

The People.

VOL. VII, NO. 42

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 1898

PRICE 3 CENTS

FIRST EDITORIAL

Ohio's Food for Bourgeois Cannon.

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Ohio in general, Columbus in particular, was last week the theater of much turbulence. The issue was, Shall Hanna be defeated? Around this issue, as around a rock middle in the track of opposing currents, did the storm rage. Never do human passions come into violent contact, especially not when vented on historic stages, without the penny-a-liner philosopher is pricked into mental and other activity. So it was in this case. The deep philosophic, excruciatingly political, sickeningly sociologic editorial-essays that our plutocratic press felt pricked to perpetrate were numerous, and they were perpetrated on a large number of incidents connected with and suggested by the fight. Nevertheless, however numerous these topics, the ONE point of interest brought out by the Hanna conflict, the ONE point of deep note just now and deeper note in the near future, that was left uncommented upon. Either our journalistic "philosophers" were too witless to perceive it, or they had sense enough to perceive it, and thought best not to bring it into prominence. That point was the rôle played in the conflict by the employees of Hanna and Bushnell.

Bushnell and Hanna are both Republicans, enthusiastic upholders of "the noble principles of the Republican party." But they are competitors in some of their several branches of industry; hence they are also competitors politically: each knows that, if to his capital he can add individual political power, he will be all the better equipped for the struggle in the market. Hanna sought a seat in the United States Senate as a lever for his business; Bushnell sought to deprive him of that lever. Neither would openly admit the secret spring of his action; both wrapped themselves in the toga of the "national interest," and thus went through the wrestling match amidst a political stage-setting. Each sought to make it appear that not only his "noble party," but the "honest masses of Ohio" were on his side. Hence each was driven to drive and lash as large a crowd to his side as possible. But the masses are in the working class, and, with the exception of the labor leader fakirs among them, are not apt to bubble with Hanna or Bushnell enthusiasm; the stock-holders in the Hanna and the Bushnell enterprises are not numerous enough to create a sensation, even if they were to gather their full strength together. Whence, then, were the "masses" to come? There were

“masses,” they did assemble, the working class did “flock.” And that is the point, which, together with the how thereof, is the real significant matter in this Hanna fight.

Bushnell ordered his plants in Springfield and elsewhere to close; a holiday was given his men with free passes to Columbus. Hanna ordered all his available hands—from the lakes, the tractions and the mines—, all that could be spared to be packed up and consigned to Columbus. Arrived in that city, the consignee of each job-lot took charge of his merchandise and therewith “fitted out” his meeting as a Hanna meeting and a Bushnell meeting respectively!

With little over 4,000 class-conscious workingmen voters in Ohio, this disgraceful scene comes natural. The quarry from which the conflicting capitalist usurpers can draw their material for their various uses is the quarry of the class-unconscious proletariat. While that lasts, bourgeois conflicts will not lack food for cannon; in proportion as the light of Socialism redeems that quarry and electrifies it into manhood, bourgeois conflicts will become, in point of the number of the combatants, more and more trifling, and thereby more and more in keeping with the bourgeois issues.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded November 2003