

THE FORTY-NINERS

One hundred and one years ago gold was discovered in the Sacramento Valley in California. Soon San Francisco had mushroomed from a small village to a city of 25,000 and Englishmen, along with Georgia "Crackers", North Carolina "Tarheels" and new England "Puritans", were rubbing elbows with Indians, Mexican and Chinese.

But other things were taking place. While gold-mining Forty-niners were seeking their fortunes in California, there was other Forty-niners in villages and cities, in the professions and in the rank of labor, in the lodge and in the church, seeking not so much the gold that glitters as a goal that challenged, not so much the wealth of the world as a wealth of a people, not so much the power of riches as righteousness. There was the slender, white-haired Calhoun fighting the battle of States Rights, the frail and feeble Clay fighting to save the Union from breaking asunder at the Mason and Dixon line, and there was the gaunt, black-haired Lincoln quietly preparing himself for a martyr's role in the service of our country.

Such was our country of a hundred years ago with its Forty-niners. What of our country a hundred years later with its Forty-niners? How does the Forty-niner of the twentieth century face the future? That is the question that should be in the forefront of the thinking of every thoughtful citizen.

We are the recipients of a great heritage. In two hundred years this country has developed the greatest culture the world has ever known. No system is perfect, but ours is the most productive and social system in the history of mankind. With less than eight percent of the world's population we produce 42 percent of the world's wealth. When we stop to think about this record, we realize that freedom is the fountainhead from which our economic, social and cultural advantages all flow.

We must realize that to continue to hold our leadership and to have abundant benefits, we must continue to perform our duties upon which freedom thrives. Only when we neglect our duties does despotism step in and we lose our heritage of freedom and our wealth of materials and our cultural life. The survival of our freedom depends on whether each of us conscientiously discharge our obligations as loyal workers and good citizens.