

THOUGHTS ON LABOR.

“GOD has given each man a back to be clothed, a mouth to be filled, and a pair of hands to work with.” And since wherever a mouth and a back are created a pair of hands also is provided, the inference is unavoidable, that the hands are to be used to supply the needs of the mouth and the back. Now, as there is one mouth to each pair of hands, and each mouth must be filled, it follows quite naturally, that if a single pair of hands refuses to do its work then the mouth goes hungry, or, which is worse, the work is done by other hands. In the one case, the supply failing, an inconvenience is suffered, and the man dies; in the other he eats and wears the earnest of another man’s work, and so a wrong is inflicted. The law of nature is this, “If a man will not work neither shall he eat.” Still further, God has so beautifully woven together the web of life, with its warp of Fate, and its woof of Free-will, that in addition to the result of a man’s duty when faithfully done, there is a satisfaction and recompense in the very discharge thereof. In a rational state of things, Duty and Delight travel the same road, sometimes hand in hand. Labor has an agreeable end, in the result we gain; but the means also are agreeable, for there are pleasures in the work itself. These unexpected compensations, the gratuities and stray-gifts of Heaven are scattered abundantly in life. Thus the kindness of our friends, the love of our children is of itself worth a thousand times all the pains we take on their account. Labor in like manner, has a reflective action, and gives the workingman a blessing over and above the natural result which he looked for. The duty of labor is written on man’s body, in the stout muscle of the arm and the delicate machinery of the hand. That it is congenial to our nature appears from the alacrity with which children apply themselves to it and find pleasure in the work itself, without regard to its use. The young duck does not more naturally betake itself to the water, than the boy to the work which goes on around him. There is some work, which even the village sluggard and the city fop love to do, and that only can they do well. These two latter facts show that labor, in some degree, is

no less a pleasure than a duty, and prove, that man is not by nature a lazy animal who is forced by Hunger to dig and spin.

Yet there are some who count labor a curse and a punishment. They regard the necessity of work, as the greatest evil brought on us by the "Fall;" as a curse that will cling to our last sand. Many submit to this yoke, and toil, and save, in hope to leave their posterity out of the reach of this primitive curse.

Others, still more foolish, regard it as a disgrace. Young men, — the children of honest parents, who live by their manly and toil-hardened hands, bear up the burthen of the world on their shoulders, and eat with thankful hearts their daily bread, won in the sweat of their face, — are ashamed of their fathers' occupation, and forsaking the plough, the chisel, or the forge, seek a livelihood in what is sometimes named a more respectable and genteel vocation; that is in a calling which demands less of the hands, and quite often less of the head likewise, than their fathers' hardy craft; for that imbecility, which drives men to those callings has its seat mostly in a higher region than the hands. Affianced damsels beg their lovers to discover (or invent) some ancestor in buckram who did not work. The Sophomore in a small college is ashamed of his father who wears a blue frock, and his dusty brother who toils with the saw and the axe. These men, after they have wiped off the dirt and soot of their early life, sometimes become arrant coxcombs, and standing like the heads of Hermes without hands, having only a mouth, make faces at such as continue to serve the state by plain handiwork. Some one relates an anecdote which illustrates quite plainly this foolish desire of young men to live without work. It happened in one of our large towns, that a Shopkeeper and a Blacksmith, both living in the same street, advertised for an apprentice on the same day. In a given time fifty beardless youngsters applied to the Haberdasher, and not one to the Smith. But this story has a terrible moral, namely, that forty-nine out of the fifty were disappointed at the outset.

It were to be wished that this notion of labor being disgraceful was confined to vain young men and giddy maidens of idle habits and weak heads, for then it would be

looked upon as one of the diseases of early life, which we know must come, and rejoice when our young friends have happily passed through it, knowing it is one of "the ills that flesh is heir to," but is not very grievous, and comes but once in a lifetime. This aversion to labor, this notion that it is a curse and a disgrace, this selfish desire to escape from the general and natural lot of man, is the sacramental sin of "the better class" in our great cities. The children of the poor pray to be rid of it, and what son of a rich man learns a trade or tills the soil with his own hands? Many men look on the ability to be idle as the most desirable and honorable ability. They glory in being the Mouth that consumes, not the Hand that works. Yet one would suppose a man of useless hands and idle head, in the midst of God's world, where each thing works for all; in the midst of the toil and sweat of the human race, must needs make an apology for his sloth, and would ask pardon for violating the common law, and withdrawing his neck from the general yoke of humanity. Still more does he need an apology, if he is active only in getting into his hands the result of others' work. But it is not so. The man who is rich enough to be idle values himself on his leisure, and what is worse, others value him for it. Active men must make a shamefaced excuse for being busy, and working men for their toil, as if business and toil were not the Duty of all and the support of the world. In certain countries men are divided horizontally into two classes, the men who WORK and the men who RULE, and the latter despise the employment of the former as mean and degrading. It is the slave's duty to plough, said a Heathen poet, and a freeman's business to enjoy at leisure the fruits of that ploughing. This same foolish notion finds favor with many here. It is a remnant of those barbarous times, when all labor was performed by serfs and bondsmen, and exemption from toil was the exclusive sign of the free-born. But this notion, that labor is disgraceful, conflicts as sharply with our political institutions as it does with common sense, and the law God has writ on man. An old author centuries before Christ was so far enlightened on this point as to see the true dignity of manual work, and to say, "God is well pleased with honest works; he suffers the laboring man, who ploughs the earth by night and day,

to call his life most noble. If he is good and true, he offers continual sacrifice to God, and is not so lustrous in his dress as in his heart."

Manual labor is a blessing and a dignity. But to state the case on its least favorable issue, admit it were both a disgrace and a curse, would a true man desire to escape it for himself, and leave the curse to fall on other men? Certainly not. The generous soldier fronts death, and charges in the cannon's mouth; it is the coward who lingers behind. If labor were hateful, as the proud would have us believe, then they who bear its burthens, and feed and clothe the human race, and fetch and carry for them, should be honored as those have always been, who defend society in war. If it be glorious, as the world fancies, to repel a human foe, how much more is he to be honored who stands up when Want comes upon us, like an armed man, and puts him to rout? One would fancy the world was mad, when it bowed in reverence to those who by superior cunning possessed themselves of the earnings of others, while it made wide the mouth and drew out the tongue at such as do the world's work. "Without these," said an ancient, "cannot a city be inhabited, but they shall not be sought for in public council, nor sit high in the congregation;" and those few men and women who are misnamed the World, in their wisdom have confirmed the saying. Thus they honor those who sit in idleness and ease; they extol such as defend a state with arms, or those who collect in their hands the result of Asiatic or American industry, but pass by with contempt the men who rear corn and cattle, and weave and spin, and fish and build for the whole human race. Yet if the state of labor were so hard and disgraceful as some fancy, the sluggard in fine raiment and the trim figure — which, like the lilies in the Scripture, neither toils nor spins, and is yet clothed in more glory than Solomon — would both bow down before Colliers and Farmers, and bless them as the benefactors of the race. Christianity has gone still farther, and makes a man's greatness consist in the amount of service he renders to the world. Certainly he is the most honorable who by his head or his hand does the greatest and best work for his race. The noblest soul the world ever saw appeared not in the ranks of the indolent; but "took on him the

form of a servant," and when he washed his disciples' feet, meant something not very generally understood perhaps in the nineteenth century.

Now manual labor, though an unavoidable duty, though designed as a blessing, and naturally both a pleasure and a dignity, is often abused, till, by its terrible excess, it becomes really a punishment and a curse. It is only a proper amount of work that is a blessing. Too much of it wears out the body before its time; cripples the mind, debases the soul, blunts the senses, and chills the affections. It makes the man a spinning jenny, or a ploughing machine, and not "a being of a large discourse, that looks before and after." He ceases to be a man, and becomes a thing.

In a rational and natural state of society, — that is, one in which every man went forwards toward the true end he was designed to reach, towards perfection in the use of all his senses, towards perfection in wisdom, virtue, affection, and religion, — labor would never interfere with the culture of what was best in each man. His daily business would be a school to aid in developing the whole man, body and spirit, because he would then do what nature fitted him to do. Thus his business would be really his calling. The diversity of gifts is quite equal to the diversity of work to be done. There is some one thing which each man can do with pleasure, and better than any other man, because he was born to do it. Then all men would labor, each at his proper vocation, and an excellent farmer would not be spoiled to make a poor lawyer, a blundering physician, or a preacher, who puts the world asleep. Then a small body of men would not be pampered in indolence, to grow up into gouty worthlessness, and die of inertia; nor would the large part of men be worn down as now by excessive toil before half their life is spent. They would not be so severely tasked as to have no time to read, think, and converse. When he walked abroad, the laboring man would not be forced to catch mere transient glimpses of the flowers by the way side, or the stars over his head, as the dogs, it is said, drink the waters of the Nile, running while they drink, afraid the crocodiles should seize them if they stop. When he looked from his window at the landscape, Distress need not stare at him from every bush.

He would then have leisure to cultivate his mind and heart no less than to do the world's work.

In labor as in all things beside, moderation is the law. If a man transgresses and becomes intemperate in his work, and does nothing but toil with the hand, he must suffer. We educate and improve only the faculties we employ, and cultivate most what we use the oftenest. But if some men are placed in such circumstances that they can use only their hands, who is to be blamed if they are ignorant, vicious, and without God? Certainly not they. Now it is a fact, notorious as the sun at noon-day, that such are the circumstances of many men. As society advances in refinement, more labor is needed to supply its demands, for houses, food, apparel, and other things must be refined and luxurious. It requires more work, therefore, to fill the mouth and clothe the back, than in simpler times. To aggravate the difficulty, some escape from their share of this labor, by superior intelligence, shrewdness, and cunning, others by fraud and lies, or by inheriting the result of these qualities in their ancestors. So their share of the common burthen, thus increased, must be borne by other hands, which are laden already with more than enough. Still farther, this class of mouths, forgetting how hard it is to work, and not having their desires for the result of labor checked by the sweat necessary to satisfy them, but living vicariously by other men's hands, refuse to be content with the simple gratification of their natural appetites. So Caprice takes the place of Nature, and must also be satisfied. Natural wants are few, but to artificial desires there is no end. When each man must pay the natural price, and so earn what he gets, the hands stop the mouth, and the soreness of the toil corrects the excess of desire, and if it do not, none has cause of complaint, for the man's desire is allayed by his OWN work. Thus if Absalom wishes for sweet cakes, the trouble of providing them checks his extravagant or unnatural appetite. But when the Mouth and Hand are on different bodies, and Absalom can coax his sister, or bribe his friend, or compel his slave to furnish him dainties, the natural restraint is taken from appetite, and it runs to excess. Fancy must be appeased; peevishness must be quieted; and so a world of work is needed to bear the

burthens which those men bind, and lay on men's shoulders, but will not move with one of their fingers. The class of Mouths thus commits a sin, which the class of Hands must expiate.

Thus by the treachery of one part of society, in avoiding their share of the work; by their tyranny in increasing the burthen of the world, an evil is produced quite unknown in a simpler state of life, and a man of but common capacities not born to wealth, in order to insure a subsistence for himself and his family, must work with his hands so large a part of his time, that nothing is left for intellectual, moral, æsthetic, and religious improvement. He cannot look at the world, talk with his wife, read his Bible, nor pray to God, but Poverty knocks at the door, and hurries him to his work. He is rude in mind before he begins his work, and his work does not refine him. Men have attempted long enough to wink this matter out of sight, but it will not be put down. It may be worse in other countries, but it is bad enough in New England, as all men know who have made the experiment. There must be a great sin somewhere in that state of society, which allows one man to waste day and night in sluggishness or riot, consuming the bread of whole families, while from others, equally well-gifted and faithful, it demands twelve, or sixteen, or even eighteen hours of hard work out of the twenty-four, and then leaves the man so weary and worn, that he is capable of nothing but sleep,—sleep that is broken by no dream. Still worse is it when this life of work begins so early, that the man has no fund of acquired knowledge on which to draw for mental support in his hours of toil. To this man the blessed night is for nothing but work and sleep, and the Sabbath day simply what Moses commanded, a day of bodily rest for Man as for his Ox and his Ass. Man was sent into this world to use his best faculties in the best way, and thus reach the high end of a man. How can he do this while so large a part of his time is spent in unmitigated work? Truly he cannot. Hence we see, that while in all other departments of nature each animal lives up to the measure of his organization, and with very rare exceptions becomes perfect after his kind, the greater part of men are debased and belittled, shortened of half their days, and half their excellence, so

that you are surprised to find a man well educated whose whole life is hard work. Thus what is the exception in nature, through our perversity becomes the rule with man. Every Black-bird is a black-bird just as God designs; but how many men are only bodies? If a man is placed in such circumstances that he can use only his hands, they only become broad and strong. If no pains be taken to obtain dominion over the flesh, the man loses his birthright, and dies a victim to the sin of society. No doubt there are men, born under the worst of circumstances, who have redeemed themselves from them, and obtained an excellence of intellectual growth, which is worthy of wonder; but these are exceptions to the general rule; men gifted at birth with a power almost superhuman. It is not from exceptions we are to frame the law.

Now to put forward the worst possible aspect of the case. Suppose that the present work of the world can only be performed at this sacrifice, which is the best, that the work should be done, as now, and seven tenths of men and women should, as the unavoidable result of their toil, be cursed with extremity of labor, and ignorance, and rudeness, and unmanly life, or that less of this work be done, and for the sake of a wide-spread and generous culture, we sleep less softly, dine on humbler food, dwell in mean houses, and wear leather like George Fox? There is no doubt what answer Common Sense, Reason, and Christianity would give to this question, for wisdom, virtue, and manhood are as much better than sumptuous dinners, fine apparel, and splendid houses, as the Soul is better than the Senses. But as yet we are slaves. The senses overlay the soul. We serve brass and mahogany and beef and porter. The class of Mouths oppresses the class of Hands, for the strongest and most cunning of the latter are continually pressing into the ranks of the former, and while they increase the demand for work, leave their own share of it to be done by others. Men and women of humble prospects in life, while building the connubial nest that is to shelter them and their children, prove plainly enough their thralldom to the senses, when such an outlay of upholstery and joiners' work is demanded, and so little is required that appeals to Reason, Imagination, and Faith. Yet when the mind demands little besides time, why

prepare so pompously for the senses, that she cannot have this, but must be cheated of her due? One might fancy he heard the stones cry out of the wall, in many a house, and say to the foolish people who tenant the dwelling,—"O, ye fools, is it from the work of the joiner, and the craft of those who are cunning in stucco and paint, and are skilful to weave and to spin, and work in marble and mortar, that you expect satisfaction and rest for your souls, while ye make no provision for what is noblest and immortal within you? But ye also have your reward!" The present state of things, in respect to this matter, has no such excellencies that it should not be changed. It is no law of God, that when Sin gets a footing in the world it should hold on forever, nor can Folly keep its dominion over society simply by right of "adverse possession." It were better the body went bare and hungry, rather than the soul should starve. Certainly the Life is more than the meat, though it would not weigh so much in the butcher's scales.

There are remedies at hand. It is true a certain amount of labor must be performed, in order that society be fed and clothed, warmed and comforted, relieved when sick, and buried when dead. If this is wisely distributed, if each performs his just portion, the burthen is slight, and crushes no one. Here, as elsewhere, the closer we keep to nature, the safer we are. It is not under the burthens of Nature that society groans, but the work of Caprice, of Ostentation, of contemptible Vanity, of Luxury, which is never satisfied, these oppress the world. If these latter are given up, and each performs what is due from him, and strives to diminish the general burthen and not add to it, then no man is oppressed, there is time enough for each man to cultivate what is noblest in him, and be all that his nature allows. It is doubtless right that one man should use the service of another; but only when both parties are benefited by the relation. The Smith may use the service of the Collier, the Grocer, and the Grazier, for he does them a service in return. He who heals the body deserves a compensation at the hands of whomsoever he serves. If the Painter, the Preacher, the Statesman, is doing a great work for mankind, he has a right to their service in return. His fellow man may do for him what otherwise he ought

to do for himself. Thus is he repaid, and is at liberty to devote the undivided energy of his genius to the work. But on what ground an idle man, who does nothing for society, or an active man, whose work is wholly selfish, can use the services of others, and call them to feed and comfort him, who repays no equivalent in kind, it yet remains for Reason to discover. The only equivalent for service is a service in return. If Hercules is stronger, Solon wiser, and Job richer than the rest of men, it is not that they may demand more of their fellows, but may do more for them. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," says a good man. In respect, however, to the matter of personal service, this seems to be the rule, that no one, whatever be his station, wants, attainments, or riches, has any right to receive from another any service which degrades the servant in his own eyes, or the eyes of the public, or in the eyes of him who receives the service. It is surely unmanly to receive a favor which you would not give. If it debases David to do a menial service for Ahud, then it debases Ahud just as much to do the same to David. The difference between King and Slave vanishes when both are examined from the height of their common humanity, just as the difference between the west and northwest side of a hair on the surface of the Earth is inconsiderable to an eye that looks down from the Sun, and takes in the whole system, though it might appear stupendous to the motes that swim uncounted in a drop of dew. But no work, useful or ornamental to human life, needs be debasing. It is the lasting disgrace of society, that the most useful employments are called "low." There is implied in this very term, the tacit confession, on the part of the employer, that he has wronged and subjugated the person who serves him, for when these same actions are performed by the mother for her child, or the son for his father, and are done for love and not money, they are counted not as low, but rather ennobling.

The Law of nature is, that work and the enjoyment of that work go together. Thus God has given each animal the power of self-help, and all necessary organs. The same Robin builds the nest and lives in it. Each Lion has claws and teeth, and kills his own meat. Every

Beaver has prudence and plastic skill, and so builds for himself. In those classes of animals where there is a division of labor, one brings the wax, another builds the comb, and a third collects the honey, but each one is at work. The drones are expelled when they work no more. Even the Ruler of the colony is the most active member of the state, and really the mother of the whole people. She is only "happy as a king," because she does the most work. Hence she has a divine right to her eminent station. She never eats the bread of sin. She is Queen of the Workers. Here each works for the good of all, and not solely for his own benefit. Still less is any one an injury to the others. In nature those animals that cannot work, are provided for by Love. Thus the young Lion is fed by the Parent, and the old Stork by its children. Were a full grown Lion so foolish that he would not hunt, the result is plain, he must starve. Now this is a foreshadowing of man's estate. God has given ten fingers for every two lips. Each is to use the ability he has for himself and for others. Who that is able will not return to society, with his head or his hand, an equivalent for what it received? Only the Sluggard and the Robber. These two, the Drones and Pirates of Society, represent a large class. It is the plain duty of each, so far as he is able, to render an equivalent for what he receives, and thus to work for the good of all; but each in his own way; Dorcas the seamstress at her craft, and Moses and Paul at theirs. If one cannot work through weakness, or infancy, or age, or sickness, — Love works for them, and they too are fed. If one will not work, though he can, the law of nature should have its effect. He ought to starve. If one insist simply upon getting into his hands the earnings of others, and adding nothing to the common stock, he is a robber, and should properly meet with the contempt and the stout resistance of society. There is in the whole world but a certain amount of value, out of which each one is to have a subsistence while here; for we are all but life-tenants of the Earth, which we hold in common. We brought nothing into it, we carry nothing out of it. No man, therefore, has a natural right to any more than he earns or can use. He who adds anything to the common stock and inheritance of the next age, though it be but a sheaf of wheat, or cocoon of silk he has pro-

duced, a napkin or a brown loaf he has made, is a benefactor to his race, so far as that goes. But he who gets into his hands, by force, cunning, or deceit, more than he earns, does thereby force his fellow mortal to accept less than his true share. So far as that goes, he is a curse to mankind.

There are three ways of getting wealth. First, by seizing with violence what is already in existence, and appropriating it to yourself. This is the method of the old Romans, of Robbers and Pirates, from Sciron to Captain Kidd. Second, by getting possession of goods in the way of traffic, or by some similar process. Here the agent is Cunning, and not Force; the instrument is a gold coin, and not an iron sword, as in the former case. This method is called Trade, as the other is named Robbery. But in both cases wealth is acquired by one party and lost by the other. In the first case there is a loss of positive value; in the latter there is no increase. The world gains nothing new by either. The third method is the application of labor and skill to the earth, or the productions of nature. Here is a positive increase of value. We have a dozen potatoes for the one that was planted, or an elegant dress instead of an handful of wool and flax. The two former classes consume much, but produce nothing. Of these the Roman says, "*fruges consumere nati,*" *they are born to eat up the corn.* Yet in all ages they have been set in high places. The world dishonors its workmen, stones its prophets, crucifies its Saviours, but bows down its neck before wealth, however won, and shouts till the welkin rings again, **LONG LIVE VIOLENCE AND FRAUD.**

The world has always been partial to its oppressors. Many men fancy themselves an ornament to the world, whose presence in it is a disgrace and a burthen to the ground they stand on. The man who does nothing for the race, but sits at his ease, and fares daintily, because wealth has fallen into his hands, is a burthen to the world. He may be a polished gentleman, a scholar, the master of elegant accomplishments, but so long as he takes no pains to work for man, with his head or his hands, what claim has he to respect, or even a subsistence? The rough-handed woman, who with a salt-fish and a basket of vegetables provides substantial food for a dozen working men, and

washes their apparel, and makes them comfortable and happy, is a blessing to the land, though she have no education, while this fop with his culture and wealth is a curse. She does her duty so far as she sees it, and so deserves the thanks of man. But every oyster or berry that fop has eaten, has performed its duty better than he. "It was made to support human nature, and it has done so," while he is but a consumer of food and clothing. That public opinion tolerates such men is no small marvel.

The productive classes of the world are those who bless it by their work or their thought. He who invents a machine, does no less a service than he who toils all day with his hands. Thus the inventors of the plough, the loom, and the ship were deservedly placed among those society was to honor. But they also, who teach men moral and religious truth, who give them dominion over the world; instruct them to think; to live together in peace, to love one another, and pass good lives enlightened by Wisdom, charmed by Goodness, and enchanted by Religion; they who build up a loftier population, making man more manly, are the greatest benefactors of the world. They speak to the deepest wants of the soul, and give men the water of life and the true bread from Heaven. They are loaded with contumely in their life, and come to a violent end. But their influence passes like morning from land to land, and village and city grow glad in their light. That is a poor economy, common as it is, which overlooks these men. It is a very vulgar mind, that would rather Paul had continued a tent-maker, and Jesus a carpenter.

Now the remedy for the hard service that is laid upon the human race, consists partly in lessening the number of unproductive classes, and increasing the workers and thinkers, as well as in giving up the work of Ostentation and Folly and Sin. It has been asserted on high authority, that if all men and women capable of work would toil diligently but two hours out of the twenty-four, the work of the world would be done, and all would be as comfortably fed and clothed, as well educated and housed, and provided for in general, as they now are, even admitting they all went to sleep the other twenty-two hours of the day and night. If this were done we should hear nothing of the sickness of sedentary and rich men. Exercise for

the sake of health would be heard of no more. One class would not be crushed by hard work, nor another oppressed by indolence, and condemned, in order to resist the just vengeance nature takes on them, to consume nauseous drugs, and resort to artificial and hateful methods to preserve a life that is not worth the keeping, because it is useless and ignominious. Now men may work at the least three or four times this necessary amount each day, and yet find their labor a pastime, a dignity, and a blessing, and find likewise abundant opportunity for study, for social intercourse, and recreation. Then if a man's calling were to think and write, he would not injure the world by even excessive devotion to his favorite pursuit, for the general burthen would still be slight.

Another remedy is this, the mind does the body's work. The head saves the hands. It invents machines, which, doing the work of many hands, will at last set free a large portion of leisure time from slavery to the elements. The brute forces of nature lie waiting man's command, and ready to serve him. At the voice of Genius, the river consents to turn his wheel, and weave and spin for the antipodes. The mine sends him iron Vassals, to toil in cold and heat. Fire and Water embrace at his bidding, and a new servant is born, which will fetch and carry at his command; will face down all the storms of the Atlantic; will forge anchors, and spin gossamer threads, and run of errands up and down the continent with men and women on his back. This last child of Science, though yet a stripling and in leading strings, is already a stout giant. The Fable of Orpheus is a true story in our times. There are four stages of progress in regard to labor, which are observable in the history of man. First, he does his own work by his hands. Adam tills the ground in the sweat of his own face, and Noah builds an ark in many years of toil. Next he forces his fellow mortal to work for him, and Canaan becomes a servant to his brother, and Job is made rich by the sweat of his great household of slaves. Then he seizes on the beasts, and the Bull and the Horse drag the plough of Castor and Pollux. At last he sets free his brother, works with his own hands, commands the beasts, and makes the brute force of the elements also toil for him. Then he has dominion over the earth, and enjoys his birthright.

Man, however, is still in bondage to the elements; and since the beastly maxim is even now prevalent, that the Strong should take care of themselves, and use the weak as their tools, though to the manifest injury of the weak, the use of machinery has hitherto been but a trifling boon in comparison with what it may be. In the village of Humdrum, its thousand able-bodied men and women, without machinery and having no intercourse with the rest of the world, must work fourteen hours out of the twenty-four, that they may all be housed, fed, and clothed, warmed, instructed, and made happy. Some ingenious hands invent water-mills, which saw, plane, thrash, grind, spin, weave, and do many other things, so that these thousand people need work but five hours in the day to obtain the result of fourteen by the old process. Here then a vast amount of time — nine hours in the day — is set free from toil. It may be spent in study, social improvement, the pursuit of a favorite art, and leave room for amusement also. But the longest heads at Humdrum have not Christian but only selfish hearts beating in their bosoms, and sending life into the brain. So these calculators think the men of Humdrum shall work fourteen hours a day as before. "It would be dangerous," say they, "to set free so much time. The deluded creatures would soon learn to lie and steal, and would speedily end by eating one another up. It would not be Christian to leave them to this fate. Leisure is very good for us, but would be ruinous to them." So the wise men of Humdrum persuade their neighbors to work the old fourteen hours. More is produced than is consumed. So they send off the superfluities of the village, and in return bring back tea and porcelain, rich wines, and showy gew-gaws, and contemptible fashions that change every month. The strong-headed men grow rich; live in palaces; their daughters do not work, nor their sons dirty their hands. They fare sumptuously every day; are clothed in purple and fine linen. Meanwhile the common people of Humdrum work as long as before the machines were invented, and a little harder. They also are blest by the "improvement." The young women have red ribbons on their bonnets, French gloves on their hands, and shawls of India on their shoulders, and "tinkling ornaments" in their ears. The young man of Humdrum is

better off than his father who fought through the Revolution, for he wears a beaver hat, and a coat of English cloth, and has a Birmingham whittle, and a watch in his pocket. When he marries he will buy red curtains to his windows, and a showy mirror to hang on his wall. For these valuable considerations he parts with the nine hours a day, which machinery has saved; but has no more bread than before. For these blessings he will make his body a slave, and leave his mind all uncultivated. He is content to grow up a body—nothing but a body. So that if you look therein for his Understanding, Imagination, Reason, you will find them like three grains of wheat in three bushels of chaff. You shall seek them all day before you find them, and at last they are not worth your search. At Humdrum, Nature begins to revolt at the factitious inequality of condition, and thinks it scarce right for bread to come fastest into hands that add nothing to the general stock. So many grow restless and a few pilfer. In a ruder state crimes are few:—the result of violent passions. At Humdrum they are numerous;—the result of want, indolence, or neglected education; they are in great measure crimes against property. To remedy this new and unnatural evil, there rises a Court-house and a Jail, which must be paid for in work; then Judges and Lawyers and Jailors are needed likewise in this artificial state, and add to the common burthen. The old Athenians sent yearly seven beautiful youths and virgins:—a tribute to the Minotaur. The wise men of Humdrum shut up in jail a larger number:—a sacrifice to the spirit of modern cupidity; unfortunate wretches, who were the victims not the foes of society; men so weak in head or heart, that their bad character was formed FOR them, through circumstances far more than it was formed BY them, through their own free-will. Still farther, the men who violate the law of the body, using the Mouth much and the Hand little, or in the opposite way, soon find Nature taking vengeance for the offence. Then unnatural remedies must oppose the artificial disease. In the old time, every sickly dunce was cured “with Motherwort and Tansey,” which grew by the road-side, suited all complaints, and was administered by each mother in the village. Now Humdrum has its “medical faculty,” with their conflicting systems, homoeo-

pathic and allopathic, but no more health than before. Thus the burthen is increased to little purpose. The strong men of Humdrum have grown rich and become educated. If one of the laboring men is stronger than his fellows, he also will become rich, and educate his children. He becomes rich, not by his own work, but by using the hands of others whom his cunning overreaches. Yet he is not more avaricious than they. He has perhaps the average share of selfishness, but superior adroitness to gratify that selfishness. So he gets and saves, and takes care of himself; a part of their duty, which the strong have always known how to perform, though the more difficult part, how to take care of others, to think for them and help them to think for themselves, they have yet to learn, at least to practise. Alas, we are still in bondage to the elements, and so long as two of the “enlightened” nations of the earth, England and America, insist on weaving the garments for all the rest of the world, not because they would clothe the naked, but that their strong men might live in fine houses, wear gay apparel, dine on costly food, and their Mouths be served by other men’s Hands, we must expect that seven tenths of mankind will be degraded, and will hug their chains, and count machinery an evil. Is not the only remedy for all the evils at Humdrum in the Christian idea of wealth, and the Christian idea of work?

There is a melancholy back ground to the success and splendid achievements of modern society. You see it in rural villages, but more plainly in large cities, where the amount of Poverty and Wealth is summed up as in a table of statistics, and stands in two parallel columns. The wretchedness of a destitute mother contrasts sadly with a warehouse, whence she is excluded by a single pane of glass, as cold as popular charity and nearly as thin. The comfortless hutch of the poor, who works, though with shiftless hands and foolish head, is a dark back ground to the costly stable of the rich man, who does nothing for the world, but gather its treasures, and whose horses are better fed, housed, trained up, and cared for than his brother. It is a strange relief to the church of God, that, with thick granite walls, towers up to Heaven near by. One cannot but think, in view of the suffering there is in the

world, that most of it is the fault of some one; that God, who made men's bodies, is no bankrupt, and does not pay off a penny of Satisfaction for a pound of Want, but has made enough and to spare for all his creatures, if they will use it wisely. Who does not sometimes remember that saying, Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me?

The world no doubt grows better; comfort is increased from age to age. What is a luxury in one generation, scarce attainable by the wealthy, becomes at last the possession of most men. Solomon with all his wealth had no carpet on his chamber floor, no glass in his windows, nor shirt to his back. But as the world goes, the increase of comforts does not fall chiefly into the hands of those who create them by their work. The mechanic cannot use the costly furniture he makes. This, however, is of small consequence, but he has not always the more valuable consideration, **TIME TO GROW WISER AND BETTER IN.** As society advances, the standard of poverty rises. A man in New England is called poor at this day, who would have been rich a hundred and fifty years ago; but as it rises, the number that falls beneath that standard becomes a greater part of the whole population. Of course the comfort of a few is purchased by the loss of the many. The world has grown rich and refined, but chiefly by the efforts of those who themselves continue poor and ignorant. So the Ass, while he carried wood and spices to the Roman bath, contributed to the happiness of the State, but was himself always dirty and overworked. It is easy to see these evils, and weep for them. It is common also to censure some one class of men—the Rich or the Educated, the Manufacturers, the Merchants, or the Politicians, for example—as if the sin rested solely with them, while it belongs to society at large. But the world yet waits for some one to heal these dreadful evils, by devising some new remedy, or applying the old. Who shall apply for us Christianity to social life?

But God orders all things wisely. Perhaps it is best that man should toil on some centuries more before the race becomes of age, and capable of receiving its birthright. Every wrong must at last be righted, and he who has borne the burthen of society in this ephemeral life, and tasted none

of its rewards, and he also, who has eaten its loaves and fishes and yet earned nothing, will no doubt find an equivalent at last in the scales of divine Justice. Doubtless the time will come when labor will be a pleasant pastime, when the sour sweat and tears of life shall be wiped away from many faces; when the few shall not be advanced at the expense of the many; when ten pairs of female hands shall not be deformed to nurse a single pair into preternatural delicacy, but when all men shall eat bread in the sweat of their face, and yet find leisure to cultivate what is best and divinest in their souls, to a degree we do not dream of as yet; when the strong man who wishes to be a Mouth and not a Hand, or to gain the treasures of society by violence or cunning, and not by paying their honest price, will be looked upon with the same horror we feel for pirates and robbers, and the guardians who steal the inheritance of their wards, and leave them to want and die. No doubt it is a good thing that four or five men out of the thousand should find time, exemption from labor, and wealth likewise to obtain a generous education of their Head and Heart and Soul, but it is a better thing, it is alone consistent with God's law, that the world shall be managed, so that each man shall have a chance to obtain the best education society can give him, and while he toils, to become the best and greatest his nature is capable of being, in this terrene sphere. Things never will come to their proper level so long as Thought with the Head, and Work with the Hands are considered incompatible. Never till all men follow the calling they are designed for by nature, and it becomes as common for a rich man's son to follow a trade as now it is happily for a poor man's to be rich. Labor will always be unattractive and disgraceful, so long as wealth unjustly obtained is a distinction, and so long as the best cultivation of a man is thought inconsistent with the life of the farmer and the tailor. As things now are, men desert a laborious occupation for which they are fitted, and have a natural fondness, and seek bread and honor in the "learned professions," for which they have neither ability nor taste, solely because they seek a generous education, which is thought inconsistent with a life of hard work. Thus strong heads desert the plough and the anvil, to come into a profession which they dislike, and

then to find their Duty pointing one way and their Desire another. Thus they attempt to live two lives at the same time, and fail of both, as he who would walk eastward and westward at the same time makes no progress.

Now the best education and the highest culture, in a rational state of society, does not seem inconsistent with a life of hard work. It is not a figure of speech, but a plain fact, that a man is educated by his trade, or daily calling. Indirectly, Labor ministers to the wise man intellectual, moral, and spiritual instruction, just as it gives him directly his daily bread. Under its legitimate influence, the frame acquires its due proportions and proper strength. To speak more particularly, the work of a farmer, for example, is a school of mental discipline. He must watch the elements; must understand the nature of the soil he tills; the character and habits of the plants he rears; the character and disposition of each animal that serves him as a living instrument. Each day makes large claims on him for knowledge, and sound judgment. He is to apply good sense to the soil. Now these demands tend to foster the habit of observing and judging justly; to increase thought, and elevate the man. The same may be said of almost all trades. The sailor must watch the elements, and have all his knowledge and faculties at command, for his life often depends on having "the right thought at the right time." Judgment and decision are thus called forth. The education men derive from their trade is so striking, that craftsmen can express almost any truth, be it never so deep and high, in the technical terms of the "shop." The humblest business may thus develop the noblest power of thinking. So a trade may be to the man in some measure what the school and the college are to the scholar. The wise man learns more from his corn and cattle, than the stupid pedant from all the folios of the Vatican. The habit of thinking thus acquired is of more value than the greatest number of thoughts learned by rote, and labelled for use.

But an objection may readily be brought to this view, and it may be asked, why then are not the farmers as a class so well instructed as the class of lawyers? Certainly there may be found farmers who are most highly educated. Men of but little acquaintance with books, yet men of thought, observation, and sound judgment. Scholars are ashamed

before them when they meet, and blush at the homely wisdom, the acute analysis, the depth of insight and breadth of view displayed by laborers in blue frocks. But these cases are exceptions. These men were geniuses of no mean order, and would be great under any circumstances. It must be admitted, that, as a general rule, the man who works is not so well educated as the lawyer. But the difference between them rises not so much from any difference in the two callings, as from this circumstance, that the lawyer enters his profession with a large fund of knowledge and the habits of intellectual discipline, which the farmer has not. He therefore has the advantage so long as he lives. If two young men of the same age and equal capacity were to receive the same education till they were twenty years old, both taking proper physical exercise at the same time, and one of them should then spend three years in learning the science of the Law, the other in the science of the Farm, and then both should enter the full practice of the two callings, each having access to books if he wished for them, and educated men and women, can any one doubt that the farmer, at the age of forty, would be the better educated man of the two? The trade teaches as much as the profession, and it is as well known that almost every farmer has as much time for general reading as the lawyer, and better opportunity for thought, since he can think of what he will when at his work, while the lawyer's work demands his thought all the time he is in it. The farmer would probably have the more thoughts; the lawyer the more elegant words. If there is any employment which degrades the man who is *always* engaged in it, cannot many bear the burthen—each a short time—and so no one be crushed to the ground?

Morality, likewise, is taught by a trade. The man must have dealings with his fellows. The afflicted call for his sympathy; the oppressed for his aid. Vice solicits his rebuke, and virtue claims his commendation. If he buys and sells, he is presented with opportunities to defraud. He may conceal a fault in his work, and thus deceive his employer. So an appeal is continually made to his sense of Right. If faithful, he learns justice. It is only by this exposure to temptation, that virtue can be acquired. It is in the water that men learn to swim. Still more, a

man does not toil for himself alone, but for those dearest to his heart; this for his father; that for his child; and there are those who out of the small pittance of their daily earnings contribute to support the needy, print Bibles for the ignorant, and preach the gospel to the poor. Here the meanest work becomes Heroism. The man who toils for a principle ennobles himself by the act.

Still farther, Labor has a religious use. It has been well said, "an undevout astronomer is mad." But an undevout farmer, sailor, or mechanic, is equally mad, for the duties of each afford a school for his devotion. In respect to this influence, the farmer seems to stand on the very top of the world. The laws of nature are at work for him. For him the sun shines and the rain falls. The earth grows warm to receive his seed. The dew moistens it; the blade springs up and grows he knows not how, while all the stars come forth to keep watch over his rising corn. There is no second cause between him and the soul of all. Everything he looks on, from the earliest flowers of spring to the austere grandeurs of a winter sky at night, is the work of God's hand. The great process of growth and decay, change and reproduction, are perpetually before him. Day and Night, Serenity and Storm visit and bless him as they move. Nature's great works are done for no one in special; yet each man receives as much of the needed rain, and the needed heat, as if all rain and all heat were designed for his use alone. He labors, but it is not only the fruit of his labor that he eats. No; God's exhaustless Providence works for him; works with him. His laws warm and water the fields, replenishing the earth. Thus the Husbandman, whose eye is open, walks always in the temple of God. He sees the divine goodness and wisdom in the growth of a flower or a tree; in the nice adjustment of an insect's supplies to its demands; in the perfect contentment found everywhere in nature — for you shall search all day for a melancholy fly, yet never find one. The influence of all these things on an active and instructed mind is ennobling. The man seeks daily bread for the body, and gets the bread of life for the soul. Like his corn and his trees, his heart and mind are cultivated by his toil; for as Saul seeking his father's stray cattle found a kingdom, as stripling David was anointed king while keep-

ing a few sheep in the wilderness, and when sent to carry bread to his brothers in the camp slew a giant, and became monarch, so each man who with true motives, an instructed mind, and soul of tranquil devotion, goes to his daily work, however humble, may slay the giant Difficulty, and be anointed with gladness and possess the Kingdom of Heaven. In the lowliest calling he may win the loftiest result, as you may see the stars from the deepest valley as well as from the top of Chimborazo. But to realize this end the man must have some culture and a large capital of information at the outset; and then it is at a man's own option, whether his work shall be to him a blessing or a curse.

P.