
Slaves and Cowards

by Eugene V. Debs

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The great mass of American workingmen are in abject slavery. A few realize it and protest — still others realize it and are content — while countless numbers of them are totally indifferent as to their condition, and oblivious of their surrounding, and if they are one degree above the beast of the field, or give one thought to anything, they give no appreciable evidence of it. Still, my heart goes out in sympathy. I always think they are as good as they can be.

They are the victims of centuries of greed, centuries of tyranny and plunder, and if they are sunk to the level of total depravity, the blame is not with them. They have got to be lifted and educated and redeemed. The process is slow and painful. Thousands of them are satisfied to crawl and grovel, and will resist any attempt to lift them out of the mire into the sunlight. If my jail life will help, I have no objection to being shorn of what little liberty I enjoyed. The future is getting molded and fashioned in the present, and I have perfect faith that it will be brighter and better.

I wish no political nomination in '96, nor at any other time. I want nothing from the people — I simply want them to do something for themselves. I care nothing about empty honors. Besides, I don't know that there is any particular glory in being President of a nation of slaves and cowards.

E. V. Debs.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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