

CHAPTER III.

THE RIGHT TO WORK.

THERE is talk of a new kind of right. It is in the air. We hear it on every hand. It is the *right to work*.

It is not a *newly conceived* right. It has been postulated before, it has been preached before, it has been maintained before, by thousands of the world's great teachers and prophets.

But it is *new* in the sense that it is coming to be accepted by all humane men as a necessary right; indeed, fundamental and precedent to those rights declared in the Declaration of Independence — for only by the concession of the right to work can a man live, enjoy liberty and pursue happiness; and it is *new* in the sense that it is to be the next right incorporated into the law of our Republic.

Until this right is as well established in this country as the right to vote, and work is as free as education in the public schools, our boasted liberty is, and will remain, largely a myth.

APPEALS FOR WORK.

The present social system has failed, as every thoughtful man who comes in contact with real life is ready to admit. *The public offices in our cities to-day are living charnel-houses.* The cry of the poor and disinherited never ceases in their corridors. Work! Work! Work! is the plaintive cry. Denied it in one office, they turn to another, to meet the same denial. This experience is repeated until hope has fled from the man's bosom,

and there is no man left; and he goes out to become a criminal, or perhaps to seek escape in a suicide's grave.

The other day I received a pathetic letter from a wife and mother in our city; it is yet unanswered, simply because I do not know what to say; it is a counterpart of hundreds that come to the mayor's office and of hundreds of thousands that go to the office of every public official and employer throughout our land; it is the appeal of a wife and mother coming to the help of a husband and father, who has become disheartened in the hopeless search for work. She says:

My husband has looked in every shop and every store and every new building in the city, and he *can't get as much as a pleasant look*. They act as if you had asked for their pocket-book when you ask only for work, etc.

Actually the warfare is so fierce in the competitive scramble for "trade" that the modern business man cannot afford the time for either a pleasant look or a pleasant word unless there is money (business) in it.

Here is another letter:

DEAR SIR.— Please excuse me for troubling you, but it's a case of *don't know what to do*. I am a widow, with three children — two boys, one sixteen and the other seventeen, and a little girl of twelve. We could get along nicely if my boys could get work, but they have looked and looked all summer long and found nothing. We have advertised in the papers, and they have answered every advertisement we have seen, but all to no use. My boys are good boys, and I want them to stay good boys. I don't want them to become corner "bums," but unless they get work soon, I am afraid they will drift into evil ways, as so many have done. I work for ———, but, of course, don't get much these hard times, etc.

Here is a mother, pleading that her boys may have what is clearly the *right* of every man,— the right to work, pleading that her boys may not be driven through enforced idleness into lives of crime. Put yourself in her place; she is your sister; think of the pathos of the situation, and then see if you can satisfy

your conscience by saying "it has always been so," while you complacently draw your robes of luxury about you.

Every day's mail brings letters to the mayor's office, begging for employment or pleading for immediate help. It is a revelation of misery. Men and women, altogether human, and well-educated, as can be readily seen from the composition of their letters, are suffering unspeakable agonies of mind and even the actual physical pangs of starvation, for the lack of a few pitiful dollars.

Husbands plead for work that their wives may not go hungry; mothers implore assistance for their children, that they may be kept from shivering in the winter's cold; sons declare themselves willing to do any kind of labor to save their white-haired parents from the poorhouse.

It is a constant wail of anguish, and it would take so little to transform it into a song of thanksgiving. Any one would think that work was the elixir of life. Men plead for it as though it were the greatest boon in the world. Work! Work! Work! What can be more pathetic? Willing to dig ditches, to delve in treacherous coal-mines, to sweep refuse off the streets, to run any risk, to endure any hardship, to submit to any conditions, however inhuman, so that a few precious dollars may be earned to shake in the face of poverty!

Here are three sample letters, selected at random from among hundreds, showing the way in which our people are being driven over the precipice.

A heart-broken woman from Grand Rapids, Mich., says:

As a drowning man catches at a straw, I catch the thought that by appealing to you something may be done. My husband is an old locomotive engineer. He is well and favorably known among railroad men. Seven years ago his health broke down, and he became a physical and mental wreck, partially paralyzed and half blind. He will never again be able to earn a dollar.

I was obliged, some years ago, to give a chattel mortgage upon our furniture, and until now I have been able to pay the interest. I raised \$250 at 8 per

cent. But I can no longer pay any more, and we owe \$50 for the rent. Besieged upon all sides for money, I don't know which way to turn. Every one I know wants money, but I cannot hope to get any unless some friend of humanity will lend it to me until I can pay him back. Only the bitterness of necessity causes me to write this to a stranger. I am in desperate circumstances or I would not dare to appeal to you. I will repay you every cent. With an anxious heart I shall await your reply.

Here is another, from an Ohio town:

I take the liberty of asking you if you could give me employment *at anything*, as I have a family depending on me for support. I have done nothing all winter, and I am at the end of my means,—no money left. If you can get me work, for God's sake do, and I will remember you as long as I live. I was in the oil-refining business, but was crowded out by the Standard Oil Company. I must either work or starve. I will be faithful to you if you will please be kind enough to give me a chance. I should have sent you stamps for reply, but have spent the last money I had in the world to send this letter.

And this is one from our own city of Toledo, dated November 21st:

I suppose you hear a great many hard-times stories, but I feel as though I must tell you mine. My husband had just one day's work last week, and we have not had fire enough to keep warm. We have been living on dry bread and not enough of that. We have a family of eight, and five of them are without shoes. The truant officer compels us to send them to school, and we cannot send them barefoot and hungry and cold. I asked for help and was refused.

If you come to our house you will see that I am telling you the truth. Part of my children sleep on the floor because there is no bedstead for them. If we had an old one we would be thankful. We pay our rent and that is something. I am sick abed, and I can't bear to see the children so cold and unhappy. We must have shoes and food until my husband gets regular work. If you can help us quietly, please do. If not, we can suffer the same as we have been doing.

Such are the stories that come from thousands of families. To blame the unfortunate creatures themselves, to pharisaically point to their lack of thrift, their large families, and so forth, is to treat a large subject in a trifling way. Poverty is too wide-

spread a disease to account for it by cataloguing a few individual frailties. These touching appeals come from the victims of an unrighteous social system.

The continued appeals for work from so many men, their repeated offers to "work for anything," their piteous pleading for their needy and distressed wives and little ones, the abject and servile deference that many of them manifested in the presence of those who had the power, as they believed, to give or withhold the precious boon for which they sought, was to me, when I marked them first, a new and very distressing revelation of the life of the people about us. Morning, noon, and night the same story was repeated,—nay, is still being repeated—and always by a new crop of men. My business friends who had long lived in the city and had, in a manner, become used to the "hard-luck stories," as they called them, tried to comfort me by saying that "it has always been so," or that "they are looking for work and praying that they shall not find it," or that "they are a drunken and worthless set and no good anyhow;" but these answers did not and do not satisfy the awakened social conscience. Most of my business friends enjoy the comfortable seclusion of an inner office, and as business men cannot afford to listen to appeals for work, that unpleasant duty is turned over to a servant or to the still cheaper and more comfortable sign-board on the outer wall labelled with the legend that has proved a heart-breaker to many a man who has walked weary miles only to feel hope die within his breast as his eyes fell on this indictment of modern industrialism, this cold-blooded denial of *Brotherhood*,—"NO HELP WANTED." I knew that the explanations offered by my friends did not furnish a true reason for the existence of such an army of unemployed men. It is not true that "it has always been so;" and if it were true, my reply would be that it has therefore been wrong, and that it is our duty to change it.

WE KNOW NOT HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES.

It was the actual contact with ragged, starving men, your brothers and mine, willing and anxious to do any kind of work, that opened my eyes to the iniquity of our social arrangements. As some poet has said:

Evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as want of heart.

Too many of us confine our lives to a small, select circle of friends. The real lives of the people in the city where we live are as unknown to us as the manners and customs of the Patagonians. All the folk outside our own little clique are regarded as necessary automatons, not as human beings with the same joys, sorrows, virtues and frailties as ourselves.

We live for ourselves and think for ourselves,
For ourselves and none beside,
Just as if Jesus had never lived,
As if he had never died.

If we only knew the tragedies that take place probably in our own ward or street, if we only knew the bitter heart-ache of the poorly dressed woman who touches elbows with us on the sidewalk, we should endeavor to live larger and less self-centred lives. Our duties are not fulfilled when we love our families and remain true to our friends. "Thy brother is he who hath need of thee."

We are members of the human race, and "humanity is more than any man." The very complexity of our civilization brings with it a thousand social duties, the ignoring of which will bring bankruptcy and disaster to us as a nation and as individuals.

VAST DEVELOPMENT WHICH HAS MEANT ONLY WANT TO THE WORKERS.

During the last fifty years America has seen a wonderful materialistic development. A nation of inventors, we have led the world in making marvelous machines which have been and are the wonder of the age, each displacing the labor of many men. In the old time, a man with skill at his trade, made in his shop the whole of a thing, whether it was a wagon, an axe, or a pair of shoes. Now a worker in any of our large factories makes and has skill to make only the twentieth part of a thing. He himself becomes a machine, going through the movements many times a day, day after day, week after week, and month after month, with no stimulus of brain to inspire him to aim at an artistic and finished creation, but merely to turn out as many pieces of a thing as a piece-price wage, or an exacting foreman, demands.

We have developed great wealth in this nearly completed nineteenth century (will it not seem strange in one more year to write 1900?) but it is the wealth of individuals — millionaires and multi-millionaires, who hold in their hands a dangerous power, in this money-worshipping age, which can, if it wills, corrupt courts and legislatures, and can and does frequently menace and crush out private interests which stand in the way of desired ends.

Ruskin says: "The wealth of a nation, first, and its peace and well-being besides, depend on the number of persons it can employ in making good and useful things."

Does this apply to us as a nation? Yet, who shall say when a man has reached the limit of right in the amount of his possessions? Who can set the mark for a definite stopping-place in the scramble for wealth?

Thoughtful men and women who are close students of social conditions tell us that in the evolution of society in this country

the great middle class, which has constituted the stability of our nation (a nation which in its founding was created by this same so-called "middle class"), is gradually lessening in numbers and prosperity, and will eventually cease to be, unless we change our social system. Wealth is more and more being massed in the hands of the few, and the armies of the poor and of absolute pauperism daily grow in numbers. More than 300,000 people exist in one square mile of the city of New York. In Chicago, men run over one another to get a chance to cut ice at a dollar a day, and board themselves: hard and cold work, and those who want the job are thinly clad and poorly fed.

Men tell us that times are better; that there has been a fine trade, and we hope it is true, and are glad; yet the army of the unemployed is still here. To-day there are steam shovelers on the docks that load and unload each as much coal and ore as formerly took fifty men to handle.

THE MODERN TRAMP.

In this way we have developed the modern American tramp. There must have been tramps in bonnie Scotland one hundred years ago, or Robert Burns would not have written the "Jolly Beggars;" but the modern tramp is a different creature. He has been and is still the subject of many a jest and cartoon in our papers, humorous and otherwise, and Weary Waggles has become a well-worn and familiar friend. The tramp to-day may occasionally be the idle and worthless fellow we have come to think him, but in the main, very largely indeed, he is the man who, thrown out of employment through conditions wholly beyond his control, after a vain attempt to find work in his own town or city, is driven through his own desperate need or that of a wife and little children who suffer with him, to start out to find a "job" in some other locality, and at once he becomes a tramp. Without means, he is arrested by railroad de-

tectives if found trying to steal a ride, or in the cities as a vagrant, and told to move on, or worse still, thrown into the workhouse. What think you of his state of mind if he has left behind wife and little ones whom he loved? He may be among the incapables — naturally they would be the first to be thrown out by the development of machinery, and saving of hand labor,— but they must live. He is usually ragged and forlorn — how could he be otherwise?

The objection, "he does not want to work," is simply a polite bit of evasion with which we try to soothe our troubled consciences. It is belied in a thousand ways by our daily experience. The army of unemployed furnish the recruits for every new enterprise that is started. No man would be afraid to start a mill, factory, or blast furnace because a thousand men were needed and he feared they could not be found; the supply of labor is always "long;" whatever other market may be "cornered," this one never has been and never will be while the competitive system of industry remains.

The late Myron W. Reed, of Denver, Col., whose bright book, "Temple Talks," has furnished much inspiration for reformers, said:

The tramp is often dirty, uncombed, and generally unpleasant. The slouch and shuffle and unmanly front are not necessarily there because of a lack of brains or heart. The lack of a shirt will account for it. George Washington, in continental coat and powdered hair, fronts the world with a Virginia look. But let him hit the road, sleep in hay stacks, eat cold victuals, and the father of his country will not be recognized by his child.

The American tramp is far from being an ideal man, but as a rule he is not only willing, but anxious to work. In our own Humane Society lodging, out of more than 3,000 men fed and housed from one to three days during last winter, less than a dozen refused to perform the stipulated amount of work upon the streets, which was done often under humiliating conditions,

with jeers and gibes of lookers-on at the "hobos." Yet they comprised many intelligent but unfortunate men, from every walk of life.

HOW TRAMPS ARE MADE.

In an agricultural machine factory 600 men can to-day do the work that twenty-five years ago required more than 2,000. Men are being displaced in all lines of manufacture. Toledo is a bicycle town, and competition has become so sharp here and elsewhere that the prices of wheels have fallen more than half; yet there is not enough work to keep men busy all the year, and the factories close down a part of the summer.

The immense wheat farms of Minnesota, the Dakotas, and California raise tramps as well as wheat. In harvest, the proprietor requires hundreds of men; when harvest is over he requires perhaps ten. The extra force tramp. Their fires can be seen all the way from San Francisco to Minneapolis.

Social conditions at present make it a hundred times easier for a man to do wrong than right. I was at the workhouse recently, and while there saw one-third of the men confined in the prison working at the brick machines for the revolting and blood-curdling crime of jumping on freight trains. A man comes into the city looking for work. He cannot find it. He is hungry. If he is caught begging, we arrest him and send him to the workhouse; if he steals, he is imprisoned and branded as a criminal. So he does the next best thing,— he tries to get out of town. Then he is arrested for jumping on a freight train, and caged like a wild animal. We catch him coming and going. We punish him if he will, and we punish him if he won't. We refuse him the right of being a respectable and industrious citizen, and then send him down for vagrancy. We turn the hose on him, and then arrest him for being wet. What kind of a system do you call that? Is that the way to make a good citizen? Every tramp is a good citizen spoiled.

Men do not become social outcasts for pleasure, nor because of any innate and unconquerable depravity. An irresistible social pressure is forcing our people by thousands over the precipice. I believe it is natural for both men and trees to grow straight, and not crooked. Release men from the burden of this iniquitous profit-system, and tramps will be as rare as lepers. Restore comfort, hope, and ambition to the laboring classes, and trampology will become a lost art.

A young boy, or young man perhaps, starts out in search of employment. He goes from place to place from day to day, week to week, month to month, and year to year. At first he is respectable, well clad, ambitious perhaps; he is unable to secure any employment, or at best to secure but casual work. He goes out with bright hopes of getting a good job by which he can lay up a little something. He does not know that for every one chance in favor of his becoming rich, there are literally thousands against the possibility that he will be able even to make a comfortable livelihood for himself, and thousands more against the possibility of his ever being able to have a home in which to bring up a family. It does not take long for his clothing to become shabby; his last shirt disappears, literally worn off his back, and he pins his coat under his chin to cover his nakedness. He does just about as you and I should do if we had been forced to go through his experience. He does not become so lost to reason but that he can tell that riding beats walking, so, driven from one city, he starts for another; he takes the head end of the "blind baggage" or freight car in preference to walking; of course, there are laws against this; he is a law-breaker; but what would you do in his place? Would you be a law-abiding citizen? Could you maintain your self-respect while denied the right to a place to stand on the earth, as thousands of American citizens are to-day? I think not; I do not think you would try; you would see that every man's hand was against you, and naturally your hand would be against every man.

AN INSTANCE OF A HOMELESS ONE.

A New York gentleman relates the following typical incident, showing the condition of thousands of our people:

I was hurrying along William street, headed toward the bridge, when a man addressed me with, "Say, Mister, wouldn't you help a poor fellow out?" I passed along unheeding. Again he spoke: "Say, Mister, I haven't slept in a bed in two nights!" As I continued to turn a deaf ear to his entreaties, he continued: "You won't listen to me; you won't even look at me!" A sob in his throat brought a note of anguish into his voice which made me stop, both to listen and to look at him. He was not a pleasant sight. The ragged clothes, battered hat, weather-beaten, unshaven face, the sunken eyes, with a half-starved look in them, that made one suddenly silent with a realizing sense of the awfulness of such a condition of life, all made me forget that the man was talking to me while I was studying him.

"My father was born in this country before me," I heard him saying. "My crime is that I am an uneducated man. Nobody wants to listen to me; nobody wants to look at me; nobody wants to help me; what shall I do?"

"Well," I said, "you say you have not slept in a bed in two nights; why not?" "Well, I haven't," said he; "and I'm hungry, too. If you, sir, will help me, I will not spend the money for drink. The trouble with you, like all the rest, is that you class all as unworthy; you do not take time to investigate — if you care!"

By this time the man's despair lent eloquence to his argument. He continued: "Here in this big city I have tried for days and days to find work; nobody wants me; if I go a second time to the police station, where I have once been for help, they will send me to the Island, and I don't want to go there. Sir, work is what I want! In the great churches they are taking up collections to feed the heathen and educate them, giving ministers gold watches and chains, and letting thousands starve at their very doors!"

Unconsciously enough, he had struck home with me. The Sunday morning before I had heeded the appeal from the pulpit and put a dollar in the church collection for "foreign missions," and here was a man telling me my duty as a citizen of this great city, to him as a man and brother, an unfortunate one, a dirty, disreputable-looking one, yes, but a man who probably spoke truly and with a fervor born of great necessity. By this time I had given him what he named as a sum sufficient for supper and a bed — to my regret, it was only a quarter — and I listened further.

"Now," said he, "I worked on the snow gang. With no money in my pocket, and the delay, I had to have my order cashed, and the man who did it took a good part for giving me the money. I come from Colorado," he went on, "used to work in the mines there. What did they do? Brought over gangs of Italian laborers who would work cheaper, and I had to get out. I have no recommendation; nobody will hire me without; what am I to do? Starve, or go and jump off the dock into the river?"

I told him that I did not employ any men myself; that the treatment he received in his distress and need was not directed against him as a man, but as one of a class—one of the thousands who day and night haunt the streets until their appeals are unheeded, hardly heard, because of the great number of them. As I spoke, the meaningless platitudes sounded so empty. But I did not know of a place to send him, nor, in my acquaintance, a man who would give him a chance.

NO PLACE FOR THEM ON THE EARTH.

A few of us have corralled the opportunities for work so that we have become like gods upon the earth, holding the lives of our less fortunate fellow-men in our grasp. The dreadful hardships of enforced idleness and inevitable poverty are being endured by thousands who are as worthy and industrious as any of us.

For days and weeks and months they have tried every avenue of escape, doing everything within their power, until finally the awful truth dawned upon them that there was no place for them on the earth,—no pen, or hammer, or shovel, or plow, or other tool that they could use to get the necessities of life for themselves and their loved ones. Then they become desperate and commit some crime, even a prison seeming to them as a place of refuge; or, if their nature rebels against a criminal life, they pass into the future life by the *short-cut of suicide*.

Every day, upon the streets of our cities, you will see throngs of discouraged men. They have lost hope. The ambitions of their youth are only cinders in the ashes of a burnt-out past. Civilization to them seems organized hate. They are on the wrong side of every door, and every man's hand is against them.

They used to hope for a better time coming, but now they simply exist hour by hour and look forward to nothing. To them, America is another word for disappointment. They feel like the prisoner in the terrible cell, used in the Middle Ages, the walls of which gradually approached nearer and nearer, until the helpless victim was crushed to death between them. I can look out of the window of the mayor's office and see the unemployed men standing on the streets with their hands in their pockets, an idle, hopeless, listless look in their eyes: and many of them have no home but the public highway. They come to the office; they besiege me with their pathetic words and their hopeless, hungry looks. They ask for work. They try to add emphasis to their request by telling me of a sick wife and small children.

I repeat the stale old platitude that I am sorry for them, and tell them that work is a luxury beyond my power to give. Every day there is a new crop of people in the office. Where they come from and where they go I cannot tell. Many of them struggle through the winter, half frozen, borrowing a little warmth from the saloons and existing on free lunches and hand-outs.

And all these are *people*, not cattle nor machines. They are sons, husbands, brothers, fathers. Loving mothers nourished them through infancy and cared for them through childhood. They are nineteenth century human beings, having all the feelings and faculties of men.

HOW CAN THE WASTE OF MANHOOD BE JUSTIFIED?

How can we justify this waste of manhood? If a single copper penny were dropped on the sidewalk, it would be picked up in a moment; but men, *men* with bright minds and strong, skilled hands, are allowed to stand and rot in idleness upon the streets of our unchristian cities. Men reared in our American civilization and educated in our public schools are to-day without any alternative than to steal or starve. I meet them every day.

They are good men — just as good as most of the pious men of the churches, but they are unfortunate. They are not to blame. When business is a lottery, some people must get the blanks. They failed, not because they were immoral or unskilled or lazy; but because an inhuman system of industry picked them up and threw them on the dump-heap.

It is not necessarily our best men who rise to the top, nor our worst men who sink to the depths. No business man can be sure that he or his children will not before ten years be enlisted in the ragged army of vagrants. The bright-faced young lads now preparing for life in the high schools may find themselves thrust to one side as if it were a crime to be alive. The great Juggernaut car of business has no mercy, and none can be sure of escaping from its crimsoned wheels.

Idle men throng the market places and congregate on the street corners, and yet on every hand there is work in abundance that needs to be done. Many of the city streets are in dire need of improvements, some of them being almost impassable, but there has been such a terrific howl about taxes, mainly on the part of rich men, that there seems to be a dread to propose the work of improvement that is needed. The rather anomalous spectacle confronts us, that, while our streets are full of idle men, our banks are full of idle money. Never in the history of the country, perhaps, have the bank balances been so large as at the present time. Thus far we seem to be unable to unite these two idle forces to do the work that is so much needed, both by the city at large, and by the workers themselves.

BEGGING FOR LEAVE TO WORK.

Begging for leave to toil is not a new profession, but it is one wholly at variance with any just conception of democracy or brotherhood, and inconsistent with our claim to being a republic of equals; and nothing can be more certain than that if we are

ever to realize that condition of equality that the founders of our government forecast in the preamble of the Declaration of Independence, it must be through a realization of perfect democracy in government,— what Lincoln called, “ A government of the people, by the people, and for the people,” for all of the people, not alone for a few of us.

A man begging for leave to toil, which is in other words leave to live, cannot be a good citizen; it is impossible for him to have any proper feeling of love of country; patriotism in the best sense cannot live in the heart of such a man, for how can he love a country that does not afford him and his little ones a right to live, in return for the service he stands ready to offer? Such a country is unworthy to be loved, because it is unloving.

We are beginning to see that so adroitly have the captains of industry managed for themselves, to-day the toilers who produce all the wealth are not only deprived of any fair share in it, but many are denied even a place to stand upon the earth. All over this broad land of unparalleled richness, men — industrious, honest, earnest men, willing workers — are compelled to tramp in enforced idleness and vainly beg, not for a share in the wealth their hands have produced, but for the poor privilege to work that they may still further add to the wealth of others that they may not enjoy, and incidentally that they and their little ones may eat bread and not die. One hundred and twenty-five years ago Robert Burns wrote:

See yonder poor, o'erlabored wight,
So abject, mean and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To grant him leave to toil,
And see his lordly brother worm
His poor petition spurn,
Unmindful though a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

RIDPATH'S "CRY OF THE POOR."

When I think of the misery which exists among the many, and the hardened apathy of the few, I am reminded of John Clark Ridpath's "Cry of the Poor":

Oh, ye money lords of the United States! Oh, ye men of unbounded wealth and license, ye men who reap where ye have not sown and gather where ye have not strewn, ye men who have arrogated to yourselves the right of establishing a despotism over American society, ye men who have banded together to destroy the great Republic and to rebuild on its ruins the abandoned, owl-haunted fabric of the past, ye men who are the foes of human liberty, who do not believe in the democracy of man, who trample down truth and crush the aspirations and hopes of 70,000,000 people under your gilded Juggernaut, ye men whom nothing will satisfy but to gather up the total earnings of your countrymen and consume them in the attempted gratification of your insatiable greed and luxury, ye men whom preachers preach to and teachers teach and lawyers plead for and orators flatter and journalists glorify, ye men who have purchased the organized powers of society and who use them as the dumb pawns of the gambler's board, who think you can buy the world and convert it one-half into a slave market and the other half into a park, ye men who own all the railways and all the bonds and all the sugar and all the petroleum and most of the cotton — heaven save us! — of the United States, ye men whose intolerable pride overtops that of the feudal lords and whose unmitigated selfishness devours the lives of others as the Roman gluttons devoured humming birds and snails, ye men who fear neither the proclamation of truth nor the appeal of innocence in torment, ye millionaires and multi-millionaires and billionaires about to be, whose spoliation of the human race goes on unchecked and whose arrogance already grins defiance out of the ironbound windows of your arsenals, stop — stop now!

The time has come for you to pause and listen! The low murmur which you hear in the distance, so sad and far, is the cry of the poor. They who cry are your fellow-beings. They are as good as you are. They have as much right to the blessedness of life as you have. They have brothers and sisters and children, as you have a few. They have hearts, as some of you have. They are patient and true, as you are not. They are not arrogant and envious; they are humble and sincere. If there be a God they are His loved ones, and now, by the goodness of heaven, you shall hear their cry. We serve upon you a modest and generous notice to hear that cry. You shall do it. The nation will make you do it. You are not the lords of

the world; you are not the proprietors of nature. You are simply men as are the rest of your brothers. Your brothers will do you no harm, but you shall hear their cry. You shall not be liars and say that there are no poor; you shall not be casuists and say that it was always so and always will be, for civilization will either abolish poverty or be abolished by it. You shall not be hypocrites and say that God will take care of those whom you have robbed of their labor and their hope, as though He were your confederate. Hear ye, hear ye, the cry of the poor and answer that cry with justice and compassion! Otherwise the future will come down on you like night, and your children's children, visited with a fate worse than that which you now inflict on the children of the poor, will damn you for your sin and folly.

BEGINNING TO BE ASHAMED OF PROFITABLE IDLENESS.

Thousands of us are beginning to understand that the right to work is an inherent right, like the right to breathe. All over this broad land people are feeling a sense of ignominy and shame that the workers who produce all the wealth, who make all the useful and beautiful things, should have so little of the product of their toil. Many of us are beginning to be ashamed of living in idleness on profits gathered from the toil of little children, overworked women, and underpaid men.

Great numbers of thoughtful people feel like hanging their heads and hiding their faces as they contemplate the hopeless despair of the army of unemployed that throngs our public highways and our city streets, repeating its piteous plea for employment.

The thing we stand in need of just now is not more territory, not expansion nor imperialism, but a system of government which shall so order and regulate industry that every man shall be free to work, and be protected from the profit-monger in the product of his toil. It would pay us a thousand times better to provide work for our own people than to *purchase insurrections from Spain*, and squander the public money on Gatling guns and battleships. The real battle, which our people are being allowed to fight unaided, is against poverty and bankruptcy. Our self-

respecting workers are not asking for charity, like the Italian lazzaroni, but only for the chance to sweat and toil at some productive occupation.

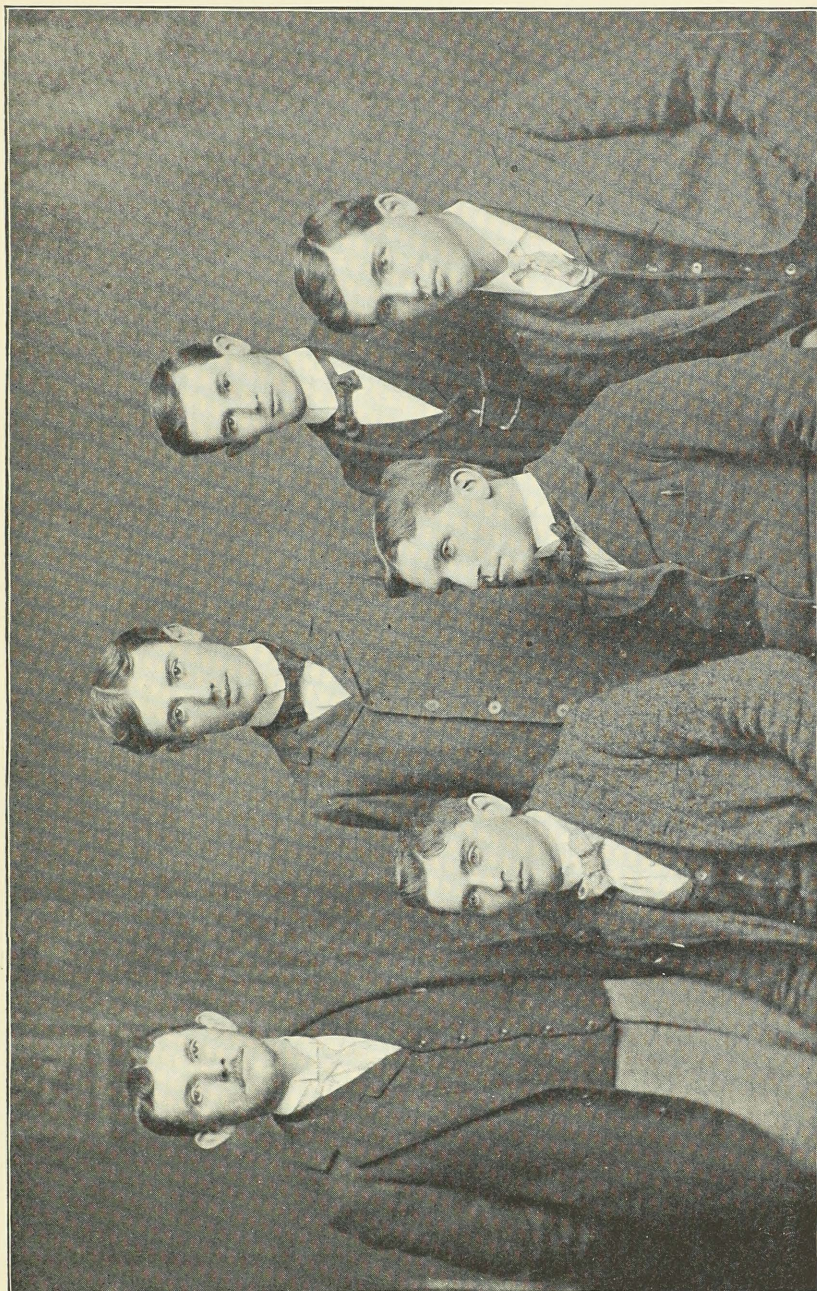
No honest, self-respecting man can be content to live at the expense of other people's toil. I do not believe there is any way in which a man can show his love of country except as he manifests it to his fellow-men. Both our religion and our patriotism are measured by our attitude towards one another, and not by a professed veneration for the flag or the Creator. Such conceptions of patriotism as I got in my boyhood days are a delusion, pure and simple, and instead of aiding me to a helpful and proper understanding of citizenship, they proved almost insurmountable barriers. The impression is given to our children that, as the thing called government is perfected, there is therefore no responsibility upon them beyond the pure perfunctory work of voting on election day, of proclaiming in season and out of season that we have the best government on earth, and constantly keeping before the minds of our fellow-men the assertion that we "can lick everybody." If we have the best government, which I do not question, it does not necessarily follow that even that may not be still improved. If we can "lick everybody," even that is not of necessity the highest ideal toward which a nation may strive. It is even possible that we may demonstrate our greatness in a far more substantial manner by manifesting our ability so to organize and associate ourselves together in the thing called government as to show the world that we can love everybody, and that we love them so thoroughly and so scientifically that we have a government that is ready to listen to the cry of the weakest child as to the clamor of the most powerful organization on earth; and a government in which and under which every man, great or small, may have equal and exact justice; and when that condition shall have been attained, the cry

of the pauper and mendicant and the pitiable appeals of the workless throng will forever cease in our land.

IDLENESS DESTROYING MEN.

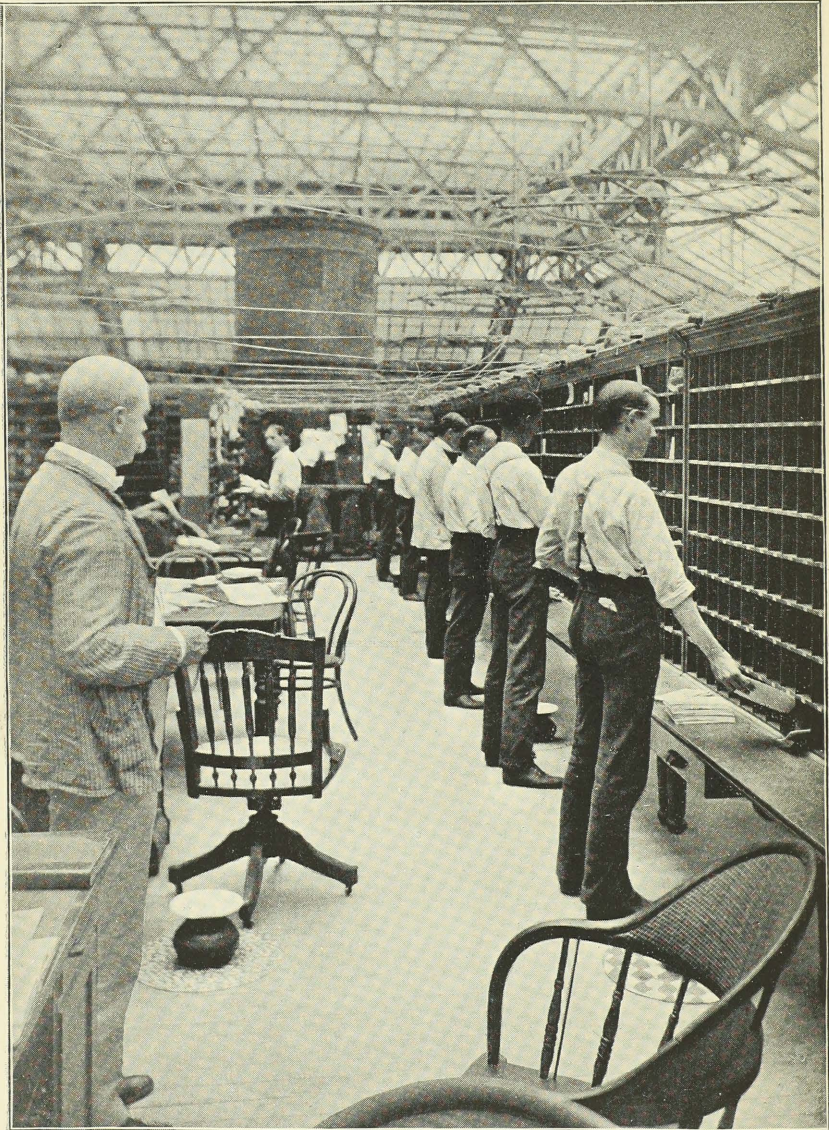
The most glaring and immoral fact in our present civilization is the army of the unemployed — an army created largely by the development of machinery and the perfecting of all the means of production and transportation, multiplying the capacity of labor many fold without any adequate reduction in the hours of labor, or any attempt at economic adjustment by raising the pay of the workers. This condition of affairs cannot continue many years longer without serious injury to the government itself. It has been for years doing irreparable damage to our wage-workers. Lack of employment, with all its accompanying worry and discouragement, simply destroys men. It takes all the manhood out of them, and leaves them mere wrecks on the highway of life.

Why should we bestow so much sympathy and honor and glory upon the victims of militarism, and entirely ignore the victims of industry, who are ten thousand times more numerous? In almost every American city and town there is a monument to the soldier boys who never came back. It is an appropriate token of appreciation, and reveals one form of patriotism which is very necessary for the upbuilding and welding together of any country. But where is there a single monument to workingmen who have been killed while doing their work? Why are there no statues to the soldiers of the plow and hammer? Why do we not recognize that service is service, whether rendered with a pick and shovel or with a Springfield rifle and Gatling gun? Let us prove that it is the *man* we honor, and not merely the uniform he wears. Many a young volunteer has recently discovered that the public did not appreciate his worth as highly when he wore a workman's smock and overalls as when he wore his military



A STORY OF SIX YOUNG MEN.

(See page 150.)



A VIE V IN THE ASSORTING DEPARTMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT POST-OFFICE,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

(The largest business institution in the world, conducted by the National Government.)

clothes. He has found that the country he went to defend will not now even guarantee him a job.

England spent twenty-five million dollars in rescuing one of her citizens from the interior of Africa, while the same money would have saved the lives of thousands of citizens at home, in London, Manchester, and the other great English cities. Are we not in danger of making a similar blunder?

WHY CANNOT WE PROVIDE A PLAN OF UNIVERSAL WORK?

We have been skilful enough to provide a plan whereby all of the people, without distinction of color, wealth, or education, shall have their letters carried and delivered in an orderly and scientific way, and our present great task is to provide a plan whereby every man shall have a chance to work without any more uncertainty than now attends the delivery of a letter.

Every man has a right to the public streets, parks, and highways. The poorest laborer in any city has the right to receive the aid of the fire department, without being obliged to pay a cent for the expense.

We have already fought for and obtained the right to vote, to exercise freedom of speech, to worship as we please, and to receive a free public-school education. The next right, which is really more important than any of the others, is the right to labor and to receive the full, fair value of what we produce.

Every right necessary for the continuance of life has been, through the growth of democracy, granted to every man, except the right to steady employment, but the denial of the latter makes all the others of little value. Men cannot eat votes, or pay their rent by free speech, or buy clothing by prayer. The freedom of starvation is the bitterest kind of slavery.

The social evolution of the last hundred years has no meaning unless it goes further and bestows upon every citizen the right to at least self-support. A nation of free citizens, nine-tenths

of whom have no legal claim to a livelihood, could not possibly exist without a series of revolutions that would terminate finally in a military despotism that would crush out every instinct of freedom.

THE RIGHT TO WORK AS AFFECTED BY THE CONTRACT SYSTEM.

The right to work is not to be considered as established merely when all men are employed. We must consider *how* they are employed, and for *whose benefit*. The right is not fully granted when willing workers are transferred from idleness to a condition of service wherein they toil long hours and for trifling rewards, the profits of their exertions going to others. The right to work carries with it the right to decent work, to useful work, to work to which the toiling one is adapted, and the right to the full recompense thereof.

I believe one of the best methods for restoring the wage-worker to his rightful place is by the abolition of the contract system. This prevents him from being sweated by middlemen, and cuts out direct profit on labor.

The evils of the contract system are the evils of special privilege. Any system that is adopted by society, either as custom or law, that grants to one man or set of men, a privilege that is by force of circumstances denied to other men, is a denial of the equality guaranteed to the people of this government in the Declaration of Independence, and is, moreover, a violation of divine justice.

This iniquitous system is one to which many of the cities of our country are chained by law. In my own city we are bound by a state law to let all work amounting to more than \$500 to that ideal robber, the lowest bidder, and similar laws and customs prevail with regard to nearly all of the public work, municipal, state and national. This law would seem to have been framed especially for the benefit of those who are capable of influencing,

purchasing and bribing boards, departments or legislatures. The popular idea, of course, is that it has been framed in order to give the community the most work for the least money, but in practice it works in exactly the opposite direction; for, as I have already intimated, it is the contractor's business, not to see how cheaply he can do the work and do it well, but first, to see how much he can get for doing it, and next, how very little he can pay the laborer and how poorly he can do the work in order to increase his profits. The result of this unscientific system is damaging and destructive in innumerable ways; the most direct damage of all proceeding from it is the wholesale robbery of labor. Instead of affording the free competition that its advocates claim for it, it has been shown by practical experience that the inevitable result of the system is monopoly through a combination of business interests into rings, combines and trusts.

Where in a single instance the monopoly fails, as sometimes occurs, the result then is the wholesale robbery of the laborer. In one city of Ohio last year the contractors failed to "get together" in bidding for the work of a large sewer. The warfare between them was bitter, and the contract was finally let at a figure so low as to threaten the ruin of the man who secured it; but, acting under the impulse of the greed that has been developed by the competitive system, the man shifted the consequence of his wrong-doing upon the poor laborers. Instead of employing them by the day at a living wage, he put them in competition with one another for the privilege of digging the sewer by the linear foot, with the result, as I was told by the Civil Engineer of that city, that the poor laborers who dug the sewer received less than fifty cents a day for their pay. And this is freedom! This is under the best government on earth! This is liberty, is it? Liberty for what? Liberty to what? Liberty to exist on a crust and live the life of a dog.

It seems to me that the city that sells to the lowest bidder the privilege of plucking its people, is placing itself on a par with the robber barons of old, who sold the privileges of highway robbery in the narrow passes and mountain crags of their possessions; and the poor laborer to-day under the contract system is a more helpless victim in these United States than were the travelers of old, who were made the legalized objects of plunder by the robber barons. But this system does not exist because men hate one another; it exists because we have not yet learned the source of our distress. Our social system ministers to selfishness and greed, and in every conceivable way we have sought to divert attention from the real question, first by this false issue and then by that.

At every recurring campaign a new cry of "stop thief!" has been raised to divert attention from the real thief; at one time it is the tariff question, at another the money question, at another the question of our foreign policy, and while we still point our fingers at these vanishing myths and cry loudly "stop thief!" we are all the time filling our pockets with unrighteous gains at the expense of the toilers and producers.

STATE ELIMINATION OF THE CONTRACTOR.

In New Zealand the government carries on public works on the co-operative principle, directly employing those who are able and willing to work upon them. It is found that this system is cheapest; that contractor's profits are saved to the state, and the men paid the ruling standard of wages in the open market. One thing the co-operative labor system has certainly done. It has relieved the congested state of the labor market in all the large centers of population, and cleared the streets of thousands of men who were formerly driven to a state of enforced idleness in consequence of the limited channels of private employment, in winter time more especially.

There are a few cities, notably Boston, Baltimore, Worcester, Mass., Fall River, Mass., Brockton, Mass., Evansville, Ind., and

Manchester, N. H., which report that the contract system is very seldom used, and that practically all the work of the city is done by direct labor.

In Birmingham the health committee, which is responsible for sanitation, has not only entirely eliminated the contractor from the cleaning and repairing of the streets and removal of refuse, but from the laying down of granite paving and flagging, once a most profitable item of his business. The gas committee is not content with employing hundreds of men to make gas, but also keeps its own staff of carpenters, bricklayers, blacksmiths, tinmen, painters, fitters, etc., to execute its numerous works. The improvement committee has its own carpenters, fitters, bricklayers, paperhangers, plasterers and zinc-workers, while the water committee, besides a regular staff of mechanics of all kinds, is now actually engaged in constructing several huge dams and reservoirs near Rhayader, two tunnels and various water towers and syphons, together with workmen's dwellings to accommodate a thousand people, stables, stores, workshops, a public hall and recreation room, a school, two hospitals and a public-house — all without the intervention of a contractor. Liverpool has had a similar experience. Almost all the city engineer's work is done by men directly employed by the city government. After a cruel experience in doing the work of sewer construction by contract, it now does the work by direct employment.

During the Crimean War, the clothes furnished by the contractors to the English army were of the poorest quality. They hung in rags upon the soldiers; and public sentiment was so thoroughly aroused against the contract system that a clothing factory was built at Pimlico, which has ever since supplied both the sailors and soldiers of the British Empire.

The progressive Municipal Council of Paris has for several years allowed a trade union, or any responsible association of workmen, to make bids for public work, thus shutting out the contractor and encouraging co-operative effort.

A SYSTEM THAT CANNOT ENDURE.

“Unemployment exists,” says Alfred Russel Wallace, “because of the fact that production is carried on not at all for the sake of supplying the wants of the people, but for the sake of making money for the capitalist.” This is the vital weakness in the contract system of doing the work of public improvement. I have no quarrel with the capitalist. I have no quarrel with the contractor. Under our existing business system, it is the business of the capitalist and contractor to get the best end of the bargain, and to my mind all inflammatory and denunciatory appeals directed against “the capitalist,” “the contractor,” “the money power,” are idle and of no avail. Our warfare should be upon an unholy system, a system, too, that is as unscientific as it is unholy, a system that hopes to perpetuate itself through ministering to greed, a system that is a daily warfare, that is calculated to make men hate one another — men who are the children of one Father, whose natural instincts are to love one another and who will yet demonstrate that in spite of all the devils in our special privilege laws or in hell itself, they *will* love one another. The contractor, the franchise-grabber, the briber, who invade our halls of legislation and courts of justice, the political plunderer, the business plunderer and all of the “monsters of greed” to whom we charge our distress to-day, are the legitimate products of this vicious system that makes our pretended democracy a travesty, and exhibits our life and practice as a denial of democracy and brotherhood.

A PLEA FOR THE WELL-TO-DO.

Hitherto I have argued chiefly for the disinherited, the millions who have to confess themselves beaten in the game of life, and who, for that reason, are living the most miserable of all miserable lives — a life of enforced idleness. I now want to enter the plea for another class, the well-to-do, the wealthy, who are leading

lives of idleness that, while not calculated to excite our pity as does the life of a man unable to find employment, who has a wife and little ones dependent upon him, are yet just as pitiable, equally deserving of sympathy from all who have any just conception of life and its purposes.

In every city there are hundreds — thousands — of young men and women who are practically rotting on their feet, living upon incomes derived from the fruit of other people's toil, having no more part or lot in the common life about them than the marble statuary that adorns their homes, or the painted faces that hang on their walls; and these have come to have my sympathy to an equal extent with those at the other end of the social line. These rich men's sons and daughters have a right to work, to have a share in the creative work going on around them. How can they, any more than the others, love a country that they have had no part in making, but which has been built up by the toil of other hands? If they reflect at all, they must reflect not only that they have not contributed to the creative work about them, but that they have been, indeed, a burden upon the body politic, drones in the social hive, rendering no service whatever in return for that which is given to them; and so I now want to include in my plea every one of God's creatures, whether rich or poor.

The right to work is a natural right in which we all have a right to share, and ought to share. Work is a necessity in the creation of a human being, and the more useful the work that contributes to the building up of the physical man, the more human the man will be; and many of our rich men have learned through bitter experience that the very money that has enabled them to raise their sons and daughters in idleness has been a curse rather than a blessing to them. William Morris says that "it is right and necessary that all should have work to do, work that should not be over-wearisome nor over-anxious, and which of itself should be worth the doing," and I agree with Morris

that, "turn this claim over as I may, look at it as I will, I cannot find that it is an exorbitant or extravagant claim; on the contrary, it is a most just claim."

The necessity for work in order to produce a normal, healthy human being is generally recognized, and we have all sorts of schemes for providing artificial work for the well-to-do to whom useful work is not available. We know we can make mere bone, muscle, and sinew by providing artificial work, such as is found in every well-equipped gymnasium, but I do not believe that sort of work has the moral worth or brings with it the satisfaction that comes from the feeling that we have contributed to the making of the material world about us, to the beautiful and useful, to the sum total of the comfort of our fellow-men. And so these reflections have led me to the point where I can say that my sympathies are equally divided between the two classes of unfortunates at either end of the social line — the unfortunate poor and the unfortunate rich. Indeed, many of the latter are living lives of enforced idleness, and, in addition, they are living wholly artificial lives, entirely out of sympathy with the common life about them, growing up in ignorance of the needs of the world about them, growing up without the knowledge that they have need of work, thanking their stars that they have been born above the working classes, and yet growing up with the belief that they can in some way share in the common stock of patriotism, that they can share the same patriotic impulses and love of country that are felt by people who have made sacrifices to build up the country and to raise up its institutions. But any thoughtful person knows that this is impossible, that in no just sense can we appreciate the blessings that surround us, whether they be spoken of in more general terms as the blessings of liberty or the more ordinary blessings of home and home comforts, except as we have contributed to them through real service.

We have to learn that "service brings its own reward." Illustrating the pressure that there is for place under existing conditions and the unfair competition that the poor have to meet, I relate an instance: A well-to-do gentleman called upon me with the request that I give his son employment "in almost any capacity." "I want him to think that he is earning something. Pay him \$40 a month, and I will send you my check for that amount monthly," said he. This man knew the value of work and was willing to pay for it. "An idle brain is the devil's workshop" is an old saw and a true one; it is equally true whether the idler be poor or rich. God never made a place for drones in human society. God never provided a plan whereby a human being could be happy and be idle. Any social system that enforces or permits idleness and non-productive life on any of its citizens is as unscientific in theory as it is vicious and wrong in practice. I hail with delight the signs that I see of the dawning of the day of industrial freedom, when every man shall be as free to exercise the right to work as he is to-day to exercise the right to vote or the right to worship.

SET THE IDLE TO WORK ON ROAD BUILDING.

If we are the great people that we are said to be, we shall demonstrate our greatness by getting together the idle millions of the millionaire on the one hand, and the idle men on the other, and putting both to work. Work is man's normal condition, as natural for a healthy man as play for a healthy child; but work under reasonable conditions, mind you; I am not talking of the work of a serf or a slave, but of the work of a man; not ten, twelve, or fourteen hours' work, for eight hours for the present is enough for the proper development of any man. Moreover, work is a thing that is as much needed by one man as it is by another. If you know a man who will not work, remember he is what we have made him by our vicious social system. Our rich

men have never had a better opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism, their love of country, than they have in these days. I do not see why patriotism does not call for the millionaire to give up the service of himself for a while and to invest his money in road building, just as much as it calls for him to set himself up for a target to be shot at in front of Santiago. I cannot see why a man who would give his life, or a part of it, to the service of making such roads as would enable the people to go to and fro freely through the country, ought not to be loved by his fellow-men just as sincerely as the other man who gives his life to the rusting idleness of the camp. And I believe that the country will love and honor, and build monuments too, to that man or those men who give up the selfish scramble for money for which they have no use and which they know can only be obtained at the expense of those who have none to use, and instead, will turn their attention and their talents to the service of their fellow-men in providing by their skill and business ability such socializing agencies as good roads.

I know that the millions of our tramps who are to-day denied the right to work will love them; I know that millions more who recognize the tramp as a brother man, however low he may be descended in the human scale, will love them; I know that this thought is in strict line with the correct idea of democracy, which is that the individual shall sink himself for the benefit of his fellow-men; I know that we must lay hold upon this truth if we are to realize a perfect democracy in this country. We must understand that millionaires on the one hand and tramps on the other will not exist in any perfect order of society.

Association is the word that is to save this nation and the world, and good roads contribute to, and help forward, the work of association. Macaulay says that "every improvement of the means of locomotion benefits mankind morally, and intellectually, as well as materially, and not only facilitates the interchange of the

various productions of nature and art but tends to remove national and provincial antipathies, and to bind together all the branches of the great human family." This is our great need to-day, to be bound together. Good roads, through facilitating the means of getting together, making country districts equally accessible at all seasons of the year, will aid in the work of building up a nobler and purer patriotism. Men will love a government, local, state, or national, that provides them with such things as contribute to their comfort, that does something for them. In every section of the country where they have good roads, particularly in many of the counties of Indiana, noted for their fine graveled pikes, I find all of the people pointing with pride to these properties of the people. In Ireland I found a poor peasant who seemed to take pride in showing me the 90,000-acre farm of Lord Kenmare, but the things that a people with any true conception of liberty take pride in are the publicly owned properties. Our public highways ought to be first. The adoption of a plan by the general government for aiding in the work of road building would be beneficial to the people in every respect. It would furnish employment for idle men and idle money, and the labor so employed would benefit every class without injuring any.

A NEW CONSCIENCE NEEDED.

After all, I find that the consideration of the question of good roads lands me at the same place as the consideration of any phase of the subject of the improvement of social conditions; namely, this: we can only improve our roads by improving our morals. We shall only have better roads as we have a better understanding of social relations and the obligations of patriotism; only as the social conscience is awakened in our people and we come to a knowledge of right relations and break away from the slavery of ancient tradition and live as brothers, love one another in time of peace as well as when we are at war with a foreign nation, shall

we come to have better roads, better government, better social conditions, or anything better. To get better roads or better anything else, we must turn our thoughts from the debasing idea of making money at the expense of our fellows to the nobler idea of making men of them.

Let me illustrate with a quotation from the remarkable address of Mr. Henry D. Lloyd on "The New Conscience," which will give us a picture of what we could do were the idle labor of the world employed:

If the idle labor of the world could be employed, if the idle soldiers of the world could be set to work, and if all the other idlers could be turned from their idleness, we could do anything in the world that we wanted to do. The first year, we could take the women and children out of the shops and factories, and send them home, to stay home. The second year, we could buy up all the monopolies and begin to administer them for the benefit of the people. The third year, we could rebuild the slums in all the cities of the world. The fourth year, we could give every child the beginning of an education, which could go on to college and university. The fifth year, by applying labor adequately to cleanliness and isolation, and proper nursing, we could abolish all the contagious diseases. The sixth year, we could pay all the national debts of the world. And the seventh year! the seventh year, we could do what we are told the Creator of the Universe did after His six days' labor of creation. We could rest, and look upon our work and behold that it was good.

LABOR ORDAINED BY GOD.

The labor question is as old as time. We first hear of it at the very dawn of creation when God said to Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." This declaration of the Almighty defined the most important and indefeasible of all the rights that man is heir to, the first great right, the right to work, the right to help carry on the great but never-ending work of creation. When God spoke to Adam there were no "jobs" available, except such as were found in the natural resources. There were the earth, the air, the sunlight, and the rain; there was no boss "to hire him;" there was no shrewd "business man" on hand to

organize industry and "make work" for Adam on the one hand, and to make profit out of him on the other. Clearly, if he was willing to work, he might work. Moreover, it naturally followed that he might have the whole product of the toil of his hands.

It seems to me that this lesson in the history of primitive man is a very valuable one for us to consider to-day. It is certain that we cannot go on indefinitely with the present social system. It is admitted by all thoughtful people that a social system, based on competition, has failed to provide a plan whereby all who are willing to work may work and may live, and the consequence is that in our country to-day there is an ever-increasing army bearing the "curse of the wandering foot."

THE RIGHT TO WORK IS THE RIGHT TO WORSHIP.

"The secret place of the Most High is in the depth of human need." I am excited to more reverence when I stand in the workshop or factory, watching the work of men's hands, than when I stand in the nave of the grandest cathedral. The right to work! the right to work! — this is the right that must be established and for which we need a new Emancipation Proclamation. The millions of toilers, who are now tramping our streets, highways, and alleys have a right to share in the creative work that is going on about them. They have a right to have a hand in building a country that they are asked and expected and want to love. Men are brothers. That they should live in a state of competition is a denial of brotherhood; that this system of social warfare must be succeeded by co-operation — a system in which men can be brothers — is as certain as that to-morrow's sun will rise. We may hasten its coming by proclaiming, by spreading, the gospel of brotherhood. We cannot retard it, however reactionary may be our purposes.

These are the reflections of a plain man of the world who comes in contact with the people, who knows the people, BELIEVES IN THE PEOPLE, and will never cease to raise his voice in their

behalf. The right to vote, over which we have expended much spread-eagle eloquence, is as small dust in the balance when compared with the right to work. Why shall I vote if I am denied the right to work? There is no reason, unless there shall be a market for votes when the market for labor has ceased. "But they do not want to work," is the apologetic plea often flung back at me, usually by those who are living in comfort on the fruit of other people's toil. I know it is a thoughtless remark. I know that the people who make it are, in the main, good people, and they would like to see some easy way out of our present difficulty. Let me say, however, that my experience put the lie to this statement that "they do not want work." I have been permitted to see thousands of them tried, and not 1 per cent. are unwilling to work under half-way decent conditions. I protest against a continuance of this suicidal policy that this competitive system is waging against the young men of America to-day.

Let me not be misunderstood. In the juster order of society that is coming, the right to work will not involve slavish drudgery for eight or ten hours a day, but the right to participate in creating the world about us and the right to such a conception of art as that of which William Morris gave us a definition when he said that "art is the expression of man's joy in labor." That is the kind of work that all have a right to share in; that is the kind of liberty that we are yet to know through the larger recognition of social obligation that is coming to us, and coming with whirlwind speed in these closing years of the nineteenth century.

NOTE.—The six young men, whose picture appears on page 135, furnish a striking example of the inefficiency, waste and criminality of the present social order with regard to the question of employment for our people. They came into my office one morning last winter, and from their appearance I judged them to be a committee of some labor union, perhaps. They were all fairly well-dressed, bright and intelligent-looking. The facts, however, were these: They had each made application at a local employment agency for work. Their applications had been filed for from two to eleven weeks, and they had

been putting in time every day searching for work. It had been their regular custom to call at this employment agency every morning. In this way, these six young men, who were all strangers to one another, became acquainted. Every morning they found the sign of "Help Wanted" outside the employment agency, but the "manager" always reported that the class of service on demand was something that "none of them could do." They, therefore, were led to believe that the agency was merely a "graft" for working money out of those least able to bear that sort of a tax. The business of the agency is perfectly legal, and, of course, I could offer them no relief. They kindly consented to co-operate with me to the extent of going over to the photograph gallery to have their pictures taken. I might add that along with it I took their history. Every one is American born, every one is a voter. Two of them had been school teachers and all were willing to contribute useful service to society, but society had no place for them. Suppose one of them were your son, your boy, how would you like it?