

What Workingmen Have Done for Our Country

BY A WORKINGMAN

(Continued from last week.)

The sons of our workingmen have been numerous in all departments of our public life.

There is scarcely an official position in any of our states from governor down to constable, from presiding judge on the supreme bench down to justice of the peace, which they have not filled with credit and distinction. The truth of this statement is a matter of common knowledge. But they have also entered the broader field of our national public service. They have enriched with their learning and genius the discussions of the lower house of congress, standing forth there among the best, wisest and the bravest tribunes of our people. In a number of instances they have reached the speakership of that body. Linn Boyd, who was elected speaker twice beginning in 1851 was brought up at hard work on a farm. Nathaniel P. Banks, made speaker in 1856, worked in a cotton factory in early life, but before reaching congress he had been a lecturer, an editor and governor of Massachusetts. The same may possibly be true of others who have been elevated to the speakership of that body.

They have frequently been found among the men who have given culture, dignity and respectability to the United States senate.

Joseph E. McDonald, for a while United States senator from Indiana, was a saddle maker in early life. Henry Clay, the "great American commoner," was born of poor parents and inured to manual labor in early life. His career was a most extraordinary one. With limited education, he became a lawyer, member of the legislature, member of congress and six times speaker of that body, many years a United States senator, was secretary of state four years, beginning in March, 1825; represented our country as minister in foreign courts; was a candidate for President several times, and throughout his life was noted for his marvelous ability as an orator. Daniel Webster, "the great expounder of the constitution," a man of gigantic intellect, was the son of a farmer in very moderate circumstances, and Daniel himself did some work on his father's farm when he was a boy, and would, probably, have been obliged to do much more but for the fact that he was a weak, puny lad, unable to endure hard, manual labor. By making many sacrifices, his father's family managed to give him a good college education. He then became a lawyer, and rose to high eminence in his profession—a position he always maintained. He was also a member of his state legislature, a member of congress, a United States senator, secretary of state and for years prominently before the public as an aspirant for the presidency. Mr. Webster was a great man, a great statesman, at times sublime in his flights of eloquence; a most powerful debater and especially so on constitutional questions.

Without stopping to give names, the sons of our workingmen have been among our cabinet officers, the President's advisers in matters pertaining to the affairs of state, and in that position they have in numerous instances been noted for the wisdom and patriotism of their counsels. They have also played an important part in the field of diplomacy in foreign lands.

They have occasionally filled the high office of Vice-President of the United States.

Daniel D. Tompkins, the son of a farmer, after something of a public career, became Vice-President in 1817. Hannibal Hamlin was reared on a farm, became a printer by trade, and later was a member of the legislature, governor of Maine, a congressman, a United States senator, minister abroad,

and took his seat as Vice-President in 1861.

Henry Wilson was the son of a farm hand, worked on a farm himself till 21 years old, and then became a shoemaker by trade. Later he was a member of the Massachusetts legislature, a congressman, a United States senator, and in 1872 was elected to the office of Vice-President. Surely it must be admitted that so far as I have gone, the record of workingmen and of the sons of workingmen has been good; but the whole field is not yet covered. Hence, there is something more to follow.

J. T. MORGAN.

(To be continued.)

PRESIDENT GOMPERS.

A Washington correspondent of the Amalgamated Journal, official paper of the iron and steel workers, recently wrote concerning Samuel Gompers:

"The more I see of him the more I see in him to admire. I want to say right here that in President Samuel Gompers the labor movement of the United States has a general the equal of whom is not to be found at the head of the labor movement anywhere.

"As you all well know, the work of Mr. Gompers is general. He maps out the policy which is followed to a large extent by many of the labor unions, both national and local. Every day his mail brings him questions to decide, which are referred to him because there can be found no one else to answer them. His is the final arbitrator of many matters inside the union. On him depends the movements of organizers all through the country. To his skill and judgment many now flourishing unions are indebted for their prosperity. The responsibilities which he assumes are tremendous; yet he bears them with such humility and sweetness that it is a pleasure to meet him, to talk with him, and to talk with him on any point whatever. I know this from personal experience.

"Here is a letter from a local union affiliated with the A. F. of L., whether it would be advisable for the union to strike. The letter is bare of details; the writer evidently thinks Mr. Gompers knows all about the conditions which have arisen. How the great chief knows them matters not to him. It is a ticklish question and requires lots of diplomacy; yet Mr. Gompers never falters for an instant. Having grown up with the movement in this country, he is familiar with all its strong points and all its weaknesses. He knows how strong numerically and financially each section is, and his experience has taught him how to grapple with each question. He pauses for a moment's reflection, and then begins to dictate a letter, which for suavity and preciseness is the wonder of all who read it. It hits the spot exactly, and suffices to advise the troubled members of the union in regard to their difficulty.

"Another letter is from an organizer who has been sent to some distant point to perform some work. The work is exceedingly difficult, and the organizer is beginning to get discouraged. A few kind words expressed in a manner which Mr. Gompers only knows how, suffices to fill the man with renewed courage, and he goes to work again, to report in a few days that he has succeeded. And so it goes, in an endless stream of letters, on widely varied subjects, and all of more or less importance to the labor movement. Mr. Gompers, the diplomat, meets them all as they come, and knows just what to do with each one."

Every Chinaman engaged as a household servant is another obstacle in the pathway of virtue that white working girls are trying to follow.

OPPOSED TO THE UNIONS.

Reasons Given by a Capitalist Why They Should Be Abolished.

I am opposed to trade unions because I believe the workers should be satisfied with any conditions the bosses want to place on them.

I am opposed to trade unions because wherever they exist the workers are more independent and insist on what they might call their rights.

I am opposed to trade unions because wherever they exist the rate of wages is always higher, and I believe in low wages always and everywhere.

I am opposed to trade unions because wherever the workers are organized the hours of labor have been reduced. Organized trades have the shortest workday. I believe in long hours, as it tends to keep the toilers ignorant; I don't think they ought to know too much.

I am opposed to trade unions because they are trying to take children out of the shops and factories and put them to school, and have secured the passage of laws that prohibit their employment under a certain age. Children will work for almost nothing, and if the unions succeed in sending them to school they will become educated and ask ugly questions when they grow up. The way to keep these working people ignorant is to make their children work.

I am opposed to trade unions because they demand that women shall receive equal pay with men for equal work. I think a woman should be content with whatever she can get. She has got no vote anyway, and if these trade unionists would stop their agitations we should soon have her to work for nothing.

I am opposed to trade unions because they insist on and have secured the passage of legislation that makes the boss protect dangerous machinery and run his factory under proper sanitary conditions. I think this is all rot; it costs the boss money. Formerly, if a man was killed or lost a limb or met with an accident, that was all there was about it. Men are cheap and anxious to get work, and if it were not for these blamed unions we could do as we like and run our business to suit ourselves.

I am opposed to trade unions on principle. I don't think they are any good; they make the wage-earner dissatisfied; they put the idea into his head that he has a right to think for himself; that he should receive more returns from his labor; that he should work less hours; that he has a right to enjoy some of the luxuries of life, and that his children have the same right to be educated as the children of the rich.

Yes, I am utterly opposed to trades unions, first, last and all the time. They make the workingmen think they have the right to set a price on their labor, and say under what conditions they will work. If we could only get rid of the unions we would do pretty much as we like. We could work men for 12 or 14 hours a day at a dollar rate, and they would be too ignorant to make a kick. Yes, these trade unions are a bad thing when they teach our workers that they have rights the same as we have. That is where I draw the line, and I don't see how an intelligent person can uphold them in their outrageous demands. Yes, sir, the union is a bad thing; a bad thing, I say, a very bad thing; it should be suppressed.—Rochester Labor Journal.

The man who gives preference to the union label when making purchases shows to the onlooker that he has made the labor movement something more than the average man considers it. He proves that he is a student of economical conditions and is honestly trying to get a full solution of the matter.—Decatur Labor News.

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