A CO-OPERATIVE VILLAGE FOR WORKING PEOPLE—BEAUTIFUL AND PRACTICAL AND A FOUR PER CENT. INVESTMENT: BY MABEL TUKE PRIESTMAN

The employers who to-day are getting the best returns for their money are men who have taught themselves to understand how the "other half" lives. For it is not merely the day's work that is a money value to the wage-earner, but the conditions under which life is lived from one day's work to another. The foundation for successful endeavor has got to be comfortable, healthful environment as well as ambition and capability. When an employer hires workmen it is his frank intention to secure the best purchasable work for his money. As a matter of fact he does not always get it, and fully one-half of the time he is to blame; or if not to blame, he at least suffers for his ignorance of economic conditions.

It is a fact which every employer sooner or later must face, that people who are neither well fed nor properly rested, nor ever really happy from 6 p. m. to 8 a. m. are not going to work cheerfully and enthusiastically; that people who live in confusion and dreariness and misery will work with reluctance and lack of interest; that a day's work begun wearily and ended indifferently cannot be successful work either for the wage-earner or for the employer.

Professional people who are overworked and none too comfortable from day to day, at least have humor and philosophy to discount fatigue and discomfort; but what self help is there for the busy people who labor in the whirl of machinery and the heat of furnaces? To people whose working day is noise and dust and physical exhaustion, a garden of their own is a walk abroad into fairyland; a vine-hidden porch brings to the summer evening the cool of the woods and the sounds of birds; a rose from the bush along the path is that sort of joy that comes from one's own creation. When there is a cool, peaceful house to rest the brain and relax the body the uproar and tension of factory work begin to lose their power to destroy and incapacitate.

There can be no doubt that the working men and women who are able to connect one day's labor with another by life in a simply beautiful home, set in a garden of their own cultivation, with fruits that they have watched grow out of fragrant blossoms, are on the real
THE TRIANGLE—ONE OF THE PARK SPACES IN BOURNVILLE

A FAVORITE STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE ALONG BOURNVILLE LANE
A SIMPLE, BEAUTIFUL CASEMENT IN A BOURNVILLE TENEMENT

AN EXCEEDINGLY GOOD STYLE BEDROOM IN ONE OF THE HUMBLEST HOMES
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road to good work. For peace of mind and bodily health and a spirit of contentment must forever lead to increased productiveness as well as to a quiet elevation of character. Amiability and unselfishness do not grow to their perfect proportion easily in confusion and sordidness, and more often than not irritability is just ragged nerves.

But how to provide beautiful homes on a simple basis for working people is no easy problem for the employer. It goes without saying that the busy people cannot meet the problem themselves, and philanthropy does not hold out long at a financial loss. The first fact that confronts every well disposed employer is not merely the improvement of his factory, but the consideration of building homes for the people he employs. The squalor and monotony that surround the average tenement, often even where the tenants are receiving moderately good salaries, are largely responsible for discontented, irresponsible workingmen. But what force can convert tenements into real dwelling places, hovels into homes?

IN spite of the difficulty of this question, one man at least has answered it to the satisfaction of his own employees and his own bank account. Mr. George Cadbury, of Northfield, Birmingham, England, has evolved a scheme of colony living which up to the present date has proved at once practical, beautiful and profitable. We have all of us heard in a vague way something of the Bournville Colony; we may even have seen charming pictures of well-built cottages with lawns, gardens, hedges and porches to lure song-birds to nest in; but very few of us know just how it came about, and what peace and thrift abide therein.

The village of Bournville was started in 1895, to quote Mr. Cadbury’s own words, “as a contribution toward the housing problem.” After years of careful thought, of work with architects and civic improvement enthusiasts, Mr. Cadbury proceeded to set apart a large portion of his Bournville estate, which was situated near his cocoa works, for this colony; roads were laid out, cottages built, gardens planted and tenants secured beyond the housing room of the buildings.

Mr. Cadbury decided at the very start that the dulness and monotony produced by long lines of unbroken houses must be avoided, that every house must have its individual surroundings, the utmost
supply of sunlight and air, with opportunity to cultivate the love of
gardening, as well as general open-air spaces for recreation and the
complete enjoyment of out-door life.

Bournville is especially adapted in its situation to this sort of colony
development. It is on high rolling ground with fine stretches of
scenery about it in every direction. The cottages average about seven
to the acre and are semi-detached or built in blocks of four. The
utmost comfort for the tenants has been studied in their construction,
and the architects, Mr. W. A. Harvey and Mr. H. Bedford Tylor,
have introduced as much variety as is consistent with simple construc-
tion, in order that each cottage should suggest the individuality of a
home. There are many quaint little cottages, suggesting that famous
one of Anne Hathaway’s. Some of the most attractive are rough-cast
and half-timbered, while others are built of brick. The roofs are of
red tile or green slate, and add a charming color quality to the darker
tones of the houses. Porches, gables and buttresses are seen where
they develop in harmony with the architecture; and, although much
attention has been given to making the houses artistic, comfort and
compactness have always been given the first consideration. Gloomy
back rooms and straggling out-houses are never allowed. When a
house unavoidably faces north a window is cunningly devised at an
angle that will secure at least a moderate amount of sunshine.

From early spring to late autumn the lawns are green and the
gardens brilliant with blossoms. Six hundred feet of garden space is
allowed to each house. When a new cottage is built the garden at the
start is laid out by the estate gardeners, so that the new tenant
moving in finds the garden all ready to cultivate, and hedges started
with fruit trees, with pears, apples and plums, set in such a way that
the trees form a screen about the garden. The advice of professional
gardeners is always at the command of the tenants, although each
householder is expected to cultivate his own garden and lawn, which
he of course would want to do. The actual value of the fruit and
vegetables secured from these gardens is often equal to more than a
third of the rent. And who can estimate the value in health and
mental rest to the cultivators of the garden? Think, too, of the wholes-
some fruit and vegetable diet for the family, with little cost beyond
the time spent out in the early morning sunshine.

The co-operative purchase of plants, shrubs and bulbs gives oppor-
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tunity for buying at the cheapest rates, and garden tools can be rented at a very low cost. A loan library of gardening books has also been established, together with an association that not only periodically inspects the gardens, gives free lectures in winter and excursions in summer, but helps also to cultivate an interest in gardening by holding village flower-shows at which the exhibition is entirely from the lovely Bournville gardens.

In the center of the colony is the village green shaded by trees, the playground for the children. An open space known as the Triangle is planted with shrubs, and in the early spring the green lawn is spotted from end to end with gold and purple crocuses. In and about Bournville there are at least fourteen acres of open space, and beyond the village to the north is a fine stretch of old woodland known as Camp Wood. As building increases, new land is added and divided into allotments.

The public buildings consist of the village meeting-house, where religious services are largely attended on Sundays; Ruskin Hall, where lectures and meetings are held, and where it is planned to organize an extensive library, reading-room, museum and classes for industrial art, and the new public schools which have just been given by Mr. and Mrs. Cadbury, and which are said to be the finest in the kingdom. There are also almshouses and a Home of Rest outside of the estate. The almshouses are most attractive, each one of the thirty-three little homes containing a living-room, bedroom and scullery on the ground floor. All are tastefully furnished and the occupants are supplied with free coal, water and gas, also with medical attendance. Old employees of Messrs. Cadbury Brothers have the preference for admission, although the houses are not reserved exclusively for them.

Another delightful adjunct to the village is Bournville Hall, formerly an old English residence. This old house still stands in its beautiful grounds, but it has been converted into a sort of home for the use of young girls working in Bournville who are either orphans or live at a distance from their relatives.

The cocoa works and recreation grounds adjoin the village. The playground for girls includes tennis courts, cricket and hockey grounds and beautiful shaded lawns, stretching over some twelve acres, and there is a fine large resting pavilion. The men’s recreation
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ground consists of fourteen acres, with liberal space for large cricket and football clubs. They have, also, an open-air swimming bath, a finely equipped gymnasium and a charming pavilion, as shown in our illustration.

A point of deep interest to social reformers is that up to the present time there has never been a liquor license in Bournville village; neither public house, beer shop nor licensed grocer can be found, because the village people apparently do not want them. This is the work of the trustees of the village and not a restriction of Mr. Cadbury’s. The village council, a band of voluntary workers, elected by vote, gives time and energy to protecting the interests of the village, to getting up flower shows and summer excursions and to encouraging an interest in the beautifying of the colony. This council also arranges for lectures and entertainments, manages the bath houses and children’s playground, and keeps a careful watch over the purity of the milk supply—all of which involves no little sacrifice of time, yet is done cheerfully for the public good, and because of the universal feeling that the village is worth working for.

THE visitor to Bournville will encounter interesting evidences of appreciation among the tenants. When last in England I had an opportunity of seeing for myself this beautiful village. Mrs. Cadbury and I timed our visit so that we could call at several of the houses just before the noonday meal, that busiest of hours with the busy housekeeper. But we found the homes one and all in perfect order. To begin with they were homes easy to keep in order. The fittings were very simple, and there seemed to be no crowding about of cheap ornaments. Cheap sash-curtains of spotless muslin hung at the windows and pots of flowers were blooming on the windowsills. In even the very simplest houses the walls were covered with tasteful, plain, ingrain papers, finished with beautiful landscape friezes. I found out by questioning Mrs. Cadbury, as we walked through the fragrant village streets, that when a house was rented it was already suitably papered, and that the architects or a committee on furnishing would help tenants to select appropriate yet inexpensive furniture, hangings or rugs, and it seems that when curtains or rugs need renewing in these charming Bournville cottages, they are not replaced by cheap Nottingham lace or gaudy colored floor covering.
THIS ROOM IS MADE CHARMING ENOUGH FOR A LIVING-ROOM AND KITCHEN COMBINED

A BATHTUB SUNK IN THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF THE SCULLERY FIRE
BATHTUB IN A SCULLERY CORNER
CLOSE BY THE COOKING RANGE

A BATHTUB IN A CLOSET—TO BE LET DOWN WHEN NEEDED
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The impulse of the tenants seems to be to keep in their homes the atmosphere of beauty they start with. Most of the houses are fitted up with wooden furniture stained either green, brown or gray, and the good lines and simplicity of construction in the chairs and bookcases and tables that I saw could furnish a lesson to many housekeepers in far richer homes.

The British workman used not to insist upon a daily bath, partly because it was not the custom and partly because it meant bathing in a cold room, which none of us like any too well; but the excellent Bournville architects have overcome the latter objection, and there are many ingenious devices in these colony houses to make bathing a pleasant luxury. The favorite place for the bathtub is before the scullery fire, and as the living-room contains an open fireplace the scullery can be converted at will into a secluded room. The bathtub is sunk into the floor, and a hinge-lid covers it in the day time, which in turn may be covered by a rag carpet rug or a strip of pretty colored oilcloth.

Another convenient arrangement is the recessed bath with shower attachment and hot and cold water. Several of the larger houses, where space is not so limited, contain a tiny bathroom on the second floor. Where the bathroom is desired upstairs in a small house, it is set on a pivot so that it can stand on end when not in use, in a closet provided for it.

Most of the houses built before 1901 contain two sitting-rooms, a scullery, three bedrooms and the usual conveniences. Larger ones were built with five or six bedrooms. I noticed, however, in the newest cottages that there was a tendency to have one large living-room, which was a great improvement on the old cutting up of space.

URING our day at Bournville Mrs. Cadbury and I called upon her old nurse, who is spending her last days in one of the almshouse cottages. Although a very old woman, she was doing her own housekeeping in a tiny little house which was in perfect order. I noticed that these cottages have the bedroom on the first floor, and that there are no steps in and out of the doorway—which makes it very safe for the old people, who might need a great deal more care if these little details for their comfort were not given the utmost consideration. The stronger help the weaker, and there are
always neighbors to care for the sick and needy. This dear old woman was sitting by the fire knitting, wearing a dainty white cap and fresh frock—a perfect picture of contented old age.

As a rule supper in the colony is eaten at five o’clock, and there is no more necessary work, but long twilights in the summer for recreation and gardening, and cheerful winter evenings for reading or social enjoyment, or the study of industrial art.

In 1900 Mr. Cadbury presented the village and the estate of which it forms a part to the nation, and it is now administered by trustees. The deed of foundation enacts that “all revenue after providing for repairs, maintenance, and other necessary expenditure, shall be used for building more cottages, the purchase of more land, and the general extension of the scheme.”

The area of the estate is now five hundred and two acres; there are about six hundred cottages in the village, with a population of about two thousand eight hundred. Rents range from $1.10 to $1.50 per week. The recreation grounds are also in the hands of trustees, and the trust deed enacts that they are to be preserved as open spaces forever. In the event of the factory ceasing to exist, the deed provided that the ground should be handed over to the district council for use as a public park.

One can hardly realize that a scheme of this kind, which is such a philanthropic success, should also be a financial success, but so it is with Bournville. The property as a whole, including the portion not yet developed for building, yields a moderate return on the capital value. And as new houses are built, the rents are fixed so as to give a four per cent. net on the cost of construction and site.