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NDIUSTRIAL EUROPE SEEN THROUGH AMERICAN EYES

Bournville the Realization of the Ideal English Workingman's Home.

By Judson Grenell.
(Copyrighted, 1904, by Judson Grenell).

Bournville, England, June 22.—No doubt the workingmen of every nation in the world have their ideals of what a home should be, and doubtless, too, these ideals vary with the environments. I have no desire, even if I had the knowledge, to inflict my readers with a dissertation on the habitations of the workers of all nations, but I am sure there is profit in considering an English experiment in furnishing ideal English homes for English working people, as carried out in the village of Bournville.

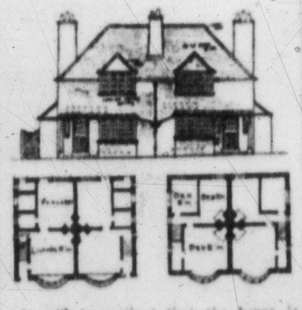
This village, this workshop amid artistic environments, made a deep impression on me, but it was an appeal to the sight, which I find impossible to reflect in mere words. Especially has it strongly impressed me after visiting slum districts. The contrast is most vivid, opening up to the mind, like a revelation, a brilliant array of possibilities for the man who toils. Oh, the free-born Briton (like the free-born American citizen) is a fool in some respects, or he would not live as he does.

The ideal English home is not like the ideal American home. In the English one, there is more breadth than depth, more expanse in building front, back and division walls and fences than seems necessary, and more of a shut-in look, in fact, than is pleasing to those accustomed to expanding horizons, plenty of sunshine and a dry atmosphere. But the English have not been building stone and brick houses for a thousand years or more without learning some things that Americans can profit by. There is a substantial look about the houses I am about to describe that is refreshing after seeing the flimsy structures owned or occupied by the wage-earners of the United States.

A Factory in a Garden.

Bournville is "a factory in a garden," nestling in a valley on the edge of the "Black country," as the region around Birmingham is sometimes called, and it is something over a hundred miles northwest of London. It is the creation of George Cadbury, a great chocolate and cocoa manufacturer, who has made a "trust" of his 500-acre estate, the profits from which are expended in building more model cottages and still further improving the environments of working men and women. There are some 3,500 of these working for Mr. Cadbury, two-thirds of them women; and one of the rules of the factories is that when a girl marries she can no longer be employed, her proper place then being the home.

In building these homes for working people the high brick walls so common elsewhere in England have been dispensed with, greatly improving the looks of the streets; but the "exclusive possession" idea is catered to by fences on all sides, or by hedges that adorn as well as hide. A four-roomed brick double house, each side renting for $1.50 a week, is planned thus:



It will be noticed that the house is very shallow—only two ordinary rooms deep—but it can be readily understood that this makes room on the lot for a flower garden in front and a vegetable garden in the rear, a condition of affairs that the tenants are quick to take advantage of. The more pretentious houses contain five rooms, the rents of which are $3 a week and taxes.

Home Comforts Abound.

As to the interiors, every cottage has a built-in grate (coal range), and the ground floor front room at least contains a fireplace. Generally in the "scullery" is a bathtub let in the floor, or arranged to swing out from a closet. The latter is the plan in the newest houses. The walls are plastered and colored in attractive tints, to suit the tenants, who seldom move, and who take pride in making everything as neat as possible. Indeed, were a tenant to neglect these evidences of civilization he would not long be allowed to remain. Half the tenants work elsewhere than for Cadbury.

Here the "home comforts" and conveniences common in the homes of well-to-do American citizens were most observed by me. Musical instruments, ornaments, soft cushions, pictures, rugs, easy chairs—except "rockers"—were to be seen—things that are scarce in most British homes occupied by the working classes.

The roofs of these houses are of tiles of different colors. The woodwork is green, or red, or blue, and casement windows, giving picturesqueness to the exteriors, are in common use. In fact, these casement windows, with their tiny glasses, have to do more than any other one thing in giving an "air" to these ideal homes, no two of which are just alike.

The streets are wide, with growing shade trees and well-kept lawns and flower beds are everywhere. On one of my visits I saw a little girl industriously picking the grass from between the stones that formed the curb. I asked her what she did that for, and she replied:

"Father says grass is good in its place, but it doesn't look nice between the curbstones."

"And do you like to dig it out?"

"I'd rather play."

But she kept at work, and as I left her she was industriously digging at a particularly obstinate bunch of grass.

Overcrowding is Prevented.

Something over $1,000,000 has been expended on the 500 homes and surrounding grounds of Bournville, sheltering 2,500 people. Here British artisans live amidst the delights of country life, and yet have all the conveniences attached to urban homes. Each family is isolated—the one supreme demand of all Britishers in locating a permanent residence, and which idea crops out even amidst the dirt and distress of slum life—yet is provided with gas, water and sewers. At the rear of the 600 square yards each tenant has for a garden are to be seen fruit and shade trees and even when the tenant goes into a new house he finds his garden plot awaiting him, and already under cultivation. The work of raising the products of these gardens not only furnishes healthful outdoor exercise, but their quantity contributes considerably to the support of the family.

Provision has been made to prevent objectionable crowding, and there is even a limit to the number of stores that may be started. This, it is said, is to prevent wasteful competition. Thus the open spaces in the matter of small parks are numerous, and the stores take on a character in harmony with their surroundings.

The Plan in Every Way a Success.

Bournville is a success. It pays its way and does not impose undue restrictions on its inhabitants. Neither does the owner attempt to cut wages because offering exceptional advantages in the way of surroundings to his employees. The rents charged are no higher than for the same number of rooms in less favored localities, and the wages paid by Mr. Cadbury are equal to, if not above, the average earned by the workers in competing and neighboring factories.

There are many other commendable features connected with the great factory at Bournville, but they are outside the range of this article. What I started out to do was to show that even in crowded England there is room for ideal conditions of living, if only the will is back of the desire to supply them. The facts are, however, that where there is one Cadbury there are a thousand landowners of the sort that care for nothing but squeezing the greatest amount of rent from the wealth producers. Hence slums in the midst of evidences of almost unbounded riches; hence the 6,000 crowded courts (back yards) of Birmingham, only four miles away, where thousands of "freeborn Britons" have the "privilege" of living amids the most degrading conditions. The point to be remembered is that all Britishers could enjoy the same healthful and artistic surroundings for their home life as are seen at Bournville, if they had the sense to demand what is theirs by right—the unearned increment attaching to the soil. They have reached the point where they are absorbing, through their municipalities, the profits heretofore attached to the ownership of public franchises for public utilities, but they do not yet seem to recognize the drain on wages that comes from the private ownership of ground rents. I trust I have not dwelt too long upon this ideal village. And, after all, it must be seen to be appreciated.

Next week I shall take my readers to the very heart of industrial England, where the trade unions are the strongest, and where cotton and woollen mills, iron works and factories generally, are packed closer together than anywhere else in the world.

Notes and Notelettes

Dominion Day is at hand. Now is the time for laudation. The "News" has a jubilant picture representing the great progress of this country from 1867 to the present time. In order to make the world believe that we have been a marvel of success all that is necessary is to quote suitable statistics and leave the rest unsaid. The population of Canada in 1865, forty-five years after the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, was 3,251, equal to that of a good village of today. To-day it is nearly 6,000,000. This is four-fifths the population of New York State, a little less than the State of Pennsylvania, and about one-quarter more than that of the State of Illinois. The wheat crop is 100,000,000 bushels. The mineral production amounts to $63,000,000, the forest production $80,000,000, the fishing industry to $22,000,000, and the total trade $467,000,000. All this sounds big, and if anyone wants to make a swelling speech of self-laudation, he has simply to compile a lot of similar statistics and hold them before the admiring multitude. That is the usual style of national holiday oratory.

Nothing is said of the fact that every ten years we have had our financial cataclysm, that for years the mortgagees were sold by the thousand, that during the years 1903-'4-'5 and '6 nearly one-tenth of the houses in the city passed into the hands of the mortgagees, that the building trade was paralyzed, and half of the mechanics were walking the streets in idleness. About these matters one had better preserve the most profound silence if he is ambitious for first of July applause.

The loss of life by the burning of the steamer Slocum is attracting much attention. The same is true as to the killing of thirteen laborers by dynamite explosion in Colorado. When death comes in this tragic and sudden form then careful inquiry is instituted and methods adopted to prevent its recurrence. But there is a slow death of thousands in the large cities in consequence of the misery into which people are driven because of their poverty. As to this death, which can be measured by thousands and thousands yearly, there is no inquiry at all commensurate to the extent of the evil. The Pittsburg riots, the Chicago riots, the coal strike, and now the Colorado strike are all outward and visible signs of an inward and social injustice. Whatever way the Colorado struggle may terminate it is much more than likely that no proper investigation will be made to ascertain the ultimate cause of these troubles. Men will be imprisoned, the law will be set at defiance or utterly ignored, men will be deprived of their liberty in the most arbitrary manner, and some way or other the contest will end. But will there be any attempt to establish good laws so that such a struggle will not be repeated? Not by any means. The despotism which ruled the coal mines still continues just as strong as ever and the same will be true of the contest in Colorado.

While the great Republican party has declared its faith in the superstition of protection, some of the Southern planters are advocating the immigration or the importation of Chinese coolies. Others believe that Italians will fill the factories of the South. The employers complain that the negroes are too indolent and that they try to avoid the cotton fields. The Italian farmers are said to be peace loving and industrious.

The immigration from Europe is likely for a while to exceed all precedent. A rate war between steamship companies has reduced the rate from Europe to $8.45, where it was formerly $20 to $30.

When the Republican convention proclaims its continued belief in "Protection" it means protection for the employer only. The employers who frame the tariff to suit themselves, both in the States and in Canada, want the cheapest possible labor, and not the slightest protection is proposed to keep out the pauper labor that comes from the poorest countries in the world. The freest possible welcome is given to the laborers from Italy or Hungary, the men who are accustomed to eat black rye bread, to wear the cheapest clothing and to swarm into hovels. The most rabid protectionist is an absolute free trader when it comes to the importation of labor.

Secretary Shaw of Roosevelt's Cabinet has been telling the workmen of Wilmington, Del., of the blessings of high prices. He has been preaching the gospel of dearness. The doughty secretary lays down the doctrine that as prices rise, wages rise also, and he promises to produce statistics to support this statement. There is no doubt but that the Secretary will prove his case, if we allow him to choose his statistics; for a man may prove the most outrageous conclusions, if he is allowed to pick out such numbers as answer his purpose. It is a fact that statistics show that while the Republican party has been in power the suicides among white people and lynching among the colored people have increased at a great rate. Steamship travel and decay of teeth have also increased at the same time. Now if we follow statistics, have we not made out a case that suicides among the whites are the cause of decayed teeth or that decayed teeth are the cause of suicides, or is it the reign of the Republican party which has caused all these coincidences!

If, however, the Secretary wishes to prove that the working classes are better off with higher prices he may exercise his energies on the following facts. In the siege of Samaria an ass's head sold for four score pieces of silver, and the people were eating their own children. Prices went up, but will the Secretary dare to say that the workers were better off when they were on the point of starvation? The Vicksburg "Daily Citizen," of July 2, 1863, when General Grant was besieging that city, said: "If anything could appeal to the heart of stone of the extortionist with success, the present necessities of our citizens would do so. A rumor has reached us that parties are selling flour at five dollars per pound, molasses at ten dollars per gallon and corn at ten dollars per bushel." Here is a sample of high prices which we commend to the consideration of the Secretary to wrestle with; for the dearness in the case of these sieges was caused in just the same way that dearness is caused by tariffs, namely, by making it hard to get goods into the market.

Then we would like to call the attention of the Secretary to the thirtieth annual report of the National Commissioner of Labor for 1903. This report says: Ten plows which cost, when made by hand, $34.46, can now be made by machinery for $7.90. A hundred blank books made by hand cost $219.70, by machinery $70. The price of ruling of paper has been reduced from $4 to 80 cents, one five-hundredth the cost. The cost of making a hundred boots has been reduced from $556.24 to $74.30. This list could be extended to the large majority of things produced by industry. Industry and ingenuity are striving all the time to make goods more abundant and cheap. As they become more abundant, if labor does not receive the abundance, it is not the fault of the mechanical improvement, but of bad laws which allow the abundance to be appropriated by those who make nothing.

I would like to see Secretary Shaw give his statistics to prove that it is all wrong for inventors to try to make goods abundant and cheap. Is it a calamity that photography has reduced the cost of picture and map making one-thousandfold and that the introduction of the locomotive has done the same for transportation? If the Secretary wishes to make things dear, nothing is easier. Let him get a law passed forbidding the use of any kind of labor saving machinery and at once he can have dearness to his heart's content and starvation to boot.

The cheapness is all right. We can have a progressive civilization only as improvements make goods abundant and cheap. The trouble is that as goods have become cheap, the land has grown dearer and dearer. As the goods have diminished in value the indebtedness for the occupation of the land has grown and grown so that the toilers have had to surrender the abundance as fast as they could produce it.

Mr. W. Houston delivered an interesting address to the Methodist Young Men's Club on the subject, "Reading for Recreation." This is important enough to be repeated again and again. Reading properly pursued enriches the mind, cultivates the taste, stores the memory, elevates the thought, dignifies the existence and converts the boor into the philosopher. In our schools we teach the children to read as a mechanical operation without developing in them the love for the best reading for the purpose of refining, developing and elevating the man.

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The observance of these regulations will materially assist the Department in the proper and effective administration of the Building By-Law, and will also save a deal of inconvenience and possible heavy loss to those whose neglect of such constitutes a contravention of By-Law No. 2466.

Robert J. Fleming,
Commissioner of Assessment and Property.

City Hall, June 28th, 1904.

TORONTO EXHIBITION PRIZE LIST.

A copy of the prize list for the Canadian National Exhibition to be held in Toronto this year from August 29th to September 6th, has been received. It is an exceptionally handsome and well printed production. The cover is in three colors and tastefully embossed. All the classes are nicely arranged and the Executive are pleased to say that the greatest care has been taken to have the rules, regulations and conditions explicitly set forth in clear and unmistakeable language. There are no fewer than two hundred and fifty classes, covering practically every industry known to Canada that is worthy of encouragement, and calling for $35,000 prize money. In several departments considerable changes have been made and the premiums added to. A new Art Gallery and a new Administration Building are being erected and improvements made to the grounds. The famous Black Watch Band, by gracious permission of His Majesty the King, and of the colonel and officers of the gallant old "Forty-two," has been engaged and will play three times each day during the entire period of the exhibition. A number of other decidedly superior attractions have also been arranged for. Altogether, therefore, the Executive feel justified in promising that Toronto's Great Fair of 1904 will eclipse all its predecessors. Copies of the prize list can be had on application to J. O. Orr, manager, 70 King street east, Toronto.

SPARKLING THOUGHTS

From J. L. Gordon's Sermon on "The Spiritual Athlete."

If Christianity stands for anything, it stands for the development of the whole man.

The spirit is the flashing out of the light within.

Four things necessary to growth—1st step, light; 2nd, atmosphere; 3rd, food; 4th, exercise.

They say the eagle flies alone, but cattle move in herds.

Emerson says that the worst thing about money is that it costs so much.

Christ left his disciples in the grandest hour of the world's history.

There never was a calm heart in this world until some great truth dawned upon it.

The marvellous thing about John was, he could see so much.

Fishes are satisfied with water, birds with air, cattle with the grass on the hills, and you will never be satisfied until you return to your first thought of God.

We want food as well as light.

This world is full of thought.

What you need is thought to read upon.

So long as you find God, what difference does it make where you find him?

How many people have got an unnatural religion.

We need atmosphere as well as light and food.

My friend, you generate your own atmosphere.

Goodness is religion, and religion is goodness.

Emerson has said that there are men who rise refreshed at the hearing of a threat.

Godly exercise is that that profiteth much.

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