

poem does wrong to a most respectable and able-bodied multitude of citizens, every one of whom ought to resent Mr. Markham's attempt to throw "the emptiness of ages in his face" and certainly deserves better of the poet than to be called a "monstrous thing" and "brother to the ox."

"From time immemorial the tiller of the soil has been invested with his full share of the honor of this world, and where any individual example of the class—or, in fact, of any honest and respectable class—has given reason for Mr. Markham's inquiry: "Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?" it can, I think, be safely said that the man's own breath blew it out. There is no occasion for a farmer to have his soul quenched or to become a 'dumb terror.' He can hold his head as high as any man's, and he generally does; and what calling is more honorable—at least in this country—to which, by the way, I understand Mr. Markham's observation and study have been confined.

"What about the man without the hoe—he who cannot get work, or, having the opportunity to labor, won't do it? There are thousands of young men in this country who have been educated up to the point where the honest and healthful occupation of their fathers in the field has become distasteful to them, and, in many cases, they have grown to be ashamed of it and of their parents. In European countries particularly there are multitudes of young men—the younger sons of titled people, for instance, who have been taught that common labor or work in the trades is beneath them, and they sink their individuality, their manhood, and their future in the ranks of the army and in petty government positions. They must have money, but they must earn it only in a 'genteel' way. These are the men without the hoe—the real brothers to the ox. Who shall tell their story? Who shall best sing the bitter song of the incapables who walk the earth, driven hither and thither like beasts by the implacable sentiment of a false social education, suffering the tortures of the damned and bringing distress upon those dependent upon them because they have lost the true independence of soul that comes to him who dares to labor with his hands, who wields the hoe and is the master of his destiny.

THE THREE PRIZE POEMS

THE MAN WITH THE HOE.

(A Reply to Edwin Markham.)

"Let us a little permit Nature to take her own way; she better understands her own affairs than we."—Montaigne.

Nature reads not our labels, "great" and "small,"

Accepts she one and all,
Who, striving, win and hold the vacant place;

All are of royal race.
Him, there, rough-cast, with rigid arm and limb,

The Mother molded him,
Of his rude realm ruler and demigod,
Lord of the rock and clod.

With Nature is no "better" and no "worse,"

On this bared head no curse.

Humbled it is and bowed; so is he crowned

Whose kingdom is the ground.

Diverse the burdens on the one stern road

Where bears each back its load;

Varied the toil, but neither high nor low.

With pen or sword or hoe,

He that has put out strength, lo, he is strong;

Of him with spade or song

Nature but questions—"This one, shall he stay?"

She answers "Yea" or "Nay."

"Well, ill, he digs, he sings"; and he bides on,

Or shudders, and is gone.

Strength shall he have, the toiler, strength and grace,

So fitted to his place

As he leaned there, an oak where sea winds blow,

Our brother with the hoe.

No blot, no monster, no unsightly thing.

The soil's long-lineaged king;

His changeless realm, he knows it and commands;

Erect enough he stands.

Tall as his toil. Nor does he bow unblest;

Labor he has, and rest.

Need was, need is, and need will ever be

For him and such as he;

Cast for the gap, with gnarled arm and limb,

The Mother molded him.

Long wrought, and molded him with mother's care,