



You'd be surprised—

Habits grow with us, and as we grow strong our habits develop in proportion. The habit of working for a living is no different from other habits; stealing, for instance, (like employers) or 'junking', a la hobo, etc. Any of these habits are hard to break once you "fall into their culture." All habits (and drinking isn't a habit) are hard to break. But my subject is work:

I know men that are habitual workers. As regularly as a clock they can be found at the point of exploitation—as regularly as the superstitious ones tie themselves to church, on Sabbath morning, (to insure themselves against death, disease and destruction), they can be found at the places where men labor to support society; politely referred to as the point of production (which doesn't explain the half of it). "Production" doesn't explain what happens there, and is only a 1-10 truth, at best.

Perhaps many of you have been at these points of production, one form or another, if not actually at a freight house (which comes under head of work) and many there maybe who are not fully posted as to the aims and purposes of the 'man-hauled wagon.' Therefore, we will throw the weight of our observations on the scale of common knowledge: early in the game it was discovered that a freight handler found some difficulty in carrying 120 pounds of freight on his shoulders. And, generally, after such trips, with heavy leads, he would "meow" and agitate in favor of having some kind of a vehicle, that would carry the weight—but

no; his complaints fell upon deaf ears and his industry was viewed through ignorant eyes . . . until one day, exasperated, he dropped a piece of lead, rolled it upon a shovel and dragged the shovel behind him—he had demonstrated his idea, others took it up and eventually the truck was invented—(the shovel was the father of the "blade" (on truck) that is pushed under heavy "pieces," a shovel on wheels.

Well, at first, 120 pounds was put on the truck and the freight handler stepped out to the tune, "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

But the bosses saw "the invention was good," and suggested that a few small pieces be loaded with the 120 pounds—(just to pay for the invention) it was done.

The trucker made twice as many trips and the bosses were hugging themselves for their astuteness. And it was admitted by "all" that the "truck" helped to make the freight handlers life more bearable.

Next year "two" 120-pound pieces were put on the truck and a few light pieces; to pay for the invention, of course.

The third year "four" 120-pound pieces were put on the truck and a few extra pieces to pay for the invention. . . . And only yesterday, we tried to load 2,600 pounds on a truck. She must be paid for; at least, the company doesn't "care a hoot" if it breaks down. Alas, and to think the thing was invented for the purpose of making it easier to handle 120 pounds!

Another invention is in order!—Guess we'll have to toss a harness onto the God of Israel?

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Perhaps, too, you have stood and watched the freight handler—grim visaged, unsmiling—as he perambulates *his truck* from one end of the platform to the other; perhaps you have seen him viciously demanding *right of way* from his fellow worker; perhaps you have heard him growl like a lion in a cage as he paces back and forth; perhaps you have seen him with his face twisted under his ear with the violence of his exertions and you may have wondered what is going on in his mind. His mind, for he has one, is active and alert far more so than

the mind of an average lawyer. But what is going on in that mind?

One would presume from the sober expression that he is thinking of quitting; the wistful look in his eyes might mean that he is speculating as to whether tomorrow's breakfast will consist of Arkansaw Chicken or just plain "dogs" but, and I'm afraid, we would be wrong. The chances are he is tracing back whether he "put that last load" in "409" or "309"—and, if watched for a trip or two, it will be found that he will make a special "call" in 409 to verify the location of that load.

His work is rapidly becoming a habit—a habit to the exclusion of much good thought—and it can safely be said that thoughts of release from his burdensome vocation are far indeed from his mind. Otherwise he would organize to regulate the size of his load instead of bragging (of an evening) how much he can "Juggle." Juggle, indeed! No longer is there reason or rhyme in the way wage slaves are loaded down. . .

—To this "platform" comes the voice of George Bernard Shaw, anent Churchill's failure to understand how "less work, shorter hours and longer vacations" would leave more to distribute among the workers. Says Shaw: "No doubt he does not understand the apparent miracle, *but it happens.*"

"The history of organized labor for the last hundred years has been one of higher wages, shorter hours, less work, longer holidays and greatly increased product." He continues: "But that proves only that our capitalists, when they were given *carte blanche* to exploit the working class(es) ruthlessly could not do even that job properly and had to be forced by our (British) factory legislation to stop killing the goose that laid the golden eggs and using up nine generations of men in one generation." He concludes: "It is clear that the formula will not work beyond a certain point."

The mere assertion of manhood will surprisingly increase the manhood by the time it again becomes advisable to assert it. You'd be surprised.