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The Slavery of Every-Day Life.

We believe that everybody ought to have a vocation of some sort. Every healthy adult person should earn his own living. It makes men and women healthier, happier and holier. Rich or poor, old or young, everybody is better off to have something to do every day. We have to hold ourselves back very hard to keep from despising men and women, who, because they happen to have a little money, are willing to degenerate into human parasites. Every one ought to do a moderate amount of business to preserve true manhood and womanhood.

But business very easily becomes a slaveholder, a tyrannical master. Six or eight hours a day is plenty of time to devote to any one business, and we feel like pitying that man or woman who must do more than this, and feel like scolding that man or woman who does so from choice. That business man, be he rich or poor, who has no time for social relations, not a moment to spare for family felicities, who goes to meals with the same punctuality and brevity as a penitentiary convict, such a man is a slave. There is no other word that will fit his case. His master is invisible, his manacles are unseen, his prison walls are not tangible, but his bondage is just as irksome, just as pitiless as if he were a galley slave.

If all the business slaves in any city should be marshalled out some day, and parade up and down our streets, to be reviewed by the lazy aristocrats who make such slaves necessary, what an army they would make.

The sleepless politician would be there vainly trying to quiet his outraged nerves with tobacco and mixed drinks. The poor preacher would be there, with his bent shoulders and flabby muscles, picking his way along absent-mindedly, his pale face disfigured by his ceaseless writing of sermons that no one cares to hear. The merchant would be there with long columns of figures which he is vainly trying to add up in such a way as to make the balance come in his favor. The overworked mechanic would be there, who, because of long hours and poor pay, has learned to hate his vocation. The busy doctor, the successful lawyer, would be there, groaning under their burdens of overwork, while hundreds of others of the same profession have nothing whatever to do.

Then would come a long array of common day-laborers, whose faded, ill-fitting clothes attest the poverty in which they live. And last but not least, the multitudes of washerwomen, scrubwomen, who begin to work in the morning when the rest of us are asleep, and continue to work until after we are asleep again. They receive the poorest pay, the meanest food, wear the cheapest clothes, for all of which we give them a cheap Christmas present once a year.

What an "Uncle Tom's Cabin" could be written about all of these people! The slavery of ante-bellum days cannot compare with this sort. There is no time for these slaves to "hang up the shovel and the hoe, and take down the fiddle and the bow." These slaves hung up the fiddle and the bow long ago and will never take them down again. For these people no emancipation has yet

arisen. Their emancipation has not yet been declared.

But with many people this slavery is voluntary. It is the willing servitude of a deluded mortal for the sake of money, more money. He somehow imagines that his future happiness is related to the amount of money he possesses. He has taken upon himself the slavery that has no compensation, no recreation, no satisfaction. His money becomes a canker that is eating the life out of his soul.

One of the most degrading forms of slavery in this world is slavery of wage earning. The man or woman who works simply for wages, who has no interest in the work done save the pay received, is enduring the most degrading form of servitude. That fellow who loafs around, putting up the pretense of doing something, waiting for the pay car, has no interest in anything but pay-day—such a man is wearing manacles that will finally leave indelible

scars wherever they touch.

The man who builds with no other thought than the pay he is to receive is building a monument to his own shame. The man who offers merchandise to the public, looking only to his gains, caring nothing to contribute to the world's good—such a man sinks lower and lower in morals and spirituality. No one has any moral life who continues a vocation in which he has no interest. The practice of such a vocation slowly but surely consumes his veracity and self-respect. That man who has sought and gained a political office simply for the gain that is in it, then sits and smokes all day while subordinates do his work, such a man is a slave. The most detestable kind of a slave. His flesh hangs on his bones in flabby bulges. He no longer enjoys his food. He has lost all interest in the affairs of men. Nothing but sordid, sensual pleasures appeal to him at all. He tries to persuade himself that he is a lucky man by escaping the responsibilities of productive labor, when the whole truth is that he is enduring a worse slavery than hard work in a State's prison.

Happy is that wage earner who not only likes to receive his wages, but also likes his work. Even though such a man work for one dollar a day, he is a king beside that other man who with a princely salary takes no interest in his work.

The housewife drudge who does her work in a slatternly way, but cares nothing for pictures, books or music, drags around in slovenly attire, looking forward for nothing except sleep to antidote her weariness, such a woman is a slave when she ought to be a queen. There never was a home so humble but that the right woman assisted by the right man could convert it into a paradise.

Every life might be noble if only each person could grasp the truth. The truth is, we are children of a king. We are all heirs of a divine birthright. This life is but a short pilgrimage to try our mettle. Every hidden virtue will finally find open reward. Every secret trial bravely faced is sure to meet complete recompense. This is the truth of the matter, and this truth rightly comprehended is able to make every one free, free from despair and pessimism, free from cynicism, free from all the poison weeds of discontent, that makes life a thralldom. Any one who is obliged to prevaricate, to keep back part of the truth, to pretend to be anything other than he really is, such a person is a slave.

A person may possess bodily freedom, but be in complete spiritual bondage. Anyone who fears the truth, or hesitates to reveal the facts is a slave. Slavery of spirit is a thousand times worse than slavery of body. That one is to be pitied whose soul is chained. Chained by some superstition or imprisoned by some cowardly fear of public opinion. Only the truth can set such a man free. One day's existence of perfect freedom is worth a thousand years of servility and truckling hypocrisy. The joy of existence depends upon the degree of freedom one has attained.

To be able to stand up in this world free from superstition, free from malice, free from sin, free from the fear of God or the hatred of man, free from the fear of death, free from creeds and theological rubbish, free from all obligations that do not rest upon reason, free from ritual and rioting, free from pious cant, free from everything that binds the soul or fetters the intellect, one day of such freedom is worth a lifetime of sensuous pleasure.

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