

What Workingmen Have Done for Our Country

BY A WORKINGMAN

(Continued from last week.)

In the several letters heretofore written, I have given attention to the part our working men have taken in the peaceful vocations of our people. In this letter it will be my purpose to say something about the figure they have cut in our military affairs. As is quite generally known they have always been numerous in our navy, among our marines, whose valor has shone resplendent in our conflicts on the sea. For examples of such valor we are not obliged to go back into ancient history. It was exhibited in the engagement at Manila where the enemy's ships upon the water and his batteries on the land were silenced and destroyed by the guns of Uncle Sam, under the command of brave and matchless Dewey. It was seen in the sinking of the Merimac, a deed so fraught with danger and so marked by courage that it lifted to renown the name of gallant Hobson.

It was witnessed in the great battle near the bay of Santiago, where Cervera's noble fleet went down beneath the awful fusillade of valiant Sampson and heroic Schley.

Our working men have been numerous in our armies; and have nobly suffered, bled and died for "hearth and home and native land." As a matter of fact, they have always been our chief reliance amid those collisions of fire and sword which, at times have fairly jarred the world. We relied upon them during the Revolutionary war and the result was the Declaration of Independence, the ending of colonial relations with Great Britain, the taking our place among the sisterhood of nations as one of the great sovereign powers of earth, the floating of Old Glory upon every rippling wind that sweeps the heavens—Old Glory, the most beautiful banner between earth and sky—Old Glory, the noblest emblem of Liberty and Freedom ever bathed in summer's golden sunshine or kissed by autumn's wooing breeze—Old Glory, the grandest symbol of equality before the law ever unfurled over the sons and the daughters of the children of men.

Old Glory, Old Glory, Oh float thee forever,
O'er land and o'er waves of the sea,
And cease, do we pray thee, we pray thee, Oh never,
As flag of the brave and the free.

We relied upon our working men in the war of 1812 and the result was the victory of Jackson over Pakenham in 1815, the driving of the invader from our shores and the settlement of the doctrine of expatriation in our favor, so far at least as England is concerned—a doctrine which asserts the right of an individual to change his allegiance and citizenship. We relied on them during the Mexican war and the result was a signal victory for our arms, followed by the addition of about 600,000 square miles of contiguous territory to our public domain. We relied upon them during the Rebellion and the result was the overthrow of the doctrine of secession, the preservation of the Union, the liberation of four million of slaves and the establishing of political equality between all our people regardless of the distinctions based on race, color or previous condition of servitude. We relied upon them during our late war with Spain, which began and ended in 1898, and from a purely military point of view, the result was the adding of a new lustre to the brilliancy of all our earlier achievements.

But lest it be inferred that our working men and their sons never got above the lower ranks in our military service, I ought here to state that such is not the case. The fact is that in many instances they have risen to posts of highest distinction and responsibility in that line of service.

General Putnam of Revolutionary fame, literally left the plow to take part in the war for Independence.

Nathaniel Greene, the son of a poor Quaker, who in his youth worked on a farm, in a mill and at a forge, entered upon his military career as a private soldier and during the same war was advanced by degrees till he became a brigadier-general.

The same sort of a statement is in a general way, true of General Francis Marion and General John P. Morgan, both of whom won much distinction during that war.

Andrew Jackson, whose early career was sketched in the letter wherein I spoke of the presidents who had been working men and the sons of working men, was a man who gave several years of his life to military service, and, as will be readily recalled, won his greatest victory and renown during the war of 1812.

Zachary Taylor was the son of a farmer was brought up on a farm upon which he was accustomed to labor in early life. With a limited education he devoted most of his life to the profession of arms, rising gradually and by slow degrees till he reached a very high place as a commander, and it was his military achievements and the glory they brought him, more than anything else, that led to his being elected to the office of president.

James A. Garfield, Nathaniel P. Banks and Ambrose E. Burnside, distinguished generals during the Rebellion, all saw service in some form or other, as manual laborers in early life. But these are examples sufficient, for my present purpose. In view of the numerous facts to which attention has now been called it would seem safe to say that our working men have upon the whole been of as much service to our country in war as they have in peace, that in both they have risen to the highest eminence, and that they have acquitted themselves creditably in the most responsible positions in all branches of our public and private life.

J. T. MORGAN.

(To be concluded next week.)

THE MISTAKE OF HIS LIFE.

According to an Associated Press dispatch, Marcus Aurelius Hanna is planning to control the next convention of the American Federation of Labor. It seems an improbable story, but there is nothing Hanna would not do to further the interests of plutocracy, and if he contemplates mixing in labor affairs it is for that purpose. He will tackle the hardest job of his lifetime if he tries to control the American Federation of Labor. His millions have enabled him to befuddle large numbers of workingmen and so split up their votes as to best serve his political purposes. But should he attempt to make a political unit of them by interfering with the affairs of the American Federation of Labor he will be met with something he has not as yet had to contend against—the organized opposition of two million union workingmen. His purpose would be so evident that the representatives would not dare, even if they were inclined, to adopt any plan he might propose. While we do not think Hanna will mix in the Federation of Labor's affairs, we almost wish he would. The result would be, what has long been sought, the unification of organized labor at the polls—not to serve Hanna's interests, but to protect its own. His interference would force union men to do at once what they know they must eventually do—vote together. They would be brought face to face with the fact that they now only see in the distance—the fact that they must dethrone the money power with ballots. Hanna is doomed to disappointment if he attempts to make a political machine of the American Federation of Labor, and his doom would be the salvation of labor.—Union Record.

RIGHTEOUS DEMANDS.

Two of the demands made by the striking miners in Pennsylvania appeal with much force to the impartial student of the situation. The first of these requests is for fortnightly pay days. By the system now in vogue the men are paid monthly. More frequent pay days are proper for people of small incomes, who are generally denied large credits.

It is no argument to say that more frequent pay days means more spent in drunkenness. These men earn this money and have a right to it. It is not for the employers to try and regulate their habits or methods of spending it. They are free American citizens, and not the subjects of paternalism.

The other request is for the abolishment of the company stores. The right of the miners to liberty of trade should not be denied them. The men should be paid in the current money of the country and be allowed to buy where they please and to the best advantage for them. The possibilities for the abuse of the company store system are almost unlimited, and in most cases are attained to a greater or less degree.

There may be other worthy contentions in the cause of the striking miners, but in these two respects the righteousness of their cause is so manifest that it can but win them hopes for success, in these respects at least.—Galesburg Mail.

FARMERS AND ORGANIZED LABOR

A conference was held this week in St. Paul, Minn., by the heads of the several national farmers' organizations, for the purpose of considering the political situation, and it is said that an address will be issued shortly designating those candidates who are favorably regarded by the farmers' organizations. A series of demands, it has been said, has been submitted to candidates of all parties for congressional and legislative offices and also to President McKinley and W. J. Bryan. It is claimed that the societies represented have a membership of 3,500,000, are absolutely non-partisan in politics, but will support only candidates as set forth in their demands.

The farmers have tried this thing before, and so have labor organizations, and both have lost out in an endeavor to better their condition through getting promises from candidates for political offices. How long will it take the toilers to reach the conclusion that they can only secure justice by filling the offices with men from their own ranks, and how long will it take the farmers to learn that they cannot get anything of value to them as a class until they join forces with organized labor? We hope the lesson may be sufficiently impressed upon them by the results of their efforts in this campaign.—Union Guide.

EASY AS LYING.

A German named Siegel quietly bought up a fine site in Camden, N. J., three years ago, and erected a complete sugar refinery at a cost of some two millions. When he was ready to start up, the sugar trust made him offer after offer and finally paid him all he had expended and one million on top of it, and the refinery has never turned a wheel. But the sugar trust will now proceed to collect that \$3,000,000 from sugar-users in the price they pay for sugar. How nice and patriotic it is to sit still and be governed instead of served by a government!

The Waterville Mail, in speaking of the municipal ownership of the waterworks system by the city of Auburn, Maine, says that the net profit for the last year was almost \$9,000 and the total net profit for all the time since the city acquired the work is about \$57,000. That is rather better than putting that much money into the pockets of a private corporation.—Labor Signal.

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