

by the most mendacious finger-posts. This is true of them in all departments of acquisition, and not merely in the manual arts. They aspire to speak German without studying the grammar, and to acquire "French in six lessons without a master." That they rarely learn any trade thoroughly, is the almost uniform testimony of employers. We need not wonder, therefore, if these prefer proficient foreign workmen to native "botches," and if nearly all positions demanding skill and commanding high pay are occupied by foreigners, only the inferior and poorly paid ones being left for natives. The number of these native "botches" whom necessity forces into trade is great enough to make competition among them sharp, and consequently their wages low. This induces greedy employers, and, ultimately, in self-defence, employers who are not greedy, to hire their cheap services, and, as far as possible to dispense with high-priced skilled labour, a result which has a most injurious effect, not only upon the character of the work done, but also upon the interests of all good workmen. That this condition of things should intensify the American's natural aversion to learning a trade is intelligible enough. He can hardly be expected to enter a calling in which he is likely to be always a mere assistant, under the control and direction of foreigners. Consequently, whenever he can, he makes his escape from the workshop, and tries to live by his wits, thus reinforcing that undisciplined and hostile army of social harpies and vampires which we maintain within our own borders, in the shape of pot-house politicians and their tools, labour-demagogues, dive-agents, loafers, tramps, blackmailers, gamblers, and thieves.

The second of the leading causes of the current aversion to manual labour is one already alluded to—the

feeling that it is ungentlemanly. This cause has its origin in the first. Labour being despised as an evil, those who could live without it not only came to be regarded with envy, which is one form of respect, but were soon able to place the toilers in a position of servitude, and to establish the momentous social distinction between bondmen and freemen, which again easily passes into a moral distinction. Everywhere the words for toiler have come to mean clown or knave, and those for comfortable idler to mean gentleman or nobleman. "*Eorlas and ceorlas*" (gentle and simple) has become earls and churls, and there is no more disastrous confusion in thought and speech than that which has long prevailed between the social and moral senses of the words "gentleman" and "nobleman." Manual labour having thus, from time immemorial, been connected with servility and baseness, and idleness with mastership and nobility, it is no wonder that Americans of all classes, being freed from those restrictions which elsewhere seek to crystallize social distinctions, and repudiating the blasphemous doctrine that, in however low a condition a man is born, therein Providence means him to remain and be content, should seek to avoid manual labour with all its social and moral implications. No man can be blamed for insisting upon being a gentleman, and upon being regarded as one, and if public sentiment decides that a tradesman cannot be a gentleman, he is right in refusing to be a tradesman.

But, in defence of the American workman, it must be admitted that, even had he the patience to learn a trade thoroughly, he would find it difficult to do so. Apprenticeship, which has hitherto been the only recognized means of learning trades, has died out, and no other institution has taken its place. There does not,