

# The Independent.

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## Labor Is A High Privilege For Which Men Should Render Thanks

Labor is the highest privilege of man. It is a divine gift that enables him to work for himself and for others. If on this Thanksgiving day we fail to render thanks for the gift to toil we prove ourselves ungrateful for the best of all gifts.

Some men consider work an evil, and such it is when the individual is forced to work in slavery or to work at that which is not his real life work. But in itself work is a blessing. The most foolish conception of heaven is that which pictures the immortal spirits as enjoying eternal rest. If the brain of man or the intellect of an angel should cease to toil it would cease to be. If our bodily functions should cease to toil we should cease to be. Toil is the condition of all existence and can only be an evil when it is not free.

On this earth labor can never be wholly free and must ever be something of an evil, but at the same time it is the greatest of all blessings because in spite of its limitations it develops the good that is in our human nature. There is no growth, mental, moral or physical, without labor. Even the beasts of the field and the birds of the air must work that they may eat and develop. As for man, being an intelligent being, he grows not only in a physical sense, but mentally, morally and spiritually by means of toil, whether of hand or brain. Those who fail to grow as the result of their labor have labored in vain. As there would seem to be always room for further development of the bodily muscles by toil, so there seems to be room for indefinite development morally, spiritually and mentally. There is, however, a bourne which hems us in and prevents indefinite development in our mortal state. The immortal soul, however, passes beyond this bourne into new fields of labor, into the region of eternal toil, which is at the same time the region of eternal peace.

A few days ago Andrew Carnegie, while attending a banquet in New York, declared that poverty was a blessing instead of a curse. "Abolish wealth," he said, "but abolish poverty, never." The canny Scotch ironmaster was perhaps dreaming of his boyhood days when he whistled light-heartedly on his way to work and took little heed of the morrow, what he should eat or what he should wear. But Mr. Carnegie mistook the source of his happiness and of his moral and spiritual growth. He was not happy because he was poor. Insofar as he was really poor he was unhappy. But

insofar as he overcame poverty by toil he was happy. Because he was poor he was forced to toil, to use his brain and body in the accumulation of those things which are necessary to sustain life. "The destruction of the poor is their poverty," but the salvation of the rich and the poor is their labor.

The greatest evil in the world is sin and vice. The next greatest evil is ill health, and last of all comes poverty. But the unthinking are apt to reverse the order and to place poverty first, ill health next and viciousness last of all. But the first is the true order, and that is why the world will always pay its highest tributes of esteem to those who care for the souls of men, and will give honor next to the physician who stills the throbbing pain of the sufferer and wrests from nature the secret antidotes that check the ravages of disease. To him, however, who battles with the ever menacing perils of poverty, who finds the ways and means to improve the material welfare of his fellow men, to diminish pauperism and thereby to diminish disease, vice and crime, men will ever give meed of love and respect.

To the Author of Toil, therefore, we owe our high thanksgiving. The fruitage of the field and the fabric of the factory have been produced in lavish abundance, but greed and avarice, folly and ignorance, will prevent a fair distribution. And yet while condemning the human errors and passions that lead to the unfair distribution of wealth, we should never forget that God has given an abundance for all. If He withdrew the atmosphere for a few seconds all men would perish. If He took from the soil its nourishing qualities for a single season the human race would cease to exist. If the earth should lose its balance for the millionth part of a second it would plunge into space and no record of the earth or its inhabitants would remain in the universe of matter. That none of these evils eventuate is due to an All-wise Benevolent Providence. But even though He did not entirely withdraw His care, if He but withdrew His kindly providence sufficiently to make most of the earth a marsh or a desert the conditions under which we labor would become vastly more painful.

In spite of man's unfairness, his ignorance, greed and folly, the human race thrives and men are content to advance from small things to great, from weakness to strength, from the night of the unknown into the daylight of knowledge and understanding, through the medium of toil.

## Railways Show Their Hand In Battle For Regulative Legislation

Serious discussion of such a brazen document as Senator Foraker's bill for railway regulation would unduly dignify an effort to secure for the railways more license to plunder the public than they now possess. The language of the bill is purposely obscure and involved, designed as it is to weaken rather than to strengthen the present laws against discriminations and acts in restraint of trade. The following provision will be particularly offensive to those who believe the railways can be effectively regulated by the government:

"That nothing in the act to regulate commerce, approved February 4, 1887, or in the act to protect trade and commerce against unlawful restraints and monopolies, approved July 2, 1890, or in any act amendatory to either of said acts shall apply hereafter to the establishment of rates or the changing or publication of the same with respect to foreign commerce, if carried in ships of American registry; or shall prohibit any necessary or reasonable act, association or agreement with respect to interstate trans-

portation that is not in reasonable restraint of commerce with foreign nations or among the several states; or shall hereafter authorize forfeiture of property as punishment for any violation of such acts."

What is the meaning of this jargon? The railways will be permitted to do anything necessary or reasonable that is "not in reasonable restraint" of trade. The doing of anything reasonable that is not reasonable is a sort of special privilege belonging exclusively to the realm of frenzied finance. The provision seems to be a device which will permit the railways to pool on rates and to form such associations for the purpose of agreeing on rates as are now forbidden by the interstate commerce act. The last clause would remove a penalty that at present rather frightens railway officials who are eager to grant preferential treatment to favorite shippers.

The other provisions of the bill are along the lines of what