MAN AN IDEAL WORKER.

Our scientists have been a little puzzled to coin a definition of man that would discriminate him thoroughly from all other animals. He has been called the tool-handling animal, the only animal that wears clothes, and knows how to cook its food. The ideal worker is a definition that seems to far more aptly discriminate him. The power to create archetypal thoughts, plans and schemes in the mind, and then deliberately seek to realize them in some form, shape or act, is the most distinguishing characteristic of man. The beaver may show great skill in felling trees across a stream to make a dam; the bird may exhibit a very delicate taste in the neat way it weaves sprigs of moss, feathers and leaves into a cozy little nest; the bee is certainly quite a geometer in the way it economizes space in shaping the cells of a honeycomb—but all these little, busy, vivacious workers are conscious of no creative skill. They are animated in their toil by no ideal plan or system of architecture they would seek to realize. They seem to be driven to their work by a vital force as unerring and as irresistible as that which shapes a leaf or paints a clover blossom. But man takes the raw material—wood from the forest, stones from the quarry, ores from the mine—and builds them into forms of beauty and utility according to a plan or idea of his own devising.

Let us illustrate some modes of ideal working. What is science? Merely star-gazing, collecting fossil bones and bits of petrified wood, pinning bugs and beetles on a card, picking a flower to pieces and giving to each part a hard name. Why all this is only the crude material out of which science is made. True science is an effort to group all the facts and phenomena of nature in the unity of some one great law or controlling principle. Thus astronomy, for instance, now the most sublime and accurate of all sciences, was once a huge heap of apparent contradictions and absurdities. The planets seemed looped and tangled like a lot of gawky boys and girls in a wild country dance, until Newton caught sight of the primal law of the universe, and then all these jarring discords fell into tuneful order. This is the ideal science ever seeks to realize. The scientist, whether studying stars or polliwogs, is an ideal worker.

And what is art but an effort to embody the ideal? A thought dawns upon the mind of a gifted artist. It comes at first, perhaps, like a ray of pale, unsteady light, gleaming and shimmering across the troubled waters of his imagination. It is a beautiful thought, but how coy it seems. It flies timidly before the ardent pursuer, and when he gives up the chase comes singing gayly back, teasing him with its provoking charms. He cannot rest, he cannot sleep; he is smitten with its beauty, and says in the language of the old painter: "My Lord, i, is in me, and must go forth of me." He throws off his coat and goes to work, chipping and hewing at a block of marble for many a weary hour, or standing by his easel, pencil in hand and his eyes fixed upon the lovely conception, and lo! the Greek Slave emerges from that stony sepulcher, or the Transfiguration blossoms on the canvas. Thus are all the great works of genius born.

And when we descend into the region of the useful and practical arts we are still in the presence of ideal working. We never grow tired assembling at agricultural fairs or in the halls of the exposition and boasting of the wonderful things we have achieved. But what power is it that has hung a light-house for our commerce among the stars; taught sturdy old gravitation patiently to shoulder our bridges and prop up the walls of our houses; that has plucked from the lightning its fiery sting, and set it to running on our errands; and has compelled the giant energies of steam to puff and blow, pull and tug at large and small factory wheels?

It is inventive thought that has organized the forces of nature into these new and useful combinations. The steamship wheeled its way through the deeps of the mind before it slid down into the sea, and in the noiseless looms of the imagination first whirred the factory spindles. In short, all our wonderful and useful inventions are merely ideas in harness, thoughts under saddle. All men are more or less inspired to action by ideals, or the hope of realizing some desire or purpose seen in the silent sky of calculating forethought.

The most careless and thoughtless, even, do not travel all day aimlessly, and then try and find out in the evening where they are going. Look at the motley crowd you see surging all day long up and down these stony aisles of trade. How diverse their mental and social condition! Yet there is not one in that busy throng, from the Pharisee to the Publican, from the scavenger on his offal cart to the great banker on 'change, from the miserable-looking woman in faded and tattered garments picking rags out of the mud to the fashionable lady dashing by in her stylish turnout—not one but what is animated by some secret hope or luring desire, that gives to life all the zest and meaning it possesses, and without which the hours would drift by as drearily as the dead, yellow leaves of autumn. The only thought uppermost in the minds of many may be: What shall I eat, drink or wear; how scare the wolf from the door and drive winter from the fireplace; or how to make a fortune, and glitter and dazzle in a drawing-room for an hour. But whatever it may be, it is something that causes them to think more of the morrow than the present, and in which hope builds its nest, though it be on the ground or in the sky. And in this ideal working we find the glory and dignity of man.

BORRROWING TROUBLE.

"I believe in workin' and earnin' your honest bread, etc., and so forth; but still I believe in makin' things agreeable and pleasant, very. We Americans as a nation are a dretful anxious-lookin', hard-workin', long-faced, ambitious, go-ahead race, and we tackle a holiday as if it was a hard day's work we had got to git through with jest as quick as we could; and we face enjoyments with considerable the same countenance we do funerals.

"And truly, if anybody is goin' to set up in the worry business, nights is the best time for it in the hull 24 hours. Middlin'-sized troubles swell so in the dark; tribulations that haunt much by daylight, at midnight will look bigger'n a barn. I declare for't I've had bunnets before now that didn't suit me—was trimmed up too gay or come over my face too much, or sunthin', and when I'd wake up in the night and think on 'em they'd look as big to me as a bushel basket, and humblier; and I'd lay and groan to think of ever wearin' 'em to meetin'. But at daylight they would kinder dwindle down again to their natural shape. And Josiah Allen! I spose I have buried that man as many times as he has got hairs on his head (he is pretty bald), when he'd have a cold or anything, I'd wake up in the latter part of the night, when it was as dark as Egyptian darkness, and I'd get to thinkin' and worryin', and before I knew it there Josiah would be all laid out, and the procession meanderin' off toward Jonesville buryin' ground, and I a follerin' him a weepin' widow—and I've gone so far as to see myself lay dead by the side of him, killed by the feelin' I had for that man, and there we'd lay, with one stone over us a readin':

'Here lays Josiah and Samantha;
Their warfare is accomplished.'

But jest as soon as the sun would rise up and build up his fire in the east and Josiah would rise up and build his fire in the stove, why the ghosts of fear and anxieties that haunted me would, in the language of the poem Thomas J. was readin' the other day: 'Fold up their tents like an Arab man, and silent go to stealin' some where else.'"—*Marietta Holly, in Samantha at the Centennial.*

OUR NEW MINISTER'S WIFE'S BONNET.

Well, Sophronia Ann, I'm glad you've come. A great many things have happened since you were here in house-cleanin' time. You know then I hadn't been near the Methodist church for nigh onto a month; and all Clarence Center was a laughing and making fun of our new minister's wife. How dreadful they did talk about that blue velvet bonnet of hern! At last the women in the church couldn't stand it no longer; so they went to Miss Brown, an' they told her that people thought she were a-injurin' and a-keepin' back the Lord's work by a-wearin' such a wicked, worldly bonnet. And then says Miss Brown: "Ladies, I should like a new bonnet very much. The blue velvet was my weddin' hat, nearly two years ago. Since then my husband has been too poorly paid, he has not been able to buy me anything new. So I have been obliged to wear this hat, summer and winter." Now Sister Pipkin, she had an old black silk apron, jest as good as new. And she said if the others would take hold and help, she would have a sewing bee, and make up Miss Brown a decent bonnet. I didn't care nothin' 'bout the bonnet, but seein' Miss Pipkin was a-goin' to the pains of a-gettin' up a supper, I thought I would go and help 'em. Well, if I do say it, we made one of the purtiest bonnets you ever lay eyes on. There was none of them highfalutin' things about the bonnet. And we sent it to her that very night. Now in meetin' next Sunday mornin' they all looked at Miss Brown's seat, to see how the new bonnet looked on her head, but she wasn't there. After the prayer was over, who should they see but Miss Brown a-comin' up the aisle, a-holdin' her head higher than a kite. And do you suppose she had on our new bonnet? No indeed! But she did have on one of them new black felt hats, that come down over a person's eyes, and are all covered over with black hen feathers. It looked a great sight wuss than her old one. And the meanest of all was, next mornin' when old Byer the wash-woman, came to do Miss Pipkin's washin', she had on that very same black silk bonnet, that we had took sich pains to make for Miss Brown.—*Woman's Journal.*

STRIKE THE KNOT.—"Strike the knot!" said a man one day to his son, who, tired and weary, was leaning on his ax over a log, which he had in vain been trying to cleave. Then looking at the log, the gentleman saw how the boy had hacked and chipped all round the knot without hitting it. Taking the ax, he struck a few sharp blows on the knot and split the log without difficulty. Smiling, he returned the ax to his son, saying: "Always strike the knot!" That was good advice. It is good for you, my children, as it was for the boy to whom it was first given. It is a capital maxim to follow when you are in trouble. Have you a hard sum to do at school? Have you got to face a difficulty? Are you leaving home to live among strangers? Strike the knot! Look your trouble in the eye, as the bold lion hunter looks in the face of the lion. Never shrink from a painful duty, but step right up to it and do it. Yes, strike the knot! Strike the knot, boys and girls, and you will always conquer your difficulties.

HOME-MADE UNDERCLOTHES.—A correspondent of the *Rural New Yorker* says: I have just repaired some flannels, and for wristbands took the tops of a pair of old socks, stretched them on the press-board, which tapers, drew the sleeve over it till the turned-in edge just overlapped the raveled edge of the sock-rib; I felled the sleeve to it, nicely drew it off, turned it and sewed down the sock edge. This makes an elastic band which yields to the motions of the body. It would be better, of course, to have knit flannels entire, but they are very expensive. Good flannel one yard wide may be bought for 50 cents per yard, and 10 yards will make two sets (if economically cut) of shirts and drawers. Shrink the flannel, cut to fit closely, and finish the *wrist* and *ankles* with a knit rib, put on as directed above. They will last three winters.