

Foreword to The Life of Albert Parsons

Lucy E. Parsons

February 22, 1889

In preparing the Life of Albert R. Parsons for publication I have been actuated by one desire alone, viz.: that I might demonstrate to every one, the most prejudiced as well as the most liberal minds: first, that my husband was no aider, nor abettor, nor counselor of crime in any sense. Second, that he knew nothing of nor had anything to do with the preparation for the Haymarket meeting, and that the Haymarket meeting was intended to be peaceable, and was peaceable until interfered with by the police. Third, that Mr Parsons' connection with the labor movement was purely and simply for the purpose of bettering the condition of his fellow men; that he gave his time, talents, and at last his life, to this cause.

In order to make these facts undeniable, I obtained articles from persons holding avowedly adverse views with his, but who were nevertheless willing to testify to his innocence of the crime for which he suffered death, and his sterling integrity as a man.

It has been the endeavor of the author to make the present work not only biographical, but historical—a work which might be relied upon as an authority by all future writers upon the matters contained in it. Hence nothing has been admitted to its pages that is not absolutely correct, so far as it was possible for me to verify it by close scrutiny of all matter treated.

And for this reason I ask the public to read its pages carefully, for in this way they will become acquainted with the inmost thoughts of one of the noblest characters of which history bears record.

There is one man whose name and life was so intimately interwoven with one of the stirring periods of this country's history that its history could not be written if his name were omitted. That man is General Ulysses S. Grant. His biographers record no act of his life with more praise than the magnanimous manner in which he treated the Rebel General, Lee, when the latter surrendered his sword to him. Suppose Grant had taken the proffered sword and stabbed his antagonist with it? There would have been no word too detestable to have attached to his name.

Albert R. Parsons surrendered his sword to the wild mob of millionaires when he walked into Court and asked for a fair trial by a jury of his peers. Yet the proud State of Illinois murdered him under the guise of "Law and Order"; foully murdered this innocent man. And upon the heart of her then Governor (Oglesby), who completed the atrocity by ratifying the vile conspiracy conducted by the wild howls of the millionaire rabble, by signing the death warrants of men whom he, as a lawyer, knew were innocent, there is not "one damned spot," but five, to "out."

Thus it is that history repeats itself. In this case it was the old, old cry: "Away with them; they preach a strange doctrine! Crucify Them!" But the grand cause for which they perished still lives.

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