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Work While it is Day

Freedom Press, Anonymous

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"WORK WHILE IT IS DAY; THE NIGHT COMETH WHEN
NO MAN CAN WORK."

The time was Spring and the man's heart was glad within him at the thought of his garden and of the flowers which he would plant there and the seeds be would sown. And he rose in the morning and the sun laughed through the fleecy clouds and soft showers that kissed the breast of the fruitful earth.

In the orchard among the blossomed fruit trees the birds were making love. The whole world laughed to sea itself so beautiful.

A morning of sunlight and soft airs and hope and promise.

Who could work on such a morning?

So the man said: "I will walk with my beloved between the green hedges and gather the primroses and violets, and I can think and talk about where the roses and lilies shall grow in my garden and plant them later on." And he walked with his beloved along the happy woodland ways; but ere noon she said to him:

"Dear one-our gardens-we must sow the seed or there will be no flowers."

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But he said: "I do not want to work now. I want you-only you. It is early. I can work later."

"But I must work now," she answered. "How dare I delay for a single hour the summer in my garden?"

"But we may never see the summer," he murmured, for his heart was languid and full of love; "and to-day is ours, and thou and I are mine and thine."

"Nay," she answered, "but others will walk in our gardens and be glad of Bummer and pluck the flowers we sowed; and to-day indeed is ours, but whose are we I Not only mine and thine, dear heart."

But he would not hearken and so presently she left him and passed through her own garden where she sowed the seeds that flower in Love and Brotherhood and Freedom.

When she was gone his heart was sad; but now he said "I will drink the peace and rest of this noontide and later I will toil."

But later he found himself too sleepy and stupid to work. And the shining showery day passed by, and evening came and the birds sang louder as the sun sank: lower-the sky grew heavy and dark. Only a red streak of light shone in the west over the line of shivering gray poplar trees.

Then he sprang up with a cry,

"It is night", he cried, "If night, and my work not done!" And the deepening dusk and the silence echoed durably "Night!"

"But what matter," he tried to think, composing himself to sleep.

"To-morrow I can put things right."

But from the dim orchard where the blossoms still glimmered palely in the dying light, he heard a voice, and it was as the voice of his beloved

"Oh, Love, my Love, is all thy work undone? And what if there be no to-morrow?"

And he reached out his arms to her; but the dividing darkness fell between them-the night came wherein no man can work. And for him there was no morrow.

E. NESBIT.