
Liberty:

Speech at Battery D, Chicago, On Release from Woodstock Jail, November 22, 1895.

by Eugene V. Debs

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Manifestly the spirit of '76 still survives. The fires of liberty and noble aspirations are not yet extinguished. I greet you tonight as lovers of liberty and as despisers of despotism. I comprehend the significance of this demonstration and appreciate the honor that makes it possible for me to be your guest on such an occasion. The vindication and glorification of American principles of government, as proclaimed to the world in the Declaration of Independence, is the high purpose of this convocation.

Speaking for myself personally, I am not certain whether this is an occasion for rejoicing or lamentation. I confess to a serious doubt as to whether this day marks my deliverance from bondage to freedom or my doom from freedom to bondage. Certain it is, in the light of recent judicial proceedings, that I stand in your presence stripped of my constitutional rights as a freeman and shorn of the most sacred prerogatives of American citizenship, and what is true of myself is true of every other citizen who has the temerity to protest against corporation rule or question the absolute sway of the money power. It is not law nor the administration of law of which I complain. It is the flagrant violation of the constitution, the total abrogation of law and the usurpation of judicial and despotic power, by virtue of which my

colleagues and myself were committed to jail, against which I enter my solemn protest; and any honest analysis of the proceedings must sustain the haggard truth of the indictment.

In a letter recently written by the venerable judge Trumbull that eminent jurist says: "The doctrine announced by the Supreme Court in the Debs case, carried to its logical conclusion, places every citizen at the mercy of any prejudiced or malicious federal judge who may think proper to imprison him." This is the deliberate conclusion of one of the purest, ablest and most distinguished judges the Republic has produced. The authority of Judge [Lyman] Trumbull upon this question will not be impeached by anyone whose opinions are not deformed or debauched.

At this juncture I deem it proper to voice my demands for a trial by a jury of my peers. At the instigation of the railroad corporations centering here in Chicago I was indicted for conspiracy and I insist upon being tried as to my innocence or guilt. It will be remembered that the trial last winter terminated very abruptly on account of a sick juror. It was currently reported at the time that this was merely a pretext to abandon the trial and thus defeat the vindication of a favorable verdict, which seemed inevitable, and which would have been in painfully embarrassing contrast with the sentence previously pronounced by Judge [William A.] Woods in substantially the same case. Whether this be true or not, I do not know. I do know, however, that I have been denied a trial, and here and now I demand a hearing of my case. I am charged with conspiracy to commit a crime, and if guilty I should go to the penitentiary. All I ask is a fair trial and no favor. If the counsel for the government, alias the railroads, have been correctly quoted in the press, the case against me is "not to be pressed," as they "do not wish to appear in the light of persecuting the defendants." I repel with scorn their professed mercy. Simple justice is the demand. I am not disposed to shrink from the fullest responsibility for my acts. I have had time for meditation and reflection and I have no hesitancy in declaring that under the same circumstances I would pursue precisely the same policy. So far as my acts are concerned, I have neither apology nor regrets.

Dismissing this branch of the subject, permit me to assure you that I am not here to bemoan my lot. In my vocabulary there are no

wails of despondency or despair. However gloomy the future may appear to others, I have an abiding faith in the ultimate triumph of the right. My heart responds to the sentiments of the poet who says:

“Swing back today, O prison gate,
O winds, stream out the stripes and stars,
O men, once more in high debate
Denounce injunction rule and czars.
By Freedom’s travail pangs we swear
That slavery’s chains we will not wear.

“Ring joyously, O prison bell,
O iron tongue, the truth proclaim;
O winds and lightnings, speed to tell
That ours is not a czar’s domain.
By all the oracles divine
We pledge defense of Freedom’s shrine.

“O freemen true! O sons of sires!
O sons of men who dared to die!
O fan to life old Freedom’s fires
And light with glory Freedom’s sky.
Then swear by Cod’s eternal throne,
America shall be Freedom’s home.

“O workingmen! O Labor’s hosts!
O men of courage, heart and will;
O far and wide send Labor’s toasts
Till every heart feels Freedom’s thrill,
And freemen’s shouts like billows roar
O’er all the land from shore to shore.”

Liberty is not a word of modern coinage. Liberty and slavery are primal words, like good and evil, right and wrong; they are opposites and coexistent.

There has been no liberty in the world since the gift, like sunshine and rain, came down from heaven, for the maintenance of which man has not been required to fight, and man’s complete degradation is secured only when subjugation and slavery have sapped him of the last spark of the noble attributes of his nature and reduced him to the unresisting inertness of a clod.

The theme tonight is personal liberty; or giving it its full height, depth and breadth, American liberty, something that Americans have been accustomed to eulogize since the foundation of the Republic, and multiplied thousands of them continue in the habit to this day because they do not recognize the truth that in the imprisonment of one man in defiance of all constitutional guarantees, the liberties of all are invaded and placed in peril. In saying this, I conjecture I have struck the keynote of alarm that has convoked this vast audience.

For the first time in the records of all the ages, the inalienable rights of man, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," were proclaimed July 4, 1776.

It was then that crowns, scepters, thrones and the divine right of kings to rule sunk together and man expanded to glorious liberty and sovereignty. It was then that the genius of Liberty, speaking to all men in the commanding voice of Eternal Truth, bade them assert their heaven — decreed prerogatives and emancipate themselves from bondage. It was a proclamation countersigned by the Infinite — and man stood forth the coronated sovereign of the world, free as the tides that flow, free as the winds that blow, and on that primal morning when creation was complete, the morning stars and the sons of God, in anthem chorus, sang the song of Liberty.

It may be a fancy, but within the limitless boundaries of the imagination I can conceive of no other theme more appropriate to weave into the harmonies of Freedom. The Creator had surveyed his work and pronounced it good, but nothing can be called good in human affairs with liberty eliminated. As well talk of air without nitrogen, or water without oxygen, as of goodness without liberty.

It does not matter that the Creator has sown with stars the fields of ether and decked the earth with countless beauties for man's enjoyment. It does not matter that air and ocean teem with the wonders of innumerable forms of life to challenge man's admiration and investigation. It does not matter that nature spreads forth all her scenes of beauty and gladness and pours forth the melodies of her myriad — tongued voices for man's delectation. If liberty is ostracized and exiled, man is a slave, and the world rolls in space and whirls around the sun a gilded prison, a doomed dungeon, and though painted in all the enchanting hues that infinite art could command, it must still

stand forth a blotch amidst the shining spheres of the sidereal heavens, and those who cull from the vocabularies of nations, living or dead, their flashing phrases with which to apostrophize Liberty, are engaged in perpetuating the most stupendous delusion the ages have known. Strike down liberty, no matter by what subtle and infernal art the deed is done, the spinal cord of humanity is sundered and the world is paralyzed by the indescribable crime.

Strike the fetters from the slave, give him liberty and he becomes an inhabitant of a new world. He looks abroad and beholds life and joy in all things around him. His soul expands beyond all boundaries. Emancipated by the genius of Liberty, he aspires to communion with all that is noble and beautiful, feels himself allied to all the higher order of intelligences, and walks abroad, redeemed from animalism, ignorance and superstition, a new being throbbing with glorious life.

What pen or tongue from primeval man to the loftiest intellect of the present generation has been able to fittingly anathematize the more than satanic crime of stealing the jewel of liberty from the crown of manhood and reducing the victim of the burglary to slavery or to prison, to gratify those monsters of iniquity who for some inscrutable reason are given breath to contaminate the atmosphere and poison every fountain and stream designed to bless the world!

It may be questioned if such interrogatories are worth the time required to state them, and I turn from their consideration to the actualities of my theme. As Americans, we have boasted of our liberties and continue to boast of them. They were once the nation's glory, and, if some have vanished, it may be well to remember that a remnant still remains. Out of prison, beyond the limits of Russian injunctions, out of reach of a deputy marshal's club, above the throttling clutch of corporations and the enslaving power of plutocracy, out of range of the government's machine guns and knowing the location of judicial traps and deadfalls, Americans may still indulge in the exaltation of liberty, though pursued through every lane and avenue of life by the baying hounds of usurped and unconstitutional power, glad if when night lets down her sable curtains, they are out of prison, though still the wage-slaves of a plutocracy which, were it in the celestial city, would wreck every avenue leading up to the throne of the Infinite by stealing the gold with which they are paved, and debauch

Heaven's supreme court to obtain a decision that the command "thou shalt not steal" is unconstitutional.

Liberty, be it known, is for those only who dare strike the blow to secure and retain the priceless boon. It has been written that the "love of liberty with life is given" and that life itself is an inferior gift; that with liberty exiled life is a continuous curse and that "an hour of liberty is worth an eternity of bondage." It would be an easy task to link together gilded periods extolling liberty until the mind, weary with delight, becomes oblivious of the fact that while dreaming of security, the blessings we magnified had, one by one, and little by little, disappeared, emphasizing the truth of the maxim that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

Is it worth while to iterate that all men are created free and that slavery and bondage are in contravention of the Creator's decree and have their origin in man's depravity?

If liberty is a birthright which has been wrested from the weak by the strong, or has been placed in peril by those who were commissioned to guard it as Gheber priests watch the sacred fires they worship, what is to be done? Leaving all other nations, kindred and tongues out of the question, what is the duty of Americans? Above all, what is the duty of American workingmen whose liberties have been placed in peril? They are not hereditary bondsmen. Their fathers were free born — their sovereignty none denied and their children yet have the ballot. It has been called "a weapon that executes a free man's will as lighting does the will of God." It is a metaphor pregnant with life and truth. There is nothing in our government it can not remove or amend. It can make and unmake presidents and congresses and courts. It can abolish unjust laws and consign to eternal odium and oblivion unjust judges, strip from them their robes and gowns and send them forth unclean as lepers to bear the burden of merited obloquy as Cain with the mark of a murderer. It can sweep away trusts, syndicates, corporations, monopolies, and every other abnormal development of the money power designed to abridge the liberties of workingmen and enslave them by the degradation incident to poverty and enforced idleness, as cyclones scatter the leaves of the forest. The ballot can do all this and more. It can give our civilization its crowning glory — the cooperative commonwealth.

To the unified hosts of American workingmen fate has committed the charge of rescuing American liberties from the grasp of the vandal horde that have placed them in peril, by seizing the ballot and wielding it to regain the priceless heritage and to preserve and transmit it without scar or blemish to the generations yet to come.

“Snatch from the ashes of their sires
The embers of their former fires,
And he who in the strife expires
Will add to theirs a name of fear
That Tyranny shall quake to hear.”

Standing before you tonight re clothed in theory at least with the prerogatives of a free man, in the midst of free men, what more natural, what more in consonance with the proprieties of the occasion, than to refer to the incarceration of myself and associate officials of the American Railway Union in the county jail at Woodstock?

I have no ambition to avail myself of this occasion to be sensational, or to thrust my fellow prisoners and myself into prominence. My theme expands to proportions which obscure the victims of judicial tyranny, and yet, regardless of reluctance, it so happens by the decree of circumstances, that personal references are unavoidable. To wish it otherwise would be to deplore the organization of the American Railway Union and every effort that great organization has made to extend a helping hand to oppressed, robbed, suffering and starving men, women and children, the victims of corporate greed and rapacity. It would be to bewail every lofty attribute of human nature, lament the existence of the golden rule and wish the world were a jungle, inhabited by beasts of prey, that the seas were peopled with sharks and devil-fish and that between the earth and the stars only vultures held winged sway.

The American Railway Union was born with a sympathetic soul. Its ears were attuned to the melodies of mercy, to catch the whispered wailings of the oppressed. It had eyes to scan the fields of labor, a tongue to denounce the wrong, hands to grasp the oppressed and a will to lift them out of the sloughs of despondency to highlands of security and prosperity.

Here and now I challenge the records, and if in all the land the American Railway Union has an enemy, one or a million, I challenge them all to stand up before the labor world and give a reason why they have maligned and persecuted the order. I am not here to assert the infallibility of the organization or its officials, or to claim exemption from error. But I am here to declare to every friend of American toilers, regardless of banner, name or craft, that if the American Railway Union has erred, it has been on the side of sympathy, mercy, and humanity — zeal in a great cause, devotion to the spirit of brotherhood which knows no artificial boundaries, whose zones are mapped by lines of truth as vivid as lightning, and whose horizon is measured only by the eye of faith in man's redemption from slavery.

I hold it to have been inconceivable that an organization of workmen, animated by such inspirations and aspirations, should have become the target for the shafts of judicial and governmental malice.

But the fact that such was the case brings into haggard prominence a condition of affairs that appeals to all thoughtful men in the ranks of organized labor and all patriotic citizens, regardless of vocation, who note the subtle invasions of the liberties of the American people by the courts, sustained by an administration that is equally dead to the guarantees of the constitution.

It is in no spirit of laudation that I aver here tonight that it has fallen to the lot of the American Railway Union to arouse workingmen to a sense of the perils that environ their liberties.

In the great Pullman Strike the American Railway Union challenged the power of corporations in a way that had not previously been done, and the analyzation of this fact serves to expand it to proportions that the most conservative men of the nation regard with alarm.

It must be borne in mind that the American Railway Union did not challenge the government. It threw down no gauntlet to courts or armies — it simply resisted the invasion of the rights of workingmen by corporations. It challenged and defied the power of corporations. Thrice armed with a just cause, the organization believed that justice would win for labor a notable victory, and the records proclaim that its confidence was not misplaced.

The corporations,, left to their own resources of money, mendacity and malice, of thugs and ex-convicts, leeches and lawyers, would have been overwhelmed with defeat and the banners of organized labor would have floated triumphant in the breeze.

This the corporations saw and believed — hence the crowning act of infamy in which the federal courts and the federal armies participated, and which culminated in the defeat of labor.

Had this been all, the simple defeat of a labor organization, however disrupted and despoiled, this grand convocation of the lovers of liberty would never have been heard of. The robbed, idle and black-listed victims of defeat would have suffered in silence in their darkened homes amidst the sobbings and wailings of wives and children. It would have been the oft repeated old, old story, heard along the track of progress and poverty for three-quarters of a century in the United States, where brave men, loyal to law and duty, have struck to better their condition or to resist degradation, and have gone down in defeat. But the defeat of the American Railway Union involved questions of law, constitution and government which, all things considered, are without a parallel in court and governmental proceedings under the constitution of the Republic. And it is this judicial and administrative usurpation of power to override the rights of states and strike down the liberties of the people that has conferred upon the incidents connected with the Pullman strike such commanding importance as to attract the attention of men of the highest attainments in constitutional law and of statesmen who, like Jefferson, view with alarm the processes by which the Republic is being wrecked and a despotism reared upon its ruins.

I have said that in the great battle of labor fought in 1894 between the American Railway Union and the Corporations banded together under the name of the “General Managers’ Association,” victory would have perched upon the standards of labor if the battle had been left to these contending forces — and this statement, which has been verified and established beyond truthful contradiction, suggests the inquiry, what other resources had the corporations aside from their money and the strength which their federation conferred?

In replying to the question, I am far within the limits of accepted facts when I say the country stood amazed as the corporations put

forth their latent powers to debauch such departments of the government as were required to defeat labor in the greatest struggle for the right that was ever chronicled in the United States.

Defeated at every point, their plans all frustrated, out-generated in tactics and strategy, while the hopes of labor were brightening and victory was in sight, the corporations, goaded to desperation, played their last card in the game of oppression by an appeal to the federal judiciary and to the federal administration. To this appeal the response came quick as lightning from a storm cloud. It was an exhibition of the debauching power of money which the country had never before beheld.

The people had long been familiar with such expressions as "money talks," "money rules," and they had seen the effects of its power in legislatures and in congress. They were conversant with Jay Gould's methods of gaining his legal victories by "buying a judge" in critical cases. They had tracked this money power, this behemoth beast of prey, into every corporate enterprise evolved by our modern civilization, as hunters track tigers in India jungles, but never before in the history of the country had they seen it grasp with paws and jaws the government of the United States and bend it to its will and make it a mere travesty of its pristine grandeur.

The people had seen this money power enter the church, touch the robed priest at the altar, blotch his soul, freeze his heart and make him a traitor to his consecrated vows and send him forth a Judas with a bag containing the price of his treason; or, if true to his conviction, ideas and ideals, to suffer the penalty of ostracism, to be blacklisted and to seek in vain for a sanctuary in which to expound Christ's doctrine of the brotherhood of man.

The people had seen this money power enter a university and grasp a professor and hurl him headlong into the street because every faculty of mind, redeemed by education and consecrated to truth, pointed out and illumined new pathways to the goal of human happiness and national glory.

The people had seen this money power practicing every art of duplicity, growing more arrogant and despotic as it robbed one and crushed another, building its fortifications of the bones of its victims, and its palaces out of the profits of its piracies, until purple and fine

linen on the one side and rags upon the other side, defined conditions as mountain ranges and rivers define the boundaries of nations — palaces on the hills, with music and dancing and the luxuries of all clinics, earth, air and sea — huts in the valley, dark and dismal, where the music is the dolorous “song of the shirt” and the luxuries rags and crusts.

These things had been seen by the people, but it was reserved for them in the progress of the Pullman strike to see this money power, by the fiat of corporations, grasp one by one the departments of the government and compel them to do its bidding as in old plantation days the master commanded the obedience of his chattel slaves.

The corporations first attacked the judicial department of the government, a department which, according to Thomas Jefferson, has menaced the integrity of the Republic from the beginning.

They did not attack the supreme bench. A chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and the corporations knew where that was and the amount of strain it would bear. How did they attack this weakling in the judicial chain?

I am aware that innuendoes, dark intimations of venality are not regarded as courageous forms of arraignment, and yet the judicial despotism which marked every step of the proceedings by which my official associates and myself were doomed to imprisonment, was marked by infamies, supported by falsehoods and perjuries as destitute of truth as are the Arctic regions of orange blossoms.

Two men quarreled because one had killed the other's dog with an ax. The owner of the dog inquired, “when my dog attacked you, why did you not use some less deadly weapon?” The other replied, “why did not your dog come at me with the end that had no teeth in it?” There is an adage which says, “fight the devil with fire.” In this connection why may it not be intimated that a judge who pollutes his high office at the behest of the money power has the hinges of his knees lubricated with oil from the tank of the corporation that thrift may follow humiliating obedience to its commands?

If not this, I challenge the world to assign a reason why a judge, under the solemn obligation of an oath to obey the constitution, should in a temple dedicated to justice, stab the Magna Carta of American liberty to death in the interest of corporations, that labor

might be disrobed of its inalienable rights and those who advocated its claim to justice imprisoned as if they were felons?

You may subject such acts of despotism to the severest analysis, you may probe for the motive, you may dissect the brain and lay bare the quivering heart, and, when you have completed the task, you will find a tongue in every gash of your dissecting knife uttering the one word "pelf." Once upon a time a corporation dog of good reputation was charged with killing sheep, though he had never been caught in the act. The corporation had always found him to be an obedient dog, willing to lick the hand of his master, and declared that he was a peaceable and law-abiding dog; but one day upon investigation the dog was found to have wool in his teeth and thenceforward, though the corporation stood manfully by him, he was believed to be a sheep-killing dog. The world has no means of knowing what methods corporations employ to obtain despotic decrees in their interest, but it is generally believed that if an examination could be made, there would be found wool in the teeth of the judge.

I do not profess to be a student of heredity, and yet I am persuaded that men inherit the peculiarities of the primal molecules from which they have been evolved. If the modern man, in spite of our civilizing influences, books, stage and rostrum, has more devil than divinity in his nature, where rests the blame?

Leaving the interrogatory unanswered, as it has been in all the past, it is only required to say that men with the ballot make a fatal mistake when they select mental and moral deformities and clothe them with despotic power. When such creatures are arrayed in the insignia of authority, right, justice and liberty are forever in peril.

What reasons exist today for rhetorical apostrophes to the constitution of the Republic? Those who are familiar by experience, or by reading, with the pathways of the storms on the ocean will recall recollections of ships with their sails rent and torn by the fury of the winds, rolling upon the yeasty billows and flying signals of distress. Clouds had for days obscured sun and stars and only the eye of omnipotence could tell whither the hulk was drifting — and today the constitution of our ship of state, the chart by which she had been steered for a century, has encountered a judicial tornado and only the

gods of our fathers can tell whither she is drifting. True, Longfellow, inspired by the genius of hope, sang of the good old ship:

“We know what master laid thy keel, What workmen wrought thy ribs of steel.

Who made each mast and sail and rope,

What anvils rang, what hammers beat,

In what a forge and what a heat

Were shaped the anchors of thy hope.”

But the poet wrote before the chart by which the good old ship sailed had been mutilated and torn and flung aside as a thing of contempt; before Shiras “flopped” and before corporations knew the price of judges, legislators and public officials as certainly as Armour knows the price of pork and mutton.

Longfellow wrote before men with heads as small as chipmunks and pockets as big as balloons were elevated to public office, and before the corporation ruled in courts and legislative halls as the fabled bull ruled in a china shop.

No afflatus, however divine, no genius, though saturated with the inspiring waters of Hippocrene, could now write in a spirit of patriotic fire of the old constitution, nor ever again until the people by the all pervading power of the ballot have repaired the old chart, closed the rents and obscured the judicial dagger holes made for the accommodation of millionaires and corporations, through which they drive their four — in — hands as if they were Cumberland gaps.

Here, this evening, I am inclined to indulge in eulogistic phrase of Liberty because once more I am permitted to mingle with my fellow — citizens outside of prison locks and bars.

Shakespeare said:

“Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.”

I know something of adversity, and with such philosophy as I could summon have extracted what little sweetness it contained. I know little of toads, except that of the genus judicial, and if they have a precious jewel in their heads or hearts it has not fallen to my lot to find it, though the corporations seem to have been more successful.

The immortal bard also wrote that

“This our life, exempt from public haunt, Finds tongues in trees, books in running brooks, Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

If to be behind prison bars is to be “exempt from public haunt,” then for the past six months I may claim such exemption, with all the rapture to be found in listening to the tongues of trees, to the charming lessons taught by the books of the running brooks and to the profound sermons of the stones. There is not a tree on the Woodstock prison campus, or near by, to whose tongued melodies or maledictions I have not in fancy listened when liberty, despotism or justice was the theme.

The bard of Avon, the one Shakespeare of all the ages, was up to high-water mark of divine inspiration when he said there were those who could find tongues in trees, and never since trees were planted in the garden of Eden has the tongue of a tree voiced a sentiment hostile to liberty.

Thus, when in prison and exempt from judicial persecution, the tongues of trees as well as the tongues of friends taught me that sweets could be extracted from adversity.

Nor was I less fortunate when I permitted my fancy to see a book in a running brook as it laughed and sang and danced its way to the sea, and find that on every page was written a diviner song to liberty and love and sympathy than was ever sung by human voice.

And as for the stones in Woodstock prison, they were forever preaching sermons and their themes were all things good and evil among men.

In prison my life was a busy one, and the time for meditation and to give the imagination free rein was when the daily task was over and night's sable curtains enveloped the world in darkness, relieved only by the sentinel stars and the earth's silver satellite “walking in lovely beauty to her midnight throne.” It was at such times that the “Reverend Stones” preached their sermons, sometimes rising in grandeur to the Sermon on the Mount.

It might be a question in the minds of some if this occasion warrants the indulgence of the fancy. It will be remembered that Aesop taught the world by fables and Christ by parables, but my recollection is that the old "stone preachers" were as epigrammatic as an unabridged dictionary.

I remember one old divine who, one night, selected for his text George M. Pullman, and said: "George is a bad egg, handle him with care. Should you crack his shell the odor would depopulate Chicago in an hour." All said "Amen" and the services closed. Another old sermonizer who said he had been preaching since man was a molecule, declared he had of late years studied corporations, and that they were warts on the nose of our national industries, — that they were vultures whose beaks and claws were tearing and mangling the vitals of labor and transforming workingmen's homes into caves. Another old stone said he knew more about strikes than Carroll D. Wright, and that he was present when the slaves built the pyramids; that God Himself had taught His lightning, thunderbolts, winds, waves and earthquakes to strike, and that strikes would proceed, with bullets or ballots, until workingmen, no longer deceived and cajoled by their enemies, would unify, proclaim their sovereignty and walk the earth free men.

O, yes, Shakespeare was right when he said there were sermons in stones. I recall one rugged-visaged old stone preacher who claimed to have been a pavement boulder in a street of heaven before the gold standard was adopted, and who discussed courts. He said they had been antagonizing the decrees of heaven since the day when Lucifer was cast into the bottomless pit. Referring to our Supreme Court he said it was a nest of rodents forever gnawing at the stately pillars supporting the temple of our liberties. I recall how his eyes, as he lifted their stony lids, flashed indignation like orbs of fire, and how his stony lips quivered as he uttered his maledictions of judicial treason to constitutional liberty.

But occasionally some old bald-headed ashler, with a heart beating responsive to every human joy or sorrow, would preach a sermon on love or sympathy or some other noble trait that in spite of heredity still lived even in the heart of stones. One old divine, having read some of the plutocratic papers on the Pullman strike and their

anathemas of sympathy, when one workingman's heart, throbbing responsive to the divine law of love, prompted him to aid his brother in distress, discussed sympathy. He said sympathy was one of the perennial flowers of the Celestial City, and that angels had transplanted it in Eden for the happiness of Adam and Eve, and that the winds had scattered the seed throughout the earth. He said there was no humanity, no elevating, refining, ennobling influences in operation where there was no sympathy. Sympathy, he said, warmed in every ray of the sun, freshened in every breeze that scattered over the earth the perfume of flowers and glowed with the divine scintillation of the stars in all the expanse of the heavens.

Referring to the men and women of other labor organizations who had sympathized with the American Railway Union in its efforts to rescue Pullman's slaves from death by starvation, the old preacher placed a crown of jeweled eulogies upon their heads and said that in all the mutations of life, in adversity or prosperity, in the vigor of youth or the infirmities of age, there would never come a time to them when like the Pen grasping a penitent's tear as a passport to heaven, they would not cherish as a valued souvenir of all their weary years that one act of sympathy of the victims of the Pullman piracy, and that when presented at the pearly gate of paradise, it would swing wide open and let them in amidst the joyous acclaims of angels.

From such reflections I turn to the practical lessons taught by this "Liberation Day" demonstration. It means that American lovers of liberty are setting in operation forces to rescue their constitutional liberties from the grasp of monopoly and its mercenary hirelings. It means that the people are aroused in view of impending perils and that agitation, organization, and unification are to be the future battle cries of men who will not part with their birthrights and, like Patrick Henry, will have the courage to exclaim: "Give me liberty or give me death!" I have borne with such composure as I could command the imprisonment which deprived me of my liberty. Were I a criminal; were I guilty of crimes meriting a prison cell; had I ever lifted my hand against the life or the liberty of my fellowmen; had I ever sought to filch their good name, I would not be here. I would have fled from the haunts of civilization and taken up my residence in some cave where the voice of my kindred is never heard. But I am standing here

without a self-accusation of crime or criminal intent festering in my conscience, in the sunlight once more, among my fellowmen, contributing as best I can to make this “Liberation Day” from Woodstock prison a memorial day, realizing that, as Lowell sang:

“He’s true to God who ‘s true to man; wherever wrong is done,
To the humblest and the weakest, ‘neath the all-beholding sun.
That wrong is also done to us, and they are slaves most base,
Whose love of right is for themselves and not for all their race.”

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