

How a Little Girl Put Deputies to Flight with a Big Gun

During the 1897 strike I held a meeting at Plumb Creek, Pa., one of the camps where the striking miners were living in tents. The bright face of a little girl of 13 drew my attention to her. Each day as I was telling about the purposes of the strike and what a victory would mean to the miners and their families, most of whom had not had a good square meal for years, as I would portray the suffering of the women and children, this little girl's eyes would fill with tears.

One day the company, in a last desperate effort to break up the strike, sent Deputy Sheriffs, each with a big star pinned on his coat, around to corral the strikers and force them into the mine. They went to the tent where this girl, with her sisters and brothers and father lived.

The deputies went in and dragged the father out, but they had no more than got him started toward the wagon than the children, headed by the oldest girl, came a-running. The four small ones began screaming and crying, to which the deputies paid less attention than they would have to a stray cur's yelping.

The eldest girl ran into the tent and came out dragging an old shotgun. Only one end of it could she keep off the ground at a time, but that happened to be the business end of the gun, and the deputies caught themselves looking down into the double barrels.

"Now you just let go of my papa," the little girl cried hysterically, "and if you don't this gun will shoot every one of you bad men."

"The little fool might shoot, Bill," one deputy said to another. They let the father climb out of the wagon and then turned the team around and drove back to the Mine Superintendent for further instructions.

"Bring that kid to me!" he said.

A whole company of deputies went down and catching the girl in the road carried her to the mine company's office.

The Superintendent told her that he was going to send her to the Reform School for attempting to murder officers of the law.

"You can send me there if you want to, the old gun didn't have any hammer or trigger on it. Them fellows are all cowards anyhow. Gee! You ought to have seen 'em let loose of papa, 'cause they were scared I'd shoot daylight through them."

The Superintendent didn't send the little girl to the Reform School and

6 April 1912

they didn't try to kidnap any other strikers either. We all held a meeting and I made a crown which we placed upon the little girl's head. From then until the men won the strike, which they finally did, the girl was the heroine of all the mining country thereabouts.

[*Cincinnati Post*, 6 April 1912.]