

insure them the attainment of their ambition of fair wages and constant employment under pleasant conditions.

(This admirable report concludes with the regret that opportunity would not permit of a fuller examination of the subject, and urges the future appointment of a like committee to report upon the question more in detail. The Stereotypers' and Electrotypers' Union have established an excellent precedent for other trade and labor unions to follow. This recognition of the vital nature of the problem does credit to the intelligence of this progressive trade organization, and this dignified report of Mr. Straube shows with how just a discrimination the committee was selected.)



## FALLACIOUS DOCTRINE OF WORK.

JOSEPH DANA MILLER, IN VALLEY MAGAZINE.

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We have heard much of late in glorification of work. It would seem that some persons are very much interested in getting the people to work harder than they do—the same kind of interest that a Southern planter might have had in the work of the slaves of his plantation in the days anterior to '61. This is only one of the doctrines among many that are used to buttress the prevailing system of the distribution of wealth. For it takes for granted that the prizes of the world go to the worker, and that he who works hardest secures most of the prizes.

We have the President of Harvard telling us that men cannot work too hard or too long. But President Elliot in his library telling men that they cannot work too hard in sewer or subway is an amusing figure. Men not only can work too hard and too long, but as a matter of fact, they do. Everywhere our hasting unresting modern life is dwarfing our mental and spiritual activities and squeezing the juices out of existence.

Look at what the practical acceptance of this theory includes. Men should have time for reflection, religion, morals, art, culture. All of these hours must be taken from work. Do the canting priests of work deny this, or do they mean to assert that these things are not good for men?

The use of life is to grow—only work of the kind that aids growth is of any value. Not all work aids growth, but only the kind of work that is allied to creation. Not that man can create; the visible product is the fruit of his brain conception. To watch this growth, to have a proprietary interest in it beyond what is received as necessary maintenance, is the only real delight in work. To ask workmen to take an interest in their work when wages are just sufficient for maintenance is futile. The element of proprietorship is lacking.

"Study the interest of your employer," says the mentor to the young man. Nobody ever studies the interest of other people in matters of actual work on the economic plane, whatever he may do from altruistic motives. In fact, what his mentors mean is, "Study your own interest by studying your employer's interest." What seems a lofty injunction, reduced to terms of exactness is seen to be quite sordid enough, and is, in reality, the lowest suggestion of sycophancy. The phrase could never have become general, save in a social condition of economic dependence. Men work for themselves, not for others. If one works with an employer ("for" an employer, as we say), he works merely as an associate with some one else.

Of course, there is arue doctrine of work that may be applied to nearly every relation of life. Nothing rusts the mind like sheer idleness, and perfect repose is decay and death. So much we may grant.

But this is not the thought of the persistent and stupid advocates of work for work's sake. They conceive of both mind and body as machines, which must be kept in constant motion—they look not upon what is done, the fruit of effort, but upon the effort itself as the admirable thing. This is stretching the theory to its breaking point.

Do they ever stop to reflect that all the best of man's achievements is due to the effort to realize desire with the least exertion? It is the point of least resistance that is responsible for everything that is greatest in modern civilization, especially in industrial civilization, the substitution of steam for sailing vessels, of electricity in place of slower motor powers, of the specialization of industry, of co-operation in all its forms. All this is the effort of mankind of get away from work in its more strenuous features. Human nature works against the theory of work—it seems constantly preparing men for a time when the mind will have supreme leisure for itself to work out unhindered by physical needs its own mighty problems. It is conceivable that work as we know it will, some day, disappear, and the only problems will be those of mind or spirit. Indeed, is not the very highest civilization that we can imagine one in which "the bread and butter problem" will have been finally solved, when the least thought of man will be how to provide himself with food and shelter. Why, indeed, should this problem be the hardest and most pressing? Is it not the very thing that stands in the way of higher achievements?

The mammoth forms of co-operation which we term trusts, in which a thousand forms of unnecessary service are dispensed with, a thousand useless efforts rendered at last unprofitable, are the means by which the sum total of human labor must be finally minimized. Now, to what end is all this if the doctrine of the apostles of work, for work's sake, be justified? Production is not the chief end of existence; growth is that.

Work as work—there is no more useless thing in the universe. The squirrel is the type of mere useless, unceasing activity. So men

"Round and round  
Within a squirrel cage."

keep up this constant movement. But where has the soul fled amid all this bustle? And where the spirit, with its lost delights? What of the deep fountain at which the soul, if it pause not, may not drink? As a people we have lost much of the seriousness, the old depth, the old reserve, because of this passionate intensity of our physical activities.

"Work is prayer"—that depends. Work may be blasphemy. There is a Gospel of work that is Apocrypha; there is a Gospel of work that is alone the true Holy Scripture. Is it not time that we began to preach this Gospel of Leisure?—Joseph Dana Miller, in *Valley Magazine*.



## SIGNS OF PROGRESS.

*From the Columbus (Ohio) Daily Press.*

One reason why the Republicans oppose any Single Tax system is that they have so many ways to bleed the people and do not want to give up any of their grafts.

If you didn't know a thing about it would you rather have a Single Tax or a double or triple tax? What with \$3 tax rate, vehicle tax, plumbers', butchers', bakers', and candlestick makers' taxes, it wouldn't be singular if most people thought them a little too plural.

As a theory, the single tax has never been refuted. Its discussion as a political issue is now confined solely to the Republican party and they may find it a pretty hot proposition before they are through.