

MAN, THE WORKER.

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THERE are various forms of human industry, and an infinite variety of employments in our busy world; and under the term "work" I would include them all. Whatever man accomplishes in grappling with facts and realities, and moulding them to some genuine purpose, whether it be done by hand or brain, by power of thought or strength of muscle, by tongue, or pen, or arm, all may rightly be named "work." He is a worker who handles spade, or axe or trowel—who plies the loom or the fishing line; but he, too, is no less truly a worker who, in his counting-house, guides the wheels of commerce, or, at his desk, shapes the thought that will enlighten or gladden the soul and mould the destinies of unborn generations.

The beneficent Creator has opened a thousand paths for human industry; but the noblest and most instructive lesson for our life's guidance is this—that every one of us has got work to do; that this is a hard-working world in which there are to be no idlers; and that labour is the ordinance of Heaven. Just as you see it sometimes written over the entrance of some huge factory, as a warning to idlers and loungers, "no admittance here except on business," so, over the world, a similar placard is posted, with heavy penalties attached, in case of transgression. Nature permits none of her children to be drones; she will not tolerate the indolent; and her stern, though kind voice, to each and all is, "go work,—under penalties be not idle; the night cometh when no man can work."

By the very constitution of his nature, man is clearly a born worker in this world. Why has he been endowed with the strong arm, the inventive brain, the courageous heart? Why has he been placed, by the great Creator, in the midst of seemingly unfriendly elements, in a world that grows thorns and thistles, and is full of dark, tangled forests, and dismal swamps and roaring cataracts, where the ocean billows rise and threaten to overwhelm him, and the storms of winter howl, and the very soil is cursed with barrenness? Is it not that he, "lord of the lion heart and eagle eye" may, by his strong arm and stout heart, subdue these elements before him—may smite down the stubborn forest and convert it into a harvest field waving with the golden grain—that he may drain the pestilential marsh and change it into the green flower-clad meadow, on which the sportive lamb may skip—that he may bid the stately city rise where the tiger's jungle meets the eye—and that he may launch the strong-knit barque, and riding upon the whirlwind and defying the storm, may bind together continents and islands, and bridging over the restless, roaring sea, may make it a highway for the nations of the earth? Such is man's allotted task; such his own constitution and that of the material universe; and, being thus fitted for work, in that, and not in idleness, can he ever find hap-