the 25th day of 1913, before the register or collector of the United States office, at Salt Lake City, Utah; person is at liberty to protest purchase before entry, or to contest at any time before issues, by filing a corroborated affidavit in this office, alleging which would defeat the entry. D. R. THOMPSON, Register. First pub. Jan. 16; last Mch. 13-13.

4-365.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION—Coal Entry. (Sec. 2347, R. S.) Land Office at Salt Lake City, Utah, December 31, 1912. Notice is hereby given that Truman A. Ketchum of Portland, Oregon, who, on the 11th day of March, 1912, filed in this office application to purchase, Sec. 010552, under the provisions of Section 2347, U. S. Revised Statutes, the N 1/2 NW 1/4, SW 1/4 NW 1/4 and 2 NE 1/4 NW 1/4 of Sec. 13, Twp. 13 South, Range 10 East, Salt Lake meridian. Any and all persons claiming adversely the land described, or desiring to object for any reason to the sale thereof by applicant, should file their affidavits of protest in this office during the thirty-day period of publication immediately following the first printed issue of this notice, when the application may be made. E. D. R. THOMPSON, Register. First pub. Jan. 23; last Feb. 13-13.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION—(Publisher.) Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at Salt Lake City, Utah, January 23, 1913. Notice is hereby given that L. Debord of Price, Utah, who, on March 18, 1912, made Deeds Entry No. 09523, for N 1/2 NE 1/4, Twp. 15 South, Range 9 East, Salt Lake meridian, has filed notice of intention to make final proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before the clerk of the district court at Price, Utah, on the 3d day of March, 1913. Claimant names as witnesses Fred L. Blom, Thompson, K. A. Thompson, C. Burghland, all of Price, Utah. D. R. THOMPSON, Register. First pub. Jan. 23; last Feb. 13-13.

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