

# The People.

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SECOND EDITORIAL

## If a “Captain” in Industry, Why Not in War, Thinks He.

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**M**r. O.H.P. Belmont, a New York capitalist, offered the United States to build, equip and present the Government with a torpedo boat. If he had gone no further, and placed no conditions to his offer, the incident would simply have afforded the praise-singers of the robber class in Congress with fresh opportunity to dilate upon the “superb patriotism” of the rich, as they did when the daughter of the deceased brigand Jay Gould “patriotically” donated the other day \$100,000 to the Government out of the wealth that her father took from the American working class, and left to her to be generous and to her sister to buy a French Count-husband with. But Mr. Torpedo-Boat Belmont coupled a condition to his gift, to wit, that he be the Commander-in-Chief of his boat.

The Government rejected the offer on account of the condition; and Mr. Belmont is wondering. And well he may.

Mr. Belmont has been feasted as a “Captain of Industry.” His safe or safe deposit vault is stuffed with stocks—not of one, but of a score of industries. These industries are run by wage slaves from top to bottom. They “captain” it and “crew” it. He does nothing, not the least thing in either running those several industries, or in producing the smallest particle of the wealth they turn out. And yet he has not only the practical results but the glory: not only he pockets the wealth, leaving to the workers the crumbs, but he is decked with the title of “Captain of Industry.”

Is it to be wondered at that this fly on the industrial wheel, finding himself styled “Captain of Industry,” and the title vociferously defended by professors, politicians and parsons, should conclude that, seeing the ownership of capital is enough to confer upon him the standing and the title of “Captain of Industry,” notwithstanding he knows nothing of and does nothing in industry, it should also be enough to confer upon him the title of “Captain of a Torpedo Boat,” although he knows not starboard from port,

taffrail from poop, nor the division of a battle knows more {any more?} than a spinster?

Well may Mr. Belmont wonder. As to him, it is not likely he will draw any conclusion from the rebuff he has received other than that he failed in his expectations because he had not enough "pull": the horizon of the capitalist's mind is bounded by such views. But the masses of the people, that large working class that has to "captain" and "man" the industrial ships, and yet is deprived of both the profit and the honor of doing so,—that mass may draw from Mr. Belmont's rebuff a valuable lesson. The working class will learn that, under the capitalist system, we go to war against the permanent foe of the race—hunger, thirst and the weather—, as a mob, led by idlers and ignoramuses; but that, when it comes to going to war against fellow men, then we go to war as an organized body, led only by the trained and the able.

Not an unimportant lesson.

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

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