

William Perkins Black: Haymarket Lawyer
By Herman Kogan

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Long before the American Civil Liberties Union was formed, there were lawyers capable of sacrificing a lucrative career to defend an unpopular cause. You know of Clarence Darrow—now we give you William Perkins Black, attorney for the Haymarket anarchists.

In the late spring of 1886, few lawyers in Chicago had as glowing a future as William Perkins Black. A Civil War hero who had been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor when he was only nineteen, he was alert, articulate, popular, and a partner in a law firm that numbered among its clients many of the city's burgeoning industrialists and most important businessmen. Then he was paid a visit by three men desperate for his services—and his life and career were forever altered.

The three were Dr. Ernst Schmidt, a well-known physician who had once run for mayor on the Socialist ticket, and two young attorneys, Sigmund Zeisler and Moses Salomon. They had come as members of a legal defense committee organized on behalf of eight men who had been charged with involvement in the explosion of a bomb in Haymarket Square on the night of May 4—a horrific tragedy that climaxed the struggle between the striking workers of the McCormick Harvester Works, the company, and the police. The workers—who were striking for the eight-hour day—had held a mass meeting on May 3. Police fired into the crowd and six strikers were killed. The next night, at the square at Randolph and Desplaines streets, some two thousand persons gathered to hear speakers denounce the murders. Then a bomb was thrown by an unknown person: seven policemen were killed and almost seventy others in the crowd were injured. In the aftermath, the city was gripped by hysterical fear of the strikers and their leaders, some of whom were self-acknowledged anarchists.

Police Capt. Michael J. Schaack, a zealous foe of agitators and unionists, ordered a roundup of anarchists, both acknowledged and suspected, of radicals of every hue, and even of laborites who were opposed to anarchism but who had campaigned for nearly a decade for such daring improvements as the eight-hour day and sanitary factory conditions. Many innocent Chicagoans were taken from their homes without warrants and held without bail, and for days the station-house cells were jammed, some with women and children. Ultimately, eight men were held without bail for the Criminal Court grand jury. And on May 27, the eight—Albert R. Parsons, a Confederate army veteran, writer, and leader in the Central Labor Union, an aggregation of left-wing unions; August Spies, a fiery editor of a German workers' newspaper, the *Arbeiter Zeitung*; British-born Samuel Fielden, an avowed anarchist who had been speaking when the fatal bomb burst; Adolph Fischer, a printer; George Engel, a toymaker; Louis Lingg, a carpenter; Oscar W. Neebe, a beer-wagon driver; and Michael Schwab, an editorial assistant on the *Arbeiter Zeitung*—were indicted as accessories to the murder of policeman Mathias J. Degan, for murder by pistol shots, and for general conspiracy to murder.

The prevailing atmosphere was incredibly tense. Day after day, the accused were condemned in the nation's newspapers. The *New York Times* called for “death for the cowardly

savages”; the *Philadelphia Inquirer* demanded “a mailed hand” to teach anarchists that the United States was not a “shelter for cutthroats and thieves”; and some of Chicago’s editors cried out for a public hanging without trial. Even liberal clergymen joined the mob: “We need a careful definition of what freedom is,” intoned David Swing of the Central Church of Chicago. “If it means the license to proclaim the gospel of disorder, to preach destruction and scatter the seeds of anarchy and death, the sooner we exchange the Republic for an ironhanded monarchy the better it will be for all of us!” Charles C. Bonney, a lawyer who had for years criticized industrialists and inveighed frequently against “the greed, the selfishness, the neglect and folly of wealth and power,” now maintained that labor was responsible for its own ills, that labor and anarchism were genuine allies, and that the use of the bomb, no matter by whom thrown, was literally “a waiver of trial and a plea of guilty.”

In such an atmosphere, it seemed next to impossible to secure good legal counsel for the accused. Yet, even while the grand jury was in session, Dr. Schmidt, who deplored the use of force in securing workers’ gains but who was convinced that Spies and the others had had no part in causing the Haymarket tragedy, undertook the task of organizing a legal defense committee.

Aware that Salomon, the lawyer for the Chicago Labor Union, and his associate Zeisler were too inexperienced for what was certain to be a complex and difficult trial, Dr. Schmidt first sought to retain Luther Laflin Mills, a former state’s attorney of Cook County. Mills swiftly declined. William S. Forrest, highly experienced in the technicalities of criminal law, asked a fee that was far beyond the capacity of the committee, most of whose contributors had given from \$1 to \$5.

Now they were in Black’s office to ask that he head the defense team. Black seemed an unlikely choice. A charter member of the Chicago Bar Association and a partner in the firm of Dent and Black, his reputation was in corporate law, and he was not versed in criminal law. True, he had lectured from time to time on Nihilism and on Socialist movements in America, but Black was not at all sympathetic to anarchism or to violence.

Born in Woodward County, Kentucky, on November 11, 1842, Black first studied in downstate Danville to be a Presbyterian minister like his father. With the coming of the Civil War, he and his older brother John enlisted in the 11th Indiana Zouaves. Early in 1862, the two organized a company of Illinois volunteers in the 37th Illinois Infantry, popularly known as the Fremont Rifles, and within months they were in fierce combat at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, where William, a captain, performed so valiantly that he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. John’s bravery in a later battle, at Prairie Grove, Arkansas, won him the same medal and a promotion to general.

After the war, both men studied law. Early in the 1870s, they came to Chicago, where John ran unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor on the Democratic ticket. John Black later became a wealthy railroad company attorney and also served as U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois and as chairman of the U.S. Civil Service Commission. William turned Democrat after campaigning for Horace Greeley in 1872. In 1882, he ran for Congress and was defeated by only 2,400 votes.

His practice with Dent, an old friend from Danville, was rapidly expanding when Dr. Schmidt visited him. Black was cool to the request but promised to secure an expert in defending men accused of serious crimes. But he was unable to do so. And the longer he tried, the more indignant Black became, and the more he feared that the defendants might go to trial without adequate counsel.

So he went to see Circuit Court Judge Murray F. Tuley, a former corporation counsel and alderman who was respected and admired as one of the city's learned jurists.

"I've been applied to by the friends of the anarchists to undertake their defense," Black said. "I advised them to try to employ someone who made criminal law their specialty. But they came back a second time and said they were still unable to get any such person to undertake their defense because they had very little money and again pleaded with me to take the case. The amount of money they have offered me is not worthy of consideration, but it is their all—all they can raise. I told them I would consider the matter and give them my decision. You know what undertaking their defense means to me or any lawyer of position at the bar."

"You have counted the cost?" asked Judge Tuley.

"Yes, I think I can foresee the result to me if I undertake their defense. I think I can foresee that he who undertakes the defense of these anarchists will be looked upon with at least great disfavor. It means to some extent social ostracism and, I believe, an almost total sacrifice of my business and possibly of my future prospects. Now, Judge, what shall I do? What would you do?"

To this Judge Tuley replied, "Captain Black, your question is a very serious one, and probably one that you should solve yourself. But as you ask my opinion, I shall give it to you. As these men have offered a retainer and that to the extent of their ability, I have no hesitation in saying that your duty to your profession, your duty to yourself, demands that you accept it and undertake their defense. I must say to you that you have rather underestimated than overestimated the cost to yourself. But yet, Captain, it is always expedient to do one's duty."

"I do feel," said Black, "that it is my duty to take the case, and your advice has encouraged me to do so."

It was a courageous decision. "Captain Black's consent to become the leading counsel in the case," Zeisler wrote years later, "was nothing short of an act of heroism." Because he believed that the charge to the grand jury by John G. Rogers, chief justice of the Criminal Court, had been filled with prejudice, one of Black's first moves was to ask for a change of venue, hoping the case might be assigned to Judge Tuley, whose reputation for impartiality and sound judgment was of the highest. But the case went, instead, to Judge Joseph E. Gary. Elected to the Superior Court in 1863, Gary had practiced law in Chicago for seven years before that and had been a partner of Tuley's. He was a stickler for punctuality and court decorum. He never permitted a lawyer or litigant to see him in his chambers for any reason, explaining that people were already so suspicious of lawyers and judges that he did not want to stimulate public curiosity and stir more suspicion by transacting judicial matters except in open court. The *Chicago Legal News* wrote of him:

Judge Gary is a very independent, experienced, able, impartial, judicial officer. There is no man on the bench in this country that exceeds him in executive ability. He allows no nonsense in his court. He calls things by their right name, proceeds at once to business. He is not flattered at the praise of counsel or frightened at their threats. In fact, he allows neither. He governs his court in a quiet way with a strong hand and a dean head, never descending to wrangling with counsel.

Almost immediately, however, Judge Gary began ruling against the defense. Black's motion to delay the opening of the trial—he believed the defendants would not get a fair hearing so close to the actual event—was denied when Gary ruled that it was the government's prerogative to set the date. The judge also refused to grant separate trials for Spies, Schwab, Fielden, and Neebe, requested by Black because he feared that evidence against any one defendant might be construed as evidence against all eight. The trial, unsurpassed in drama and tension in the city's legal annals, began on July 21, 1886. It took 21 days to pick a jury from among 982 talesmen, during which Parsons, appalled at what he considered Judge Gary's prejudice in permitting potential jurors to state that they were opposed to anarchism, passed Zeisler a note that read, "In taking a change of venue from Judge Rogers to Lord Jeffries, did not the defendants jump from the frying pan into the fire?"

Chief prosecutor Julius S. Grinnell was still basking in the fame of his recent convictions of a ring of thieving Cook County commissioners and of Joseph "Chesterfield Joe" Mackin, a powerful Democratic politician, for vote stealing. Through witnesses and evidence, he sought to connect the defendants to Rudolph Schnaubelt, the man who, though still missing, was generally believed to have hurled the bomb. Grinnell argued that even if Schnaubelt were not the actual bomb thrower, the defendants were still guilty of engaging in a conspiracy against established society. At one point, he declared that the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in 1861 "was nothing compared with the insidious, infamous plot to ruin our laws and our country secretly and in this cowardly way." And in his final summation, he cried:

I say to you, the law demands now, here, its power. . . . [T]hat law which the exponents of anarchy violated to kill Lincoln and Garfield, that law that has made us strong today and which you have sworn to obey, demands of you a punishment of these men. . . . Don't try, gentlemen, to shirk the issues. Law is on trial! Anarchy is on trial! The defendants are on trial for treason and murder!

Black's defense—in which he was aided not only by Zeisler and Salomon but also by a tough, tobacco-chewing Iowan, William A. Foster—was based on the lack of specific evidence to prove the charges in the indictment. The men were being tried, he asserted, because they were radicals:

The defendants are not charged with anarchy, they are not charged with Socialism. They are not charged with the fact that anarchy or Socialism is dangerous or beneficial to the community. . . . They had the right to gain converts, to make anarchists and Socialists, but whether Socialism or anarchy shall ever be established never rested with these defendants, never rested in a can of dynamite or in a dynamite bomb. It rests with the great mass of people, with the people of

Chicago, of Illinois, of the United States, of the world. If they, the people, want anarchy, want Socialism, if they want Democracy or Republicanism they can and they will inaugurate it.

Black's closing summation, in which he challenged virtually every point made by prosecution witnesses, ended with: "Gentlemen, the last words for these eight lives. They are in your hands, with no power to whom you are answerable but God and history, and I say to you in closing only the words of that Divine Socialist, 'As ye would that others should do to you, do you even so to them.'"

In his charge, Judge Gary instructed the jury that the defendants could be adjudged guilty if the evidence showed that they had agreed to overthrow the law by force and also if policeman Degan had been killed "in pursuance of such conspiracy." The jury needed only three hours to decide that seven of the defendants were guilty and one hour more to agree that Neebe was guilty, too. The next morning, all but Neebe, who received fifteen years, were sentenced to death and the date of execution was set for December 3.

From that point on, a series of legal steps was taken to save the men from the gallows. Leonard D. Swett, Abraham Lincoln's legal associate, replaced Foster early in 1887, in an unsuccessful appeal to the Illinois Supreme Court. Foster, whose lack of sympathy with defendants' ideas was obvious, never really regarded his clients as martyrs, and his actions in the trial were criticized by some Chicago radicals. Later that year, Swett also appeared with Gen. Ben Butler in a hearing before the U.S. Supreme Court, but the high court refused to intervene. Agitation for executive clemency for the condemned men, led by Lyman J. Gage, a prominent banker, over the strenuous opposition of such leading citizens as Marshall Field, Cyrus McCormick, George M. Pullman, and Philip D. Armour, prompted Gov. Richard J. Oglesby to commute Fielden's and Schwab's sentences to life imprisonment.

Lingg killed himself by exploding a detonating cap in his mouth, and the remaining four—Parsons, Spies, Fischer, and Engel—were hanged on November 11, 1887, in the Cook County Jail yard. On that day, there appeared on the bulletin board of the Palmer House the notice: "Trap fell. Spies Parsons Fischer & Engel expiate their crime & the law vindicated."

But the Haymarket case refused to die.

At first, Judge Gary remained aloof from the continuing controversy, but he was increasingly—and irritably—aware of the growing reaction against the trial's outcome. Agitation persisted for clemency for the surviving defendants. A petition bearing sixty thousand names—including many of Judge Gary's judicial colleagues—was presented to the state's new governor, John Peter Altgeld, shortly after his election in 1892. Although he had a reputation as a man of liberal views and had been urged to action by his close friend George Schilling, a labor union leader, Altgeld had taken no part in any of the earlier moves on behalf of the anarchists. After his election, Altgeld began to study the voluminous trial record. He was still at it when the April 1893 issue of *The Century* magazine appeared. In it was an article headed "The Chicago Anarchists of 1886. The Crime, the Trial, and the Punishment. By the Judge Who Presided at the Trial. And the Law is Common Sense."

In a startling, embittered article, Judge Gary asserted that the anarchists were convicted not for their political creed but for “horrible deeds.” He denounced each of the defendants and accused them of being insincere men who really had little sympathy with the workers they sought to lead. He reiterated the main points of his decision overruling a motion for a new trial. He made several misstatements about what the defendants had said and about events at the McCormick Harvester Works. And, he attacked not only William Perkins Black but even Black’s wife, Hortensia.

After Judge Gary had imposed the death sentence on seven of the defendants, Mrs. Black had written a letter to the Daily News in which she expressed sympathy for the anarchists:

I have never known an anarchist, did not even know what the term meant, until my husband became counsel for the defense. . . . Like everyone I knew, I felt horror for the tragic events of that eventful night. . . . But one day, one came to speak for that side which so long has been unheard—the accused—and I found out that, as to everything, there were two sides to this. During all that long trial a kind of soul crucifixion was imposed upon me. Often, as I took up one or the other of the daily papers, I would recall reverently those words of my Divine Master: “For which of my good works do you stone me?” Anarchy is simply a human effort to bring about the millennium. Why do we want to hang men for that, when every pulpit has thundered that the time is near at hand?

Quoting from the letter, Judge Gary implied that Mrs. Black and her husband were bound by some kind of spell to the anarchists, that they were unduly fascinated by them, and that the words they spoke and wrote were motivated not by social consciousness or deep feelings about society but by that peculiar fascination.

He was even rougher on Black for having declared in his funeral oration for the hanged anarchists at Waldheim Cemetery:

I loved these men. I knew them not until I came to know them in the time of their sore travail and anguish. As months went by and I found in the lives of those with whom I talked the witness of their love for the people, of their patience, gentleness and courage, my heart was taken captive in their cause. . . . I saw that whatever fault may have been in them, these, the people whom they loved and in whose cause they died, may well dose the volume, and seal up the record, and give our lips to the praise of their heroic deeds, and their sublime sacrifice.

Judge Gary had privately expressed his indignation over these remarks when they were first made, and now, nearly six years later, he was still outraged. He scoffed at such phrases as “sublime sacrifice” and interpreted Black’s reference to the men’s “cause” to mean “rebellion, to prosecute which they taught, and instigate murder.” The Blacks were guilty not only of falling under the anarchists’ spell, but also of maudlin sympathy.

Commenting on the article, the *Tribune* decreed, “It is timely.” But a youthful Clarence Darrow denounced it in a speech to the Law Club of Chicago while Judge Gary sat stony-faced

in a nearby chair. As for Governor Altgeld, the article spurred him to a decision to pardon Fielden, Neebe, and Schwab.

His official document, “Reasons for Pardoning,” issued on June 26, 1893, was a direct assault on Judge Gary and the conduct of the trial, from the faulty method of picking the jury to the failure of evidence to prove guilt. Judge Gary, concluded the governor, had conducted the trial “with malicious ferocity,” had ruled without exception on every contested point in favor of the prosecution, had swayed the jurors by making “insinuating remarks,” and had made speeches that were “much more damaging” than any by the prosecution. The article in *The Century*, wrote Altgeld, was “full of venom” because of the attacks on the Blacks. “It is urged,” the governor wrote toward the conclusion of the statement, “that such ferocity of subservience is without a parallel in all history, that even Jeffries of England contented himself with hanging his victims and did not stoop to berate them after death.”

Altgeld’s decision aroused considerable furor. Even such staunch admirers as Darrow and Jane Addams deplored Altgeld’s personal attack on Judge Gary, although the governor insisted, “I denounced not Gary the man but Garyism.” Even William Perkins Black derived scant personal or professional satisfaction from the result.

His law partner, Thomas P. Dent, continued to thrive and, in 1895, became president of the Chicago Bar Association and later president of the Illinois State Bar Association and of the Chicago Historical Society. Black’s partnership with Dent was, however, at an end. Nearly all of his business clients abandoned him and, for a number of years after the Haymarket case, his annual income, which had been between \$10,000 and \$15,000 shrank by two-thirds.

His association with Parsons and the other defendants had radicalized him somewhat. He spoke before various labor groups and especially at meetings memorializing those who came to be called the “Haymarket martyrs.” On the other hand, he retained an interest in conventional politics, zealously campaigning for William Jennings Bryan in his several presidential bids and running unsuccessfully for the office of Circuit Court judge, once on the Democratic ticket and later on the United Silver ticket.

With passage of years, the animosity toward Black that had prevailed during and immediately after the Haymarket hysteria dimmed. “He did what he considered his duty,” wrote one editorialist, “as dauntlessly as he did when a soldier.” He even managed to rebuild a reasonably successful law practice. By the time he died on January 3, 1916, in the Fulton Street home of his adopted son, William P. E. Black, he was a long-forgotten figure, his death meriting only a twenty-two-line newspaper obituary. Yet even that brief notice could not avoid mentioning his most memorable act as a lawyer of strong convictions and his basic belief in every man’s right to fair and equal trial before the law. “He assumed the work of defending the anarchists in the famous Haymarket riot, men charged with murder. And he did so at a time when considerable moral courage was necessary to do such a thing.”

Herman Kogan, editor of “Show,” the Chicago Sun Times arts and amusements section, adapted this article from his book The First Century: The Chicago Bar Association 1874–1974 (Rand McNally, 1974).

(A biographical sketch of William Perkins Black by his wife Hortensia, printed in *The Society*.)

Captain William Perkins Black

“Yes, he stood there alone trying to right the whole rebel force, whilst Charlie lay like dead at his feet; and he thought his brother was dead. The order to retreat had been given, but Cap never heard it; if he did he didn’t obey, and when the rest of us got safe behind the fences we looked back and there was Cap standing all alone firing at the Rebs. A shout went up from the troops and the Johnnies echoed it, and stopped firing in very admiration; and then Cap ran to drag Charlie back.”

That was the first I ever heard of my husband. In the city of Houston, Texas, a Union officer related the above in my hearing. The speaker was ardently attached to Captain Black, and becoming a great friend of mine prevailed upon him to inaugurate a correspondence with the permission of my parents, which after three years led to our marriage in the city of Galveston, that fairy isle of the Gulf.

The character indicated by that little sketch tells his history. His father and mother had been pro-slavery, and their happiest days had passed in the Southern homes; and in Woodford County, KY., Will was born; yet he left college when Sumter was fired upon to join the Union army as a private. When the war had accomplished its end, and only the gathering of honors remained, Captain Black returned home after three and a half years continuous service. Read law, whilst tutoring for the means of livelihood in a family near Chicago, was admitted to the bar and speedily became partner in an old prosperous firm of the City by the Lake, succeeding to the distinguished Judge Arrington as partner to Judge Dent.

Then came his marriage – marriage to a woman with whom he had only spent three days the year previous to Friday, May 28, 1869, on which date the marriage occurred, performed by a Catholic priest. Dr. Johnson, head of St. Mary’s College, Galveston; for he was marrying one as ardent in Catholicity as he was in his Presbyterian fold.

The children consequent on this union perished early, two little girls in their babyhood and four boys prematurely borne from this world, consequent on the mother’s grief for those earlier lost.

Religion naturally at this juncture performed an important part; and an order, commonly the effect of bereavement, drove Mr. Black into almost severe evangelical labors. But humanitarian more than theologian, he chose the missions among the poor for his field, and preached for three years at Rail Road Chapel, the mission of the wealthy. First Presbyterian Church, in order that old “Father Kent” as he was called, might continue to draw his scanty salary instead of being ousted in his old age by some theological student from the seminary, as was proposed.

But becoming disgusted with the narrowness of church bondage, Mr. Black, though he had been elected an elder in his church, resigned that position and finding he could not

conscientiously remain in that church of the rich, asked to have his name dropped from the roll, and upon his insisting, the ministers, who but the day previous had plead with him to remain, publicly excommunicated him, very much to Mr. Black's amusement at this feeble imitation of Rome's fulminating powder.

The subject which then began to interest him was Socialism, the cry of the people. He often said in those days, that it was like the approaching roar of a lion, that it was coming up to the very church doors. Mr. Dent, his partner, had purchased and loaned him Viletard's History of the International, which he carefully perused.

It was while my baby Rosebud lay dying in the Palmer House that the five thousand starving men of Chicago surrounded the Court House and demanded bread – and bread was given them; but oh, how the iron was entering the souls of the poor with that reluctant dole!

One day Mr. Jackson, who was a candidate, asked Mr. Black to go for him to see some of the labor leaders. In those days all labor agitators were Socialists, and not afraid or ashamed of the name, as they seem to be now. So, the two gentlemen went on the search for Socialists. I can best describe the result in my husband's language, as with eager vehemence he told it me that night:

“Darling, I've been on a visit to the gnomes! I went with Jackson to find the Socialists leaders. We were directed down underground, where we found two men with faces and hands as black as the ace of spades! And they were not negroes either, but just laboring men, engineers running machinery. But oh, you ought to have heard those men talk! They told me about the working people's condition” – here his voice began to quiver – “they told how men were selling their labor for starvation wages, and women their bodies for life;” and here he put his face in his hands and his whole frame shook with emotion. “They gave the figures, the data, the statistics. I never heard men talk so eloquently I wish you could have heard them. Oh, there is more to this question than I ever dreamed of!”

Those men – those underground gnomes – were John McAuliffe and George Schilling. McAuliffe, black-listed and hopeless, took his own life. George Schilling, black-listed, but of more hopeful disposition, is fighting on labor's line tonight at the Knight of Labor Convention. Schilling came to see us, and brought us that wonderful book, “The New Incarnation.”

I wonder if everybody has read that book? We did, and through our tears beheld the long night of the toiler.

Society then began to find Captain Black “queer.” Religious people began to doubt his religion – especially when he delivered several lectures before the philosophical Social and the Liberal Union, one on “Socialism” and one on “Nihilism.”

The latter has been translated into other tongues and circulated in almost all lands, and yet both lectures were from a student's, not an adherent's standpoint. About that time, 1882, Mr. Black, perceiving the political breakers ahead, permitted his name to be used in the race for Congress in the Third Congressional district of Chicago against Geo. R. Davis, the present City

Treasurer, accepting in the first instance the nomination of the working people, to which was added later those of the Independent Republicans and the Democrats. I went one night to hear him speak, and I knew that Aristides had a better chance in Athens than the author of such a speech against monopolies, corporations and combinations of wealth, as he that night uttered, in Chicago.

On election day the very men who had clamored most over his nomination – the Democrats – put Geo. R. Davis' name on their ticket, and fooled the voters with it. Even Carter Harrison, who had been around making speeches with Mr. Black, laughed at the trick as a good joke, and the regular tickets with Mr. Black's name, on them were found hidden away by the police, evidently acting under orders. Certain of the Republicans and Democrats had entered into a trade whereby McGarigle, now in Canada, was to be elected by the Republicans sheriff, and the democrats were to vote for Davis. The Democrats "delivered the goods," but the Republicans as usual, stuck to their own man and elected Hanchett, predecessor of the present incumbent, Canute Mattson.

The faces of the wealthy men who listened to the speech on the occasion referred to said very plainly, "You are not our tool." Though Frank Collier, the bearer of English-Chicago compliments to Queen Victoria, sprang on a bench and waving his hat cried out, "Three cheers for Captain Black," I thought a good deal, as I saw written on R. T. Crone's face, as if he had said it out alone, "Oh! he's weak, it don't matter what Collier does."

By the way, I saw Collier do the very same act when the jury brought in the verdict in the Anarchist case, jump on the bench and wave his hat hurrahing; and I guess my face spoke as Crone's did.

There came family troubles after the political defeat of the sore affliction of his beloved mother who, in gradual softening of the rain, slowly and painfully ebbed out of existence mentally and physically years dying. A grand, proud, intellectual woman.

And, as the years passed by, having removed to the country, Mr. Black in personal sorry lost sight of the great approaching conflict.

Entering Chicago on May 5, 1886, I opened the Tribune and read out the heading, "A night in hell." Then followed the description of the Haymarket police attack on the people there assembled, and the destruction by the bomb, in front of R. T. Crone's foundry.

As we walked by the Central Station, which is in the Court House building, we saw patrol wagons driving up with prisoners, and great was the excitement. I had read it aloud, the account, with frequent ejaculations of horror; but Mr. Black exclaimed:

"I don't believe the story of it as there stated. That paper lies so you can't believe it."

But during the day came other tidings, and the dreadful times had begun in earnest. The actual war of Capital on Labor had been inaugurated by a conspiracy of rich men, which future years will anathematize.

The right of terror was in Chicago, not of canaille over the noblesse but of the noblesse upon the teachers and leaders of the canaille. One could not go through the street in those days without witnessing cruelties; and one day when a wealthy young lady rushed into the office fairly crying as she told what she had seen: two burly policemen with a poor negro in the patrol wagon, beating him over the head whilst the blood streamed down; it was difficult to restrain one's indignation.

"Why," said Miss R. through her tears, "I thought it was a dog at first, till I saw the poor bleeding negro put up his hands."

Day after day – day after day, and Mr. Black went to the mayor, who coolly informed him that he had given the police carte blanche, and they could do what they pleased. Then we wondered they did not act worse.

But who would stand by this oppressed and beaten Israel? Who would dare, in the teeth of capital – teeth, fleshed and bloody from rending the poor – to plead for labor? Was it not so dark an hour that even Peter had denied his friends? Aye! Had not the workman declared he never knew these men about to be placed on trial for their lives? With many an oath I grant you!

Quietly, fearlessly, George Schilling came to Mr. Black one day and said:

"They will not even allow poor Fielden to have his wound dressed, and I've come to get you to go see him, and take his case."

Does the reader know what that meant? The opposite of Satan's temptation on the pinnacle of the Temple. It was saying, "are you willing to sacrifice all life's prospects to serve justice? Will you lay down a life's ambition rather than sacrifice eight men, although but two of them are known to you and that but slightly?" And Mr. Black said, "I'll let you know in three days. I am not a criminal lawyer, and hesitate at the responsibility."

He spent those three days trying to find some experienced criminal lawyer to share the labor with him. In vain. All such lawyers shrank from that case as from the leprosy. I spent the three days trying to get him not to take the case, but to help in other ways. I counted the cost.

At the end he said to me solemnly, "I must take it. I can do no other wise, God helping me. A great wrong has been done. I must do all I can to make it right."

And then he began this fight for life. Everything else had been subordinated. The thought of those eight sufferers, shut in from the air and sunshine to narrow confines of a dark and dreary dungeon with the shadow of a cruel death falling athwart their path, and the bitterness of the desertion, the ingratitude, of those toilers who join their masters in the cry, "Crucify our friends! We give you leave – we desert them to your tortures." These thoughts have been his spur day and night. More and more silvery has the hair grown, clustering above the flashing eyes, whose fire never burned more brilliantly than on those days when, speaking for seven

hours, he dared to thrust the accusations of the prosecution back upon them, and held up these Labor Leaders and Labor Lovers, not for apology, but to a world's admiration.

All fell on cold, unheeding hearts – hearts that had taken counsel before to slay these men, and who were not ready to drop their prey till forced to let go by some need of their own.

That brainless jury of dudes passed sentence on men they could not comprehend.

Unbaffled – full of confidence that Justice yet held her abode somewhere among men – tirelessly, Mr. Black appealed to the higher Court of the State, only to find that, like to Judge Gary, they simply acted as lawyers for the prosecution, and penetrated deeply the realms of the imagination to find excuse for affirming the action of the lower Court.

There is a legend that long ago, when brave men contended for the helpless and oppressed, a woman high in rank, and theretofore of reputation spotless, had become the target for men's scorn unjustly; yet even the king, her spouse believed her guilty.

Then passed those authorized to do so sentence that she should die a hideous death for her disloyalty.

The day of execution came, when lo! A knight appeared upon the scene in harness, accoutered full for battle, and, to the amaze of all, challenged belief in her guilt to fight. So many set upon him that the knight was wounded sore, yet would not yield; and by the law of that land's code the death was stayed until his wounds should heal and he be strong enough to enter lists again.

And on the day appointed came the doomed accused, and came her knight and challenged her accusers yet once more. Then far more lustily than first the lady's foes, increased in number, fell on the knight, and all but hewed the life out. Still, he maintained her innocent.

Again, the fatal day came round, and came the gallant knight with stronger weapons and more full of loyal faith in that fair queen's unspotted virtue. Again, he flung his glove to all in challenge; but lo! What stir is this? From the entrance to the field the bugle sounds the coming of another knight upon the ground. Advancing in view, the knight and all behold, almost with fear, a massive form in powerful armor clad. Sadly, the good knight takes his leave of Hope, when lo! The stranger lifts his visor, and the fickle multitudes behold the king. He speaks, addressing reverently his own queen's champion: "Friend and defender of her I love, thy faith hath resurrected mine. Back to my all repentant heart I call my suffering love, and on this bosom offer her atonement from the altar of faith rekindled from the fires of thine. And thou her friend when all forsook, be still her friend, and aye my honored guest."

Oh, may this legend set in homely phrase find realization in this case. May the king – the true sovereign, the people – come to the rescue of these, the unjustly accused; and now, at this hour, ay the working-men of America, of all lands, cast aside the cloak of cowardice and stand up manfully protesting their faith in the innocence of our men (that is what we call them). What a deliverance would this effect!

What a coronation to him who loves them as my husband does the toilers of the earth.

Do you think, I have drawn a fancy sketch of my husband's character.

Listen then to what was written of him by a leading Republican capitalist during the campaign of 1882 in assigning his reasons for voting for Mr. Black.

“Speaking from a person acquaintance of years standing, the writer, if asked would say of Captain William P. Black, that he would bring to the legislative office a heart throbbing, with a benevolent love for his fellow man, sympathetic with their misfortunes and ambitious to be of service to them a quick and enlightened conscience with a profound service of personal responsibility; an independence in thought and action almost phenomenal; an honesty deep seated as the earth's foundation; an incorruptibility, absolutely unassailable; an intellect of great breadth and keenness; a mind well stored with a comprehensive knowledge o law and history; a ripe and widely varied experience; an eloquence at once dignified and impassioned, impressive and graceful; a patriotism strengthened and purified on the battle fields of the Rebellion, and a courage which cannot be daunted; a life so pure and spotless that the fierce breath of a bitter canvass has cast no mist upon it; a religious principle which manifests a reverent regard for all the ways of righteousness; a widely gathered familiarity with the management of affairs, and a broad, general culture, a splendid presence and manners courteous, affable and polished.”

This as the outspoken published summary of Mr. Black's character in 1882; this was what men thought of him before he took the Anarchist case. He is the same man now with the same nature, and the qualities which made men praise him then are the very ones that prompted him to defend the Anarchists.