

EDITORIAL

MARSHALL VICE WILSON.

By DANIEL DE LEON

VICE-PRESIDENT THOMAS RILEY MARSHALL blossomed out as a revivalist by figuring as the principal exhorter at the big Methodist camp meeting at Great Falls, Va. The “testimony” which the Vice-President is reported to have given in behalf of “Jeffersonianism” and against the “sharp practices of lawyers to keep criminals out of jail” is reported to have been received with salvos of “Amens” and “Glory, Glories!”

Which reminds us—

In the summer of 1872 the writer was taken by some friends to “see something you never saw before.” It was a Methodist camp meeting in the vicinity of Atlantic City, N.J.

There were at the camp meeting fully 5,000 people. “Testimony” was being given.

The first one to testify was about as tough-looking a piece of humanity as one would care to meet. Though groomed and dressed in a new suit of “store clothes,” the “testifier” could not conceal his mannerisms. He “testified.” It ran about this wise:

“I was a great sinner.”

[“Glory! Glory!” and waving of handkerchiefs by the old women of both sexes.]

“I used to come home dead drunk.”

[More “Glories!” and wavings.]

“One day I licked my wife within an inch of her life.”

[Frantic “Glories,” and “Amens,” and wavings.]

“But I have now been converted and renounce sin.”

From that moment on, the interest of the audience in the man began to subside

visibly and audibly. They had little further use for him; and looked listless until he withdrew, and another “testifier” stepped up.

This second specimen was lean, lank, and slick, with a hatchet face, and black, piercing, restless eyes. His “testimony” was about like this:

“I also was a great, a miserable, a wicked sinner.”

[The “Glories!” and wavings of handkerchiefs immediately revived.]

“I was a gambler.”

[More “Glories!” and wavings.]

“I gambled away a fortune.”

[Still more “Glories!” and wavings.]

“I gambled away my fortune, and then I gambled away my wife’s fortune.”

[Frantic “Glories!” and “Amens!” and wavings.]

“The last dollar was gone at the card table and my wife and children were starving at home.”

[Tumultuous wavings, “Amens!” and “Glories!”]

This second specimen dragged out all he could the period of his popularity, until finally, when he also announced his conversion, the interest in him drooped.

We wonder whether the salvos of “Amens!” “Glory, Glories!” and, no doubt, the wavings of handkerchiefs also at Great Falls, were as enthusiastic when Vice-President Marshall recounted the civic virtues of Jefferson, as they appear to have been when he disclosed the scampish practices of lawyers.

We also wonder at the inscrutableness of the Providential dispensation that simultaneously elects a Wilson, with a Marshall as his possible successor.

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