
To The Brotherhood

[Regarding Future Resignation]

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by Eugene V. Debs

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More than a decade of years has passed since I became a member of the Grand Lodge of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, my induction into the office of Grand Secretary and Treasurer having occurred July 16, 1880, and at the same date I became the Editor and Manager of the *Locomotive Firemen's Magazine*. These honorable and responsible positions were conferred upon me by Grand Master F.W. Arnold. At Chicago, in September 1880, I was elected for one year to fill an unexpired term. At Boston in 1881, I was elected Grand Secretary and Treasurer and Editor and Manager of the *Magazine* for a term of three years. At Toronto in 1884, I was elected to the same offices for a term of two years. At Minneapolis in 1886, I was again elected to the offices named for a term of two years. At Atlanta in 1888, I was again elected for a term of two years, and at San Francisco in September 1890, I was again elected Grand Secretary and Treasurer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, and Editor and Manager of the *Locomotive Firemen's Magazine*; in all, six times I have been, without an opposing candidate, or the loss of a single vote, the recipient of the unwavering confidence of the Brotherhood.

Such exhibitions of unflagging trust in one who had no claims upon the Brotherhood, whose duties as a member of the Order had been confined to the narrow limits of one Lodge, have from the first burdened me with a sense of gratitude, which defies all words at my command to express.

How well I have met the obligations which such faith in my rectitude imposed, is a matter for others to debate. But this may be said: that when I entered the Grand Lodge, the Order was bankrupt and had about 2,000 members. It is now rich in financial resources and

can boast of more than 20,000 members. When I entered the Grand Lodge, the *Magazine* had 3,500 subscribers. Since then its monthly editions have expanded to 33,000 copies.

In saying this, I am not so foolish as to intimate that it has been because of my connection with the Order — and the statement is made simply to show the splendid growth of the Order — and to emphasize the fact that with this growth, the duties of the Grand Secretary and Treasurer, and the duties of the Editor and Manager of the *Magazine*, have even more than proportionately increased, grown to a sum total of responsibility, of mental and physical wear and tear, which leaves little, indeed, no time at all for recreation or recuperation. It is one ceaseless demand upon mental and physical energies, which, if discarded one day, only doubles the burden for the next, and this sapping of the vital forces, like Tennyson's brook, "goes on forever."

Having reached the accepted "half way station" in the years allotted to man — "three score and ten" — and other and less exacting business pursuits offering, I have come to the unalterable conclusion, during my present official term to surrender all the trusts committed to my hands to the Brotherhood, and retire from all official positions in the Order.

It must not be understood that this conclusion has been arrived at without a mental pang of regret. Ten years of uninterrupted fellowship with thousands of brothers beloved cannot be broken off without producing in susceptible minds feelings of sadness, and in a special sense is this true when, as in my case, these associations have been fruitful of personal satisfactions of boundless proportions.

Between myself and the great Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen not so much as one incident has occurred to dampen my ardor for its success, to abate my devotion to its principles, or to weaken my fraternal friendship and good will for my brothers of the scoop and throttle, and whatever fate or fortune may have in store for me, the members of the Brotherhood, one and all, will have a warm place in my heart until its pulsations cease.

As I have said, during my present term I shall resign the positions I now hold, nor will I, under any conceivable circumstances, be a candidate for re-election *for any other office* in the gift of the Order.

Having determined to go into other business, I have deemed it prudent to make this early announcement of my purpose for a variety of reasons, the more important of which is that it enables the Broth-

erhood, without unnecessary haste, to select from the great number of competent members the one most likely to meet the onerous requirements of the positions.

I have no desire to magnify the duties of the offices which I shall resign, nor will I underestimate their importance. Closely identified with the duties they imposed for more than ten consecutive years, my conviction is that the Brotherhood will esteem it a favor to have ample time for deliberation.

As through the Magazine, or otherwise, opportunities will offer to refer to this subject again if require, I close by subscribing myself, in all that fraternity means, the Brotherhood's friend and well wisher.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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