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EUGENE VICTOR DEBS was born November 5th, 1855. He died October 20th, 1926. In the seventy-one years of his life he had been five times candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and twice the prisoner of the United States: once for his bold assertion of the right of labour to organize and to strike, and the second time for his eloquent, steadfast and intelligent opposition to the hysteria of war and his demand for a negotiated peace. The record of his colourful and crowded years was not the record of what men call success in America or, indeed, anywhere else in our Western world. Yet to-day in his own country the memory of no man who has achieved pomp and power is dearer to masses of his fellows than his. Over and over it has happened to me in widely scattered cities and towns that after a meeting men have come up and told me with a kind of awe in their voices: "I knew 'Gene Debs," or "I was a friend of 'Gene Debs." On inquiry I found that often their knowledge of Debs was confined to one of his hearty handshakes. It was a thing they always remembered. It is experiences like this which illustrate the statement that no American of his generation —perhaps no American of any generation—was ever better loved than 'Gene Debs, or in his day better feared and hated.

The man so loved and hated was not a great Socialist philosopher, theoretician, maker of platforms and programmes, or even, in his later years, an organizer. He was a man of eloquent words and a doer of great deeds. Yet the unique thing about him is not what he did for the labour movement or for Socialism but that he was in himself a kind of incarnation of the flaming spirit of the labour movement and of Socialism.

'Gene Debs's passionate identification with the working class was voluntary. He was not born into a class from which he could not rise. It was by choice he insisted

that he did not want to rise from the ranks but with them. He was a good Socialist, an avowed Marxist and a true internationalist. Although he never visited Europe he had an understanding of international problems and he was the hero, almost the idol, of many of the immigrant workers of New York and other cities. Nevertheless, he came to Socialism by a characteristically American road.

He was born in the great central Mississippi valley in the days when Abraham Lincoln was the authentic expression of its spirit at its best. He was a native of that region happily called the Valley of Democracy, a country which had not yet outgrown its pioneer days. His father and mother were Alsatians, thrifty and energetic folk who soon became substantial and respected citizens in the little town of Terre Haute on the banks of the Wabash, Indiana, where they made their home. They had more than average love of music and books. 'Gene's middle name, Victor, attests the family devotion to Victor Hugo. As is so often the case with great men, 'Gene's mother was an unusual woman of much force of character and a graciousness which won the everlasting devotion of her children. Ten children in all were born to these immigrants who had left an older culture for a rough but rapidly growing frontier town. Four of them died in early infancy. The fierceness of summer heat and winter cold were not easy to endure in those days and the then little clan was afflicted with what was commonly known as " the Wabash Shakers," apparently an acute form of malaria. 'Gene and his younger brother, Theodore, who later in life was to prove more than brother to him, both remembered how intensely they suffered from those evils. It is rather remarkable that fever left no mark on their strong constitutions. It was in the earlier years a rather primitive life that the children knew. But Jean Daniel Debs's grocery business flourished and there was always plenty of food. Moreover, the son, 'Gene, was given the best education the town afforded in what was called the Old Seminary. It was not good enough to satisfy either father or son. The lad wanted to go to work and at last got his father's permission. So before he was fifteen 'Gene left school.

His first job was in the Vandalia paint shop at Terre

Haute where railroad cars were painted. 'Gene went to work with a borrowed scraper for the vast sum of 50 cents a day. He put the wages of the first two days into his own scraper which he bought for one dollar. He cherished it to the end of his life as another man might have cherished a less honourable coat of arms.

In the paint shop he worked for about a year and, as he afterwards said, "It almost killed me." To him as to thousands of American boys of his generation the railroad, and especially the railroad engine, stood for romance and liberation. It was for 'Gene a genuine escape when for the first time, before he was sixteen years of age, he fired an engine. By the end of 1870 he got a regular job as fireman. His hours permitted him to go on with a little schooling, and in particular to listen to the political speakers of his time, to study their arts, and to practise speaking. This job he kept for about four years. Then, because of his mother's great anxiety, born of the long chapter of railroad accidents of those days of little rocking engines, 'Gene threw up his job and went to work in the wholesale grocery house of Hulman and Cox.

But his heart was still with the railroad men. In February, 1865, before he was of age, 'Gene Debs took the stand which determined his life's work. He joined the newly formed lodge of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, and their national organizer, Joshua Leach, picked him out as a leader. From that time on, though he might make a living in the grocery warehouse by day, his heart was in the work of the union, of which he was the secretary.

The next twenty-two years of the life of the "long, tow-headed boy from Terre Haute" were interesting, but of themselves they would never have given 'Gene Debs a place among earth's greatest. He developed rapidly into an efficient labour organizer, speaker, and editor. As the country emerged from the dreadful panic years of the '70s which were marked by violent labour upheavals he saw his Brotherhood grow to power. Indeed, he was the chief factor in helping it grow to power. He was popular at home. For two terms he was City Clerk of Terre Haute and his salary came in handy to help him in the work of organizing the firemen. In 1884 he was elected as a Democrat to the

Indiana Legislature and in the same year he was married to Kate Metzel. His chief biographer, McAlister Coleman —to whom I am indebted for most of the material in this paper, truly says: "It was his first love affair and his last and it lasted until 'Gene's death." The couple had no children and perhaps the extraordinary warmth of affection which 'Gene bestowed so freely on his fellow men was in part an expression of a love which other men concentrate less upon the comrades of their spirits than upon the children of their bodies.

In these years both 'Gene's union and 'Gene himself belonged definitely to the respectable school of labour organization and politics. He had a vigorous tongue and personality with which to fight the battles of his union, but the organization itself was anything but Socialist.

'Gene's capacities were generally recognized and more than once he had a chance to leave the work of a labour organizer for fields more remunerative financially. If he had not been well fed up with his first experience in the Legislature he easily could have gone far in American politics. As it was, the passage of the years found him the best loved man and one of the most powerful officials in the Brotherhood of Firemen. He was the editor of their paper and a famous orator—of a rather flowery, rhetorical sort—especially in labour circles. Only in one respect did the years bring him disappointment. His pet plan of federation between the different railroad workers' organizations was repeatedly baulked. Moreover, it was chiefly the so-called transportation men—that is to say, the men working on the trains—who were organized. The great mass of men engaged in maintaining the road beds and doing other necessary tasks was virtually unorganized. Thinking on these things Debs came to a momentous decision. At the 1892 convention of his Brotherhood in Cincinnati he suddenly announced that he was resigning from the Brotherhood. The next year he began the organization of the American Railway Union. The date of its birth was June 20th, 1893. Debs and fifty other carefully picked men drew up a constitution and elected officers. 'Gene as president of the A. R. U. set his salary at $75

a month. He had been receiving $4,000 a year with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. The union was to include all railroad workers. 'Gene was definitely set on eliminating " the aristocracy in labour which unfortunately exists." It was in this connection that he first enunciated the sentiment to which I have already referred and which in various forms he was to repeat so often. " If I rise it will be *with* the ranks, not *from* them."

The American Railway Union had a meteoric success. Almost miraculously, early in 1894, it won its first strike against that formidable builder of a railroad empire, Jim Hill, of the Great Northern. 'Gene and his faithful brother and comrade, Theodore, were received with ovations by the workers not often matched in American history. And then came the Pullman strike.

George M. Pullman was the maker of the American sleeping-car. He had established a town of his own in Pullman, Illinois, not far from Chicago. He had equipped this town with some of the show features which might be expected under a benevolent feudalism. Behind this façade were three-storey tenement blocks where the foreign-born workers lived and at the south end of the town long rows of wooden shanties which were built at a cost of $100 apiece, and were rented by Mr. Pullman's company for $96 a year. In the panic of 1893 men were laid off wholesale and wages were slashed to a starvation level. By the spring of 1894 the Pullman workers were in debt to the company for their so-called model housing, and the like, to the extent of more than $70,000. It was against this hypocrisy and these intolerable conditions that at last the strike was declared. At once the Pullman workers on strike sought the support of the railroad workers who had to handle the Pullman company's cars. They appealed to the A. R. U.

Debs was an experienced labour official. He knew the tremendous odds against victory. He knew that in spite of his victory over Hill his A. R. U. was still a pretty green army. Therefore he opposed the strike. But at the meeting of the A. R. U. members in Chicago the Pullman workers told of their suffering in words so moving that the men voted to support them by a strike. Into that strike Debs

threw himself heart and soul. It began on June 26th with a boycott on Pullman parlour cars, and soon became a general railroad strike involving at least 125,000 railroad workers on twenty roads. The Knights of Labour, which had not yet gone to its death, pledged support to the strike, and the trades and labour organization of Chicago even went so far as to offer to call a general strike in support of their brethren on the railroads. Debs and the responsible leaders did their best—and with a high degree of success—to preserve order and to prevent violence. The brave and genuinely democratic Governor of Illinois, John P. Altgeld, watched the situation with every intention to preserve order but with no intention to use the militia for purposes of crushing the workers. Under these conditions, for the first time in American history on any considerable scale, the federal government used its power to break a strike. The first weapon brought into action by the government was an order directly from President Cleveland sending federal troops into Chicago, ostensibly to protect the mails. Not only was federal help not asked by the Governor of the State—as had previously been the rule—but the Governor sent a dignified, cogent and powerful protest—all to no avail. The second weapon was an injunction against Debs and some of his associates invoked under the Sherman anti-trust Act which had been passed in 1890 to check monopoly. Its purpose was to prevent the A. R. U. from " in any way or manner interfering with, hindering, obstructing, or stopping " any of the business of a list of 21 railroads in the Middle West. The injunction was not wholly without precedent. Its use on so large a scale was new and ultimately supported by the Supreme Court. Debs was twice arrested: first on June 15th, when he was soon released on bail, later on July 17th. He was arrested the second time for contempt of court, in that he had violated the injunction. With Debs and other leaders in jail the strike was soon broken. Before long the A. R. U. disappeared as a practical force in railroad affairs. It left behind it a burden of some $40,000 in debts. Later on 'Gene Debs without a salary paid off this debt from the proceeds of the speaking engagements which poured in upon him during the next few years. It is characteristic of the man that in his endless travelling on these speaking

engagements, and later for the Socialist Party, for some ten years he refused to ride in Pullman cars. This meant that he sat up at night in day coaches and slept as best he could. The reason he gave was that the strike against Pullman was not officially ended. It was well on in the twentieth century before a Socialist Pullman car conductor persuaded him that " even a righteous boycott had to end some time."

To go back now to the legal cases. The first efforts of the railroad managers and their allies in the government had been to convict Debs and his associates on a general blanket charge of conspiracy to commit various wrongful acts. This charge came to trial early in 1895. The principal counsel for defence was Clarence Darrow, who began his tremendous reputation as a labour lawyer in this trial. He carried the war into the enemy's camp. He let it be known that he was going to examine members of the General Managers' Association and, above all, his Majesty King Pullman himself. At this dramatic juncture mysteriously a juror was taken ill. The presiding judge, a man named Grosscup, declared a mis-trial. The case was never called again; and the bosses fell back on the injunction to which I have already referred. Debs, under it, was sent to jail at Woodstock for six months for contempt of court. A great deal of public feeling was aroused on behalf of Debs and his comrades, but to no avail. Conditions in Woodstock, unlike conditions in the unspeakably vile Cook County (Chicago) prison, where Debs had been confined on his arrest, were decent, and Debs was allowed much time to read or write. It was there that his conversion to Socialism was finally completed, largely under the influence of that famous American Socialist, Victor Berger, later to be Congressman for Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Nevertheless, since the truth must be told, although Debs always said that he was finally converted to Socialism in Woodstock, he did not immediately become active in Socialist politics. Instead he was one of the supporters of William Jennings Bryan in the famous campaign of 1896, fought largely on the money issue. It was only after Bryan's defeat that he finally saw the need of a new party. On June 18, 1897, 'Gene and his friends formed the Social Democracy. The bulk of his followers were drawn from the American Railway

Union which was at about the same time formally dissolved. Around this labour phalanx was an odd assortment of free-lances of various kinds. The first platform of the Social Democracy contained the astonishing and chimerical proposal that one State of the Union should be selected for the establishment of co-operative industries which ultimately would extend to the whole Union. Other demands of the platform, both immediate and more ultimate, were more truly in line with the usual Socialist proposals.

About the time that 'Gene Debs and the middle-westerners were forming the Social Democracy there was a split in the old Socialist Labour Party in New York City and the East. This split was provoked largely by the rather despotic tactics of that brilliant and able thinker and leader, Daniel De Leon. De Leon's tactics tended to draw workers out of the regular trade unions into a Socialist union rather than to inspire them to convert their comrades in the labour movement. For these and other reasons Morris Hillquit, Abraham Cahan and many another of the most promising younger Socialists broke away. Naturally, they sought alliances. So there came together this Eastern group with its Marxist and European background and the native American Social Democratic group which, as a whole, had what is called in America a Populist background. Out of the union the present Socialist Party was made. The final unity, however, was not consummated until July 29th, 1901, at Indianapolis, after 'Gene had made his first race for the Presidency in 1900 and received 96,878 votes. His biographer truly tells us concerning this campaign that " 'Gene contented himself with Socialist generalities couched in Ingersollian* phrases—with talk of a new world, the emancipation of the workers and the happiness of the little children of the future." This remained Debs's style of speaking, except when he was aroused by some specific wrong.

From 1901 the history of 'Gene Debs was to a large extent the history of the Socialist Party. He lost none of his interest in the organization of labour on the economic front and did some brave preaching of labour unionism in

*R. G. Ingersoll, the freethinker and popular orator of the later half of the nineteenth century.

difficult places. In 1905 he was one of the organizers of the Industrial Workers of the World, better known by its initials, I. W. W. He was not content, however, with the development of that organization along syndicalist lines which utterly repudiate political action, and was not long active in it. He was to the day of his death a thorn in the side of the shrewd and able Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labour, and his conservative labour advisers. Nevertheless, the general policy of Debs and the Socialist Party was one of working within the organized labour movement on fair and democratic lines. Debs himself, however, never could abide the tendency to racial discrimination in the A. F. of L., its over-emphasis on craft unionism, and some other features which he had regarded as undemocratic ever since the day when he resigned his own well-paid job with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen.

While the history of Debs is the history of the Socialist Party in its activities and enthusiasm, it seems in the retrospect a somewhat extraordinary fact that a man who had been so active in building labour organization for more than twenty years was not, in the Socialist Party, primarily an organizer any more than he was a theoretician. He was instead the voice, sometimes the pen, always the soul and conscience of the Party. He was its candidate for the Presidency in 1904, in 1908 and in 1912. Every year saw the Socialist Party grow in organized power, in membership and, above all, in the number of its votes. 1908 was the year of the famous train, the Red Special, which carried Debs and a few comrades all over the country in such a campaign as America has rarely seen. 1912, without the Red Special, but with better organization, was the year which saw the Socialist Party receive its highest percentage of the total national vote. This was also the year of the famous Bull Moose or Progressive campaign when Theodore Roosevelt temporarily became the leader of the forces of a mild revolt. The Progressives stole and mutilated a good many of the Socialist immediate demands, but they remained definitely capitalist and nationalist in outlook. Neither their liberalism nor the liberalism of the Democrat Woodrow Wilson served to prevent the growth of Socialism.

This growth continued apace during the early years of the World War while the United States was trying to remain neutral and yet make money out of the blood of the youth of Europe. It was at this period that the Socialist Party, and Debs with it, wrote some of the most creditable pages of their history. In the retrospect it is surprising that a comparatively small party succeeded in diagnosing so correctly the true causes of the war and in advocating so intelligently a programme of negotiated peace behind which it urged the United States to put its moral and economic force. In the midst of the war came the presidential election of 1916. Debs was no longer young and he was tired. He insisted that some younger man should run. His insistence was probably a mistake. Allan Benson who was nominated had been an able Socialist writer. He proved not to have the temperament for the human contacts and the arduous programme of speaking which an American presidential campaign requires. Moreover, a great many Socialist sympathisers, while they were very suspicious of President Wilson's type of pacifism, nevertheless voted for him because in the words of the campaign slogan "He kept us out of war." The whole world knows for how short a time Wilson kept us out of war. Inevitably America's benevolent neutrality to one group of contestants with whom it carried on a most profitable trade forced the country into war when it became evident that the profits of the merchants, manufacturers and bankers might be in danger. There were plenty of good slogans lying around to sanctify the war and plenty of sincere idealism which that eloquent phrase-maker, Woodrow Wilson, was able to exploit. Doubtless he had first fooled himself.

But the Socialist Party of America kept the faith. The St. Louis declaration of the Party, adopted after America had entered the war, is the most vigorous anti-war declaration adopted by an official Socialist Party during the whole World War.

Each day saw the war passion and hysteria grow apace. With the German attack upon revolutionary Russia even Socialists began to wonder if this might not be a necessary war. Probably these months were the most trying in Debs's whole life. Even his townsmen who knew him best and

had loved him most, irrespective of politics, began to turn against him, and there were times when there was actual danger of physical attack upon him and his home. America was mad with war hysteria.

Out of comparative inactivity, the increasing persecution of Socialist and other disbelievers in war aroused 'Gene Debs. He took the stump again, urging civil liberty in America, the recognition of the Bolshevik Government in Russia and a negotiated peace. He once told me that he had delivered in substance the famous speech, which later got him into jail, some sixteen or seventeen times before finally he went to the State Convention of the Ohio Socialists. This Convention was held in Canton, Ohio, not very far from Cleveland. On his way to the Convention, Debs stopped off to visit three Cleveland Socialists—Charles E. Ruthenberg, Alfred Wagenknecht and Charles Baker—in jail for their anti-war stand in 1917. Fired by his contacts with them, he stepped on to the Convention platform and made the speech which, together with his later speeches to the jury which tried him and the judge who sentenced him, rank as his greatest. The Department of Justice was waiting for him. He was arrested under the espionage law. Many years later a prominent Democrat told me that when President Wilson first heard of Debs's arrest under this law he was shocked and said that he had never meant the law to be used in a case of that sort. In a few days, however, Wilson had changed his mind in resentment because of the uproar that went up on the arrest of Debs. By all radicals and many liberals Wilson was held responsible for the law of which 'Gene had fallen foul. From that moment Wilson was Debs's implacable enemy.

At last came the trial. It was marked not only by the eloquence of Debs, but by one or two characteristically kindly acts. A girl carrying a bouquet of red roses, intended for 'Gene, fainted at his feet. He picked her up and carried her into the ante-room. One of the witnesses against him, a young stenographer, was obviously much discomfited by the testimony he had given. After this young man had finished his testimony and the court had adjourned for the day, 'Gene walked over to him and patted him on the shoulder: "Never mind, sonny," said he, "you did the

best you could under the circumstances." 'Gene's eloquence was in vain. A jury of farmers found him guilty. They could hardly help it in view of the fact that the judge had charged them that it was unnecessary to prove that the Canton speech had actually caused insubordination, mutiny or refusal to accept military service. All the jury had to decide was whether it was 'Gene's intention or a possible result of his work that these things should happen. The case was appealed and dragged the weary length of appeals in American courts, Debs remaining free on bail. Finally it was unanimously affirmed by the Supreme Court, the so-called liberals on the bench uniting with the conservatives. 'Gene did not actually begin his jail sentence until April, 1919, five months after the Armistice. His first place of confinement was the Moundsville Penitentiary in West Virginia. His statement on entering its doors was this: "I enter the prison a flaming revolutionist—my head erect, my spirit untamed, and my soul unconquerable." Somewhat later he was transferred to Atlanta. Many of his friends regarded this as a persecution. By this time Debs was not well, his heart was in bad shape, and the heat of Atlanta was terrific. The Atlanta Penitentiary was—and is—no model prison. Nevertheless in it 'Gene Debs made a place for himself unique in prison annals. On account of his health he was relieved from heavy prison work and in a short time became a kind of unofficial personnel officer among the prisoners—this with the full consent of the Warden. When he left jail men wept. A hardened negro "lifer" said of him: "'Gene Debs is the only Jesus Christ I ever knew."

Debs was not pardoned in any hurry. Thousands of those who loved him, although they were not Socialists, joined in repeated requests for his release. President Wilson was adamant against it. It was one of Wilson's weak points that he was inclined to regard every sharp difference of opinion with him as a kind of sin against the Holy Ghost and therefore unforgivable.

When Harding succeeded Wilson in March, 1921, the situation changed. Harding was a mediocre politician whose administration wrote some of the blackest pages of American history. Nevertheless he was not vindictive. I

happened to have known Harding, because as a boy I lived in the town from which he came. Therefore, on two occasions I saw the President in behalf of Debs. It was easy enough to read between the lines of what the President said and to see that with him the problem was purely political. He would pardon Debs when he became convinced that the pressure for release was greater or, at any rate, more intense than the pressure to keep him behind prison bars. The post-war hysteria had not yet subsided to the extent that Debs's release was a matter of indifference to thousands of so-called patriots. Finally the President took the extraordinary step of sending for Debs to come and see him in Washington. No publicity was given to this trip. Debs left Atlanta Penitentiary, called on the President and returned to the Penitentiary. Not for years would he speak of his visit and then only with reserve. The respective characters of the two men make that meeting a dramatic footnote to history. Not Harding sat in judgment on Debs but Debs on Harding. He made no appeal for himself. He told the President of conditions in Atlanta that needed immediate remedy, and his last words with the President were a plea for the pardon of a fellow prisoner. Finally on Christmas Day, 1921, the President commuted Debs's ten-years term and he left Atlanta a free man.

In this brief description of Debs's imprisonment I have omitted reference to his political activities. He kept in fairly close touch with political events through letters and occasional visits from friends. In the presidential campaign of 1920 he was the candidate of the Socialist Party. Of course he was completely inactive. Even his writing was restricted. The party was feeling the destructive effects not only of the war which was over but of the post-war hysteria and the Communist split. Debs got a great many personal and protest votes. Something like a million votes were counted for him, the highest number he had ever received, but not the highest proportion of the total vote. 1920 was the year in which for the first time women voted for President all over the country.

Debs came out of prison into a very confused political situation. All his revolutionary instincts were on the side of the Bolsheviks in Russia. He at once declared: " I am

a Bolshevik from the crown of my head to the tips of my toes." Nevertheless the stories of Bolshevik persecutions and denial of civil liberty greatly disturbed him. His closest friends were loyal to the Socialist Party. Debs stayed with his party. He found a country that was feeling all the effects of the new issues and new attitudes which had been developed in the war and the post-war years. In 1921 the post-war boom receded into depression from which America made a rapid recovery, and soon Debs with the rest of his party found themselves engulfed in the extraordinary current of one of the maddest periods of gamblers' prosperity on record.

To all this Debs brought his own great personality but less than his old leadership. Once more at Terre Haute he received a great ovation from a crowd which included hundreds of those who during the war had turned against him. He was never embittered by the fickleness of crowds. He brought out of prison that which he had taken into prison; namely, a capacity for prophetic wrath against wrong combined with an almost infinite love for individuals, the weakest and stupidest of them. He was the same lanky, bald-headed, affectionate, magnetic Debs. But he had definitely lost in health. The years did not make easier for him or for his friends the struggle which he had to make against over-dependence on alcohol. Like many others of his temperament, 'Gene was more susceptible than most men to the effect of liquor. It was not this, however, but ill-health and the fact that he had been removed from intimate contact with public affairs and party controversies during critical months which affected his post-war leadership. Much of his energy he threw into a campaign for better prison conditions. He left the direction of party affairs largely to that able lawyer and thinker Morris Hillquit. He went along without enthusiasm but without protest when in 1924 the party nominated Senator LaFollette of Wisconsin, a courageous progressive but not a Socialist, and entered a coalition in his support out of which it hoped that a genuine labour party might emerge. Probably the party was justified in taking this particular gamble, although in the light of hindsight it might have taken it in a way somewhat better to have protected its own interest and its own future.

It lost on the gamble. LaFollette got about 5 million votes. His followers had expected more. Organized labour had co-operated rather reluctantly. The A. F. of L. leadership had never abandoned its old non-partisan political policy. After the election the convention, which Debs and the Socialist Party had hoped might give birth to a true labour party, buried the LaFollette movement. Representatives of the Railroad Brotherhoods and some other unions listened with respect, but unmoved, to Debs's eloquent plea at the convention for the formation of a genuine labour party. The Socialists had to begin again.

Into this new beginning Debs threw himself gallantly. He became the National Chairman of the party and was only restrained in the amount of his speaking by the state of his health. But there was always an element of pathos about his post-war meetings. Crowds turned out to honour the man, and to pay a kind of pious tribute to their own past. There was about these meetings a memorial quality. Men paid to the living Debs the tribute that usually they reserve for the dead.

But they did not pay him the one tribute he wanted; namely, the tribute of consecration to the Socialist goal. His own pleas to them had much of their old eloquence, but he made in effect the same speech he had been making before the war. He had little to contribute to an analysis of post-war conditions and the fallacy of the tinsel prosperity of the Coolidge epoch.

Yet the brave warrior went on unclouded in spirit and vibrant with hope. In the summer of 1926 he was forced to go again to a sanitarium which he had visited before. He never left it alive. He read, talked occasionally with friends who were allowed to see him, reminisced of the past. In October he was obliged to take to his bed. His biographer writes:

"He went unwillingly. Whenever there was no one about he walked the halls. One day he found a girl, whose case had been pronounced hopeless, weeping near his room. He tried to comfort her. He spoke of Henley's brave *Invictus*. She begged him to write some lines of the poem for her. Theodore Debs brought her this verse written in 'Gene's graceful longhand:

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll:
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

'Gene fell into a coma. For five days they bent anxiously above that great heart of his, the physicians certain that it had stopped. On the fifth day, October 20, 1926, the heart beat no more. 'Gene died with his hand in Theodore's."