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# Capital and Labor

by Eugene V. Debs

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The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen has taught, from its inception to the present time, and shall continue to teach and demonstrate the truth of this teaching, the identity of the interests of capital and labor, believing that all their business relations conducted with this fact in view, will be harmonious and friendly, and avoid what might otherwise result in discord and strife. When this school of education is abandoned by our Brotherhood, then indeed we will not know the seasons from each other nor the day from the night.

That the results following the establishment of this truth on the side of labor may be full and complete, it is necessary that capital should manifest a disposition to meet labor a generous half way, thereby showing its appreciation of our efforts in that direction. Nor do we know of any more intelligible or comprehensive plan of displaying its sincerity in advancing the teaching of this doctrine, than by paying to its employee a fair and just compensation for their labor, and conceding to them those considerations for their feelings, that they claim for themselves, and that all men shall receive from each other, particularly the humble from the exalted.

Looking at this matter from the standpoint of modern civilization, and seeing the advantageous position that the employer naturally occupies, it seems to us that the very polish of our highly lauded politeness, requiring those of higher rank or station in life to be a little more condescending in their manner and bearing towards those who are beneath them in the social scale, than to their equals, has been entirely ignored, if it ever existed, much less the alleged chivalry that pretends to throw its shielding and protecting arm over the weak as against the strong. While these things are eminently true in our organization, they are sadly wanting in the body politic. Much of the success of business ventures and enterprises, depends upon the faithful discharge of the duties of employees, and we may add that the

honest fulfillment of these duties proceeds, in a great measure, from the just remuneration given to the labor employed. The lower animals receive for their labor a sufficient quantity of food and the necessary care to insure health. Man, the masterpiece of God's creation, and bearing the impress of the Creator on his soul, needs more than this; yet there are thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands in our very midst whose reward for their toil of ten hours a day, does not reach that of the horse.

There never lived a king, emperor, or potentate, no matter how wealthy or powerful, whose family affections were stronger, whose sympathies were deeper or wider, whose sense of justice was keener, or whose love of the beautiful was more tender than the humblest peasant in his kingdom, or laborer in the workshop; and if there is or has been such, it is not owing to his exalted position or amassed wealth.

We say this in reference to the arrogance and petty tyranny that certain railroad managers and their subordinates practice upon the employees under their charge. A mark of respect or consideration never comes from them to the wage-worker.

Such are the tools, debased and narrow-minded, that some of our capitalists and railroad corporations employ, who, with the concrete soul of a Shylock, wrench every particle of energy from their employee, leaving him in return for a faithful service of perhaps ten or 20 years, a broken and shattered health, a premature old age, and a family in poverty. Death ends his misery and adds to that of his wife and children. When such crimes are permitted to continue, let not the student of history look aghast at the record.

The school of the Brotherhood has given to railroad corporations, (and we appeal to the annals of the organization to prove the assertion) a body of men not only efficient in their work, but honest in its performance, displaying an individual interest in the care and protection of property, directly or indirectly under their charge. Then, in view of this fact, we ask in all reason that these men receive a just compensation for their labor. True the great bulk of our enginemen receive fair wages, but there are many who do not, and for these do we plead. Some of our Eastern railroads barely pay their men sufficient to keep body and soul together. These men have tasted of every danger within the compass of their hazardous calling, they have felt the severity of every storm that swept their course but the existing circumstances make their contemplation of the future, their bitterest cup of suffering.