

before he was changed, but ocular demonstration this day has assured many of us that the murderer's taste has not yet driven that popular delicacy from the tables of the fashionable and refined.—Phineas T. Barnum sometimes makes temperance speeches, but, thank God, his leprous touch of that almost holy cause has not abated the zeal of our noblest men in the great and good work. Negro girls have been the nurses of white children in Virginia since time immemorial, but slave nursing has not made and never will make it degrading for a mother to fuddle and nurse her infant child. A thousand other instances might be mentioned, but these suffice to show that the vilest wretch that crawls upon the earth, cannot make it degrading for an honest man to do what his duty demands, by having done the same thing before him from any motive whatever.

Slaves do here what white men, called free, do elsewhere. If it is the color of the hand which degrades the labor, then why is honest labor in as low repute at the north as at the south—nay lower, if we may judge from the shifts made to avoid it, as witness wooden nutmegs and deal hams? Will it be said that the slave has made work degrading, because he does it in obedience to the command of a master? Then I say that the white slave obeys a master too, and oft-times far harder master than the black one. The northern hireling obeys a master who doles out to him the merest pittance of the fruits of his daily toil, and gives him no love nor sympathy along with it. But obedience is not degrading. It is the first law of parental discipline, social order, religious faith, and everything excellent in heaven and on earth. Obedience to rightful authority, so far from being degrading, is honorable and ennobling in all the highest positions of life. When an American officer in the revolution was commanded to storm Stoney Point, did he degrade himself by obedience? Far from it. He did as he was ordered, and won immortal glory. The highest functionaries of the land find honor in obedience. The slave is not degraded by obeying his master; he is more of a gentleman, and ought to have more honor and respect for every act of faithful obedience, than the white citizens of Boston, who disregard the laws of the land, and by daily acts of disobedience violate the rights of others, and trample honesty, good faith, duty and justice under their feet. No matter what the work may be, it cannot be degrading for any man to do it, when duty commands, and this whether it is usual to be done by freemen or bondsmen. If any kind of work is degrading,

I would take *shoe blacking* to be so. But a high dignitary in one of the Virginia churches told me some years ago, that he once chanced to visit the bishop of a northern State, a man of learning, wisdom and exalted piety, who kept no man servant. The gentleman tarried all night, and when he looked out from his window in the morning he beheld the venerable bishop seated on the steps below blacking his own and his guest's shoes.—Since holy bishops have blacked boots and Epaminondas swept the streets, I think the degradation of any kind of work by slave labor may be set down as an antique *myth* of northern *ism*.

Mischievous as have been the effects of the pernicious notion that slavery degrades labor, I think that even worse evil has come from the farmer of Virginia mistaking what his true work is. It is not the doing of any kind of work indifferently, that declares a man's "dignity and wins the regards of heaven on all his ways:" But it is doing his "appointed work." A man may degrade himself almost as much by doing a wrong work, as by doing none. Now the work of the farmer of Virginia is an intellectual, not a bodily work; and, it is because intellectual labor is much more difficult and repugnant to us than bodily, that we have chosen to mistake our true work, and toil with our hands more than with our heads.

It is true that in some regions of Virginia, as is generally the case at the north, the husbandman must be, to a considerable extent, his own laborer. In all such cases bodily work is the "farmer's appointed work," and he finds honor as well as profit in doing it faithfully. But in most parts of this State the farms are large, and the slaves numerous, and on them the master's work is to *know* rather than to *do*—to order, direct, control, plan and supervise all the complicated operations of the farm, with superior wisdom and knowledge, and not to labor with the hoe and plow. This is a work of the mind, requiring much study, deep thought and profound science. It is a hard and responsible work, and even wise men shrink from responsibility; hence comes it that the high intellectual calling of the Southern farmer is much too often relinquished for the easier and less responsible work of the body.

Unfortunately for agriculture progress our youth commence farming generally with very imperfect training for the business, and with very vague notions of what a farmer's occupation in Virginia ought to be, which almost compels them to get their *head work* done second hand by neighbors and overseers as ignorant and less interested than