

Celebrating Toilet Cleaners

For my entire school-age existence (even through college), my mother cleaned houses. She worked incredibly hard and built an impressive little business. While I wasn't a big fan of telling people my mom cleaned houses, I was still very proud of how hard she worked and that she always provided for us.

Whenever it came to work or spending money, "scrubbing other people's toilets" was often a phrase thrown into the conversation. But my mom always held her head high. She refused to take welfare as a single mom and made it known that she stood on her own. Despite scrubbing other people's toilets for a living, my mother found honor in providing for her little family.

It's something our society seems to have forgotten. We worship celebrities and some prestigious white-collar jobs. But what about everyone else? What about the people who work hard, get dirty, and put food on the table? Should they be honored? Absolutely.

I was reminded of that point in Ralph Moody's book *Mary Emma & Co.*, which follows a widower trying to make a living and raise her children on her own. After working in a laundry house to learn the trade, she decides to set off on her own. Some of the local, wealthy church ladies decide to help her by giving her some initial business. The mother's oldest daughter sees this as charity, whereas the mother gives her a good talking to about honor in work. Here it is:



The portion finishes on the next page with the following:

"... Mother told her. 'If we give people one penny's worth less for their dollar than they could get elsewhere, then we will be accepting charity. But if we turn out every single piece as

though it were to be exhibited, and charge prices commensurate to the quality of our work, then there will be no woman in our church or elsewhere whom we cannot meet on an equal footing. Don't feel badly about your outburst, Gracie. It has cleared my thinking as nothing else could have done, and through it we have been able to chart the course that we will follow.'"