

The Working Slave

William G. Clark

IN HIS ESSAY, "Life Without Principle," Henry David Thoreau wrote, "There is no more fatal blunder than he who consumes the greater part of his life getting his living." Maybe some of Thoreau's readers might think his statement to be impracticable. Every man must work to live, and, at least at the present, working requires a great part of his time. Yet it seems to me that too many men have become slaves to their jobs and are living only for their strange "master"—their job. I, therefore, agree with Thoreau, for I look upon work as a "tool" which we use to live. It is a "tool" that we use to satisfy several of our basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. Work is man's "tool," and it is not intended to be a "master" of man!

There is more to living than seeking material gains and prestige. Success gained from working conscientiously does not sufficiently compensate us for the time and effort we spend at our work. Appreciation of that which is about us, love and faith in God and man, and meditation on all we see and feel will add a fullness to life that can not be gained by giving all our strength and interests to our work.

Men may gain national and world fame in their work if they apply themselves devotedly to their occupations. They may point with pride to the results of their efforts and declare that it was their sweat that made their task productive. But what have they gained from life for being slaves to their work? Compare their fame to what they have missed and will never regain! They missed the laughter of their fellow men or they missed the presence of God as the moon was reflected from a wooded stream. They missed many of the blessings of life because their thoughts have been shackled to their jobs.

How can men receive much from life if their thoughts are narrowly focused upon their work? They can not take time to watch a bluebird feed its young or find time to lie on a beach and bask in the sun and listen to the rhythmic pounding of the waves. They must spend their leisure time hastily so that they can hurry back to their jobs. Far too many of them think of meditation as a form of procrastination and regard devotion to one's job as the basic virtue of man.

It would be unwise for anyone to deny the importance of working, as it is certainly necessary. It is also expected that man should have a rational pride in his job. Working, however, is not the

supreme job of man; his most important job is to live fully and unselfishly. Maybe the "working slave" would strive for a more meaningful life if he would take time to examine the rich life of an idler, and realize that an idler does not die with his stomach lined with ulcers!

What is Beauty?

Marthella Louise Davis

THE WEARY LABORER, trudging homeward from a day of toil to find his own small cottage, his waiting wife, his happy children, and a warm fire, knows in his heart what beauty is.

The bitter, disillusioned cynic, chancing on the faith of a small child, finds once more that beauty does exist.

Young lovers, discovering for themselves the wonders and mysteries of first love, will swear that they know what beauty is.

The child, gazing into the face of his mother and finding love and tenderness there, instinctively feels beauty.

The visitor to a great cathedral stands awed and silent in the presence of beauty.

The sailor feels beauty at the sight of a graceful ship, at the smell of the sea, at the sound of the rolling waves.

The farmer sees beauty in the well-ordered fields and crops that comprise his existence.

A. E. Housman found beauty in a bough of cherry blossoms. Robert Frost found it in a snowy woods on a winter's evening. Beethoven found beauty in moonlight; Debussy discovered it in the sea; Michelangelo saw beauty in the life of Christ.

What, then, is beauty? From these experiences we can know that beauty is that which gives pleasure to the senses; exalts the mind or spirit; and that which displays physical, moral, or spiritual loveliness.

What a prosaic definition that is! How can such a quality be defined in these dull, common words? For my part I will use for a definition of beauty, the lines by the philosopher, Kahlil Gibran, "Beauty is life when life unveils her holy face. It is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror."