

## VILLAGE COMMUNITIES OF THE FACTORY MACHINE WORKS, AND MINE.

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The years just past have been characterized above all by mechanical progress and, as its corollary, by centralization of industry. The factory system has drawn the working community toward foci, with ever increasing intensity. Economy of production—the great all controlling influence in the modern material world—requires the concentration of power in huge units, and about these cluster ever growing and ever denser swarms of machine tenders—workers of every grade. The movement goes on with almost unthinkable rapidity, but pace by pace with it move the conditions of labor, of life for the laborer, and of relations between workman and employer. Mechanical production—to use the accepted phrase—is working a revolution in economic affairs, in the distribution of industry, in the balances of trade, and in national politics and precedence. It is also working a revolution in social conditions and relations.

It is no wonder that many earnest minds shrink from the realization of this ceaseless onrush, and wish that it might be stayed. And yet it is not mere optimism to hold that the outcome is for good, and continually for the better. Viewed in the large, the last century has done more to free the body and the mind of labor—to reduce physical toil, increase its reward, enlarge opportunities, and open the way to a larger sharing in the higher things of life—than all the centuries which went before. The future may be most safely judged from the past. What the introduction of machinery began, the enlargement of its use will continue.

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It needs time for so large an adjustment, and the period of adaptation to new conditions is a trying one. As, in the factory management, system and organization must take the place of proprietary oversight and direction, so between employer and employee a new basis of relation must be established. The close personal contact between proprietor and workman, which belonged to the domestic and semi-domestic era of manufacturing, must give way to something else—some counterpart suited to the new order. But that it should give way and nothing take its place, would be as fatal as that management should lapse into chaos, because the owner could no longer personally direct every detail of a mammoth plant. The complex human element in a great manufacturing works needs the more intelligent provision, in even greater degree, than its complex motive power and machinery need more skillful care than the little water wheel of the first factory. But modern civilization—at least in the enlightened industrial countries—rejects the paternalism of early days, even if modern conditions do not make it impracticable. Not the least characteristic result of the age of machinery has been the development of individuality in the worker. Enlightened self interest demands that the employer shall consider the welfare and comfort of his men, but reason, justice, and sympathetic comprehension must be the elements of the relations—not patronage on the one side, nor unmanly dependency on the other.

It must be admitted that the perception of the employer's interest in the well being of employee has been rather lately regained after a period of indifference to, or perhaps active rejection of, the idea that there should be—must be—such an interest. The cycle is swinging round again to a phase somewhat modified, possibly not always enough modified, from that displayed in the old days of proprietor and apprentice, when the physical and moral charge of the laborer was assumed by his master. Perhaps a prototype still closer, because on a scale more nearly equal, might be found in the great iron works of the early half of the nineteenth century. In the black country of England, and in the Ohio valley in the United States up to the time of the civil war, these great establish-

ments were the largest existing aggregations of manual workers and heavy machinery. The very conditions of their being marked them out for isolation and necessary self dependence. The mine and the furnace created the community. The owner of the plant was very generally, from the nature of the enterprise, owner of most of the adjoining land. He alone had sufficient facilities for securing the distributing and needful provisions and supplies. He was employer, landlord, health officer, lawmaker, magistrate, merchant. The workman, while separated from his employer by a wider gulf than now, was more dependent upon him. The system was almost patriarchal—quite feudal. The ironmaster was a petty lord and a political power of no small importance; for while internal conflict was by no means lacking, especially when the feudal baron had not the wisdom to be beneficent, the community was one in its interest in outside affairs. The often remote situation and peculiar surrounding conditions of the mine, together with the semi-military discipline which must characterize its conduct, favor the persistence of many of these conditions to the present day. With the growth in importance of factory plants, and their necessary location in outlying situations where they may have room to grow and space enough for their dependencies, there is a marked and rising tendency toward the establishment of somewhat similar relations, modernized and improved, between the factory management and factory operatives. Wisely directed, it has vast possibilities for bettering the surroundings of the working classes and creating a strong, practical, concrete political influence for sound economic legislation and the promotion of national welfare.

There is no danger of the pendulum swinging back too far. Twentieth century social ideas are sufficient to hold the balance. The conceptions of constitutional and individual liberty are too firmly planted and broadly branched to allow paternalism to grow under their shadow. But it would be unfortunate to see efforts, well conceived and meritorious in the main, meet a check which would reflect on other budding enterprises, simply because they did not sufficiently recognize the boundary between healthy fostering care and encourage-

ment and an unwise even though benevolent bossism, or an intolerable attempt to control the man because he is a workman. Probably no more carefully devised or thoroughly worked out plans for a factory community were ever put into effect than those which took shape in the town of Pullman. Possibly the model was excellent. But individual lives cannot be stamped into uniform pattern nor made interchangeable, and the Pullman experiment, instead of preventing trouble, aggravated one of the worst strikes known in the history of America's labor wars. The way to a sound and healthy life in the factory community lies well between the two extremes of apathy and indifference of the management on the one side, and an over interest, coupled with chafing restrictions, on the other. But that the happy mean can be found, and when found will promote mutual satisfaction and prosperity, is amply shown by a rapidly increasing number of examples in the manufacturing world.

The most obvious step in protecting a factory community through the critical times which come with increased pressure of intensity on its life, is one whose simplicity puts it within range of every establishment, large or small. It is confined in its exercise within the factory, and is simple attention to those matters of hygiene and comfort which the workman can not provide for himself, but which are essential to physical well being (and hence to high efficiency) and to the promotion of good personal habits and self respect. Such matters are proper ventilation and heating, proper facilities for washing, provision for changing clothes, and decent sanitary arrangements. Coupled with these is the provision for bath time during working hours without loss of wages—a tacit recognition that conditions of employment which bring dirt and discomfort should provide also for its removal. Next come provisions for providing meals, or supplementing those which the workmen bring with the nourishing or appetizing things which can not be carried, or which the situation of the works or the shortness of the meal time make it difficult and unduly expensive to procure. Something can be done in this way, also, toward directing the employees' attention to more nutritious and wholesome dishes than they have been accustomed to provide

for themselves. Beyond this again are the opportunities for mental improvement through the establishment of clubrooms, assembly rooms, lectures, libraries, and other means of education in the subjects most helpful in the men's work. All of these are well recognized and largely practiced.

But it is outside of the factory walls that the workman spends most of his life, and here the interest of the employer more rarely follows. This is an oversight all the more grave because, with the growth in size of individual plants and the increase in the number of works employing thousands of employees, the distinctly factory community is becoming a larger element in economic and political influence. If, by patient exercise of a due and consistent regard for the workman's welfare, the employer establishes a feeling of mutual regard and sympathy, much of the misunderstanding between capital and labor will be effaced and no demagogue will dare—or should he dare, will succeed—in playing upon the suspicions of one side to enable him to fleece or force the other. United, they will be an irresistible power for wise and stable economic legislation.

It is, therefore, to repeat, by a grave oversight that the manufacturer has not oftener considered the employee's interest parallel with his own in building up his works. Within city limits, this is perhaps hardly possible; but there general conditions govern the cost of living and the employer can scarcely, without meddling, enter into his employees' arrangements in that regard. But it is growing more and more common for large works to move, or to be established, in rural and semi-rural districts, where land and taxes are low and there is room to spread as the growth of business may demand. Under these conditions it has been altogether too common—at least in the United States—for the proprietor to make the best arrangements he could for himself and leave his workpeople to get what they could after his bargain was tightly closed. It is not at all uncommon for a factory site to be given to the owners of the business, free of any charge and often free of taxes for a period of years, in consideration of their locating in a certain place. The neighborhood gains from the increased population and the increased chance of

employment for its own people; but the employees practically pay the bill for the site, for all ground nearby is advanced greatly in value, houses are built in certainty that they will be absolutely needed by the incoming army of workers, and local landlords and lodging house keepers put up their prices to the limit. I have known personally of men who made their living by dealing in factory sites—buying up or securing options on available properties, getting some large manufacturing plant, under good inducements, to take enough for their own purposes, and making their handsome profit out of the adjoining ground—the higher values being paid, immediately or indirectly, by the workingmen and their families.

In a case of this sort, where the men's interest is diffused and almost intangible—at least, incapable of being concentrated into a unit which can operate with the factory management to joint advantage—it certainly seems as if it would be only reasonable and just for the employers to act as trustee of the tacitly confided interest of their men, and to secure for them the same advantages they get for themselves. In this there would be no paternalism, but simply the regard which an active partner might show for an unrepresented one—simply the regard which, it is now recognized, a controlling stock interest should show the other shareholders. And here the question is not one of abstract principle but of practical relations, for the management and the employees must continue to work together, and everything that makes life fuller and more satisfying to the workman tends directly to the advantage of his work and of his employer.

The after adjustment might be determined as good judgment and the special conditions direct. The main point is that the development of the very desirable factory community spirit can not well be fostered by starting with a real estate deal in which capital takes a virtual profit at the expense of its co-operative element—labor. As Mr. Shuey says: "The experience of Pullman and similar efforts has not encouraged others to do much toward building towns owned and controlled by the company," though throughout the new cotton manufacturing district in the southern states this is at present the custom, as it is in some leading English examples—notably,

I believe, the Cadbury Brothers' village at Bourneville and the Lever Brothers' settlement at Port Sunlight. In New England are to be found some of the best established examples in the United States—those whose soundness of basis is evidenced by the length of their existence and their satisfactory results to both sides. One of the most clean cut and definite instances, perhaps, is the village of Ludlow, Mass. The company built the waterworks, gas works, electric light plant, churches, and schoolhouses. Their general policy with regard to the employees' residences can best be given in the words of Mr. J. E. Stevens, agent of the company:

"Our efforts have been to give every family a complete home, even if it has but four rooms, which is the smallest cottage we build. We avoid as far as possible building anything in the way of blocks, and what is known as the usual mill tenement block we have long since discarded. When we first began building the modern type of cottage, or about sixteen years ago, it was our policy to sell to any of our operatives who cared to buy, and as a matter of fact we did sell several cottages with lots of about one quarter acre. We sold the cottages for about the cost of building, calling the land nothing, and making easy terms of payment. This plan, however, did not work out successfully, for the reason that rules drawn up to promote the health and comfort of the community at large could not be enforced against individual holders. For this and kindred reasons we have ceased to sell cottages and, in fact, bought back at a premium those we sold. Our rents are made as low as can consistently be done, and are much lower than the prevailing rents in this neighborhood. It is our intention to offer prizes for the best kept homes and gardens, for while many tenants take an interest in their surroundings, others are wholly indifferent and can with difficulty be got to co-operate in the protection of shade trees. In designing our cottage homes, we have limited our study almost wholly to the inside; many of these we believe are models of comfort and convenience. We have not made an effort to obtain striking or even showy outside effects, but have rather adopted plain exteriors, with a view to minimum of expense for repairs and maintenance."

Another strikingly successful factory community in the state of Massachusetts is Hopedale—a small place of about 2,000 inhabitants, whose only industry is operated by the Draper company. It is, in fact, a typical example of the factory village. The tract of ground on which it stands was laid out at the company's instance by a prominent landscape architect, and sidewalks, sewers, and other improvements were put in. The principles governing the relations of the company to the community of its employees are thus defined by the assistant agent, Mr. F. I. Dutcher:

"We do not give special encouragement to our workmen to buy their own places. Hopedale is a very small town and our company operates its only industry. It is necessary for us to furnish tenements to a great many of our people, and, on the other hand, those employed by us owning their own places, in case they should leave our employment, are not as well situated as they would be in or near a large town or city if left with a piece of real estate on their hands. We do make an inducement in the way of rentals, in the fact that our rates are based upon an extremely low percentage of income, so low, in fact, that no outside parties build tenements for this purpose.

"To encourage care of the premises about the houses of our employees, we offer every year premiums covering the general outside conditions both of the front and back yards, and shall distribute \$300 in this way. We have found after an experience of quite a number of years in this direction, that the average condition of the premises has greatly improved.

"Two boarding houses are owned by our company, and are operated independently by people who rent them, but we do reserve the right to limit the price to be charged for board and to keep a certain amount of supervision on the way in which things are run.

"The local government in Hopedale is the same as in any Massachusetts township. While our people interested in and owning the works of this company are in a way equally interested in the town, its boards and officers are elected by people having a right to vote, and without the least regard to property ownership.

"As far as the writer is aware, there is a good understanding between the employers and employees in this community. We have had absolutely no labor difficulties for many years, and none whatever that were at all serious."

The Peace Dale Manufacturing company, of Peace Dale, Rhode Island, is yet another New England example of the distinctive factory community, and one in which personal, family, business, and village interests have been linked together for nearly a century. The company built the town hall, library, and village church. The Hazard Memorial contains library, gymnasium, baths, class rooms and hall, and was built by the owners of the company for the use of the village. In this case, the treasurer of the company writes, the employers build houses for rent to the help, and also encourage them to build and own their own houses by loaning money and selling land on easy terms. In some cases operatives have not only acquired their own houses, but have secured additional houses and themselves become landlords.

One of the most characteristic of American industrial settlements is the co-operative village of Leclaire, connected with the factories of the N. O. Nelson company, near St. Louis, Mo. It would be impossible to set forth its constitution or its effects more forcibly than in Mr. Nelson's words:

"It is a wretched arrangement by which men are huddled together in ugly factories. We have tried to make the factories attractive as well as healthy. Our days are shortened by the fact that the homes and factories are close together; no time is lost in going and coming. Every home has about a third of an acre of ground attached, thus holding one foot on the sod and one in the factory.

"Leclaire was an outgrowth of the profit sharing system, which was adopted in 1886, and still continues. In the first ten years the dividends on wages amounted to 57 per cent. In the last four years there have been no dividends, the earnings being invested in additions and improvements. But much more important than cash dividends is the improved living, the co-operative spirit, unconsciously absorbed from the common benefits enjoyed out of the fund jointly created."

In answer to my special inquiry, Mr. Nelson writes the following fuller explanation of the policy and constitution of Leclaire:

"Leclaire is built upon a farm of 125 acres, platted into streets, blocks and lots. The land is owned by me as trustee for the Nelson Manufacturing company. The lots when sold are deeded in fee simple.

"There are no legal co-operative elements. Co-operation is entirely voluntary, as well in the social things as in the public things that are provided and maintained by the company. In that respect, the corporation acts as the agent for that associated number of men who do the work and who, with their families, want these public things.

"There are only two legal bodies: the business corporation, and the school and library association, which holds the endowment fund and manages the school library and looks after the village public affairs. The settlement is not at all restricted to employees. At first, we built the houses for the employees on plans agreed on with them, and they paid for them in monthly installments. Now, they build with their own money and loans from the outside, either from building associations in Edwardsville or private lenders. The company owns a few of the houses, but it has no intention of being a landlord. These few are mainly those that have been taken back from employees who left, and they are a convenience for newcomers until they get naturalized and conclude whether they are permanent residents or not.

"There are no ordinances or regulations for the village or its residents—none whatever. There is no local incorporation or authority except the county and township, and especially is there no boss. I live in the village myself, but no resident has ever been asked by me to do anything or refrain from doing anything. Every resident understands that he is as free as he would be on a farm.

"Very decidedly, Leclaire as an institution promotes sympathy and understanding between the work people and employers, and diminishes labor troubles to the vanishing point."

A somewhat less unusual policy is pursued by the Cleveland Cliffs Iron company, of Ishpeming, Mich., but a policy

which nevertheless is addressed directly toward establishing a bond of sympathy to bind the community together by other ties than those of mere payment and receipt of wages. Its most characteristic feature is the stimulus to thrift and neatness, by means of prizes given annually for well kept premises and prettily planted gardens. The more general relations of the company with employees are thus explained by the agent, Mr. M. M. Duncan:

"The company owns some sixty houses, which it rents to its employees at a very nominal figure; in fact, about one-half of the rates prevailing on properties owned by individuals in the city. These houses were built many years ago to attract labor to this district. Up to this time we have leased ground to those wishing to build, the rent for which is from \$12.00 to \$15.00 a year, in some cases exempt from taxation and in some cases the lessee pays a nominal tax.

"Of the mine employees of this city, there are about 1,125 employed by our company, about 725 by the Lake Superior Iron company, and about 500 by the Pittsburgh & Lake Angeline Iron company. These all live within the city limits, and all take interest in municipal government. The company retains some influence in local government, but not to the extent of holding municipal offices. The municipal officials are made up from employees of some of the mining companies and business men, as is also the city council and the county board of supervisors."

The policy of fostering the employee's interest in his home and establishing a communal interest by co-operative and competitive effort in this direction, is pursued also by the National Cash Register company, of Dayton, Ohio. Their methods are thus defined:

"We simply stimulate and encourage our employees to beautify their homes. The company does not own or rent a single dwelling house, and does not believe in attempting to do so.

"Our work was started by organizing the South Park Improvement association, composed of residents of South Park interested in beautifying their homes, and while it is entirely independent of the factory, we encourage them in

every way possible by loaning them stereopticon slides, letting them have the use of our hall, and all facilities. In our Sunday school, which might be termed a Sunday club, we teach the principles of landscape gardening, distribute free seeds, and offer \$250 annually for the best results in home beautifying."

It is not coincidence that the concerns which take these views regarding the relations between employer and employee are conspicuously fortunate in their freedom from labor troubles. The list of such concerns is lengthening at a wonderful rate, but the millennium is still far off. There are yet workmen who are wholly indifferent and can with difficulty be got to co-operate. There are yet employers who look with disgust on what they call coddling the men. There are yet mine stores exacting so large profits on their compulsory sales that they more than support an unprofitable mine. Where these conditions persist, the factory community will hardly survive its second summer. But such instances serve as foils to set off the better way found in the better directed plants which are working toward fuller understanding and fuller co-operation between labor and capital. That this basis of mutual support should exist grows every year more vitally important. A larger and larger proportion of the nation is annually engaged in manufactures. With the increase in size of individual plants, waxes rapidly the possible damage, to the concern and the community, from the clashing of opposing parties. But organization, which was conceived, even by its promoters, to be an institution of war, is rapidly revealing itself as the most effective agency for stability and peace. When to the reciprocal understanding and tolerance which it is bringing about between capital and labor in the large, is added the community feeling, the sense of unified interest, and the esprit de corps induced by an enlightened policy in the individual works, the second summer of the working community will be safely passed, and the way be open to stable industrial peace and the enduring welfare of both employers and employed.