

Crouy life, the close-knit communal organization of a French settlement. Since all these country people live side by side, they discovered long ago that there is no need to duplicate, over and over, in each house, labors which are better done in centralized activity. Instead of four hundred cook-stoves being heated to the baking-point, with a vast waste of fuel and effort, one big fire in the village *boulangerie* bakes the bread for all the community. These French country women no more bake their own bread than they make their own shoes. In fact, if they tried to they could not produce anything half so appetizing and nourishing as the crusty, well-baked loaves turned out by that expert specialist, the village bakeress; and they buy those loaves for less than it would cost to produce them in each kitchen.

In addition to the *boulangerie* where you buy your bread, there is in Crouy (and in all other French towns of that size) another shop kept by a specially good cook among the housewives, where you can always buy certain cooked foods which are hard to prepare at home in small quantities. Ham, for instance. In American towns too small to have a delicatessen shop, how many of us quail before the hours of continuous heat needed to boil a ham, and the still more formidable enterprise of getting it all eaten up afterward without a too dreary monotony! I have known American villages where people said the real reason for church suppers was that they might taste boiled ham once in a while. In Crouy, backward, primitive, drainageless community that it is, they