

MEN GROW STRONG WITH LABOR.

This is an age of business, and there is danger that the higher interests of men will be submerged and choked out by the crowding concerns of our money-seeking civilization. The refinements of art, the beauty and glory of nature, the power of repose, the adventure of the ideal—all these things should be parts of a fully rounded human life; all these things should have a place in a career that is worth while, thus enlarging life's scope.

Mere material success usually is lop-sided. It is not long ago that Andrew Carnegie, our Bismarck of business, delivered a weighty utterance upon the insufficiency of wealth as an ideal aim in life. "Money," said Mr. Carnegie, "does not make a man happy. I would give up all wealth I have rather than be denied the pleasures that come from the study of literature and art. If Shakespeare and Wagner, the mountain peaks of literature and music, were taken out of my life, life would be poor indeed."

Here is testimony, competent, relevant and pertinent—the testimony of a disinterested witness, writes Edwin Markham. Here are texts for many serious meditations. These doctrines cry out against a soul-suffocating absorption in business, but do they set the word of approval on an idle life? Do they mean that work is a misfortune to be hemoed, an incubus to be shaken off? Is Labor the Old Man of the Sea astride the bended back of Life? Nay, verily.

We are outgrowing the crude tradition that work is a curse, a hindrance to a complete life. It is the mark of a shallow thinker to fancy that, if it were not for work, life would break open around him into beautiful satisfaction.

There is no curse of work—work that is not slavish drudgery; for work is as normal to man as play is to a tiger's cub. But in the ashes of hope there is a curse upon the paradise of the idle, deep as the dust of graves.

So the chief concern of every man should be to become oriented—to find out his errand to the earth. This is a part of the obligation laid upon every soul. The animal does not have to seek for its mission, does not have to find its way. In normal conditions, the animal is pushed on in the path of its fore-ordained career, but man must co-operate consciously with the powers that make for his progress and his peace.

One look into life makes clear the fact that man is not here to roll as an aimless stone down a swift river. No; he is not here to drift with the stream, but to turn the course of the stream. He is not here to be bent by the world, but to bend the world.

Into the destiny of things he comes as an

other fate to seize the raw materials of life and mould them nearer to his heart's desire. He is here to affirm, to create, to compel nature to higher issues, and to write large his autograph on a page of history.

It is his to find the wildling crabapple in the Asian forests, and to transform it to the bell-flower and the greening of our orchards; his to transform the sneaking wolf into the faithful collie and the benevolent St. Bernard; his to transform the arid desert, the reeking swamp, to the busy city, the whitening wheat field; his to command the irresponsible lightnings and yoke them to fetch and carry our words, our burdens, ourselves.

Do we smile at the old myths? If so, we are forced to be serious in the presence of one of them—the old story of the terrible Erinyes, the three secret goddesses who ever were alert to punish those who escaped or defied the law. There is a dread truth in that old tradition. In the deep chambers of nature there are avenging powers that no wealth can bribe, no cunning evade.

The punishment of the idler is doubly deep because his crime is a double crime; he sins against himself and against society. He fails to express himself; and at the same time he fails to render to others any return for his food and shelter. The deep life law is founded on the Golden Rule, the principle of reciprocity. If we take, we must give. Failure to obey this divine mandate is the chief cause of all the sorrows and disasters of individual and of social life. It is the observance of this law that swings the world in its harmonies and makes possible the heaven of heavens.

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**LABOR
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1907.**