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LEISURE AND ITS USE: A QUOTATION

"Work and leisure are two interdependent parts of one and the same thing, which is an interesting and a useful life."

ONE of the most obvious objects of education and of life itself is to learn how to live. That means two things: first, that one must make life physically possible by such compensated effort as will provide the necessities of physical existence and comfort for himself and those dependent on him; and second, that one will seek to find and to make opportunity to use his human capabilities and abilities in larger and non-material ways and fashions, both for his own individual satisfaction and for the good of his kind.

The first of these we call work, and the second we call leisure. There is a vast difference between leisure and unemployment. Unemployment means an absence of work, and that destroys the basis for real leisure. Unemployment merely fills the hours of the day with worry and anxiety. So long as work is not available, leisure is impossible, since leisure is the outgrowth and accompaniment of successful work.

An immense proportion of the population of the modern world has known very little of leisure and still less of enjoyable and interesting leisure. Work, the first of the two aspects of life, has occupied most or all of their waking hours, and such little time as they might have given to leisure has really been spent in recovering from fatigue. We have now come to a point where the interest of the intelligent mass of mankind is focused on so raising the general standard of

living that, first, work will be systematically provided and properly remunerated, and second, that leisure will be offered, together with indication and guidance as to how that leisure may best be used.

One of the physical characteristics of leisure is that it involves the rest and relaxation of the nervous system. The strain on the nerves of a brain worker of any kind is very serious and very severe during the hours of occupation, whether these be long or short. True relaxation, therefore, should in such cases involve opportunity to take part in outdoor life, in physical exercise, or in games. It may take the form of light occupation of some non-serious sort, such as working in a garden with flowers, trees, or vegetables. It may often involve the reading of books, hearing good music, or visiting noteworthy collections of art, thereby expanding the field of intellectual interest and activity. What has now become exceedingly important is that the hand worker should not only be offered leisure but should be guided toward its interesting and helpful use. This means outdoor interests, sports, and occupations of various kinds. Moreover, we need to place increased emphasis upon the intellectual guidance of our whole adult population. Adult education does not mean going to school or even following any rigorous program of instruction. What it does mean is guidance and suggestion from competent sources as to one's systematic reading, as to one's standards of appreciation and judgment in art, in science, and in either work or leisure. The exercise of this guidance must be very carefully done and must always avoid prescription or control. It would be foolish in high degree to offer a list of books to a man who has been toiling for six or seven hours in a mine. His

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natural desire would be for the open air, and it would be there that he would naturally wish to look for his relaxation. One great trouble heretofore has been the comparatively few hours that physical workers have had for relaxation. The time has now come, however, when with shorter hours of labor, leisure and its relaxations are fortunately to take a much larger place in the life of the hand-worker than they have ever done before.

Properly used, leisure will increase the capacity for useful and productive work. This is really the basis of the new argument for shorter hours of labor. That argument is not that shorter hours of labor will result in less work being done, but that it will result in more work being done or in the same work being better done. Of course, this means that there should be no artificial limit put to a worker's power of production. He should lay as many bricks in a day as he comfortably can without regard to the capacity of other workers engaged in the same occupation. In this way the advantage of those things with which he occupies his leisure will manifest itself in his capacity for work. We have a very long way to go in dealing with this question, because there are parts of our own country and of other countries in which the standard of living is far below what it should be. This standard cannot be raised all at once, but nevertheless it should be our object to raise it by all means in our power, and as rapidly as possible. One great obstacle to the freer movement of international trade, which freer movement would be of so great benefit to the people of the United States and to many other peoples as well, is that the condition of workers in some lands is still so very low as to make it quite incommensurable with the condition which we have in mind for our own workers of today and tomorrow. This is an international problem of large importance and it will not down.

Different nations are already approaching

the problem of leisure and its use in definite fashion. The new government of Italy has developed an extraordinarily brilliant program for the interesting and enjoyable use of leisure on the part of both children and adults. The German people have long had their own way of solving this problem and have made large use of physical exercise, of music, and of open-air life. The British, like ourselves, are dealing with this question just now in serious and practical fashion and along very much the same lines that are projected and advocated in the United States.

The fundamental fact to be grasped is that work and leisure are two interdependent parts of one and the same thing, which is an interesting and a useful life. He who does not work loses one of the greatest of life's enjoyments, and he who has no adequate leisure and no knowledge of how to use that leisure is deprived of life's greatest satisfaction.

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

IF IT CAN GET THEM!

A university cannot make silk purses out of a sow's ear, but it is my settled conviction that every mind is better for that tuition and discipline if it can get them. For example, to be rash and name names, I think that Mr. Bernard Shaw is the greatest dramatist of his age, and one of the wittiest minds in Europe. But I also think that four years at a university would have saved him, say, the ten years, distributed over his long and intrepid life, during which he has been engaged in telling it to the marines.—JOHN DRINKWATER, in *Discovery*, his new autobiography.

When life is more terrible than death, it is then the truest valour to dare to live.

Sir Thomas Brown

Truth is the hiest thing that a man may kepe.—*Chaucer*.