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EDITORIAL

MARK HANNA.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WITH the death of Mark Hanna a monumental figure is removed from the stage of American history.

What Mark Hanna might have been, under conditions other than the complex ones of capitalist society, it is not difficult to guess from the combined qualities displayed in his career, and which, though they mark him a distinguished figure, certainly marred his special gifts for good, dwarfing all and in their combination producing a prodigy—such as it was.

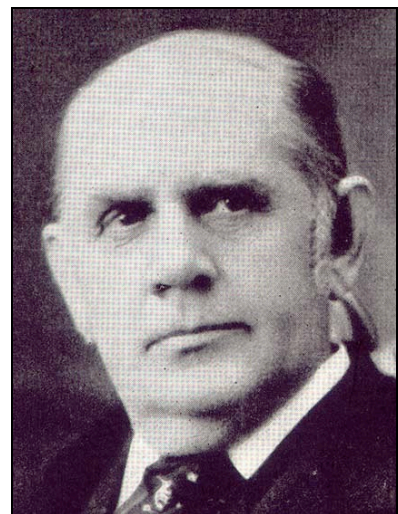
Had his lot been to be born among barbarians, Mark Hanna would have been a strong-fisted, physically bold yet shrewd Ghengis Khan.—The man had all the latent fibre of physical daring.

Had his lot been to be born in a period and a nation of intellectual repose and culture, Mark Hanna would have been a learned man, and a profound thinker.—The man had all the latent powers of the mind.

Had his lot been to be born in, or thrown into frontier life, the chances are even that Mark Hanna would have been found either at the head of vigilantes committees, or at the head of the bandits, the objects of the vigilantes' solicitude.—The man had the latent instinct of the bloodhound and the wolf.

Had his lot thrown him into the ranks of the Greeks after Kunaxa, Mark Hanna would have taken the place of Xenophon.—The man had the latent powers of the high grade organizer.

Had his lot thrown him into the requisite company, time and atmosphere, greater Utahs would have risen at the wave of Mark Hanna's wand.—The man had



MARCUS A. HANNA (1837-1904)

the latent idealism to conceive the building of nations.

As it was, Mark Hanna's lot threw him into capitalist society—American capitalist society, at that,—where none of the noble and all the ignoble qualities, evoked by the above-mentioned conditions, are the atmosphere for the “survival of the fittest.” The result was that the latent good was marred in Hanna, and produced, together with the latent bad that now was “fittest” for development, the prodigy that he was.

Hanna, instead of physical daring developed the daring of the Jerry Sneak; instead of learning, developed low cunning; instead of broadly constructive he became corrodingly selfish; instead of noble, he became callous to wrong. With these qualities, expanded by whatever was left of his better part, Mark Hanna naturally became the undisputed and admired and trusted head of our modern filibusters—the American capitalists—combining in his person the essential qualities that none other possessed—at least not to the extent that he did. And thus, with one foot on the political, the other on the industrial field of capitalism, Hanna rose like a Colossus of Rhodes—a mighty guide to his class.

Well may they mourn their loss.

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

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