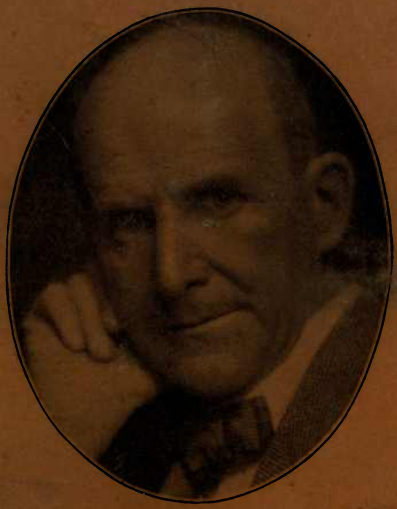
THOUGH JAILED, HE SPEAKS



DEBS

HIS AUTHORIZED LIFE AND LETTERS

By David Karsner

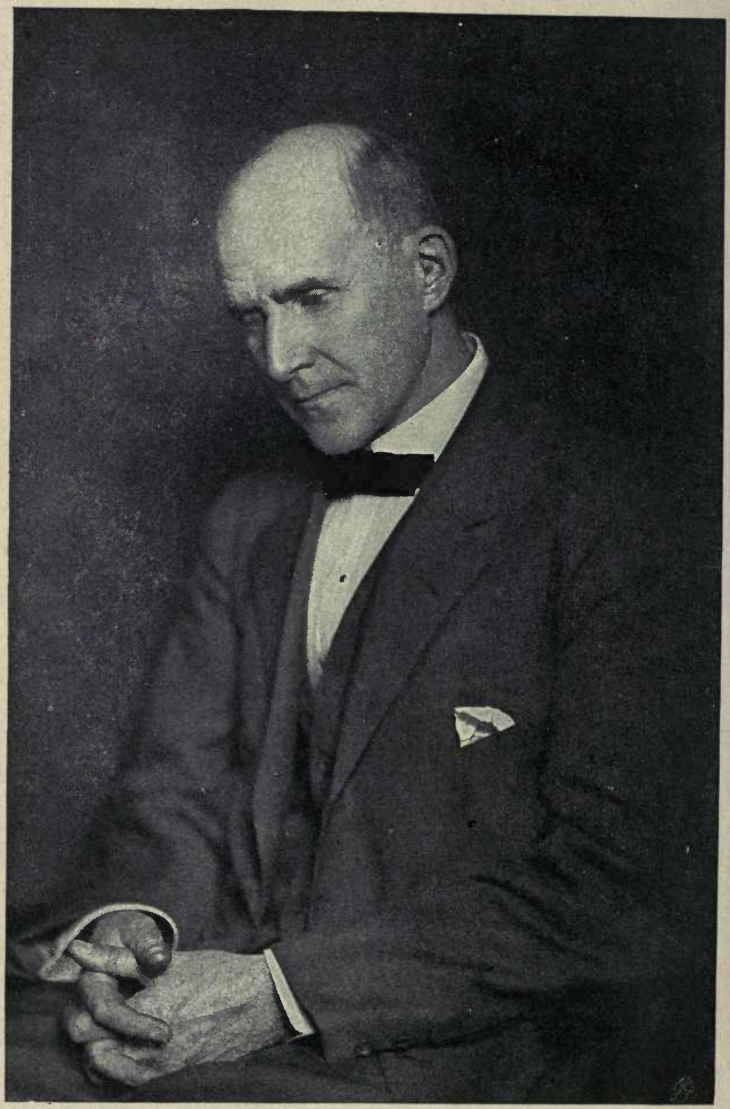
AN AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY

"You will write just the kind of a book that Time and History will require, and in every line in every page, you will be speaking for me with my authority given to you without reservation or qualifications."—*Eugene V. Debs to David Karsner.*

Every Copy Sold Helps
Political and Industrial Prisoners

BONI AND LIVERIGHT
Publishers *New York*

DEBS



Photograph by Allen Drew Cook

EUGENE VICTOR DEBS

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DAVID KARSNER

199

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

DEBS'S AUTHORIZATION AND INDORSEMENT

EUGENE VICTOR DEBS, a federal convict in the United States Prison at Atlanta, Ga., was prohibited, under the prison rule, from doing any sort of writing except the one letter a week to his family. He could not, therefore, *write* an introduction to this volume. Consequently, I visited him at the Atlanta Prison on July 17, 1919, and in the presence of Warden Fred G. Zerbst, Debs authorized and authenticated this record of his life in these words:

"I am exceedingly glad that you were commissioned to write this book which, I am sure, will come to be recognized as an important and an imperishable contribution to American labor history. Although the rules of the prison do not permit me to write an introduction to your book, or to do any writing of any kind aside from my one letter a week to my family, in this spoken word I authorize you to write the story.

"I give to you as the author, and to Boni and Liveright as the publishers, not merely my word of approval and hearty indorsement of your book, but my warm appreciation of this manifest interest in the cause in which I have been privileged to serve all of my life. You will write just the kind of a book that Time and History will require, and in every line, on every page you will be speaking for me with my authority, given to you without reservations or qualifications.

"More than any other person you have been pe-

culiarly identified with the whole story since it began with the trial in September, 1918. Your daily reports of the trial in Cleveland, your several accounts of the trip we took from Terre Haute to Moundsville Penitentiary last April, and your several interviews with me at Moundsville, all printed in *The New York Call*, were rare specimens of newspaper accuracy and journalistic skill. I say this not as flattery, but as the personal conviction which I have expressed to you in writing before.

"Honestly, I do not know of a man in America who is placed in so advantageous a position, from so many angles, to write this book, as yourself. I suppose that other books along similar lines and covering the same subject will be bound to follow, but already you are fortified with a thorough knowledge of the case and have an understanding and an appreciation of its historic significance to be able, more than any other, to write authoritatively. As you have so far been the newspaper historian of my trial, conviction and imprisonment, you will now become the historian of the whole story in a much larger and more permanent sense.

"And I indorse and shall stand by your book as being the real and true history of such facts, incidents and data that you may deem necessary to write about, comment upon or interpret, and you therefore understand without further word from me that I place abundant faith in your moral and intellectual integrity. If I did not feel absolutely sure that you would discuss your subject frankly, fearlessly, justly and accurately, and in the same intellectually honest spirit that I would write of it, I should of course be compelled to withhold my imprimatur from your book.

"During this past year, crowded with these momentous months when we have been together under the most trying circumstances, you have measured beyond every test of loyalty and devotion as a friend and com-

rade, and have given me cause to regard you always as my younger spiritual brother.

"I wish your book every success; which I am sure it will have; and you have my authority to sign my name to what I have told you in this interview, inasmuch as the rules of the United States Prison here do not permit me to give you my written word."

Still in the presence of the warden, 'Gene Debs sealed these words with an affectionate embrace. Then he slowly backed off to the door, smiling and serene, walked rapidly down the silent marble corridor with light and agile tread, and the heavy iron door slammed and locked as he slipped beyond, and became again a common convict, U. S. No. 9653.

DEBS—AUTHORIZED LIFE AND LETTERS

CHAPTER I

"AS FIRM AS GRANITE"

SO far as I am concerned these stone walls and steel bars do not exist; I do not see them. My spirit soars beyond this institution and mingles with the spirits of my comrades, loyal and devoted all, throughout the country and the world. For my own self I am serene and dauntless, and for my comrades I am confident that the cause in which and for which they are working all their waking hours will soon triumph, and in that blessed day the workers of the world will inaugurate the greatest liberty and democracy that the world has ever known. Tell my comrades that I am all right and that there is nothing to worry about; and now is there anything else that you wanted to see me about?"

Eugene Victor Debs, a Federal prisoner serving a sentence of ten years for violating the Espionage Act by making a speech at Canton, Ohio, on June 16th, 1918, which the government construed as being inimical to the success of the war in which it was engaged with the Allied Powers against Germany, had been speaking to me for half an hour in the private office of the warden at the Atlanta Federal Prison. I told him that there were a thousand things about which I should like to speak to him, but he instantly assured me that it was unnecessary; that while he had not received a single paper or periodical since he came to Atlanta, June 14th,

1919, from Moundsville Penitentiary, West Virginia, where he began to serve his term exactly two months before, still he knew, felt, all the important happenings and did not need to be enlightened.

"I can feel the vibrations of the warm, firm and tender hearts beating in unison for freedom and democracy all over the world. The swelling note of their song reverberates through these corridors, and I know they are active. At night, in my prison cell I can feel the warm and tender fingers of little children upon my face, and all these things give me strength and courage to face the future, whatever it may hold, with serenity and composure."

Debs was now standing, clad in the prison blue, his lean hands placed firmly upon each of my shoulders, his six foot figure, gaunt and slender, slightly stooping, his smooth, lean and mobile face wreathed in a smile, and his spectacled gray-blue eyes moist and radiant. A few feet from us Warden Fred G. Zerbst was standing at his yellow roll-top desk, wearing an expression on his face which to me seemed to betoken a mixture of astonishment, sadness and sympathetic amusement. In a moment Debs was backing off to the door and as he turned his head before he stepped down the white marble corridor he bowed and waved his hand to the warden in a courteous manner, as an expression of his thanks to his keeper for permitting the interview. Debs was wearing cheap canvas "sneakers" over rough cotton socks. Before the echo of the slamming iron door behind him had died out in the sepulchral corridor, Warden Zerbst and I, both still standing, were looking very foolishly at each other.

"Did the government build this prison for such men?" I asked.

"The government built this prison for men who violate Federal laws," replied the warden judiciously. Before his answer came I imagined there was a negative

reply to my inquiry in his mind. But if there was he gave it no voice.

During this talk with Debs he mentioned having seen a newspaper article purporting to be a statement of A. Mitchell Palmer, Attorney General of the United States, to the effect that if Debs would repent things might be made easier for him. A liberal interpretation of this statement might be made to imply that Debs could have a pardon if he would but ask for it and say he was sorry for what he had done. In speaking of the newspaper article he had read Debs's eyes narrowed almost to slits, and his great jaw tightened, and the flesh on his long and narrow chin was drawn as his mouth contracted with the gritting of his teeth.

"Repent! Repent!" he snapped. "Repent for standing like a man! For having a conviction about a public question, and standing by it and for the Cause! Why, before I would don the sackcloth and get down into the ashes before the Attorney General or any man on earth for having a principle I would gladly walk to the gallows or the stake. If I should do such a thing as that the barbaric tortures of the Inquisition would be too good for me.

"No! Not in a thousand years shall I repent for a single principle that I possess. They are dearer to me than liberty, than life itself." Pointing his finger in his most characteristic manner in the direction of the iron gray gate at the entrance, he continued:

"The flies will carry me through that keyhole piece by piece before I shall ever confess sorrow or penitence for standing like a man, and by my constitutional rights as an American citizen." Debs was on fire. His great frame was hot in the molten passion of his spirit. He was now manifesting the grand bitterness of his nature, which, from another side is cooled from a tower of fire and force, to a stooping figure of infinite tender-

ness, mercy, compassion and love. "No," said he, "I am as firm as granite!"

It can be said without exaggeration that Eugene V. Debs is one of the most celebrated prisoners ever placed behind steel bars in America. Before his incarceration he had enjoyed national, even international, fame for twenty years, having first been a candidate for President of the United States on the Social-Democratic Party's ticket in 1900. In the three successive presidential campaigns he again led the Socialist Party. He resolutely declined to accept the nomination for the fifth time in 1916 when his party again looked to him to be their leader. In that presidential year, still eager to carry on the propaganda of Socialism, he permitted his state (Indiana) organization to run him for Congress in the Fifth District, which embraces Terre Haute, the town in which he was born and has lived all his life. Of Debs's four presidential campaigns we shall deal later. They have been mentioned here merely by way of suggesting the national character and import of this man, many of whose thousands of political opponents are among his personal friends, and whose breadth of intellect, spirit and vision transcends any single creed, dogma or political party. Although the Socialists claim him particularly, and he glories in their claim, he steps, in fact, far beyond the Socialist creed, a man whose spiritual figure will loom larger on the social horizon with the passing of time. It may be that Debs will be remembered and revered in history long after his immediate political attachment has been eclipsed by other creeds and formulas looking toward the perfect day and the noble spirit.

Debs stepped into a felon's cell as philosophically as if he were stepping into a train to go to some meeting place to address a large audience. He donned the prison gray at Moundsville and the prison blue at Atlanta with the same equanimity with which he would put on civilian

clothing at home. In both prison experiences he has exhibited the same irrefragable determination of spirit and mental serenity that he has manifested on unnumbered occasions in industrial and political contests. There was no boast in the statement which he gave to me just before he entered Moundsville Prison April 13th, 1919:

"I enter the prison doors a flaming revolutionist—my head erect, my spirit untamed and my soul unconquerable."

I saw Debs first at the Atlanta Prison on June 18th. He had arrived there from Moundsville Prison the previous Saturday afternoon, June 14th. I was permitted by Warden Zerbst to see Debs only because I presented a letter to him written by Warden Joseph Z. Terrell of Moundsville Prison, which introduced me "as a writer of *The New York Call*, a close personal friend of Debs," and stated that I had been permitted to see Debs several times and that "not once did he deviate from my instructions as to what he might say to Debs, or the length of his visit." The Atlanta warden was insistent that I write "no sensational interview" in case he should let me see Debs. The government did not permit newspaper people to interview prisoners, he said. Sitting on the veranda of the warden's dwelling, we held quite a lengthy talk about Debs and his case.

The first five days of Debs's stay at Atlanta he was locked in a cell, having been numbered 9653. In a letter from Warden Terrell, Zerbst was familiarized with the humane treatment and consideration accorded Debs at Moundsville, and Zerbst was requested to be as kind to Debs as the prison rules of Atlanta would permit. Zerbst told me, on my first visit, that he intended to place Debs in the hospital, in a clerical position similar to that which he held at Moundsville for the two months that he was there. In my presence, Zerbst so informed Debs of his intentions.

"Well, warden, that is very kind of you, but I think I should like to have a little manual labor, too. I am very familiar with overalls. At home in Terre Haute I am scarcely out of bluejeans. I am the official swabber of my back alley. I give it a bath every day. One day at home while I was sweeping the alley, an old neighbor of mine, a very poor man, came along and said, 'Look yere, Mr. Debs, you're keepin' a good man out of a job by sweepin' that alley yourself.'

" 'Well, neighbor, how much a day would you get for doing this work?' I asked him.

" 'Two dollars, Mr. Debs.'

"So I gave him the two dollars and I kept the job, and we were both happy and contented."

I left the prison in June with the impression that 'Gene would be treated almost as well as he had been at Moundsville. His friends were astonished upon learning in July that he had been assigned to work in the clothing department, and slept in a cell with five other prisoners; that to all outward intents and purposes this would be his routine life for the coming ten years.

In July, Zerbst voluntarily explained that Debs had requested his present employment in the clothing warehouse instead of the hospital assignment. But I learned from Debs's own lips the reason. He had been proffered the hospital assignment, which would have allowed him to sleep in a dormitory instead of a cell, and a bed instead of a bunk. When he went to the hospital one of the attaches, remarking to another, said, "He will cheat the government out of his sentence; he'll never live ten years." Debs heard the slur, and refused to go to work in the hospital, but he did not explain to Zerbst the reason, and that official never knew, believing that "Debs prefers the other work." At Atlanta the rigorous prison rules were applied in all their severity to Debs just as they apply to the 1700 other prisoners. Debs expressed himself to me as being glad that this

was so. He refused to place himself in the position of being the recipient of special favors that were not accorded his fellow convicts. What was good enough, or, rather, what was bad enough for them, was equally good or bad enough for him, and he would not have it otherwise.

As to the treatment accorded Debs at Atlanta, and his reactions to it, we might just as well let the great humanist speak for himself in his letter to his brother, Theodore, at Terre Haute:

THEODORE DEBS,
1218½ Wabash avenue,
Terre Haute, Indiana.

U. S. Penitentiary,
Atlanta, Ga.
July 3d, 1919.

MY DEAREST OLD PARD:

A thousand loving greetings to you and Gertrude and Marguerite and "Babe"! You know why, under my limited writing privileges, you have not heard from me before. And you know, too, that you have been in my heart every moment since we embraced in love and farewell that never-to-be-forgotten night. You are the sweetest, faithfullest, darling of a brother a mortal ever had. Kate* has been telling me all about how good and sweet and attentive you and Gertrude and Marguerite have been to her, and that has been of inexpressible solace to me—We all may write a special letter on the Fourth of July and it is this letter that I'm now writing to you. Please drop a line to Marguerite and tell her why I can't write and that I send my love and tenderest devotion to them all. The ride down here was hot and tiresome but I stood it well. Had but an hour's notice before leaving and everything was kept profoundly secret. The first five days here I was locked in my cell day and night. I'm now assigned to clerical work in Clothing Room, very light, and in charge of Mr. Boyle and Mr. Barry(?), two very fine men. We work from

* Mrs. Katherine M. Debs, Terre Haute, Indiana, wife of Eugene V. Debs.

8 till near 4—then twenty minutes in yard, then supper. We are in our cells from 5 P. M. to 7 A. M.—Saturday and Sunday P. M. we have out in the grounds from about 1 to 4. There are six of us in one cell—my five companions are the finest kind of fellows and I love them all. One is a German, one a Jew, one an Irishman and two Americans. They are all fine, bright fellows and they vie with each other in being kind to me. Don't let any one send me *anything* as it cannot come to me under the rules. I have not received a package of any kind, nor a Socialist paper or magazine since I've been here. Cigars, fruit, candy, eatables cannot come to me, so please notify Germer * and the papers not to send me anything as it will not reach me. Tell the comrades I cannot write to them. I can write but one letter a week and that to my family. A special letter requires application in writing, special permission, and must be confined to the one subject for which it is written, which must be specified. The application must be approved by the guard before it can be passed on—it may or may not be granted and when written it may or may not be sent. I am treated exactly the same as the common run of prisoners and have no complaint on that score. The prisoner here to whom we sent a little money for tobacco about two years ago has been very kind to me and returned it many fold. Bread cast upon the waters, etc. I'm in perfect health. My spirits could not be more serene and dauntless. I calmly await the future. All's well.

My love and kisses to you all and forever,

GENE.

Eugene V. Debs,
No. 9653.

Debs himself had related to me on my visit in July the substantial facts concerning his treatment and estate

* Adolph Germer, National Secretary, Socialist Party, Chicago.

at Atlanta Prison. After he had mentioned the different nationalities of his five cell mates he said:

"And I am an internationalist, so we all get along splendidly together."

He said he was not being persecuted at the prison because of his social ideas. But I could easily understand without a word from him, by the flash of his eyes and the stiffness of his jaws, with what hatred he regarded all prisons, and with what sympathetic understanding he entered into the dull, drab lives of his fellow prisoners.

"You remember," he said to me on one of my visits to his cell, "you remember what Lincoln said when at New Orleans he saw a young negress being sold on the block? He said: 'If I ever get a chance I'll hit at the very foundations of chattel slavery, and I'll hit it hard.' Well, if I ever get out of here alive I'll strike at the prison system harder than Lincoln ever hit at chattel slavery."

At Atlanta Debs and his five cell mates alternated in teams of two each week sweeping, swabbing and washing the cell, which was neither a difficult job nor a long one for six healthy and normal human beings, considering the fact that the cell was only ten by eight feet. In the sextette cells there are three steel bunks in tiers on each side of the walls. A thin straw mattress is thrown over the springless steel frame of each. A rough sheet and a blanket make up the clothing.

"Last week," said Debs, "came the turn of my Jewish comrade and me to sweep and wash the floor and walls. A line in the cement floor running down the middle of the cell furnished the division of our labor. I had my back turned to the fellow, as I was washing the wall between the bunks, and when I turned around I saw that the rascal had hunched over on my side of the line and had washed almost the entire floor. I naturally gave him a good talking to, and told him that since the govern-

ment had given me a job I wanted to fill it, and that he should 'shinny over on his own side.' "

Debs has not often been in accord with the ideas of priests and preachers, and when he was visited in his cell at Atlanta by them the occasion presented an opportunity to deliver himself on the subject, as he put it, of churchianity versus Christianity.

"I have already had two visitors," said Debs, with a merry twinkle in his eye, "yes, one a priest and the other a preacher. They came at different times, but on the same mission, to save my soul. They both wanted to know what religion I professed. I told them that their churches and their theologies were not for me—I have no use for them. Their tendencies are not to serve but to enslave. To conceal rather than reveal the true and vital significance of the Sermon on the Mount." So, Debs said he told the two clergymen that he belonged to no church, and bowed to no image. He said he believed firmly in immortality, and saw the spiritual likeness of God in the face of every breathing being.

"I told my friends of the cloth that I did not believe Christ was meek and lowly, but a real, living, vital agitator who went into the Temple with a lash and a knout and whipped the oppressors of the poor, routed them out of doors and spilled their blood-got silver on the floor. He told the robbed and misruled and exploited and driven people to disobey their plunderers! he denounced the profiteers, and it was for this that they nailed his quivering body to the cross and spiked it to the gates of Jerusalem, not because he told men to love one another. That was a harmless doctrine. But when he touched their profits and denounced them before their people he was then marked for crucifixion. I did the same thing in a different way," continued Debs on this occasion, speaking in a most impersonal matter-of-fact manner, with not the slightest suggestion of self-praise, but rather in a vein of deep humility. "I did the same

thing, but I fared better than Christ. They nailed him to the cross and they threw me in here. We have progressed quite some in two thousand years. If Christ could go to the cross for his principles, surely I can go to prison for mine, and I want nothing more than the strength to be able to serve in this slight way those who have done so much for me. To be here for the reason that I am here is a high privilege, and, in a sense, a vindication of many things, all of which will come out all right in God's good time. All of us but need the strength to face the future together."

Debs is a most religious man. He accepts literally what he conceives to be the principles for which Christ was crucified. He is a Christian to whom the church offers nothing but an apology for Christ. He was a personal friend of Robert G. Ingersoll, and he admired the speeches and writings of the great agnostic, and understood their significance as few men in that period did. Debs is preëminently an agitator, a crusader. He has lived close to the pulsing heart of the human race. He accepts the Socialist philosophy because he is sure it can be made to serve the poor and make them rich in the good things of life. In his heart and soul there is no trace of hatred for a living soul, and he has said time and again that he would serve those who oppose him just as much as those who are with him. Few men in America have possessed the gift of oratory that belongs to Eugene V. Debs. What he once said of Ingersoll, that "flowers blossom upon his lips, and you can hear the ripple of silver springs in the music of his voice," is likewise said of him. In his forty years of agitation in behalf of the workers and the organized labor movement of America Debs has addressed millions of people. Once when he came to New York to make an address at Madison Square Garden the hall was crowded to the last inch. Lincoln Steffens, the journalist, had a seat offered him on the platform which he declined, saying he would rather go

down under the stage so that he might be able "to feel 'Gene's vibrations."

Debs was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, November 5, 1855. In his sixty-fifth year he enjoys fair health, despite the results of a severe nervous breakdown a few years ago which left him prostrated for some while. He stands a little over six feet, is slender and gaunt like Lincoln. When speaking, both in public and in private, he gesticulates frequently with his large, lean right hand, extending and separating his fingers, with his thumb curved far back. The gestures of that right hand are a vital part of his talk, and in his grip you can feel the sincere, pulsing heart of the man. His baldness, which extends back beyond the crown of his head, accentuates the myriad tiny veins, lines of suffering, and the valleys and crevices in his face.

Debs has made his living for many years by his speeches and writings, although by far the most of his speeches have been delivered without any thought of pay, and the major portion of his writings have been given freely to the small daily and weekly papers whose political and economic doctrines he supports. Scores of weeklies and radical publications claim him as their "contributing editor," although most of them are financially unable to contribute toward his material well-being. For many years an article in any one of these publications signed by his name has been considered a "star feature," and is reprinted again and again until it has run its printorial course from coast to coast, from the Gulf to the regions farthest north. He has had compensatory attachments with *The Appeal to Reason* of Girard, Kansas, when that free-lance Socialist weekly was conducted under a former management, and later he wrote a weekly editorial for *The Rip Saw*, another free-lance Socialist weekly, published at St. Louis, and which later became known as *The Social Revolution* just before it went into eclipse. He has written for a num-

ber of the more widely known publications, too, and always in the style and manner of an agitator, a crusader. Several scores of his most significant articles have been reprinted in leaflet and pamphlet form, and have had tremendous sales in which Debs has almost never shared, the profits going into the coffers of the particular enterprising Socialist Party branch to enable it to increase its propaganda for Socialism in its community. Times uncounted he has traveled long distances to address meetings, paying every expense, even railroad fare, out of his own pocket. He is reckless with money—gives it away. Many stories have been told about him concerning the number of overcoats he has given to poor derelicts whom he chanced to meet in his travels about the country. Once he came to Philadelphia to address a large rally of his party. He was met at the railroad depot by friends and an escorting committee. He saw in the group an old and staunch friend, Horace Traubel, poet and editor, a man of his own beliefs.

"Horace, have you got any money?" Debs asked, when the greetings were over. Traubel had in his pocket twenty dollars which he gave over to Debs without further word.

"I haven't got a cent," explained Debs. "On my train coming east there was an old woman with several children, and the poor soul had lost her ticket. The conductor was going to put her off. I gave her every cent I had so she could go on her way." And Traubel was reimbursed by Debs as soon as the latter arrived home at Terre Haute.

The simplicity and sincerity of his kindnesses have been the simplicity and sincerity of his powerful attacks against whatever he considered to be injustice. Keenly, persistently, he has sought his goal. Bitter criticism, punishment, could not affect the vision in his soul. Sixty-four years of age—a ten-year term of imprisonment—simply, serenely, he took that vision with him into his cell.

CHAPTER II

TRIAL, CONVICTION AND APPEAL

THE Debs case was the result of a speech made by Debs in Canton, Ohio, June 16, 1918, before the Ohio State Socialist Convention.* He had made a number of other speeches to his comrades in the Socialist movement at various times during the year from April 6, 1917, the date on which Congress declared that a state of war existed between the United States and the German Imperial Government, up to the Canton address. On June 20, 1918, a Federal grand jury empaneled at Cleveland, in the Eastern Division of the Northern District of Ohio, returned an indictment, consisting of ten counts, against Debs under Section Three of the Act of June 15, 1917, as amended by Act of May 16, 1918, and known as the Espionage Law. On September 9, 1918, Debs went to trial at Cleveland before Judge D. C. Westenhaver. He was represented by Seymour Stedman, of Chicago; William A. Cunnea, of Chicago; Joseph W. Sharts, of Dayton, Ohio, and Morris Wolf, of Cleveland. The government was represented by United States District Attorney E. S. Wertz, assisted by F. B. Kavanaugh, and one or two other assistants. On the previous day, Sunday afternoon, Debs, at his home in Terre Haute, calmly discussed his case with his counsel, feeling almost certain that the following week would find him convicted. With the knowledge of the fates of several hundred other Socialists, Industrial Workers of the World, Bible students and political and religious free-

* Salient extracts from the Canton speech may be found in the Appendix.

thinkers, convicts under the Espionage Act, still fresh in his mind, Debs could not well be sanguine concerning his own fate.

He took the position from the beginning of his predicament that the Federal Constitution protected, or was intended to so protect, his rights as an American citizen, born in the United States. He stood squarely upon the First Amendment:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peacefully to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of their grievances."

Over and against that guarantee was the Espionage Act, passed originally June 15, 1917, and amended May 16, 1918. The original act was as follows:

(Title I, Section 3.) "Whoever, when the United States is at war, shall (1) wilfully make or convey false reports or false statements with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the United States or to promote the success of its enemies, and whoever, when the United States is at war, (2) shall wilfully cause or attempt to cause insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty, in the military or naval forces of the United States, or shall (3) wilfully obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States, to the injury of the service or of the United States, shall be punished by a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars or imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both."

Of far more drastic nature was the amended act:

"Whoever, when the United States is at war, shall wilfully make or convey false reports or false statements with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the United States, or to promote the success of its enemies, or shall wilfully make or convey false reports or false statements, or say

or do anything except by way of bona fide and not disloyal advice to an investor or investors, with intent to obstruct the sale by the United States of bonds or other securities of the United States or the making of loans by or to the United States, and whoever, when the United States is at war, shall wilfully cause, or attempt to cause, or incite or attempt to incite, insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty in the military or naval forces of the United States, or shall wilfully obstruct or attempt to obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States, and whoever, when the United States is at war, shall wilfully utter, print, write or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous or abusive language about the form of government of the United States, or the Constitution of the United States, or the military or naval forces of the United States, or the flag of the United States, or the uniform of the army or navy of the United States, or any language intended to bring the form of government of the United States, or the Constitution of the United States, or the military or naval forces of the United States, or the flag of the United States, or the uniform of the army or navy of the United States into contempt, scorn, contumely, or disrepute, or shall wilfully utter, print, write or publish any language intended to incite, provoke or encourage resistance to the United States, or to promote the cause of its enemies, or shall wilfully display the flag of any foreign enemy, or shall wilfully, by utterance, writing, printing, publication or language spoken, urge, incite or advocate any curtailment of production in this country of any thing or things, product or products, necessary or essential to the prosecution of the war in which the United States may be engaged, with intent by such curtailment to cripple or hinder the United States in the prosecution of the war, and whoever shall wilfully advocate, teach, defend, or suggest the doing of any of the acts or things in this section enumerated, and whoever shall, by word

or act, support or favor the cause of any country with which the United States is at war, or by word or act oppose the cause of the United States therein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars or imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both."

Several hours before Judge Westenhaver's court convened that morning Debs was busy every moment, both at the Holland Hotel and the Gillsy House, around the corner, holding impromptu receptions with his friends and counsel, seeming to be wholly oblivious of the ordeal through which he must pass in the coming week. He was calm and composed, and to one anxious friend, who expressed deep concern over the outcome of the trial, Debs said: "This is but another milepost along the pathway of progress. We shall not tarry here very long." As he entered the courtroom, clad in fresh summer gray, he was instantly surrounded by a large group of his fellow Socialists who had been standing in line outside the judicial doors for several hours in the hope of getting a seat to witness the trial of their chief. Debs, walking with one of his counsel, took his seat at a table, folded his hands in his lap, and appeared eager for the curtain to rise on what was to be the climax of his career. He followed closely the examination of the veniremen, appearing to be not so much concerned as a defendant, as interested as a spectator. After four hours of examination and cross-examination of a score or more of prospective talesmen, twelve men were chosen to try the case. A jury of farmers had been selected. They all evinced their thorough nationalism by the answers they gave to pertinent and leading questions of Debs's counsel. All believed in the form of government of the United States, its Constitution, including the First Amendment, which several of them had heard read and explained for the first time in their lives, and disclaimed any prejudice against Debs or the party he represented.

Assistant District Attorney Kavanaugh presented the government's case to the jury. He was a prepossessing young man, and accepted the duty that lay before him with ardor and vehemence.

"This man is the palpitating pulse of the sedition crusade," he exclaimed, adding later, "by his words shall he be judged, and by his words shall he be condemned." His address lasted the better part of an hour, and, when it was finished, Debs leaned across the counsel table and complimented his adversary upon his efforts.

Stedman, speaking for Debs, justified, by the Constitution of the United States, everything his client had said in his Canton speech, and when he said to the jury: "You would not indict Woodrow Wilson because he wrote in his book, 'The New Freedom,' that wars are brought by the rulers and not by the people," there was applause in the rear of the courtroom. The court quickly smothered this demonstration, and the participants, including Mrs. Rose Pastor Stokes, a New York worker in the Socialist cause, who at that time was herself convicted of violating the Espionage Act, were fined. Mrs. Stokes, who sat by Debs during his trial, was enjoying her freedom under bail pending the disposition of appeal of her case. Stedman paid tribute to Debs and his life work, concluding with the words:

"We ask you to judge Eugene V. Debs by his life, his deeds and his works. If you will do that we shall abide by your verdict."

Clyde R. Miller, a newspaper reporter of Cleveland, was the chief witness for the government. He testified that he was sent by his paper, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, to report the proceedings of the Socialist convention at Canton on June 16th, and that he had interviewed Debs at the Courtland Hotel in Canton just before he delivered his address. Miller testified that he had particularly asked Debs whether the newspapers

had correctly reported him when they stated that he had repudiated the St. Louis Majority Report of the Socialist Party.* Denying the statements that he had repudiated the anti-war proclamation of his party, Miller testified that Debs said in that interview:

"I approved of the adoption of the platform in form and substance at the time it was created, but in the light of the Russian situation I think we should have put forth a restatement of the aims of the Socialist Party." Miller also quoted Debs as saying to him: "In a land where they are fighting for democracy one must be very careful what one says if one would keep out of jail."

"He told me it was his opinion that the Bolsheviki of Russia were the inspiration of the world, and that he hoped their ideas would come to prevail in America," Miller swore. "He told me, further, that the Socialist movement in America was growing numerically and morally as a direct result of the arrest and conviction of radicals under the Espionage Law." There was nothing venomous in the character or quality of the young reporter's testimony. He appeared rather to be personally sympathetic toward Debs, and to be laboring under some discomfiture in having to testify against the old agitator.

The most astonishing revelation of the trial came with the testimony of Virgil Steiner, a youth of twenty years, when he said that he had been pressed into service by the Department of Justice to take a stenographic report of Debs's address at Canton, despite his admission on the witness stand that his knowledge of shorthand was so meager that he had practiced it but little even in common office dictation. The young man admitted that he was hopelessly at a loss in following

* Proclamation of the Socialist Party expressing opposition to the war. Adopted in national convention at St. Louis, Mo., April 5, 1917, and known as the St. Louis Majority Report, other reports having been offered.

Debs's speech, and that very early in the address he abandoned all attempt to follow Debs verbatim. He admitted to the court that he would rest between long sentences and exclamations, and then would "jump in" to follow the thread of the discourse. This is all the more significant when we consider the fact that it was Steiner's version upon which the indictment against Debs was drawn, coupled with the testimony of Miller before the grand jury. At the time the Department of Justice agents at Canton pressed Steiner into service as a government stenographer to take a speech of a man who would probably be sent to the penitentiary the lad was employed by a motor car concern at Canton. The Steiner version was read to the jury and only forty minutes were required for the reading, whereas Debs talked for about two hours on that occasion. Contrasted with the Steiner version, Edward B. Sterling, 32 years old, a lawyer of Canton, was employed by the Ohio State Socialist Convention to take in shorthand and transcribe the entire Canton speech. Sterling told the court that he had twelve years' experience as a shorthand reporter, and had "taken down" many speeches of representatives and senators in Congress. Both shorthand reporters were made to read to the jury their respective versions. Sterling read with great effect, and he seemed to emphasize of his own accord the high lights, oratorical flights and dramatic climaxes contained in the bulky printed manuscript he held in his hand. There were many moist eyes in the court room while Sterling read the speech, and the jury gave it strict attention. Only the prosecutors seemed to effect infinite weariness. With minor and slight reservations Debs stated that the Sterling version was correct.

During a ten-minute recess that day Debs walked to the back of the court room where young Steiner was sitting, and, putting his hands on the shoulders of the boy, assured him that he had done the best he could

under the circumstances, and told him not to feel humiliated in the least, that his abilities in that line had been unfairly taxed. The youth was nearly in tears as 'Gene gently patted his face and told him not to worry. On another similar occasion, when Miller had concluded his testimony and took his seat at the press table, 'Gene left his chair and leaning over the shoulders of newspaper men said very softly to Miller:

"Mr. Miller, all that you said about me is true. You quoted me straight and accurate. I don't want you ever to feel that you have done me an injury by testifying against me. You had to do it, and you did it like a gentleman. We all do what we cannot possibly help doing, and no blame or stigma attaches to any of us for doing that."

On Wednesday, September 11, shortly before 11 o'clock counsel for the government informed the court that the prosecution had presented its case. The heads of Debs's four lawyers bent together in a conference that lasted exactly one minute; then Stedman informed the court that the defense also rested its case. Debs had been fully cognizant of this move beforehand. I am told that it was originally his desire to caution his attorneys against making even an opening statement in his behalf. If such had been his intention, it was doubtlessly prompted by his feeling of certainty that, under the circumstances, it would be useless to make a defense when he held, in the first instance, that the Espionage Act was a flagrant violation of the Federal Constitution, and that the constitutionality of the act itself had never been determined by the Supreme Court.

Debs and his counsel retired to an ante-room and when they returned Stedman briefly announced to the court: "Mr. Debs will plead his case before the jury." Debs had been working during the night on the address that he was now to make. I remember seeing him in his room at the Gillsy House from my own room, just

across an areaway, sitting at his window, clad in pajamas, calmly smoking a long black cigar, with a paper pad resting on his knee and jotting down notes for the speech that will, it has been said, take its place as a classic of oratory and as a libertarian exposition. Certainly, it is one of the most remarkable speeches delivered by a defendant before a jury.

Assistant District Attorney Breitenstein opened final arguments for the government. He paid a glowing tribute to Debs as a man, but condemned his word. "God only knows the harm he has done the United States by his fiery eloquence," said the prosecutor. Debs had a kind word and warm smile for the prosecutor when he had concluded, and they exchanged handclasps across the table. At that moment that table seemed wider than the seven seas, so far apart were the intellectual and social leanings of these two men, now smiling into each other's face in comradely manner.

The luncheon recess was announced by the court. In the corridor Debs was instantly surrounded by an ever-growing group of friends and followers. With difficulty he made his way to the elevator, and walked straight to his hotel. He partook of no luncheon, preferring to go to his room to be alone with his thoughts. Long before the court was opened for afternoon session the federal building was jammed with struggling humanity, trying to edge its way toward the courtroom. The doors were flung open and there ensued a veritable stampede for seats on the painfully straight benches. Spectators perched themselves on window ledges, and crowded every aisle. When the last available inch had been occupied the doors were locked, shutting out ten times as many people as were in the room. The moment was tense with dramatic interest and expectancy. Judge Westenhaver warned the spectators that any attempt to applaud or otherwise show approval or disapproval would be sharply and sternly dealt with. The

twelve men in the jury box shifted to attention in their seats. Reporters had sharpened the points of a dozen pencils in order not to miss a word of Debs's plea for his rights as an American citizen.

He arose from his seat beside his counsel, and slowly walked over to the jury. With right hand extended, the arm crooked at the elbow, the left hand placed firmly at his side, he commenced.

"May it please the Court, and Gentlemen of the Jury:*

"For the first time in my life I appear before a jury in a court of law to answer to an indictment for crime. I am not a lawyer. I know little about court procedure, about the rules of evidence or legal practice. I know only that you gentlemen are to hear the evidence brought against me, that the Court is to instruct you in the law, and that you are then to determine by your verdict whether I shall be branded with criminal guilt and be consigned, perhaps to the end of my life, in a felon's cell.

"Gentlemen, I do not fear to face you in this hour of accusation, nor do I shrink from the consequences of my utterances or my acts. Standing before you, charged as I am with crime, I can yet look the Court in the face, I can look you in the face, I can look the world in the face, for in my conscience, in my soul, there is festering no accusation of guilt.

"Permit me to say in the first place that I am entirely satisfied with the Court's ruling. I have no fault to find with the district attorney or with the counsel for the prosecution.

"I wish to admit the truth of all that has been testified to in this proceeding. I have no disposition to deny anything that is true. I would not, if I could, escape the results of an adverse verdict. I would not retract

* Because of its importance, Debs's speech has been included in its entirety.

a word that I have uttered that I believe to be true to save myself from going to the penitentiary for the rest of my days.

"I am charged in the indictment, first, that I did willfully cause and attempt to cause or incite, insubordination, mutiny, disloyalty and refusal of duty within the military forces of the United States; that I did obstruct and attempt to obstruct the recruiting and enlistment service of the United States. I am charged also with uttering words intended to bring into contempt and disrepute the form of government of the United States, the Constitution of the United States, the military forces of the United States, the flag of the United States, and the uniform of the army and navy."

THE COURT: "Mr. Debs, permit me to say that the last charge which you have read to the jury has been withdrawn from their consideration by the Court."

DEBS: "Pardon me. I was not aware of that."

THE COURT: "I have directed a verdict of 'not guilty' as to that charge."

DEBS: "I am accused further of uttering words intended to procure and incite resistance to the United States and to promote the cause of the Imperial German Government.

"Gentlemen, you have heard the report of my speech at Canton on June 16, and I submit that there is not a word in that speech to warrant these charges. I admit having delivered the speech. I admit the accuracy of the speech in all of its main features as reported in this proceeding. There were two distinct reports. They vary somewhat, but they are agreed upon all the material statements embodied in that speech.

"In what I had to say there my purpose was to educate the people to understand something about the social system in which we live and to prepare them to change this system by perfectly peaceable and orderly

means into what I, as a Socialist, conceive to be a real democracy.

"From what you heard in the address of counsel for the prosecution, you might naturally infer that I am an advocate of force and violence. It is not true. I have never advocated violence in any form. I always believed in education, in intelligence, in enlightenment, and I have always made my appeal to the reason and to the conscience of the people.

"I admit being opposed to the present form of government. I admit being opposed to the present social system. I am doing what little I can, and have been for many years, to bring about a change that shall do away with the rule of the great body of the people by a relatively small class and establish in this country an industrial and social democracy.

"In the course of the speech that resulted in this indictment, I am charged with having expressed sympathy for Kate Richards O'Hare,* for Rose Pastor Stokes, for Ruthenberg,† Wagenknecht † and Baker.† I did express my perfect sympathy with these comrades of mine. I have known them for many years. I have every reason to believe in their integrity, every reason to look upon them with respect, with confidence and with approval.

"Kate Richards O'Hare never uttered the words imputed to her in the report. The words are perfectly brutal. She is not capable of using such language. I know that through all of the years of her life she has been working in the interests of the suffering, struggling poor, that she has consecrated all of her energies, all of her abilities, to their betterment. The same is true

* Mrs. Kate Richards O'Hare, Socialist worker of St. Louis, Mo., convicted and serving a sentence of five years at Jefferson City, Mo., prison for making a speech alleged to be in violation of the Espionage Law.

† C. E. Ruthenberg, Alfred Wagenknecht and Charles Baker, Cleveland Socialists, sentenced to serve one year each at the Stark County workhouse for infractions of the military laws in 1917.

of Rose Pastor Stokes. Through all her life she has been on the side of the oppressed and downtrodden. If she were so inclined she might occupy a place of ease. She might enjoy all of the comforts and leisures of life. Instead of this, she has renounced them all. She has taken her place among the poor, and there she has worked with all of her ability, all of her energy, to make it possible for them to enjoy a little more of the comforts of life.

"I said that if these women whom I have known all of these years—that if they were criminals, if they ought to go to the penitentiary, then I, too, am a criminal, and I ought to be sent to prison. I have not a word to retract—not one. I uttered the truth. I made no statement in that speech that I am not prepared to prove. If there is a single falsehood in it, it has not been exposed. If there is a single statement in it that will not bear the light of truth, I will retract it. I will make all of the reparation in my power. But if what I said is true, and I believe it is, then whatever fate or fortune may have in store for me I shall preserve inviolate the integrity of my soul and stand by it to the end.

"When I said what I did about the three comrades of mine who are in the workhouse at Canton, I had in mind what they had been ever since I have known them in the service of the working class. I had in mind the fact that these three working men had just a little while before had their hands cuffed and were strung up in that prison house for eight hours at a time until they fell to the floor fainting from exhaustion. And this because they had refused to do some menial, filthy services that were an insult to their dignity and their manhood.

"I have been accused of expressing sympathy for the Bolsheviki of Russia. I plead guilty to the charge. I have read a great deal about the Bolsheviki of Russia that is not true. I happen to know of my own knowl-

edge that they have been grossly misrepresented by the press of this country. Who are these much-maligned revolutionists of Russia? For years they had been the victims of a brutal Czar. They and their antecedents were sent to Siberia, lashed with a knout, if they even dreamed of freedom. At last the hour struck for a great change. The revolution came. The Czar was overthrown and his infamous regime ended. What followed? The common people of Russia came into power —the peasants, the toilers, the soldiers—and they proceeded as best they could to establish a government of the people."

DISTRICT ATTORNEY WERTZ: "If the Court please, I would like to ask the Court to instruct the defendant that his arguments are to be confined to the evidence in the case. There isn't any evidence in this case about the Bolsheviki at all or the Russian revolution."

THE COURT: "I think I will permit the defendant to proceed in his own way. Of course, you are not a lawyer, Mr. Debs. The usual rule is that the remarks of counsel should be confined to the testimony in the case, but it does not forbid counsel from making references to facts or matters of general public history or notoriety by way of illustrating your arguments and comments upon the testimony in the case. So I will permit you to proceed in your own way."

DEBS: "Thank you. It may be that the much-despised Bolsheviki may fail at last, but let me say to you that they have written a chapter of glorious history. It will stand to their eternal credit. The leaders are now denounced as criminals and outlaws. Let me remind you that there was a time when George Washington, who is now revered as the father of his country, was denounced as a disloyalist; when Sam Adams, who is known to us as the father of the American Revolution, was condemned as an incendiary, and Patrick Henry, who delivered that inspired and inspiring oration, that

aroused the Colonists, was condemned as a traitor. They were misunderstood at the time. They stood true to themselves, and they won an immortality of gratitude and glory.

"When great changes occur in history, when great principles are involved, as a rule the majority are wrong. The minority are right. In every age there have been a few heroic souls who have been in advance of their time who have been misunderstood, maligned, persecuted, sometimes put to death. Long after their martyrdom monuments were erected to them and garlands were woven for their graves.

"I have been accused of having obstructed the war. I admit it. Gentlemen, I abhor war. I would oppose the war if I stood alone. When I think of a cold, glittering steel bayonet being plunged in the white, quivering flesh of a human being, I recoil with horror. I have often wondered if I could take the life of my fellow man, even to save my own.

"Men talk about holy wars. There are none. Let me remind you that it was Benjamin Franklin who said, 'There never was a good war or a bad peace.'

"Napoleon Bonaparte was a high authority upon the subject of war. And when in his last days he was chained to the rock at St. Helena, when he felt the skeleton hand of death reaching for him, he cried out in horror, 'War is the trade of savages and barbarians.'

"I have read some history. I know that it is ruling classes that make war upon one another, and not the people. In all of the history of this world the people have never yet declared a war. Not one. I do not believe that really civilized nations would murder one another. I would refuse to kill a human being on my own account. Why should I at the command of any one else, or at the command of any power on earth?

"Twenty centuries ago there was one appeared upon earth we know as the Prince of Peace. He issued a

command in which I believe. He said, 'Love one another.' He did not say, 'Kill one another,' but 'love one another.' He espoused the cause of the suffering poor —just as Rose Pastor Stokes did, just as Kate Richards O'Hare did—and the poor heard him gladly. It was not long before he aroused the ill will and hatred of the usurers, the money changers, the profiteers, the high priests, the lawyers, the judges, the merchants, the bankers—in a word, the ruling class. They said of him just what the ruling class says of the Socialist to-day, 'He is preaching dangerous doctrine. He is inciting the common rabble. He is a menace to peace and order.' And they had him arraigned, tried, convicted, condemned, and they had his quivering body spiked to the gates of Jerusalem.

"This has been the tragic history of the race. In the ancient world Socrates sought to teach some new truths to the people, and they made him drink the fatal hemlock. It has been true all along the track of the ages. The men and women who have been in advance, who have had new ideas, new ideals, who have had the courage to attack the established order of things, have all had to pay the same penalty.

"A century and a half ago, when the American colonists were still foreign subjects, and when there were a few men who had faith in the common people and believed that they could rule themselves without a king, in that day to speak against the king was treason. If you read Bancroft or any other standard historian, you will find that a great majority of the colonists believed in the king and actually believed that he had a divine right to rule over them. They had been taught to believe that to say a word against the king, to question his so-called divine right, was sinful. There were ministers who opened their Bibles to prove that it was the patriotic duty of the people to loyally serve and support the king. But there were a few men in that day

who said, 'We don't need a king. We can govern ourselves.' And they began an agitation that has been immortalized in history.

"Washington, Adams, Paine—these were the rebels of their day. At first they were opposed by the people and denounced by the press. You can remember that it was Franklin who said to his compeers, 'We have now to hang together or we'll hang separately by and by.' And if the Revolution had failed, the revolutionary fathers would have been executed as felons. But it did not fail. Revolutions have a habit of succeeding when the time comes for them. The revolutionary forefathers were opposed to the form of government in their day. They were opposed to the social system of their time. They were denounced, they were condemned. But they had the moral courage to stand erect and defy all the storms of detraction; and that is why they are in history, and that is why the great respectable majority of their day sleep in forgotten graves. The world does not know they ever lived.

"At a later time there began another mighty agitation in this country. It was against an institution that was deemed a very respectable one in its time, the institution of chattel slavery, that became all-powerful, that controlled the President, both branches of Congress, the Supreme Court, the press, to a very large extent the pulpit. All of the organized forces of society, all the powers of government, upheld chattle slavery in that day. And again there were a few lovers of liberty who appeared. One of them was Elijah Lovejoy. Elijah Lovejoy was as much despised in his day as are the leaders of the I. W. W. in our day. Elijah Lovejoy was murdered in cold blood in Alton, Illinois, in 1837 simply because he was opposed to chattel slavery—just as I am opposed to wage slavery. When you go down the Mississippi River and look up at Alton, you see a magnificent white shaft erected there in memory of a

man who was true to himself and his convictions of right and duty unto death.

"It was my good fortune to personally know Wendell Phillips. I heard the story of his persecution in part, at least, from his own eloquent lips just a little while before they were silenced in death.

"William Lloyd Garrison, Garret Smith, Thaddeus Stevens—these leaders of the abolition movement, who were regarded as monsters of depravity, were true to the faith and stood their ground. They are all in history. You are teaching your children to revere their memories, while all of their detractors are in oblivion.

"Chattel slavery disappeared. We are not yet free. We are engaged in another mighty agitation to-day. It is as wide as the world. It is the rise of the toiling and producing masses who are gradually becoming conscious of their interest, their power, as a class, who are organizing industrially and politically, who are slowly but surely developing the economic and political power that is to set them free. They are still in the minority, but they have learned how to wait, and to bide their time.

"It is because I happen to be in this minority that I stand in your presence to-day, charged with crime. It is because I believe, as the revolutionary fathers believed in their day, that a change was due in the interests of the people, that the time had come for a better form of government, an improved system, a higher social order, a nobler humanity and a grander civilization. This minority that is so much misunderstood and so bitterly maligned is in alliance with the forces of evolution, and as certain as I stand before you this afternoon, it is but a question of time until this minority will become the conquering majority and inaugurate the greatest change in all of the history of the world. You may hasten the change; you may retard it; you can no more prevent it than you can prevent the coming of the sunrise on the morrow.

"My friend, the assistant prosecutor, doesn't like what I had to say in my speech about internationalism. What is there objectionable to internationalism? If we had internationalism there would be no war. I believe in patriotism. I have never uttered a word against the flag. I love the flag as a symbol of freedom. I object only when that flag is prostituted to base purposes, to sordid ends, by those who, in the name of patriotism, would keep the people in subjection.

"I believe, however, in a wider patriotism. Thomas Paine said, 'My country is the world. To do good is my religion.' Garrison said, 'My country is the world and all mankind are my countrymen.' That is the essence of internationalism. I believe in it with all of my heart. I believe that nations have been pitted against nations long enough in hatred, in strife, in warfare. I believe there ought to be a bond of unity between all of these nations. I believe that the human race consists of one great family. I love the people of this country, but I don't hate the people of any country on earth—not even the Germans. I refuse to hate a human being because he happens to be born in some other country. Why should I? To me it does not make any difference where he was born or what the color of his skin may be. Like myself, he is the image of his creator. He is a human being endowed with the same faculties, he has the same aspirations, he is entitled to the same rights, and I would infinitely rather serve him and love him than to hate him and kill him.

"We hear a great deal about human brotherhood—a beautiful and inspiring theme. It is preached from a countless number of pulpits. It is vain for us to preach of human brotherhood while we tolerate this social system in which we are a mass of warring units, in which millions of workers have to fight one another for jobs, and millions of business men and professional men have to fight one another for trade, for practice—

in which we have individual interests and each is striving to care for himself alone without reference to his fellow men. Human brotherhood is yet to be realized in this world. It can never be under the capitalist-competitive system in which we live.

"Yes, I was opposed to the war. I am perfectly willing, on that count, to be branded as a disloyalist, and if it is a crime under the American law, punishable by imprisonment, for being opposed to human bloodshed, I am perfectly willing to be clothed in the stripes of a convict and to end my days in a prison cell.

"If my friends, the attorneys, had known me a little better they might have saved themselves some trouble in procuring evidence to prove certain things against me which I have not the slightest inclination to deny, but rather, upon the other hand, I have a very considerable pride in.

"You have heard a great deal about the St. Louis platform. I wasn't at the convention when that platform was adopted, but I don't ask to be excused from my responsibility on that account. I voted for its adoption. I believe in its essential principles. There was some of its phrasing that I would have otherwise. I afterwards advocated a restatement. The testimony to the effect that I had refused to repudiate it was true.

"At the time that platform was adopted the nation had just entered upon the war and there were millions of people who were not Socialists who were opposed to the United States being precipitated into that war. Time passed; conditions changed. There were certain new developments and I believed there should be a restatement. I have been asked why I did not favor a repudiation of what was said a year before. For the reason that I believed then, as I believe now, that the statement correctly defined the attitude of the Socialist Party toward war. That statement, bear in mind, did not apply to the people of this country alone, but to the

people of the world. It said, in effect, to the people, especially to the workers, of all countries, 'Quit going to war. Stop murdering one another for the profit and glory of the ruling classes. Cultivate the arts of peace. Humanize humanity. Civilize civilization.' That is the essential spirit and the appeal of the much-hated, condemned St. Louis platform.

"Now, the Republican and Democratic parties hold their conventions from time to time. They revise their platforms and their declarations. They do not repudiate previous platforms. Nor is it necessary. With the change of conditions these platforms are outgrown and others take their places. I was not in the convention, but I believed in that platform. I do to-day. But from the beginning of the war to this day, I have never, by word or act, been guilty of the charges that are embraced in this indictment. If I have criticized, if I ever condemned, it is because I have believed myself justified in doing so under the laws of the land. I have had precedents for my attitude. This country has been engaged in a number of wars, and every one of them has been opposed, every one of them has been condemned by some of the most eminent men in the country. The war of the Revolution was opposed. The Tory press denounced its leaders as criminals and outlaws. And that was when they were under the 'divine right' of a king to rule men.

"The War of 1812 was opposed and condemned; the Mexican war was bitterly condemned by Abraham Lincoln, by Charles Sumner, by Daniel Webster and by Henry Clay. That war took place under the Polk administration. These men denounced the President; they condemned his administration; and they said that the war was a crime against humanity. They were not indicted; they were not tried for crime. They are honored to-day by all of their countrymen. The War of the Rebellion was opposed and condemned. In 1864

the Democratic Party met in convention at Chicago and passed a resolution condemning the war as a failure. What would you say if the Socialist Party were to meet in convention to-day and condemn the present war as a failure? You charge us with being disloyalists and traitors. Were the Democrats of 1864 disloyalists and traitors because they condemned the war as a failure?

"I believe in the Constitution of the United States. Isn't it strange that we Socialists stand almost alone to-day in defending the Constitution of the United States? The revolutionary fathers who had been oppressed under king rule understood that free speech and free press and the right of free assemblage by the people were the fundamental principles of democratic government. The very first amendment to the Constitution reads: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.' That is perfectly plain English. It can be understood by a child. I believe that the revolutionary fathers meant just what is here stated—that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or of the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

"That is the right that I exercised at Canton on the 16th day of last June; and for the exercise of that right I now have to answer to this indictment. I believe in the right of free speech in war as well as in peace. I would not, under any circumstances, gag the lips of my biggest enemy. I would under no circumstances suppress free speech. It is far more dangerous to attempt to gag the people than to allow them to speak freely of what is in their hearts. I do not go as far as Wendell Phillips did. Wendell Phillips said that the glory

of free men is that they trample unjust laws under their feet. That is how they repealed them. If a human being submits to having his lips sealed, to be in silence reduced to vassalage, he may have all else, but he is still lacking in all that dignifies and glorifies real manhood.

"Now, notwithstanding this fundamental provision in the national law, Socialists' meetings have been broken up all over this country. Socialist speakers have been arrested by hundreds and flung into jail, where many of them are lying now. In some cases not even a charge was lodged against them, guilty of absolutely no crime except the crime of attempting to exercise the right guaranteed to them by the Constitution of the United States.

"I have told you that I am no lawyer, but it seems to me that I know enough to know that if Congress enacts any law that conflicts with this provision in the Constitution, that law is void. If the Espionage Law finally stands, then the Constitution of the United States is dead. If that law is not the negation of every fundamental principle established by the Constitution, then certainly I am unable to read or to understand the English language.

To THE COURT: "Your Honor, I don't know whether I would be in order to quote from a book I hold in my hand, called 'The New Freedom,' by Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States."

THE COURT: "I will grant you that permission."

DEBS: "I want to show the gentlemen of the jury, if I can, that every statement I made in my Canton speech is borne out in this book by Woodrow Wilson, called 'The New Freedom.' It consists of his campaign speeches while a candidate for the presidency. Of course, he uses different language than I did, for he is a college professor. He is an educated gentleman. I never had a chance to get an education. I had to go

to work in my childhood. I want to show you that the statement made by Rose Pastor Stokes, for which she has been convicted, and the approval of which has brought condemnation upon me, is substantially the same statement made by Mr. Wilson when he was a candidate for the presidency of the United States:

" 'To-day, when our government has so far passed into the hands of special interests; to-day, when the doctrine is implicitly avowed that only select classes have the equipment necessary for carrying on government; to-day, when so many conscientious citizens, smitten with the scene of social wrong and suffering, have fallen victims to the fallacy that benevolent government can be meted out to the people by kind-hearted trustees of prosperity and guardians of the welfare of dutiful employees—to-day, supremely does it behoove this nation to remember that a people shall be saved by the power that sleeps in its own deep bosom, or by none; shall be renewed in hope, in conscience, in strength, by waters welling up from its own sweet, perennial springs.'

"So this government has passed into the hands of special interests. Rose Pastor Stokes' language is somewhat different. Instead of 'special interests' she said 'profiteers.' She said that a government that was for the profiteers could not be for the people, and that as long as the government was for the profiteers, she was for the people. That is the statement that I indorsed, approved and believed in with all my heart. The President of the United States tells us that our government has passed into the control of special interests. When we Socialists make the same contention, we are branded as disloyalists, and we are indicted as criminals. But that is not all, nor nearly all:

" 'There are, of course, Americans who have not yet heard that anything is going on. The circus might come to town, have the big parade and go, without their catching a sight of the camels or a note of the calliope.

There are people, even Americans, who never move themselves or know that anything else is moving.'

"Just one other quotation: 'For a long time this country of ours has lacked one of the institutions which free men have always and everywhere held fundamental. For a long time there has been no sufficient opportunity of counsel among the people; no place and method of talk, of exchange of opinion, of parley. Communities have outgrown the folk-moot and the town meeting. Congress, in accordance with the genius of the land, which asks for action and is impatient of words—Congress has become an institution which does its work in the privacy of committee rooms and not on the floor of the Chamber; a body that makes laws, a legislature; not a body that debates, not a parliament. Party conventions afford little or no opportunity for discussion; platforms are privately manufactured and adopted with a whoop. It is partly because citizens have foregone the taking of counsel together that the unholy alliances of bosses and Big Business have been able to assume to govern for us.

" 'I conceive it to be one of the needs of the hour to restore the processes of common counsel, and to substitute them for the processes of private arrangement which now determine the policies of cities, states and nation. We must learn, we freemen, to meet, as our fathers did, somehow, somewhere, for consultation. There must be discussion and debate, in which all freely participate.' "

"Well, there has been something said in connection with this about profiteering—in connection with this indictment.

To THE COURT: "Would it be in order for me to read a brief statement, showing to what extent profiteering has been carried on during the last three years?"

THE COURT: "No. There would be no concensus of opinion or agreement upon that statement. It is a mat-

ter that is not really in the case, and when you go to compile a statement, you are then undertaking to assume something without producing evidence to substantiate it."

DEBS: "Now, in the course of this proceeding you, gentlemen, have perhaps drawn the inference that I am pro-German, in the sense that I have any sympathy with the Imperial Government of Germany. My father and mother were born in Alsace. They loved France with a passion that is holy. They understood the meaning of Prussianism, and they hated it with all their hearts. I did not need to be taught to hate Prussian militarism. I knew from them what a hateful, what an oppressive, what a brutalizing thing it was and is. I cannot imagine how any one could suspect that for one moment I could have the slightest sympathy with such a monstrous thing. I have been speaking and writing against it practically all of my life. I know that the Kaiser incarnates all there is of brute force and of murder. And yet I would not, if I had the power, kill the Kaiser. I would do to him what Thomas Paine wanted to do to the king of England. He said, 'Destroy the king, but save the man.'

"The thing that the Kaiser incarnates and embodies, called militarism, I would, if I could, wipe from the face of the earth,—not only the militarism of Germany, but the militarism of the whole world. I am quite well aware of the fact that the war now deluging the world with blood was precipitated there. Not by the German people, but by the class that rules, oppresses, robs and degrades the German people. President Wilson has repeatedly said that we were not making war on the German people, and yet in war it is the people who are slain, and not the rulers who are responsible for the war.

"With every drop in my veins I despise kaiserism, and all that kaiserism expresses and implies. I have sympathy with the suffering, struggling people every-

where. It does not make any difference under what flag they were born, or where they live, I have sympathy with them all. I would, if I could, establish a social system that would embrace them all. It is precisely at this point that we come to realize that there is a reason why the peoples of the various nations are pitted against each other in brutal warfare instead of being united in one all-embracing brotherhood.

"War does not come by chance. War is not the result of accident. There is a definite cause for war, especially a modern war. The war that began in Europe can readily be accounted for. For the last forty years, under this international capitalist system, this exploiting system, these various nations of Europe have been preparing for the inevitable. And why? In all these nations the great industries are owned by a relatively small class. They are operated for the profit of that class. And great abundance is produced by the workers; but their wages will only buy back a small part of their product. What is the result? They have a vast surplus on hand; they have got to export it; they have got to find a foreign market for it. As a result of this these nations are pitted against each other. They are industrial rivals—competitors. They begin to arm themselves to open, to maintain the market and quickly dispose of their surplus. There is but the one market. All these nations are competitors for it, and sooner or later every war of trade becomes a war of blood.

"Now, where there is exploitation there must be some form of militarism to support it. Wherever you find exploitation you find some form of military force. In a smaller way you find it in this country. It was there long before war was declared. For instance, when the miners out in Colorado entered upon a strike about four years ago, the state militia, that is under the control of the Standard Oil Company,

marched upon a camp, where the miners and their wives and children were in tents,—and, by the way, a report of this strike was issued by the United States Commission on Industrial Relations. When the soldiers approached the camp at Ludlow, where these miners, with their wives and children, were, the miners, to prove that they were patriotic, placed flags above their tents, and when the state militia, that is paid by Rockefeller and controlled by Rockefeller, swooped down upon that camp, the first thing they did was to shoot these United States flags into tatters. Not one of them was indicted or tried because he was a traitor to his country. Pregnant women were killed, and a number of innocent children slain. This in the United States of America,—the fruit of exploitation. The miners wanted a little more of what they had been producing. But the Standard Oil Company wasn't rich enough. It insisted that all they were entitled to was just enough to keep them in working order. There is slavery for you. And when at last they protested, when they were tormented by hunger, when they saw their children in tatters, they were shot down as if they had been so many vagabond dogs.

"And while I am upon this point let me say just another word. Workingmen who organize, and who sometimes commit overt acts, are very often times condemned by those who have no conception of the conditions under which they live. How many men are there, for instance, who know anything of their own knowledge about how men work in a lumber camp—a logging camp, a turpentine camp? In this report of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations you will find the statement proved that peonage existed in the state of Texas. Out of these conditions springs such a thing as the I.W.W.—When men receive a pittance for their pay, when they work like galley slaves for a wage that barely suffices to keep their protesting

souls within their tattered bodies. When they can endure the conditions no longer, and they make some sort of a demonstration, or perhaps commit acts of violence, how quickly are they condemned by those who do not know anything about the conditions under which they work!

"Five gentlemen of distinction, among them Professor John Graham Brooks, of Harvard University, said that a word that so fills the world as the I.W.W. must have something in it. It must be investigated. And they did investigate it, each along his own lines, and I wish it were possible for every man and woman in this country to read the result of their investigation. They tell you why and how the I.W.W. was instituted. They tell you, moreover, that the great corporations, such as the Standard Oil Company, such as the Coal Trust, and the Lumber Trust, have, through their agents, committed more crimes against the I.W.W. than the I.W.W. have ever committed against them.

"I was asked not long ago if I was in favor of shooting our soldiers in the back. I said, 'No, I would not shoot them in the back. I wouldn't shoot them at all. I would not have them shot.' Much has been made of a statement that I declared that men were fit for something better than slavery and cannon fodder. I made the statement. I make no attempt to deny it. I meant exactly what I said. Men *are* fit for something better than slavery and cannon fodder; and the time will come, though I shall not live to see it, when slavery will be wiped from the earth, and when men will marvel that there ever was a time when men who called themselves civilized rushed upon each other like wild beasts and murdered one another, by methods so cruel and barbarous that they defy the power of man to describe. I can hear the shrieks of the soldiers of Europe in my dreams. I have imagination enough to see a battlefield. I can see it strewn with the legs of human beings,

who but yesterday were in the flush and glory of their young manhood. I can see them at eventide, scattered about in remnants, their limbs torn from their bodies, their eyes gouged out. Yes, I can see them, and I can hear them. I have looked above and beyond this frightful scene. I think of the mothers who are bowed in the shadow of their last great grief—whose hearts are breaking. And I say to myself, 'I am going to do the little that lies in my power to wipe from this earth that terrible scourge of war.'

"If I believed in war I could not be kept out of the first line trenches. I would not be patriotic at long range. I would be honest enough, if I believed in bloodshed, to shed my own. But I do not believe that the shedding of blood bears any actual testimony to patriotism, to lead a country to civilization. On the contrary, I believe that warfare, in all of its forms, is an impeachment of our social order, and a rebuke to our much vaunted Christian civilization.

"And now, Gentlemen of the Jury, I am not going to detain you too long. I wish to admit everything that has been said respecting me from this witness chair. I wish to admit everything that has been charged against me except what is embraced in the indictment which I have read to you. I cannot take back a word. I can't repudiate a sentence. I stand before you guilty of having made this speech. I stand before you prepared to accept the consequences of what there is embraced in that speech. I do not know, I cannot tell, what your verdict may be; nor does it matter much, so far as I am concerned.

"Gentlemen, I am the smallest part of this trial. I have lived long enough to appreciate my own personal insignificance in relation to a great issue that involves the welfare of the whole people. What you may choose to do to me will be of small consequence after all. I am not on trial here. There is an infinitely greater issue

that is being tried in this court, though you may not be conscious of it. American institutions are on trial here before a court of American citizens. The future will tell.

"And now, Your Honor, permit me to return my hearty thanks for your patient consideration. And to you, Gentlemen of the Jury, for the kindness with which you have listened to me.

"My fate is in your hands. I am prepared for the verdict."

Debs had spoken for the better part of two hours. If there had resided any doubt in the minds of his friends and followers in the courtroom as to his fate, after hearing his speech to the jury it vanished. His jury speech had been a restatement of his Canton address and an amplification of it. If his Canton speech warranted an indictment for crime what would his speech to his jury bring upon him? Debs made just the kind of a speech to the jury that the government counsel wanted him to make. He had admitted having obstructed the war. He would oppose it if he stood alone. He had approved of the I.W.W., 101 of whose national officers, organizers, editors and speakers, including William D. Haywood, general secretary-treasurer, had been convicted and sentenced to prison for terms ranging from one to twenty years, only a few weeks before his own trial began. The I.W.W. had been convicted of conspiracy to obstruct the government in prosecuting the war. Debs had not availed himself of a single legal loop through which he might escape a prison sentence. His manner of speech was not defiant, but calm, composed and candid. He said all that he believed to be true on a number of public questions. Even in that courtroom, on that late summer's afternoon, in a moment when the whole nation was aroused by war, when American soldiers were at the throat of a fast-weakening and retreating foe across

the seas, Debs still pleaded with twelve average American citizens to give a thought to the Constitution of the land which guaranteed to a minority citizenry a free and public expression of political opinions. It was an astonishing request, so simple, naïve and child-like. It was like asking men whose homes had just been uprooted by a hurricane or tidal wave to remember the soft and odorous nights of June whose breezes were so gentle as not to stir a maple leaf. Debs resumed his seat amid the silent plaudits of his followers. For he had set one more example for the libertarians of the world to follow if they would be true to their convictions. An agent of the Department of Justice who had been more or less active in assisting the prosecution said to one of the journalists at the press table: "You've got to hand it to the old man, he came through clean."

District Attorney Wertz spoke for the remainder of the day in final argument for the government. The prosecutor roundly denounced Debs and the Socialists, as was his duty, and said that all rights of free speech were adjourned. He stated that it was possible that the reason Abraham Lincoln was not arrested and convicted for criticizing President Polk in 1846 for waging war against Mexico was because there was no Espionage Law at that time to apply. The prosecutor even said that Debs would be apt to carry his right to free speech to the extent of yelling "fire" in a crowded theater if it pleased him to do so.

At the conclusion of that court day Debs was greeted outside the doors by a throng of Socialists and admirers who had been unable to gain admittance. A young girl who had been standing in the crowd outside the doors all day long pushed her way by sheer force through the crowd to Debs's side. In her arms she carried a huge bouquet of red roses caught at the stems with a wide splash of red satin ribbon. She thrust the flowers into 'Gene's arms, and then swooned,

Debs catching her and holding her in his long, lean arms. He carried her into an ante-room, kissing her brow and saying: "I would rather have lived to witness this token of love and generosity of my unknown comrade than to have my freedom. These are the incidents that make life so full and fine."

That night he remained in his room writing letters and smoking. I visited him for a few moments and expressed my admiration for the address he had made. "Well," he said quietly, "this time to-morrow we shall know how much American citizens care for liberty and their Constitution." He said that for him everything was all right, that he had not the least concern over what the verdict might be. "'I have made my bed and am prepared to lie in it.'"

The following day, September 12th, Judge Westenhaver delivered his instructions to the jury. In effect, the court told the jury that it was not a crime for a person to disapprove of the war, or even to criticize the Administration and the conduct of the war, so long as such criticism and disapproval was not made with criminal intent. The jury was instructed that the Espionage Law, even in its amended form, was not intended to stifle the opinions of freemen which may be at variance with those of the majority of the people and the government, and that if the jury found that Debs, in his Canton speech, had no criminal intent to thwart the energies of the government in the prosecution of war with Germany it was clearly their duty to return a verdict of "not guilty." It was not necessary, ruled the court, for the government to prove that the Canton speech had actually caused insubordination, incited mutiny and promoted the cause of Germany. It was sufficient if the jury believed that it was the specific intention of Debs to do these things.

The jury was instructed to disregard the testimony of witnesses who appeared against Debs, the court stat-

ing that such evidence was admitted only by way of indicating to the jury "the state of mind of the defendant." With the constitutional right of free speech the court dealt at length, maintaining that the right should be denied and must be denied any person who willfully sought to obstruct the government in time of war, or tried to delay the production of materials necessary for its prosecution, or who interfered with the enlistment and recruiting service. The talesmen were told, finally, to disregard Debs's statement that the Espionage Law was invalid because it abridged the Constitution, stating that that point was for the courts to determine.

Shortly before eleven o'clock the jury retired to their room with a copy of the indictment and Debs's Canton speech. The indictment had been stripped to three counts from its original ten, conviction on each count to carry a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment and a fine of ten thousand dollars for each offense. While the jury debated, Debs sat at the counsel table and wrote letters and told stories and anecdotes to interested friends. He was in high spirits. Telegrams of congratulations from all parts of the country poured into his hands from followers who had read newspaper accounts of his address on the previous day. By six o'clock in the afternoon the jury reached its verdict of "Guilty as charged in the indictment." The court fixed Saturday morning, September 14th, as the time for sentence. Debs spent the intervening day at Akron, Ohio, the home of Mrs. Marguerite Prevy, a personal friend, who was also a Socialist worker, and one of two of Debs's bondsmen. While at Akron, Debs was visited by his lawyers, all of whom were Socialists, and who prevailed upon him to take advantage of the opportunity that would be given him the following day to address the court before sentence should be imposed. I am told that Debs was at first disinclined to do this,

feeling rather weary of the whole proceeding, but on second thought he was convinced that he should make the most of the situation by speaking for the future.

The proceeding on Saturday morning, September 14th, was as follows:

DISTRICT ATTORNEY WERTZ: "If the Court please, I move for the imposition of sentence."

JUDGE WESTENHAVER: (To the clerk) "You may inquire if the defendant has anything to say."

THE CLERK: "Eugene V. Debs, have you anything further to say in your behalf before the Court passes sentence upon you?"

DEBS: "Your Honor, years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest of earth. I said then, I say now, that while there is a lower class I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free.

"If the law under which I have been convicted is a good law, then there is no reason why sentence should not be pronounced upon me. I listened to all that was said in this court in support and justification of this law, but my mind remains unchanged. I look upon it as a despotic enactment in flagrant conflict with democratic principles and with the spirit of free institutions.

"I have no fault to find with this court or with the trial. Everything in connection with this case has been conducted upon a dignified plane, and in a respectful and decent spirit—with just one exception. Your Honor, my sainted mother inspired me with a reverence for womanhood that amounts to worship. I can think with disrespect of no woman, and I can think with respect of no man who can. I resent the manner in which the names of two noble women were bandied with in this court. The levity and the wantonness in this instance were absolutely inexcusable. When I think of

what was said in this connection, I feel that when I pass a woman, even though it be a sister of the street, I should take off my hat and apologize to her for being a man.

"Your Honor, I have stated in this court that I am opposed to the form of our present government; that I am opposed to the social system in which we live; that I believed in the change of both—but by perfectly peaceable and orderly means.

"Let me call your attention to the fact this morning that in this system five per cent of our people own and control two-thirds of our wealth; sixty-five per cent. of the people, embracing the working class who produce all wealth, have but five per cent to show for it.

"Standing here this morning, I recall my boyhood. At fourteen, I went to work in the railroad shops; at sixteen, I was firing a freight engine on a railroad. I remember all the hardships, all the privations, of that earlier day, and from that time until now, my heart has been with the working class. I could have been in Congress long ago. I have preferred to go to prison. The choice has been deliberately made. I could not have done otherwise. I have no regret.

"In the struggle—the unceasing struggle—between the toilers and producers and their exploiters, I have tried, as best I might, to serve those among whom I was born, with whom I expect to share my lot until the end of my days.

"I am thinking this morning of the men in the mills and factories; I am thinking of the women who, for a paltry wage, are compelled to work out their lives; of the little children who, in this system, are robbed of their childhood, and in their early, tender years, are seized in the remorseless grasp of Mammon, and forced into the industrial dungeons, there to feed the machines while they themselves are being starved body and soul. I can see them dwarfed, diseased, stunted, their little lives broken, and their hopes blasted, because in this

high noon of our twentieth century civilization money is still so much more important than human life. Gold is god and rules in the affairs of men.

"The little girls, and there are a million of them in this country—this the most favored land beneath the bending skies, a land in which we have vast areas of rich and fertile soil, material resources in inexhaustible abundance, the most marvelous productive machinery on earth, millions of eager workers ready to apply their labor to that machinery to produce an abundance for every man, woman and child—and if there are still many millions of our people who are the victims of poverty, whose life is a ceaseless struggle all the way from youth to age, until at last death comes to their rescue and stills the aching heart, and lulls the victim to dreamless sleep, it is not the fault of the Almighty, it can't be charged to nature; it is due entirely to an outgrown social system that ought to be abolished not only in the interest of the working class, but in a higher interest of all humanity.

"When I think of these little children—the girls that are in the textile mills of all description in the East, in the cotton factories of the South—when I think of them at work in a vitiated atmosphere, when I think of them at work when they ought to be at play or at school, when I think that when they do grow up, if they live long enough to approach the marriage state, they are unfit for it. Their nerves are worn out, their tissue is exhausted, their vitality is spent. They have been fed to industry. Their lives have been coined into gold. Their offspring are born tired. That is why there are so many failures in our modern life.

"Your Honor, the five per cent of the people that I have made reference to constitute that element that absolutely rules our country. They privately own all our public necessities. They wear no crowns; they wield no scepters; they sit upon no thrones; and yet

they are our economic masters and our political rulers. They control this government and all of its institutions. They control the courts.

"And, Your Honor, if you will permit me, I wish to make just one correction. It was stated here that I had charged that all federal judges were crooks. The charge is absolutely untrue. I did say that all federal judges are appointed through the influence and power of the capitalist class and not the working class. If that statement is not true, I am more than willing to retract it.

"The five per cent of our people who own and control all the sources of wealth, all of the nation's industries, all of the means of our common life, it is they who declare war; it is they who make peace; it is they who control our destiny. And so long as this is true, we can make no just claim to being a democratic government—a self-governing people.

"I believe, Your Honor, in common with all Socialists, that this nation ought to own and control its industries. I believe, as all Socialists do, that all things that are jointly needed and used ought to be jointly owned—that industry, the basis of life, instead of being the private property of the few and operated for their enrichment, ought to be the common property of all, democratically administered in the interest of all.

"John D. Rockefeller has to-day an income of sixty million dollars a year, five million dollars a month, two hundred thousand dollars a day. He does not produce a penny of it. I make no attack upon Mr. Rockefeller personally. I do not in the least dislike him. If he were in need and it were in my power to serve him, I should serve him as gladly as I would any other human being. I have no quarrel with Mr. Rockefeller personally, nor with any other capitalist. I am simply opposing a social order in which it is possible for one man who does absolutely nothing that is useful to amass a

fortune of hundreds of millions of dollars, while millions of men and women who work all of the days of their lives secure barely enough for an existence.

"This order of things cannot always endure. I have registered my protest against it. I recognize the feebleness of my effort, but, fortunately, I am not alone. There are multiplied thousands of others who, like myself, have come to realize that before we may truly enjoy the blessings of civilized life, we must reorganize society upon a mutual and coöperative basis; and to this end we have organized a great economic and political movement that is spread over the face of all the earth.

"There are to-day upwards of sixty million Socialists, loyal, devoted, adherents to this cause, regardless of nationality, race, creed, color or sex. They are all making common cause. They are all spreading the propaganda of the new social order. They are waiting, watching and working through all the weary hours of the day and night. They are still in the minority. They have learned how to be patient and abide their time. They feel—they know, indeed,—that the time is coming, in spite of all opposition, all persecution, when this emancipating gospel will spread among all the peoples, and when this minority will become the triumphant majority, and sweeping into power, inaugurate the greatest change in history.

"In that day we will have the universal commonwealth—not the destruction of the nation, but, on the contrary, the harmonious coöperation of every nation with every other nation on earth. In that day war will curse this earth no more.

"I have been accused, Your Honor, of being an enemy of the soldier. I hope I am laying no flattering unction to my soul when I say that I don't believe the soldier has a more sympathetic friend than I am. If I had my way there would be no soldiers. But I realize the sacrifices they are making, Your Honor. I can think

of them. I can feel for them. I can sympathize with them. That is one of the reasons why I have been doing what little has been in my power to bring about a condition of affairs in this country worthy of the sacrifices they have made and that they are now making in its behalf.

"Your Honor, in a local paper yesterday there was some editorial exultation about my prospective imprisonment. I do not resent it in the least. I can understand it perfectly. In the same paper there appears an editorial this morning that has in it a hint of the wrong to which I have been trying to call attention."

Reading: " 'A senator of the United States receives a salary of $7500—$45,000 for the six years for which he is elected. One of the candidates for senator from a state adjoining Ohio is reported to have spent through his committee $150,000 to secure the nomination. For advertising he spent $35,000; for printing $30,000; for traveling expenses $10,000 and the rest in ways known to political managers.

" 'The theory is that public office is as open to a poor man as to a rich man. One may easily imagine, however, how slight a chance one of ordinary resources would have in a contest against this man who was willing to spend more than three times his six years' salary merely to secure a nomination. Were these conditions to hold in every state, the senate would soon become again what it was once held to be—a rich men's club.

" 'Campaign expenditures have been the subject of much restrictive legislation in recent years, but it has not always reached the mark. The authors of primary reform have accomplished some of the things they set out to do, but they have not yet taken the bank roll out of politics.'

"They never will take it out of politics, they never can take it out of politics in this system.

"Your Honor, I wish to make acknowledgment of

my thanks to the counsel for the defense. They have not only defended me with exceptional legal ability, but with a personal attachment and devotion of which I am deeply sensible, and which I can never forget.

"Your Honor, I ask no mercy, I plead for no immunity. I realize that finally the right must prevail. I never more clearly comprehended than now the great struggle between the powers of greed on the one hand and upon the other the rising hosts of freedom. I can see the dawn of a better day of humanity. The people are awakening. In due course of time they will come into their own.

"When the mariner, sailing over tropic seas, looks for relief from his weary watch, he turns his eyes toward the Southern Cross, burning luridly above the tempest-vexed ocean. As the midnight approaches, the Southern Cross begins to bend, and the whirling worlds change their places, and with starry finger-points the Almighty marks the passage of Time upon the dial of the universe; and though no bell may beat the glad tidings, the look-out knows that the midnight is passing —that relief and rest are close at hand.

"Let the people take heart and hope everywhere, for the cross is bending, the midnight is passing, and joy cometh with the morning.

> "'He is true to God who is 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 the race.'

"Your Honor, I thank you, and I thank all of this court for their courtesy, for their kindness, which I shall remember always.

"I am prepared to receive your sentence."

The Court overruled the motion of Debs's counsel for a new trial on the ground of a faulty indictment and immaterial and improper evidence introduced by the prosecution. Judge Westenhaver made a lengthy statement from the bench, reviewing the evidence. He said that men of the power and influence of Debs were responsible in a large measure for "other ignorant and unthinking foreigners" getting into similar difficulty. The Court held he yielded to none in his sympathy and tenderness toward the poor and the struggling, and expressed his amazement at "the remarkable self-delusion and self-deception of Mr. Debs who assumes that he is serving humanity and the downtrodden."

"I am a conserver of the peace and a defender of the Constitution of the United States," avowed the Court, looking squarely into the face of Debs whose eyes met squarely those of his judge. The Court admitted his admiration of Debs's sincerity and courage, and added that the principles which Debs had espoused before the jury and the Court were "anarchy pure and simple," and not in conformity with any works on Socialism that he had read. The Court denounced as enemies those persons "within our borders who would strike the sword from the hand of this nation while she is engaged in defending herself against a foreign and brutal power."

The Court then sentenced Debs to serve ten years in the West Virginia State Penitentiary at Moundsville on each of the three counts upon which he was found guilty, the sentence to run concurrently. Debs's bail of $10,000 was continued, and he was released, but only on condition that he would remain at his home in Terre Haute or within the jurisdiction of the Court pending the disposition of his appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States. The Socialist Party had decided that Debs should make a nation-wide speaking tour in behalf of other political and industrial prisoners con-

victed under the same statute, but the ruling of the Court limited his activities in this direction to the northern judicial district of Ohio and his home town. Debs held scores of meetings in the cities and towns embraced by this area while his appeal was being prepared. He did not miss a single opportunity to address his followers, and each address was substantially a reiteration of the principles enunciated in his Canton and jury speeches.

On March 10th, 1919, the Supreme Court of the United States upheld the conviction and sentence of Debs.*

Debs was at home when the news reached him that his appeal had been denied. He gave the following broadside to the press associations:

"The decision is perfectly consistent with the character of the Supreme Court as a ruling class tribunal. It could not have been otherwise. So far as I am personally concerned, the decision is of small consequence. But there is an issue at stake of vital interest to the American people. It involves the fundamental right of free speech. With this, our boasted freedom is a delusion and a farce.

"The Supreme Court has dodged the issue. It has held the Espionage Law valid without affirming its constitutionality. The real issue before the court was the constitutionality of the act. This issue the Supreme Court did not dare to decide. What the Supreme Court did decide is that the Constitution is another 'scrap of paper.'

"Great issues are not decided by courts, but by the people. I have no concern in what the coterie of begowned corporation lawyers in Washington may decide in my case. The court of final resort is the people, and that court will be heard from in due time.

* Full text of decision of Supreme Court in the Debs case may be found in the Appendix.

"The decision just rendered places the United States where old Russia under the Czar left off. It is good for, at least, a million Bolshevist recruits in this country.

"I stand by every word of the Canton speech. The Supreme Court to the contrary, notwithstanding, the Espionage Law is perfectly infamous, and a disgrace, as well, to the capitalist despotism at whose behest it was enacted.

"Sixty years ago the Supreme Court affirmed the validity of the Fugitive Slave law to save chattel slavery. Five years later that infamous institution was swept from the land in a torrent of blood. I despise the Espionage Law with every drop of blood in my veins, and I defy the Supreme Court and all its powers of capitalism to do their worst.

"All hail to the workers of America and the world!

"The day of emancipation is dawning."

CHAPTER III

THE JOURNEY TO PRISON

IT was about eleven o'clock on Saturday morning, April 12th, 1919, when the telephone rang in Debs's home. District Attorney Wertz, of Cleveland, was at the other end of the wire. Debs answered. The district attorney informed Debs that he should make ready at once to come to Cleveland and surrender himself to the government authorities who would take him to the Moundsville penitentiary. Debs was told that no guards would be sent to Terre Haute to accompany him on the journey to Cleveland.

"Thank you, Mr. Wertz, I'll be right along," said Debs as he hung up the receiver.

From that moment until 9.30 o'clock in the evening, Debs was busying himself at home packing for the journey to prison. Mrs. Debs helped him with this and that, reminding him to write that little note before he went away, and "Don't you think you should attend to this?" All day long telegrams and special delivery letters poured into his home at 451 North Eighth street. They were from his friends in all corners of the continent.

I had arrived in Terre Haute a little before 2 o'clock. There were crowds at the station and I felt sure that Debs had gone away. I was aware that his moments of freedom were few. I hailed a taxi-cab. "Take me to Debs's home," I urged. A moment later it occurred to me that, possibly, the driver did not know where Debs lived. I told him. The driver smiled. "I wish I had a dollar for every man I've driven to Debs's home. Why, more people in Terry Hut know where 'Gene

Debs lives than they know the location of City Hall." In a few moments we were at the Debs home. A tall, matronly woman, with gentle and kindly face, opened the door. There was a slight hesitancy in her manner. It instantly occurred to me that persons coming to that home on this day were no less than intruders, interlopers. Yes, Debs was at home, she said, but very busy. "He is upstairs now writing letters," she said. A few moments after I had stepped into the parlor I heard 'Gene's footsteps on the stairs. His eye was clear, and his voice was firm, sweet and resonant. His shoulders were slightly more stooped, possibly due to his recent confinement to bed with lumbago. It was a wonderful spring day down there in southern Indiana. Everywhere one sensed the budding and bursting of new life. Debs felt it.

"Well, I am ready to go to prison. I am ready to pay the ultimate penalty for speaking what to me was the truth. I said in court at Cleveland that I had not one word to retract. I have not a word to retract now. I would say over again what I said at Canton." His mouth contracted as his lips tightened in determination. I asked Debs if he could tell me what his feelings were on the eve of his going to prison. He smiled, and I knew at once that I had asked a foolish question, for his answer to it was flashed in his confident, winning manner.

"What about a pardon?" he repeated my question. "I don't know anything about one. I have asked for none, nor shall I. I stand on the threshold of going to prison with malice toward none, and with perfect faith in the rectitude of my course and an absolute confidence in the justice and ultimate triumph of the cause to which I have gladly given my services. To ask a pardon would be to confess guilt." Debs's eyes were flashing fire, and a steely glint stole into them. Debs said he thought that the reactionary element in the political and

industrial spheres of the country feared the spread of Bolshevism over the United States, and that if they could but cut out its tongue, meaning the elimination of himself, they would have killed it. At that time he thought it not unlikely that President Wilson might intervene, though he did not expect or wish it.

"Wilson has a vision," Debs said. "There is some light on his social horizon, however much it may be obscured by the clouds that hover around him. He sees, or seems to see, at some moments, that the liberties of the people cannot be crushed by repressive measures, but there are tremendous forces behind the President, or before him, I don't know which, that won't let him be free."

He mentioned the large and enthusiastic meetings he had been holding in the northern judicial district of Ohio, and while speaking of them he became oblivious of the gray journey he was soon to take to prison.

Only a few persons in Terre Haute knew that Debs was leaving them that night. A few of his townsmen were bent upon holding a huge demonstration in his honor. Debs requested them to call it off. "I just want to slip out quietly now. When I come back—that will be the time."

A little way down the street from his two-story frame dwelling two children were playing with a kitten. I had just left Debs's home, but as an experiment I wanted to know what his little neighbors thought of him. I asked one of them where Debs lived.

"Right in that second house from the corner, two doors above Sycamore street. You can't miss him; he's the man with the kind face." Then the little girl chirped up: "Yes, the other day he patted me on my head and told me not to hurt my kitten, and I have not squeezed it since." This led me to talk to whomever I chanced to meet about 'Gene Debs for the remainder of the afternoon.

Down on the railroad tracks near the station was a watchman's shanty. Inside was the watchman, an old man, looking to be about sixty years. His face was red and weatherbeaten. His eyes were red, too, from the wind and cinders. He was reaching his arm through the window to dip a cup into a pail of water that was placed on an upturned box.

"Well, I guess I oughta know where 'Gene lives," he said, answering my inquiry. He gave me the accurate direction.

"You know they're taking him away to prison to-night?" I ventured.

"Yes, I know it." A fierce glint tempered with sadness stole into the old railroader's eyes.

"I suppose you are going up to say 'Good-by' to him before he goes away?"

"Oh, 'Gene never goes out of Terry Hut but what he comes by this shanty and yells in 'So long, Bob, I'll see you soon again.' He'll be comin' 'long here to-night before he goes away. I'll bet he won't be gone as long as some of those times when he made the run for President." That night, just before train time, 'Gene, his brother Theodore, and I were walking from his home to the station.

"Just a minute, boys," said 'Gene. "I want to stop at that shanty over there and say 'So long' to Bob."

Strolling down Seventh street towards the center of the city's heart an elderly man hove into sight. He looked as though he might be a retired wage worker, too old now, maybe, to work at whatever had been his trade. A butt of a cigar was gripped between his brown teeth, and a battered light felt hat dipped over one eye. His clothes hung upon his slender frame in a manner resembling nothing so much as a scarecrow's. I put the same questions to him. With some show of city pride after the manner of an elder citizen who has a

speaking acquaintance with all the local celebrities, my friend owned that he knew Debs "very well."

"I once worked for him," he vouchsafed, swelling up just a little. "Yes, siree, I tinkered 'round his front porch and painted 'er up. So 'Gene is leavin' Terry Hut for prison to-night! Well, I'll be damned. That's tough, ain't it?" I ventured the suggestion that some day Terre Haute would erect a monument to the memory of its foremost citizen.

"Well, I don't know. Now, we ain't much on monuments here in Terry Hut. We don't go in for the decorations. Did you see that Soldiers' and Sailors' monument down there in the park on your way up? Ain't that a hell of a lookin' thing? No, siree, we don't go in much for the monuments in Terry Hut. Well, I'll just go 'round and say 'Good-by' to 'Gene before he goes." The old wage worker slowly ambled off toward the Debs home to take his parting farewell.

Down at the Terre Haute House some leading citizens and politicians were standing in groups out on the pavement. Several iron rods that supported the awning were bent in just about up to a man's shoulder, and several citizens were settled snugly against them. The bar was crowded. The next man to me was drinking slowly from a glass of beer. He wore striped trousers that were frayed at the heels, and a black cutaway coat that was green and shiny at the back and elbows. A greenish black braid ran around its edges and the cuffs. A high piccadilly collar with soiled flaps pinched his neck. He had a professional air about him. We struck up a conversation about Debs.

"Well, I should say I do know him—for twenty years, sir."

"What does Terre Haute think about Debs going to prison?" I inquired.

"Well, now, speaking for myself," he began, "I've known Mr. Debs for many years. I like him person-

ally, but he's got some cranky notions in his head. If he didn't have them fool ideas about saving humanity he'd be all right. What's more, sir, humanity as it is ain't worth anybody goin' to jail for." He gulped to the dregs.

"I'll tell you, I hope Debs goes to prison, and I hope he s-e-r-v-e-s twenty-four hours just to prove to him and his followers that the law is bigger'n he is."

"Everybody in Terre Haute loves Debs," an editor of the *Terre Haute Tribune* told me, "but many of them think he was mighty foolish to make that speech at Canton when he did. He had no right to do that. I guess the feeling in Terre Haute about Debs is something like this: ninety-five per cent of the people don't like his ideas, but they worship the man. They all love him. But there is probably not one man or woman in that ninety-five per cent but who would gladly go to jail for 'Gene if they could."

Shortly before nine o'clock I went back to the Debs home. Lights were shining through the side windows of his sitting room, which was simply furnished, like any ordinary American home. It was marked by its orderliness and comforts, without any pretensions or luxuries. Debs was sitting in an ample rocking chair smoking a cigar. He might just have returned from a campaign trip. There was good nature all around. 'Gene seemed to be the one least affected by the ordeal through which he must pass in the days and months to come. Around him were his wife, Theodore and his wife and daughter, Mrs. Debs's aged mother, and her brother, Arthur Baur, a local druggist.

In a vase on a table was a huge bunch of American Beauty roses, the gift of Mrs. Flynn, an old washerwoman, and a neighbor. "She is a Roman Catholic," Debs said, "and every morning for many years she has prayed for me." Debs blew a ring of blue smoke and smiled sadly. The rear of the house resembled a

miniature horticultural hall filled with myriad flowers that had been brought to the house all that day and evening, the gifts of Debs's neighbors, many of whom did not share his social ideas, but who were deeply fond of and admired the man. Debs spoke of a rich overall manufacturer who lived a few doors from him. "Of course he doesn't like the hard things I say about capitalism, but he is a splendid neighbor. He was here to-day to say farewell."

"Well, Eugene, we had better start," put in Mrs. Debs, rising.

"Yes," replied Debs. "We don't want to miss the train."

Theodore, who has been closer than a brother to 'Gene, got Debs's coat from the rack. Mrs. Debs's mother was weeping softly. 'Gene went over to her side and patted her cheek. "It is all right, mother," he said with infinite tenderness, "it will come out all right in the end."

In spite of the fact that on that very afternoon a delegation representing the Terre Haute branch of Socialists and the Terre Haute Central Labor Union called on him to obtain his permission to hold a demonstration that night,—which Debs refused,—there were at the Big Four Railroad station more than 200 of the old guard, the faithful comrades who would not let their 'Gene go away without a farewell and a last shake of his hand. Debs strolled right into the crowd. Instantly he was surrounded. Those who could not edge their way right up to him reached over the heads of the others and tugged at his coat sleeves. They represented, typically so, the American labor movement. They were not all Socialists. But they were all working men and women. Debs went from one to the other avowing his love for them all, and pledging anew to them his devotion to their common cause. One big miner thrust his huge form through the crowd. His gnarled hand clasped Debs's arm. Tears flowed freely from his

eyes as he said: "We're with you, 'Gene,—by God, we're with you to the last man."

"I know it," said Debs, patting his cheek and kissing his brow. "Until the last drop we'll stand together, all of us. Only by standing together can we hope for victory. You boys take care of the outside and I'll take care of the inside." A volley of cheers from two hundred strong throats rent the air. Debs passed into the station and the crowd followed. Every few moments some one would start "three cheers," and the throng would shout its response. Merchants competing with each other for trade and profits could not possibly be more competitive than were these men, vieing with each other just to touch the garments of 'Gene Debs. Out on the platform they surged as the train pulled into the station. As Debs mounted the steps of his car a Pullman porter doffed his cap. Debs had been a passenger in his car many times before, on happier occasions. Instantly Debs removed his own hat. Then the crowd uncovered, even the women removing their hats. In this manner they stood for some minutes. In front of the crowd a soldier was standing. On one sleeve were two gold stripes, indicating a year's service in France, and on the other sleeve one gold stripe, indicating a wound received in battle. He stood first on one foot, then on the other. When he could restrain himself no longer he climbed up the steps, grasped Debs by the hand and shouted:

"Mr. Debs, I went through hell over there for them, and now I'm ready to go through hell over here for you." The crowd let out a whoop. "And there are a million more like me," shouted the soldier back to the crowd. As the train slowly puffed its way out of the shed Debs threw a kiss to his wife, and his friends. A little way down the platform a young woman was walking with a man. She pulled a red flower from her

bosom and threw it at Debs who was still standing on the platform.

Arthur Baur and myself, who were to accompany Debs to prison, went with him to the club car while the porter made up his berth. Earlier that day Debs had said:

"During my incarceration my comrades will be true and my enemies will be satisfied, and therefore, as far as I am concerned, all will be well with the world."

I asked him how Mrs. Debs was bearing up under the strain.

"She has stood shoulder to shoulder with me through every storm that has beat upon us, and she is standing firm now." Debs said that it was his wife's regret that she could not go with him to prison. "But she cannot do that, so she will remain here to keep the home fires burning."

All about the Debs home there was every outward indication that 'Gene would remain undisturbed for the rest of his life. A man was working in the little garden in back of the home, laying out new flower beds for Mrs. Debs and pruning the trees on the strip of lawn in front of their house. Quietly standing by his side throughout all of his trials and tribulations, throughout all of the homage and glory that have been lavished upon her husband, Mrs. Debs declined to give her own opinion concerning the plight in which Debs found himself. It has been her life rule to permit Debs to speak for himself on every matter of public import. On that day her hair seemed just a wee bit whiter; her cheeks may have lost a little of their accustomed rosiness; she might even have been somewhat thinner; but she was quite as erect, and carried her head in the same unafraid manner as of old, resembling nothing so much as a great tree in some forest over which has swept many a strong wind, yet which remains steadfast, braced to weather any storm that may arise again.

Debs smoked two or three cigars as we sat in the club car. He was lively, mostly in reminiscent mood, and in excellent spirits. During the conversation I suggested to him that his imprisonment would tend to accelerate whatever boom may otherwise have been started for him for President. He waved it aside, saying, "When the presidential year comes around I'll be the best swabber of floors, or the best prison clerk, in Moundsville."

This led him to speak of leaders.

"Very often a leader is, in fact, a misleader. It is the workers, the men and women who do all the hard work in every line of trade and profession—in building up their own Socialist branches and their unions, to whom all the credit, homage, honor and glory is due. They are the salt of the earth, the gold in the rainbow,—these simple people, these Jimmie and Jane Higginses who work early and late for the cause, who arrange the meetings, who wash the dishes after the festive dinners—how much we owe to the workers. They expect no pay and they receive no honors. If you were to approach them with your thanks for the good they have done, they would blush to the roots of their hair. I have had a regret all of my days that I shall not live long enough to repay these dear comrades of mine for the wonderful love and honors they have showered upon me with their seamed and scarred hands, worn and shriveled from the toil that has been their lot. Their joy is to serve, yet none serve them. All that I am in this world is what my comrades have made me. They are the fruit of the choicest tree that ever grew.

Across from us, sitting in the brightly lighted car, sat several men, smoking and drinking light beverages. They were going somewhere for business or pleasure. Debs was going to prison. They knew he sat within a few feet of them. A little while before they had come out on the platform at Terre Haute to see what all the

racket was about. People asleep in their berths had come out with wraps about their pajamas and night-gowns. One tall fellow, clad in pajamas, shook Debs's hand and said: "Mr. Debs, I am going to Canton. Have you ever been there?"

"Oh, yes," replied Debs, appreciating the humor, "I once made a speech there which the government didn't like."

"Suppose," I asked him during the evening, "suppose President Wilson should cable a pardon for you without any strings attached to it, an unconditional pardon, what would you do? What would be your attitude?" At that time President Wilson was in Paris helping to arrange the terms of peace for the world which for the five preceding years had been swept by war. Debs drew on his cigar. As the blue smoke curled from his lips his answer was ready:

"I should refuse to accept it, unless the same pardon were extended to every man and woman in prison under the Espionage Law. They must let them all out—I.W.W. and all—or I won't come out. I don't want any special dispensation of justice in my case. It is perfectly clear. I always have taken that position and I cannot too strongly reassert it now."

All during the trip to Cleveland Debs talked gayly enough. He told stories of how back in 1896 he had campaigned for William Jennings Bryan for President. Even during that campaign, Debs said, he was getting along fast toward Socialism. "Bryan's lieutenants wanted me to espouse the Sixteen-to-one, Free Silver panacea, but I was talking straight Industrial Unionism, and those were the days, too, when to talk for Industrial Unionism, or the One Big Union, was to espouse 'anarchy,' for the American Federation of Labor was at that time growing fast toward its full strength as a craft union movement, and Bryan's managers anticipated a number of votes from that element." Debs's

crowds in those early days ran neck and neck in numbers with those of Bryan himself, and this fact would augur well for his power as a speaker nearly a quarter of a century ago.

"Many years ago," he went on, "during the great Cripple Creek strike in Colorado I was invited to go out there and help organize the miners, who were struggling to obtain the eight-hour day. In those days the 'Eight-Hour Day' movement was labor heresy. I would not again go into a situation such as I found out there for anything in the world—not for anything *except Socialism.*

"The towns were flooded with armed thugs, who were ordered to shoot all labor agitators on sight. The business men and mine owners were determined they would not allow a labor union in that district. I went out there. At the station I was met by a large group of armed thugs, the sheriff and his deputies. They made up their minds that I should not make a speech that night." Debs said he told the leader of the gang that, "This will either be the beginning of organized labor in Colorado or the end of me."

"They held conference on the curb while I went to a hotel. That night I made my speech and held a most successful meeting. The next morning I was standing on the curb near my hotel, talking with several of the union men. There were only a few who had dared to be seen with me. One of the men drew my attention to a big, hulking fellow not ten feet away. He was the biggest man I ever saw in two boots. He had a deadly eye. I could see the butts of two guns protruding from his hip pockets.

" 'See that fellow over there, Mr. Debs,' one of my friends said to me. 'Well, he is a sure shot. He was never known to miss the man he went after. Last night that man stood not ten feet away from your stand all the while you were talking. You have not left his sight

since then. He has been following you every step, and he'll be the last man to see you out of town.'

"'Is that so?' I said to my friend. I walked over to the strong man on the curb and extended my hand to him.

"'My friends have been telling me that you were at my meeting last night, that you have been watching my movements ever since, and that you are the sure shot of Colorado. I am glad to meet you.'

"'Yes, Mr. Debs, I've been watching you pretty carefully. I knew that they were out to get you in this yere burg. I hail from Vincennes, Indiana, and I know you're on the level with the workingmen. I jest made up my mind that any ——— who laid his dirty hands on you would be carted out of this yere region a corpse.'

"The fellow blushed to the roots of his hair like a girl when I thanked him for the personal service he had rendered to me. I have found on so many occasions that it is almost impossible to declare accurately who are our friends and who are our enemies."

At five o'clock next morning Debs was up and dressed. He said he had slept only about an hour, but had been resting with his thoughts. While the train was creeping slowly into the Cleveland yards Debs asked me to take his statement "for my comrades throughout the United States." I had no paper at hand, so I fished a book from my grip, and was ready to write his statement in the back of it. This is the statement:

"As I am about to enter the prison doors, I wish to send to the Socialists of America who have so loyally stood by me since my first arrest this little message of love and cheer. These are pregnant days and promising ones.

"We are all on the threshold of tremendous changes. The workers of the world are awakening and bestirring themselves as never before. All the forces that are playing upon the modern world are making for the

overthrow of despotism in all its forms, and for the emancipation of the masses of mankind.

"I shall be in prison in the days to come, but my revolutionary spirit will be abroad and I shall not be inactive. Let us all in this supreme hour measure up to our full stature and work together as one for the great cause that means emancipation for us all.

"Love to all my comrades and all hail to the revolution."

When the Cleveland newspapers announced, Saturday evening, that Debs would leave Terre Haute that night for Cleveland, the Socialists hastily prepared for a mass meeting at which Debs was to speak. Dodgers printed in scarlet ink were scattered through the streets of the city. It was to be a meeting to protest against the imprisonment of Debs and the other political and industrial prisoners. The meeting did not take place because Debs was spirited out of Cleveland three hours after he arrived. At the depot he was met by Mrs. Marguerite Prevy, who had driven up from Akron with her sister, Mrs. May Deibel, and her husband, John. They were staunch friends of Debs. The breakfast over, Debs went to the Gillsy House. He was writing a note to his folks at home, telling of his safe arrival, when two United States deputy marshals came to his room and ordered him to come with them to the Marshal's office in the Federal building. With Debs at that moment were Mrs. Prevy, J. Louis Engdahl and Alfred Wagenknecht, the last two coming from Chicago as representatives of the National Socialist Party, and who would accompany the Debs party to Moundsville.

After a few minutes' stay at the Federal building, where Marshal Charles W. Lapp prepared the necessary documents for delivering Debs to prison, the prisoner, with Marshal Lapp and a deputy, appeared at a side exit, and entered an automobile. Those of us who were to accompany him got into another automobile. The

Debs car tore through the city streets. It turned corners sharply, the driver ignoring all traffic regulations. Our car kept up the whole distance, recklessly brushing passing vehicles and moving trolley cars. Traffic policemen waved their arms in frantic yet futile attempt to halt the dual speeders. For an hour this mad race continued, until finally the Debs car drew up before a suburban railroad station where the Marshal purchased three tickets for Youngstown. His pursuers did likewise. Debs was taken to a private compartment of the train and we were allowed to sit with him. The Marshal then told us that we were to make the trip to Moundsville from Youngstown by trolley. This was done to forestall any demonstrations for Debs by his followers along the route. The trip was uneventful. Debs told stories of his life, of the American Railway Union's strike back in 1894, and similar incidents of his career. Every now and then he would turn to Marshal Lapp, who wanted to be congenial and affable, slap him on the knee and ask him how he felt. Just before we reached Youngstown Debs remarked to the Marshal that it might take some while to get to Moundsville by trolley.

"Well, we can make an all-day job of it," smiled Lapp.

"Oh, yes," rejoined Debs, with perfect good humor, "we have ten years in which to get there." Debs said he never felt in better spirits in all his life, and added, "This is the beginning of a great event for us all." At Youngstown, a little boy of twelve years, the son of a Socialist, espied Debs walking through the streets with his guards on the way to the interurban station. The little fellow threw himself in 'Gene's arms. After a half-hour wait we were aboard a trolley for Leetonia; from there to East Liverpool; to Steubenville; to Wellsburg, West Virginia; to Wheeling, where Debs was allowed thirty minutes for supper. He had not eaten since early morning in Cleveland. We

reached Wheeling by eight o'clock. Debs was kept jumping off and on trolley cars all day Sunday. He was an old man, 64 years old, recently confined to bed with illness. There was not one word of complaint from him, yet he was visibly exhausted. When one of his party complained about his being "kidnaped" in this fashion, Debs only smiled and said, "It's all right; let them have their inning now; we'll have ours some day."

Debs's trolley slid across trestles, jolted and jostled along the foothills of the Alleghenies, with every now and then happy couples getting on and off the various cars on which we traveled. They were making merry on a Palm Sunday frolic. Once, I was reminded of what a barber in Terre Haute had remarked in speaking casually to a customer about Debs's impending imprisonment. "Well, it's coming along to Easter time, and we're getting ready for another crucifixion."

Late in the afternoon Debs was so weary he could hold up his head no longer. Presently it bent slowly toward his breast, and in this posture he slept as the car rocked his head from side to side. Life's grayest shadows held no sadder picture than this. We who accompanied Debs to prison shall never forget his sad and sleeping figure, with head bent on bosom, his long frame cramped in a trolley car seat, with two guards ever vigilant, moving along the Ohio Valley, with the river flowing at our right, with great earth swells rising and falling on either side like huge brown and green waves.

Shortly before ten o'clock we arrived at Moundsville. The great turrets of the prison arose before us like ancient towers. As we passed along the wall, sickly yellow lights shone through the grated windows like a sieve held over a number of candles. Debs was still carrying his heavy grip which he would let none of his party carry for him. He was walking slowly beside

Marshal Lapp, and he was talking softly to his guard. I heard him say this:

"Marshal, you have treated me like a gentleman all the way down here. I should not wish you ever to feel that you have done me the slightest injury or harm by bringing me here. I understand perfectly why I am going to prison, and I am glad to come here for the reason that I am coming here. So set your conscience at perfect ease so far as I am concerned." Debs's long arm slowly stretched across the broad shoulders of his guard and in this fashion he entered the prison—with poise and composure.

Once inside the prison, Debs was met by the warden, Joseph Z. Terrell. In his characteristic half-stooping manner, Debs extended his hand to the warden. In a moment the formalities were over and Debs stepped into an automatic turn-table inclosed in a double barred grating. At the first meeting, the warden spoke kindly to his new charge. Debs was taken to a receiving cell, No. 51, in the south wing of the prison. He had embraced each of us just before he stepped into the turn-table. There was a moment's turning of his head, and his face was sadly radiant in the mellow glow of an incandescent hanging in the hall. The warden assured us that Debs would be well taken care of in the prison.

"He will not be on exhibition for the curiosity seekers, and I shall respect his wishes, so far as the rules will allow, as I would those of a man of similar character and intelligence," said Terrell. From the first it was apparent that Debs was in good and kind hands as far as a prison is concerned. Debs was to be allowed to write as many letters as he pleased, subject, of course, to prison censorship, whereas the rules permitted only one each week. He would be assigned to light and easy clerical duty in the hospital.

Moreover, the warden would allow Debs to receive any number of Socialist newspapers and publications,

the only restriction being that he would destroy them when he had read them. This provision was made with a view to keeping the other prisoners "from being contaminated by Socialist ideas." The warden would also allow Debs to receive, reasonably, unrestricted visits from members of his family and personal friends. Before we left that night the warden permitted us to go to Debs's cell and bid him good-night. He had removed his coat and vest, collar and tie. He was preparing for bed. We did not linger before his barred door. With one hand gripping the steel rods of his cage, he extended the other through the grating and bid us each good-by. His cell was jet black within. In the night it was impossible for the eye to discern its length or width.

"It is all right, boys," said Debs; "I am going to sleep the sleep of the just to-night. I am very tired. Don't worry for me, or about me. We know what we are about, and I shall be very comfortable here." His face was close up to the bars, looking after us as we walked down the narrow iron balcony to the floor. Something that we could not name rose in our throats to choke us. Something that we could not define or see rose up before us to beat us down. The sound of our footsteps on the granite floor aroused the sleeping prisoners in that section, and in a moment there was a chorus of coughing such as is heard in a hospital for consumptives.

Debs was given number 2253. On the prison records his occupation was entered as writer and lecturer. He was the only convict among the 896 men there at that time who would not be permitted to practice his trade or profession. Debs was told that he would be expected to obey all the rules of the prison, and Debs promised that he would, saying to the warden: "If I transgress, it will not be intentional, and I want you to call my attention to my error so I will not repeat it."

The next afternoon, Monday, April 14, 1919, Debs was assigned to the prison hospital. He had bathed and donned the prison uniform, a light gray with tiny checks. The suit bore no external stamp or marking of identification, as is customary, and, in fact, it was not unbecoming to him. It was the sort of clothing that any one might purchase in a very cheap clothing store, the material hard and durable. We found him sitting in a low rocker, reading and smoking his pipe. His room was ample, with two windows, and containing a single white iron bed. In one corner of his room there was a stationary white wash-stand, and in another a gas heater was burning brightly to take away the chill. Debs was as comfortable as it is possible for a man to be in prison. There were no bars at his windows, which faced the green sward, and the door to his room and the one opening out to the prison yard was unlocked at all times. He could stroll about the yard as often and as long as he chose.

As we entered his room, Debs put down the book he had been reading, disturbing a large gray cat that was sleeping at his side. The warden observed his book. It was John Reed's first volume of the Russian Bolsheviki Revolution, entitled "Ten Days That Shook the World." Warden Terrell told Debs that he had free access to the prison library. "We have a rule here, Debs," said the warden, "that prisoners must be checked up on the books they take from the library, but we will waive that rule for you. I know you appreciate the value of good books."

"Indeed I do, Mr. Warden," replied Debs with his thanks.

Debs said he had "slept like a log" in his cell, and now felt "as chipper as a young goat on a tin roof." He laughed good-naturedly as he looked at his prison garments, and called them his new spring suit. Debs said that he had already "met some fine men in the

prison." His neighbor in the next cell had confided to him that he came originally from McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, where he had been a miner and a Socialist, and had once voted for Debs for President. In the yard, during his morning walk, another prisoner had come up to him and extended his hand.

"Well, Mr. Debs, I've wanted this honor to meet you all my life, but, by God, I'm sorry to meet you in here," the convict had said. Debs hastily clasped the man's extended hand and said, "As well meet here as anywhere; the meeting is the thing that counts, not the place." All day Monday two Negro prisoners were busily engaged scrubbing the floors of the room that Debs was to occupy, fumigating it, and, generally, "putting his house in order." One of these men was called "Old Nigger Bill." He instantly attached his affections to Debs. This darky had twice escaped execution for murder, and had since been offered a pardon which he had declined with thanks, having no home and no where to go.

At the warden's invitation we dined with him and his family that evening. As we chatted with Debs's keeper and his wife in their private apartments on the top floor of the prison, the warden's little girl, Barbara Lee, romped and played on the floor. Debs's name was mentioned frequently, and finally the brown-eyed baby looked up into her father's eyes and asked: "Daddy, who is Debs?" The warden gently referred the child's inquiry to me. With a bound she ran over to me and climbed upon my lap. I had been playing "patty-cake, patty-cake, baker's man" with her.

"Debs is a good, kind man," I told her, "who loves all little boys and girls. And all little boys and girls who meet him come to love him, too. If he were up here now he would get right down there on the floor and play with you." The little girl danced off my lap and ran over to the warden, clapping her hands with glee.

"Oh, Daddy; Mr. Debs is a kind man who loves children, and he plays with them, too; do you think he will ever come upstairs and play with me?" There was anxious hope in the baby's voice as she put her unanswerable question. None of us knew how to reply to the child whose imagination had been gripped by the thought of a possible playmate.

"No, I don't think Mr. Debs will ever have time to come up and play with you, Barbara Lee," said her father finally, "but you shall see him some day." The little girl ran back to me as though I could somehow bring into being the thoughts that raced through her mind. I told her that some day, when she had grown to be a big girl, she might be glad and proud that she had once lived in the same house with Debs. I told her that many of his friends would wish they could say they had lived under the same roof with him. She looked at me wonderingly with big, brown eyes.

During the meal the warden impressed upon us that he had received no instructions from any one to show Debs any special favor or consideration. He said he was merely treating his prisoner as the latter's age, character and intelligence demanded.

CHAPTER IV

TWO MONTHS AT MOUNDSVILLE PRISON

THERE was no question about Debs being the recipient of special favors from the warden at Moundsville. His mail was unrestricted and untampered. He never took the full advantage of favors that might easily have been extended to him by Terrell. For instance, there was a rule in the prison that all lights must be out at nine o'clock at night. Debs had a room which we could call private. None shared it with him and it contained only his personal property. It is unlikely that the guards in the prison yards would have raised objection had Debs kept his light burning after the forbidden hour. Most of them, if not all, were aware that Debs was the most celebrated prisoner the prison had ever held, and all of them came to respect him, both for his personal evidences of kindness within the prison walls, and for what they knew him to be in the outside world. Debs promptly turned his light off at nine o'clock each night.

It is customary, I am told, according to prison regulations, for officials to examine carefully all papers and magazines and books before they are turned over to the prisoner. This is done, not so much to censor the written contents, as to guard against the smuggling in of drugs, "sleep powders," flat files or saws to the prisoners. Many prisons forbid any printed matter coming to the prisoners except that sent direct from publishers. Debs, however, received vast quantities of printed matter of every radical description, about fifty per cent. of which came direct from his friends. Almost

from the first, his full mail was turned over to him unopened. It reached such volume that he could easily have used a private secretary in prison. Instead, it was his custom to assort his mail and dispatch the more general letters to his brother, Theodore, in Terre Haute, who would answer each missive. Visitors came to see him by the scores. Within two short months, Moundsville became the mecca for the nation's radicals, liberals, and those curiously interested in celebrated and public personages. At one time a delegation of fifty Socialists marched into the warden's office from a small Ohio town nearby to see Debs. Of course, this vanguard was denied its mission, but the leader of the group was passed through the prison gates, and was granted a brief interview with his chief. Debs at Moundsville soon found himself in the position of trying to minimize the favors that were being showered upon him from every hand. It was his deep concern not to incur the dislike or enmity of his fellow prisoners by these evidences of official partiality. He received boxes of candy, fruit, cigars, smoking tobacco and flowers in abundance; these he distributed among the patients at the hospital in which he was supposed to be a clerk to the chief physician. Never in all his days had "Old Nigger Bill" smoked so many and such good cigars as those he relished with ever-increasing frequency during the stay of Debs. Bill loved to bathe in the reflected glory of 'Gene, and finally came to look upon himself as Debs's personal valet. He would scrub the bathtub to a fine polish each morning before Debs took his plunge, and once Debs remarked, "The old rascal seems to think he is filling the tub with holy water for a prince or potentate."

On one of my visits to Moundsville, Warden Terrell escorted me over to Debs's room. Debs was seated at his table writing letters. He instantly arose and greeted his keeper kindly as though Terrell were an old friend. For some minutes both men chatted in clubby fashion,

laughing and jesting. It seemed that Debs quite forgot that he was the prisoner, and Terrell seemed oblivious of the fact that it was he who had finally ordered the barred gates closed upon Debs. The next moment Debs stooped over his big suit-case, fished out a fresh box of cigars, and offered it to the warden. The latter hesitated and Debs took up a handful of the Havanas and thrust them in the warden's coat pocket. Terrell protested that he had a box of cigars of his own.

"Well, take these anyway, Mr. Warden," said Debs, "they were sent to me yesterday by one of the sweetest comrades I ever knew."

The warden smiled. "Do you know, Debs," he said in mock-serious tone, "I am beginning to feel the least bit jealous of you. If I had so many people who loved me as intensely as your friends love you, and who would say such nice things about me as they say about you, I think I should be willing to be a prisoner myself." Debs showed the slightest trace of embarrassment.

"Well, Mr. Warden, if you are ever in my place I want to be your warden so that I might have a chance to treat you as kindly as you have treated me," said Debs, and both men laughed at the incongruity of the picture.

"Oh, Debs, I'm not treating you kindly," argued the warden; "I am merely treating you like a man."

It was a bright, sunny summer's day, and more than 800 prisoners were scattered about on the spacious sward of the prison. Some were sitting alone. Others were in small groups. Many of them were smoking pipes, cigars and tobacco. But for the monotonous similarity of their clothing, and the gray stone wall that stretched forty feet from the ground and inclosed them, one could not have thought of these men as prisoners, but as workmen enjoying a half holiday. They were, indeed, enjoying a half holiday, for Warden Terrell had ordered all work suspended at noon that day, Saturday. These men were not workmen, though they had once

been such, and many of them would be again. Now they were all convicts. Bankers, tellers, burglars, slayers, counterfeiters, forgers—men imprisoned for every conceivable offense, and now all on the same dead level of equality in the eyes of the state and of society. As Warden Terrell passed these different groups of men not a man lowered his eyes. Many of them looked straight at their keeper, some with smiling eyes of friendly acknowledgment, some with blank expressions, some whose faces were alight with hope of future liberty, while others gazed straight ahead at the great gray wall as if that stone panel were the very end of life and its mysteries. On the lawn, the prison band was playing popular airs. This was the scene that met Debs's eyes as he looked out of the window, brushing aside the white scrim curtains that hung from the lower half of the sashes. Pinned on the wall by the side of his bed was a magazine print of Christ. On his table, a rough affair of the kitchen variety, painted with lead gray color, were numerous magazines and photographs of children and friends throughout the country. These had been sent to him since his incarceration. On the radiator there was a large picture of a little girl, the daughter of a Socialist in Ohio. Several candy boxes containing flowers plucked in open fields by children lay on a chair. One of these he showed to me and the letter that accompanied it:

457 West 151st St.,
New York City, N. Y.,
May 27, 1919.

Dear Comrade Debs:

Just a few lines to let you know how many of us still love you. I hope, and all my friends hope, that the prison bars do not ruin your health. Comrade, you have no idea how bad we feel about you. Isn't it awful that you must stay there? It is very noble of you indeed not to want to come out unless your fellow workers

come out. But don't you worry, all will turn out all right, those Conenscious (conscientious) Objectors and other fellow-workers and dear Kate O'Hare, who have worked for the cause, will come out. Though it isn't pleasant to be behind bars, it must feel wonderful to know you have accomplished a great deal and that you are behind bars for a very good cause.

But let's not talk about that. Spring is just as beautiful, and I am sending you a Lily-of-the-Valley from our garden. I hope you soon will be able to enjoy spring again. Of course you will, and when you do I certainly will rejoice, and so will all my friends. Don't lose courage, dear Comrade, remember your little comrades still love you, and you love us, that we know. Just you wait, when you come out all nature will rejoice with you and all who love you.

Comrade, remember when at Carnegie Hall I gave you a bunch of American Beauties, with a banner with "Votes for Women" on it, and when you lifted me up and kissed me that thrill went through me I shall never forget. To be kissed by such a wonderful man. . . .

But all your work to give women the vote was not useless, for you see they got the vote. Also your work for Socialism will not be useless. The working class shall soon wake up and realize. I am now just eleven, and when I grow up I will follow your footsteps. I hope I and all my fellow comrades will be able to enjoy your noble work.

Yours for a Wonderful Cause,
Your Little Comrade,
HAZEL KLOTZ.

To this little girl's letter Debs replied on May 31:

MY DEAR COMRADE HAZEL:

Your very dear letter with the Lily-of-the-Valley attached has come to me and I thank you with all my heart for your loving remembrance. You are certainly a true little friend and a noble young comrade. . . .

I note all you say and your sweet message touches me deeply. How very fortunate I am to have the confidence and love of such fine comrades! All is well with me here and in good time everything will come out right. Thanking you again, my dear little comrade, and with much love to you and all your household and other comrades, I am ever,

Yours devotedly,

E. V. DEBS.

Referring to his mail, Debs said letters had been pouring in upon him by the thousands. On Easter Sunday he received a dozen boxes of flowers.

"I want to say that if I had to come to prison, I am glad I came here. I have not heard an unkind word since I arrived, and every official, from the warden down, has been kind to me and solicitous about my health," said Debs. The matter of the warden's treatment to him is further attested by him in the following letter to me:

Moundsville, W. Va., April 22, 1919.

MY DEAR COMRADE DAVID:

A thousand thanks! You can never know how very much I appreciate all your kindness. Your coming here with me was so good of you, and the many fine things you have said and written in your splendid articles will abide with me for all time.

I wish you could have been here long enough to know the warden, Mr. Terrell, as I have learned to know him. He occupies a very trying and difficult position and my being here under the circumstances does not make things easier for him. He has certainly treated me as well as he possibly can under the rules of the prison which, as you know, he is expected to enforce *impartially*, and there are not a few who would be glad to see him subject me to the severest discipline and set me at the hardest tasks. Mr. Terrell has had all regard for my health, and he has in every other way treated

me not only humanely but kindly, and I am sure he has the welfare of all the prisoners at heart and does the very best he can by them all. But after all, it's a prison, and I am sure there are many things he would do differently if he were free to carry out his own individual wishes. Hundreds of letters, telegrams, etc., are coming here. I could not begin to answer them all even if it were not for the prison rules. I appreciate each loving word—each touch of comradely kindness.

Believe me always, always,
Yours in loving comradeship,
GENE.

P.S.—Tell the comrades they must not worry about me in the least. I am all right. There is nothing to regret, nothing to fear—there is everything to hope for, and to live and work for.

On Easter Sunday he went to the chapel services.

"I sat in the middle of all the prisoners," said 'Gene. "It was a wonderful sight. In the very midst of all their sorrows and their miseries there was a wonderful spirit that shone in the faces of all the prisoners. I would not have missed this experience for anything in the world. It means so much to me. It has enriched my life. Why, I have callers every day. These men, scores of them, come to my room and ask me to write letters for them, letters to their families and applications for pardons. They all seem to have discovered me. They tell me their stories and their hopes for the future."

Debs spoke of Archdeacon Spurr of the Reynolds Memorial Hospital, near Moundsville, who had paid him frequent visits.

"The deacon brought me this tie that I am wearing, and asked me if I needed any money for my family! What do you think of that? If there was as much kindness and good feeling on the outside world as I have seen within these walls all would be well with the

world," he said. Debs's tie was dark blue, of the flowing variety. "The deacon is not a bit 'churchy,' just a fine human being with a great heart," Debs volunteered. At the end of this visit, April 28, I mentioned that I might have time to stop at Altoona, Pennsylvania, to see William F. Gable, whom I knew to be a man of generous heart, and for many years a warm admirer of Debs; that I would go west and try to see Mrs. O'Hare at Jefferson City, Missouri, prison, and to Leavenworth, Kansas, prison to see William D. Haywood. Debs's face lit up at once at the mention of these names.

"Be sure you give Gable my love," he said. "His is one of the sweetest natures I ever knew—an exceedingly good and generous man. When you get to Leavenworth take my love to Bill Haywood and the other boys. We are all in prison for the same thing—attempting to be true to ourselves and those whom we serve. In the final sum we all stand together—I. W. W. and all—the world's workers.

"If you are allowed to see Kate, tell her I am keeping the light burning in West Virginia as I know she is doing in Missouri. Her case was harder than mine. She left four beautiful children behind when they took her off to prison. I had no little children of my own to leave—I just left all the children behind." There was a strain of infinite tenderness and sadness in his voice as he spoke the last, and his whole frame was vibrant with the love that flooded his heart and moistened his pale blue eyes.

On my second visit, June 7, Debs talked of prisoners, the prison problem and John Brown, the martyred abolitionist of Civil War days.

"I have been in many jails and prisons, and have seen numberless criminals, old and young, male and female, and of every hue and shade, and my heart is with them all. I cannot pity them without con-

demning myself. But I can love them, and I do. I love them for what they are, foul and repulsive as they may appear to those whose cry of 'unclean' but mocks the dead sense of their own guilt and shame.

"Many an innocent soul," he went on, raising his voice, "branded with crime, is vainly beating its tired wings against the steel bars of a prison cage. But the guilty! Who shall dare to judge them? What sinless, spotless saint among us may pronounce them wicked and sentence them to prison? The very lowest and most degenerate of criminals is not a whit worse than I. The difference between us is against me, not him. All of my life I have been the favored one, the creature of fortune. We both did the best we could, and the worst we knew how, and I am the beneficiary of society of which he is the victim." The last remark caused me to remind Debs that he was not now "the favored creature" of society, but rather its banished benefactor.

"No, that is not exactly correct," he replied at once. "I am so much more fortunate than those who are now sharing my lot with me. My thoughts are not in this place; I do not see these gray walls, nor am I conscious of these steel bars. Only my clay is here, and that might just as well be here as anywhere else. I can live here with my soul at peace; I can live on the increment of the love of my comrades and friends in the world outside these walls. But these men—and I know many of them by their first names now—were once workmen. For the most part they have been used and exploited. When they had nothing more to give, had given their all—soul and body—and strove at last to make the best of a bad bargain and erred, society then put them out of sight. They were no good any longer. They could not be *used* any longer. Put them away! They are unclean!

"Think of the monstrous crime of punishing the brother we have deformed for the wrong he has suf-

fered at our hands! Think of torturing his body and deforming his soul for having had the awful misfortune to be the dehumanized victim of our own inhumanity. Is it any wonder that in a perverted, wicked system the basest passions are aroused, hate and lust fill the world, and fire and slaughter ravage the race?"

Rarely before had his eyes betokened firmer conviction than when he said now:

"I belong in prison. I belong where men are made to suffer for the wrongs committed against them by a brutalizing system. I have talked about this thing and these social conditions all of my life, and now the fates have given to me the opportunity to practice what I have preached.

"I belong to this stratum of society," he repeated with signal emphasis. "The roots of the social system are here. They are nowhere else.

"I would not harm a hair in the head of any human being on earth," he went on, with rising fire and renewed force, "but before I pass beyond I would like to have all the plutocrats, the profiteers, the exploiters of labor and their mistresses in their satins and their jewels—all those who believe this is a just social system and who support it—to sit in a great grandstand, and I would then parade before their seeing eyes this pageant of misery—the criminals, the sick, the halt and the blind. I think that any man or woman who could witness such a spectacle without feeling his and her just share of social responsibility for it all must surely have hearts of granite, and have become as gross and as dehumanized as they make out these poor souls to be." Debs's eyes wandered toward the window whose curtains were gently blowing in the June breeze, and he saw precisely the very same creatures about whom he had just been speaking so vehemently. At this moment the prison band struck up "Maryland, My Maryland." Long ago the Socialists had parodized the words and

entitled them "We'll Keep the Red Flag Waving." Debs noted the significance of the music. There was flare and fire in the swelling notes that flew high over the prison walls just like the hopes of some of the men who dotted the green sward here and there within the inclosure.

"Of course, it is fine and thrilling to be in the outside world mingling with noble spirits and kindly souls who illuminate the earth with the light of their generous love, but some must be in places like this, else how could we differentiate between light and darkness? And I am as pleased to be here as any."

Maybe a few among those who know Debs have sometimes thought that the stone walls, the steel bars and the locks would harden his heart, tame the currents that sweep his mind and weaken his spirit. Men have been broken in chains and in other forms of restraint. They have become sullen and dead to all save the physical life under the pressure of prison. But Debs says that many of these were of broken or wavering spirit before they were fettered and striped, and when the last straw in the form of a cell was weighted upon them they were left stranded, suspended between the spiritual and physical equations, with little or no conception of the restorative power of the former, and with but a sickening, haunting memory of the latter. More than once Debs has said he could go to the stake without batting an eye and with song in his heart, if he knew he was right. That is actually the manner in which he entered prison three times in his life—Woodstock, Moundsville and Atlanta. His spirit is adamant. It has and will sustain him to the end of his days.

While Debs talked rapidly and earnestly of the prison problem, I remembered having read his speech on that very subject, delivered before the Nineteenth Century Club, at Delmonico's, New York, March 21, 1899.

I shall quote certain pregnant passages from that speech:

"From the earliest ages there has been a prison problem. The ancients had their bastiles and their dungeons. Most of the pioneers of progress, the haters of oppression, the lovers of liberty, whose names now glorify the pantheon of the world, made such institutions a necessity in their day. But civilization advances, however slowly, and there has been some progress. It required five hundred years to travel from the inquisition to the injunction.

"In the earlier days punishment was the sole purpose of imprisonment. Offenders against the ruling class must pay the penalty in prison cell, which, not infrequently, was equipped with instruments of torture. With the civilizing process came the idea of the reformation of the culprit, and this idea prompts every investigation made of the latter-day problem. The inmates must be set to work for their own good, no less than for the good of the state.

"It was at this point that the convict labor problem began and it has steadily expanded from that time to this and while there has been some temporary modifications of the evil, it is still an unmitigated curse from which there can be no escape while an economic system endures in which labor, that is to say, the laborer, man, woman and child, is sold to the lowest bidder in the markets of the world. . . .

"Fortunately the system of leasing and contracting prison labor for private exploitation is being exposed and its frightful iniquities laid bare. Thanks to organized labor and the spirit of prison reform, this horrifying phase of the evil is doomed to disappear before an enlightened public sentiment. . . .

"All useful labor is honest labor, even if performed in a prison. Only the labor of exploiters, such as speculators, stock gamblers, beef-embalmers and their mercen-

ary politicians, lawyers and other parisites—only such is dishonest labor. A thief making shoes in a penitentiary is engaged in more useful and therefore more honest labor than a "free" stone mason at work on a palace whose foundations are laid in the skulls and bones and cemented in the sweat and blood of ten thousand victims of capitalistic exploitation. In both cases the labor is compulsory. The stone mason would not work for the trust magnate were he not compelled to. . . .

"To the student of social science the haggard fact stands forth that under the competitive system of production and distribution the prison problem will never be solved—and its effect upon trade and industry will never be greatly modified. The fact will remain that whatever labor is performed by prison labor could and should be performed by free labor, and when in the march of economic progress the capitalist system of industry for private profit succumbs to the Socialist system of industry for human happiness, when the factory, which is now a penitentiary crowded with life convicts, among whom children often constitute the majority—when this factory is transformed into a temple of science, and the machine, myriad armed and tireless, is the only slave, there will be no prison labor and the problem will cease to vex the world, and to this it is coming in obedience to the economic law, as unerring in its operation as the law of gravitation.

"That prison labor is demoralizing in its effect on trade and industry whenever and wherever brought into competition with it, especially under the various forms of the contract system, is of course conceded, but that it has been, or is at present, a great factor in such demoralization is not admitted. There is a tendency to exaggerate the blighting effect of prison labor for the purpose of obscuring the one overshadowing cause of demoralized trade and impoverished industry.

"Prison labor did not reduce the miner to a walking hunger pang, his wife to a tear-stained rag, and his home to a lair. Prison labor is not responsible for the squares of squalor and miles of misery in New York City, Chicago and all other centers of population. Prison labor is not chargeable with the sweating dens in which the victims of capitalistic competition crouch in dread and fear until death comes to their rescue. Prison labor had no hand in Cœur d'Alene, Tennessee, Homestead, Hazleton, Virdin, Pana, that suburb of hell called Pullman, and other insanguine industrial battlefields where thousands of workingmen after being oppressed and robbed were imprisoned life-felons, and shot down like vagabond dogs; where venal judges issued infamous injunctions and despotic orders at the behest of their masters, enforcing them with deputy marshals armed with pistols and clubs and supported by troops with gleaming bayonets and shotted guns to drain the veins of workingmen of blood, but for whose labor this continent would still be a wilderness. Only the tortures of hunger and nakedness provoked protest, and this was silenced by the bayonet and bullet; by the club and the blood that followed the blow.

"Prison labor is not accountable for the appalling increase in insanity, in suicide, in murder, in prostitution and a thousand other forms of vice and crime which pollute every fountain and contaminate every stream designed to bless the world.

"Prison labor did not create our army of unemployed, but has been recruited from its ranks, and both owe their existence to the same social and economic system.

"Nor are the evil effects confined exclusively to the poor working class. There is an aspect of the case in which the rich are as unfortunate as the poor. The destiny of the capitalist class is irrevocably linked with the working class. Fichte, the great German philoso-

pher, said: 'Wickedness increases in proportion to the elevation of rank.'

"Prison labor is but one of the manifestations of our economic development and indicates its trend. The same cause that demoralized industry has crowded our prisons. Industry has not been impoverished by prison labor, but prison labor is the result of impoverished industry. . . .

"The prison laborer produces by machinery in abundance but does not consume. The child likewise produces, but owing to its small wages, does not consume. So with the vast army of workers whose wage grows smaller as the productive capacity of labor increases, and then society is afflicted with over-production, the result of under-consumption. What follows? The panic. Factories close down, wage workers are idle and suffer, middle class business men are forced into bankruptcy, the army of tramps is increased, vice and crime are rampant, and prisons and workhouses are filled to overflowing as are sewers when the streets of cities are deluged with floods.

"Prison labor, like all cheap labor, is at first a source of profit to the capitalist, but finally it turns into a two-edged sword that cuts into and destroys the system that produced it. . . .

"There is proverb which the Latin race sent ringing down the centuries which reads, *'Omnia Vincit Amor,'* or 'Love conquers all things.' Love and labor in alliance, working together, have transforming, redeeming and emancipating power. Under their benign sway the world can be made better and brighter.

"Isaiah saw in prophetic vision a time when nations should war no more—when swords should be transformed into plowshares, and spears into pruning hooks. The fulfillment of the prophecy only awaits an era when Love and Labor, in holy alliance, shall solve the economic problem. . . .

"The army of begging Lazaruses, with the dogs licking their sores at the gates of palaces where the rich are clothed in purple and fine linen, with their tables groaning beneath the luxuries of all climes, make the palaces on the highland where fashion holds sway and music lends its charms, a picture in the landscape which, in illustrating disparity, brings into bolder relief the hut and the hovel in the hollow where want, gaunt and haggard, sits at the door and where light and plenty, cheerfulness and hope are forever exiled by the despotic decree of conditions as cruel as when the Czar of Russia ordered to his penal mines in Siberia the hapless subjects who dared whisper the sacred word of liberty—as cruel as when this boasted land of freedom commands that a far away, innocent people shall be shot down in jungle and lagoon, in their bamboo huts, because they dream of freedom and independence."

Sixty years ago—in 1859—John Brown, of Kansas, was hung by the neck at Charlestown, Virginia, that portion of the state which is now West Virginia, because he carried the black man's burden in his heart. He was executed for having attempted to free the chattel slaves from bondage by his raid on Harper's Ferry, but the slaves either did not wish to be free, or else were entirely ignorant of the measure of freedom that would have been theirs had John Brown and the other abolitionists of that period accomplished their purpose, which was ultimately tried and vindicated a few years later in the War of the Rebellion. Of course, it was merely a coincident that Eugene Victor Debs was originally sentenced to serve his term of ten years in prison in West Virginia, the same state in which Brown paid the full pound of flesh for his devotion to a principle. In prison, in the year 1919, in the moment of the most widespread propaganda and preachments for world-wide liberty and democracy, I spoke with Debs

about John Brown, whose martyred memory is dear to him, and which he passionately reveres.

"Many years ago," Debs said, "I went over every foot of ground trod by John Brown and his men—at Harper's Ferry, across the bridge, and the nine-mile stretch to Charlestown. I went through the jail where Brown lay for days preceding his execution.

"I have the candle," he went on, "which Brown used to light up his cell at Charlestown. But John Brown did not need the light of a candle to light up his cell; the white light of his soul was quite sufficient." Debs also treasures a button from Brown's coat which, he says, has been properly authenticated.

In some respects Debs and Brown are similiar in their principles, and the impassioned manner in which both sought to bring them into effect. The dissimilarity of the two men appears, however, in their methods of procedure, their tactics. It has been said that were Brown alive in our time he would have enlisted his energies in the cause of the Industrial Workers of the World—his mind seeming to have taken the turn of "direct action," as proved by his fearless, yet foolhardy raid upon Harper's Ferry with a beggardly handful of followers pitted against the entire South. On the other hand, Debs is no less zealous, nor less fearless, but his appeal has been made not to unthinking mobs, who could be swayed by their emotions, but to the intelligent and thinking working class; his appeal is made to their reason, not to their emotions, despite the fact that Debs himself is highly emotional, and his speeches do assume the character and tone of an agitator, a crusader.

That both men believed their cause was just and pursued it unflinchingly in the face of extreme adversity is further attested by passages from their speeches to the court before sentence was pronounced upon them. Brown said:

"In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted—the design on my part to free the slaves. I certainly intended to have made a clean thing of that matter, as I did last winter, when I went into Missouri and took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country and, finally, left them in Canada. I designed to have done the same thing again, on a larger scale. That was all I intended."

Debs said:

"Yes, I was opposed to war. I would have been opposed to war if I stood alone. I am perfectly willing, on that count, to be branded as a disloyalist, and if it is a crime under the American laws, punishable by imprisonment, for being opposed to human bloodshed, I am perfectly willing to be clothed in the stripes of a felon and to end my days in a prison cell."

While John Brown was riding to his execution in a large furniture wagon drawn by two white horses, and which also contained his coffin, he remarked:

"What a beautiful country this is. I have never been down this way before."

On his ride in a trolley car down the Ohio Valley from Cleveland to Moundsville, Debs said:

"What a beautiful day it is. I have been all over this part of the country and have talked to thousands of these miners."

At one point in the John Brown talk Debs remarked that while Brown was lying in his cell at Charlestown an old Negro slave pleaded on his bended knees to his master for the privilege of taking an ax and going into Brown's cell and braining him.

"That was his way of attesting his loyalty to his master who held him in bondage, body and soul. That was his way of proving his slavishness and abject servility.

"There are to-day workmen with minds that run in

the same groove as their master's, and doubtless, some of them would attest their slavishness and devotion to their industrial masters by doing the same thing to other John Browns."

Once during his trip to Moundsville, Debs remarked: "Were I to engage in satire, I would say how ironical it seems that I, who have been forty years in the service of organized labor am now being taken to prison by union men." Just before this remark was passed a conductor had come through the car to collect fares and on the lapel of his coat was his union button.

Not only was Debs taken to prison without any organized opposition from the American labor movement, but the American Federation of Labor, at its 1919 convention at Atlantic City, did nothing to obtain his release; neither did it ask for the release by amnesty of any political and industrial prisoners convicted and sentenced under a war-time statute—the Espionage Law. Despite this gross neglect of Debs, there were a number of bodies within that organization in several parts of the country who espoused his cause and petitioned for his release.

The Chicago Federation of Labor, embracing a quarter of a million organized workers, for instance, adopted the following resolution after the major body of the American Federation of Labor had adjourned:

"Whereas, Eugene V. Debs has devoted the larger part of his life to the working class in its struggle for better conditions; and

"Whereas, he was convicted and sentenced to ten years imprisonment as a result of war-time passion, the war now being ended, the Chicago Federation of Labor insisting upon restoring pre-war liberties, urge the immediate release of Eugene V. Debs and urge that resolutions to this effect be adopted by all labor bodies and upon adoption that a copy be sent to the President of the United States, the Senators of the state where

adopted and the congressmen of the district wherein the resolution is adopted."

It cannot be said that there has existed friendliness between Debs and the executive and administrative officials of the American Federation of Labor. On the contrary, he has attacked them unsparingly in the Socialist press, for what he has construed as being their reactionary tendencies not only in the affairs of their own organization, but in their policies and attitude toward matters of public import. In a word, Debs is revolutionary, while the American Federation of Labor, officially, he claims, has not yet reached even the rebel stage.

Debs's affections as a labor leader are more attached to the Industrial Workers of the World, in the creation of which organization he played no little part.

When our conversation had departed from the subject of John Brown, Debs inquired about the welfare and whereabouts of several persons with whom his name and his affections have been connected for many years. Especially mentioned among these was Horace Traubel, who had been extremely ill, and who died September 8th, 1919.

Follows one of Debs's letters written in prison to Traubel:

Moundsville, W. Va., April 25, 1919.

MY BELOVED HORACE:

Your beautiful messages, with you and your wonderful love in each word, are with me and my heart sings in love and gratitude. You have been with me every hour and every moment since I've been here, and I've pressed you so close to my heart that I've forgotten all about prison walls.

Dear Dave Karsner, who so loves us both and who is equally dear to me, told me all about you. I'm so sorry you're not well. You simply must come back to yourself and to me for we need you now, dear brother, as never

before. I wish you knew how immortally great you are, what an incomparable contribution you have made to humanity, and how very necessary you are *now* to the world.

I have a truly wonderful letter from our dear Mildred Bain—a prose-poem—of love and devotion in all its beauty and perfection. What a rare courageous, lofty soul she is, and how rich you are in her noble appreciation, and how indebted to you I am for sharing in her precious confidence and regard. I remember the happy hour we had with her splendid husband, Frank, and some good day I hope to have the joy of meeting these loving souls.

My writing is limited under the prison rules. You understand that my messages go to you daily without the written page and that my heart is and always will be with you.

I am well cared for here in every way, so give yourself no concern about me. I have everything I need and a perfectly humane Warden who is as good to me as the rules will allow—I'm here for a purpose and I know how to be patient. The lessons I am learning here are of inestimable value to me and I am not sorry that my lot is cast for a time among "Les Misérables."

With my heart's enduring love to you and dear Mrs. Traubel and Gertrude and her husband, I am

Yours until the stars go out,

GENE.

As we shook hands in parting, I realized that Debs was not conscious of me as an individual; and as he looked into my eyes I knew that his vision, as always, vaulted all walls and mountains, and bridged all rivers and horizons; he was looking, as always, far beyond the immediate person, and was clasping the hand of the miner, the trench digger, the locomotive fireman, the carpenter, the bricklayer, the mason, the mechanic—the artisan everywhere; his love was smiling upon the half-

starved and stunted shop worker, the little children bent in arduous toil at the looms in the southland; the breaker boys in the mines, the teachers, the organizers, and the Jimmie and Jane Higginses—he was bestowing his benediction upon the people who toil everywhere. Myself, each person he spoke to, was only the representative of all men and women to him.

CHAPTER V

TRANSFERRED TO ATLANTA

IT was a day of mourning among the prisoners at Moundsville when Debs was transferred to Atlanta. On the morning of June 13, 1919, after Debs had had his breakfast, Warden Terrell came to his room in the prison hospital and told him that he was to pack his things at once and take the trip to Atlanta prison. He was given one hour to get ready. The warden stated afterward that when he first told Debs the latter had appeared startled, and then slightly depressed, but he had made no scene nor visible sign of his feelings, and quietly replied that he would "be ready in a jiffy." The blue serge suit that he had worn to prison was brought to him, and in a few minutes he was dressed. He began at once to pack his large leather suit-case. It was soon apparent to Debs that he could not take with him to Atlanta all of his prison property. There had accumulated many gifts, enough to fill two ample packing boxes, since he had been at Moundsville, so "Old Nigger Bill," Debs's side-partner and self-appointed valet, was instantly mustered into active service by Debs to help him pack.

When "Old Nigger Bill" was called into the room and his eyes fell upon Debs clothed in street attire they danced to the tune of the song that was in his heart for he thought that Debs had been pardoned. But when he was made to understand the full import of this sudden change he could not be comforted.

"What am dey doin' dis foh, Mistah Debs?" he inquired with husky voice; "ain't we all happy heah to-

gethu? Ain't we gettin' along all right?'' Debs took the two fat cheeks of the old Negro ''lifer'' between his palms and patted them gently, saying as he did so, ''It is all right, Old Bill, everything will come out all right; we'll not forget each other, will we?'' The two men set to work at packing.

''Old Bill'' started to weep softly. Every little while he would sing with violent emphasis a verse from some Methodist hymn, in vain and futile attempt to smother his sobs.

''Now stop that crying, Bill, and wrap up this bundle for me,'' Debs would command in kindly tones. ''One would suppose that you were losing your wife, the way you are carrying on, you old rascal.''

''Old Bill'' dropped on the floor the bundle he was tieing and looked straight into Debs's eyes.

''I'm losin' the best friend I evah had, Mistah Debs,'' sobbed the darky, breaking afresh into a flood of tears. ''It wouldn't be so bad if you was goin' home, but to help you to go to another prison—it's too much, Mistah Debs, it's too much.'' Finally the packing was accomplished. Debs addressed each parcel, indicating where it should be sent. This was done at the suggestion of the warden who assured Debs that all of his property would be well cared for, even that which he might chose to leave behind for some future time.

Debs then went the rounds of the hospital, bidding each man good-by and extending his hand to all alike. Some of the prisoners were abed, while others were in wheel chairs on the porch. To each man Debs gave cigars, fruit and candy which had been sent to him by his friends. Tears ran in rivulets down the hollow cheeks of three tubercular patients over whom Debs had watched with tender care. There was unutterable sadness and misery among these men. They were not Socialists. They did not comprehend the social ideals to which Debs adhered. They had come to know him only

as a man—a loving, gentle, thoughtful, tender companion who understood them; one who did not pity them, but who championed them. They understood this only from the look in his eyes, and from the smile that wreathed his wrinkled face when he was near them. And now he had bid them good-by.

One of them called after him:

"If ever you run again for President, Mr. Debs, and I'm out of here, put me down for one vote."

"And if ever you are in sorrow or trouble," replied Debs, "put me down as one friend."

When Debs finally left the prison "Old Nigger Bill" was sitting on the stone steps of the hospital, a broom between his knees, his kinky head lying heavily in his folded arms. He had cried all he could. The tears would not come any more. But Time would, and with it would come balm for his poor, distracted soul.

It is doubtful if the movements of a President of the United States have ever been guarded with more care and caution in critical moments than were those of Debs from the time he left Moundsville until he reached Atlanta. He motored to Wheeling, a ten-mile run, with Warden Terrell, the latter's son, just home from college, and a prison guard. At the Baltimore and Ohio railroad station the party was joined by United States Marshal Ned Smith, of Fairmont, West Virginia, and Deputy Joyce of Parkersburg. Debs chatted pleasantly with the warden and his son. When Debs entrained there were more than one hundred persons in the train shed, and not a single person, aside from the members of his party, knew that he was there.

Fearful lest some hitch might occur at the last moment to balk their plans to spirit Debs away into the south, the United States Marshal had instructed the managers of the Western Union and the Postal Telegraph companies in Wheeling to accept no newspaper "copy" from any reporter dealing with the Debs case. This

censorship of the nation's wires concerning Debs was kept for twenty-four hours, being lifted at seven o'clock the next morning, June 14, when Debs was then but a few hours away from Atlanta Prison.

Debs left Wheeling on the 10:40 train for Cincinnati, where he changed for the Louisville and Nashville railroad to Atlanta. He and his party arrived in the Southern city early Saturday afternoon. The entire trip was made in a private compartment on both railroads. Debs told me later when I visited him at Atlanta that both his guards had been genial and courteous to him and tried to make the trip as comfortable as possible, but Debs spoke of the incident as "kidnaping." At Cincinnati he gave the following statement to the press:

"The first I knew I was to be transferred was this morning when I was told to get ready. It is all the same to me. I would have made no legal effort to prevent my transfer had I known of the plans. I care nothing about technicalities. During my trial I cautioned my lawyers to make no technical exceptions, and I admitted the truth when it was presented by the government.

"In Moundsville I was treated with fairness and kindness and so were the other prisoners as far as I could observe. I was there two months and Warden Terrell showed himself to be a good administrator and at the same time a humane and considerate man."

Solicitous about Debs's welfare up to the last, Warden Terrell wrote a personal letter to Warden Fred G. Zerbst of Atlanta Federal Prison, which Marshal Smith took with him, explaining the manner and method of his treatment of Debs at Moundsville and expressing the hope that Warden Zerbst would himself be able to treat Debs in the same kindly manner.

"I am just as much concerned about Debs as a man as any of his followers," Terrell said to me when I vis-

ited him a few days after Debs had left his prison. "I told him that if any time I could serve him he should call upon me, and I mean that from the bottom of my heart." Of course there was not the slightest political affinity between Debs and his former keeper. Terrell is a Democrat and a member of his party in West Virginia. He is the political appointee of a Democratic governor. Terrell does not believe in Debs's social ideas. He regards them as visionary and impractical, but as a man Debs rises to heroic figure in the warden's esteem. This was brought about during the two months that Debs was Terrell's ward. The men had never met before, although Terrell did know, as every one else does, of Debs by his reputation and public career.

"I never in my life met a kinder man," were Terrell's words. "He is forever thinking of others, trying to serve them, and never thinking of himself."

For six weeks after Debs was shifted to Atlanta the reasons for his transfer were as mysterious as the secrecy which had shrouded his actual movement to the Southern prison. Cryptic and laconic statements made by several officials of the Department of Justice at Washington in answer to inquiries of his friends and attorneys only served to heighten the suspicion in the minds of Debs's thousands of followers throughout the land that he had been ordered transferred to another prison because of the kindnesses and considerations given to him by his keeper at Moundsville. The officials at Washington had the facts and could have allayed the mental unrest of Socialists and liberals interested in Debs and his welfare by giving them to the public. They chose not so to do.

Joseph W. Sharts, an attorney at law, of Dayton, Ohio, who was associated in the defense of Debs at his trial in Cleveland, inquired of the Department of Justice the reasons of Debs's removal. In reply he received the following:

SIR:

The Department of Justice has your letter of the 18th instant, in which you ask to be informed as to the grounds upon which Federal Prisoner, Eugene V. Debs, was transferred from West Virginia penitentiary to the Atlanta Federal prison.

Debs was ordered transferred upon a demand made by the State Board of Control for his removal.

Respectfully, for the Attorney General,
CLAUDE R. PORTER,
Assistant Attorney General.

June 21, 1919.

On June 26, Mr. Sharts dispatched a second letter to the Department of Justice, inquiring upon what legal grounds Attorney General Palmer had removed Debs. Sharts quoted the law to the Attorney General upon which a federal prisoner may be removed. This statute, it appears, gives three grounds upon which such removal can be made: First, the health of the prisoner, at his request; second, brutal treatment at the first place, at his request for removal; third, the insecurity of the place of confinement.

Under date of July 1, 1919, Sharts received the following reply:

SIR:

In reply to your letter of the 26th ultimo, you are informed that the West Virginia State Board of Control demanded the removal of Federal Prisoner Eugene V. Debs from the West Virginia Penitentiary, and the transfer thereupon was directed by the Attorney General in accordance with the power vested in him by law to transfer federal prisoners under certain conditions.

Respectfully, for the Attorney General,
WILLIAM L. FINSON,
Assistant Attorney General.

When the nation-wide interest in Debs's removal, coupled with the fact that his treatment at Atlanta

was on the same dead level with that accorded the commonest prisoner, which is not conducive to perfect health nor happy spirits, was brought to the attention of John J. Cornwell, Governor of West Virginia, through a newspaper article in a Chicago Socialist paper, Governor Cornwell at once sent to me personally copies of the official correspondence between the West Virginia State Board of Control and F. H. Duehay, Superintendent of Prisons, Department of Justice, Washington, D. C.

The State Board of Control set forth in their letter, dated June 2, 1919, the fact that it had entered into an agreement with the Federal Government to receive and care for federal prisoners at the Moundsville Penitentiary for the sum of forty cents per day. Since that agreement was made, the Board complained, few federal prisoners had been received at Moundsville, and there was a likelihood that they would not receive any more. The Board's letter further stated:

"We have Eugene V. Debs . . . confined in the West Virginia Penitentiary, and since his admittance we have had to put on extra guard force, which has increased our expenses $500.00 per month, but we felt it necessary to do this for his safety as well as that of the other prisoners. If we cannot get some federal prisoners to help bear this extra expense in connection with his care we shall have to ask to have him cared for in some other institution."

The Board's letter concluded with the request:

"Will you kindly let us know if you cannot arrange to let us have 100 or 150 prisoners."

In response to this letter Mr. Duehay, under date of June 5, 1919, replied that the government had found it necessary to use several state penitentiaries for the care of regular federal prisoners, as well as a number of federal prisoners charged with violation of the Espionage Law, since the two federal prisons, Atlanta and

Leavenworth, had become overcrowded during the war with a large number of military prisoners. Since the signing of the armistice, however, many of the military prisoners had been released, and this had made room for regular federal prisoners.

Then Mr. Duehay stated in his letter:

"In accordance with your request, I will have orders prepared immediately for the transfer of Federal Prisoner Eugene V. Debs from the Moundsville institution."

The orders were prepared and Debs, as we have seen, was removed to Atlanta Prison on June 13.

There does not appear to be anything mysterious, on the face of these two documents at least, in the removal of Debs. The matter might easily have been cleared up by giving this official information to the public, straightly and directly. On the other hand, the officials in Mr. Palmer's department succeeded in arousing bitterness, if not hatred in some quarters, against an important arm of the government which, many persons imagined, had been raised to strike Debs down; to shorten his life by forcing him to spend fourteen hours of every day in a cell with five other prisoners; to deny him any and all considerations as a political prisoner, which he is in fact; and to cut him off from the world and its interests by withholding from him all newspapers, magazines and books—leaving him absolutely alone.

Warden Terrell did not know that Debs was to be removed until a few hours before it happened. He was as surprised as any, he told me, when Marshal Smith demanded that he surrender Debs. The warden was not only shocked but regretful that Debs was going from him. Terrell stated that when Debs first came to Moundsville he did order one extra arc light installed at the corner of the hospital building near the room which Debs occupied. If I remember correctly, the warden also stated that he did order a patrol of two

extra guards in the vicinity of the hospital. He explained that he took this extra precaution not on Debs's account, but because he did not know the character of some of Debs's friends who called to see him, and rather than bar them all out he had installed the extra guards. These he discontinued, however, after the first week or two that Debs was there, explaining later that he felt certain that Debs would encourage the visit of none whom he suspected as being untrustworthy.

If we assume the correctness of Warden Terrell's version of the expense entailed by his keeping Debs, it would appear that the State Board of Control might have overstated the total liability incurred by his presence there in order to convince the government of the necessity of their receiving more federal prisoners at the rate of forty cents per day per man, and thus assure the self-sustaining qualities of Moundsville Prison.

On the other hand, the whole incident might easily have arisen through misunderstanding; but whatever the motives or the lack of them, Debs was unquestionably the victim.

CHAPTER VI

EARLY DAYS AND BACKGROUNDS

EUGENE VICTOR DEBS was born November 5, 1855, in Terre Haute, Indiana. He was one of ten children of Jean Daniel Debs and Marguerite Bettrich Debs, both natives of Alsace. The father was born at Colmar, Alsace, France, December 4, 1820. He left Colmar on a sailing ship bound for America on November 10, 1848, and arrived at New York City January 20, 1849. Marguerite Marie Bettrich followed Mr. Debs to America shortly afterward, leaving Colmar on August 7, 1849, and arriving at New York September 11, 1849. They were married in New York City two days later. The early movements of the parents are accounted for as follows: Left New York for Cincinnati, Ohio, September 30, 1850; left Cincinnati for Terre Haute, May 20, 1851; left Terre Haute March 24, 1854, returning to New York and locating in Williamsburg, Long Island, now Brooklyn; left Brooklyn September 25 of the same year, returning to Terre Haute where they permanently located. Of the ten children, six lived to adult age, four sisters, and one brother, Theodore. They made a happy family group. Both parents were passionately fond of their native country, France, the father having many stories to tell the children, gathered about their humble fireside, of France's shadows and sunshine. Jean Daniel Debs possessed a well equipped library of French history, as well as the works of some of the most noted French writers, including Victor Hugo, who was one of their favorites. Very early in his life, Eugene became acquainted with the works of

Hugo, and the master's characterization of Jean Val Jean in "Les Misérables" made an indelible impression upon his mind.

Despite the happy and loving family in which Eugene was fortunate to have been born, his childhood was somewhat shadowed by the gathering clouds of war which were soon to deluge the nation with the blood of its sons and fathers in fratricidal strife over the issue of chattel slavery. He saw Indiana's manhood march away to the battlefields, strong and sure in the justice of their cause, and he saw them return to their homes and huts, maimed, diseased and afflicted with all the nameless ailments to which a warrior is heir. He heard the shrill sounds of strife and pain, the tramp, tramp, tramp of marching men going to victory and to death, and he saw some of them return beaten and sick in soul and body. One could not say to what extent these scenes and sounds of conflict influenced Eugene Debs to take his stand against war, but it is notable that not once in his long and varied career as a labor leader has he ever counseled violence as a means to the settlement of any dispute. On the other hand, he has never compromised with a principle that he held to be right and just, but he has said again and again that if those principles were right and were just they would be accepted through the enlightened reason of mankind. To force them upon people not ready or willing to accept them would be to defeat the principle itself. That has been his stand on every public question, and not once has he deviated from it.

Eugene was devoted to his father and mother, as were all the children who affectionately called them "Dandy" and "Daisy." There were no jealousies or cross currents of petty feelings in the family circle. Love, one for another, was not only felt, but expressed in acts of service and of sacrifice. Mrs. Debs died April

29, 1906, and the elder Debs followed her soon afterwards—November 27, 1906.

On the occasion of the golden wedding anniversary of his parents at Terre Haute, September 13, 1899, Eugene Debs, surrounded by his brothers and sisters, and their husbands, wives and children paid a tribute to his mother and father in word pictures that mark him forever a poet and artist, a man with a woman's heart, a son with a grateful soul. This was the picture he painted:

"The celebration of a Golden Wedding is a rare occurrence in the history of families; only to the favored few is such a blessing vouchsafed. It is an occasion when nuptial vows pledged at Hymen's altar take on inexpressible sacredness. A far distant day is recalled when 'two souls with but a single thought' and two loving hearts that 'beat as one' courageously and confidently entered upon the voyage of matrimony.

". . . In fancy's eye we see their beautiful and vine-clad France; we see them in the bloom and strength of youth, standing at the altar and pledging to each other unchanging fidelity in storm and shine, ready to meet the future as the days unfolded their duties, their opportunities, their tasks and trials, sustained by a faith and hope which cheered them on their pilgrimage through all their married days.

". . . Love has been their guiding star; no cloud ever obscured it; and the darker the day of adversity the brighter shone their love which bathed their home in its mellow, cheering light.

"In celebrating this Golden Wedding Anniversary, all the halcyon days of our lives are included and there come to us messages from the past, under the sea and over the land, burdened with the aroma of violets and roses, caught from the flower gardens of memory, planted in youth and blooming in perennial beauty of old age.

"The serenity, the rare loveliness of this scene create emotions which no words, however fitly chosen, can express. I can but say in the name of my sisters and my brothers and those younger in the family bonds of allegiance to our father—the patriarch of these sons and daughters—that we tender him our warmest congratulations upon this rare occasion. When we greet him our hearts are in our hands; when we kiss his time-furrowed cheeks our hearts are on our lips, and when we congratulate him upon this, his golden wedding anniversary, our hearts are in our words.

". . . There are two words in our language forever sacred to memory—Mother and Home! Home, the heaven upon earth, and mother its presiding angel. To us, children, here to-day, mother and home have realized all the longing, yearning aspirations of our souls, and now, in this blissful presence, we quaff to our mother cups full and overflowing with the divine nectar of our love. I need not attempt to recite her deeds of devotion. There is not a page of our memory, not a tablet of our hearts, that is not adorned and beautified by acts of her loving care, in which her heart and her hands, her eyes and her soul, in holy alliance, ministered to our happiness. There was never a time when there was not a song in her heart, sweeter than Æolian melody, wooing her children from folly to the blessedness, security, peace and contentment of home. Her children were her jewels in home's shining circle, and if by the fiat of death a gem dropped away, the affectionate care it had received added soulful charm to her lullaby songs when at night she dismissed us and sent us to dreamland repose.

". . .We do not ask what the future has in store, we only know that we have the bride and groom in our presence, and that it is an inexpressible joy to pledge them anew our unfaltering devotion and our eternal love."

Eugene was always a "home boy," and in his later

life no man enjoyed more than he his family circle. He never sought diversion in any social club or lodge, always preferring to spend his evenings quietly at home with his parents while they lived, and with his wife and intimates in his later years. Debs himself once mentioned this attachment. He said:

"My father and I were boon companions, and I tell you, I miss it when I cannot have my Sunday evening talks with him. When I am out traveling, every day seems alike, but when Sunday evening comes, I invariably feel something tugging at my heartstrings."

In many ways he has paid tribute to his mother. Once he remarked:

"The dominant influence in my life has been my mother. Whatever of good there is in me I owe to her. Do you know, I care absolutely nothing for the praise or condemnation of the world so long as my wife and mother think I am in the right."

After the death of his mother, Debs wrote a poem to her memory. It was one of the very few times, if not the only one, when he was moved to express himself in verse. The poem, entitled "Where Daisy Sleeps," which he wrote in May, 1906, follows:

The grass grows green
Where Daisy sleeps;
The Mulberry tree its vigil keeps
Where Daisy sleeps.

The winds blow soft
Where Daisy sleeps;
The modest, blue-eyed violet peeps
Where Daisy sleeps.

The birds sing sweet
Where Daisy sleeps;
The mournful willow bends and
weeps
Where Daisy sleeps.

The sun shines bright
Where Daisy sleeps;
Each changing season sows and
reaps
Where Daisy sleeps.

The flowers bloom fair
Where Daisy sleeps;
The evening shadow softly creeps
Where Daisy sleeps.

Our hearts beat true
Where Daisy sleeps;
And love its watch forever
keeps
Where Daisy sleeps.

Eugene's parents were very poor. The elder Debs was always scrupulously honorable in all his dealings. Eugene had been born in a frame dwelling at No. 447 North Fourth street, Terre Haute. There were many children and it was a problem to support them; so Eugene's school years were cut short with his graduation from the Old Seminary School, in Terre Haute. Upon the site of that latter-day institution now stands the imposing structure of the Indiana State Normal School. In May, 1870, at the age of fourteen, Eugene began to work in the shops, and later as locomotive fireman for the Terre Haute and Indianapolis Railway Company, now a part of the Pennsylvania Railroad. When Eugene took his lantern and left his home every night for the railroad yards his mother could not conceal her fears for the safety of the lad who must act as fireman on that unballasted and prairie railroad. Eugene's pay envelope, which he turned over to his mother unopened, was decidedly slim. At first he received one dollar a day, and later, as fireman, was paid on a mileage basis. It was the tears and fears of his mother that caused him to abandon his railroad employment in October, 1874, for a clerkship offered him

by Herman Hulman, of the firm of Hulman and Cox, grocers, at Terre Haute. Eugene spent five years as a grocery clerk, relinquishing this employment in September, 1879, when he was elected city clerk, an office which he held four years.

Thirty-three years after Debs had left the employment of Hulman and Cox, he was a candidate for President of the United States on the Socialist ticket. His former employers publicly made the following statement, among other testimonials, to the voters of the nation concerning Debs:

"Terre Haute, Ind., July 6, 1912.

"In response to your request for an expression from us of our opinion of Mr. Eugene V. Debs, we wish to say that we have intimately known Mr. Debs for more than forty years; and for five years of this time he was in our employ.

"We consider Mr. Debs unselfish and generous-hearted; a man whose life has been devoted to helpful service to his fellow-men. His chief delight seems to be to serve others.

"In all business transactions between us we have found him to be honorable and upright—a man of strict honesty and integrity, and devoid of the desire to over-reach or take advantage or deal unjustly with others.

"As a public man he has had many opportunities to 'feather his nest,' but he has uniformly refused to do so.

"No man who knows him as we do could ever suspect him of using any public trust for private gain.

"Many years of close acquaintance have revealed his many fine qualities to us, his thorough reliability, his moral uprightness, his deep sincerity, his honesty of purpose and his rich endowment of mind and heart."

We might pause here a moment to go back to the reference in the Hulman letter that Debs has uniformly refused to "feather his nest." It is doubtful if any

man in America has had more opportunities thrust in his way to capitalize his talents than Debs.

He has been blind to all glitter of gold, and deaf to the tinkle of silver. He could have been a very rich man, either in a public or private way, had he deigned to use his silver tongue for the gathering of gold dollars. Instead, he has given all and received little. He has given to the poor even when he did not actually have it to give, but borrowed. Debs is a very poor man in the material sense. All of their lives, he and his devoted brother Theodore, who has managed his four presidential campaigns and his lecture tours, have struggled in a hand-to-mouth way to make ends meet. A number of years ago there was an article published in *The Twentieth Century Magazine,* which has since ceased to exist, entitled "The Personal Side of Eugene V. Debs." In the article appeared a picture of the old shack of a house in which he was born, and also the picture of the modern house which he now maintains as his home, at 451 North Eighth street. This article brought forth a number of editorals from reactionary and anti-labor newspapers, seeking to prove that Debs's preaching was not practiced by him, simply because he was born in a shack and now dared to live in a modern dwelling.

George Bicknell, poet, artist and craftsman, and for some while Chautauqua manager, once was instrumental in having a Chautauqua Bureau offer Debs twenty dates during one month at $150 each. Debs declined the offer, preferring to work in the interests of labor for a trifle more than his traveling expenses.

Upon one of my visits to him in prison, Debs spoke of having received a deed to a house and lot bequeathed to him by a woman in California, whom he did not know by name and had never to his knowledge seen. The deed had been properly affixed by the executors of the dead woman's estate, and the property was ready for his use or disposal. Debs had, just a few days before, sent

the deed to his brother Theodore, at Terre Haute, instructing him to have a lawyer arrange for the transferal of the property to the Socialist Party's branch in the vicinity of the property so his comrades might have use of it as their headquarters and club-rooms. There are incidents of this nature, too numerous to mention, showing how Debs has resolutely set his face against any money-making enterprise, or any scheme that would have enriched himself financially.

Debs's first step into the organized labor movement was taken when, on the evening of February 27, 1875, the local lodge of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen was organized at Terre Haute. He had organized the Brotherhood of Railroad Brakemen, now the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen; he had helped to organize the Switchmen's Mutual Aid Association, the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, the Order of Railway Telegraphers, and other labor unions. It was at the Buffalo Convention, in 1878, that he was first recognized as a labor leader of force and intellect, for the convention made him associate editor of the *Firemen's Magazine.* In July, 1880, he was appointed Grand Secretary and Treasurer, and editor and manager of the *Firemen's Magazine.* He served in the former capacity until February, 1893, and in the latter capacity until September, 1894.

We are told by Stephen Marion Reynolds, in his sketch of Debs's life, that when Debs took charge of the affairs of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen "the order had only sixty lodges and $6,000 debt. In a short time he had been able to add 226 lodges and had wiped out the debt. When he decided to resign he was receiving $4,000 per year. It was at the Cincinnati Convention, 1892, he tendered his resignation, which was unanimously refused; he was unanimously re-elected to all the offices previously held. He again tendered his resignation and insisted upon its accept-

ance, with the frank statement that "organization" should be broad enough to embrace all the workers, and that he desired and proposed to give all his energy to the building up of such an organization. The convention unanimously voted to give him, as a mark of appreciation, $2,000 for a trip to Europe, for rest and enjoyment; this he declined."

The true motives that impelled Debs to relinquish the offices he held with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen are best stated by him in his own words uttered at the time:

"I do this because it pleases me, and there is nothing I would not do, so far as human effort goes, to advance any movement designed to reach and rescue perishing humanity. I have a heart for others and that is why I am in this work. When I see suffering about me, I myself suffer, and so when I put forth my efforts to relieve others, I am simply working for myself. I do not consider that I have made any sacrifice whatever; no man does, unless he violates his conscience."

In June, 1893, Debs, with the assistance of a few others organized the American Railway Union, at Chicago. His salary dropped from $4,000 a year, which he received from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, to $75 a month from the A. R. U. During the last two years of the American Railway Union's existence Debs drew no salary at all. Of his activities in the A. R. U. we shall deal at length in the succeeding chapter, for they mark one of the most important epochs in his career, including, as they do, the great railroad strike of 1894, the Pullman strike in the same period, his trial for murder, treason and conspiracy, and his subsequent imprisonment at Woodstock Jail, Illinois.

Debs furnishes us with an illuminative and vigorous picture of those early days in the labor movement. He had been admitted as a charter member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen when it was organized in

Terre Haute in 1875 by Joshua A. Leach, then Grand Master. Debs was at once chosen secretary.

"'Old Josh Leach,' as he was affectionately called, a typical locomotive fireman of his day," Debs wrote years later, "was the founder of the brotherhood, and I was instantly attracted by his rugged honesty, simple manner and homely speech. How well I remember feeling his large, rough hand on my shoulder, the kindly eye of an elder brother searching my own as he gently said, 'My boy, you're a little young, but I believe you're in earnest and will make your mark in the brotherhood.' Of course, I assured him that I would do my best. What he really thought at the time flattered my boyish vanity not a little when I heard of it. He was attending a meeting at St. Louis some months later, and in the course of his remarks said: 'I put a tow-headed boy in the brotherhood at Terre Haute not long ago, and some day he will be at the head of it.'

"The years have played their pranks with 'Old Josh' and the rest of us. When last we met, not long ago, and I pressed his good right hand, I observed that he was crowned with the frost that never melts.

"My first step was thus taken in organized labor and a new influence fired my ambition and changed the whole current of my career. I was filled with enthusiasm and my blood fairly leaped in my veins. Day and night I worked for the brotherhood. To see its watchfires glow and observe the increase of its sturdy members were the sunshine and shower of my life. To attend the 'meeting' was my supreme joy, and for ten years I was not once absent when the faithful assembled.

". . . With all the fire of youth I entered upon the crusade which seemed to fairly glitter with possibilities. For eighteen hours at a stretch I was glued to my desk, reeling off the answers to my many correspondents. Day and night were one. Sleep was time wasted. Oh, what days! And what quenchless zeal and consuming vanity!

All the firemen everywhere—and they were all the world —were straining:

"'To catch the beat
On my tramping feet.'

"My grip was always packed; and I was darting in all directions. To tramp through a railroad yard in the rain, snow or sleet half the night, or till daybreak, or to be ordered out of the roundhouse for being an 'agitator,' or put off a train, sometimes passenger, more often freight, while attempting to deadhead over the division, were all in the program, and served to whet the appetite to conquer.

"One night in mid-winter at Elmira, N. Y., a conductor on the Erie kindly dropped me off in a snowbank, and as I clambered to the top I ran into the arms of a policeman, who heard my story and on the spot became my friend.

"I rode on the engines over mountain and plain, slept in the cabooses and bunks, and was fed from their pails by the swarthy stokers who still nestle close to my heart, and will until it is cold and still.

". . . And so I was spurred on in the work of organizing, not the firemen merely, but the brakemen, switchmen, telegraphers, shop men, track-hands, all of them in fact, and as I had now become known as an organizer, the calls came from all sides and there are but few trades I have not helped to organize and less still in whose strikes I have not at some time had a hand."

Debs has steadfastly disclaimed being a "labor leader." Several years ago he spoke these words to an audience of laboring people:

"I am not a Labor Leader; I do not want you to follow me or any one else. If you are looking for a Moses to lead you out of this capitalist wilderness, you will stay right where you are. I would not lead you into this promised land if I could, because if I could lead you in, some one else would lead you out. You

must use your heads as well as your hands, and get yourselves out of your present condition; as it is now the capitalists use your heads and your hands."

It has been his pride that he has remained in the ranks of the workers, sharing with them their few joys and their many sorrows and setbacks. A man who steps out of the ranks and becomes a leader, especially in the labor movement, often loses psychological and spiritual connection with those from whose ranks he has emerged, and becomes, in fact, imbued with viewpoints and ideas alien to the progress of labor. The history of the American labor movement, and doubtless the same could be said of the labor movements of other countries, has been replete with instances of "leaders" who have risen to power over the backs of the workers, sometimes by the choice of the latter and sometimes by the cunning of the ambitious ones, only to play into the hands of political, industrial and economic reactionary forces whose system of handling the workers is inimical to their social progress. Since this has been so in almost every movement down the long winding track of the ages it might be said to be "natural"; but whether it is or not, Debs has constantly cautioned the workers, wherever he has spoken to them, against being led by the Moseses who may, or may not have, their own axes to grind on the stones that the workers have dug and polished.

It was in 1878 that Debs made his first political speech, advocating the principles of the Democratic Party. Almost immediately after that oration he was tendered the nomination for a seat in Congress and declined it. His acceptance at that time would have been tantamount to his election. That is what he meant when he said in his speech before Judge Westenhaver in Cleveland in 1918 before sentence was passed upon him: "I could have been in Congress long ago. I have preferred to go to prison. The choice has been deliberately made. I could not have done otherwise. I have no regrets."

Determined to thrust political honors upon him, the Democratic Party of Indiana nominated him for a seat in the State Legislature in 1885 and he was elected. It was his avowed purpose to seek to obtain for the working class in general, and the railroad employees in particular, much-needed legislation for their benefit. In the same year, on June 9th, he was married to Katherine Metzel. Mrs. Debs was born in Pittsburgh, but her parents were of Kentucky. Few women have sacrificed their own interests to their husband's ideals and work as Mrs. Debs has throughout all of these years. Upon all occasions when the labor movement or the Socialist Party have claimed him for national tours or separate engagements she has yielded cheerfully to their demands, always with the feeling that the world had more claim upon him than herself. In this spirit of understanding, sympathy and helpfulness, Debs has had to absent himself many times from his home and family ties for months at a stretch, returning sometimes for a few brief hours or a day, only to take up again a speaking campaign, or the bitterness of a strike.

Mrs. Debs has for many years assisted Eugene with his vast correspondence, keeping his scrap-book up to date, filing his hundreds of books, papers and magazine articles in proper order so that they might be accessible to him at all times either for writing articles or as reference for speeches. Although they have no children, both are passionately fond of youngsters, and sometimes they have kept for long periods the children of their immediate family, sometimes those of their neighbors, and once, about half a dozen years ago, Eugene and Mrs. Debs opened their home to a young girl whose life was almost ruined because of an unhappy experience in Terre Haute. Upon this occasion many newspapers throughout the country hurled their epithets at him for having "darkened his threshold with the shadow of a fallen woman." These were the same journals that,

each Monday morning, print extracts from the sermons of noted preachers for the delectable palates of their readers.

When twenty-three years old, Debs met Wendell Phillips and Robert G. Ingersoll. Two years later, in 1880, he met Susan B. Anthony. From these early meetings with those rebellious, agnostic and pioneer spirits grew friendly attachments which endured throughout the life time of all three. The great oratorical powers of Ingersoll and Phillips moved and inspired Debs as nothing else had done up to that time. To the very end of Colonel Ingersoll's life he kept up a steady correspondence with him upon all vital questions and was aided by Ingersoll's suggestions. In those fallow years Debs was reading and studying, trying as best he could to make up for the lack of a decent education.

He was a live and an aggressive member of the Occidental Literary Club in Terre Haute, of which he was one of the founders. He frequently took the floor in debate with older members, and made speeches under the club's auspices to "outsiders" who might deign to "drop in." He was always attracted to persons who stood out because of their principles from the apathetic multitudes. He delights in recalling snatches of conversation he has had with those lonely vanguards of movements, ideas and philosophies which one day may be accepted by the people. Once he referred to his talk with Wendell Phillips:

" 'Debs, the world will never know with what bitter and relentless persecution the early abolitionists had to contend,' " Debs quoted him as saying. "Wendell Phillips was a perfect aristocrat; a royal man, who instantly challenged respect and admiration. Wendell Phillips was treated as if he had been the worst felon on earth. They went to his house to mob him, and

why? Because he protested against sending a fugitive Negro back into the hell of slavery."

In 1880 he persuaded Susan B. Anthony to come to Terre Haute to speak at a series of meetings on the question of Woman's Suffrage.

"I can never forget the first time I met her," he wrote some years ago. "She impressed me as being a wonderfully strong character, self-reliant, thoroughly in earnest, and utterly indifferent to criticism. There was never a time in my life when I was opposed to the equal suffrage of the sexes. I could never understand why woman was denied any right or opportunity that man enjoyed. Quite early, therefore, I was attracted to the woman suffrage movement."

Debs became determined, with the aid of Mrs. Ida Husted Harper, who afterward became Miss Anthony's biographer, to have the pioneer suffragist speak at Terre Haute. He, with a few friends, met Miss Anthony at the railroad station, and walked with her to a hotel.

"I can still see the aversion so unfeelingly expressed for this magnificent woman. Even my friends were disgusted with me for piloting such 'an undesirable citizen' into the community. As we walked along the street I was painfully aware that Miss Anthony was an object of derision and contempt, and in my heart I resented it and later I had often to defend my position, which, of course, I was ready to do."

The meeting of Miss Anthony and her co-workers in Terre Haute were poorly attended, and all but barren of results. Debs says that people would not come to her meetings in those days even to satisfy their curiosity, "and it would not have required any great amount of egging-on to have excited the people to drive her from the community."

Debs did not see Miss Anthony again for a number of years, meeting her for the last time at Rochester, a short while before her death.

"Her life work was done and her sun was setting," he wrote. "How beautiful she seemed in the quiet serenity of her sunset! Twenty-five years before she drank to its dregs the bitter cup of persecution, but now she stood upon the heights, a sad smiling light in her sweet face, amidst the acclaims of her neighbors and the plaudits of the world."

Debs himself confesses that his powers of speech and writing were not due to education or to training, for he had but little of either.

While a mere boy, firing a switch engine at night, he managed to attend a school half a day each day, sleeping the mornings and attending school afternoons. From his meager earnings he bought an encyclopedia on the installment plan, one volume each month, and began to read and study history and literature and to devote himself to grammar and composition. The revolutionary history of the United States and France stirred him deeply and their heroes and martyrs became his idols. Thomas Paine, he says, towered above them all, and a thousand times since he has found strength and inspiration in the words of Paine, "These are the times that try men's souls."

Of the intensiveness of his early studies he says that from the time he began to read with a serious mind, feeling keenly his lack of knowledge, he observed the structure and studied the composition of every paragraph and every sentence, and when one appeared striking to him, because of its perfection of style or phrasing, he would read it a second time or perhaps commit it to memory. In all of his reading, and it has been voluminous and varied, Debs has chosen such subjects and topics as would assist him to increase his own powers of expression, both oral and written, and at the same time broaden and enlighten him. He has especially

stored away in his mind the histories of all the sufferings of all races.

The schools he attended were primitive, and when he left them at the age of fourteen years he could scarcely write a grammatical sentence. He supplemented his elemental education in the ways indicated above, specializing, however, in the orations of men who spoke in advance of their time.

Patrick Henry's revolutionary speech claimed his earliest attention, and Robert Emmet's immortal oration was a great favorite and moved him deeply. Drake's "American Flag" stirred his blood, as did also Schiller's "Burgschaft." He would often shut himself up in a room and recite the speeches of these heroes, always making sure that no one was listening. Everything that was revolutionary, that spoke for the toilers and gave voice to their unexpressed yearnings appealed to his imaginative mind and tender heart. He had a passion for Patrick Henry and his burning defiance of King George inspired the first speech that Debs ever attempted to deliver in public.

This was before the Occidental Literary Club in Terre Haute. Debs loves to tell now of how he shuddered upon facing the crowded little room, and how the cold sweat stood in beads upon his brow when he realized the awful plight he had invited upon himself and the utter hopelessness of escape.

"The spectacle I made of myself that evening will never be effaced from my memory, and the sympathetic assurances of my friends at the close of the exhibition did not relieve the keen sense of humiliation and shame I felt for the disgrace I had brought upon myself and my patron saint. The speech could not possibly have been worse and my mortification was complete. In my heart I hoped most earnestly that my hero's spiritual ears were not attuned to the affairs of this earth, at least that evening.

Upon the invitation of the Department of Education of the University of Wisconsin, under whose direction there was being conducted an investigation of the subject of "Distinguished Contemporary Orators and Lecturers," Debs contributed a paper entitled, "The Secret of Efficient Expression."

Among other things he wrote:

"The secret of efficient expression in oratory—if secret it can be properly called—is in having something efficient to express and being so filled with it that it expresses itself. The choice of words is not important since efficient expression, the result of efficient thinking, chooses its own words, molds and fashions its own sentences, and creates a diction suited to its own purposes.

". . . No man ever made a great speech on a mean subject. Slavery never inspired an immortal thought or utterance. Selfishness is dead to every art. The love of truth and the passion to serve it light every torch of real eloquence. Had Ingersoll and Phillips devoted their lives to the practice of law for pay the divine fire within them would have burned to ashes and they would have died in mediocrity.

". . . The highest there is in oratory is the highest there is in truth, in honesty, in morality. All the virtues combine in expressing themselves in beautiful words, poetic phrases, glowing periods, and moving eloquence.

"The loftiest peaks rise from the lowest depths and their shining summits glorify their hidden foundations. The highest eloquence springs from the lowliest sources and pleads trumpet-tongued for the children of the abyss."

We could not conclude this phase of the life of Debs, his early struggles and the backgrounds that bring his portrait out in relief, without a word about his brother, Theodore Debs. In fact, any record of Eugene's life that omits Theodore is, in the final estimate, woefully incomplete.

Some years ago, Eugene was tendered a notable reception by his friends and followers in Boston. After every speaker had toasted him, Horace Traubel arose and said that no one could really claim knowing Debs without knowing his brother Theodore and his wife. Debs instantly admitted the truth of this statement, and thanked the speaker for bringing it to the attention of the assemblage. Theodore has been a tireless worker, for a score of years and more, by Eugene's side. He has had no public recognition or honors, and has never sought any. Only those who have come very close to Eugene know Theodore. Yet, behind almost every public career one finds the sacrificial hand and devoted heart. He has managed nearly every one of Eugene's national lecture tours; he has cared for him after the strain and stress of public speaking, actually putting him to bed and giving him quiet and comfort in preparation for the next meeting.

For a number of years Theodore Debs has found it necessary to maintain an office in Terre Haute for handling Eugene's enormous mail. When Debs is absent, Theodore answers all correspondents, and they are many. There has always existed a most complete communion and camaraderie between these two men, and to consider one without the other would be much like appraising the value of steam without considering the engine from which it issued.

CHAPTER VII

LABOR UNIONIST AND WOODSTOCK

THE year 1893 was one of desolation and hopelessness for the wage earners of America. Due to the financial panic of that year, which followed in the train of bond issues floated by the government in an effort to make up the deficit due to declining federal revenues, the workers were thrown out of employment by tens of thousands when factories closed and bankruptcies were the order of the day. Those workers who had managed to keep their employment were receiving wages far blow a decent living standard. Industrial unrest and chaos was widespread. From distant and scattered points bands of unemployed workers were marching across the country to join the main contingent led by "General" Jacob Coxey headed for the national capital to seek redress for their grievances. "General" Coxey was arrested at Washington. The railroad workers of the country, and those employed by the Pullman Palace Car Company at South Chicago, Illinois, were affected by wage reductions; this created a sullen temper among the toilers, not calculated to produce confidence in or make for the stability of any government.

The American Railway Union had been organized at Chicago in June, 1893, with Debs at the head of the organization. This was one of the very first attempts in this country at industrial unionism, or "One Big Union," a form of organization which has come to be looked upon by a large number of workers in this and other countries as a most efficacious method of gaining

quick results in the furtherance of their industrial and economic programs. To have thought of, much less fathered, such a program in those days was tantamount to stamping one's self an anarchist and inviting derision from the conservative press and public.

On April 13, 1894, the strike was called on the Great Northern Railroad, and lasted eighteen days. On April 16, members of the American Railway Union received a circular letter containing the scale of wages paid on the Great Northern lines, and showed that train dispatchers were receiving $80 per month; freight conductors, $78; freight brakemen, $42 to $53; engineers, in some instances, $2.80 per day; inspectors, $35 per month; operators, $37.50 to $41.50; roundhousmen, $1 per day; trackmen and truckmen, $1 per day. Paralleled with this scale of wages it was shown that in many railroad centers, Butte, Montana, for instance, the cheapest board was $26 per month. The officials of the Great Northern soon learned of the circular sent to its employees, and at once sent out a cipher dispatch to its superintendents and managers to remove all agitators and those known to be in sympathy with the A. R. U. Debs and his co-officials learned of this step taken by the railroad to break down the morale of the men, and the strike was speedily called. The railroad was given no time to prepare a counter offensive. From the Butte headquarters of the A. R. U. came the appeal to the men, couched in the following vein:

"We need your financial and moral support everywhere. It is the greatest strike the world has ever seen. Give us your moral and financial support through the general office at Chicago. Act quickly. See if we cannot break the chains that are being forged to reduce us, not only to slavery, but to starvation."

This appeal was all that was required to enlist the full and hearty support of the railroad workers. In

many ways they pledged to their leaders their loyalty to the A. R. U.

On April 13, C. W. Case, general manager of the Great Northern lines, received the following letter from the A. R. U.:

"SIR:

"I am instructed by your employees to say that unless the scale of wages and rules of classes of employees that were in effect prior to the first cut made August 1, 1893, are restored and switchmen at Great Falls and Helena receive the same pay and schedules as at Butte and the management agrees to meet the representatives of the employees at Minot not later than ten days hence and formulate schedules accordingly, all classes of employees will quit work at 12 o'clock noon this 13th day of April."

The late James J. Hill, owner of the Great Northern, and for many years before his death called "the empire builder" because of his vast railroad and financial interests in the northwest, was taken completely unawares. He instructed his managers to issue appeals to the men to remain loyal to the company and promised them rapid promotion if they would but turn their faces from the American Railway Union. On April 22, Debs, as president of the A. R. U., and George W. Howard, as vice-president, addressed a large meeting of railroad workers in St. Paul, where the general offices of the Great Northern were located and the home city of James J. Hill. As a result of that meeting the A. R. U. added 225 members. With imminent defeat staring him in the face, Mr. Hill called a conference of a few railroad managers and labor leaders, the main theme of his talk to them being that he would offer arbitration. When Mr. Hill had concluded, a tall, gaunt man arose in the back of the council chamber. Moving slowly to the front where Mr. Hill sat the man began to speak. It was Debs. These were his words:

"Let me say that we do not accept the proposition. Efforts have been made ever since this trouble started to divide the organization and make trouble between the Union and the Brotherhoods. I understand such to be the policy of this company.

"Now, if the other organizations represent the men, let them set your wheels turning. Our men will not go back to work. My idea is that in raising the question of representation you have sought to evade the issue. We presented the terms upon which we would go to work. I am authorized to say that we will settle on these terms and on no others. This grievance is a universal grievance and all the men are united in this action. It will be to no avail to attempt to divide us into factions. If wages are not restored you can no longer have the service of the men. For the past week we have restrained the men from leaving your employ. Now, understand me that I am too much of a gentleman to make a threat and I do not mean this as anything but a plain statement of fact, but if there is no adjustment, those men will withdraw from your service in a body. They are convinced that their demand is a just one. If their request is not complied with they will, without regard to consequences, continue this struggle on the lines already laid down and fight it out with all the means at their command within the limits of the law. We understand your position; you understand ours. We will not withdraw from this conference. We shall be in the city several days and shall be glad to receive any further communications from you."

Failing completely to break the strike, reduce the morale of his employees, or to bargain with Debs for a compromised settlement, Mr. Hill next enlisted the aid of Knute Nelson, then governor of Minnesota, now United States Senator. Debs told me how Governor Nelson had sent for him to come to his executive offices. Debs went and was kept waiting in the office of

the Governor for many minutes, the Governor being present, giving no sign of knowing that Debs was in the room.

Finally, Governor Nelson approached Debs with the inquiry, "Do you wish to see me?"

"No, Governor, I do not wish to see you, but you have indicated your wish to see me, and here I am," Debs replied.

"So you are Eugene V. Debs," Governor Nelson said, backing off and surveying the tall figure before him from head to foot. Debs said the Governor at once launched into a livid denunciation of him, employing frequent use of such epithets as "agitator," "foreigner," "anarchist," and so on, and wound up by harshly condemning him for "stirring up strife among peaceful and contented workingmen."

"When he had finished," Debs said, relating the story, "his face was purple and I thought he might succumb to his anger. 'Now, Governor, I have listened to all you have had to say,' I remarked. 'Are you through?' Nelson said he was.

" 'Well, then, for the first time in your life look into the eyes of a man.' " Debs said he explained to the Governor very briefly and tersely the issues of the strike and concluded with:

"I have never in my life worn the collar of a plutocrat, nor jumped like a jack when he pulled the string as you have done for Mr. Hill. Now, Governor, I know something about railroads, and you may, with my consent, take the B Line and go to hell.' I left him standing in the middle of his executive chamber," Debs concluded. This little incident of the A. R. U. strike he related while going to Moundsville prison.

The Great Northern strike was won in eighteen days and not one drop of human blood was shed. It was the first signal victory achieved by the workers in this country standing together, united, for their demands, and

the result heartened the forces of labor allied with other trades and revived their spirits which had been all but annihilated after the Haymarket riots and hangings seven years before.

Debs returned to his home in Terre Haute on May 3, 1894, and four thousand of his friends, neighbors, men, women and children, greeted him with shouts and music. He addressed his fellow citizens in a public park, near the Terre Haute House. A carriage had been provided for him to ride in from his home to the park, but Debs chose to walk amid the shouting throng. We shall set down here only the salient points of his address on that occasion:

". . . The contest on the Great Northern system has no parallel in the history of railroad trouble. From the hour the strike commenced the men were united; they stood shoulder to shoulder—engineers, firemen, brakemen, conductors, switchmen, and even the trackmen and freight handlers, who are generally first to suffer, stood up as one man and asserted their manhood.

"One of the remarkable features, very remarkable, in the contest, was the good feeling which prevailed during the eighteen days of the strike, and the good feeling lasted during the trying and anxious hours of arbitration. I am glad, my friends, to be able to say to you tonight, that in all those eighteen days there was, from one end of the Great Northern road to the other, not a single drop of human blood spilled. The American spirit of fair play was uppermost in the minds of the manly men who were involved in the trouble, and their fight for wages was conducted without rowdyism or lawlessness. The reduction on the Great Northern Railway was without cause. In resisting it, the employees met solidly organized capital face to face, and man to man, and for eighteen days not a pound of freight was moved and not a wheel turned, with the exception of mail trains. As a result of this unification, this show of

manliness and courage on the part of the employees, they gained 97½ per cent. of what they claimed as their rights.

"The arbitration of the differences was entrusted into the hands of fourteen representative business men of the Twin Cities, with Charles Pillsbury, the merchant miller prince, as chairman. The preliminaries leading up to that memorable meeting of arbitration covered many weary hours, but once in session and facing the great question of wages of thousands of men, these fourteen men, all of whom were men of capital and employers of labor, reached a verdict in one hour, a verdict for the employees, by which $146,000 more money will monthly be distributed among the deserving wage earners than would have been had they not stood up for what they knew to be justly theirs.

"My glory, my friends, consists in the gladness which I know will be brought into the little cottage homes of the humble trackmen among the hills in the west. I can almost see the looks of gratitude on the faces of these men's wives and little children. In all my life I have never felt so highly honored as I did when leaving St. Paul on my way home. As our train pulled out of the yards the tokens of esteem, which I prize far more highly than all others, was in seeing the old trackmen, men whose frames were bent with years of grinding toil, who receive the pittance of from 80 cents to $1 a day, leaning on their shovels and lifting their hats to me in appreciation of my humble assistance in a cause which they believed had resulted in a betterment of their miserable existence. . . ."

As so often happens in times of industrial strife, the demonstration of solidarity plus victory of the American Railway Union over the Great Northern system, brought renewed hope and inspiration to the workers in kindred and other trades, and two months after the Great Northern strike the workers of the Pullman Palace Car Com-

pany, at South Chicago, Illinois, now Pullman, went out. This was in June, 1894.

The American Railway Union officials, against the advice of Debs, decided again to call a strike in sympathy with the Pullman workers. "Debs believed that the abnormal and unfavorable conditions raised too many obstacles against success," wrote James Oneal in the *New York Call Magazine,* July 7, 1918. "However, the decision was against his advice and, taking his orders from the organization, he entered into the struggle with all his might. A number of railroads were tied up, others were partially crippled and the union achieved a larger measure of success than even the optimistic had dreamed of."

The second A. R. U. strike was so widespread and devastated the profits of the railroad owners to such an extent that the magnates of that period resolved to annihilate the American Railway Union root and branch and imprison its leaders. For this purpose the administration of President Grover Cleveland was prevailed upon to begin prosecutions against Debs and his co-officials of the A. R. U. The federal courts were not used for this purpose, however, until after President Cleveland had ordered out the federal troops to go to Chicago "to preserve order and protect private property." As to the manner in which the United States soldiers of that period executed their orders from the federal government we shall deal later, for the record has been fully set down in the minutes of the meetings of the commission appointed by President Cleveland in the summer of 1895 to investigate the causes of the Chicago strike. It appears that President Cleveland sent federal troops into Chicago primarily to see that the strikers did not interfere with the movement of mail trains or molest their crews. John P. Altgeld, then Governor of Illinois, protested to Washington against the sending of federal soldiers into Chicago and the state,

claiming that the regular police force was sufficient and competent to handle whatever situation might arise. His protest was ignored.

One of Debs's most bitter opponents during the A. R. U. strike was John R. Walsh, then a powerful Chicago banker and a rising figure in the financial world. He had acquired a newspaper, the *Chicago Chronicle,* to assist him in his ascendency toward the white light of fame. About ten or twelve years after the A. R. U. strike Walsh was sent to the Joliet Penitentiary, Illinois, as a bank wrecker. Petitions were circulated by his friends for his release from prison so that he might die on the outside.

Judge Peter S. Grosscup, of the federal district court in Chicago, played an important rôle in the labor drama of that period. Judge W. W. Woods was called upon to sit in the "conspiracy trial" growing out of the Pullman strike, through which the Railroad Managers' Association of that period hoped to send Debs to prison for life. Some years ago Judge Woods died, "and the world now does not know that he ever lived," said Debs in referring to him.

E. St. John was chairman of the Railroad Managers' Association of that period. It is said that he had a reputation of being one of the most powerful and successful of all the managers. He had claimed that the American Railway Union and Debs could not disturb the operation of the Rock Island railroad, but when the strike came, the Rock Island was tied up tight from one end of the system to the other.

Such were the characters who played their parts in one of the greatest labor dramas this country has ever known. Some are asleep to-day in graves forgotten by all save their immediate friends and relatives, while others have been reduced to the level of mediocrity and impotency. Since then, with every passing year, Eugene V. Debs has mounted one rung after another of the lad-

der and to-day, even though he is in prison, he is by all odds one of the most powerful public figures in America.

A special grand jury was impaneled in the United States District Court of Northern Illinois on July 10, 1894. Judge Grosscup instructed the jury concerning the crimes of insurrection, conspiracy, etc., and the jury then set to work to consider whatever evidence might be brought to its attention concerning the activities of the American Railway Union and the Pullman strike. The late Richard Olney, then attorney general in President Cleveland's cabinet, had appointed Edwin Walker, an attorney in the employ of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad, special counsel to assist in the prosecution of the Debs case. Mr. Walker and Attorney Wright, of the Rock Island system, were in attendance during the deliberations of the grand jury.

E. M. Mulford, of the Western Union Telegraph Company, was the sole witness examined by the grand jury, and he had produced for the jurors copies of telegrams sent from the headquarters of the A. R. U. and those received by the strikers' officials. With no further evidence than these copies of telegrams, and without further preliminaries the grand jury returned indictments against four officials of the American Railway Union. These were Debs, president; George W. Howard, vice-president; Sylvester Kelliher, secretary; and L. W. Rogers, director and editor of the *Railway Times*. Within ten minutes after Judge Grosscup received the indictments warrants were drawn for the arrest of Debs and his co-officials. A raid was promptly made upon the A. R. U. headquarters, all books, blank books, papers and correspondence of the union seized and other office paraphernalia confiscated by the raiders. The private mail of President Debs was seized but this was returned to him the following day by order of the court.

The four men were re-arrested on July 17 for contempt of court on the petition of Special Counsel Walker,

who alleged violation of the restraining injunction which had been issued by Judges Grosscup and Woods. This was in many respects the most astonishing injunction ever issued from a federal bench, since by it it became a crime to use persuasion on workingmen to join a strike. Neither President Debs nor his three colleagues would consent to give bail and the four men were sent to Cook County Jail, in Chicago, where they remained until July 23. On that day the A. R. U. lawyers moved for a dismissal of the contempt proceedings, arguing that they were virtually for the same offense charged in the indictment, and that no man could be tried twice on the same charge. This motion was denied by the court, and the plea of the four defendants for a trial by a jury met with the same fate. Everything seemed to indicate that the cards were stacked.

The directors of the A. R. U. were included in the proceedings later through the filing of a supplemental information in the contempt case. Originally sixty-nine persons were named in the omnibus indictments for conspiracy to obstruct the United States mails, but before the case went to trial the government attorneys entered a *nolle pros.* as to a number of defendants, leaving forty-five to answer to the charges against them on January 8, 1895. There were seven indictments against President Debs, Vice-President Howard and Editor Rogers, and three indictments each against the full board of directors of the American Railway Union. President Debs and his three colleagues were placed under $25,000 bonds in all of the conspiracy indictments, with the exception of the omnibus indictment. Debs and the A. R. U. officials were represented in court by S. S. Gregory and Clarence S. Darrow, and John J. Hanahan was represented by Thomas W. Harper, of Terre Haute. The government was represented by Edwin Walker, an attorney in the employ of the railroad managers, and named special attorney general by Attorney General

Olney; District Attorney J. C. Black, and his predecessor, T. E. Milchrist.

Upon the opening of court Attorney Gregory objected to the presence of Mr. Walker as representative of the government on the ground that he was at that time in the employ of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad, but the court did not consider there was anything irregular or unusual about that.

MR. DARROW ARGUES FOR DEFENSE

"Men have a right to strike," said Attorney Milchrist in his opening remarks to the jury, eight of whom were farmers, one an insurance agent, one a real estate dealer, one a painting and decorating contractor, and one a dealer in agricultural implements.

"If this is so, it ends this case," replied Mr. Darrow in his opening address.

Darrow argued that there was a statute which made the obstruction of a mail car punishable by a fine of $100, yet "in order to make felons of honest men, who never had a criminal thought, they passed by that statute to seize on one that makes conspiracy to obstruct the mails a crime punishable by imprisonment in the penitentiary. To hound these men into the penitentiary is their purpose, yet they call this respect for law. Conspiracy from the days of tyranny in England down to the day the General Managers' Association used it as a club has been the favorite weapon of every tyrant. It is an effort to punish the crime of thought. If the government does not, we shall try to get the General Managers here to tell what they know about it. . . .

"These defendants published to all the world what they were doing, and in the midst of a widespread strike they were never so busy but that they found time to counsel against violence. For this they are brought into a court by an organization which uses

the government as a cloak to conceal its infamous purposes."

Hundreds of telegrams, all signed by Debs, were placed in evidence, and they showed plainly that Debs had cautioned the various A. R. U. delegates and organizers on the different railroad lines against the use of violence in any form.

Following is a copy of one of the telegrams read to the jury and which became a part of the record:

"July 16, 1894.

"C. S. McAuliffe, Wisconsin.

"We have assurances that within 48 hours every labor organization will come to our rescue. The tide is on and the men are acquitting themselves likes heroes. Here and there one weakens, but our cause is strengthened by others going out in their places. Every true man must go out and remain out until the fight is over; there must be no half-way ground. Our cause is gaining ground daily and our success is only a question of a few days. Don't falter in this hour but proclaim your manhood. Labor must win now or never. Our victory will be certain and complete. Whatever happens don't give any credence to rumors and newspaper reports.

"E. V. Debs."

It was admitted that copies of the telegram just quoted were sent to forty points. After the federal troops had been sent into the strike zones Debs sponsored telegrams to be sent to his lieutenants in various parts of the country like the following:

"To call out the troops was an old method for intimidation. Commit no violence. Have every man stand pat. Troops cannot move trains. Not scabs enough in the world to fill places, and more help accruing hourly."

There were more than 9,000 telegrams sent out by the A. R. U. officials during the strike, but not more than 150 were read to the jury. When the most important of these messages had been entered upon the

record the government put on the witness stand B. Thomas, president of the Chicago and Western Indiana Railway company. He testified as to the formation of the General Managers' Association, stating that it was organized April 20, 1886, and that its purpose was to consider matters relating to railroad management and wages. Mr. Thomas admitted that the managers had agreed to act as a unit in resisting petitions from the railroad employees for increases in wages. He further admitted that a number of agencies had been established at strategic points in the country where men could be quickly assembled to take the places of strikers. The expenses of the association were apportioned among the several railway systems that supported it, he testified.

When Mr. Thomas had completed his testimony Mr. Darrow read to the jury from the minutes of a meeting of the Association on August 31, 1893, that a general combination of railroad managers throughout the country was highly desirable, and a committee of five was named to carry this idea into effect. The object of this combination, the minutes stated, was to regulate wages and make them uniform on the various competitive railroad systems.

On September 21, 1893, the Association met again and passed a resolution regretting that it had become necessary for the railroad companies to reduce the wages of their employees generally. Mr. Darrow likewise read the above minute to the jury.

On February 6, 1895, there was an air of expectancy in the courtroom when Debs was called to take the witness stand. He told briefly of his early life, the formation of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, and stated that more than four million dollars had passed through his hands while he was secretary and treasurer of the organization. Then he followed with a brief history of the labor union development of railway employees, and of his joining the American Railway Union

when it was founded in 1893. Asked by government counsel what the object of the A. R. U. was, Debs replied:

"A unification of all railroad employees for their mutual benefit and protection."

He stated that with the concentration of the smaller railroads into the larger ones, which had been taking place for twenty years, and the subsequent gradual reduction of wages of the men in all departments, it was the only logical step when they decided to organize themselves into one union that would embrace and include them all, as it had been demonstrated that the men could gain little of permanent or tangible value when they were organized along craft or trade lines. Debs said that when the strike was called on the Great Northern system the A. R. U. had a membership of 150,000.

Prior to the advent of the American Railway Union, Debs testified, there were several railroad organizations, and that they had been at odds for a long time. The same classes of men were eligible to the various organizations, and the Railroad Managers' Association seized upon this situation to play one organization against another, thus creating factionalism between the employees and keeping down the scale of wages. It was this condition that led to the formation of the "One Big Union" of all railroad employees—the American Railway Union —which was, in fact, one of the first attempts in this country at industrial unionism instead of craft organization. The A. R. U., like the Western Federation of Miners, which latter organization came into being about the same time, was one of the forerunners of the Industrial Workers of the World, whose hundred and more leaders and organizers are now in Leavenworth Federal Prison and other penal institutions for violation of the Espionage Law, the very same statute upon which Debs was convicted and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

Debs first learned of the strike conditions at Pullman,

he testified, when he returned from St. Paul to his home in Terre Haute in May, 1894. Asked if the strike was brought on by his advice he replied:

"No, it was done contrary to my advice. I first went to Pullman on the 14th of May, after the strike occurred, and stayed there part of that day and evening. I went again on May 18th." Debs explained that he had investigated the conditions at Pullman by talking with the workers and their families, and other sources. He also talked with the Rev. Mr. Carwardine, who had held a pulpit in Pullman for three years, and who said he knew at first hand of the oppressive industrial conditions under which the men toiled.

"The result of the investigation was that I came to the conclusion that the Pullman company was in the wrong; that wages had been unjustifiably reduced below the living point and that rents were much too high in comparison with what was charged for the same class of dwellings elsewhere." At this point Judge Grosscup would not permit Debs to tell the jury of the actual living conditions of the people at Pullman.

The convention of the A. R. U. was held in Chicago on June 12, 1894, he said, and was attended by 425 delegates from nearly every state in the country. The meetings were open and newspaper reporters were present at all sessions, except one executive session, which was called to consider the financial affairs of the Union. This convention voted $2,000 of the Union's funds to be paid over to the Relief Committee at Pullman, and the money was used to assist the distressed families of the Pullman strikers.

There were delegates at this convention, Debs said, who spoke of the situation at Pullman, and finally a motion was made to declare a boycott against the Pullman cars and instructing railway men against hauling them. Debs testified that as chairman of the convention he declined to entertain the motion, as he believed the Pull-

man situation was a very serious matter, and that no action should be taken hastily or until every means toward a decent settlement had been exhausted. He urged the convention to appoint a committee to try to settle the Pullman strike by arbitration and thus avert a general strike that would involve the A. R. U. That committee was appointed and on June 16 it reported to the A. R. U. officials that the Pullman company positively refused to confer with any members of the A. R. U., and would seek to adjust its troubles with the Pullman employees themselves as individuals. They absolutely declined to recognize a union of their men.

Another committee, composed entirely of Pullman employees, called on Mr. Wicks, vice-president of the Pullman Company, and they reported back to the strikers that Mr. Wicks had told them the company "had nothing to arbitrate," and that he regarded the strikers "as men on the sidewalk, so far as their relations with the Pullman Company was concerned."

Continuing his testimony, Debs said that a few days later Rev. Mr. Carwardine addressed the A. R. U. Convention, told of the living conditions of the workers at Pullman, and pleaded with the convention to "act quickly in the name of God and humanity."

The convention immediately considered a resolution to declare a boycott against Pullman cars, and appointed a committee to notify the Pullman Company that unless they agreed to arbitrate their differences with their men the boycott would become effective at noon of June 26th. The committee visited Mr. Wicks, and reported that he was still obdurate. Debs was asked if he had ever counseled violence or lawlessness on the part of strikers or workingmen.

"Never in my life have I broken the law or advised others to do so," he replied.

When Debs had concluded his testimony, United States Deputy Marshal Jones reported to the court that he had

made diligent but futile search for George M. Pullman. "Nobody seems to know the exact whereabouts of that gentleman," were his words to the court. The judge then sent for Mr. Johnson, one of Mr. Pullman's office subordinates. Mr. Johnson testified that he had taken Deputy Jones's card into Mr. Sweet, private secretary to Mr. Pullman, who in turn had carried the card to the inner office of the magnate, returning in a few moments and saying that Mr. Pullman was not in. Mr. Johnson told the court that Mr. Pullman had arrived at his office at the usual hour that morning.

Later on, Debs, in one of his speeches, referred to the absence of Mr. Pullman as follows:

"When the trials were in progress at Chicago Mr. George M. Pullman was summoned to give some testimony. Mr. Pullman attached his car to a New York train and went East, and in some way the papers got hold of the matter and made some publication about it, and the judge said that Mr. Pullman would be dealt with drastically. In a few days Mr. Pullman returned and he went into chambers, made a few personal explanations and that is the last we heard about it. Had it been myself I would have to go to jail. That is the difference. Only a little while ago Judge Henford cited Henry C. Payne, of the Northern Pacific, to appear before him to answer certain charges, and he went to Europe."

Jennie Curtis followed Debs on the witness stand and testified that at the time the Pullman strike was called the employees in those car shops were indebted to the amount of $70,000 to Mr. Pullman for rent, and indicated that this money was owed to Mr. Pullman by his employees because the wages which he paid them were scarcely adequate to enable them to purchase food and the bare necessities of life.

Debs was recalled to the stand and admitted that on June 28 he had sent out a manifesto over his own signa-

ture, copies of which were given to the newspapers and to the Associated Press, counseling peaceful conduct by the strikers and ordering a strict compliance with the laws. The manifesto concluded with:

"A man who will violate law is against the interests of labor."

Counsel for the government asked Debs what wages he received in 1875 as fireman:

"I began at $1 a night," he replied. "I was afterwards paid by the mile."

"Your salary as President of the American Railway Union still continues, does it not?" inquired Mr. Walker for the prosecution.

"No, sir; I cut it off myself last September," Debs replied.

"The purpose of your Union was to get the control of all the railroad employees in the hands of the American Railway Union, was it not?"

"Yes, sir; under the limitations of the constitution and by-laws."

Debs said that the Great Northern strike was a peaceful one and that no intimidation had been used to bring new members into the fold.

"You simply took possession of the road and held it?" asked Attorney Walker.

"No, sir; we simply went home and stayed there," answered Debs. Government's counsel asked Debs to explain the meaning of the word "strike." Debs replied:

"A strike is a stoppage of work at a given time by men acting in concert in order to redress some real or imaginary grievance."

"Mr. Debs, will you define the meaning of the word 'scab'?"

"A scab in labor unions means the same as a traitor to his country," Debs replied. "It means a man who be-

trays his fellowmen by taking their places when they go on a strike for a principle. It does not apply to non-union men who refuse to quit work."

Mr. Pullman was still absent on the following day, and one by one his private secretaries and other officials of his company mysteriously disappeared when deputy marshals were sent by the court to serve subpoenas upon them. Judge Grosscup appeared to be greatly chagrined over the disappearance of witnesses whom the defense desired should testify in the lawsuit.

Not even the power and prestige of the United States district court was adequate to induce unwilling witnesses from the Pullman Company to appear before the defendants and their counsel and testify as to their own knowledge of the industrial and social causes that brought on the great strike of 1894. In the light of past performances it now becomes apparent that the Railroad Managers' Association of that period did not desire to continue the trial, and one morning, when court had convened, Judge Grosscup announced as follows:

"Owing to the sickness of a juror and the certificate of his physician that he will not be able to get out for two or three days, I think it will be necessary to adjourn the further taking of testimony in this case." Debs and his co-defendants were astonished by this sudden turn of events, and their lawyers pleaded with the court to allow the lawsuit to proceed, but to no avail. District Attorney Black asked that the court allow the case to continue with eleven jurors, but Judge Grosscup decided that this would make the whole proceedings invalid. Clarence Darrow asked that a juror be selected to fill the place of the sick member and have read to him the whole record of the case as it had progressed up to that point. But arguments were unavailing. So, on February 12, 1895, Judge Grosscup discharged the jury and continued the Debs case until the first Mon-

day in May. Debs was sorely disappointed. He and his fellow officials of the American Railway Union were confident of an acquittal at the hands of the jury, and this belief was strengthened by the fact that when court had adjourned that day the jurors made a rush for Debs, grasped his hand and congratulated him heartily upon the stand he had taken.

The jurors shook hands with the judge, and then surrounded Debs and his fellow defendants and attorneys. Mr. Walker and his associates for the prosecution got a decidedly cool reception.

Several of the jurors did not hesitate to tell Debs that when they went into the jury box they were all but convinced that he and his co-defendants were guilty of the charges named in the indictment, and that they thought a five-year term in the penitentiary might not be too severe punishment for them. But the evidence introduced by the government and the defense, coupled with the honesty and candor of Debs himself upon the witness stand had convinced all of them that they were witnessing one of the most atrocious "frame-ups" ever perpetrated by a corporation cloaking itself in the toga of a federal court.

So far as the court records are concerned in the Debs case the juror is still sick. The case was not brought up in May, as scheduled, nor has it ever been brought up since, and the indictments against Debs and his fellow officials of the American Railway Union were never withdrawn.

Debs was sentenced to serve six months in Woodstock Jail, Woodstock, Illinois, for contempt of court. He completed his sentence on November 22, 1895.

One week after the federal grand jury at Chicago had indicted him he received a telegram from his home as follows:

"Terre Haute, Ind., July 18, 1894.

Received at Chicago.

To EUGENE V. DEBS.

Stand by your principles, regardless of consequences.

Your Mother and Father."

About the same time he received a telegram from Eugene Field, the Chicago poet and Indianian:

"Dear 'Gene: I hear you are to be arrested. When that time comes you will need a friend. I want to be that friend.

"EUGENE FIELD."

This simple note from the poet is among Debs's most treasured possessions saved from that period of terror and turbulence.

While Debs was serving his sentence at Woodstock Jail, messages and telegrams, books and papers of every description and kind poured into his cell in as great a volume as they came to him during the two months he was at Moundsville Prison in 1919. Every telegram and every message was one pledging love and devotion to him, and congratulating him for his fearlessness and courage in championing the cause of the workers.

Some of the newspapers of that day seem to have been mildly fair in their editorial discussion of the Debs case. For instance, the *Chicago Times*, of February 13, 1895, printed the following editorial under the caption, "Shall Debs Be Tried Again?"

"Owing to the illness of one juror the conspiracy cases against Eugene V. Debs and his associates of the American Railway Union have come to a sudden stop. The propositions of the defense to continue the hearing of the case with eleven jurors, or to swear in a twelfth juror and proceed after the evidence already in had been read to him, were both opposed by counsel for the government and the railroads. As the matter now stands, a new jury will have to be impaneled and the

whole thing gone over again, unless the Government decides to abandon the prosecution.

"It is exceedingly unfortunate that the present trial should have been interrupted in this unforeseen fashion. A judicial declaration upon the issues involved would have been of very decided value to all classes of society. As the evidence has been detailed day after day in the very full reports in the columns of the *Times*, the people have been able to gain a clearer and more exact idea of the incidents of the great strike than was possible in the moments of heated controversy last summer. It does not seem like overstatement to say that there was every indication that the defense would be successful. The charge of conspiracy, had not, at the time of the abrupt termination of the case, been at all forcefully substantiated.

"Interviews with the released jurors established the fact that they would have acquitted the defendants had the case been carried to its regular conclusion. It is credibly asserted that the prosecution has for some time apprehended such an outcome of the trial, and it was probably for this reason that the attorneys for the Government exercised their undoubted right to protest against continuing with an incomplete jury.

"In this situation the question arises whether the Government shall proceed further with this prosecution. Heavy expense is involved in it and it will consume much of the time of a court already overcrowded with business. It is just, too, to call attention to the fact that the defendants are poor men. The expenses of the defense have thus far been met by voluntary contributions from other poor men, who are in sympathy with the men on trial. There is obvious injustice in enlarging the financial burden by bringing these men again to trial.

"In the opinion of the *Times* enough has been done to maintain the dignity of the State in this matter.

Further prosecution of Debs and his associates would look like persecution. The Government would better abandon the case forthwith."

The matter of Mr. Pullman's disappearance caused the *Chicago Times* to say editorially on February 8, 1895:

"Magnate Pullman is still missing. His whereabouts seem to give no concern to his immediate attendants, but Judge Grosscup of the United States Court is showing some anxiety to learn where he is and why it is that he has not been served with a process calling him into court. An examination of Magnate Pullman's colored door-keeper made by the Judge personally disclosed that he saw the magnate enter his office Monday at 10:30 o'clock, an hour after a deputy marshal called, but he has since mysteriously disappeared.

"Why this assumption of right to inquire into the personal movements of so great a man as Mr. Pullman? Ought we not, rather, anxiously unite in efforts to ascertain whether he is entirely safe, for if Magnate Pullman were to disappear into thin air, it is doubtful if the world would continue to revolve upon its axis and make its usual diurnal revolution. Human laws are made for the mass of mankind. Why should Magnate Pullman, who does not belong to the mass, but is a being apart, constructed of superior clay, be subjected to any such belittling regulation? Magnate Pullman keeps more bar-rooms in more states in the union than any grog shop seller and employs more male chamber-maids than any other magnate in the bed-house business.

"The (Chicago) *Tribune* finds excuses for the magnate. It says: 'It is not strange that he should be unwilling to go on the stand and be questioned by Mr. Darrow, Mr. Geeting (?) (Gregory) and the other lawyers for the defense. It is not pleasant for a person who is at the head of a great corporation, who has many subordinates and no superiors, and who is in the habit

of giving orders instead of answering questions, to be interrogated by persons who are unfriendly to him, and who may put disagreeable inquiries which he has to reply to civilly.'

"That's it. Mr. Pullman is superior to the law. Like the king, he can do no wrong, and no processes can lie against him. The *Tribune,* however, we are bound to say, weakens a little, for it adds: 'Nevertheless, it is the duty of all men to appear in court when they are wanted there.'

". . . There was some music here last June and July. It was music that never should have been played if Magnate Pullman had been like the ordinary run of human beings, but, being altogether an extraordinary creature, he waved his bâton and the band began to play, but, far from facing the music which he himself had set in motion, he retired with a lawyer bodyguard to the East and viewed the concert from a distance of a thousand miles. Really, he had nothing to fear, for, as it turned out, not a single pane of glass in his marvelous town was broken by what he regarded as a fearful mob.

"The outcome of the present matter will be, of course, a demonstration that Magnate Pullman is a bigger man than the United States Court."

On January 1, 1895, the *Railway Times,* the organ of the American Railway Union, published the following notice:

"The general offices of the American Railway Union and the *Railway Times* have been removed to Terre Haute, Indiana. The directors having been sentenced to prison, the change was made so that the work of the Order could be efficiently and economically done during their confinement. The work of organizing and equipping the A. R. U. will be pushed with unabated vigor. Insurance and secret work will be adopted as soon as it can be done under temporarily trying circumstances.

"All correspondence should be addressed to Eugene V. Debs, Terre Haute, Indiana.

"Terre Haute, Ind., Jan. 1, 1895."

DEBS IN WOODSTOCK JAIL

With Eugene Debs in jail, a number of newspapers printed the following story on January 9, 1895:

"Woodstock, Ill.—Eugene V. Debs, George Howard, Sylvester Kelliher, Louis W. Rogers, William E. Burns, James Hogan and Leroy Goodwin are confined in the McHenry County Jail. Last evening, as he sat in what Cook County prisoners would call a palace, Mr. Debs issued a manifesto to the American people, which contains the following:

" 'In going to jail for participation in the late strike we have no apologies to make nor regrets to express. I would not change places with Judge Woods, and if it is expected that six months, or even six years, in jail will purge me of contempt, the punishment will fail of its purpose.

" 'Candor compels me to characterize the whole proceeding as infamous. It is not calculated to revive the rapidly failing confidence of the American people in the federal judiciary. There is not a scrap of testimony to show that one of us violated any law whatsoever. If we are guilty of conspiracy, why are we punished for contempt?

" 'I would a thousand times rather be accountable for the strike than for the decision.

" 'We are, by chance, the mere instrumentalities in the evolutionary processes in operation through which industrial slavery is to be abolished and economic freedom established. Then the starry banner will symbolize, as it was designed to symbolize, social, political, religious and economic emancipation from the thraldom of tyranny, oppression and degradation.' "

Eugene V. Debs entered Woodstock jail a fearless, courageous and candid man, who had a genius for leadership. It would be too moderate to say that he was extremely popular among the railroad workers and those employed in allied trades. But he had not yet acquired national prominence. His own personality had been submerged in the issues of the strike itself, and if the public regarded him at all in that period it was as a man who would soon be lost to view, and carrying forever upon his escutcheon the stigma of a prison sentence. Rarely does the public ever know the true character of the man it has sent to prison. The federal judge who consigned Debs to Woodstock Jail for contempt of his court could not know that by his act he had set in motion all the latent spiritual powers of Debs, and had caused to sprout within him the seeds of greatness which, at every recurring opportunity and season, would blossom more and more.

While Debs was in jail at Woodstock he wrote a series of very remarkable letters, one of which we shall quote in full here:

"Woodstock, Ill.,
"August 29, 1895.

"Mr. Ed. H. Evinger,

"Labor Day Committee, Terre Haute, Ind.

"Dear Sir and Brother:—I am in receipt of your esteemed favor of the 19th inst., in which you say: 'We have been unable to get a representative labor speaker for our Labor Day celebration and the committee ordered me to ask you to write us a letter to be read on the occasion.'

"In responding to your request I am disposed to recite a page of what all Christendom proclaims 'sacred history.'

"There existed some twenty-five hundred years ago a king clothed with absolute power, known as Darius, who ruled over the Medes and the Persians. He was

not a usurper like William A. Woods, the United States Circuit Judge. Darius was royal spawn. His right to rule was what kings then, as now, claimed to be a 'divine right.' All the people in Darius' empire were slaves. The will of the king was absolute. What the king said was law, just as we now find in the United States of America that what a United States judge says is law. Darius, the Persian despot, could imprison at will; the same is true of Woods, the despot. There is absolutely no difference. Do I hear an exception? Allow me to support my indictment by authority that passes current throughout the Republic. Only a few days ago the venerable Judge Trumbull, one of the most eminent jurists and statesmen America has ever produced, wrote these burning words: '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 states the case of the officers of the American Railway Union in a nutshell. They violated no law, they committed no crime, they have not been charged, nor indicted, nor tried, and yet they were arbitrarily sentenced and thrust in jail and what has happened to them will happen to others who dare protest against such inhumanity as the monster Pullman practiced upon his employees and their families.

"More than twenty-five hundred years have passed to join the unnumbered centuries since Darius lived and reigned, and now in the United States we have about four score Darius despots, each of whom may at his will, whim or pleasure, imprison an American citizen—and this grim truth is up for debate on Labor Day.

"It will be remembered that during the reign of Darius there was a gentleman by the name of Daniel whom the king delighted to honor. The only fault that could be found with Daniel was that he would not wor-

ship the Persian gods, but would, three times a day, go to his window, looking toward Jerusalem, and pray. This was his crime. It was enough. The Persians had a religion of their own. They had their gods of gold, brass, stone, clay, wood, anything from a mouse to a mountain, and they would not tolerate any other god. They had, in modern parlance, an 'established church,' and as Daniel, like Christ, would not conform to the Persian religion, 'the presidents of the kingdom, the governors and the princes, the counselors and the captains,' or as in these later days the corporations, the trusts, the syndicates and combines, concluded to get rid of Daniel and they persuaded Darius to issue an injunction that no man should 'ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days save of thee, O King'—and the king, à la Woods, issued the decree. But Daniel, who was made of resisting stuff, disregarded the injunction and still prayed as before to his God. Daniel was a hero. In the desert of despotism he stands forever:

> " 'As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
> Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm:
> Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
> Eternal sunshine settles on its head.'

"But the bigots triumph for a time. The king's decree must stand, and Daniel, as a penalty for prayer, must be cast into the lion's den and the bigots, the plutocratic pirates and parasites of that period, thought that would be the end of Daniel. They chuckled as in fancy they heard the lions break his bones and lap his blood. They slept well and dreamed of victory. Not so with the king. He knew he had been guilty of an act of monstrous cruelty and in this the old Persian despot was superior to Woods. The king could not sleep and was so pained over his act that he forbade all festivities in his palace. In this he showed that he was not totally depraved. The king had a lurking idea that somehow

Daniel would get out of the lion's den unharmed and that he would overcome the intrigues of those who had conspired to destroy him. Early in the morning he went to the mouth of the den. Daniel was safe. His God, unlike the Supreme Court, having found Daniel innocent of all wrongdoing, locked the jaws of the lions and Daniel stood before the king wearing the redemption of truth, more royal than a princely diadem. Then the king who had been deceived by the enemies of Daniel, the sycophants and the vermin of power, gave his wrath free rein and had them cast into the lion's den where they were devoured by the ferocious beasts.

"History repeats itself. I am not a Daniel, but I am in jail, by the decree of the autocrat. I appealed from one despot to a whole bench for justice, and the appeal was unheeded. I and my associates were innocent. There was no stain of crime upon our record but neither innocence nor constitution was of any avail. To placate the corporations, the money power, the implacable enemies of labor, we were sent to prison and here alone, contemplating the foul wrong inflicted upon me and my associate officials of the American Railway Union, with my head and heart and hand nerved for the task, I write this letter to be read on Labor Day to friends and neighbors in the city of my birth.

"It is not a wail of despondency nor of despair. The cause for which I have been deprived of my liberty was just and I am thrice armed against all my enemies. To bear punishment for one's honest convictions is a glorious privilege and requires no high order of courage.

"No judicial tyrant comes to my prison to inquire as to my health or my hopes, but one sovereign does come by night and by day, with words of cheer. It is the sovereign people—the uncrowned but sceptered ruler of the realm. No day of my imprisonment has passed that the bars and bolts and doors of the Woodstock Jail have not been bombarded by messages breathing

devotion to the cause of liberty and justice, and as I read and ponder these messages and as I grasp the hands of friends and catch the gleam of wrath in their defiant eyes and listen to their words of heroic courage, I find it no task to see the wrath of the sovereign people aroused and all opposition to the triumphant march of labor consigned to oblivion, and as an earnest of this from every quarter come announcements that the American Railway Union is growing in membership and strength, destined at an early day to be, as it deserves to be, an organization, which by precept, example, and principle will ultimately unify railroad labor in the United States and make it invincible. There is a mighty mustering of all the forces of labor throughout the country. Labor is uniting in one solid phalanx to secure justice for labor. When this time comes, and coming it is, peacefully, I hope, no judicial despot will dare to imprison an American citizen to please corporations. When this time comes, and coming it is as certain as rivers flow to the sea, Bullion and Boodle will not rule in Congress, in legislatures and in courts, and legislators and judges and other public officers will not be controlled, as many of them are, by the money power. There is to come a day, aye, a labor day, when from the center to the circumference of our mighty Republic, from the blooming groves of orange to waving fields of grain, from pinelands of Maine to the Pacific Coast, the people shall be free, and it will come by the unified voice and vote of the farmer, the mechanic, and the laborer in every department of the country's industries.

"I notice in your letter that you say: 'We have been unable to get a representative labor speaker for our Labor Day celebration,' and here let me say that on Labor Day all men who wear the badge of labor are 'representative speakers'—not 'orators,' perhaps, as the term is accepted to mean, and yet orators in fact, from whose lips fall 'thoughts that breathe and words

that burn'; coming warm from the heart, they reach the heart and fan zeal in a great cause into a flame that sweeps along like a prairie fire. It has been the good fortune of labor to produce from its ranks men who, though unlearned in the arts of oratory, were yet orators of the highest order, if effect instead of fluency is considered. It is the occasion that makes the orator as it is the battle that makes the veteran. Mark Antony said: 'I am no orator like Brutus,' but when he showed Cæsar's mantle to the populists of Rome and pointed out where the conspirators' daggers had stabbed Cæsar, the oratory of Brutus paled before his burning words. And every man, however humble he may esteem himself, may on Labor Day hold up the Constitution of the United States and point to where the judicial dagger stabbed liberty to death, and make the people cry out for the reënthronement of the Constitution—and Terre Haute has a hundred such orators.

"I write in the hurry and press of business. Before me are a hundred letters demanding replies. I pass them by to respond to an appeal from my home, and in fancy, as I write, I am with you. I am at home again. My father bending beneath the weight of many years salutes me. My mother, whose lullaby songs nestle and coo in the inner temple of my memory, caresses me —her kiss baptizes me with joy and as if by enchantment:

> 'Years and sin and folly flee,
> And leave me at my mother's knee.'

"In this mood I write with the hope that the celebration at Terre Haute will inspire renewed devotion to the interests of labor, and with a heart full of good wishes, I subscribe myself,

"Yours fraternally,

"E. V. Debs."

"Dict. E. V. D."

The business of the American Railway Union was

conducted by Debs and his associates from the Woodstock Jail for the six months that they were imprisoned. The Railroad Managers' Association was not idle either in those days, for they had their agents stationed on every railroad line where the A. R. U. had a unit of organization, and it was the business of these agents to report to their superiors the presence of A. R. U. men and union organizers who were summarily dismissed from the company's employ.

Just before his release from Woodstock Jail, which occurred November 22, 1895, a friendly committee of labor men in Chicago sent out invitations "to liberty-loving citizens" to attend a reception at Battery D, Chicago, to Debs as a "testimony of their sympathy with Mr. Debs and his colleagues in their unjust and unlawful imprisonment and as an expression of popular aversion to judicial despotism and devotion to civil and constitutional liberty."

Debs's last night in Woodstock was spent in sound slumber. At one second after midnight the sheriff aroused him and told him that he was free. All that day and night great crowds of farmers and men and women and children of all classes and conditions had made the journey to Woodstock from Chicago, fifty-five miles distant, and from adjacent towns, to get a look at the man who had defied the titanic railroad combinations of that day, and who had gone to prison as a result of his efforts in behalf of the toiling masses.

Debs had his breakfast that morning with the Sheriff, and the morning was spent in visiting, with his brother Theodore, the townspeople of Woodstock, who had in many ways indicated to him while he was in jail their kindness and interest. Debs was to leave Woodstock on the five o'clock train for Chicago, where a huge demonstration had been arranged in his honor. As he was standing on the steps of the sheriff's residence a throng of burly workingmen hove into view. Debs was already

surrounded by shouting, yelling men, women and children eager to show him their joy and appreciation. The men pushed their way through the throng and all at once one of them shouted, "Lift him up so we all can see him." Debs was hoisted upon the shoulders of several men and in this fashion he was carried to the railroad station to await the coming of the train. It was estimated that ten thousand people swung into irregular lines behind the few men who were carrying Debs on their shoulders. The hands of excited and exultant women and children covered his dangling legs and farmers and working men tugged at his coat sleeves. One or two small-town bands, catching the spirit of the occasion, got their pieces together and furnished flaring music. No county fair or Chautauqua could have inspired as much enthusiasm as these simple country folk exhibited over the liberation of this simple man who was, in fact, overwhelmed and humbled by the show of love and feeling of his fellow citizens.

Crowds surged around the train as it rounded the curve at the station, and hundreds boarded it. The ride to Chicago was made amid singing and band music and the noise of the grinding wheels was drowned in the merriment of those who were determined to turn to victory what the court had decreed as defeat.

The train arrived at the Wells street station, and despite a falling rain and mud and slush, the newspaper reports of the period estimated that 100,000 people of all shades and conditions of life swarmed into the shed of the depot, literally sweeping Debs off his feet and carrying him to a waiting carriage drawn by six white horses. But if there was any one who thought Debs would ride while they walked they were soon to be disappointed, for when Debs saw the carriage awaiting him he said, "No. If the rest walk, I shall walk, too. What is good enough for them is also good enough for me."

That occasion was so significant in view of the conditions that had provoked it that I must yield to the temptation to quote from a newspaper of that day, the *Chicago Chronicle,* of November 23, 1895:

"The arrival of the train bearing the party with Mr. Debs, which was carefully awaited, was the signal for a mighty yell. The crowd on the platform started it and it was taken up by those who thronged the stairs leading down to the platform and those who were above in the street. The cheering became deafening. When Debs appeared on the platform of the coach the cheers became a tumult of frantic yells. Those who were nearest the labor leader rushed to him and seized him in their arms and bore him from the car into the surging, struggling, pushing, cheering, yelling throng. Sitting on the shoulders of men and raised above the heads of the crowd, bareheaded and smiling, Debs acknowledged the salutes of the crowd, bowing and waving his hat. Which ever way the labor leader turned there was a fresh outburst of cheers, but so great was the crowd that it remained wedged together. No one could move. The police cried in vain, but they could hardly hear their own voices. . . . Those who were near enough reached out to touch the leader's garments and those who were not were madly striving to do so.

"The men who were bearing Debs on their shoulders had not gone ten paces from the car when they could go no farther. From every direction the crowd faced toward their idol. Men cried for air and egress from the pressing mass, but no one heard them. The policemen were as powerless as every one else. . . .

"The slender form of the man whose presence brought out the outpouring was all the while held aloft and safe from the crush. A smile was playing over his clean-cut features. His face was aglow with the triumph of the hour. . . .

"Never did men strive and struggle so to demonstrate

their love for a fellowman just released from a convict's cell. Theirs was no outward show alone. There was no sycophancy in them. . . . When he reached the Wells street bridge he asked those who bore him to set him down where his old lieutenant, William E. Burns, who was also a prisoner with Debs in Woodstock Jail, had gotten near enough to speak to him. They halted then to form a line to march in order to Battery D.

"More than fifty of the labor unions of Chicago were represented in the six coaches that went out to Woodstock to receive Mr. Debs. The procession that marched through the storm was composed of the members of every trade union in the city, wearing badges and marching in his honor."

The *Chicago Evening Press,* of November 23, 1895, was moved to say editorially of Debs's release:

"In the face of facts developed yesterday, it is idle to say that Eugene V. Debs has lost the esteem of the masses. No such demonstration as was made in his honor yesterday and last night has been seen in this city in many years, if at all. Had he been the victorious soldier returned fresh from conquests instead of a convict liberated from prison, his welcome could not have been more spontaneous, enthusiastic, sympathetic."

After pointing to the fact that very often rich men and officials of corporations do not go to prison for transgressing the laws, and showing that it was common for the trusts to debauch the courts and bribe legislators, the *Press* concluded its editorial comment with this poignant paragraph:

"The day must never come when there is no law. But it must come when Justice will rip the bandage from her eyes and see and call for the Havemeyers and the Standard Oil Magnates, as well as for the Debses."

SPEECH OF DEBS AFTER HIS RELEASE

In crowded Battery D, Debs delivered what was per-

haps the most brilliant oration he had made up to that time. As he was closing, he said:

"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 of the prison walls preached 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 Æsop 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 stone who one night selected for his text 'George M. Pullman,' and said, 'George is a bad egg; handle him with care. If you crack his shell the odor would depopulate Chicago in an hour.' All the rest of the stones said 'Amen' and the services closed.

"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 liberty of my fellowmen, had I ever sought to filch their good name I could 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 with no 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 celebration day from prison a memorial day. . . ."

The next day Debs went to his home in Terre Haute. The same demonstration, on a smaller scale, awaited his arrival. It had been raining all that day but this fact

did not dampen the enthusiasm of his fellow townspeople. Several hundred miners, with the Coal Bluff Band, escorted him to his home, a few blocks distant. That evening the throngs gathered about his home and insisted that he come to the Armory to address them. The streets along the route were alight with Roman candles. His speech on that occasion was brief, the most of the time being consumed in shaking hands with his townsmen. Debs did speak sharply on that occasion of the judiciary and its tendencies, saying:

"If all the common people united and asked for the appointment of a federal judge their voice would not be heeded any more than if it were the chirp of a cricket. Money talks. Yes, money talks. And I have no hesitancy in declaring that money has invaded, or the influence, that power conferred by money, has invaded the Supreme Court and left that august tribunal reeking with more stench than Coleridge discovered in Cologne and left all the people wondering how it was ever to be deodorized. There is something wrong in this country; the judicial nets are so adjusted as to catch the minnows and let the whales slip through and the federal judge is as far removed from the common people as if he inhabited another planet. As Boyle O'Reilly would say:

> "'His pulse, if you felt it, throbbed apart
> From the throbbing pulse of the people's heart.'"

No matter where he goes, what the circumstances are, or under whose auspices, Debs touches all with whom he comes in contact by his kindness and his love. When he left Woodstock Jail he carried in his pocket a testimonial from the inmates, as follows:

"We, the undersigned, inmates of Woodstock Jail, desire to convey to you our heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the many acts of kindness and sympathy shown

to us by you during your incarceration in this institution.

"We selfishly regret your departure from here into the outer world and scenes of labor. Your presence here has been to us what an oasis in a desert is to the tired and weary traveler, or a ray of sunshine showing through a rift in the clouds.

"With thousands of others we rejoice and extend to you our most earnest congratulations upon your restoration to liberty.

"Hoping you may have a long, prosperous and happy life, success in all your undertakings, especially the 'American Railway Union,' we all join in wishing you Godspeed and beg to subscribe ourselves, Your friends,

CHARLES E. ANDERSON, PAUL WAMBACH,
EDWARD MADDEN, W. E. HORTON.

To EUGENE V. DEBS, ESQ.,
Woodstock, Ill., Nov. 22, 1895.

The legal expenses of the American Railway Union incident to the trial of its officials had amounted to more than forty thousand dollars, and, when the Union fell apart, Debs, for many years, helped to pay off this obligation through his lectures and writings, despite the fact that there was no personal obligation resting upon him so to do.

Debs entered Woodstock Jail a labor unionist, and, after spending six months in a cell he came out a Socialist, thoroughly convinced that the full measure of justice and liberty which he had hoped for could not be gained for or by the working class unless they were to act in concert, industrially and politically. This conviction dawned upon him while he was yet in prison.

On November 23, 1895, the day following Debs's release from Woodstock, there appeared in *The Coming Nation,* one of the earliest Socialist journals in this country, a letter by Debs first advocating the use of the ballot by working men as a means toward establishing

"the Coöperative Commonwealth." We shall quote only a paragraph from this letter which reflected the Socialistic trend of his mind twenty-five years ago:

". . . 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 lightning 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 obliquy as Cain with the mark of a murderer. It can sweep our 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 our forests. The ballot can do all this and more. It can give our civilization its crowning glory—the Co-operative Commonwealth. To the unified hosts of American workmen 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."

The following year, 1896, Debs followed the banner of Bryan, "but I was a long way toward Socialism even at that time," he said many years afterward.

A year later, 1897, Debs ceased all compromise and equivocation with the political and industrial question, coming out publicly for Socialism. His announcement

of his stand took the form of a circular letter addressed to the members of the American Railway Union on January 1, 1897. This circular bore the caption: "Present Conditions and Future Duties," and concluded with this statement:

"The issue is Socialism versus Capitalism. I am for Socialism because I am for humanity. We have been cursed with the reign of gold long enough. Money constitutes no proper basis of civilization. The time has come to regenerate society—we are on the eve of a universal change."

Just six months later the American Railway Union held its convention in Chicago. Debs and the majority of the delegates favored political action. On June 21, 1897, the Social-Democratic party was formed, and this was the beginning of the Socialist movement in the United States, with Debs as its devoted champion and leader.

COMMISSION INVESTIGATES STRIKE

Before we leave this phase of his life it seems necessary to take up, very briefly, the report of President Cleveland's commission appointd by him to investigate the causes of the Pullman and the A. R. U. strikes. This commission met in Chicago in the summer of 1895. In order that he might attend its sessions and testify, Debs was taken daily from Woodstock Jail to Chicago by two deputy sheriffs.

Upon taking the stand Debs said:

"Government supervision would not answer the purpose of preventing strikes. No good could come from compulsory arbitration; that is a contradiction in terms. Even if some means of enforcing the decree could be devised, those against whom the decree was rendered would not be satisfied. The basis must be friendship and confidence. Government ownership of railroads

would be better than railroad ownership of government."

"What about strikes in other industries?" inquired Commissioner Worthington. Debs replied:

"The replacement of the wage system by the Coöperative Commonwealth could alone solve the problem; as long as a man is dependent on another for work, he is a slave. With labor-saving machinery, which term is now a misnomer, as it is really labor-displacing machinery, unrestricted emigration and ten men bidding for a job, wages are bound to go lower and lower. Capitalists instinctively feel their affinity. I want the working people to feel the same way. To illustrate—in the late strike we did nothing to interfere with the *Chicago Herald's* business, yet the *Herald* felt its kinship to the capitalists who owned the railroads and made unmitigated war on the railroad employees."

"If such a unification of working people was accomplished, would it not have a dangerous power?" asked Commissioner Kernan.

"A little power is more dangerous than great power," Debs answered. "If you have one hundred switchmen working in a yard and ten or twelve of them are organized, you will have a strike on your hands very soon. The unification of labor would mean the abolition of the wage system."

At another point Debs said:

"It is understood that a strike is a war, not necessarily of blood and bullets, but a war in the sense that it is a conflict between two contending interests or classes of interest. There is more or less strategy, too, in war and this was necessary in our operations in the A. R. U. strike. Orders were issued from here; questions were answered and our men kept in line from here."

There was some remarkable testimony given to the commission by federal, state and municipal officials, as well as newspaper reporters, concerning the conduct of

federal soldiers and deputies who were sent into the strike zone "to maintain law and order and protect private property." For instance, Chief Deputy U. S. Marshal Donnelly said:

"We had a regular force of men sworn in of between fourteen and fifteen hundred, and then we swore in four thousand for the railroads. The government armed and paid the regular force and the railroads armed and paid the others. The first lot of men we got were a poor lot. We went on the street and got such men as we could. The better class of men said they wouldn't serve against the strikers. At first we didn't ask for any certificates of character or fitness. We received our instructions from Attorney General Olney. He told us to hire all the men we needed. The number we needed was decided on at conferences between the United States District Attorney and Mr. Walker, special Assistant District Attorney, and attorney for the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway. The railroads would send in a batch of men, saying they were all right, and we gave the 'stars' to the railroads and took their receipt for them. These railway deputies were not under our orders; they made their reports to no one except the chief detectives of the railroads. They derived their authority from the United States. All the violence I saw and the car burning was done by boys—tough kids."

Superintendent Brennan, of the Chicago Police Department, in his report to the City Councils, stated that the strike was orderly and peaceable "until the army of thugs, thieves and ex-convicts" were sworn in as United States deputies by Mr. Walker. On page 356 of the commission's report appears this statement:

"Superintendent Brennan, of the Chicago Police, testified before the Commission that he has a number of deputy marshals in the county jail arrested while serving the railroads as United States deputy marshals for highway robbery."

Ray Stannard Baker, then a reporter for the *Chicago Record,* who, during the World Peace Conference at Versailles in 1919, was head of the American Information Press Bureau, testified as to his knowledge concerning the character of the U. S. deputies:

"From my experience with them it was very bad. I saw more cases of drunkenness, I believe, among the United States deputy marshals than I did among the strikers."

On page 370 of the report appears this comment of Harold I. Cleveland, reporter for the *Chicago Herald:*

"I was on the tracks of the Western Indiana fourteen days. . . . I saw in that time a couple of hundred deputy marshals. I think they were a very low, contemptible set of men."

On page 39 of the Commission's report we find that the late Mayor Pingree of Detroit came to Chicago with telegrams from the mayors of over fifty of the largest cities all urging that there should be arbitration. He was turned down without ceremony, and afterwards declared that the railroads were the only criminals and that they were responsible for all the consequences.

Mr. Harding, reporter for the *Chicago Times,* testified as follows:

"Captain O'Neill, of the Stock Yards, told me that volleys of shots were fired by the soldiers or the militia every day or night, which, on investigation, proved to have no cause other than the desire to create excitement. A crowd would naturally gather, newspaper reporters would flock around and they would gather something to tell, to brag about in the papers. I know this is so from talks with the men themselves."

After examining hundreds of witnesses the Commission made its report to President Cleveland. That report is in many respects a remarkable document and constitutes one of the most valuable histories of that phase of the American labor movement in which Debs

was a prime factor. We shall set down here only a few of the salient features of that report which, by the way, President Grover Cleveland virtually repudiated in an article signed by him, and reviewing and commenting upon the Pullman and A. R. U. strikes. This article of the late President was published in *McClure's Magazine,* July, 1904, under the title, "The Government in the Chicago Strikes of 1894." At the time of the publication of President Cleveland's article, in which the former chief executive naturally upheld and justified the conduct of his administration in that period of turbulence, Debs was engaged in his second campaign for President on the Socialist Party ticket.

Debs at once set himself to the task of replying to President Cleveland's article. *McClure's* did not publish it. Debs's answer finally appeared in the Socialist weekly, *The Appeal to Reason,* August 27, 1904. Debs referred to that report as follows:

"On page 44 of the Commission's report it is stated:

" 'United States deputy marshals, to the number of 3,600, were selected by and appointed at the request of the General Managers' Association, and of its railroads. They were armed and paid by the railroads, and acted in the double capacity of railroad employees and United States officers. While operating the railroads they assumed and exercised unrestricted United States authority when so ordered by their employers, or whenever they regarded it as necessary. They were not under the direct control of any government official while exercising authority. This is placing officers of the government under control of a combination of railroads. It is a bad precedent that might well lead to serious consequences.'

"As to the part the strikers played in the rioting and car burning that took place, we find on page 38 that:

" 'The strike occurred on May 11, and from that time until the soldiers went to Pullman, about July 4, 300 strikers were placed about the company's property, pro-

fessedly to guard it from destruction or interference. This guarding of property in strikes is, as a rule, a mere pretense. Too often the real object of guards is to prevent newcomers from taking strikers' places, by persuasion, often to be followed, if ineffectual, by intimidation and violence. The Pullman company claims this was the real object of these guards. The strikers are entitled to be believed to the contrary in this matter, because of their conduct and forebearance after May 11. It is in evidence, and uncontradicted, that no violence or destruction of property by strikers or sympathizers took place at Pullman, and that until July 3 (federal troops appeared on the scene on this date) no extraordinary protection was had from the police or military against anticipated disorder.' "

The newspapers of that period, obviously persuaded by the railroad corporations, printed articles to the effect that the A. R. U. strikers were guilty of high crimes and wholesale destruction of railroad property. It will be remembered that it was upon these charges that the federal grand jury at Chicago based the indictment against Debs and his associates. Concerning this matter the Commission says, on page 45 of its report:

"There is no evidence before the Commission that the officers of the American Railway Union at any time participated in or advised intimidation, violence or destruction of property. They knew, and fully appreciated, that as soon as mobs ruled the organized forces of society would crush the mobs and all responsible for them in the remotest degree, and that this meant defeat. The attacks on corporations and monopolies by the leaders in their speeches are similar to those to be found in the magazines and industrial works of the day."

On page 46 of the same report we read:

"Many impartial observers are reaching the view that much of the real responsibility for these disorders

rests with the people themselves and with the government for not adequately controlling monopolies and corporations, and failing to reasonably protect the rights of labor and redress its wrongs."

The subtle manner in which the message of Socialism began to seep through the bolted doors and barred windows of Woodstock Jail to Debs is best told by himself:*

"It all seems very strange to me now, taking a backward look, that my vision was so focalized on a single objective point that I utterly failed to see what now appears as clear as the noonday sun—so clear that I marvel that any workingman, however dull, uncomprehending, can resist it.

"But perhaps it was better so. I was to be baptized in Socialism in the roar of conflict and I thank the gods for reserving to this fitful occasion the fiat, 'Let there be light!'—the light that streams in steady radiance upon the broadway to the Socialist Republic.

"The skirmish lines of the A. R. U. were well advanced. A series of small battles were fought and won without the loss of a man. A number of concessions were made by the corporations rather than risk an encounter. Then came the fight on the Great Northern, short, sharp, and decisive. The victory was complete—the only railroad strike of magnitude ever won by an organization in America.

"Next followed the final shock—the Pullman strike—and the American Railway Union again won, clear and complete. The combined corporations were paralyzed and helpless. At this juncture there were delivered, from wholly unexpected quarters, a swift succession of blows that blinded me for an instant and then opened wide my eyes—and in the gleam of every bayonet and the flash of every rifle the class struggle was revealed.

* "How I Became a Socialist," in *New York Comrade*, April, 1902.

This was my first practical lesson in Socialism, though wholly unaware that it was called by that name.

"An army of detectives, thugs and murderers were equipped with badge and beer and bludgeon and turned loose; old hulks of cars were fired; the alarm bells tolled; the people were terrified; the most startling rumors were set afloat; the press volleyed and thundered, and over all the wires spread the news that Chicago's white throat was in the clutch of a red mob; injunctions flew thick and fast, arrests followed, and our office and headquarters, the heart of the strike, was sacked, torn out and nailed up by the 'lawful' authorities of the federal government; and when in company with my loyal comrades I found myself in Cook County Jail at Chicago with the whole press screaming conspiracy, treason and murder, and by some fateful coincidence I was given the cell occupied just previous to his execution by the assassin of Mayor Carter Harrison, Sr., overlooking the spot, a few feet distant, where the anarchists were hanged a few years before, I had another exceedingly practical and impressive lesson in Socialism.

"Acting upon the advice of friends, we sought to employ John Harlan, son of the Supreme Justice, to assist in our defense—a defense memorable to me chiefly because of the skill and fidelity of our lawyers, among whom were the brilliant Clarence Darrow and the venerable Judge Lyman Trumbull, author of the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery in the United States.

"Mr. Harlan wanted to think of the matter over night; and the next morning gravely informed us that he could not afford to be identified with the case, 'for,' said he, 'you will be tried upon the same theory as were the anarchists, with probably the same result.' That day, I remember, the jailer, by way of consolation, I suppose, showed us the blood-stained rope used at the last execution and explained in minutest detail, as he

exhibited the gruesome relic, just how the monstrous crime of lawful murder is committed.

"But the tempest gradually subsided and with it the blood-thirstiness of the press and 'public sentiment.' We were not sentenced to the gallows, nor even to the penitentiary—though put on trial for conspiracy. . . .

"The Chicago jail sentences were followed by six months at Woodstock and it was here that Socialism gradually laid hold of me in its own irresistible fashion. Books and pamphlets and letters from Socialists came by every mail and I began to read and think and dissect the anatomy of the system in which workingmen, however organized, could be shattered and battered and splintered at a single stroke. The writings of Bellamy and Blatchford early appealed to me. The 'Coöperative Commonwealth' of Gronlund also impressed me, but the writings of Kautsky were so clear and conclusive that I readily grasped, not merely his argument, but also caught the spirit of his Socialist utterance—and I thank him and all who helped me out of darkness into light.

"It was at this time, when the first glimmerings of Socialism were beginning to penetrate, that Victor L. Berger—and I have loved him ever since—came to Woodstock, as if a providential instrument, and delivered the first impassioned message of Socialism I had ever heard—the very first to set 'the wires humming in my system.' As a souvenir of that visit there is in my library a volume of 'Capital,' by Karl Marx, inscribed with the compliments of Victor L. Berger, which I cherish as a token of priceless value.

"The American Railway Union was defeated but not conquered—overwhelmed but not destroyed. It lives and pulsates in the Socialist movement, and its defeat but blazed the way to economic freedom and hastened the dawn of human brotherhood."

CHAPTER VIII

FOUR PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

IN four presidential campaigns—1900, 1904, 1908, 1912—Debs was the standard-bearer of the Socialist Party, and in 1916 he could have had the nomination had he not positively declined to make another national campaign. In that year Allan Benson, publicist, was the choice of the Socialists, while Debs stumped his home state, Indiana, as candidate for Congress. Of the campaign in 1900 but little is known save by those Socialists who date their membership in the party back twenty years. James Oneal, a member of the National Executive Committee of the party, and an intimate friend and neighbor of Debs for many years, stated that there was no stenographic record made of the 1900 convention proceedings, and whatever record was kept has not been published. The Socialist movement in those days was known as the Social-Democratic Party. It was usually regarded by the public as a fanatical band bent upon subtle destruction of the commonwealth "through their impossible economic and political theories." William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan were the nominees of the Republican and Democratic parties, respectively, but neither of them expended more energy or made a more intensive campaign than Debs who covered every state and territory, not once but several times. Debs's vote in that year was 96,116.*

Despite the comparative insignificance of his vote, that campaign stamped Debs a national figure, an orator of the first rank, of great eloquence and arresting sincerity. So, four years later it was but natural that

* Figures from 1919 "World Almanac and Encyclopedia."

the Socialists in national convention should again honor their foremost member.

On May 5, 1904, George D. Herron made the speech nominating Debs for president. Mr. Herron has since gained some prominence outside of the Socialist movement, from which he has severed his connections, by his public writings approving the administration of President Woodrow Wilson in the World War of 1914-1919. Mr. Herron closed his speech nominating Debs in this vein:

". . . I am sure that in the intensifying struggle that will bring upon us, in the next four or five years, things of which we do not now dream, that may try men's souls and bodies and faith, try the whole manhood of men as possibly men were never tried in human history—I feel that when that crisis or that day of judgment comes, the working class Socialist movement of America will be as great as its cause, and that it will rise up to match its opportunity.

"Now, there is no man in America who more surely and faithfully incarnates the heart-ache and the protest and the struggle of labor for its emancipation, or more surely voices that struggle, than Eugene V. Debs. . . . I count it as among the great joys of my life—I do not say honors, because I have done with them long ago—I count it among the great joys and opportunities of my life to stand before you to-day and nominate Eugene V. Debs as the candidate of the Socialist Party of the United States for President in our coming national campaign."

There were no other persons nominated and the convention made Debs's choice unanimous. At this convention Benjamin Hanford was unanimously chosen as the Vice-Presidential nominee. Morris Hillquit, recognized as one of the leading spokesmen for the American Socialist movement, in seconding Hanford's nomination, said:

". . . Under no circumstances could any better choice, any worthier choice, have been made for associate to the presidential candidate than you have made by the selection of Benjamin Hanford. . . . The strength and brains of the working class of this country will be well represented on our ticket."

In his speech of acceptance Hanford, now dead, paid a glowing tribute to Debs, stating that it was the opinion of the majority of the delegates long before the convention assembled that Debs would be the best possible bearer of the party's banner.

On May 6 Debs appeared before the convention and made his speech of acceptance. In introducing Debs to the convention, Chairman Seymour Stedman said: "Comrades, it is my pleasure to present to you the Ferdinand La Salle of the twentieth century."

Debs replied, in part, as follows:

"In the councils of the Socialist Party the collective will is supreme. Personally, I could have wished to remain in the ranks, to make my record, humble though it might be, fighting unnamed and unhonored, side by side with my comrades. I accept your nomination, not because of any honor it confers—for in the Socialist movement no comrade can be honored except as he honors himself by his fidelity to the movement. I accept your nomination because of the confidence it implies, because of the duty it imposes. I cannot but wish that I may in a reasonable measure meet your expectations; that I might prove myself fit and worthy to bear aloft in the coming contest the banner of the working class; that by my utterances and by my acts, not as an individual, but as your representative, I may prove myself worthy to bear the standard of the only party that proposes to emancipate my class from the thralldom of the ages. . . .

"To concentrate myself to my part in this great work is my supreme ambition. I can only hope to do that part which is expected of me so well that my comrades,

when the final verdict is rendered, will say, 'He is not remembered because he was a candidate for President; he did not aspire to hold office; he did not try to associate his name with the passing glories, but he did prove himself a worthy member of the Socialist Party; he proved his right to a place in the International Socialist movement.' . . .

"From the depths of my heart I thank you. I thank you and each of you, and through you those you represent. I thank you not from my lips merely. I thank you from the depths of a heart that is responsive to your consideration. We shall meet again. We shall meet often. And when we meet finally we shall meet as a victorious host to ratify the triumph of the Socialist Republic."

In the campaign of 1904 Debs had, as his leading opponents, Theodore Roosevelt and Judge Alton B. Parker, Republican and Democratic nominees respectively. In this campaign, as in the previous one, Debs was accompanied by his brother Theodore Debs, and several other veteran Socialist campaigners, among whom was Stephen Marion Reynolds. Debs carried the message of Socialism into every state in the Union and into every territory. For two months before the election he was on the road constantly, sometimes delivering six to ten speeches a day. The intensiveness of his campaign was the marvel of political circumstances, and the sincerity with which he conducted it evoked the admiration of all who heard him.

In 1904 Debs's vote jumped to 402,321.* The increased Socialist vote of over 400 per cent. gave rise to the gravest fears and the wildest joys—fears in the conservative camps, joys in the radical camps.

Between the years 1904-1908, and for some while after the latter year, Debs was contributing editor to the *Appeal to Reason,* when that free-lance Socialist weekly

* Figures from 1919 "World Almanac and Encyclopedia."

was published by the late J. A. Wayland, and edited by Fred Warren at Girard, Kansas. Between the presidential campaigns referred to, Debs toured the country several times under various auspices of the labor movement. He was never too tired to respond to a pressing demand, and they were many, to stop off at a wayside town or village to address his comrades. Scores of times after filling strenuous speaking engagements he has sat up all night on trains so that he might stop off at some city or town along the route to visit a faithful follower whom he knew to be ill or in need.

With the financial panic of 1907 a cloud of industrial depression again settled over the country, and the Socialists turned their attention to plans for the most intensive presidential campaign they had ever waged. The Socialists were the first of the political parties to hold their national convention. William H. Taft was the candidate of the Republicans, and Mr. Bryan, for the third time, was the choice of the Democratic Party. On May 14 Delegate Phillip H. Callery, of Missouri, made the opening speech nominating Debs for President. At the conclusion of his oration Callery told the delegates that if they nominated Debs he would "bring a message of hope to the weary mothers in the sweatshops, the thousands of child slaves in the factories, and to all of those who, with tired hands and saddened faces, bear the burdens of the world's work. It has been said of this comrade that he has made mistakes, to which we answer, 'To err is human, to forgive is divine.' This comrade bears the battle scars of twenty-five years of service in the labor movement."

John Spargo, who was a delegate from New York, and who had given many years of his life to the Socialist movement before he became a missionary and an apologist for the reactionary elements of the social system, in Russia as well as in the United States, made a brilliant

speech seconding Debs's nomination. Among other things, Spargo said:

*"We need above everything else, as our standard bearer, a man who will give us back our standard unsullied and unspoiled as he takes it; we need a man who will carry it from east to west and from north to south not merely without dishonor, but with the spirit of inspiration and of the revolution of the working class along with it. Eugene V. Debs is not only a man who will carry the spirit of the working class revolution along with its banner; he is the personification of the revolt of the working class in this country. . . . Eugene V. Debs drank the genius and passion for liberty from his mother's breasts. . . . He has breathed that genius and that passion with every breath of his own in these twenty-five years. . . . When Eugene V. Debs was born I think the morning stars must have sung together. When Eugene V. Debs was cradled I think that the great spirit of liberty must have watched with proud rejoicing and said, 'Here is my champion; here is my voice to cry out to all the world and say, as the prophet said of old, 'Let my people go!' When Eugene V. Debs speaks there rises before the gaze of every workingman in this country whose heart responds to the yearning for liberty, a vision of breaking chains, a vision of the uprising protesting host marching out of its misery, marching out of its servitude, marching on and on to that great freedom to which we all aspire. Therefore I second the nomination of Eugene V. Debs."

Delegate Seymour Stedman, of Chicago, opposed the nomination of Debs and named A. M. Simons, who, like Spargo and Herron, among others, ceased his activities in behalf of Socialism when war came to America in April, 1917. Delegate Stedman read to the convention

*Pages 147-148, "Proceedings National Convention of Socialist Party, 1908.

a letter from Debs which he had received that day. The letter follows:

"SEYMOUR STEDMAN, Chicago, Ill.

"My dear Steddy: Telegram sent by yourself, Williams and Berger has been received this moment. I am sorry not to be able to comply with your request. The *Appeal* has undertaken certain special work of some importance on the strength of my being here, and I cannot well abandon it at this time. I should be happy, of course, to attend the convention and to meet the comrades if the situation were such that I could do so. I see that my friends have again been very kind to me in this matter of nomination. I had hoped that my name would not be mentioned in that connection this year, and I have done what I could to discourage it; the reasons for this purely from the party standpoint, seem quite apparent to me. As for myself personally, I never had any ambition along that line. If I do anything worthy of keeping my name alive I prefer that it shall be done as a private in the ranks and not by having my name associated with some public office or with what may seem to be the desire of some public office. With loving regards, etc.,

"I am yours in the same old way,

"EUGENE V. DEBS."

It appears that Stedman had opposed Debs's nomination on the ground that Eugene's health might be seriously impaired if he were to submit himself again to the rigors of another national campaign.

On the other hand, Benjamin Hanford, of New York, who was one of the most brilliant men the Socialist movement of this country has yet produced, and the originator of the term "Jimmie Higgins" for those who do the hard, grinding work of party building without thought of reward or recognition, whose services are all a matter of love, and who are served by none, arose

in the convention and seconded the nomination of Debs after reading a letter from him, which follows:

"As to my throat and general health, I have improved considerably since I have had a chance to lead something like a regular life and get a reasonable amount of rest. I visited a specialist again a few months ago, and he assured me that my throat was greatly improved. At present I feel no ill effects. My general health is about all that could be desired. So far as strength is concerned, I never had more to my credit, if as much. In the coming campaign, however, I would prefer, if I had my choice, to so see what I could do with my pen and give my tongue a rest. I feel as if I can write a campaign and make some of the enemy take notice that there are Socialists in the field. Now, I will tell you candidly just how I feel. I have never refused to do, so far as I could, anything the party commanded me to do, and never shall. I have taken the nomination under protest, but I have no desire to run for office and a positive prejudice against the very thought of holding office. To obey the commands of the Socialist Party I violated a vow made years ago that I would never again be a candidate for political office. My whole ambition—and I have a goodly stock of it—is to make myself as big and as useful as I can, as much opposed to the enemy and as much loved by our comrades as any other private in the ranks. You need have no fear that I shall shirk my part in the coming campaign. I shall be in condition, and I hope there will be no good ground for complaint when the fight is over.

"Very sincerely,

"Eugene V. Debs."

There was total of 198 votes cast at this convention, 159 of which were received by Debs. On motion of Delegate Victor L. Berger, of Milwaukee, and seconded by Delegate Stedman of Chicago, the convention made the vote for Debs unanimous.

For a second time Ben Hanford was chosen as Vice-Presidential nominee. When Debs heard that his old friend and comrade, Hanford, had again been chosen for the second post of honor, he wrote to him:

"Girard, Kansas, May 15, 1908.

BEN HANFORD, care Socialist Convention, Brand's Hall, Chicago.

"Hearty congratulations and handclasps across the spaces. The posts of honor assigned us are posts of honor only because they are posts of duty and responsibility. You will vindicate brilliantly the wisdom of the convention and I hope at least to keep it from reproach. Greetings to the greatest convention ever assembled in the United States. Cheers for the revolution.

"EUGENE V. DEBS."

This was followed the same day by a letter accepting the nomination, which follows:

"Girard, Kansas, May 15, 1908.

"FREDERIC HEATH, Secretary, Socialist Party Convention:

"My dear Comrades:—Deeply touched by the incomparable honor you have for the third time conferred upon me, I accept the nomination for the presidency, returning to each of you, to the convention as a whole, and to the party at large, my sincere thanks. The hearty unanimity with which the nomination is made, and the magnificent spirit in which it is tendered fill me and thrill me with inexpressible emotion and arouse within me all the latent energy and enthusiasm to serve the Socialist Party and the great cause it represents, with all the mental, moral and physical strength of my being.

"Personally, I had earnestly hoped the convention would choose otherwise, but as individual desire is subordinate to the party will, I can only wish myself greater strength and fitness to bear the revolutionary banner of the working class you have placed in my hands.

"Permit me to congratulate you upon the nomination of Comrade Hanford, and to express my personal gratification in having a comrade so loyal to share in upholding the proletarian standard. At a later day I shall make formal answer to your notification.

"This year the command to advance must be issued to all the hosts of Socialist emancipation. The working class of the United States must be aroused this year and made to feel the quickening pulse, the throbbing hope and the stern resolve of the social revolution. The greatest opportunity in the history of the Socialist movement spreads out before us like a field of glory.

"The principles of the Socialist Party are resplendent with the truths which crown them. Its very name is prophetic and its spirit is literal fulfillment in this auspicious hour supreme with opportunity. Duty to the cause transcends all else, and touching elbows, and hearts keeping time to the quick steps of the revolution, we march beneath the banner (no compromise) to certain victory.

"My soul love and greeting to you all, my comrades. My heart is full and overflowing. With every drop of my blood and every fiber of my being I render obedience to your command, and offer myself body and soul, to the Socialist Party, the working class and the revolution.

"Eugene V. Debs."

It was the almost unanimous opinion of political observers and experts of that day—1908—that there had never been waged before in this country a political campaign as spectacular and as replete with dramatic circumstance, nor one as pregnant and promising of great results as that which Debs carried from one end of this country to the other for sixty days before election. The meetings of William H. Taft and William Jennings Bryan were largely attended, and both candidates provoked enthusiasm wherever they appeared, but at the

Debs meetings, no matter where they were held, men, women and children fought for vantage points and in some sections of the country trampled upon each other in their wild determination to clasp the hand or tug at the coat sleeve of this "new Napoleon of the west," whose message to his followers was not concerned so much with politics and cure-alls for social ills as it was with love, one for another, a plea for universal happiness and personal kindness, and a solemn command for the assertion of manhood and womanhood, and the protection for childhood. Like a Savonarola commanding his followers to destroy their idols and burn their vanities, and pay heed only to the word of God, Debs told the multitudes who flocked to hear him to bow before no king or tyrant, to accept the word of no leader as the gospel truth, but to use their heads with the same energy as they had for many years used their hands, to crown themselves sovereigns in the glory of their own manhood. Every speech that he made was directed to the personality of the individual, and every word was struck off from his heart like sparks from steel and went straight to the heart of the person.

Brand Whitlock, former mayor of Toledo, Ohio, and United States minister to Belgium, on June 16, 1908, commented on the Republican National Convention, as follows:

"A few weeks ago another convention was held in Chicago, not on the Lake Front, nor was there any parade on the Lake Front. That convention was held back in the heart of Chicago, where, perhaps, the misery and squalor of our industrial life shows more glaringly than in any city in the country. That convention, according to the frugal reports, was disorderly. It was a real convention and all real conventions are disorderly. The delegates were intensely in earnest, every one had to make a speech, every one had to try to get other men to help him realize his ideals. That was the

convention of the Socialist Party. One wonders how long it will be before this well-mannered crowd on the Lake Front learns of that other convention so much like the one forty-eight years ago (Lincoln's in 1860), and begins to inquire what it is all about. To-day in the midst of all this conspicuous waste, talking with such lack of interest of Taft, and of how Bryan might beat him if Bryan were new, it is evident that they do not know that there is such a thing as an economic question, or a hungry workless man in the world. Didn't Lincoln set men free forty years ago?"

The two major political parties were making much ado about the funds contributed by corporations and rich individuals to each other's campaign fund. This controversy caused Debs to issue a statement from Terre Haute concerning the funds contributed to the Socialist treasury:

"The Socialist Party has always published all receipts and expenditures in connection with its political campaigns, and this year will be no exception to the rule.

"The campaign fund of the Socialist Party is made up almost wholly of the nickels and dimes of the working class, and all contributions are published in the official bulletin of the national party at the time they are made, and at the close of each campaign due report of all receipts and expenditures is made by the campaign committee and the national secretary, copies of which are furnished to the party press and the party membership. Not a dollar so far has been received by the Socialist Party from any corporation, and not a dollar ever received by it has been used except for the education of the working class.

"Eugene V. Debs."

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, early in July, decided to raise a fund from the membership of the party to finance a "Red Special"

campaign train which would carry Debs into every nook and corner of the United States. The train consisted of a combined sleeper, observation and dining coach, a baggage car and an engine. As the "Red Special" entered each state local speakers and candidates were taken aboard to assist in the work in their states. There was a "Red Special" band of music on the train to arouse the public as the candidate approached a city or town. The baggage car was filled with Socialist literature of every description and this was circulated freely through the country. "The Red Special" cost the Socialist Party $20,000, every penny of which was contributed voluntarily by the membership and sympathizers.

The Socialist train left Chicago on August 31, for the west. Not one town was omitted from its itinerary. No sooner had it gotten under steam than the Democratic Party newspapers printed stories accusing the Republicans of financing the expedition to worry the Democrats. This statement was promptly disproved by the publication of the names and addresses of persons who had contributed toward the enterprise.

Harry C. Parker, of Philadelphia, was in general charge of the train on its westward sweep.

Before the "Red Special" started Debs had been campaigning in several states of the west, especially Kansas. On August 24, he wrote as follows:

"The meetings out here are big as all outdoors and red hot with enthusiasm. Ye Gods! But these are pregnant days! The hosts pour in from all directions —men, women, children and babies, and all of them, including the babies, are up in arms against the capitalist system. The farmers out here, thousands of them, are revolutionary to the core and ripe and ready for action. Socialists are nearly as thick out here, and quite as strictly strenuous, as the grasshoppers used to be. The plutes will need the doctor and the preacher when the votes are counted. The 'Red Special' is trump.

The people are wild about it and the road will be lined with the cheering hosts of the proletarian revolution.

"EUGENE V. DEBS."

Debs received a letter from Alexander Law, of the National Committee for the Unemployed, asking him to address the jobless workers, who would gather in New York on September 25. All the presidential candidates had been invited to speak before that body. On August 10 Debs replied from Girard, Kansas, as follows:

"My dear Sir:—Your favor of the fourth instant has been received and noted. Replying, I have to say that I am vitally interested in the question of the unemployed and appreciate the invitation you extend to attend the convention of the unemployed to be held in September, but as I shall be engaged in campaign work at that time, it will be impossible for me to join you, gladly as I would do so under other circumstances.

"Thanking you for your kindness, and hoping that your convention may be fruitful of good results, especially in opening the eyes of the working class to the fact that it is the capitalist system which is responsible for unemployment, and that this system must be abolished before the problem can be solved,

"I remain, yours fraternally,

"EUGENE V. DEBS."

The Negroes' National League, through its president, Rev. J. Milton Waldron, addressed a letter to Debs asking him to state his position on the Negro question. In his reply, dated from Girard, Kansas, June 30, 1908, Debs wrote, in part:

"The people of your race are entitled to all the rights and opportunities that other races are entitled to, but they have never had them, nor will they ever have them under the administration of either the Republican or Democratic parties.

"Let me say to you candidly that in the individual matter of defeating William H. Taft as the candidate

of the Republican Party we cannot join you. We Socialists attach no importance to mere individuals in political campaigns, and have no sympathy with any movement designed to inflict punishment on individual candidates for real or fancied wrongs. We are organized to overthrow the capitalist system which is maintained politically by both the Republican and Democratic parties, and to establish the Socialist Republic in which all men and all women, regardless of race, nationality or creed, may enjoy equal freedom. To accomplish this we are not making war upon individuals, but upon a social and industrial system, in which individuals, especially those prominent in political life, do practically as they must to obtain their ends.

"The Brownsville affair, we admit, was disgraceful and indefensible; but it cannot be said that it was due to race discrimination. At least the outrage cannot be supported upon that theory. The officials of the Western Federation of Miners were not Negroes, but white men, and yet they were kidnaped by conspiracy of Republican governors and by sanction of President Roosevelt and at the behest of the Mine Owners' Association. It is not a question of race, but a question of class. The white working man is no higher in the present social scale than is the Negro, and although the prejudice of the one against the other is assiduously cultivated by the ruling class, that class has no more real regard for a wage slave of one color than of another.

"I agree perfectly to what you say about President Roosevelt. He is in truth a czar, but whether he is or is not makes but little difference, after all, in this capitalist system. The President of our so-called Republic has equal power, to say the least, with the Emperor of Germany, or the King of England, and, as a matter of fact, he makes use of power which neither of these monarchs would dare exercise over their subjects. This country is ruled to-day by the President and the Su-

preme Court, and this resolves itself practically into the President alone, since Supreme Court judges are creatures of his appointment.

"In this system class rules class and will while the system lasts, and this, as I have already indicated, is not a race question, but a class question, and when the Negroes, the great mass of whom are wage earners, develop sufficient intelligence to understand their true economic and political interests, they will join and support the Socialist Party, the only political party in the world to-day whose declared purpose is to abolish class rule and establish a republic whose fundamental principle is the equal rights and freedom of all.

"Ever since the close of the Civil War the Republican Party has used the Negro as a political asset. The Republican Party cares not one whit more for the Negro than does the Democratic Party. . . . The Northern Republican manufacturer places precisely the same estimate upon the Negro as the Southern cotton-grower. He esteems him for the use he can make of him and the surplus value he can extract from his labor power. . . .

"The Socialist Party wants every Negro vote it can get, provided it represents the intelligence, dignity and honesty of the man who casts it. The Socialist Party does not invest in whiskey and cigars as a means of influencing the votes of Negroes or others, nor does it spend a single cent to influence any man's vote except as that vote can be influenced in an educational way. . . ."

Failing of a broad-gauged argument upon which they might meet the Socialist's theories, the stump speakers of both the major parties accused Debs of belittling the flag of the nation, to which accusation he replied on September 5:

"We say that the national flag has been polluted by the plutocracy who have used it to shield themselves in their evil doing. It is not at present the flag of the

patriot but has become the flag of predatory wealth, in its exploitation of the working class and its ravages upon the people generally. This is the only objection the Socialists have ever urged against the colors of the United States, and in this position they have the indorsement of every true patriot in the land. It is the corrupt and truckling politician who goes to the legislature and Congress, either as a so-called representative or as a lobbyist to defeat the will of the people, who is the first to point to the flag and claim to be a patriot in its name."

At Muscatine, Iowa, Debs addressed 2,000 people. As he was going through the train-shed of the depot to board the "Red Special" an impressive and pathetic scene was enacted. James Carter, an aged employee of the Rock Island Railroad, pushed his way through the crowds and nudged up alongside of Debs. The tall, gaunt man turned swiftly around; there was an instant's hesitation and then Debs threw both his arms around the old railroader and pressed him close to his bosom. He kissed his seamed face and patted his furrowed cheeks. 'Gene and Jim had not met for thirty years—since their boyhood days when both were working on the Vandalia Railroad, in Indiana. In those days both men were fired with ambition, and now, in the middle of their life's span they had met again and tears, big and hot, rolled down the cheeks of each.

On his swing around the country at that time, and before and since, Debs ran across hundreds of old American Railway Union men, and together they spun their yarns about the old days of great strike in '94. Debs went out of his way hundreds of times to visit the homes of these old veterans, and he was usually laden with gifts for the wife and children of his former comrade.

On September 3, the Kansas City *Times* commented about Debs's meeting in that city:

"Eugene V. Debs, candidate for President of the United States of the Socialist Party, spoke to a crowd of 2,500 to 3,000 persons, all of whom paid an admission fee, in Convention Hall last night. Mr. Debs, though the greatest spell-binder of the party, is drawing just $3 a day for conducting his own campaign. The audience was composed largely of workingmen, but there were many business men who listened attentively to everything Mr. Debs said. A large number of women were also present.

" 'This is about the time of the year,' said Debs, 'when the orators of the capitalist parties—the Democrats and Republicans—are coming before you and telling you how intelligent you are—they tell you how intelligent you are to keep you ignorant. We tell you how ignorant you are to make you intelligent. You produce all wealth and have none of it. The capitalist class produces no wealth and has all of it. You make automobiles and—walk.'

" 'And get run over,' shouted a voice from the audience."

Further down the column, the *Times* said:

"When the 'Red Special' bearing Eugene V. Debs and his party reached here at 6:30 o'clock last night there were several hundred men and women waiting. They swarmed into the cars to see the candidate. But Mr. Debs with his secretary had shut himself up in his private office. He would see no one—and small wonder at that, for he had made ten speeches, some of them forty minutes in length, since leaving Des Moines at six o'clock in the morning. . . . The train was getting more behind schedule at each special stop but there was no other graceful way out of the predicament when a crowd of farmers surrounded the train yelling 'Debs!' At little towns the 'Red Special' band tried to put off the enthusiasts with a lively rendition of 'Marseillaise,'

but there was nothing doing in that line. The French anthem only made them worse."

Several times while the "Red Special" was touring the western part of the country Debs issued appeals to the membership of the Socialist Party for more funds to enable the train to invade the east. Once, at least, there seemed to be a likelihood that the "Red Special" would have to be abandoned for lack of financial fuel; but this discouraging barrier was surmounted and the train rolled on to the eastward with its band and campaigners. On September 29, the train rolled into Toledo, Ohio. Thousands of people were at the depot to welcome Debs and the "Red Special," among them being Brand Whitlock, who was at that time mayor of the city. Mr. Whitlock, who has since become an international figure because of the part he played in aiding Belgium, not only greeted Debs most cordially, but the newspapers of that period report that he contributed five dollars to the "Red Special" campaign fund. A tremendous parade was held in which Mayor Whitlock took part, the papers so reported. That evening a rousing meeting was held at Memorial Hall, which held 2,000 people. Several overflow meetings were addressed by Debs. Congressman Isaac R. Sherwood, of Ohio, applauded Debs's arraignment of the "System."

The *Miners' Magazine* for September, 1908, commented upon the fact that Debs had been refused permission to speak in the famous Stanford University Chapel, in San Francisco. Said the *Miners' Magazine:*

". . . The class which dominates this institution feel no generous thrills vibrating their hearts for the class whose cause Debs advocates and defends. It is doubtful if Christ returned to earth and preached the same doctrines that He proclaimed nineteen hundred years ago that He would have been admitted to the chapel of Stanford University."

San Francisco was not the only city, by any means,

that made it difficult for Debs to have his hearing before the people. In Philadelphia one of the heads of the police department tried to raise barriers in the way of Debs speaking there. The Philadelphia Socialists sought to obtain the Grand Opera House for the Debs meeting which was scheduled for October 11th. Charles W. Ervin, now editor-in-chief of the New York *Call*, who for many years has been a faithful and loyal devotee to the cardinal principles of social and economic justice, and personally friendly to Debs, was at that time chairman of the Campaign Committee for Philadelphia. The manager of the Grand Opera House informed Mr. Ervin by letter that Debs could not have the Grand Opera House except by order of the Department of Public Safety. Mr. Ervin adjusted the matter by having Debs speak in two smaller halls instead of the large one.

Before Debs's humanistic qualities and kindliness had become a matter of almost universal knowledge, and before many people knew that every phase and angle of his many-sided life was spotless, he was subjected time and again to unfounded accusations concerning his public career. Most of the time Debs did not bother to answer these taunts and calumnies. Like every other self-respecting public man, he allowed his life's record to stand as the answer to those who would revile him and bear false witness against him. In 1908 when he was assailed by some of his political adversaries, the Socialist National Campaign Committee at Chicago caused to be published in the Socialist press of the country a letter written the year before by the mayor of Terre Haute, Indiana, Debs's home city. The letter follows:

Executive Department
City of Terre Haute, Indiana
James Lyons, Mayor

"February 27, 1907.

"MR. JOHN CUTHBERTSON,

"Crooked Lake, Michigan.

"Dear Sir:—Yours of the 24th inst. received requesting information without any political bias as to the standing of Eugene V. Debs in this community.

"In reply, will state that while the overwhelming majority of the people here are opposed to the social and economic theories of Mr. Debs, that there is not perhaps a single man in this city who enjoys to a greater degree than Mr. Debs the affection, love and profound respect of the entire community.

"He is cultured, brilliant, eloquent, scholarly and companionable, loveable in his relations with his fellowman. At home he is known as 'Gene, and that perhaps indicates our feeling towards him as a man, independent of his political views.

"He numbers his friends and associates among all classes, rich and poor, and some of the richest men here, people who by very instinct are bitter against Socialism, are warm personal friends of Mr. Debs.

"His personal life is spotless and he enjoys a beautiful home life. Few public men have been more persistently and cruelly misrepresented by the press of the country.

"When such men as James Whitcomb Riley, the Hoosier Poet, comes to Terre Haute, he is always the guest of Mr. Debs.

"If you care to use this letter in any way for publication, you are at liberty to do so. Every word I have written, and I am not in sympathy with Mr. Debs's views on Socialism, I know would be heartily indorsed by the people of this city. Very respectfully,

"JAMES LYONS,

"Mayor."

On October 2, 1908, the "Red Special" arrived in New York state, and this was cause for great demonstrations in every city and town. At Rochester, for instance, 5,000 people struggled for paid admission into Convention Hall. Many hundreds more were unable to edge their way inside. Debs often falls into epigrams in his speeches, as, for instance, at Rochester when he said:

"The capitalist refers to you as mill hands, farm hands, factory hands, machine hands—hands, hands! You are the horny-handed sons of toil. If you ought to be proud of your hands the capitalist ought to be ashamed of his.

"A capitalist would feel insulted if you called him a hand. He's a head. The trouble is he owns his head and your hands."

Four days before Debs spoke at the Hippodrome in New York City every seat in the great amphitheater was sold. One of the newspapers of New York City in commenting on the meeting, said:

"With a deafening roar 10,000 men and women transformed the interior of the Hippodrome into a mountainous red-capped wave of revolution that whistled and screamed for Socialism when Eugene V. Debs appeared and answered the cry of humanity. For twenty-five minutes the full-lunged protest gave tongue to the protest against the 'System' in an unparalleled demonstration."

"What was deemed still more remarkable about the meeting," spoke another newspaper, "was that all these people had paid from 15 cents to 50 cents for admission. No other political party than the Socialist could do the same thing."

After this giant meeting had closed Debs dodged back of the stage to the exit so quickly that the audience did not know he was escaping. They filed into the street, and several thousand enthusiasts struggled to keep his

waiting automobile from turning a wheel toward his hotel. They wanted to meet the man himself. They demanded to touch the hand of the human dynamo that had ignited the latent moral and spiritual powers within them, transfiguring them from mere workaday automatons into flaming symbols of revolt.

Joshua Wanhope, an old sailor, and one of the most brilliant writers of the Socialist movement, had been campaigning with Debs on the "Red Special" as candidate for governor of New York. Of the Hippodrome meeting Wanhope said:

"If Roosevelt were here I believe he would remark, with amazement, upon the astonishing increase of 'undesirable citizens!' It might impress Mr. Gompers with the untruth of his assertion as to Debs being the Apostle of Failure. This audience does not look like failure, or, if it does, the English language needs a new dictionary. I never was an optimist. But unless all signs fail, this generation is not going to pass until we see Socialism realized."

One of the best speeches of Debs's career was delivered at that Hippodrome meeting. We should like to set down here a few of the salient points which he developed in his oration:

THE PASSING OF CAPITALISM

". . . Capitalism has fulfilled its mission, for the capitalist class can no longer control the productive forces, nor manage industry, nor give employment to the workers. And so the historic mission of this movement is to abolish capitalism, based upon private ownership, and recognize society upon a basis of collective ownership of the means of production and distribution. This change is coming just as certain as I stand in your presence. It will come as soon as you are ready for it, and you will be ready for it just as soon as you understand what Socialism means.

"INDIVIDUALITY

". . . You read in the newspapers that under Socialism you will be reduced to the dead level of degradation. You are there now. They tell you that Socialism will destroy your individuality. You haven't got any. The wage slave has no individuality. What is individuality? It is the expression unhampered of the individual's mental and moral and spiritual qualities. It is the human being in full bloom. The thirty million wage workers who are dependent upon the capitalist system for work are walking apologies, most of them. They have hinges in their knees. They doff their hats in the presence of a two by four boss. They are repressed and cramped and their aspirations are stifled, because they have got to beg for work, and therefor they have to beg to live, and they have no individuality.

BREAKING UP THE FAMILY

"They tell you that Socialism would break up the family, destroy the home. There are 80,000 divorces a year under capitalism. Capitalism destroys the family all over this country in all the circling hours of the day and night. How about the families of the five million who have no work? Who have got to leave their families, or their huts, or their hovels, or their lairs in a vain search somewhere else for other masters, and after they reach a point four or five hundred miles away from home and their last penny is gone and their clothes are seedy they receive a letter from home. Observe them closely as they read it; you will find the tears coursing down their cheeks. The wife reports that the rent is due and that she and the children are about to be evicted and put upon the street. The children are hungry. These men become tramps. Their lives are destroyed, their homes are wrecked, and the happiness of all these people is wrecked.

THE FRUIT OF CAPITALISM

"Nothing is certain in this system except uncertainty. You may have $50,000 and die in an almshouse and sleep your last sleep in a Potter's field. If you are a workingman and you have a little girl of eight or ten, and your wage is small, or you are out of a job at the very age when this child ought to be under the care of a loving mother and have a comfortable home, and be out in the sunlight and have wholesome food—and nothing is so easily produced—the child is under the hunger whip of capitalism, and at eight or ten she has got to go to a mill or a factory and she stands beside the machine all day long. She feeds the machine. The machine starves her. If it be written in the book of fate that that blue-eyed child of yours that you love far more than you do your own life . . . shall perish in a brothel hell, I want you to know that you are responsible for it if you support this System.

AN OBLIGATION

". . . You and I who are on earth to-day are under great obligation to the splendid men, the magnificent women, who made sacrifices that we might enjoy some degree of liberty, some degree of civilization. We can only discharge that obligation by doing or trying to do something in the interest of those who are to come after us. It ought to be the high mission of every man and woman to do something to make it possible for some child to come to his or to her grave and place a flower where he or she sleeps and say, 'This world is better and brighter for me because of your having been here.'

THE END OF WARS

". . . With the end of industrial and commercial competition comes the end of war, and with the beginning of world-wide coöperation comes the inauguration

of the reign of peace on earth and good will toward all men. So that when this movement sweeps into power, and establishes an industrial democracy, every man will have the inalienable right to work, will receive what he produces, may stand forth a free man, enjoy the fruit of his labor, have a comfortable home, a happy wife, his children at play or at school; and in that hour the badge of labor will be the only badge of nobility."

On October 23, 1908, Debs spoke at Evansville, Indiana. Mr. Taft made a speech in the same city that night and the newspapers of that city commented upon the fact that more people had paid an admission fee to hear Debs than those who went to hear Mr. Taft at a free meeting.

On the eve of the national election in 1908, October 28, the national Socialist movement felt itself considerably strengthened by the fact that Charles Edward Russell, noted magazine writer and author of several books on social and economic subjects, definitely allied himself with the Socialist Party by applying for membership. "It seems to me that essential conditions have grown worse instead of better," said Mr. Russell. "The Socialist Party is the only party that promises to deal adequately with these conditions, hence all my sympathies are with the Socialist Party." At the same time, Lincoln Steffens, radical American publicist, while not allying himself with the party, in a public statement to the press, urged the people to support Debs for President and the other Socialist candidates. Mr. Russell, in 1916, broke away from the Socialist Party on the war question, favoring American preparedness for battle with Germany, while the major sentiment in the party was pacifistic at that time. Debs was one of the first persons to come to Mr. Russell's defense in a statement in the party's press, saying that while he heartily disagreed with Mr. Russell's views on preparedness and the part America should play in the World War, yet he

acknowledged the courage and candor that Mr. Russell had displayed in stating his position in face of almost a hundred per cent. opposition of his party.

One of the last campaign speeches that Debs made in that year was at Woodstock, Illinois, the town in which he had served a six-months' jail sentence thirteen years before for contempt of court in connection with the American Railway Union strike. Debs spoke from the steps of the jail to half a thousand people, among whom was Mr. Eckert, who was Debs's jailer in 1895. Debs referred to the jail as the college where he had been educated, and there was no trace of bitterness in his words as he showed a few of his friends the cell where he had been confined as a defiant labor unionist.

The last campaign speech that Debs made that year was in Chicago, the day before election, in the Seventh Regiment Armory, where a crowd estimated at 16,000 people struggled to hear him. Before the meeting, there was a parade in which 14,000 Chicago workers marched along a route extending two miles. Debs, on foot, marched at the head of this great labor procession, which recalled the distant days when a similar demonstration had been made in his honor upon his release from Woodstock Jail.

At his home in Terre Haute, surrounded by his wife and his brother Theodore, members of his immediate family and a few friends, Debs, on election night, was enjoying his first rest in many arduous months. His was not the concern which must have possessed Mr. Taft and Mr. Bryan, for he knew well enough he had not been elected. He had not campaigned for that purpose. Had the miracle of miracles happened, and he had found himself actually the President-elect there would not have been an unhappier man than he, for that office would have imposed upon him the duty of performing many unkind and questionable, if subtle, acts such as must needs be performed by any public officer, no mat-

ter how high-spirited he may be, and 'Gene Debs simply could not do an unkind thing or perform any act that would redound to the injury of a human being—he could not do that, not even to be President of the United States. But he had waged an educational campaign for Socialism, the like which this country had never seen before. More than that, he had left a trail of light wherever he had gone, and had brought cheer and hope to the workers.

Before the votes were even counted he telegraphed to the party press a statement in the course of which he said:

"The campaign is ended, and my very first thought is of the kindness shown me and the loyal support given me in every part of the country. While at times the exactions were trying, I was sustained every hour by the loving care and unflagging support of comrades. To me this was the beautiful and satisfying feature of the campaign. It expressed the true spirit of Socialist comradeship, which is the making of our movement, and which will sustain it through every ordeal until it is finally triumphant."

Despite the tremendous meetings, wild enthusiasm and the "Red Special," the Debs vote in 1908 showed but a slight increase over that of four years before. The Socialist vote in 1908 was 420,973.*

The 1912 convention of the Socialist Party, which was held at Indianapolis, was even more disorderly, if by that term enthusiasm is implied, than Brand Whitlock had discovered at the 1908 convention in Chicago. During those four years the Industrial Workers of the World had grown to be an organization wielding considerable influence in industries that employed large numbers of unskilled workers, and poorly paid skilled ones. Debs had been one of the leading spirits in the initial organization of the I. W. W. in 1905. Even be-

* Figures from the "World Almanac and Encyclopedia," 1919.

fore that period he had taken his stand for industrial unionism as against trade unionism. In 1908 the I. W. W. eliminated the political clause from its Preamble, an act which Debs termed "a monstrous blunder."* Despite his disagreement with the Chicago faction of the I. W. W., who were non-political, Debs continued to entertain a strong regard for the I. W. W. movement generally because of its uncompromising attitude on all economic and industrial questions affecting the real wage earners of America.

When the delegates assembled in 1912 at Indianapolis it was apparent that a serious division would come in the party because of the I. W. W., who counted among its membership many Socialists. The conservative wing of the party maintained that the I. W. W. was a destructive organization because it openly advocated "sabotage" and "direct action" against employers, and, moreover, discouraged political action. William D. Haywood, who was a member of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, and at the same time active in the councils of the I. W. W., led the fight of "the Reds" in that convention. Despite distinct division in the convention between these two elements, when the time came for choosing a presidential candidate, it was a foregone conclusion that Debs would be nominated for the fourth consecutive time. Both sides could, and did, accommodate their tactical differences, for both factions knew that Debs, more than any other man in the American labor movement, stood solidly and squarely for the complete overthrow of the capitalist system by both industrial and political methods, intelligently and peaceably applied, and in the final analysis that was the aim of both the I. W. W. and the Socialist Party.

As one observer at the convention put it, "The next

*Page 252, "The I. W. W., A Study of American Syndicalism," by Paul Frederick Brissenden.

business was the nomination for president on the Socialist ticket, and a roll call being ordered, Dan Hogan got a chance to yell for Debs. After that there was nothing to it. It was clearly evident that both sides were ready to get together on Debs."* The total vote of the delegates for President showed 165 for Debs; 56 for Emil Seidel, former Socialist mayor of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and 54 for Charles Edward Russell, of New York. Mr. Seidel was chosen Vice-Presidential nominee, Mr. Russell declining to accept the nomination.

Debs made a whirlwind campaign in 1912, with three adversaries, President Taft, Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt. When the votes were counted Debs had polled 897,011,† more than doubling his vote in 1908.

At this moment, with Debs in a prison cell, he is again being talked of in the Socialist press, as the party's choice for President in 1920. "We will run him for the White House from his prison cell in Atlanta," some of his followers assert, arguing that if Debs is still a prisoner during the next campaign that fact would make him a highly dramatic figure in the political equation.

* Page 827, *International Socialist Review*, June, 1912.

† Figures from the "World Almanac and Encyclopedia," 1919.

CHAPTER IX

LIBERTARIAN AND LOVER

"GOD was feeling mighty good when he made 'Gene Debs, and he didn't have anything else to do all day," wrote James Whitcomb Riley, the "Hoosier Poet."

The great minds and tender hearts of America have long been attracted to Debs, and this is especially true of the poets. It is extremely doubtful if any other single American, not excepting Lincoln, has inspired the poets of his native country more than 'Gene Debs. We are not speaking now of the Socialist poets—persons of his own political faith and economic creed—but rather of those singers, past and present, who have brought laughter and tears to the public generally. Debs has at one time or another been linked with the best and most famous of them by silver threads of fellowship. One of the earliest of those was Riley. Debs soon perceived the genius of the Indianian. Away back in those early years—the eighties—when he was tramping the country trying to organize the railroad firemen he found time to drop off at Indianapolis to see Riley. The poet was not at home. But Debs arranged with the poet's manager to have him come to Terre Haute. Debs has told this story himself, and we shall let him tell it now:

"The first appearance of the Hoosier Poet in our city was anything but a shining success, although the poet gave a brilliant exhibition of his wonderful powers as a mimic and as an impersonator of the characters sketched in his poems and studies. The entertainment was given in the old Dowling Hall, and there was a painfully diminutive attendance.

"Riley himself had more than measured up to expectations. He was, indeed, a delicious treat to those who could appreciate his quaint humor, his melting pathos, his poetic imagery and his flawless, faithful impersonation. His hoosier farmer was fresh from the soil, a breathing, boasting, homespun reality. His dandified schoolmaster teaching a country class was the very perfection of mimic art, while his child-stories, told in their own simple, guileless fashion and accentuated with their own eager, impulsive gestures, were too marvelously true to nature to admit even of the faintest suspicion that, in heart and imagination, the poet had outgrown his own Elysian childhood.

"Surely, I argued to myself that night, this settles the question of Riley's genius, and never again will the God-gifted Hoosier Poet be humiliated by so paltry an audience in Terre Haute. On his next visit he will without doubt be greeted by an overflowing house and given a rapturous ovation.

"But alas! the second audience was even smaller than the first. My surprise and mortification may be imagined. But I was more than ever determined that the people of Terre Haute should see James Whitcomb Riley and realize that a poet had sprung up out of their own soil—a native wild flower at their very feet—whose fame would spread all over the land and beyond the seas to the most distant shores. A third attempt resulted in another dismal failure."

Debs says that it was not until some few years later that Riley, who had met Bill Nye, whose fame as a humorous philosopher was then in the ascendant, was invited at the instance of the latter to appear before the assembled authors and their guests at their national entertainment held at the Academy of Music in New York.

"To be sure," says Debs, "he had already received a letter from Longfellow, highly commending a poem

which chanced to come under the eye of the elder poet, but his fame was chiefly confined to his native state and even there to limited circles. But when he rendered his dialect masterpiece, 'When the Frost Is on the Punkin,' in his own inimitable style, he thrilled with ecstasy the cold and critical literary audience which had been surfeited with dignified and prosaic discourse, and the house echoed and reëchoed with excited applause."

"I remember once asking Riley if his work came easy," Debs said, "and his witty answer came back to me: 'Easy! I should say not. It's like grinding sausage meat with bones in it.'" On another occasion Debs asked Riley if he had worked very hard over a certain task he had performed and if he felt tired when he had finished it.

"I felt when I had got through with that job as if I had given birth to a rough-shod colt."

For many years Debs and the Hoosier Poet exchanged visits between Terre Haute and Indianapolis. Riley lived in the latter city. Following one of Debs's visits to Riley he had sent the poet some roses of which he was passionately fond. Then came this letter from Riley:

"Dear Debs:—Do you think I've entirely forgotten all I owe you? No: that query is gratuitous, and knowledge of your loyalty throughout the past forbids all affection of questioning it now. But I've been anything but a well man for a long, long time, and in consequence I've simply been deprived of the pleasure of expressing to you, until now, my ripest, richest gratitude for your recent floral remembrance. Tom Moore sings in effect,—

> "'You may break the little bench-legg'd poet if you will,
> But the scent of Debs's basket of roses will cling round him still!'

"May this find you as glad at heart as your gift made me, and may your gentle interest in all human kind never

wax nor wane though all the stars of heaven keep up their specialty. My love to you—your brother, and all friends, particularly Ben Cox.

"Affectionately as always yours,

"J. W. RILEY."

The same visit of Debs to Riley and the same bunch of roses inspired the poet to sing of "Them Flowers," dedicating his song "To My Good Friend Eugene V. Debs." This is the last of three stanzas of the poem:

"You see, it's like this, what his weaknesses is,—
Them flowers makes him think of the days
Of his innocent youth, that mother o' his,
And the roses that *she* us't to raise:—
So here, all alone with the roses you send—
Bein' sick and all trimbly and faint,—
My eyes is—my eyes is—my eyes is—old friend—
Is a-leakin'—I'm blamed if they ain't!"

A few more of Riley's homely lines to 'Gene Debs:

"Go, search the earth from end to end,
And where's a better all-round friend
Than Eugene Debs?—a man that stands
And jest holds out in his two hands
As warm a heart as ever beat
Betwixt here and the Mercy Seat!"

Late in the life of Wendell Phillips, and early in the life of Debs, the two men met. The suns and sorrows of many years had already shed their light and shadow upon the head of the great orator and apostle of human liberty, while the other man, much younger, was yet to come through the sunrise and twilight of the years that would bring to him triumph and travail. It was in 1878, and Debs was already touching elbows with the protagonists of revolt and the active and intellectual spirits of his day. Debs had invited Wendell Phillips to come to Terre Haute to lecture. The meeting was poorly attended. As chairman of the lecture committee it fell to Debs to pay the lecturer his fee. The audience

had not been large and the financial loss was considerable. "Mr. Phillips felt this keenly, and it plainly distressed him not a little," Debs wrote of the incident many years later. " 'Please take back part of the fee to cover your loss,' he said to me in the kindest possible way, when I placed the money in his hands.

" 'No, Mr. Phillips,' I said, 'you have earned it, it is yours and you must keep it. If we had come out ahead you would have accepted no more than your fee and we cannot consent to your accepting less than the stipulated amount.' He generously insisted upon handing back part of the money, but it was as persistently declined, and he consented at last, reluctantly, to keep it. Behind the gentleman I could visualize the man, the warrior, the liberator, the humanitarian, the lover of his kind. I did not look upon him with awe, but with reverence and love. He had fought for me and my class with all his strength of body and soul his whole life long. He had been hated, denounced, and socially exiled that I and mine might live and enjoy, aspire and fulfill, and here he stood, and with my own eyes I could now behold the man, meditate upon his greatness, and find inspiration in his noble example."

It was in that same period that Debs met Robert G. Ingersoll. As one of the prime movers of the activities of the Occidental Literary Club in Terre Haute, Debs invited Ingersoll to lecture under the club's auspices. The hall in which the meeting was held was packed to the doors. Ingersoll's subject was "The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child." Debs introduced the famous orator to the audience.

"Never until that night had I heard real oratory; never before had I listened enthralled to such a flow of genuine eloquence," wrote Debs in his "Recollections of Ingersoll."

"The speaker was in his prime, not yet forty-five, tall, shapely, graceful and commanding, the perfect picture

of the beau ideal of his art. Never can I forget his features, his expressive eyes, his mellifluous voice, his easy, graceful gestures, and his commanding oratorical powers. He rippled along softly as a meadow brook or he echoed with the thunder of some mighty cataract. He pleaded for every right and protested against every wrong. His words fell as pearls in sunshine from his inspired lips and his impassioned periods glowed with the fervid enthusiasm of their thrice-eloquent author." Debs tells how he happened to be in Ingersoll's room in an Indianapolis hotel when the latter received a telegram requesting him to deliver a lecture in Philadelphia for the benefit of Walt Whitman, "and I can still see his fine features light up as he said, 'Certainly I will. It will give me real pleasure to be of service to dear Old Walt.'" On another occasion Ingersoll visited Terre Haute again and Debs walked with him to the railroad station. When the train came and Ingersoll got aboard Debs made up his mind in an instant to go along and swung on, riding with him to Cincinnati.

"It was while he was being thus shamefully maligned, misrepresented and persecuted for denying that God was a monster and that a roaring hell awaited most of his children, that his calm courage, his serene self-reliance, and his eloquent and fearless espousal of the truth as he saw it, enlisted my sympathy," says Debs in his "Recollections."* "He stood his ground alone and fought his fight without compromise to the end. I can never forget how his heroic spirit stirred me; how I felt myself thrilled and inspired by his flaming appeal and impassioned eloquence. He did more than any other man, living or dead, to put out the fires and fears of hell and rid the world of superstition. Scarcely any one outside of an asylum any longer believes in the barbarous dogma of an everlasting torture chamber. The Reverend Billy Sunday is one of the few monuments of

* *Pearson's Magazine*, 1915.

the stone-age of theology. He plagiarizes Ingersoll to fan the dying embers into flame again and to keep salvation on a sound and paying commercial basis.

"Robert Ingersoll could without doubt have been President of the United States. But not for one moment was he tempted by the lure of political preferment. The highest office the people had to bestow appeared contemptible to him because he knew it could be obtained only at the politician's price of manhood and self-respect."

For a number of years Ingersoll's birthday, August 11, was the occasion of a letter or telegram of congratulation from Debs and his family. Ingersoll wrote in acknowledgment of one of these:

Walton,
Dobb's Ferry-on-Hudson,
August 12, '92.

"My dear Mr. Debs:

"A thousand thanks for your beautiful telegram. The years are growing short. Time seems in a hurry to bring the birthday around. Well, all we can do is to get what good we can out of the days that pass.

> Each moment is a bee that flies
> With swift and unreturning wing,
> Giving its honey to the wise,
> And to the fool its poison sting.

"I hope that you and yours will have honey all your lives. We all send best regards to your father and mother—to your sisters and to Mrs. Debs and yourself. In spite of the hot weather we are all perfectly well—including the baby.

"With more thanks for your kindness, I remain,

"Yours always,

"R. G. Ingersoll."

"Mrs. Ingersoll says—'Give my love to all'—and so say I."

Debs met John Swinton, the famous radical American journalist, in the days of the Pullman strike. Swinton had been one of the staunchest champions of the railroad workers. "He stood face to face with Wall Street," wrote Debs of him, "and charged it with infamous crimes, and when John Swinton spoke the people listened."

Swinton had enjoyed the friendship of Horace Greeley, Charles A. Dana, the elder James Gordon Bennett and other notable journalists of that period. He was at one time or another editor and chief editorial writer of the principal New York daily newspapers. But he was fearless and courageous, and he saw beneath superficial inferences. That might explain his early attraction to Debs. Swinton wrote a book during the Pullman strike, "Striking for Life; or Labor's Side of the Labor Question." Like many another sincere thinker and friend of the people, Swinton died in poverty when he might have acquired riches and the plaudits of the public. "He was truly great," wrote Debs of him, "and uncompromisingly honest, scorning to barter his principles and convictions for a gilded cage and a life-ease of pampered self-indulgence to soften his brain, eat out his heart, and petrify his soul.

"I can still hear him as he held my hand in his humble flat in New York, as he put me through a course of questioning as to how much I could stand for the sake of labor: 'They'll break your heart.' When I answered, 'I'll not let 'em,' he said, 'Bravo!' "

The very thing that made the rich and powerful and the ignorant hate and condemn Debs in those years of industrial turmoil endeared him to the heart of John Swinton. A fine eulogy of Debs by Swinton was inspired by the former's imprisonment in a Chicago jail in those days. This he included in his book:

"I am not afraid thus to praise Eugene Victor Debs, though he is a new figure in the gallery of my statuary.

I praise him though he be a victim of Grosscup's ruthless law; though he has been assailed by Cleveland and Olney, Pullman and Egan, Schofield and Miles, by the rapacious corporations, the dastardly plutocracy, the Sodomite preachers, the Satanic press, and our bribe-taking Congressmen. I praise him, though he is in prison."

On July 5, 1894, Swinton wrote to Debs as follows:

"You are waging a Napoleonic battle amidst the admiration of millions. God give you the victory for the sake of all mankind. . . . I wrote to President Cleveland three days ago. Be strong, Brother Debs."

While Debs was in jail at Woodstock, Swinton wrote on July 17, 1895:

"You do not seem to have been aware that I was in the prison with you by day and by night, during the past month. Never a word have you spoken to me, though you were in my company. 'Not a mutineer walks handcuffed into jail but I am handcuffed to him and walk by his side.' I have not at any time thought you cared for my praises, so I shall not praise you now. But I believe you are of stout heart, and I must hope you are not depressed in spirit. Be strong! I know you will be faithful unto death. I send you my best love. P. S.—Sunday of this week was the anniversary of the Fall of the Bastile."

In 1897, when Swinton learned that the Railroad Managers' Association were determined to stamp out of industrial life the American Railway Union, and that their detectives were dogging the footsteps of Debs day and night, he wrote on June 30:

"The strength of your faith, the liveliness of your hopes, the persistency of your valor, the breadth of your thought, and the energy of your genius fill me with admiration. These things belong to that kind of Americanism which is ever regenerative."

Debs was forever paying tribute and homage to the

heroes and martyrs of his country. His writings and his letters are filled with words of kindness and gentle thoughts for those who have struggled to make this planet a better and a brighter place. Of Swinton he wrote:

"The world owes more, far more, to John Swinton than it knows or perhaps ever can know. He was one of the real heroes of American history. He lived and labored wholly for his fellowmen. He struggled bravely with all the adverse fates and forces that others might be spared the pains and privations that fell to his lot and have life richer and more abundant. Aye, he fought as heroically and unselfishly for humanity as any man that ever won the crown of martyrdom."

Debs delights in reminiscencing about Eugene Field, the poet and humorist. These choice spirits first met in April, 1893, and although their personal attachment endured only for a short year, Field dying suddenly in his forty-fourth year, in 1894, Debs owns that he never had a truer friend.

Within a few hours after Debs and Field first met, the poet returned with copies of his books beautifully inscribed and these are now among the treasured possessions in Debs's library. Debs writes of Field's life in the Rockies:*

"Eugene Field was never more at home than among these sturdy pioneers who opened the treasure chambers of the Rocky Mountains and scattered their gleaming secrets broadcast over the continent. They were after his own heart and he rejoiced like the big boy he was, in having found his way to the golden west and for living for once among God's own people. No wonder the change came upon him like a revelation and attuned his muse to the sweet minstrelsy that was soon to carry his name back to the Hampshire Hills where he had

* *Pearson's Magazine.*

spent his boyhood and echo his fame to the remotest parts of the country."

Field once came to Terre Haute with George W. Cable, the Southern novelist. Debs says that the opera house was crowded and Field captured the audience by his simplicity in reciting his charming bits of childhood rime. "He had wonderful dramatic resources," says Debs, "and his pathetic passages moved his audience to tears." At the close of the entertainment Field, who was the guest of Debs and his family during his stay in Terre Haute, was invited to a friend's house, "and here occurred an incident that revealed his passionate love for children of whom a number were in attendance," says Debs.

"After a time the little folks withdrew to another room to seek their own enjoyment. Not long afterwards, Field also disappeared. The reason soon became apparent. Peals of laughter issued from the adjoining room. Hilarity was evidently at high tide in the child-world. And no wonder. Field had gotten among them and was both ring-master and clown of the show, and when the door was opened he was found minus his dress coat, down on the floor on all fours, and cutting such antics as made the little folks scream with delight."

Among the messages that Debs received from his many friends while he was imprisoned at Woodstock in 1895 came one from Eugene Field. Here is the note:

"Now that you are settled in your summer quarters I shall soon be out to see you." But the visit was never made, for Field went to bed soon after and never got up.

It would require the writing of another book to attempt to tell of the number of libertarians and world lovers about whom Debs has written and paid tribute in his speeches, and to record the thousands of testimonials that have been written and spoken in appreciation of his own life and works. His private mail

in Terre Haute is normally a very large one, and since his arrest, trial and imprisonment under the Espionage Act he has been literally swamped with letters praising his courage and devotion to his principles from people in all walks of life. At his home, Theodore Debs, with the aid of several secretaries, has been kept busy day and night answering these thousands of letters in which the authors have pledged their money, and even their lives to the cause for which Debs stands.

The world has a habit of estimating a public man, not upon his record as a diplomatist, or in his dealings with state affairs, no matter how brilliantly and successfully he might have executed the arduous tasks set before him, but it searches his career as a public servant to learn what he has done and contributed to the elemental happiness and well-being of those who came under his immediate political charge. If that record is bright and yields itself to the nobler instincts of the people that man lives in history and those who come after him sing praises to his name even though he may never have written a treaty of peace for the nations of the world. The men who live in history, whose names shine with all the luster of a star, are those who cultivated the arts of kindness and justice and who have cared for, rather than crushed, those persons whom all the world knows were truly concerned with the happiness of their fellowmen. Speeches and phrases are things that die when the word is spoken, but acts, for good or for evil, are affairs never to be erased as long as there are people to compile the records of human history. More has been written and spoken in America for liberty and democracy in the past two years than in any other country on earth, yet, it is a fact, tragic to relate, that much has been done in America in the same period to crush liberty and stamp out democracy in this Republic. Nothing more than a survey of the list of libertarians and true democrats punished by imprison-

ment under the Espionage Law is necessary to convince a fair-minded person of the truth of this assertion.

Debs, as we know, was one of these libertarians so punished—Debs of whom Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, the world-famous sculptor who designed the Statue of Liberty that stands in New York harbor, said:

"He is endowed with the most precious faculty to which one can aspire—the gift of language; and he uses it for the proclamation of the most beautiful thoughts. His beautiful language is that of an Apostle."

When Debs had made his speech before the jury in his trial at Cleveland, Edmund Vance Cook, the Cleveland poet, was moved to write a poem to the towering figure in that court room. He called it "Eugene." The second verse reads:

> "We may bind and make you mute,
> We may stripe you in the suit
> Of the meanest felon. Aye,
> We may scourge and crucify,
> But your soul, sublime, serene,—
> Who can crucify Eugene?"

More than a year ago, when I was Sunday editor of a New York daily paper, I wrote to Debs and asked him if he would write something for us about the Russian Revolution. He promptly complied with my request. I shall quote a few paragraphs from his article:—

"The Russian Revolution is without a precedent or a parallel in history. Monumental in its glory, it stands alone. Behold its sublime majesty, catch its holy spirit and join in its thrilling, inspiring appeal to the oppressed of every land to rise in their might, shake off their fetters and proclaim their freedom to the world! Russia, domain of darkness impenetrable, transformed in a flash into a land of living light! Russia, the goddess of freedom incarnate, issuing her defiant challenge to the despotisms of the world!

"The heart of Russia in this hour of her glorious

resurrection is the heart of humanity; the soul of her triumphant revolution is the soul of a new-born world. Verily, the last are now first, and the world's most pitilessly plundered and shamelessly exiled have become the world's revolutionary redeemers and supreme liberators. . . .

"The Bolsheviki demanded nothing for themselves they did not demand in the same resolute spirit for the proletariat of all the world, and if history records the failure of their cause it will be to the eternal shame of those for whom these heroes offered up their lives and who suffered them to perish for the lack of sympathy and support. . . .

"All the forces of the world's reaction, all its dynasties and despotisms, all its kingdoms and principalities, all its monarchies and imperialism, all its ruling and exploiting classes, and their politicians, priests, professors and parisites of every breed—all these are pitted openly or covertly against the Russian Revolution and conspiring together for the overthrow of the victorious Russian proletariat and the destruction of the new-born democracy. But, whatever may be the fate of the revolution, its flaming soul is immortal and will flood the world with light and liberty and love."

Debs has written and spoken much about children whom he loves. Once he wrote: "What sweet emotions the recollections of childhood inspire, and how priceless its treasured memories in our advancing and declining years! Laughing eyes and curly hair, little brown hands and bare feet, innocent and care-free, trusting and loving, tender and pure, what an elevating and satisfying influence these little gods have upon our maturer years.

"Childhood! What a holy theme! Flowers they are, with souls in them, and if on this earth man has a sacred charge, a holy obligation, it is to these tender buds and blossoms of humanity."

A friend of Debs, a few years ago, sent him a card with some verses of his own composition announcing the birth of a baby girl. In a little while the mail brought a letter from the simple man:

"The glad tidings of the new life and the new light in your home came when I was far away or this acknowledgment would have been sooner made. With all my heart I send love and congratulations to the beautiful and transfigured mother, the joyous and exultant father, and the sweet and tender babe.

"It is all beautiful to me and I can see it all and feel the thrill of it all as if I were in the very heart of your beloved family. My blessings upon the mother and the babe, and upon all of your godly household.

"The riches of the world are now yours in all their abundance and all your comrades will unite in the celebration of your joy.

"Allow me, beloved comrade, to join in the beautiful, characteristic father greeting you have extended to the babe:

" 'With outstretched arms and open heart I welcome you into this world of war with my love of peace.' "

CHAPTER X

HIS IMPRESS ON THE FUTURE

OF all the human sciences, character study and appraisal is perhaps the most illusive and deceptive. We cannot know exactly the amount of good nor the extent of evil that has been accomplished and perpetrated by a single individual. Men do place some sort of estimate, however worthy or accurate it may be, upon the acts of their fellowmen for good or bad report. Historians follow in their train years, sometimes ages, later and assume to render the final verdict based, not upon their own knowledge of events, but upon the accumulative evidence attending to and surrounding the individual and the time in which he lived. This report, written on parchment and bound in sheep's skin, is passed down among men waiting in the corridors of the years, and they scan it eagerly for the word of praise or blame, according to their instincts, their feelings and their emotions, sometimes their intellects; they, in turn, accept or discard the historian's word, according to which side their interests, material or otherwise, lie. After all, people believe those things about people that they want to believe, and no amount of argument, however convincing, changes them until they themselves want to change. That change, if it does come, occurs of its own volition through circumstances over which the person has little, if any, control and at the time when the moral, spiritual or intellectual interests have become allied with or against the principles embodied in the person with whom the historian deals. There is, however, a cosmic intelligence and understanding and

this does in time defeat whatever unjust prejudice or fulsome praise may have existed. In the light of logic and the sense of sciene, water comes to its own level, and a diamond will endure long after the jewelers who appraised its value are dead.

The assayist tests the worth of his precious metal by applying acid to its surface, while society employs the use of punishment and persecution upon its choicest spirits; unlike the assayist, society is not content with mere surface application of its venom and vitriol, but attempts to torture the heart and twist the soul of the man under its microscope. Failing in this, it sometimes kills him outright as a warning to others who may have his social and spiritual bent. Nothing could be more cruel than the composite social mind which subjects its component parts to the most excruciating pains. Yet, paradoxically, the world-mind progresses and manifests a commonhood of tenderness and kindness and reciprocity. If the first premise were not true we should not have that pantheon wherein sit the shades of the gods who have illuminated all the pages of history by their glorious deeds and sacrifices for the well-being of their fellowmen, and who have pushed forward the hand of time through travail to triumph. If the second conclusion is false then why come these admiring audiences, these teeming thousands to bow before their idols, to cherish their memories and to celebrate them in song and story? Truly, truly, the world is a fickle lover! It first condemns the man it later condones. Sometimes it kisses the hand that strikes it to earth. But oftener it reveres the memory of the man it has crushed. Which but proves the transparency of the human mind and the winding ways through which it must pass before it may arrive at any settled estate of estimate and balance.

It is not given to all men of strong mind and great heart to garner some of the fruits from the seeds they

have sown. Many of the martyrs of history have come to ignominious ends without ever having known that they had caused one quickened heart-beat, or had started a ripple in the social stream. Others have been more fortunate. They have lived to see the changing tides and to witness the shifting scenes, and they have had the satisfaction of knowing that in these processes of inexorable evolution they have played their part.

Eugene Victor Debs, now in the autumn of his life, a prisoner of the United States government, belongs to this latter group. No man, living or dead, has more faithfully consecrated his life to the cause of social justice and fair dealing, man to man, than Debs. Likewise, he has been severely punished for it. But he has fought the good fight and kept the faith of his fathers whose names are all in history, and who are revered even by the children of the races. Perhaps men will always differ concerning the wisdom of the special political and economic theories through which Debs chose to exert his influence; but no matter, for in the just verdict of mankind the world will agree that Debs was honest, kind, sincere, loyal, devoted, true, lovable and loving, always doing what he could in rain or shine, in prison or at home, to make this world a better and a brighter place for the people who inhabit it, and for those who will come afterward. For these things, these traits—which are akin to Christhood—will he be honored in the ages to come.

The principle for which Debs stands—Socialism—is already accepted, in one form or another, in various countries. This change in economic and political forms of government has been hastened by the World War which has just closed, and which Debs opposed. Debs believed that these same changes could have been brought about through an enlightened intelligence and an exerted will of the people who have actually brought them about—the world's workers. He has been a life-long

antagonist of the principle of violence and force no matter by whom it is practised. He would not injure or kill his biggest enemy if by so doing he would advance the cause nearest his heart, and therefor he would not be cowardly enough to encourage another so to do. He believed that the people could do what they were of a will to do; that they could change the form of governments under which they lived and arrange industries so that they would serve the people instead of exploit them, by acting in concert politically, economically and industrially. He did not believe it was necessary for the workers of one country to hate those of another and to meet on the battlefields to kill one another in order to have happier lives at home.

There is an ever-increasing number of people who believe that Socialism is the next step; who believe that it is the only possible form of human procedure by which people can live happily together and enjoy the fruits of their labor. Debs, believing this with all his heart and mind, has struggled unceasingly to bring this about. By his courage and his loving, tender heart he has done more than any other man in America to set forth the program which he and his followers believe will make for happiness and justice in the present and the future.

He has fought his enemies with love, pity and compassion. They have fought him with blood and bludgeon, persecution and prison. He has attacked their citadels with his eloquence and persuasion. They have returned the attack with injunctions and indictments. The future must decide this political and industrial question. As for Debs, as a man, as a leader of men, as a lover of liberty, as a determined spirit, and as a gentle soul, he has already left his impress on the future. There awaits him a page in history, and a niche in the temple of fame, not beside those who have purchased their way into posterity with blood or gold, but beside those who have

been elevated to immortality through the common estimate of the common people.

I have had no illusions about this book as being a final word on Debs's career. It could not possibly be so, for the subject of my study still lives and has other work to do. All that has been attempted here was to give an authoritative record of his life's work, to set down as accurately as it was in my power to do, those incidents in his life which, accumulated, make him the splendid figure that he is in the eyes of those who love him almost to the point of idolatry—and thousands of such persons heartily disbelieve in Socialism.

As I complete this task, dear 'Gene, I give you my hand and my heart, for they are all that I have to give, without stint or diminution, in appreciation of your many kindnesses to me, of the too generous words that you have put on paper from your prison cell, and for the noble things you have said and done for humanity. For these things I am your debtor for the rest of my days—and now I lay this paltry tribute at your feet. The world may scoff at it, but in your generous heart you will accept it for what it is intended to be.

APPENDIX

EUGENE V. DEBS was sentenced to ten years in prison under the Espionage Act for making a speech at Canton, Ohio, June 16, 1918, before the State Convention of the Socialist Party of Ohio. The following are extracts from that speech as reported by a government stenographer and included in the indictment. The government stenographer admitted in court that he was inexperienced and was unable to follow Debs's speech accurately or verbatim. However that may be, Debs admitted that what the government stenographer reported him as saying was substantially correct, but actually and technically at variance with the text of his speech. The extracts follow:

"I have just returned from a visit from yonder (pointing to workhouse) where three of our most loyal comrades are paying the penalty for their devotion to the cause of the working class. They have come to realize, as many of us have, that it is extremely dangerous to exercise the constitutional right of free speech in a country fighting to make democracy safe for the world. I realize in speaking to you this afternoon that there are certain limitations placed upon the right of free speech. I must be extremely careful, prudent, as to what I say, and even more careful and prudent as to how I say it. I may not be able to say all I think, but I am not going to say anything I do not think. And I would rather a thousand times be a free soul in jail than a sycophant or coward on the streets. They may put those boys in jail, and some of the rest of us in jail, but they cannot put the Socialist movement in jail. Those prison bars separate their bodies from ours, but

their souls are here this afternoon. They are simply paying the penalty that all men have paid in all of the ages of history for standing erect and seeking to pave the way for better conditions for mankind.

"If it had not been for the men and women who, in the past, have had the moral courage to go to jail, we would still be in the jungles. . . .

"Why should a Socialist be discouraged on the eve of the greatest triumph of all history of the Socialist movement? It is true that these are anxious, trying days for us all, testing those who are upholding the banner of the working class in the greatest struggle the world has ever known against the exploiters of the world; a time in which the weak, the cowardly, will falter and fail and desert. They lack the fiber to endure the revolutionary test. They fall away. They disappear as if they had never been.

"On the other hand, they who are animated with the unconquerable spirit of the social revolution, they who have the moral courage to stand erect, to assert their convictions, to stand by them, to go to jail or to hell for them—they are writing their names in this crucial hour, they are writing their names in fadeless letters in the history of mankind. Those boys over yonder, those comrades of ours—and how I love them—aye, they are our younger brothers, their names are seared in our souls.

"I am proud of them. They are there for us and we are here for them. Their lips, though temporarily mute, are more eloquent than ever before, and their voices, though silent, are heard around the world.

"Are we opposed to Prussian militarism? Why, we have been fighting it since the day the Socialist movement was born and we are going to continue to fight it to-day and until it is wiped from the face of the earth. Between us there is no truce, no compromise. . . .

"Do not imagine for one moment that all the plutocrats and Junkers are all in Germany; we have them here in our own country, and these want to keep our eyes focused upon the Junkers in Germany so we won't see those within our own border. I have no earthly use for the Junkers of Germany and not one particle more use for the Junkers in the United States.

"They tell us we live in a great republic. Our institutions are democratic. We are a free people. This is too much, even as a joke. It is not a subject for levity; it is an exceedingly serious matter. . . .

"Patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels. It has been the tyrant who wrapped himself in a cloak of religion or patriotism, or both. They would have you believe that the Socialist Party consists in the main of disloyalists and traitors. It is true, in a certain sense. We are disloyalists and traitors to the real traitors of this nation. . . .

"Why, the other day they sent a woman to Wichita Penitentiary for ten years. Just think of sentencing a woman to the penitentiary for talking. The United States under the rule of the plutocrats is the only country which would send a woman to the penitentiary for ten years for exercising the right to free speech. If this be treason, let them make the most of it. Let me review another bit of history. I have known this woman for ten years. Personally I know her as if she were my own younger sister. She is a woman of absolute integrity. She is a woman of courage. She is a woman of unimpeachable loyalty to the Socialist movement. She went out into Dakota and made her speech, followed by plain-clothes men in the service of the government, intent upon encompassing her arrest, prosecuted and convicted. She made a certain speech and that speech was deliberately misrepresented for the purpose of securing her conviction. The only testimony was that of a hired witness. . . . And thirty farmers who went

to Bismark to testify in her favor, the judge refused to allow to testify. This would seem incredible to me if I had not had some experience of my own with a Federal court. Who appoints the Federal courts? The people? Every solitary one of them holds his position through influence and power of corporation capital. And when they go to the bench, they go there not to serve the people, but to serve the interests who sent them. The other day, by a vote of five to four, they declared the Child Labor Law unconstitutional; a law secured after twenty years of education and agitation by all kinds of people, and yet by a majority of one, the Supreme Court, a body of corporation lawyers, with just one solitary exception, wiped it from the statute books, so that we may still continue to grind the blood of little children into profit for the Junkers of Wall Street, and this in a country that is now fighting to make democracy safe for the world. These are not palatable truths to them. And they do not want you to hear them and that is why they brand us traitors and disloyalists. If we were not traitors to the people, we would be eminently respectable citizens and ride in limousines. It is precisely because we are disloyal to the traitors that we are not disloyal to the people of this country. . . .

"How short-sighted the ruling class is. The exploiter cannot see beyond the end of his nose. He has just been cunning enough to know what graft is and where it is but he has no vision. You know this is a great throbbing world that speaks out in all directions. Look at Rockefeller. Every move he makes hastens the coming of his doom. Every time the capitalist class tries to hinder the cause of Socialism they hurt themselves. Every time they strangle a Socialist newspaper they add a thousand voices to those which are aiding Socialism. The Socialist has a great idea. An expanding philosophy. It is spreading over the face of the earth. It is as useless to resist it as it is to resist the

rising sunrise. Can you see it? If you cannot you are lacking in vision, in understanding. What a privilege it is to serve it. I have regretted a thousand times I can do so little for the movement that has done so much for me. The little that I am, the little that I am hoping to be, is due wholly to the Socialist movement. It gave me my ideas and my ideals, and I would not exchange one of them for all the Rockefeller blood-stained dollars. It taught me how to serve; a lesson to me of priceless value. It taught the ecstasy of the handclasp of the comrade. It made it possible for me to get in touch with you, to multiply myself over and over again; to open the avenue to spread out the glorious vistas; to know that I am kin with all that throbs that become class conscious. Every man who toils, every one of them, is my comrade. . . .

"Here I hear your heart beats responsive to the Bolsheviki of Russia. (Applause.) Yes, those heroic men and women, those unconquerable comrades, who have by their sacrifice added fresh luster to the international movement. Those Russian comrades who have made greater sacrifices, who have suffered more, who have shed more heroic blood than any like number of men and women anywhere else on earth. They have led the first real convention of any democracy that ever drew breath. The first act of that memorable revolution was to proclaim a state of peace with an appeal not to the kings, not to the rulers, but an appeal to the people of all nations. They are the very breath of democracy; the quintessence of freedom. . . .

"Wars have been waged for conquests, for plunder, and since the feudal ages along the Rhine, the feudal lords have made war upon each other. They wanted to enlarge their domains, to increase their power and their wealth and so they declared war upon each other. But they did not go to war any more than the Wall Street Junkers go to war. Their predecessors declared the

wars, but their miserable serfs fought the wars. The serfs believed that it was their patriotic duty to fall upon one another, to wage war upon one another. And that is war in a nutshell. The master class has always brought a war and the subject class has fought the battle. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, and the subject class has had all to lose and nothing to gain. They have always taught you that it is your patriotic duty to go to war and slaughter yourselves at their command. You have never had a voice in the war. The working class who make the sacrifices, who shed the blood, have never yet had a voice in declaring war. The ruling class has always made the war and made the peace.

"'Yours not to question why,
Yours but to do and die.'

"Another bit of history that I want to review is that of Rose Pastor Stokes, another inspiring comrade. She had her millions of dollars. Her devotion to the cause is without all consideration of a financal or economic view. She went out to render service to the cause and they sent her to the penitentiary for ten years. What has she said? Nothing more than I have said here this afternoon. I want to say that if Rose Pastor Stokes is guilty, so am I. If she should be sent to the penitentiary for ten years, so ought I. What did she say? She said that a government could not serve both the profiteers and the employees of the profiteers. Roosevelt has said a thousand times more in his paper, the Kansas City *Star*. He would do everything possible to discredit Wilson's Administration in order to give his party credit. The Republican and Democratic parties are all patriots this Fall and they are going to combine to prevent the election of any disloyal Socialists. Do you know of any difference between them? One is in, the other is out. That is all the difference.

"Rose Pastor Stokes never said a word she did not have a right to utter, but her message opened the eyes of the people. That must be suppressed. That voice must be silenced. Her trial in a capitalist court was very farcical. What chance had she in a corporation court with a put-up jury and a corporation tool on the bench? . . .

"The heart of the international Socialist never beats a retreat. They are pressing forward here, there, everywhere, in all the zones that girdle this globe. These workers, these class-conscious workers, these children of honest toil are wiping out the boundary lines everywhere. They are all proclaiming the glad tidings of the coming emancipation. Everywhere they are having their hearts attuned to the sacred cause; everywhere they are moving toward democracy, moving toward the sunrise, their faces aglow with the light of the coming day. These are the men who must guide us in the greatest crisis the world has ever known. They are making history. They are bound upon the emancipating of the human race.

"They have been sufficient to themselves, pressing forward to the heights. Do you wish to hasten the coming day? Join the Socialist Party. Do not wait for the morrow. Come now. Enroll your name. Take your place where you belong. You cannot do your duty by proxy. You have got to do it yourself. You will have no occasion to blush. You will know what it is to be a man or a woman. You will lose nothing. You will gain everything. You are very apt to find something. You need to know that you are fit for something better than slavery and cannon fodder. . . .

"There is a great deal of hope for our comrades, Wagenknecht, Ruthenberg and Baker. Anybody can be nobody, but it takes a man to be somebody. Turn your back upon that corrupt Republican Party and that still more corrupt Democratic Party, the gold-dust twins of the ruling class. Get into a minority party that fights

for a cause. Make that change. It will be the most important change you ever made in your life. You will thank me for having made the suggestion. It was a day of days for me. I passed from darkness to light. . . .

"Among other things they tell you to cultivate war gardens. Government reports now show that 52 per cent of the arable, tillable soil is held out of use by the profiteers. They do not allow others to cultivate it. They keep it idle, to enrich themselves. Thus, it makes their land valuable. It is not the fault of the people; it is the fault of the landlords. And while we are upon the subject, think about the landlord. The landlord is the great patriot. He is fighting to make the world safe for democracy. He it is who profits at the expense of the people under the pretense of being a great patriot. It is he whom you need to wipe from power. It is he who diminishes your health and your liberty far more than the Prussian junker on the other side of the ocean. . . .

"A change is needed, a change of system from despotism to democracy, a change from slavery to freedom; a change from brutehood to brotherhood. To accomplish this you have got to organize, and to organize not along the zig-zag lines laid down by Sam Gompers who, through all of his career, has been on the side of the capitalist class. You never hear the capitalist papers speak of him except in praise. Gompers was always conservative. . . .

"Few men have the courage to say a decent word in favor of the I. W. W. I have. (Here several in the crowd yelled, 'So have I.')

"I have a great respect for the I. W. W. . . . It is only necessary to label a man 'I. W. W.' to lynch him. Just think of the state of mind for which the capitalist press is responsible.

"When Wall Street yells war, you may rest assured every pulpit in the land will yell war. The press and the pulpit have in every age and every nation been on

the side of the exploiting class and the ruling class. That's why the I. W. W. is infamous.

"The I. W. W. in its career has never committed as much violence against the ruling class as the ruling class has committed against the people. The trial at Chicago is now on, and they have not proven violence in a single solitary case, and yet, one hundred and twelve men have been on trial for months and months without a shade of evidence. And this is all in its favor. And for this and many other reasons, the I. W. W. is fighting the fight of the bottom dog. For the very reason that Gompers is glorified by Wall Street, Bill Haywood is despised by Wall Street. . . .

"And now for all of us to do our duty. The call is ringing in your ears. Do not worry over the charge of treason to your masters, but be concerned about the treason that involves yourself. . . . We Socialists are the builders of the world that is to be. We are inviting you this afternoon. Join and it will help you. In due course of time we will proclaim the emancipation of the brotherhood of all mankind."

Following is the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, rendered March 10th, 1919, in the case of Debs:

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

No. 714—October Term, 1918.

Eugene V. Debs, Plaintiff in Error, VS The United States of America.	In Error to the District Court of the United States for the Northern District of Ohio.

(March 10, 1919.)

Mr. Justice Holmes delivered the opinion of the Court.

This is an indictment under the Espionage Act of June 15, 1917, c. 30, p. 3, as amended by the Act of May 16, 1918, c. 75, p. 1, 40 Stat.—It has been cut down to two counts, originally the third and fourth. The former of these alleges that on or about June 16, 1918, at Canton, Ohio, the defendant caused and incited and attempted to cause and incite insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny and refusal of duty in the military and naval forces of the United States and with intent so to do delivered, to an assembly of people, a public speech, set forth. The fourth count alleges that he obstructed and attempted to obstruct the recruiting and enlistment service of the United States and to that end and with that intent delivered the same speech, again set forth. There was a demurrer to the indictment on the ground that the statute is unconstitutional as interfering with free speech, contrary to the First Amendment, and to the several counts as insufficiently stating the supposed offence. This was overruled, subject to exception. There were other exceptions to the admission of evidence with which we shall deal. The defendant was found guilty and was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment on each of the two counts, the punishment to run concurrently on both.

The main theme of the speech was Socialism, its growth, and a prophecy of its ultimate success. With that we have nothing to do, but if a part of the manifest intent of the more general utterances was to encourage those present to obstruct the recruiting service and if in passages such encouragement was directly given, the immunity of the general theme may not be enough to protect the speech. The speaker began by saying that he had just returned from a visit to the workhouse in the neighborhood where three of their most loyal comrades were paying the penalty for their devotion to the working class—these being Wagenknecht, Baker, and Ruthenberg, who had been convicted of aiding and abet-

ting another in failing to register for the draft. RUTHENBERG V. UNITED STATES, 245 U. S. 480. He said that he had to be prudent and might not be able to say all that he thought, thus intimating to his hearers that they might infer that he meant more, but he did say that those persons were paying the penalty for standing erect and for seeking to pave the way to better conditions for all mankind. Later he added further eulogies and said that he was proud of them. He then expressed opposition to Prussian militarism in a way that naturally might have been thought to be intended to include the mode of proceeding in the United States.

After considerable discourse that it is unnecessary to follow, he took up the case of Kate Richards O'Hare, convicted of obstructing the enlistment service, praised her for her loyalty to Socialism and otherwise, and said that she was convicted on false testimony, under a ruling that would seem incredible to him if he had not had some experience with a Federal Court. We mention this passage simply for its connection with evidence put in at the trial. The defendant spoke of other cases, and then, after dealing with Russia, said that the master class has always declared the war and the subject class has always fought the battles—that the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose, including their lives; that the working class, who furnish the corpses, have never yet had a voice in declaring war and have never yet had a voice in declaring peace. 'You have your lives to lose; you certainly ought to have the right to declare war if you consider a war necessary.' The defendant next mentioned Rose Pastor Stokes, convicted of attempting to cause insubordination and refusal of duty in the military forces of the United States and obstructing the recruiting service. He said that she went out to render her service to the cause in this day of crises, and they sent her to the penitentiary for ten years; that she had said no more than the speaker had said that afternoon;

that if she was guilty so was he, and that he would not be cowardly enough to plead his innocence; but that her message that opened the eyes of the people must be suppressed, and so after a mock trial before a packed jury and a corporation tool on the bench, she was sent to the penitentiary for ten years.

There followed personal experiences and illustrations of the growth of Socialism, a glorification of minorities, and a prophecy of the success of the international Socialist crusade, with the interjection that "you need to know that you are fit for something better than slavery and cannon fodder." The rest of the discourse had only the indirect though not necessarily ineffective bearing on the offences alleged that is to be found in the usual contrasts between capitalists and laboring men, sneers at the advice to cultivate war gardens, attribution to plutocrats of the high price of coal, etc., with the implication running through it all that the working men are not concerned in the war, and a final exhortation, "Don't worry about the charge of treason to your masters; but be concerned about the treason that involves yourselves." The defendant addressed the jury himself, and while contending that his speech did not warrant the charges said, "I have been accused of obstructing the war. I admit it. Gentlemen, I abhor war. I would oppose the war if I stood alone." The statement was not necessary to warrant the jury in finding that one purpose of the speech, whether incidental or not, does not matter, was to oppose not only war in general but this war, and that the opposition was so expressed that its natural and intended effect would be to obstruct recruiting. If that was intended and if, in all the circumstances, that would be its probable effect, it would not be protected by reason of its being part of a general program and expressions of a general and conscientious belief.

The chief defences upon which the defendant seemed

willing to rely were the denial that we have dealt with and that based upon the First Amendment to the Constitution, disposed of in SCHENCK V. UNITED STATES, ANTE. His counsel questioned the sufficiency of the indictment. It is sufficient in form. FROHWERK V. UNITED STATES, ANTE. The most important question that remains is raised by the admission in evidence of the record of the conviction of Ruthenberg, Wagenknecht and Baker, Rose Pastor Stokes, and Kate Richards O'Hare. The defendant purported to understand the grounds on which these persons were imprisoned and it was proper to show what those grounds were in order to show what he was talking about, to explain the true import of his expression of sympathy and to throw light on the intent of the address, so far as the present matter is concerned.

There was introduced also an "Anti-war Proclamation and Program" adopted at St. Louis in April, 1917, coupled with testimony that about an hour before his speech the defendant had stated that he approved of that platform in spirit and in substance. The defendant referred to it in his address to the jury, seemingly with satisfaction and willingness that it should be considered in evidence. But his counsel objected and has argued against its admissibility, at some length. This document contained the usual suggestion that capitalism was the cause of the war and that our entrance into it "was instigated by the predatory capitalists in the United States." It alleged that the war of the United States against Germany could not "be justified even on the plea that it is a war in defence of American rights or American 'honor.'" It said: "We brand the declaration of war by our Government as a crime against the people of the United States and against the nations of the world. In all modern history there has been no war more unjustifiable than the war in which we are about to engage." Its first recommendation was, "continuous,

active, and public opposition to the war, through demonstrations, mass petitions, and all other means within our power." Evidence that the defendant accepted this view and this declaration of his duties at the time that he made his speech is evidence that if in that speech he used words tending to obstruct the recruiting service he meant that they should have that effect. The principle is too well established and too manifestly good sense to need citation of the books. We should add that the jury were most carefully instructed that they could not find the defendant guilty for advocacy of any of his opinions unless the words used had as their natural tendency and reasonably probable effect to obstruct the recruiting service, etc., and unless the defendant had the specific intent to do so in his mind.

Without going into further particulars we are of opinion that the verdict on the fourth count, for obstructing and attempting to obstruct the recruiting service of the United States, must be sustained. Therefore it is less important to consider whether that upon the third count, for causing and attempting to cause insubordination, etc., in the military and naval forces, is equally impregnable. The jury were instructed that for the purposes of the statute the persons designed by the Act of May 18, 1917, registered and enrolled under it, and thus subject to be called into the active service, were a part of the military forces of the United States. The Government presents a strong argument from the history of the statutes that the instruction was correct and in accordance with established legislative usage. We see no sufficient reason for differing from the conclusion, but think it unnecessary to discuss the question in detail.

Judgment affirmed.

A true copy.

Test:

Clerk Supreme Court, U. S.

Give full address of your letter here

Name David Karsner
St. 2 Beekman Place.
City New York
State N.Y.

Place name and serial number here

Name Eugene V. Debs
Serial No. 2253
Cell in

818 JEFFERSON AVE.
MOUNDSVILLE, W. VA. May 29 1919

Beloved Comrade Dave:

You are the very dearest, sweetest, friend & comrade, and you have proved it times without number since first you came, as if by special providence, into my life. I find myself so often under the necessity of thanking you for some fresh kindness that I have come to realize how little of what sings in the heart and sighs for expression can be transferred to the written page. — Please give the youngster in the office my love for his kindness in helping you to furnish me with the Call files and clippings as requested, a service on the part of you both that I gratefully appreciate.

A LETTER FROM PRISON

DAVID KARSNER,
2 Beekman Place,
New York, N. Y.

E. V. Debs,
Serial No. 2253.

Moundsville, W. Va., May 29, 1919.

Beloved Comrade Dave:

You are the very dearest, sweetest, finest of comrades, and you have proved it time without number since first you came, as if by special providence, into my life. I find myself so often under the necessity of thanking you for some fresh kindness that I have come to realize how little of what sings in the heart and sighs for expression can be transferred to the written page. Please give the "youngster" in the office my love for his kindness in helping you to furnish me with the *Call* files and clippings as requested, a service on the part of you both that I gratefully appreciate.

Dear, beautiful, wonderful Horace! Put your arms around him and kiss him for me until I can do so myself. The Almighty never made but one of him. Tell him for me to cling to the willows and live—he cannot otherwise, for he's immortal. The Whitman Fellowship banquet of the gods will revive, restore and re-inspire him. How I'd love to be with you and put my arms about you all. I'm busy here every minute. All's well within my walls—if only the same were true without! Warden Terrell has inquired about you. He thinks very kindly of you as you do of him.

My love to our dear Horace, Anne Montgomerie, your sweet Rose, and the comrades at the *Call!*

Yours until the last sunset, GENE.

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