O COME upon Hellerau is to experience a rare pleasure; to inspect it, forewarned of all its charms, is to become convinced that it is possible to maintain, in the modern scramble for existence, a community ideally planned and practically executed, a town possessing all the advantages of civilization. For Hellerau is the city of the future—of that future when men shall live, not each one for himself alone, but all for one another. It was a moody April day that we jogged our way along the trolley line, out to Hellerau. We passed through New Dresden, beyond the military garrison where we caught a glimpse of a green-clad hunters' regiment at artillery practice. We left the trolley for a path through the woods, which a picturesque sign-post assured us would take us on the direct route to Hellerau. A group of stone-breakers with their horse were working by the roadside. How happy they looked! The men were working as leisurely as one may while maintaining a semblance of earning one's pay; rhythmically they lifted the hammer and rhythmically they let it fall. In time with this measure they puffed their pipes. The horse seemed to grin cheerfully at the contemplation of that peaceful scene of which he formed a part.

As we passed, the workmen all stopped as by signal. "Guten Tag," they said, as though trained to act in chorus; the horse turned his head and gave us a benign equine blessing.

"Guten Tag," we replied, having learned our little lesson of Continental greetings well, "Noch weit zu gehen, nach Hellerau?"

"Nicht schlimm," they called after us encouragingly, resuming their pipes, their hammers and their leisure.

"Steinklopfen bin i" I hummed, understanding, for the first time, the deeper meaning in the words of the man in the Strauss song who is proud to do anything for his country—even if it is only to break stones by the roadside.

But further speculation about the possibilities for joy in the occupation of stone-breaker soon came to an end, for we came upon a sight, so real in its peace and beauty, that theories and resentments had to flee before it. It was a simple town of winding crooked streets, white houses with green blinds and red roofs, and it lay in snowy silence at our feet. Directly in front of us stood the inevitable Waldschenke, the German beer garden and afternoon coffee rendezvous. To the left spread a low, long building with wings at unexpected angles, and many courtyards. A profusion of windows and a generous supply of smoke puffing out of picturesque chimneys suggested that it might be a factory, but the very profusion of the win-
THE FIRST VIEW OF THE INN AT HELLERAU, LOOKING UP THE WOOD-PATH LEADING FROM THE TROLLEY LINE.

A VIEW OF HELLERAU ACROSS THE LAKE: TO THE RIGHT STANDS THE INN, TO THE LEFT THE FACTORY, AND BETWEEN THEM A GROUP OF MORE PRETENTIOUS COUNTRY HOUSES.
IN THE FOREGROUND A MORE HIGH-PRICED TWO-FAMILY HOUSE, TO THE RIGHT A ROW OF FOUR-ROOMED HOUSES: NOTE THAT THE LATTER DO NOT FACE THE STREET DIRECTLY, BUT ARE ACCESSIBLE BY A PATH RUNNING THROUGH THE GARDENS.

A BIT OF THE STREET OF THE GREEN COAT-TAIL, SHOWING THE SKILFUL USE OF FENCES AND WALLS, THE INTRODUCTION OF AN ARBOR HERE, A BENCH THERE.
HELLERAU IN WINTERTIME, WHEN THE WHITE HOUSES ARE CHARming WITH THEIR GREEN BLINDS AND RED ROOFS.

A ROW OF HELLERAU HOUSES: THE IDEA IN HAVING WINDING STREETS IS TO GIVE EACH HOUSE AN EQUAL SHARE OF LIGHT AND AIR.
A GLIMPSE AT THE BACKYARDS OF THE HOUSES WHICH FRONT ON THE STREET OF THE GREEN COAT-TAIL.
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dows and the very picturesqueness of the chimneys gave us pause in coming to our conclusion. Beyond it, through silvery slim birches and a curtain of finely falling snow, we could distinguish mansionlike houses on a hill slope.

To the right, up a little hill wound a crooked little street lined on both sides with neat white cottages, similar enough to be harmonious, different enough not to be tiresome. I was for exploring them first, especially as the street bore the appealing name of “Am Grünen Zipfel,”—“At the Green Coat-tail,” but decided, upon second thought to go to the big building first to find out just what it was we had come to see.

WHEN we read the sign on the big building, “Deutsche Werkstätte für Handwerkerkunst,” we recognized it immediately as the factory of the biggest German firm for interior decoration. Karl Schmidt, the founder of Hellerau, is not a dreamer of dreams, but a most practical business man who has worked his way up from the carpenter’s bench to the ownership of one of the biggest craftwork factories in Germany. He is neither a sentimental philanthropist nor a theoretical economist, but a man who understands the needs of human beings and believes in the joys of coöperation. As his creed includes a belief that man is the sum of all his conceptions and that, as such, he is the reflection of his environment, he is convinced that if work is done in pleasant surroundings, under hygienic conditions, this will invariably show in the finished product.

“For instance,” he amplified the last remark, “I believe that my men will learn to love only good and beautiful things if they can always see a pretty landscape from the windows, or a picture of artistic merit on the walls of the factory rooms as they go about their work.

“In business, in finance, in literature, in education and science—even in the courts—men are trying to live ahead of their times, to break away from useless traditions in order to meet the needs of the present state of civilization. We, here in Hellerau also believe in casting off the trappings of other centuries and living entirely in our own. In the houses we build and the furniture we make, we imitate nothing; we merely utilize such historical forms as we deem beautiful and applicable to the needs of today.

“You Americans,”—I had been waiting for the unavoidable dig at us Americans and here it was, thank goodness, soon out of the way,—“have this advantage over us, that you have no traditions to fight against. And then what do you do? You hunt them up and create them for yourselves. If you could only know how we
laugh at you for coming over to buy up trunks full of ugly little things, for which you pay fabulous prices—only because they are old!"

He then explained to us that he had been unusually fortunate in finding a piece of land near a large city, comprising about three hundred and seventy-five acres free from the clutches of land speculators and real-estate boomers. This he had been able to buy up from seventy-three different farmers for the average price of about thirty dollars a square meter. As he believes that everyone should think and work for everything he gets, he did not build barracklike rows of houses by the wholesale for his employees; believing also that the people who work in one place should not all live in one place without the stimulating company of people who work elsewhere and on other things, he bought up much more land than he needed and turned it over to a garden-city association which should develop it for the use of all sorts of desirable tenants in sympathy with a communal plan of living and in search of inexpensive lodgings in artistic surroundings. This association planned the city in accordance with the newest ideas of city building, with winding roads, frequent irregular open places, many three-sided street corners to give lots of room and light and air. Then they, in turn, parcelled off a certain district to a co-operative building association which should erect and maintain smaller houses for the workmen. The Land Insurance Company of Saxony was willing to take a first mortgage for three and one-third per cent. with an amortization of one per cent. and a great many inhabitants of Dresden were found eager to buy shares.

The principal object of both these companies is to prevent land speculation, the inflation of land values and the accumulation of the unearned increment by the individual. To this end they have decreed for all time that no land shall ever pass out of their hands, that it may, on the other hand, be leased indefinitely by individuals who have shares in the company and that these stockholders shall never receive more than four per cent. on the capital they have invested. The surplus is invariably to be used for objects of mutual benefit,—an idea that has been in operation now for two years and working successfully. Each member of the co-operative association pays fifty dollars a share, which brings him four cent. interest and which entitles him to become a tenant in one of the houses the association builds. No man may hold more than one hundred shares, and there are stockholders who never mean to live in Hellerau. The income derived from these shares, from the savings bank connected with the association (which also pays only four per cent.), the three and one-third per cent. mortgage which the Land
Company of Saxony holds, is enough to cover the expense of building, to allow for an amortization of one per cent. to pay off that mortgage in one hundred years, and to have a surplus fund for the building of schools, libraries, museums and other civic and social centers. The rents charged for the houses are equal to but five and one-half per cent. of the value of the land, its improvements and the buildings upon it.

As the rents for these smaller houses may never exceed one hundred and fifty dollars, those who want villas or more pretentious country houses must apply directly to the Garden City Association for the use of the land, pay six per cent. of its value and five per cent. of the cost of the building to be erected as rental and take out a mortgage of four-tenths of the value of both as a guarantee for the undertaking. The prospective builder receives four per cent. for this loan, but may not claim full payment of it for five years. To prevent the inevitable introduction of speculation, mortgages and shares may not be sold to any but members of either association, and so though the value of the property may increase, the individual gets but four per cent. on his investment and the town gets the benefit of the increase.

There are now about two thousand people living in Hellerau, but there is room for thirty thousand. There is enough land, a guide explained to us, to admit of wide expansion, and enough restrictions to keep it intact. As these restrictions are self-imposed, the inhabitants have to abide by them or make their objections in public at a meeting of the Self-Government Association. This is composed of all the members of the coöperative association and the Garden City Association, who elect two representative bodies: a Board of Managers to do the work and a Board of Directors to see that it is done. To both of these Karl Schmidt is the advisor.

As we left the factory with our guide, we walked past the Waldschänke, where the meetings are held, up the street of Green Coat-tail which had charmed us when we had first entered the town. There we found two kinds of houses, the Reihenhäuser, groups of small houses, built connectedly for the economy of roof and wall space, with a tiny garden front and back, and the Kleinhäuser, separate houses with free space all around and the rent a little higher. The idea in having both kinds of houses on one street, it was pointed out to us, was to mix the company that lived in them. As a result of this plan, only forty per cent. of the inhabitants of Hellerau are connected with the factory. On this one street, for instance, there lived besides some employees of the Werkstätte, a lawyer from Dresden, a widow who wrote books, a well-known violinist, a retired actress and the editor of a Socialist magazine.
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In one house we visited we met a seamstress who, with her two little children had lived there ever since the town came into existence. In Dresden she had paid about one hundred dollars for four rooms, she explained to us, two of which were "blind" and none of which was big enough to turn around in. Here she had four rooms, a garret storeroom and a laundry-cellar supplied with apparatus for heating and hot water, and all the air and sunshine she could possibly want or use for sixty-two dollars. For the "decorative" garden in front, big enough for a flower-bed, and the "utility" garden in the back, supplied with three baby fruit trees by the Association, she paid an extra rent of eighteen pfennige (four and a half cents) per square yard annually.

The neat green placard hung over the bell informed us that we were calling on Frau Lisa Brödel. The tow-headed little Lieschen that let us in hadn't time to tell us that the Frau Mutter was at home, before the seamstress mother, with some of her sewing still in her hand, came forward to greet us. From the tiny hall into which we had entered, she had led us into the gute Stube, the general utility room. The sight that greeted us as we stood in the doorway assured us that this one was used not only as dining room, sitting room and parlor, but as a dancing hall, too, for there in the middle of the floor whirled and spun an elfin sprite with a tousled yellow head.

"Gretl, Gretl," her mother, remonstrated, "Du bist nervös; geh' rhythmisch."

Whereupon the tousled head came to a sudden standstill, a wee small voice belonging to it, counted one-two, one-two, until arms and legs under perfect control and with great grace removed it into the next room, an adorable example of the subduing possibilities of rhythmical gymnastics. We were enchanted.

"You all believe in it, don't you?" I said, turning to Frau Brödel.

"Oh, yes, we go to dancing class almost every evening."

"You enjoy it—you really love it?"

"Not always." Seeing the questioning gaze in our guide's face, she hastened to explain, "that is, when it interferes with business. For weeks I have had a quarrel with Frau Straubenmüller about a bill for a dress I made for her, and last night, what was my luck—I had to draw her for my partner for the evening. You can't be angry when you do rhythmic gymnastics—that doesn't go—I smiled on her before I knew it, and now, I am sure of it—she will not pay me that money."

Hellerau is a garden city patterned very much after the English models, especially Letchworth, and has the same advantage that it
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is not only planned and managed by a political economist, a man of practical business sense, but that it is built up by architects and artists of the first magnitude. The name of Herman Muthesius, a Berlin architect whose services are sought by the builders of villas in the exclusive Gruenewald, a man whom the Government consults in weighty matters of art and architecture, is modestly signed beneath the plans of one row of houses. Carl Riemerschmidt, the founder of one of the most modern schools of interior decoration and architecture, has had more to say about the laying out of Hellerau and the building of its houses than anyone else. Karl Bertsch, another Munich artist; M. H. Baillie-Scott, of English fame; Heinrich Tessenow and Theodor Fischer are among the other contributors.

As we walked along the street, noticing the carefully laid out houses and gardens, the artistic groupings of the trees, the skilful use of fences and walls, the introduction of an arbor here, a bench there, we were so well pleased by the outside of Hellerau houses, that I couldn’t help thinking what a disappointment it must be to the men who had conceived all these things, to find the inside misused. When I expressed this to our guide he set my fears at rest by saying:

“Oh, we take care of that. See, here, we have three model houses full of suggestions for what is fit, and—by omission—what is not fit. The workers in the Werkstätte acquire there, of course, a sense of beauty in furnishings, and many of them, when they have finished making furniture for the factory, make copies for their own homes. Here is a five-room house we have furnished for three hundred and thirty-seven dollars from garret to cellar, with solid, practical things. We have everything here which is absolutely necessary—we believe in having nothing but that in a house. Pictures, of course, and books, but no unnecessary pieces of furniture, no lavish profusion of things, just because you can afford to have them.”

What startled us in the Hellerau style of interior decoration was the profusion and garishness of color that is everywhere in evidence—color that is not only gay, but decidedly giddy. Bright blue and apple green woodwork were no exception; the bold contrasts of colors in autumn leaves and wild flowers were frequently used as motifs for sofa-cushions and table covers; and the bright blue crockery was decorated with bright green irregular splotches, so that even more daring combinations soon seemed commonplace.

THE other two show-houses, larger and more pretentious, served rather as advertisements of the wares of the Werkstätte. But the gospel of color was preached here too—bright yellows and purples and blues, toned in with quieter browns and grays. Riemer-
schmidt is one of the first Germans to build a house “from the inside out,” that is with a thought for the utility of space and economy of natural household resources, but his ingenuity oftentimes brings him perilously near the grotesque.

At the end of the “Grünen Zipfel” we came upon the market-place, the shopping district of Hellerau. It was not completed when we were there, but a variety of holes in the ground indicated that there would some day be quite a galaxy of shops upon the place. They are to be rented out to anyone wishing to venture in business in a model town, irrespective of membership in either of the companies. It is doubtful, however, whether merchants will be found in great plenty to avail themselves of the opportunity, for besides a financial risk they must also run the risk of offending Hellerau taste with their wares. “Anyone who wants to sell ugly, useless things, can do that elsewhere,” Karl Schmidt had said. “We are going to have an art commission here to see that everything in and outside of these shops is in good taste and this commission is going to have authority to insist on beauty in everything from sign-boards to women’s gowns.”

As it was getting late, our guide rushed us by the street of the “Little Ditch” (“Am kleinen Grübchen”) down Street Three, past some very handsome villas in which the managers of the factory, some of the architects and directors of the Jacques-Dalcroze School of Rhythmical Gymnastics lives, and back again to the factory. Here in the courtyard we found a crowd of jolly, red-cheeked chattering children with their school books strapped to their backs in military fashion, coming home from school. They seemed much happier and more carefree than the average German children. Our guide agreed with me when I expressed this thought to him. “Yes,” he said, “they were all a nuisance in Dresden, and they felt it. They are a blessing here, and they know that, too.”

Having made a tour of the town, we were allowed to go through the factory; the thing that appealed to me most was the system of management,—without the time-check, without fines, without docketing. It is run entirely on the honor system—(a system stranger in Germany, even, than here) and Karl Schmidt declares that his are the most punctual and the most conscientious workers in the Father-land. They elect delegates to a parliament which confers with him regularly, that he may know what they think about their work and the conditions under which they must execute it. A spirit of comrade-ship was evident there that I have never seen anywhere else; a spirit, too, of the joy of work; it almost seemed, above all, as though each man were doing his best in the individual task, that the whole might be perfect.