A "Durable Struggle" was Abraham Lincoln's way of describing the contest over the extension of slavery. It is a serviceable term. Men have always had them on their hands. We have them now, and now, as in Lincoln's time and before, the stuff of which they are made is a man's right to work out his life according to his own desires and judgment.

The relative rights of property and labor is the "durable struggle" of our day, as slavery was of Lincoln's. We forget often that it is so, though quite regularly it reasserts itself, bringing the forgetful sharply back to a realization that an issue exists. It is rare, however, that in one of these outbreaks we get from either side a statement so bold and sincere as that of J. D. Rockefeller, Jr., made in April, declaring the position of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company in the strike of the Western Federation of Miners.

What the status of this particular tragedy will be when this writing sees light is impossible to know. The Federation may have yielded for the moment; Mr. Rockefeller may have reconsidered, and the representatives of the two sides be sitting around a table mediating their difficulties. Colorado may still be under Federal military rule. However that may be, there will be thousands of good and able men in the country who will still accept Mr. Rockefeller's statement
as their creed.

It is this fact that makes it worth analyzing — this fact, and the other, that it is without cunning or deceit — a frank putting of what a powerful man believes.

"The right of every American citizen to work in terms satisfactory to himself without securing the consent of the union;" that is the issue in Mr. Rockefeller's mind. To the defense of this cause he pledges himself and the millions of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company.

Grant the contention. It is a right and one to be defended. But Mr. Rockefeller mistakes a half loaf for a whole. There is another right equally precious to men, equally recognized by courts and the people, and one for which in times past as much eloquence and blood has been spilled. It is the right of men to act together when they believe it is for their interests.

Mr. Rockefeller knows the value to men of collective action. The fortune which gives him his position of power in the country is based upon it. His hope of future returns in the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company is based upon it. Moreover, all the great corporations in which he is active recognize this to be the right of the men with whom they deal. Whatever the activity — manufacturing, transporting, financing, legislating; everything except the labor — they deal directly with an individual owner, or indirectly through the representatives of a group of owners, as may be elected.

Why should this right be refused to labor? Is labor something so unimportant in the operation of the Colorado Fuel & Iron that it can be ignored? No; as a matter of fact, it is the only thing in the company which could not be dispensed with. Mr. Rockefeller could; capital could. Labor is the original necessary factor out of which all the others have sprung, and the only one which, if the slate
should be wiped clean and we had to start over again, we would have
to have — or, indeed, could use.

Is labor ignoble, then, that a right granted to men in all their
other relations is denied it? No, it takes a brave man to be a miner —
a brave and patient man. Moreover, from the ranks of these men come
daily those who are to direct and own mines in the future. The president
of the best managed mine in the United States, those of the Frick Coke
& Coal Company, once swung a pick at $1.75 a day. No, it is not because
labor is insignificant or ignoble that Mr. Rockefeller declines to
recognize those in the ranks who prefer to deal with him in groups.

He gives reasons: one is that 90 per cent of the employees are
not in the union. But is that a sound reason? Possibly there are
corporations in which Mr. Rockefeller is interested, of which he holds
as little as ten per cent of the stock. Is that a reason why he
should not have a hearing through a representative if he wishes? 10 per
cent of 60,000 men is 6,000. Is their preference to be denied because
they are only 6,000?

Mr. Rockefeller says the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company controls
"only" one-third of the output of coal and iron in Colorado. But
Mr. Rockefeller would be the first to protest that his rights as a
citizen were being interfered with if the state refused to listen to
his representative because he did not control 51 per cent of the state's
output.

He gives another reason: That the demands of the union do not
come direct to him from the 10 per cent in his employ, but from an
"outside body." But this "outside body" has the precise relation to
the 10 per cent of men in the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company that he and
Mr. J. Starr Murphy have to the 40 per cent of stock they own in the
Colorado Fuel & Iron Company. Just as he and Mr. Murphy have been
elected to represent a certain amount of money. This "outside body" has been elected to represent a certain number of men. There is a difference, however, in the experiences of the two representative bodies. By his own testimony Mr. Rockefeller has never been the inside of the Colorado mines, never explored their inky depths, swung a pick, taken his lunch by the light of a miner's lantern, known the terrors of crumbling vaults, of gas and black damp. The "outsidebody to a man has known it all.

Mr. Rockefeller declares that he will not recognize a body so famous for violence as the Western Federation of Miners. He is on dangerous ground. Place the records of the two side by side and ask which has brought the greater misery and bitterness to men. The miners' organization was born of the wrongs they suffered. It has been fed on them, walked by them.

Mr. Rockefeller may not know this, but let him read page by page the history of the concerns which made up the company of which he controls so formidable a share that he acts as its spokesman. Let him study the conditions under which the miners have lived for years, read its death roll, follow the fate of those the dead left behind them—never again will he take refuge in charges of violence against those he is fighting.

But he tells us that in recent years the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company has considered its employees, voluntarily granting an eight hour day, semi-monthly pay, check weighman, the right to buy at any store, an increase in wages. It is true, too, that the company is doing a fine work. It has torn down the former filthy miners' villages and is replacing them with neat cottages. It gives them schools, travelling libraries, kindergartens, and superior medical advice. Its camps have but one saloon a piece, and the county issues its camp licenses only after the company has made the most rigid investigations into the
character of its applicants. Its Minequa Hospital at Pueblo is counted one of the finest in the world.

These are good things. They are the material manifestation of a new spirit which is at work in American industry. The core of that spirit is that men are men—they may be of fifty-eight tongues and of any color and nation, as in these mines, but they are men, and are to be treated as men. But men require something more than things done for them. They require that things which concern them be done with them. This is what Mr. Rockefeller fails to see. Or, if he realizes dimly something of what is at issue, the situation is so complicated that he takes his stand as the advocate of a group which has not asked his services.

"Are the labor unions," asks Mr. Rockefeller, "representing a small minority of the workers of the country, to be sustained in their disregard of the inalienable right of every American citizen to work without interference, whether he be a union or a non-union man?"

Mr. Rockefeller may be sure they are not. They will no more be sustained in that disregard than the Standard Oil Company was in its original contention that it owned the oil business; than it was sustained in the efforts to force, if it could not wheedle, any man who produced, carried or sold oil into its union.

"Surely," continues Mr. Rockefeller, "the vast majority of American citizens will, without fear or favor, stand for even-handed justice under the Constitution, and equal rights for every citizen."

They will; they will sustain the labor unions in their right to grow as large as they can by legitimate means, just as they have and will sustain Mr. Rockefeller in the same right. They will sustain the union, too, in their desire to act through representatives, just as they sustain Mr. Rockefeller when he acts through representatives.

Black, bitter, and chaotic as the struggle in the Colorado mines has be
has become; it is for the men in power to find a peaceful and righteous way out.

That is their business; to secure it is the business of Wilson's administration to find a peaceful way out of the Mexican embrazu. Failure or success in either case is measured by the blood shed or spared. This miner's war,

No one man's will or judgment or desire can settle it. No system or organization, no amount of property or power can settle it. It is the affair of all concerned. There is the in young Mr. Rockefeller's way. He has learned the needs and and power of money. He has not learned that in carrying on great enterprises you can no more ignore the laws of men's minds and hearts than the laws of steam and electricity. Human nature suppressed reaches out like the pent-up fires of earth, and it is no more careful of what it destroys.

Mr. Rockefeller is dealing with men, and the difficulty is the difficulty of many of us in all ranks of life. Of those of us who write about them legislate for them, devise schemes to give them justice and happiness. We don't know enough about them.

"Look at what we have done for them," he says. But it is not that they are asking. It is part in bringing all that about. It is to have a share in their own affairs. A man's work and house and school is his affair, and when any portion of a laboring body has become so intelligent and so interested that it is willing to organize and fight, think and struggle in that affair, and starve if necessary, for the sake of that right, why that body is worth recognizing, preserving, cultivating. It is the union of the force, the part in which you can look for fresh ability, fresh invention, courage, leadership, all of the qualities which men must develop within an industry if they are to make it stable and self-perpetuating. Moreover, it is a thinking force, and it will not be denied.

This hard lesson Mr. Rockefeller must learn. If he would go himself to Colorado, take a pick, live the life of a miner for a few
months, walk among men as the Christ whom he follows with such openness, and, I believe, sincerity, once did, then he would have the right which knowledge, and knowledge alone, gives, to speak for men.

There's a big chance for him in this nasty business. It is to get the point - the real point - which is the right of men to act collectively, if they so desire. The exercise of that right, often with a violence and a corruption the labor union has rarely equalled, brought him to his present position. Let him help to extend the right to all men, and at the same time help by wise counsel to strip it of all the evils which alone make it dangerous.

He has another great chance: There is going on within American industry a tremendous movement for its peaceful redemption. It is a movement founded in the recognition of the powers of men and women, whatever their nation or their creed, to respond to opportunities for growth. In the name of the common man, industry after industry is revolutionizing itself. The very breath of this movement is cooperation. It cannot live without the active partnership in it of those whom it affects. Its outward form may be imperfect. Conditions, hours, wages, safety, homes may be improved; but without the sympathetic understanding of the theory on which it is based, the powers of men to develop it, it is nothing but a shell. It can never bring to industry the peace it needs. Indeed, it is the more liable to increase bitterness if it is suspected that these changes are made to silence the deeper things in men's hearts, those things for which through all the ages they have left homes and friends and faced hardships and death to preserve.

If Mr. Rockefeller will learn what the changes which have already been wrought in conditions around his mines mean - that they are but the shell of a precious kernel, and if he will, like a man, seek to preserve and cultivate that kernel, he will do for his time one of the greatest services man can do.