
The Square Man

by Eugene V. Debs

Published in *Firemen's Magazine* [Terre Haute, IN], vol. 6, no. 1 (Jan. 1882), pg. 16.
Listed under the heading of "Editorial," unquestionably work of Editor Debs.

While there is nothing meaner among men than the sneak, there is none grander or better than the square man. The sneak no one respects. The square man everybody honors. Riches and social position may belong to the former, but they will not bring him that mead of self-respect, that full measure of love from his fellow, which the square man enjoys as a result of his grandeur of character. Poverty and toil may be the lot in life of the latter, but he walks with his head amidst the stars. He is a king among his fellows.

The square man sympathizes with his friends in distress. His is the kind heart to devise means of help for the downtrodden and the lowly, and his is the hand to do the kindly bidding of his heart. The widow and the fatherless have a sure friend in the square man; nor does he wait till they come to him for his ready succor. He goes to them quickly when the heart is bleeding and trouble is lurking about the path of life, and by his earnest, hearty, helpful sympathy soon drives sorrow and trouble away. Everybody respects the square man. He may not wear good clothes; he may be a little ungrammatical in speech; he may even swear a little, and look rough and uncouth, but the good, honest, square man is there.

If the square man grasps the throttle of an engine there will be no sleeping at that post. Lives are entrusted to him; all his faculties are on the alert for danger. No drink touches his lips while he is making his run. Clear-brained, keen-eyed, strong-armed he stands at his post, and if the hour of danger overtakes him while there, he will never desert it. Duty does not call him

in vain. All the time while his engine is skimming along the rail like a thing of life under the sun's light; while it thunders into the darkness of night; while it crashes into the storm and out again into the morning light, he stands there silent, watchful, fearless. All who know him feel safe, for a square man is at the post of duty. So it is with the square man in all the walks of life. It makes no difference where you find him — on an engine or in a palace, homely, uncouth, and poor, or rich, elegant, and handsome — he is always the same undaunted, honorable, square man.

Edited by Tim Davenport

1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR · July 2015 · Non-commercial reproduction permitted.