

dignity of Labor? Is there anything grand or noble in toil? What is there elevating in the wearing of greasy overalls, the griming of the hands or the sweating of the brow? You may even say, Labor is a curse pronounced upon us by God. Man was made for a higher estate. We are the image of God, and it is a condescension on the part of man to labor. It coarsens and misshapes the frame, blunts the sense and destroys the finer sensibilities. Can there, then, be any dignity in Labor?

But, my dear friends, let me ask this question, what is Labor?

Some one has said: "Labor is any painful exertion of mind or body, undergone partly or wholly with a view to future good."

'Tis this which ennobles Labor, the exertions to "future good." The dignity, then, does not lie in the act of labor, but in the laborer and in the results of his toil.

Nothing, great or small, has ever been accomplished by man without a corresponding amount of suffering—yes, even death. 'Tis a common truth that all great and successful undertakings have propitiated success by human sacrifices on the altars of enterprise. "What man puts into his pocket Nature takes from his chest." 'Tis a simple yet fixed law governing man. In the old Norse Sagas Odin sacrificed his eye for wisdom. In Tom Wood's song, 'twas with reddened eyes and tear-streaked cheeks that the shirt was sewed with the Thread of Life. The electric current which flows so silently along the cold and snaky conductors carries with it the current of human life. Those magnificent railways which are the arteries of commerce, and unite ocean to ocean, rest upon other than wooden sleepers, and, oh! how soundly they sleep.

No work was ever accomplished without Purpose. Labor is the result of it, and what so dignifies, elevates and ennobles a man as a true and honest purpose? With purpose strong, Hope rises high and man feels invincible; he is eager, anxious to go on; he becomes mighty, even god-like, as unto his original state.

With a firm purpose in his heart, man has labored until he has raised himself to his present state of civilization. To-day that same purpose causes him to labor patiently from morning till night in order that he may win honors at school, gain fame in the world, or, what is nobler, feed his hungry babies or support an aged father and mother. It is these purposes, these views to future good, which cause man to struggle bravely, but, oh! how painfully, with the world, compelling it to grant him and his an