

The Motto of the Deaf

What is our motto? Is it pleasure or pastime?
Is it Happy-go-lucky, or the thoughtless plea
Of the loafer, the thief, the tramp, "A good living
This vast, rich, old universe owes unto me!
That we're lazy, and selfish, in (...) that we truly
Are doubled-eyed scamps, is no matter at all.---
The world owes us a living, and must pay in good measure
Or feel the dire force of our spleen and our gall!"

No, on! A million times no. We take proudly
Our place with the honorable bread winning-throngs,
We have talents and skill; though never sweetly nor loudly
Can we help when the hearing folk sign their glad songs,
Our motto's -forever are courage, endurance,
Fortitude, patience, and their gritty twin
Perseverance, the kind that keeps busily trying
Till the goal long desired, we successfully win.

Shoulder to shoulder with workers more favored,
Or perhaps a step slower: we move with the rest
Of bread-winners, home makers, onward to triumph
The triumph of those who do their true best.
Claiming no special favors; just fair play, civil treatment,
In short, a square deal, whatever our trade,---
Profession, or business, occupation, or calling.
By which means to live on are honestly made.

Advancing, expanding, improving, ascending,
Better yet better, grade after grade,
Till excellence is stamped on our products, our banners,
And we, on competition, look undismayed,
This is our motto: these are our tenets:
These the rule and the square by which we essay
To rank with the toilers who always are willing.
For success, the fair price, of full effort to pay.

---Angeline Fuller-Fischer
from (1908) *Silent Worker*, 21 (2), 1.