

WILLIAM P. BLACK.

WILLIAM P. BLACK, a lawyer, residing and doing business in Chicago, Illinois, a member of the firm of Dent and Black, was born in Woodford county, Kentucky, November 11, 1842.

The family dates back in this country to ante-revolutionary times, when the Scotch ancestry found homes in the colonies; first in South Carolina, and, moving thence, afterward in Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania. In the revolutionary struggle they were on the patriot side, contributing their share alike of blood and their scant treasure to the cause of liberty. In those days the family was represented in Pennsylvania by Rev. John Black, a Presbyterian minister, whose son and great-grandson followed the same calling. The last mentioned, Rev. John Black, D.D., was the father of the subject of this sketch. Dr. Black, last named, passed his ministerial life mostly in the South, and closed a short but brilliant life in his thirty-eighth year, dying at that age, February 13, 1847, in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, at which time he was pastor of the Fifth Presbyterian Church of that place. The maternal great-grandfather was William Findley, for twenty years a member of the United States senate and house of representatives from Pennsylvania; a man of marked ability, and descended from the Scotch-Irish dissenters, the family removing to this country from North Ireland long prior to the revolution.

Mr. Black's mother was, prior to marriage, a Miss Josephine L. Culbertson, of the family located at Culbertson's Row, Pennsylvania, whence her father removed and settled in Madison, Indiana, where they resided at the time of her marriage to Rev. John Black, in 1834. Born in 1813, this minister's widow was left, in 1847, with a family of four children, the eldest but eight, and William, the second son, then but little more than four years old. She removed the same year with her little ones to Danville, Illinois, and there in 1850 married Dr. William Fithian, an eminent and worthy gentleman, reputed an able speaker and politician, and successful business man. To the care, affection and ability of his noble mother, aided by her husband, is Mr. Black indebted for much that is elevated and meritorious in his life.



H.D. Cooper Jr. & Co.

Yours Truly,
W. P. Black-

Eng. by S. G. Williams & Co. N.Y.

From childhood he was a close and successful student, his zeal having to be held in check on account of delicate health and a frail body. He entered Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana, an institution justly esteemed for its thorough course and honorable alumni, in the fall of 1860. He at once took a leading place in his class as a diligent and conscientious student, and in the societies as a clear, powerful and brilliant speaker, and was affectionately esteemed by all. At this time, having joined the Presbyterian church at fifteen years of age, he was studying with reference to entering the ministry.

But the outbreak of the war interrupted the collegiate course, never to be resumed. April 15, 1861, Mr. Black enlisted, with about forty other students of the college, including his only brother, as a private soldier in Co. I, 11th Ind. Zouaves, commanded by Col. (afterward Maj.-Gen.) Lew. Wallace. Sharing with this regiment in its three months' campaign, chiefly in western Virginia, he was mustered out as corporal, and at once engaged in assisting in the work of recruiting a company in Vermilion county, Illinois, for the three years' service, of which company he was elected captain, and which was mustered into the service as Co. K, 37th Ill. Inf., at Chicago, September 18, 1861, the regiment then being known as Fremont Rifles, and his commission as captain, dated September 1, 1861, being received by him before he had reached his nineteenth birthday. This position he filled faithfully for over three years, sharing with his regiment in its marches, skirmishes and battles, chief among which may be mentioned Pea Ridge, Arkansas, Prairie Grove, Arkansas (where one-third of the federal forces were killed and wounded), the siege of Vicksburg, in the latter part of which Capt. Black held the responsible and most dangerous position of brigade picket officer, having charge of the rifle-pits of his brigade; the occupation of Texas, and the observation of the empire of Maximilian. Of his military career it is enough to say that, undertaken not from choice but under an exalted sense of the duty he owed an imperiled and loved country, every service required was performed quietly, unostentatiously and thoroughly. He could always be depended upon implicitly, possessing that quality of courage which is the result of entire devotion to duty, even at the cost of complete self-sacrifice.

Commencing the study of law in October, 1865, in the office of Arrington and Dent, Chicago, he was in about sixteen months admitted to practice, and returned to Danville to enter upon his professional career. There he remained for only a year, however, returning to Chicago in March, 1868, to form the association with Mr. Thomas Dent, which has since continued; Mr. Dent's former partner, the late Judge Alfred W. Arrington, having died December 31, 1867. Mr. Black's career as a lawyer has been unusually successful. The reputation of his firm is of the very best, both on the score of professional honor and ability, and also by reason of the spotless personal character of the individual members. Possessing varied gifts and powers, so that they admirably supplement each other, and governed in all their conduct, personal and professional, by the code of a pure Christianity, these gentlemen have secured one of the largest and most respecta-

ble clientages in their city, while the records of all the courts in the city and of the supreme courts of Illinois and of the United States attest their large success.

Mr. Black is an unusually clear, earnest and vigorous writer, and gives much attention to the themes of present vital interest. In 1881 he prepared and delivered before the Chicago Philosophical Society a lecture on "Socialism as a Factor in American Society and Politics," which was published in the Chicago "Times," republished in pamphlet form, and extensively quoted and noticed in various parts of the country. It was a remarkably clear, interesting and philosophical consideration of the great question of the social relations of the wage classes in our growing republic. A year later he delivered before the same body a lecture on "Russia and Nihilism," which has since been delivered, by request, before the Liberal League of Chicago and the Industrial Reform Club of the same place, and which has been printed in the "Weekly Magazine," and reprinted in tract form. Concerning this lecture, and as evidencing the literary ability and style of Mr. Black, it may not seem out of place to print two short letters, which speak for themselves, one being from Wendell Phillips, the other from the pen of the versatile John Swinton, chief of the editorial force of the New York "Sun." Following are the letters :

123 EAST 62D STREET, NEW YORK, July 4, 1882.

COMRADE,—I feel especially obliged to you for favoring me with a copy of Col. Black's lecture on Russia. It is a masterpiece, and has given me profound pleasure. The comprehensiveness and accuracy of the author's knowledge, the elevation of his spirit, the charm of his love for truth, justice and man, the generosity of his sympathy, and the boldness and freshness of his manner, riveted me to his pages as soon as I had opened them.

Astonishment mingled with pleasure as I passed from sentence to sentence. It is a most worthy contribution from a man of whose existence in Chicago I am delighted to know. Copies of it should be sent to Vera Sassulitch, Lavroff, Krapotkin and Tchaikovsky, and to Dr. Orloff and Wendell Phillips and others, and to public libraries and newspapers, etc.

I don't believe there is any sale for such a thing; it must be given away.

I shall mail you a copy of my "Travels" and other of my things for Col. Black, asking you to mail them to his address.

JOHN SWINTON.

E. A. Stevens, 319 W. Randolph street, Chicago, Illinois.

BOSTON, July, 1882.

MY DEAR SIR,—Hearty thanks for your instructive and eloquent address on Russia and Nihilism. Such a masterly and logical summing up of the case against the Romanoffs must give our people pause, and *make* them think. Then we shall see a public opinion more worthy of our past and our national position among civilized states.

I have read and reread your statement, each time with fresh admiration, and added thanks that any American has been found ready to make it—an honor to us and a service to the world.

Yours with great respect,

Col. W. P. Black.

WENDELL PHILLIPS.

Mr. Black is in no sense of the word a politician, though taking a keen interest in the affairs of the country, to whose service in the tented field he gave three and a half years of his life. In his views he is thoroughly independent, casting his vote and his influence always with what he believes the better side of every cause. In the summer of 1872 he devoted a little time to the advocacy of the Greeley

movement, which he supported as opposed to the increasing corruption in public affairs. His speeches in this campaign elicited much praise, and added to his already high reputation as an earnest, logical and eloquent speaker, fearless in exposing and rebuking wrong. Prior to 1872 he had been a staunch republican, but since that time he has not been actively identified with either of the great parties, though usually working with the democratic. He took no part in politics, however, after the campaign of 1872, until in 1880, when he made one speech near the close of the canvass in advocacy of the election of Gen. Hancock, which was published in full in the Chicago "Times," and which was very highly esteemed on account of its thoughtfulness and force.

In the fall of 1882 Mr. Black became a candidate for congress upon the unsolicited nominations first of the anti-monopolists in their convention, then of the democracy, and afterward of the independent republicans. The campaign was short and vigorous, and although Mr. Black was defeated, it was yet only by treachery in the democratic camp, and then by a majority of less than 2,400, in a district that, two years before, had given his successful opponent a majority of over 6,000. Mr. Black's candidacy elicited unusual enthusiasm, and became the pivotal contest in his district, while it elicited some most remarkable tributes to his character and attainments. Among these may properly be mentioned a tract, written by Mr. Henry L. Turner, a prominent real estate dealer, and a lifelong republican, under the title, "*Patriotism versus Party*," and published by him anonymously. After opening with the question, "Shall I, a lifelong republican, born and reared amidst the 'most straitest sect' of the abolitionists, so far step aside from my ancient allegiance as to vote for the democratic nominee for congress?" and proceeding at length to state his objections to the republican candidate, he gives the following estimate of Mr. Black's qualifications and character:

"Speaking from a personal acquaintance of years' standing, the writer, if asked, would say of Capt. William P. Black that he would bring to the legislative office a heart throbbing with a benevolent love for his fellow-men, sympathetic with their misfortunes, and ambitious to be of service to them; a quick and enlightened conscience, with a profound sense of personal responsibility; an independence of 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 of 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."

In 1874 Wabash College conferred on Mr. Black the degree of M.A., a graceful recognition of his professional success and his services as a man of letters.

Mr. Black was married May 28, 1869, to Miss Hortensia M. MacGreal, of Galveston, Texas, a Christian lady of clear and strong intellect, ripe culture and deep enthusiasm of religious experience. She is the eldest daughter of the late Peter

MacGreal, who was one of the leading lawyers of the Empire State of the Southwest.

We close this sketch by a few words of personal description. Mr. Black is over six feet in height, dark hair, now freely intersprinkled with gray; of spare but graceful figure; a face strong and expressive; and a dark, bright eye, that kindles under emotion or excitement, but is always kindly; his voice is clear and strong; and these, added to an unusual flow of language, make him a speaker of great power and magnetism.

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