In the Library of the Factory

In the Literary World

Something About Books, the Men Who Write Books, and Other Matters Concerning the Literary Profession

THE death of George Gissing, says a writer in the Philadelphia Record, has called the attention of the world at large to the works of an author who, while living, commanded but a small number of readers. Singularly conscientious as a writer, and with the instinct of a true literary artist, he toiled on from year to year, producing novels that were praised by the discriminating few, while they were utterly neglected by the many. There were reasons for this neglect, which Gissing himself was quick to recognize. He admitted that his novels were the sad reflection of sordid surroundings and sordid people. Like Charles Dickens, he drew his characters from the great middle class of English society, but he represented them as ill-bred, ill-mannered, without family affection, unprincipled in the pursuit of wealth, and utterly selfish when wealth had been gained.

"The Unclassed," with which, at the age of twenty-seven, Gissing began his literary career, is one of the saddest books ever written by so young a man. It opens sadly and it ends sadly; the sordid misery of the life described becomes at times almost unendurable; and yet the novel could not be called uninteresting. The art of the writer, even at that time, was too consummate not to carry the reader, when he found a reader, along with him. And this power of compelling and holding the attention of his small following never deserted him. A sadder and gloomier view of modern life than his could not have been taken; but his sincerity was as evident as his pessimism, and it is difficult to quarrel with a man who believes himself to be telling the truth.

The many novels which followed this first venture were all written amid adverse surroundings; more than once actual privation threatened to stop his work. While writing "The New Grub Street," which deals with the miseries of a modern literary hack, he was forced to sell the books from his shelves in order to obtain the necessities of life. He had difficulty in finding a publisher for the novel, and ultimately sold it outright for £150, but it made whatever reputation he ever acquired. From that time onward the publication of one of his books was awaited with interest, and if he never obtained popular recognition he was at least enabled to live by literature. The late James Payn, at that time editor of the Illustrated London News, accepted "Eve's Ransom," and published it as a serial in that journal. His short stories, too, were now beginning to appear in the English magazines, and the worst that he had to endure was past.

Many of his short stories, notably "Midsummer Madness," are equal to the best French contes. It seems strange that such work could possibly have been overlooked by the great reading public; probably the unrelieved gloom of his stories continued to repel many persons who would otherwise have been attracted by his masterly art. And his novels did not grow any more cheerful as the years glided by, bringing him, volume by volume, some slight increase of reputation. The best that can be said of his later works, judged as pictures of contemporaneous life, is that they showed a less eager desire to point out the utterly corrupt character of the men and women by whom he was surrounded. He greatly admired Dickens, as his monograph on the master of English fiction proves, but he lacked the wide range of vision, and the deep compassion for human suffering, of the writer he eulogized.

George Gissing said truly that Dickens gained many of his ends by his power of making people laugh; if once the crowd has laughed with you it will not object to cry a little—nay, it will make good resolves, and sometimes carry them out. But Gissing could not make people laugh, though one may smile sadly over certain passages in his works. Neither did he possess the easy graphic power of Dickens; his novels were quite evidently the result of laborious effort, like those of the French novelist Flaubert. It was work well and honestly done, but it was not to him, as to Dickens, a joy and a rapture. He seemed to have recognized this fact himself, for in his monograph on the great English master of fiction he says: "This thing cometh not by prayer and fasting, nor by any amount of thinking about art. You have it, or you have it not." And of the French novelist whose literary methods so closely resembled his own Gissing has written: "Not one page of Flaubert gives proof of sight and grasp equal to that evident in a thousand of Dickens." Persevering toil does much, but the man of mere talent cannot make himself, by such means, a man of genius. George Gissing had great talent, close powers of observation, and he was devoted to his art, but of genius, in the highest and truest sense of the word, his writings show not a trace.

"Real Conversations."

Bert Leston Taylor, in the Reader.

[On the veranda of the Author's Club, at Styxville-on-the-Styx. Discovered, John Milton and his publisher, Samuel Simmons.]

Milton—I am informed that £50,000 has been offered for the original manuscript of "Paradise Lost."

Simmons—Yes; by an American, the story goes. He is probably insane.

Milton—Such an inference is natural from a publisher's standpoint. Do you happen to remember what you paid me for that poem?

Simmons—Really, the matter has slipped my mind. It was quite a while ago; and I did not take my books with me when I left London. But it wasn't £50,000.

Milton—No. At the time the poem was written I did not believe there was so much money in the world. But I remember distinctly the pitiful amount you paid me. It was £5.

Simmons—Dear me! Is it possible? I thought it was more. But, as I told you at the time, my manuscript readers reported that they didn't see much in the poem, and were not quite sure it would be one of the "Six Best Selling Books." Besides, you know, I let you have the dramatic rights.

Milton—Much good that did me.

Simmons—That was your lookout. See what Irving has done with our friend Dante's work. There was a good play in "Paradise Lost."

Milton (recurring to the original grievance)—Still, £5 was a small sum. You might have given me at least £10.

Simmons—If it were to-day I should—cheerfully. Times have changed, John. Times have changed.

Milton (with a flash of insight)—Yes, times have changed. But I doubt whether publishers have.

American and English Pronunciation.

Alice Meynell, in Harper's Magazine.

Perhaps it may be said that the American who takes care of his pronunciation takes more care than the careful Englishman. He—perhaps "she" would be more exact—has more consciousness of education; but consciousness of education is not the trick of education. He thinks the English speaker is slovenly in dropping the h in white, and pronounces it carefully, transposing it so that it begins the word. Most Englishmen treat it as a mute, but not through negligence. And the American sounds the h in hotel, which to us seems ill done, because the word is French, and in French h is mute. Un-English, too, is the phrase, Write me (without the accusative a letter). It must be owned that this sounds ill to us (albeit I am told it has become usual here also in letters of affairs); but it seems to be the invariable form on the other side of the ocean. There is assuredly nothing wrong with it except novelty. We make no difficulty of Write me a letter, and yet Write me by return of post we cannot abide. Why not? Me in our monotonous language is as good a dative as it is an accusative, so that grammar is not outraged; and this obviously we acknowledge by our Write me a letter, Give me a book, and Sing me a song. American ears are aware of the universal English manner of pronouncing stupid, if one may judge by the fact that the most vigilant of writers, Mr. Howells, mimics the speech of an English woman by printing styoupid. But few English ears seem to detect that Americans generally call their city Noo York.

An Author On the Wing.

London Letter.

Clarence Ludlow Brownell, whose amusing and graphic book, "The Heart of Japan," was published just in time to ride into prosperity on the war wave, started for his old stamping ground at four hours' notice last week. He was loafing along a country lane down in Essex on Tuesday morning, when a boy dashed after him with a telegram from William Maxwell, the famous war correspondent of the London Standard, asking the author if he didn't want to go to Japan next day as Maxwell's associate. In four hours Mr. Brownell had packed up, arranged his affairs, said his good-byes and was on the train, although he had arisen that morning without the slightest notion of going to Japan. He turned up in the Standard office at midnight, and, according to his own account of the affair, given at the steamer train, the following interview took place between him and Mr. Curtis, the editor of that dignified old journal.

Mr. Curtis—You can go to Japan for us?

Mr. Brownell—Yes.

Mr. Curtis—Very well. Good evening.

After a trifling formality downstairs with the cashier, Brownell boarded the train for Liverpool, off on a journey to the opposite side of the globe.

Brownell is not the only American sent to Japan in behalf of the London papers. Percival Phillips, a bright Pittsburg newspaper man, who was on the staff of the London Express for some time, has gone for that journal, and the Chronicle will be represented, through arrangement with Collier's Weekly, by Frederick Palmer, author of "The Ways of the Service" and "The Vagabond."

George Moore on Walter Pater.

Lippincott's Magazine.

I am afraid we shall never escape from the mistake of thinking that a book is bad or useless because it does not satisfy the need of the moment; that mistake is inherent in us—we are but the need of the moment, and our need is changing; new ideas are always ripening in us, and the book we put aside last year is the book that we read eagerly this year; we are always becoming our books. Could we remember, this life would be more decorous, for it is certainly an indecorous thing to open Pater's "Imaginary Portraits" and say, "This book will never be mine." Mood follows mood, and whomsoever keeps the book by him shall read it some day in the right mood, and then his enjoyment will be a unique one; he will experience a delight not to be found anywhere else, in literature, in painting, or in sculpture; nor will his enjoyment be the enjoyment that he experiences in music, though it will be more akin to that enjoyment than to any other. While he reads this book it will seem to him that he is listening to music, for the book breathes a natural music, the music one hears in Maytime when Maytime makes a harp of the forest and a lyre of the shore. Methinks Pater desired the ear more than any other sense. Has not he said in an incomparable passage that the tendency of all the arts is to aspire to music, to tend to become—would that I could remember the exact words, they are to be found in the first book he wrote, "The Renaissance." I think the words are that the tendency of all the arts is to aspire to the condition of music.

Authorship and Business.

New York Tribune.

It is time for the modern novelist to wake up, to realize that he is practicing a trade which has close relations with the business world, and that there are no laws in the said world of which he can afford to remain in ignorance. M. Georges Ohnet published not long ago a novel called "The Poison Merchant," and in it he gave a baleful significance to a beverage which he named "abrictonine." But somebody else, it appears, had previously invented the same name for a drink that he manufactured and this individual brought suit against the novelist. The latter has been compelled by the courts to pay damages to the extent of 500 francs, to bear the expense of publishing the judgment in two newspapers and to overhaul his book so that it may no longer give offense to the outraged purveyor of liquid refreshment. M. Ohnet received cold comfort when he declared that he had no knowledge of the particular liquor whose maker had dragged him into court. He was told to go and consult the register of trademarks. What records, we wonder, can the novelist leave unexplored without fear of being subjected to legal correction? If he touches any province of human endeavor, any trade or "interest," he is likely, in his innocence, to wound somebody's feelings. Perhaps his only hope of safety lies in unremitting devotion to archaeological romance.

Literary "Ghosts."

W. L. Alden's London Letter.

The Author, which is the organ of the Society of Authors, recently published an article which was understood by most of its readers to mean that a number of popular novelists do not write the novels which appear under their names, but that the books are written by "ghosts" employed at small wages. So many people took this to be a serious charge that the Authors' Society has been compelled to explain that they are in no way responsible for what was intended to be a humorous skit. This shows the advantage of duly labeling one's humorous writings. We should then know what is humorous and what is not. Publication of an article in Punch is equivalent to labeling it "humorous." We may not understand what the author of the article means, but we know that it is humorous, or else it would not be published in Punch.

"Mr. Barnes of New York."

New York Commercial Advertiser.

The author of "Mr. Barnes of New York," in conversation with one of the editors of the Bookman the other day, told him how that extremely popular novel got its name. Mr. Gunter had at first intended simply to concoct a drama about a vendetta, and Mr. Barnes himself was purely an afterthought:

"Among Mr. Gunter's acquaintances was a well-known New York man by the name of Banks, whose main occupation in life seemed to be that of killing time. He was a member of the York Rifle Club, and upon a memorable occasion had won an international shoot by showing himself to be absolutely devoid of nerves, and scoring bull's-eye after bull's-eye, just as if nothing at all depended upon the accuracy of his aim. One day he fell into conversation with Mr. Gunter, and the talk turned upon books. 'I say, Gunter,' drawled Banks, 'I'll bet you couldn't put me in a book and make me interesting.' Then and there the author determined to incorporate him in the story which was to be called "A Corsican Vendetta."

Ballade of Sour Grapes.

Oft do I strive with Godlike toil
On clear, Parnassian heights to dwell,
While Smith, the Author, keen for spoil,
Carpenters novels just to sell.
His work is drivel, wot I well,
But still his mill grinds golden grist
The while his sales to millions swell—
The poor, Successful Novelist!

With fiendish cunning, smooth as oil,
He's robbed the master minds pell mell—
Excerpts from Hardy, Howells and Doyle
Are peculated by the ell.
His heroine's a damosel
Just like a thousand more I wist—
How you succeed I cannot tell,
O poor, Successful Novelist!

It fills my breast with wild turmoil
That such fat wit success should spell
While at Fame's doorsteps I must broil
With no one there to mind the bell.
In vain my classic goods I yell;
For when I stop I'm never missed,
Though friends acknowledge I excell
The poor, Successful Novelist!

—Envoy.—

Public, I would such luck befell
That my fair genius I might twist
Like him who claims your I X L,
The poor, Successful Novelist!

—Wallace Irwin, in the Bookman.

Authorship in America.

Leslie's Monthly.

We should like to call the attention of home market clubs and infant industry nurseries to the condition of the authorship business in the United States. During 1902 the total production of this hustling world was 200,000 volumes. The output seems small enough in comparison with the world's annual stock of other commodities, but so long as it is large enough to keep our evenings and holidays busy we have no general right to complain. The trouble comes when we analyze the figures. During 1902 the United States published but 7,833 volumes, barely worsting England, which follows us with a total of 7,700, and losing to Germany's 26,906 to the tune of one to three. What becomes of our Ladies' Literary Leagues and Home Culture Clubs in the face of hard figures? Where is Kentucky now, and where Indiana? Shall three Americans go down before one German? Shall each million Germans have 354 books each year while a million Americans are content with eighty-one?

Reverse the shield. Last year Germany published 8,049 newspapers and periodicals. The United States 21,000. There's the explanation. The American is the man of the minute.

Literary Notes.

The late Seton Merriman (H. S. Scott) left a novel in manuscript, and it will soon be brought out in serial form. It is a curious coincidence that this last book of his is entitled "The Last Hope."

These well-known authors died during 1903: Julian Ralph, M. De Blowitz, "Edna Lyall" ((Ada E. Bayley), Joseph Henry Shorthouse, Hillary Bell, Richard Henry Stoddard, Max O'Rell, William E. Henley, Noah Brooks, William E. H. Leckey, Prof. Mommsen, Herbert Spencer, Dean Farrar, Paul du Challu and Richard H. Savage.

George Borrow's stepdaughter, Henrietta Clarke McOubrey, has just died at Great Yarmouth, in England. She was that Henrietta of whom Borrow says in "Wild Wales" that "she has all kinds of good qualities and several accomplishments, knowing something of conchology, more of botany, drawing capitally in the Dutch style, and playing remarkably well on the guitar—not the trumpery German thing so called—but the real Spanish guitar." Mrs. McOubrey inherited the greater part of Borrow's papers, and from her they passed into the hands of Dr. Knapp, her stepfather's American biographer. She was much attached to Borrow, and in her later years was continually inquiring as to how his works were received by the public. Her venerable figure was often seen on the beach at Gorleston, where she delighted in gathering rare and curious seaweeds, shells and zoophytes.

A London letter says: "Mrs. Craigie (John Oliver Hobbes) is probably the busiest literary woman in London. Another of her plays is coming on soon, and various managers are clamoring for more. She has lately completed the first draft of a new novel, and besides that she is very generous with her time to clubs and societies who want her to read papers for them. The result is that Steephill Castle never knows when it will see her. One day she will be there, another day at the beautiful town house of her parents, in Lancaster Gate, and another day in her suite of rooms at the Carlton Hotel, and yet another day off to some English country seat as the guest of the Duke and Duchess of Soand-So. Though she has lived in England so long, and has won most of her success here, Mrs. Craigie is still a thorough-going American, business-like, vivacious, and quick to see the point."

News in the Country.

Jane Austen—"Mansfield Park."

"Mr. Bertram," said Miss Crawford, "I have tidings of my lost harp at last. I am assured that it is safe at Northampton; and there it has probably been these ten days, in spite of the solemn assurance we have so often received to the contrary. The truth is that our inquiries were too direct; we sent a servant, we went ourselves; this will not do seventy miles from London, but this morning we heard of it in the right way. It was seen by some farmer, and he told the miller, and the miller told the butcher, and the butcher's son-in-law left word at the shop. * * * I am to have my harp fetched to-morrow. Henry, who is good nature itself, has offered to fetch it in his barouche."

February.

The laggard sun, on frosty morn,
Throws long beams through the stubble corn.
Against the sunset, naked trees
Weave magic bredes and traceries.
From woodman's ax the splinter bounds;
The flicker's cheery tapping sounds;
Ice thaws, and in the quickening flood
Are vague, fond hopes of leaf and bud.
When, lo! like fleck of living sky—
Full-songed, a bluebird sweet flits by!

—Sarah Andrew Shafer, in The Outlook.

C. W. Kriel, sole distributer for Wilkie Collins, 10 cent cigar, Tom Benton, 5 cent cigar. Enough said.

Social Life a Notable Feature In a Large Indianapolis Factory

Lunch Room, Library, Clubs and Other Organizations Give the Laycock Company's Workers an Interest Beyond that Felt by Mere Wage Earners

WHEN the whistle blows for 12 o'clock there is no hurrying and rushing about. Everybody cleans himself up in one of the numerous washrooms and goes leisurely to the dining room on the third floor. This is the way the noon hour is ushered in at the establishment of the T. B. Laycock Spring Bed Manufacturing Company on West Tenth street. When one walks into the dining room it has more the appearance of some sort of a social gathering than a place where the people are engaged to work and are there simply to eat their noon lunches. This room is large and spacious, and will easily accommodate 200 people. The room is filled with small tables, and when one sees the employes seated around them it reminds him of a number of small families.

For the dining room there is a competent cook employed, and a number of dining room assistants, who act in the capacity of waiters. If an employe so desires he can eat dinner that is prepared at the factory, or, if he prefers, he can bring his own lunch, and coffee is furnished free. The factory meal costs 16 2-3 cents, and is much better than could be bought at a restaurant for twice that much. The menu is not elaborate, but there is plenty of good, wholesome food, and it is served in an appetizing and homelike manner. The bill of fare consists of two kinds of vegetables, besides potatoes, meat, coffee, pie and biscuits, and, of course, the menu changes each day. The meal is not served in small dishes, as is done in ordinary eating houses, but large dishes are put on each table well filled, and every person helps himself.

The cooking is excellent, and the biscuits and pie appeal to every man, taste like the ones "mother used to make," as one of the employes says. The whole affair has the appearance of home, and there is a feeling of goodfellowship existing there which is readily apparent. Everybody, from T. B. Laycock to the poorest salaried man in the establishment—that is, with the exception of the foundrymen—eats in the dining room. For those who bring their lunches there is a large coffee tank sitting in the middle of the room, and each table has an ordinary-sized coffee pot on it which is filled by one of the persons at the table.

After lunch is over small cigars are furnished to those who smoke, and the remainder of the noon hour is spent by men discussing different affairs. At one end of the room is a phonograph, which is kept going, and also a piano, which is owned jointly by the officials of the factory and the employes. The girls who can play do so, and the rest sit around and enjoy the music until the whistle blows for 1 o'clock, when everybody goes back to his work.

The foundrymen have a dining room of their own, and the reason for this is that they have only half an hour for dinner, because they cannot leave the hot metal for a longer time, and by the time they could clean themselves up sufficiently to come to the big dining room their lunch time would be over with. They, however, are provided for very conveniently, and have everything arranged for their own comfort.

PROMOTES SOCIABILITY.

One of the officials of the factory, in speaking of the dining room, said:

"I consider this one of the greatest social features that we have, because it puts everybody in the factory on an equal basis. All who take the meals prepared here at the factory get the same kind of food. It doesn't matter whether you are president of the company or an apprentice in the machine shop, the same rations are served to all. The charge which we put upon these meals does not by any means make them self-sustaining, but what extra expense is incurred is borne by the company. To illustrate this: One year that I know of the dining room cost the company $400 besides the revenue derived from the employes who bought their meals. We think one reason why this is a great social feature is that it brings the people of the factory together each day for an hour, and thus gives them a chance to get better acquainted. There are people who are employed in different departments here who would never meet each other if it were not for this dinner hour; and then it makes the people feel as though they amount to something, and that they are not merely a part of a great machine. They come to the dining room, where it is warm and comfortable, sit down to tables as they would if they were at home, and are treated since the decline of personal pride in them. They sit here and talk and have a general good time until the hour is over with, and when they go back to work they are rested and feel more like doing their tasks.

"This large dining room of ours has only been in operation since last summer; before that, however, we maintained a dining room for the girls employed here in the factory on the top floor of the building. This had a kitchen attached, and everything was conducted just as the large dining room. At that time there was an organization called the Officers' Club, and they had their dinner furnished them, but the general run of employes did not have a lunch-room. It had always been our intention to have a general room for the employes, and when we saw the great success with which the girls' lunchroom met we did not lose any time in establishing this large lunchroom. And I believe that it is thoroughly appreciated by the majority of those who work here. We all look upon the coming of the noonday meal with the greatest of pleasure, not only from the fact that it is when we get something to eat, but because there is a sociability there which makes everyone feel better toward one another."

What this official said in regard to this is certainly true, and anyone can readily tell that there is a feeling of the greatest friendship existing between the employer and the employe, because the man employed is conscious that he is an individual and not merely a small part of a great working system.

There are 400 people employed in the factory of the T. B. Laycock Manufacturing Company, and it is more like a colony of individuals working for their own interests than of people employed merely on salaries. And the reason for this is that they are not only thrown together during working hours, but their social welfare is looked after when they are away from the factory. To aid in this work a library is located in a room adjoining the office. In this there are more than 700 volumes, consisting mostly of the standard works by the best authors.

The library was started six years ago as a result of a suggestion by one of the employes, which was adopted by the company. Several magazines and five volumes of E. P. Roe's works were placed in the girls' dining room by one of the employes as a first contribution. Others followed this example when it was seen how great an interest was taken in these books by the girls. Little by little the store of volumes grew larger, and a bookcase was bought for their accommodation. About this time it was thought that the men would enjoy access to these books, and provision was made for them. When this was done the library was increased to such a size that a large space was deemed necessary, and it was moved to the room adjoining the office and placed under the charge of a competent woman librarian, who, at stated intervals, loads a large truck with books and makes a tour of the factory, issuing them to those who want them. If there is any book in the library which she does not have with her, and is wanted by any of the employes, she will get it.

THE LIBRARY PATRONIZED.

The library is for the use of everyone employed in the factory. It is governed by the same rules that prevail in the city library, and many of the books are contributed by the company, employes and friends, while others are purchased with the money derived from entertainments given by the employes. Besides the standard authors represented in this collection of books, many of the latest and best novels are also found on the shelves. Among those that show the effect of much reading is Booth Tarkington's "Gentleman from Indiana," and Mr. Riley's books are also great favorites. Every person who gets a book from this library is expected to take the best care of it, and if the library continues to grow at the rate it has in the past, in a few years hence it will bear comparison with more ambitious collections. It is said by those in charge that the good influence of the books can be readily discerned, and that they afford the employes pastime while at home during the long winter evenings which they greatly appreciate.

The employes of the factory have this social spirit of the work so thoroughly instilled into them that they have organized various kinds of clubs and societies. One of the most prosperous is the Woman's Literary and Social Club, the work of which the members are very enthusiastic over. This club accomplishes much in the way of encouraging sociability and the reading of good literature among its members. It is said that its influence, though its methods are extremely modest and unassuming, is felt more or less by the entire factory force. The general atmosphere of mutual regard and kindly feeling existing between the company and its employes and the workmen toward each other is promoted by this society. This, however, is but a minor part of its work, the best of it being accomplished through its aid committee, which goes about extending aid to those in distress. It is said that no charity, cold and cruel as is often the case, is given by this organization, but such assistance is rendered gladly by those of the family on duty to those in need. This committee draws upon the benevolent fund, to which the employes and company voluntarily and cheerfully contribute, for its requirements. It also visits the sick, and in this and in other ways comforts those in distress.

In a place like this where from 300 to 400 people are employed constantly instances where aid is needed are bound to occur. This organization does not tell of its good deeds nor do the members consider that they are performing charity when they give this assistance. No doubt many of the little stories told concerning their work would have a touch of sentiment about them that would reach the heart of any person, but these people think that the distress of their fellow workmen is too sacred a thing to gossip about, and, therefore, the details of any who are in need of aid never get farther than those who go to investigate. The way this investigation is carried on is that when any employe or member of his family gets sick some person from the factory who is a very close personal friend of his is delegated to call, and if there is any financial aid needed it will be forthcoming. It is for this that the sick benefit was organized.

It has been the idea of the officers of this establishment to bring about a factory reform ever since the place was opened. It took a number of years before much headway in this direction could be made, but as it is at the present time every one about the place is greatly elated over the future. Very often in the evenings the large dining room is cleared and a literary entertainment is given. Part of the talent is furnished by the employes of the factory and the rest is volunteered by those who are not connected with the place. Then, on other occasions, a regular old-time social is given. Booths are arranged around the walls, where refreshments are served of various kinds. To the entertainments and socials all of the employes and their families are invited, and everybody that comes, it is said, always enjoys himself, for fashions and formalities are laid aside and everybody is in for a good time.

Another thing that greatly encourages those who toil to take an interest in their work is the opportunity afforded to make suggestions for the various departments. This work cannot be better described than in the words of Mr. T. B. Laycock:

"None need bury their talents nor hide their light under a bushel here. Prizes are offered for ideas and expressed thoughts that are of sufficient importance to adopt. Those who give thoughtful attention to their work, who apply themselves carefully and closely to their own duty, who are anxious to better their own condition by bettering that of the company, have ample opportunity for advancement. Their speed towards the front depends entirely upon their own efforts. Suggestion boxes supplied with pencil, paper and envelopes are placed at convenient points. When written, the suggestion is placed in an envelope, which is already addressed to the lookout committee, sealed and delivered to the doorkeeper. No one, not even the foreman or manager, need be consulted about it. The receipt of suggestions is promptly acknowledged by a letter of thanks. Each Tuesday all suggestions received during the week are considered and passed upon by the board of managers and officers while at lunch. Prizes are awarded twice a year, the occasion being of much interest and enjoyment, owing to the musical programme usually arranged and the short and funny stories told. The ladder is here, the rounds are close and safe, and though somewhat crowded below, there is room at the top.

INDIVIDUALITY ENCOURAGED.

"By getting the employes interested in the library and in the different little social organizations which have been formed by them we are not endeavoring to perform a charity," continued Mr. Laycock. "It is simply our object to make each person employed here feel that he is somebody and not only a slight part of a great machine. It is my opinion that working people have a sympathy with each other that the man who has money enough to supply all the comforts of life cannot understand, and it is for this reason that we encourage the social side of this work. We are here like a large family, and everyone takes an interest in the welfare of his associates. Those who have any kind of little troubles come to the office and tell them to us, and we always listen and give them what advice we can; and I have never seen any harm come from it yet so far as the business is concerned. It is an old saying that business and sentiment should never be mixed and do not go together. While this may be a very good motto to follow, I don't wholly believe it. I think if people would put a little more sentiment into their business they would be better off, and by doing it they would not only help themselves, but they would also make those employed by them feel better and closer to them. There should be existing between an employer and the people he employs a friendship as close as that of anybody. My experience has always been that in treating the working people in this way gives them a feeling of personal pride and independence, and as for their abusing any privileges and rights which are given them we very seldom have trouble in this direction. We have not completed the social side of our factory work yet, and as various features planned become practical we will adopt them."

THE FACTORY WORK.

The factory of the Laycock Company is one of the largest in the city, and the iron beds and springs that are made there are shipped to all parts of the United States. It is an interesting proceeding to follow the construction of a bed from the time it leaves the foundry until it is in the shipping room. It is in the foundry where the head and foot of the beds are made, and there they are put upon a drag, which runs on a track, and from this track the bed is never taken until completed. It is raised from one floor to another by a hoist, and switched onto a track in the department where it is wanted. When a bed is enameled it is simply run into this department and lowered into a huge tank filled with enamel, taken up again in an instant, gone over with a brush and even on the toughest work, where it is left until the paint is thoroughly hardened. The springs that are made here go through the very same process. The most interesting thing about the springs is the way in which they are packed for shipment. Six of the springs are compressed into a crate, where the space is not large enough for one when not pressed down. To do this it takes a press of immense power, but it is found that it in no way injures the springs, but on the contrary makes them better. There are quite a number of girls working throughout the factory, especially where the brass beds are made and where the bedsprings are put together.

The shipping rooms take up a great part of the lower floor. One of these is devoted to local trade, in another carload lots are arranged for shipment, and so on with all of them. These rooms are arranged so that no inconvenience is experienced in loading either cars or wagons. Just now exists what is known at the factory as the dull season, but to go through the place and see every one busily engaged at his work one would not think that this statement was true.

The factory is ceiled throughout, and both ceiling and walls are painted in cream color, thus improving the light and promoting cheerfulness. The floors are kept well swept, and materials as well as goods in process are piled in systematic order. The equipment in machinery, much of which is special and of the factory's own design and build, is particularly adapted to the requirements of the place. The waterworks system, fitted with Glazier nozzles, commands, without hose, the entire roof and every foot of space throughout the interior of the factory. The electric lighting facilities are complete and ample, permitting the working of a full force in every part of the factory at night when occasion requires it. Direct communication is established between the general and department offices by an interior telephone system. Signal telegraph stations in various parts of the building are connected with the District Telegraph Company, and the night watchman sends in his signal from each station upon each trip through the factory, which is every hour of the night. There is also a duly organized fire department, with twenty-two members selected from various parts of the factory. Every precaution is taken for the safety of the employes, and everything is done to make them comfortable. This is to any visitor a very noticeable feature.

In the Factory Lunch Room...Officers Table in Foreground

A Natural History Study

SAVE OUR STARVING BIRDS

By Ernest Harold Baynes

OUR wild birds are dying by hundreds and thousands, and they are dying chiefly from lack of food. In many cases they are perishing literally from starvation, but more often the death is caused by cold, which they could stand well enough if they were sufficiently fed. Every bird may be likened to a small furnace, the fuel for which is the food it eats, and the nonconductor, its covering of feathers. When there is plenty of fuel the little furnace is warm—warmer by some degrees than a man or a horse—but when fuel becomes scarce the furnace burns low, and presently goes out. When food is plentiful, birds have little to fear from the most intense cold. A turkey buzzard, which I have in captivity at this time, is a case in point. This vulture is an inhabitant of the Southern States, and seldom comes as far North as New York City even in summer or autumn. But the individual I have here has been exposed to biting winds when the thermometer registered twenty degrees below zero, yet he walked about in the snow, spread out his wings to the sun, and preened his plumage with as little concern as though he had been perched on a chimney in Charleston, S. C. The secret was simply an unfailing supply of food, which kept up the natural heat of the body.

The chief cause of the present great mortality among our wild birds at this time is the unusual amount of sleet and snow which have fallen this winter. Many of the birds depend for food entirely on seeds which they gather from the tops of the weeds in the fields and along the roadsides, or which they pick up from the ground beneath these weeds. The snow has covered both the ground and the weed tops and cut off their food supply. The rest of the feathered population depend on berries and buds, or the insects' eggs, larvae, etc., which they gather from the trees. But the sleet has come, and the berries, buds and the tree trunks are sheathed in ice, and these birds, too, are dying. It is a sad fact that hundreds and thousands are already gone, but if we, who love them, will strive to prove our love at once, we may yet save many thousands of them. The national committee of The Audubon has appealed to the country to feed our starving birds, and I know that in some sections there has been a hearty response. To those who have as yet done nothing, I take this opportunity to appeal again in the name of all lovers of birds—in the name of all kindly-hearted people who have sympathy for wild creatures in distress.

Perhaps the best and quickest way to alleviate the suffering is through the children of the schools. Most of these children have an intelligent love for the birds, and will gladly give up an afternoon, or a day, for that matter, to assist in distributing food for their feathered friends. As my own first experience may be of assistance to those who desire to try a similar experiment, I will relate it. As soon as I knew how serious the conditions were, I wrote a letter to the local superintendent of schools, asking him to kindly co-operate with me in an effort to feed the birds in and around his town by urging the boys in the public and high school to help in distributing food the next afternoon. I requested that all who could bring bird seed, grain, suet, bread or table scraps, or anything else which birds could eat, would do so, and that the others would come provided with bags or baskets to distribute such food as my friends and I would have ready for them. The letter was sent by a messenger, and in two hours I received word from the superintendent that thirty-four students from the high school would be at the school building and ready to assist me at half-past two on the following day. On my arrival I found the students awaiting me, provided with baskets of broken nuts, barn-floor sweepings, and all manner of bird food. The boys were divided into squads of four or five under the leadership of one who knew well some particular bit of woodland or stretch of open country. There were eight squads, and they marched away in orderly fashion, each in a different direction, with instructions to cover about one-eighth of the country immediately surrounding the town. Each squad had at least one shovel, and in open places, such as fields and meadows, good generous spaces were cleared of snow and covered with seed and grain, scraps of meat and the like. Had the food been simply thrown on the surface of the snow it would soon have been buried and inaccessible, but on bare ground in the middle of an otherwise snow-covered field, it attracted the attention of every passing bird.

In every squad there was at least one boy who could climb, and the suet, in generous lumps, was tied to the branches of trees where it was likely to attract the birds, but where it was quite out of the reach of any prowling cat.

The help which I received from the students of the Stoneham High School was cheerfully given and highly satisfactory, and I believe that similar help could be obtained anywhere in this country by anyone who would ask it in the name of our starving wild birds.

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