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Note: [Naumkeag] An experiment in industrial civilization

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Notes on Salem Cotton Undertaking

Nothing harder than to admit that you do not know it all. Nothing harder for he who has done a creditable thing - carried on a creditable thing - who feels himself solid - knows what he is doing - and has not conceived that it is possible to do differently. It is a kind of disease this static satisfied condition, like unwillingness to change your diet - your sleeping tablets. Industry often has bad attacks of this static disease. Probably that is what is the matter with the cotton manufacturing industry in this country. For twenty years now it has been afflicted - it has done all sorts of things to help itself, gone South where there was cheaper labor, tried for higher duties and got them. Twenty per cent in 1911 - 9 per cent in our last but no matter what the outside panics it was still anemic.

It blamed everybody but itself, too. No one talks about cotton that does not cry out. "see what silk has done to us, see what rayon has done to us." See what all these outside new fabrics have done." And like the outing of a fine old family - one that had come to a point of facility where it regarded itself as solid as the families of Beacon Hill, families which, by-the-way, have had in a great many cases, been supported in luxury for years.

But finally it has begun to look within - not very generally I should say - not very profoundly, excepting in two or three cases. In one case at least the cotton industry has gotten
down to the bottom of things and is attempting to rebuild according to the new light of our industrial life. It is a story—this rebuilding—a story of a fine old leader, rich in tradition, confident of the solidity of those traditions, always open to facts, throwing aside conventions and prejudices, traditions of a whole great industry and saying, "Let's see what is in this." Saying it freely, honestly, humorlessly. A fine old sport—the head of the Naumkeag who has undertaken to save himself and incidently to teach a whole industry a lesson. But his sportsmanship has been matched by the leaders of the workers. If he saw clearly and was not afraid to acknowledge that the cotton industry could not be restored without the aid of men on the looms. The men on the looms saw that their jobs could not be saved without throwing in their interests with those of management. The two have got to work out the thing themselves, or the great manufacturing would close its doors and they, twenty-five hundred workers, would be scattered in all directions. They saw it and these two groups that so foolishly have considered themselves a separate unit in the cotton industry as other industries have grown to work. Intelligence, not politics, science, investigation not talk—to save the Naumkeag factory.

How they came to any such sensible, quite unheard of undertaking in the cotton manufacture can hardly be understood
without a look at the two sides, Naumkeag. Go to Salem and look at it. This factory, ninety years old, one of the first strides of New England cotton business - rather a revolutionary enterprise from the start, because it was, I believe, the first cotton factory in this country that got it into its head that it could run by steam power instead of water power and sat itself down close to the water shipping you see, and brought in coal - made itself great.

during a decade, withstood every of the life of cotton factories. It went through the Civil War and prospered. It went through the dull period that followed and lived. It went through all the changing conditions which new races of labor made imperative. The early Americans deserted it - then came the Irish. The Irish moved on into politics - road making - building and on from Canada came the French. There were not enough of them and the Poles came in. Now at Naumkeag you have about half a half of these nationalities, scarcely an American -

outside of management. It is almost truly American. What a story of the restless feet of nations - the eagerness of men to see the chance, you have under your eyes in the ninety years that man lived! It was struck by fire less than twenty years ago and it rebuilt itself in a way that makes it a factory that every manufacturer had to the best in his industry must see and it has kept itself up too. All mechanical sides - kept itself up finely in human relations. The men and women who earn their bread at these looms have seen one and another change in their interest made.
Mary's students are all doing well, but she is still worried about her family. She is still struggling with the loss of her husband and is not sure how she will be able to provide for her children. She is considering moving to a new city to start over, but she is not sure if it is the right decision. She is also concerned about her health, as she has been feeling tired and weak lately. She is thinking about seeing a doctor, but she is not sure if she can afford it.

Mary's friend, Sarah, has been trying to help her in any way she can. She has offered to babysit her children while she goes to see the doctor, and she has also offered to help with the household chores. Mary is grateful for Sarah's support, but she is still feeling overwhelmed. She is also feeling guilty for putting so much stress on her friend, but she doesn't know how to ask for help without feeling like a burden.

Mary's family is also struggling. Her son, John, is doing well in school, but he is also feeling the impact of the economic downturn. He has been working extra hours at his job, but it is not enough to cover all of the expenses. His daughter, Rachel, is doing well in school, but she is also feeling the stress of the situation. She is trying to be supportive of her mother, but she is also feeling frustrated and angry.

Mary's husband's family is also struggling. His father, John, is doing well, but his mother, Susan, is not. She has been struggling with depression and anxiety, and she is not sure if she can continue to take care of herself. She is also feeling guilty for not being able to help her daughter.

Mary is feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what to do. She is considering seeking help from a counselor, but she is not sure if she can afford it. She is also considering applying for government assistance, but she is not sure if she is eligible. She feels like she is drowning and doesn't know how to find a way out.
A fine benign father Naumkeag has been. But Naumkeag could not
live in a diseased industry and feel no touch of the trouble.
Healthy as it was - watchful as it was - the disease that was
sweeping through cotton manufactories touched it. For eighty
years they had gone on without a strike and then eleven years
ago there was a real walk-out. The people thought they ought
to have more money. The management did not see how we could give
it. It was you see. But the strike itself - never was
there such a one. Mr. Smith, Whitehead - elegant, smiling
comes down and invites them all to tea or something equivalent.
And the representatives of the union come and they talk and talk
and apparently they never quarrel and they get the thing on the table.
It takes some weeks, but at the end of the same weeks they all go back
to work. Certain things have been spoiled but not the wages.
For dishonest management has had the intelligence to show to
the workers that if Naumkeag is to go on and keep their jobs for
them it cannot pay a higher wage scale. I should say about the best
thing that could be said of this strike was what John O'Connell,
the head of the textile workers of America, living in Salem, interested
always in Naumkeag But after it was over there was
nothing on either side which could shame or
future relation of the two. Many striking, warring groups, can say that.
I found myself in a field of wildflowers, their petals dancing in the wind. The scent of their blossoms filled my nostrils, and I felt a sense of peace wash over me. I knew that I had been seeking this moment for a long time, and that now I was finally here.

As I walked further into the field, I noticed a small pond hidden amongst the vegetation. I felt drawn to it, and as I approached, I saw a small bird alighting on the edge of the pond. It was a moment of pure beauty, and I felt grateful for being able to witness it.

As I turned to leave, I saw a group of deer Thumbnail_heart.png grazing in the distance. They were so close that I could hear their hooves clicking on the soft grass. I watched them for a moment, and then turned to leave, feeling grateful for the moments of peace and beauty that had been granted to me.
He had looked up the name. He asked the man who had talked with him about it.

"Oh, it is that fellow Cooke down in Philadelphia. He has sold the whole thing to the ." And so agent O'Connell being enterprising and fair went to see Cooke in Philadelphia and they talked the thing over.

Alert, practical, experienced and with imagination, O'Connell said, and he went back to talk to Local Number and this is what he said to them:

"If there are experts of any kind who can assemble and give us facts we do not now have, let us employ them. If there are any measuring and time study practices that will help us to get the facts, let us co-operatively use them. If there are other ways of getting facts let us adopt them. For it is only through getting the facts, facing the facts and using the facts through joint action, that the enterprise and those associated with it in the long run will prosper.

"I see no need for arbitration in situations, where a decision can be reached through ascertaining the facts. Arbitration usually is a compromise of ideas. Cold facts cannot be compromised. Arbitration usually ends in compromising the beliefs, opinions and ideas of the parties to such situations. Facts based on joint analytical research cannot be compromised. They stop us from 'talking through our hat.'