
The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen

by Eugene V. Debs

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This article is written in the interest of harmony, it is also written in the interest of truth; and, since harmony cannot permanently exist where truth is exiled, ignored or crushed, it will be our purpose to state the truth. This done, we shall leave consequences to take care of themselves.

Let it be distinctly understood that we write in a spirit, neither vaunting nor apologetic. We shall, however, in the language of the sturdy old carpenter, "hew to the line," regardless of where the chips fly. Our statements will be verities, and those who may choose to assail them, shall be welcome to all the trophies they may secure.

In 1863 the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was organized; Division No. 1, in the city of Detroit took its place at the head of the column, which now numbers 317 Divisions. The Brotherhood has grown in 23 years from one Division to 317 Divisions, from a membership of 12 to a membership of 18,000. This growth, this success, demonstrates the necessity for such an organization which defies rational contradiction.

We assume, pretending to no positive knowledge upon the subject, that each of the 12 engineers, who formed Division No. 1 in 1863, in the city of Detroit, had been locomotive firemen, that they had graduated from the "scoop," and by their education and experience as firemen, had become capable of assuming all the weighty responsibilities of engineers.

It is held to be a most reprehensible trait of character, for a man, who has gone forth from a humble home and achieved success in the

world's broad field of battle, to treat his brothers who are struggling up the same steep and rugged declivities, with supercilious disdain — to assume an arrogant demeanor, to put on offensive style — in a word, to act the damphool generally. The verdict of the world, in such cases is, always, that the man so deporting himself, has more brass than brains, that he has bartered probity for position, conscience for cash, and that the conspicuousness, secured by such a course, is yielding a harvest of contempt.

The organization of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, manifestly marked an important era in the history of railway wage men. It was a move in the right direction. It was an organization for noble purposes. It had in view, not only individual rectitude, but the improvement in character and qualifications of engineers as a class. It started out with the declarations that to become a member of the Brotherhood, "an engineer must be of good moral character, of temperate habits " and the motto of the Brotherhood was, "Sobriety, Truth, Justice, and Morality."

We shall feel obliged to our readers, if, in following us through this article, they will keep the foregoing in mind.

In the year 1873, 13 years ago, in the town of Port Jervis, in the State of New York, about a dozen locomotive firemen, met and founded the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. We assume without hesitancy that there exists an urgent necessity for the organization of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen — a necessity as pressing and as importunate as that which demanded the organization of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, indeed, more decided in its character. We choose to dwell upon this phase of our subject. We propose to try this case fairly. We propose to call witnesses and make them speak. This case has been long enough on the docket. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen was organized for noble purposes. It contemplates the moral, intellectual, social and financial improvement of its membership. It had in view better citizens and better workmen and its motto — its shibboleth words, from the beginning were, "Benevolence, Sobriety, and Industry."

Now what we desire is that the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers shall call the roll of its 18,000 members belonging to its 317 Divisions, and as each member answers to his name let him state if he was at one period in his life a locomotive firemen? If he was at one time a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen? Let us have the ayes and noes. Let the record go to the world. Let it be seen

and read of all men that they may know the incalculable weight of obligation the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers is under to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen for supplying it with its membership as it stands today. What says the Grand Chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers? This: "To become members of the Brotherhood of Engineers an engineer must be of good moral character, of temperate habits." Now then what says the organic law of the Brotherhood of Firemen? This: "That a man qualified for membership shall be of good moral character, industrious, sober and sound in body and limb."

Here we ask in what regard has the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers mapped out a line of march more desirable; than that which the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen has designated for its membership? Is the question of benevolence brought into the controversy? It was stated by the Grand Master of the Locomotive Firemen in his public address at Philadelphia that the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, since its organization in 1873, had paid out for benevolent purposes the sum of \$315,764. It was recently stated by the Grand Chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers that during the past 16 years the Brotherhood had paid \$1,850, 000 on account of deaths and injuries. Now then if the dates of organization of the two great Brotherhoods are considered, as also the great disparity in wages paid engineers and firemen, it will be seen that upon the score of benevolence the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen have been true to every obligation.

The goal of the average fireman's ambition is the throttle, and just here comes into the boldest possible relief the inquiry, Has the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen been true to its high mission in preparing its membership for the responsibilities of engineers? If not, in what regard, in what particular, in what instance has the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen been derelict? We put the question with special and commanding emphasis. Here and now we challenge investigation. We know that the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen began its career in weakness — with less than a dozen members 13 years ago. We know through what ordeals it has passed. We know how intense has been the heat of the furnace. We know "what masters laid the keel" of our good ship:

What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat

Were shaped the anchors of thy hope! ¹

We know that courage more self-sacrificing, ambition more exalted, fidelity worthy of higher commendation, never animated a body of men to execute a mission born of devotion to private and public welfare.

Again the Grand Chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, justly boasts of the Journal of the Brotherhood, which he says "has a circulation of 16,000 copies per month." We applaud the undertaking and the success of the *Engineer's Journal*. It speaks well for the Brotherhood. It means literary and intellectual culture. It means the improvement of the mind forces of the membership. It is in consonance with the spirit of the age, and beneficent results must follow.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen early appreciated the importance of issuing a publication under its auspices, that should monthly give information of the progress of the Brotherhood, and discuss questions relating to the welfare, not only of the membership, but of the workmen of the country. How well it has met expectations let the figures tell. We now issue monthly 23,000 copies of the *Firemen's Magazine* and its popularity is a source of ceaseless satisfaction.

We record such facts because they place the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen on a plane calculated to inspire respect and confidence in all circles where honest endeavor is appreciated.

Such is the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, such its bed rock principles, such its growth and grandeur, such its work and success. It is large enough to be seen. Its boundaries are the horizons of the continent. Its lodge fires across the continent, and from the Dominion of Canada to the Republic of Mexico, are the beacon lights of progress. Its principles are enduring, its purpose exalted, its influence commendable, its motto universally accepted as praiseworthy. What more? It has been congratulated by men enthroned in public esteem. Statesmen, Governors, legislators, divines, writers of renown, men profoundly learned in law, literature, logic, and divinity, men who have studied all the labor problems of the day and whose opinions pass current where thinkers debate. This Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, having been for 13 years sedulously engaged in preparing men for locomotive engineers, "of good moral character, industrious,

¹ From "The Building of the Ship" (1870), by **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow** (1807-1882). Checked to the original.

sober, and sound in body and limb," now and here asks what recognition it has received and is still receiving from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers? And here we repeat the challenge contained in the May number of this *Magazine* for any one interested, "to point out one word, one line ever published in the *Engineers' Journal*, in which even a reference is made to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, one word, one line in recognition of the organization; one word, one line in favor of harmony; one word, just one that would indicate, or even intimate that such an institution as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen ever existed."

We beg not to be misunderstood. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, is not languishing because of the assumed superiority of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. There are laws regulating the amenities of life, its civilities and manners, as irrevocable as the laws of the Medes and Persians — and the penalties for their infraction are as certain as death. Haughtiness, pride, presumption, self-conceit, *big headedness*, win inevitably, pity from all manly, right thinking men — and yet, such majestic imperiousness, swelling importance, is a public calamity, since society is benefited by common sense, and is the loser when any considerable number of its members, become enamored of ideas which subject them to ridicule.

We repeat that for 13 years the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen has sought to prepare men for the position of Locomotive Engineers. This it has done by methods recognized as eminently prudent and praiseworthy. That the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, should fail to recognize such a Brotherhood, is anomalous to an extent which defies prudent characterization. It is fundamentally erroneous. It taboos the commonest courtesies of life. It is a vulgar thrusting aside of those urbanities which distinguish the gentleman from the boor. It degrades rather than elevates those who practice it. It is an exhibition of that vanity which distinguished the Pennsylvanian, who "struck ile," and thereafter couldn't see a poor relation though he was seven foot high. But the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen care little for such things; nevertheless the position taken by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has developed in an attack upon the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen fruitful of indignation rather than contempt. It brings into view a purpose of such flagrant injustice as will in our opinion defeat itself. Do we hear the inquiry, what is this injustice? It is this, that no locomotive engineer, who is a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, shall ever become a

member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and that no member of the Brotherhood of Engineers who is a member of the Brotherhood of Firemen is allowed to represent his Division in annual convention. Why? In the name of all things decent, prudent and honorable, why? The question goes resounding through all the Lodge rooms of the order, and the echoing reply is why? Why this blacklisting, this boycotting rule of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers? Why this gratuitous stigma? What stain has the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen placed upon the escutcheon — the life and character of its members? It has demanded good character, sobriety, industry, soundness of limb and body. The fireman has been for years a member of the Brotherhood of Firemen. Every noble ambition has been cultivated. He has broadened in intelligence, habits of sobriety and industry have been fixed — fidelity to obligation has been developed into a principle of life and action. He numbers his Brotherhood comrades by hundreds. He is deeply attached to the history, the traditions, the associations of the Brotherhood. It has warmed him into a noble life — prepared him for the duties and responsibilities of engineer — and now, what? This, by the fiat of the Brotherhood of Engineers, he shall never pass the threshold of a Division door, never wear the badge of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers until he has renounced allegiance to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. Gods! if that is not blacklisting, what is? If that is not boycotting, what is? If that is not imperialism, what is? It is asking a man to disrobe himself of his manhood, of his self-respect, of his independence, of his personal liberty for what? That he may enter the charmed circle of a Division of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers without the smell of a locomotive fireman upon his garments — and that is the lofty commendation locomotive firemen receive from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Look at it — turn it around — turn it inside out — view it from any possible standpoint, and the more you contemplate the astounding insult, the more you discover the purpose of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers to be, the humiliation of Locomotive Firemen.

At a recent union meeting of Locomotive Engineers at Hartford, Conn., the Grand Chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers is reported to have said:

I say to you, ladies and gentlemen, that men who will not stand up in defense of their own rights, but who bend to the wishes of the officers, and withdraw from an organization which

no man who is honest can possibly object to, *lack the essential qualities of manhood*. No man has the right to say to another, "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not." * * * A man has the right to belong to any organization, provided it is not contrary to law. We have had railroad managers tell our men, "If you belong to that Brotherhood we don't want you." * * * We do not believe in *dictation* in any form, but we do believe in justice, in equity, and in truth.

Such are the recent declarations of Grand Chief Arthur of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. How do they tally with the decrees of that Brotherhood relating to members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen? If an engineer, a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, asks admittance into the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, what is he told? This, to gain admittance you must abandon your membership in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, and yet he says to the Hartford meeting, "that a man who withdraws from an organization which no man who is honest can possibly object to," because officers demand that he should withdraw, "lacks the essential qualities of manhood," but that is just what the B of LE demands of a member of the B of LF who seeks admittance into a Division of the B of LE. The very thing denounced is practiced. The order is that no member of the B of LF shall ever enter the Order of B of LE. The demand is that such applicants shall first renounce all allegiance to the B of LF. The Grand Chief says no man has a right to say, "thou shalt or thou shalt not," and yet when a member of the B of LF desires membership in the B of LE the order is, "thou shalt" withdraw from the B of LF, and if the demand is not complied with then the order is "thou shalt not" become a member of the B of LE. The railroad official says, "If you want work, renounce the B of LE," and the B of LE says, "If you want to join this Order, renounce the B of LF." Grand Chief Arthur says, "We do not believe in dictation in any form," still, when the B of LE says to a member of the B of LF you shall not join this Brotherhood unless you withdraw from the B of LF, it practices the most odious and repulsive form of dictation, a form of dictation to which, if a man yields, "he lacks," in the language of Grand Chief Arthur, "the essential qualities of manhood."

We unequivocally endorse the Grand Chief's opinion and declaration. We heartily second the motion. We vote aye every time. And we frankly tell the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers that their

Grand Chief has sounded a keynote which will find a hearty response throughout the entire Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen.

The membership of the Brotherhood are not wanting "in the essential qualities of manhood." They will not *be forced* to abandon their parent Brotherhood to become members of any other Brotherhood. They will not permit humiliating dictation. In all things that go to make up manliness, good character, probity, sobriety, industry, a Brotherhood fireman is the peer of a Brotherhood engineer. As a citizen he possesses the same rights and prerogatives, his aspirations are as high, his purposes as pure and as unselfish, and he will never consent to cause the burning blush of shame to mantle the cheek of parents, wife or children, because of his recreancy to obligation.

We are not seeking to underestimate the character or influence of Grand Chief Arthur, of the B of LE. Hitherto, in a manner both frank and kind, we have referred to some of his public utterances, some of his infelicities of speech, but never offensively — always courteously. In this we fearlessly challenge the record. But now we have this to say, in all seriousness, that while his policy — and we refer to the treatment of the B of LF — may meet with the approval of a majority of the B of LE, as it now exists, he will be required to change his methods, if he is ambitious to be the Grand Chief of engineers now preparing for graduation. A grand army of Brotherhood firemen are pressing toward and are reaching for the throttle, their feet will soon stand upon the "footboard," they will be found loyal to their *Alma Mater*, nor will they enter the B of LE upon any terms which require them to sacrifice their self respect to the extent of a thousandth of a milligram. If it were otherwise, if the mission of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen was to prepare men for engineers, who, when they had reached the goal of their ambition, would disown their comrades, assume arrogant airs and point to them with disdain, then by all the sacred memories of struggle and triumph, by all the heroic dead, and heroes living, it were better to disband, better to fold our banners in silence, put out the lodge fires and make the humiliating confession that the children of the Brotherhood trained and educated for responsible duties, in the hour of their triumph, turned traitor to every manly and ennobling sentiment, and for the consideration of membership in the B of LE, exhibited to the world a degree of apostasy and ingratitude, for which there can be neither condonement nor atonement But we are not afflicted with such misgivings. We know whereof we write, when we say that a more self-

reliant body of men than the members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen does not exist upon the face of the earth; and if the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers is equally generous in its pride of membership, it may to its heart's content indulge in gratulatory phrases, but it should remember a large proportion of its membership graduated from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen; that is where they were trained for their positions on the "footboard," and it should remember that when the B of LE demands that a member of the B of LF shall withdraw to become a member of the B of LE, it practices a dictation as odious as ever characterized a railroad official, a dictation embodying insult and ingratitude, dictation humiliating and degrading, dictation which no manly man will tolerate and which all honorable men will condemn.

We have before us, as we write, the June number of the *Engineers' Journal*, containing communications from Messrs. Rory O'More and J.E. Phelan. In paying our respects to these astute writers, it will be courteous, we presume, to take them as they come, as millers grind grists. Rory O'More is entitled to precedence, as he begins on page 386, while J. E. Phelan comes later on page 394. These writers assume to be the custodians of Mr. P.M. Arthur's public utterances. They decorate their chief in royal purple, to which we offer no objection whatever. It is their privilege, still it occurs to us that since Mr. P.M. Arthur is one of the editors of the *Engineers' Journal* he could, if he would, or would if he could, defend his own official declarations. So far as we are concerned no assault was ever made upon Mr. P.M. Arthur. Defamation of character is not our style, hence R.O'M. in hunting for Mr. P.M.A.'s "defamers" will be required to browse around in pastures and fence corners outside of this office. It appears that the height of our offending was an article published in the February Magazine, in which we took occasion to express in decorous language our objections to expressions used by Mr. P.M. Arthur in his New Orleans address — as for instance, Mr. Arthur said, "without capital labor would starve." If Mr. Arthur in that stated a fact, he ought to continually repeat it in his *Journal*, and Rory O'More and J.E. Phelan ought to round up their periods with the declaration. We objected to the expression. We said, "It occurs to us, that Grand Chief Arthur, while manifestly seeking to harmonize labor and capital, and do away with unnecessary friction, has put upon record expressions well calculated to mislead the public mind and to perpetuate the very difficulties which he is evidently seeking to overcome."

We assume that P.M. Arthur, G.C., never objected to that language. It is courteous, parliamentary, dignified, manly.

We reversed Mr. Arthur's proposition and said, "without laborers capitalists would starve." One illustration will suffice. England can produce sufficient food for her population, about six months of the year. In proportion to area and population, England has more capital and more capitalists than any country in the world. Do R.O'M. and J.E.P. see the point?

We objected to Mr. Arthur's expression that "the capitalist and laborer both attend the same market, the capitalist with money to buy labor, and the laborer with strong muscles to sell labor." We thought such terms as "buy" and "sell" labor were infelicitous, and we strengthened our logic with such illustrations as occurred to our mind. The distinctive feature of the labor system North and South some years since were, the North *hired* its labor, the South *bought* its labor. Now the South like the north hires its labor. In the South laborers were chattels, capitalists *bought* them, and it is possible, in slave times, labor, as Mr. Arthur put it. was a "commodity." If Mr. Arthur is still convinced, that "without capital labor starves," that labor is a *commodity* to be *bought* and *sold*, he has a widely circulated *Journal* and can monthly urge his views upon engineers and workingmen generally. He should have the courage of his convictions, and if he has further remarks upon the subject we shall read them with becoming patience. Such a course would be preferable to wholesale dealing in fulsome eulogy for the protection of Mr. Arthur's reputation as authority upon labor questions, in which Messrs. R.O'M. and J.E.P. so frequently engage.

R.O'M. says, "I have noticed in the *Firemen's Magazine* on various occasions, several flings at our Order, by writers over various signatures, which satisfied me that the Order was but waiting an opportunity to let loose the dogs of war on us" — and still, R.O'M. finds it convenient and prudent not to repeat what he has "noticed," and we commend his tactics, they protect his veracity. But, as if to open his mouth for the express purpose of putting his foot in it, he says, "It seems that some remarks made by Bro. Phelan gave the pretext to commence." A confession that "Bro. Phelan" commenced. Bro. Phelan didn't "let loose any dogs of war" — he just let himself loose; his dogs were probably away from home on some other equally fruitless campaign — possibly barking at the moon. This done, R.O'M. addresses himself to "gentlemen of the B of LF" and gives the informa-

tion that he “graduated from a wiper” up to the command of a “passenger engine.” Happy to know it. You developed as you went up, and when you reached the goal of your ambition, when you had advanced from the “wiper” to the right side of a passenger engine, then what? Then you took off your “dirty linen ” and threw it at your old comrades and associates. Then you fell into line with those who decreed that no member of the B of LF shall ever become a member of the B of LE unless he turns apostate and disowns his “fostering mother,” and you say to the men in whose ranks you toiled, if you don’t like my style I cannot help it. That is the purport of your address to “gentlemen of the B of LF.”

R. O’M. refers to two factions which once sought recognition. What of that? There are no two factions now seeking recognition; no, nor one. Your supposition that “the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen of North America is able to take care of itself” is correct. It has demonstrated the fact. It has developed self-reliance; it has solved every problem of success. It is strong, morally, intellectually, and financially. It has acted toward the B of LE in the spirit of fraternity, fellowship, comradeship. In return, it has received naught but contempt. The B of LE may esteem its supercilious attitude towards the B of LF as commendable. It is the attitude of those who look with disdain upon their fellow men and fellow workingmen. It is an attitude of vulgar dictation, an attitude of base ingratitude. It is an attitude which exhibits a mixture of pride, vanity, arrogance and aristocracy, which, though R.O’M. may applaud it and seek to hide its offensiveness, sinks him and others who approve it, to positions beneath that of a “wiper” — indeed, a manly “wiper” is indefinitely superior to an arrogant and conceited engineer.

In looking over the communication of Mr. J.E. Phelan, we discover that he, too, starts out with a defense of Mr. P.M. Arthur. He goes for the article on “Capital and Labor,” published in the February number of the *Magazine*. Mr. Phelan, having started out with the proposition that labor, and therefore laborers — for there can be no labor without laborers — can be bought and sold, says his labor “can be bought.” Mr. Phelan will sell himself “absolutely” to his “employer.” Not so, Mr. Phelan. “Employer” is not the word. An employer does not buy his employees, he hires them, but you sell yourself “absolutely” — not to your employer, but to your *owner*. The man who buys a “commodity” *owns* it. Down South, when a planter bought a slave he owned him — as you say your employer does you,

or your hours, “absolutely.” You hedge, Mr. Phelan; you weaken. You resort to subterfuge. You discover that you have bitten off more than you can masticate. You say, “Let that (my) employer treat me justly, pay me good wages, and consider me a man of honor,” etc. But when a man has bought you and your labor, and you have sold yourself as a “commodity,” your buyer is not under further obligations to you. You have sold your labor, he has bought your labor — he owns your labor, but when your self-imposed degradation pinches you, you say, let him do this and that; the intimation being, unless he does this and that, you are not sold, he did not buy you — you are a free man. Gods! but we congratulate you, Mr. Phelan, and we advise you every time you sell yourself, to stipulate with the man or the corporation, making the purchase, that they shall “treat you justly,” pay you “good wages” and “consider you a man of honor,” and if they don’t do that, Mr. Phelan, don’t sell yourself. They ought not to be the owner of such a “commodity” as J.E. Phelan, Esq.

But, Mr. Phelan, in his eagerness to do the handsome thing by Mr. P.M. Arthur, assumes that we said Mr. Arthur’s language was “cringing, cowardly and fawning” because the statement that “but for capital labor would starve.” We referred to the “literature of labor.” But let us have the entire sentence. Here it is:

But it is manifestly true, that while the literature of capital is bold, aggressive, defiant, and arrogant, that of labor has been cringing, fawning and cowardly, the fundamental error being that “but for capital labor would starve.” Hence, reasoning from such a hypothesis, the conclusion is inevitable that capitalists hold in their hands the life and destiny of labor.

Not a word is said declaring the speech of Mr. Arthur “cringing, fawning and cowardly” but admitting the truth of Mr. Arthur’s declaration, that “but for capital labor would starve” and you of necessity create a literature “cringing, fawning and cowardly.” If that does not result, then the haggard truth of history, that labor in all ages has been degraded, stands forth a colossal lie.

Mr. J.E. Phelan, in making a case against the B of LF, quotes the gabble of an unknown fireman, somewhere “many years ago” — and this talk while “dead-heading,”² is made to do duty against the B of

² “Dead-heading” is the transportation of train crews from one job location to another as passengers.

LF now. If we were inclined to bring to our assistance the conversations of engineers — not many years ago — not unknown engineers, we could name engineers of the highest standing, not members of the B of LF, who have in language full of honest energy, denounced the outrageous policy pursued by the B of LE towards the B of LF. But our cause does not demand such tactics.

In our strictures upon the policy of the B of LE we have sought to influence its action in the line of justice and those proprieties which should distinguish an organization made up largely of men who have graduated from the B of LF. In this we have been animated by purposes which we do not blush to own. They will stand the test of criticism — and in the future, as now, afford us satisfaction in their contemplation.

The B of LF has not sought to control the personal action of its members. It builds no Chinese walls for its protection. The intelligence of its membership would brook no dictation from any source whatever, and what we say for members of our Brotherhood is equally true of a vast number of the members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. They are not and never will be in sympathy with a policy which seeks to degrade an engineer who retains his membership in the B of LF, of whom there are now at least 2,000, as noble and as true as ever stood upon a footboard or held a throttle. We could bank on their fidelity, though the temptation was as great as the devil offered the Master on the Mount. They would say, “Get thee behind me, Satan.”³ They will never wear the badge of apostates. They will never barter their manhood, their independence, for position. They will never withdraw from our order, unless it be of their own free will. And thousands more are coming up in our ranks whose loyalty will never waver, and when they learn, as they are now learning, that no engineer can belong to the B of LE who is a member of the B of LF, then their loyalty to their parent fraternity takes on a higher significance, then the pass word has a new meaning, and the die is irrevocably cast.

We can live apart. If the B of LE assumes, that engineers belonging to the B of LF would make the control of that organization impossible — as Mr. Phelan says would be the case, they can be of service to the B of LE by remaining on the outside, where at no distant day, a vast number of Locomotive Engineers will be found, preferring

³ Words attributed to Jesus in *Luke* chapter 4, verse 8 and *Matthew* chapter 16, verse 23.

to maintain their manhood, their integrity, than to accept any position in any organization which requires their degradation. This action will not be because the B of LF imposes restraints or pledges, or assumes to dictate, but because it will be in consonance with those principles of honor and rectitude which it has been the ambition of the B of LF to inculcate.

We have always voiced the sentiment and voice it again that we are not opposed to engineers withdrawing from our order. When they leave us and cast their lot with the B of LE we bid them Godspeed — all we plead for is their right to leave us when they will instead of being driven out under the lash without regard to their personal feelings or rights.

This article has assumed undue length, for which we can offer no apology. Insulted, maligned and ostracized in the face of ceaseless endeavors to cultivate fraternal feelings, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen had a right to a historical resume of its transaction, and this Magazine had a right to speak for itself. This has been done — how thoroughly we shall express no opinion. We have sought to maintain the honor and prestige of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. We have been identified with its struggles and triumphs in the past — we are marching with it now, we feel its great heart throb and our hand is in its manly palm, and the music to which we are keeping step, is not a dirge. Every note thrills like a bugle blast. The word is onward, we know what we have done; we know what we are doing, our ears are attuned to the harbinger notes of better times coming. We will bury our dead, we will assuage the grief of widow and orphan, we will fling out our banner, bearing our motto, we will be true to obligation, and we will educate men for Locomotive Engineers, who, when they are commanded to abandon the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen for a membership in the B of LE, will say “no!” with such indignant emphasis as that those who court apostasy, will learn, after all, that “honesty is the best policy.”

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport

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