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THE MODEL MILL SETTLEMENT

ARTICLE IN NORTHERN PAPER GIVES HIGH PRAISE TO LOCAL INSTITUTION.

A recent Sunday issue of the Buffalo, N. Y., Express carries an illustrated page write-up of the mill villages north of this city under the heading: "Greensboro, North Carolina, is Center for Model Mill Settlement of the World." Following an introductory in which the writer describes a phase of the social service work that is carried on at the mills, the article says, in part:

Everything about this big and bustling plant is in striking contradiction to the prevailing impression that Southern cotton mills are pest holes, officered by slave drivers and peopled by underpaid, half-fed and stunted boys and girls—serfs from the moment they were able to toddle forth from their cradles until their disease racked bodies are fled by the spirit so long stifled within them.

"A mill hands' Utopia," two of our presidents, Roosevelt and Taft, characterized these busy mills. As President Wilson spent many years of his life within a short distance of them, he, too, knows intimately how readily conditions here give the lie to those who, without taking the trouble to investigate for themselves, write volumes about "the appalling conditions in the Southern mills."

Picture in the mind's eye a little town laid out in checkerboard fashion with wide and generously shaded streets in which at regular intervals stand comfortable and attractive vine clad cottages facing and flanked by yards of ample proportions to permit of chicken runs and flourishing vegetable gardens. Then one will have a fair idea of this North Carolina mill settlement.

This settlement stands on the outskirts of Greensboro, itself a busy and bustling little manufacturing city, which has trebled its population in a decade, and this without a boom. The settlements are clustered about the White Oak and Proximity mills, each a mammoth establishment, and operated by the same concern. The mills have been referred to by students of industrial, economic and social problems who have visited them as the model mill settlements of the world. Not only have the homes and the environment of the mill operatives been a source of never ceasing wonder and gratification to those who are constantly on the alert to promote uplift work among toilers, but they have unanimously agreed that the mills proper have been equipped with every conceivable device that tends to better the comfort and sanitary surroundings of the operatives.

The Proximity Manufacturing Company, of which Mr. Caesar Cone is principal owner, president and managing director, owns the mills, and one of his most stringent rules is that all in and about the mills shall be so conducted that the settlements' reputation as "Spotless Towns" shall remain untarnished. Cleanliness and sanitation are his hobbies. Prizes are annually distributed among the operatives for the best kept garden and lawn conforming to the company's specifications, and when these are distributed the laggards find that they have missed a bonus well worth striving for.

In the course of a recent visit to Greensboro the writer went through the mills and their settlements and found them in strong contradistinction to those at Lawrence, Mass., another big cotton mill center, whence came the "strike babies" who testified before the congressional committee at Washington to conditions which made strong men ill and the women who gathered at the hearing turn pale and faint.

No strike babies can be found here. In their place healthy and robust boys and girls scamper through the village streets and over the settlement common on their way to and from the magnificent schools the company erected and maintains at its own expense. Pinched and drawn faces and rags and squalor have no place here. Happy and normal children and contented housewives who have been schooled in the principles of hygiene and sanitation are to be found in the homes, while the man of the household—the mill operative—is the personification of the thrifty and prosperous American husband of the working class. He is thoroughly content with his work and secure in the knowledge that his job is safe so long as he does his part and meets his employer half way. He realizes, too, that the head of the company knows from first hand knowledge just how he is performing his task and, furthermore, he knows to the minutest detail just what his home life is.

"These mills," said Mr. Cone, "are what my late brother, Moses, intended them to be. From the day we came South and located here he spent his every waking hour striving to bring about a realization of his dreams. That they proved an agree-

able reality there is no doubt, for when he was taken from us he died happy in the thought that his years of toil were crowned with the appreciation of those for whom it was done. I am striving to carry on the work along the lines he prescribed. When I succeed in bringing the mills up to the very highest possible degree of excellence I shall feel that my brother needs no more lasting monument to his noble and useful life."

"To what do you attach the most importance as a factor in bringing about this Utopian condition of affairs?" I asked Mr. Cone.

"From the first we worked, on the principle that if the manufacturer manifests the same interest in the welfare of his operatives that he does in his high priced machinery he will not only surround himself with useful and productive helpers, but he will be able to turn out a pretty high standard of the finished product. That, doubtless, has been one of the secrets of our success. We have gathered here a splendid lot of men and women who have seized the opportunities we created for them. Realizing how readily they grasped these chances to better themselves, we continued to create them, and this we kept doing until we are beginning to think our mills are as nearly perfect from a mechanical, social and economic viewpoint as it is possible to make them.

"The best investment we have made since coming South was the money spent for the welfare and uplift of our operatives, their wives and their children. The majority of them were quick to learn and they were appreciative. The result is we have built up a settlement of sturdy and healthy minded men and women, whose children, upon completing the educational course we demand that they take, will find good places at good wages in the mills where their fathers have been content to toil. Few leave us, and in consequence there are few newcomers among us. Many families are occupying the same cottages they moved into when they came to us fifteen years or more ago."

The tour through the mills had revealed the total absence of dust—that arch enemy of every mill operative. Every device known to mechanics and science had been installed to minimize this peril. Light and air are other essentials that had been given due consideration, with the result that men, women, youths and well grown girls work in bright, well ventilated quarters, while all about them is clean, sanitary and wholesome. The machinery is all of the latest pattern, and wherever a labor saving device could be installed there it was found.

But it was the settlements which interested the visitor, and to them he made his way. The smaller cottages rent for \$3 a month, while the larger ones bring \$5. For every third cottage there is an artesian well, and the water from these is cool, sparkling and as healthy as any in the state. The cottages stand on brick piers, thus insuring dry and warm interiors and offsetting any danger of dampness. All are bright and airy, neatly painted, and all within and without bespeak comfort and homelike cheer. The rental from the cottages barely offsets taxes and repairs.

Each year the company makes its distribution of flower and vegetable seeds. Shrubs and plants also are given out, and annually thirty prizes are awarded for the best vegetable and flower gardens as well as the most attractive home in the settlement. These prizes range in value from \$5 to \$50. Naturally, the housewives vie with one another to win these bonuses, and in consequence the settlements, from end to end, present the appearance of variegated flower gardens from early spring until Jack Frost comes and lays his blight on plant and blossom.

Attached to each settlement and maintained at the company's expense is a young woman thoroughly trained and equipped to go among the women and instruct and co-operate with them in giving to their homes those deft and intricate little touches which in reality make it a home for each member of the household. These young women conduct cooking and sewing classes in the schools for the girl pupils. In the afternoons similar classes are conducted for the mothers and older girls who wish to learn how to conduct the homes on the most approved lines. They are given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the best sanitary methods, dietetics and the latest and most approved cuts and modes employed by up-to-date modistes. They also conduct classes in raffia and basketry work.

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WILSON GIVES HIS VIEW TO WORLD SITUATION.

President Wilson expressed his view of the gravity of the international situation which confronts the United States to a delegation of Virginians who asked him Monday to visit the Manassas battlefield late this month.

"We are all hoping and praying that the skies may clear," said the president, "but we have no control of that on this side of the water and it is impossible to predict any part of the course of affairs."

The president was reminded that some time ago he had promised to go to Manassas.

"When I made that promise," the president told the delegation, "things were just beginning and a great many things have happened since which have altered not only the aspect of our own affairs but the aspect of affairs of the world. My experience here day by day is that questions turn up so suddenly and have to be handled so promptly and sometimes with so much thoughtful discretion that I really dare not let my thoughts go out to other matters.

"I could not come to Manassas without having something to say. It would not be worthy of the occasion if I could not make preparation that would be worth while, and that is out of the question. My thoughts are mortgaged beyond recall for the present.

"I simply feel that I have forfeited my liberty for the present and that my nearest duty is the most obvious and imperative duty. I have been obliged to say this to all invitations, however tempting in character, and I would not be worthy of your trust if I did not come to such conclusion, because I know that you want these international matters taken care of as best we know how and I ought not to send my thoughts afield."

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